

The Hidden Paths:

SHAMANS™



The Sourcebook of the Spirit World
for ARS MAGICA™ 3rd Edition

The Hidden Paths:



Anima Magica



by Sarah Link
& John Snead

CREDITS

Writing: Sarah Link and John Snead
 Development: Ken Cliffe
 Editing: Alara Rogers and Robert Hatch
 Art Direction: Richard Thomas
 Layout: Sam Chupp
 Production: Chris McDonough
 Cover Art: Pam Shanteau
 Interior Art: Tom Dow, Jeff Menges, Josh Timbrook,
 Lawrence A. Williams
 Ars Magica was originally created by Jonathan Tweet and
 Mark Rein•Hagen

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Shamans: The Hidden Paths

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE



The Hidden Paths: Shamans is the first in a series of supplements designed for Ars Magica Third Edition. These books present traditions and devotions of magic, beyond that of Hermetic magic, in the Mythic Europe world. As its title implies, this book describes shamans and their place in the world.

Shamans are folk belonging to societies that existed before the coming of Christianity. Although many such peoples were converted to or wiped out by Orthodoxy, some still survive, either on the fringes of Christendom and Islam, or hidden away within both, maintaining the old ways in the shadow of bishop, lord, and sultan.

Specifically, shamans are those who tend spirits, either of the mortal dead, or of the world and its inhabitants, either living or, to Hermetic perceptions, unliving and inanimate. Not only can shamans summon and converse with these spirits, gaining power from them, but shamans can also enter into the spirit world, an aspect of the Magic realm itself. As travelers of the spirit world, shamans can see and know things about this world and the next that Magi of the Order can only dream of.

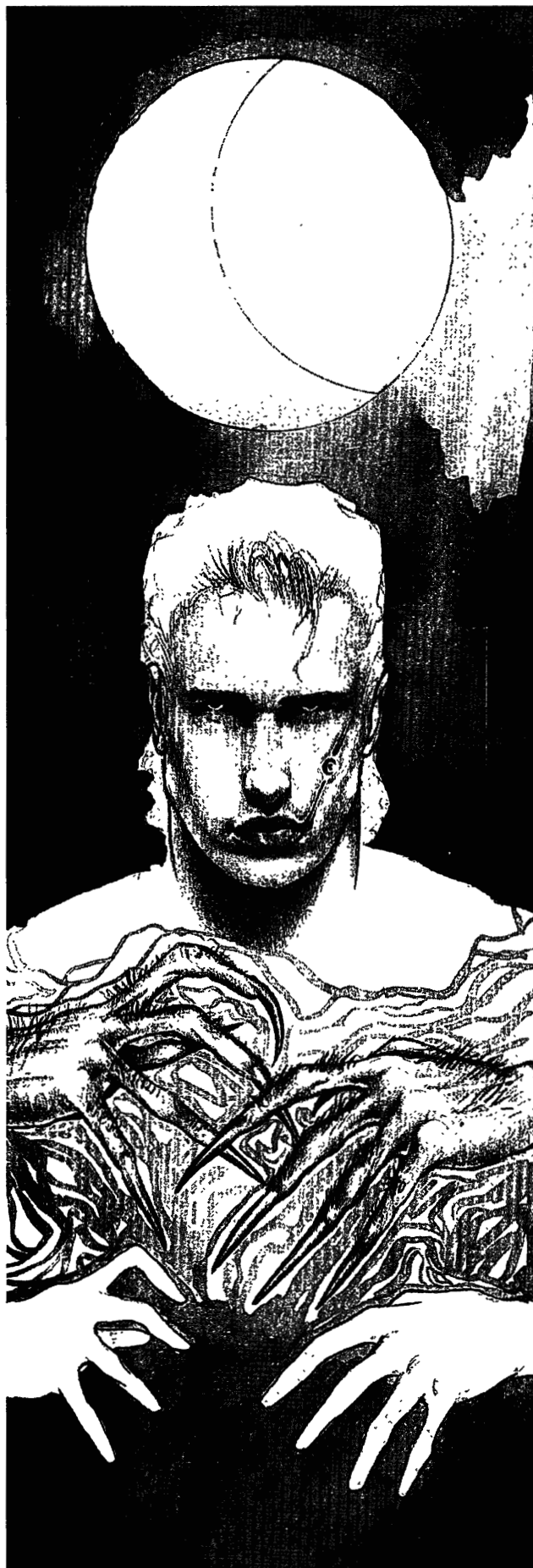
This supplement does not merely present the societies and milieus in which shamans exist. Shamans and their allies — those able to assume bestial form — can be created as players' characters, or as characters that others may meet. Indeed, with this book you can combine shamanic and Hermetic characters in the same group or Covenant. Thus, this book is designed for use by Storyguides and Ars Magica players alike. It is suggested, though, that a Storyguide read through this book before

any players, so she may indicate what sections contain restricted knowledge. Designation of such sections ultimately falls to your own discretion, depending on how you tell stories and organize your Saga. If you allow players much knowledge about the world and the way things operate, allow players to read this entire book. If you like to keep players in the dark about the world — that of the spirit included — and its ways, you may only allow players of shamanic characters to read Chapters Two and Five, filling in any remaining details yourself.

In terms of chronological setting, this book is designed for use at and after the "standard" Ars Magica Saga starting date, A.D. 1197. However, as much of the material provided herein is purely informational and non-specific, this book's ideas can be applied to almost any Saga date.

INTRODUCTION GOALS

This Chapter presents the basics behind shamanic society, setting the tone and providing information for material in Chapters to come. In particular, the following material illustrates the background from which shamans come and in which they operate. The same background is provided for members of the Clan of the Moon, shamanic shapechangers. With this information you may move on to Chapter One to create a shaman or shapechanging character.



Note, much of the information provided here is presented in the form of essays, letters, and accounts from shamans and shapechangers themselves. The Hermetic perspective on shamanic tradition is also given, presented in the same evocative manner.

The Magic Realm

"In the course of all of our vast and various studies, many Magi have wondered about the nature of the Magic realm. Bonisagus himself speculated there must be a realm of some nature associated with Magic Auras. His evidence lay in that all other Auras have their associated realms, and the universe is known to maintain its own consistency — Faerie Auras occur in areas close to the Faerie realm, and Divine Auras occur in areas close to Christian Heaven. Since the time of Bonisagus, the discovery of regio — separate worlds of limited scope which exist in space between realms — further strengthens Bonisagus's argument.

"If logic dictates there must be a Magic realm, what is it? Obviously the Magic realm is the place from whence all of our power comes. Also, it is clearly a place which is in some way related or akin to the Faerie realm, since places of Faerie power enhance magic. Similarly, the Magic realm must be in some way inharmonious with or unrelated to both Heaven and Hell.

"Many have speculated on the nature of the Magic realm, but I believe I have at last discovered the answer. The existence of ghosts has been known for centuries, and while ghosts are the spirits of dead humans, other spirits are also recognized. Some Magi have learned to summon elementals, and other beings most easily referred to as spirits. Neither of these types of beings seem to be spirits of dead humans, or to ever have been alive in any form whatsoever. Ghosts, elementals, and spirits are all magical beings, and therefore it seems likely that all are inhabitants of the Magic realm. While ghosts are simply mortals buried without Christian rite, whose spirits migrate to the Magic realm upon bodily death (much as Christian souls migrate to Heaven or Hell), elementals and spirits seem to be native inhabitants of the Magic realm, much as faeries are native inhabitants of the Faerie realm. The Magic realm is therefore none other than the vaunted spirit world, which many superstitious hedge wizards claim as the source of their power.

"Others in our Order have discussed the existence of the Shadow Empyrean, which is said to be the source of all earthly magic. This is no more than another name for the Magic realm, just as the spirit world is no more than another name. Some claim the Magic realm has even been recognized by Christian theology, indicating Limbo as the same place.

"Of course, all these theories are fine in and of themselves, but of what value are they? There are important consequences to these revelations on the spirit and Magic realm.

"I have recently returned from an extended stay in Novgorod Tribunal. In this land, far from the grasp of Christianity, there are native wizards of considerable power. While they do not benefit from our extensive training, or the universal system of magic developed by Bonisagus, their power proves equal to that of many trained Hermetic Magi. These native wizards are known as

shamans, and their magic is very different from our own. Hermetic theory is based on the premise of channeling power of the Magic realm into the Mundane realm. This power is then shaped and controlled by the Magus, to cause some effect upon the mortal world. In contrast, shamans separate their spirits from their bodies and journey into the Magic realm. Once there the shaman either asks or commands favors from the inhabitants of the realm, or directly manipulates the fabric of the Magic realm itself. Through the principle of Correspondence, results are therefore effected in the Mundane realm.

"Once, after a long and difficult challenge, I bested a shaman in single combat. As the price of my victory, I demanded that she take me on a tour of the 'spirit world.' The shaman told me there were two parts to the spirit world, or Magic realm as we prefer to call it. She said the first part is the abode of ghosts, elementals, and the spirits of places, animals, and other natural beings. This is the realm also known as the Shadow Empyrean, spirit world, and maybe Limbo. It is known to shamans as the Near Lands. She further claimed Arcadia was once a part of these "Near Lands."

"According to the woman, there is also a place known as the Far Lands, which is a separate part of the Magic realm, existing well beyond the earthly sphere of influence. Maybe this is where Magi go after final Twilight. I have not been to the Far Lands and so cannot speak of them. However, here are my experiences of the Near Lands:

"After much preparation, we both lay down on the ground, as if to go to sleep. Then I had a sensation of floating upward, out of my body. When the brief feeling of floating had passed, I regained my senses in a very strange land. I was very cold, and in the middle of a huge open forest. However, it was unlike any place I had ever seen on this world. All the trees were black and grey, the ground was white with snow, and the sky was grey. There were no colors anywhere to be seen.

"Even the animals were all grey, and animals were there in abundance. Herds of young deer abounded, as well as a multitude of smaller creatures; round, sleepy-looking beasts like door-mice, and curious, slow, fat birds. I also noted a great abundance of wolves. There were wolves of all sizes and shapes, large white northern wolves, small grey southern wolves — more wolves than I had ever seen in one place. None of them had any fear of me or my companion, and none turned ravening jaws on us. Instead, they ignored us, going about their business.

"As I watched I began to notice just how strange a land I was in. In addition to the total lack of color, I quickly became aware that, as if to make up for this lack, sounds and smells were richer and more intense than any I had ever experienced. I stood briefly entranced by the smell of a clear running stream several leagues away, by the sound of a deer snorting in the cold, and by the warm, musty smell of the wolves.

"I then saw a most amazing sight. Before me, four wolves brought down a large buck with an effortless kill. They began to eat, and after eating for some time apparently grew full and wandered off. At that point the deer got up, whole and uninjured, and rejoined its herd. It was then that I asked my companion, 'Where are we?' She answered that we were in the place of wolves, her totem. She then turned to talk to a large pack of wolves for a

time, and returned. I asked what was next, and she replied we were to go to the place of vultures. We ran effortlessly over the ground for some time, and the landscape changed.

"When we stopped, color had returned to the land. We stood on a large open plain, a place much less pleasing to the eye than the forest. The land was green and lush, but strangely silent. There were animals in abundance, especially mothers with young, but in this scene there were many dead. There were dead roebucks with their antlers still in velvet, and enormous silvery fish washed up on the river's edge. The greatest number of living creatures here were vultures. There were vultures of all kinds. Some perched in groups and some by themselves, while still others clustered around a particularly choice carcass.

"Fortunately, both the smells and few sounds of the place were of a more common degree than in the place of the wolves. However, it seemed to me I could see across vast distances. After spending a very short time here I asked if we could journey to some other place, to see something which was more familiar to me. At this my companion said she would take me to a city.

"This time we ran swiftly for quite some while. When we arrived, we were in what seemed to be the sun-warmed fields of Italy. We were on the outskirts of a large and prosperous city of strange aspect. It was all of white marble, and seemed like a scene out of Cicero or Plutarch. I was in a living, bustling Roman city of the Golden, Classical era! Water flowed on sturdy aqueducts, the streets were clean, and the air purer than in any city I have visited.



The people seemed to take no notice of me until I attempted to speak with them. Then I quickly realized my Latin was not theirs. My companion, however, seemed to converse with them without effort.

"It was late afternoon when I arrived, and all was a marvel of order. Then, evening began to approach, but it was unlike any evening I had ever seen. The sky grew grey without a sign of sunset, and the people grew fearful and quiet. An aura of concern and resignation filled the air and I grew restive. My companion indicated that all would be well. As we stood the air began to thicken, as if with dust or smoke, as though the sky itself pressed close upon us. Small stones began to fall. After a short time all was completely dark, and I could no longer even see my companion, though she held onto my hand. This darkness would not yield to any spell of mine, and lasted for some time, minutes or hours I will never know.

"We stood in a place of perfect silence. Finally, the darkness lifted, and dawn rose on a new day in this strange town, which was once more bustling with life and activity. We stayed there until afternoon, when I realized the people I had seen the day before were going through exactly the same activities they had the day before. I then asked my companion if we could leave. I had spent the day in a city of ghosts, though I knew not from where or whether the city is still upon this world. My companion confirmed my first guess, but said she did not know the name of that ill-fated city. I said I was ready to return to the mortal realm, but my companion said there were yet two places she needed to show me.

"We ran for a long time, and were once again in the strange country without color, where sounds and smells were exceptionally intense. However, this part of the country was different. The deer and other animals were fewer, and looked more fearful and less healthy. The change was most obvious among the wolves, whose numbers seemed much diminished. The wolves now avoided me and my companion, and looked around with a fearful, shifting gaze. After a time one of the wolves let out a cry, and they all began to run, as if for their lives. My companion began running also, and after a moment I was overcome with a great terror and began running after her.

"When I glanced behind I saw we were pursued by tall, shadowy shapes, filled with menace. I saw several wolves fall and not get up, though I could not see what had struck them down. Desperate to catch some sign of a weapon or spell which could be countered, I watched one of the wrapped and shapeless figures bend over a fallen wolf. The horror had no form, no odor, and no face. My companion grasped my hand and said, 'It is time we left this place.'

"We dodged or leaped somehow, and left the fearful country behind. When we stopped we were in a land of colors once again, but it was an awful place. Bodies of men, women, and children littered the landscape. There were bodies rotting on gibbets, children who had been cut down in the streets, and burned bodies contorted in the smoking remains of gutted houses and shops. All was dead and decaying, except for the vultures, who seemed to be thriving and numerous. I was nearly overcome with the sight and smell of the place. I then begged my companion to return us to the mortal world.

"After a brief sensation of floating I found myself back at our camp in the woods. From the state of the fire we had only been gone a hour or two, even though it seemed to me much time had passed in the Magic realm. My companion then asked that I deliver this message to my fellow Magi:

"The first places were those of the wolf and the vulture, as they are when the old ways are kept, the balance preserved. The vile terrors you saw in the final journeys are not nightmares to be forgotten; they are caused by your accursed kind. Your ignorant people, with their fences and strange gods, hunt the wolves to the last. You trap the spirits of the deer, and deny them return so they may not live again. Your kind kills my people without reason, and seems equally glad to kill its own. Your deeds and ignorance of the proper rituals make the worlds ill. The spirits of once-brave wolves grow few and fearful, and vultures become corrupt feeding on bodies of slaughtered dead instead of chosen feed. You 'wizards' of power must stop this evil. So you may see for yourself the state of worlds, for you surely can understand nothing but that put in front of you, I have taken you on this journey, tolerating your so-called rules of victor and victim."

— the account of Glenius of House Bonisagus, before the Stonehenge Tribunal council of A.D. 1207

Shamanic Society

The society of shamans is largely that of tribal people. These societies may be sedentary (as those of the north can be) or nomadic (like those of the east), and may consist of large groups or simple individuals. It is from these groups that shamans emerge, and their number is divided into two aspects, or, more appropriately, clans: one of the sun and one of the moon. Followers of the sun can be shamans devoted to the wilds and spirits, people attuned to the nature of the world and its peripheries. Followers of the moon are those rare folk who are subject to the material world and who embody its nature.

THE SUN CLAN

The Sun Clan comprises the majority of any shamanic people. Members of the Sun Clan usually outnumber members of the Moon Clan by four or five to one in most shamanic tribes. Members of the Sun Clan are ordinary people who farm fields, tend herds, and weave baskets. Only within the Sun Clan can shamans be found, though most Sun Clan members have no powers at all.

In some tribes of the Sun Clan, shamans belong to only a few families. In such a society, shamanic families assume near noble status, with their own legends, inherited special tools and weapons, heraldry, and alliances. Shamanic families may even have special dress and privileges, but, unlike nobles of Christendom, shamans are not considered of better or higher class than common folk. Shamans of the Sun Clan simply have a special function within their societies.

In societies where shamans do not all belong to a single family, shamans pick their successors. Such successors usually bear some sign that indicates a shamanic Gift. A person may be

marked as a shaman by special signs visible only to other shamans. These markings may be magical signs or simply inventions of an elder shaman, who uses the marks to explain the selection of a successor. In a tribe where shamanic successors are chosen rather than born, a shaman may choose a single successor or train multiple students in a lifetime. These worthies may be infants, children, or adults.

In many cases a chosen successor demonstrates to all the qualities that align him or her with the spirit realm. A child may be marked for shamanic calling almost from birth, marked by strange behavior: speaking to invisible creatures, disappearing into the wilderness, or bringing messages from dead relatives. A person who becomes a shaman later in life often does so after intense contact with the spirit realm: a series of powerful spirit dreams, a bout of apparent insanity or possession, or a near-death illness or accident (which may leave the person permanently scarred).

In other cases, a prospective shaman may not be chosen for any apparent special reasons. In the stories of King Arthur, for example, the wizard Merlin performs a magical service for Uther Pendragon in return for his apparently ordinary child. Shamans are known to make similar bargains. In many shamanic tribes, however, shamans are people called to the duty by spirits, not other shamans, for reasons only spirits understand.

Whether a candidate is born or chosen, the ability to communicate with spirits and journey to the spirit world is common to all shamans.

Shamans in Society

A shaman occupies a special place in his or her tribe. Shamans are never the chiefs or leaders of their tribes. However, they are often important advisors to leaders. With great power but little command over others, shamans are often outsiders in their own tribes. They may not have more authority than their tribes' leaders, but do not have to obey them, either. Shamans are outside the tribal leader-follower dichotomy. As outsiders, shamans possess some objectivity toward their people. They may therefore be important makers of tribal law, or may be the last refuge for tribesfolk who transgress laws, just as the Christian Church offers sanctuary from mundane trials.

To the Christian eye, the shaman's place in tribal society is perplexing. In Christian society, where each person has a distinct rank, shamans are neither higher nor lower than others, but different from all. As members of the Christian peasant class feed and care for their clergy, tribal members feed and care for their shamans. As Christian knights and lords protect the clergy, members of the Moon Clan protect shamans. This sustenance, care, and protection are not provided by conventional Christian means, though. In parts of eastern Europe, shamans may live in stone towers, be brought food by villagers' children, and be protected by a retinue of werewolves. In parts of far eastern countries, shamans may be sacred beggars with few possessions but their clothes, magical tools, and a bowl for food. They may also sleep in whatever house offers



shelter, eat whatever is given, and be protected as holy fools. Many outsiders make the mistake of assuming a shaman in a stone tower is a noble among locals, and that a shaman beggar is an outcast. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Most shamans are also somewhat unusual in appearance and behavior. Transvestites, hunchbacks, dwarfs, and the mildly insane are much more commonly represented among shamans than among the rest of tribal people and humanity in general. Because of their difference, shamans are often regarded with a degree of discomfort and sometimes fear by the rest of the tribe. In addition to their social isolation, shamans wield a great deal of mystical power, and occupy a position of respect and awe among their people. When a problem arises from an encounter with people or cultures too foreign for a tribe to understand, the problem is usually taken to the shaman, who best understands those who are different.

In spite of the aura of awe which surrounds all shamans, they occupy a very different place in their own societies than Hermetic Magi occupy in Christendom. Shamans are an integral part of their tribes. A shaman is a tribe's healer, priest, advisor, psychologist, and spiritual warrior. Shamans are the link between the tribe and the spirit world. They heal spirit-caused illnesses, curse tribal foes, propitiate angry ancestors, and communicate with the spirits of plants and animals that the tribe needs to survive. A shaman may also journey to the spirit world to communicate with storm spirits to end a drought, drive a disease spirit from a sick child, journey spiritually to deliver a message to a distant shaman, or appease a ghost that

haunts the living. Whereas Magi usually live outside mundane society, shamans and their magic are one of the cornerstones of tribal society. A tribe with no shaman is as helpless as a tribe with no crafters or hunters.

Accepting shamans as members of society, albeit somewhat aloof members, tribesfolk do not perceive magic as an unknown or dubious power. The people perceive magic as the tool which allows them to survive and prosper. Shamans are seen as wielders of this tool, just as blacksmiths are wielders of tools for working iron. All members of the tribe believe in magic. They see evidence of it every day, whether through the recovery of a child after a shaman drives out a disease spirit, or through the southward migration of herds summoned by a shaman. To the tribesperson, magic is necessary to insure that life remains in balance and harmony with the world, and shamans are the means to this prosperity.

The Barbarian Perspective

"Once, when the world was new, the sky was just above the earth, and the underworld was just below the ground. People who wished to speak with those in the spirit land only needed climb up the center-pole of their houses and put their heads out the smoke-hole to be in the spirit land. Or, to drop to the underworld, they need only dig a hole. In this time all the people of the clan of the sun were as shamans. But, one day, someone complained: 'The smoke from my fire comes back into my house. My children go playing and fall into the underworld—my dead relatives have to watch over them and push them back up,' she said. 'The worlds are too close together; the dead tend babies and I am drawn into the spirit lands from my cooking. Nothing is clear, and no one keeps to their place.'

"The sun heard the one who complained, and sent spirits to lift up the sky, high above the living world, to be forever far away. The King of the Underworld also pressed upon the earth, above his head, with his medicine-stick, and pushed the underworld forever far away, down below the deepest river.

"No one could cross to the other lands.

"Thus, the world became different. Children no longer went swimming and came by accident into the underworld, smoke went well out of the smoke-hole, and everyone knew their place.

"But, one day the one who complained had a child fall sick. She went to the graveyard to ask her grandmother to take the spirit of sickness out of the child. She knocked on the door of the grave, but no one answered. She tried to open the grave door, but the earth held it fast. The child died.

"Out of tune with the other worlds, the people were stricken with a sickness of spirit. They began to destroy those who did not know their place, to slaughter the freemartin calf, to burn the child born with a caul, and to turn on the clan of the moon. Sometimes herds would come, and the corrupt people would kill many, not knowing until too late they had killed at the wrong time, leaving none to return. A pall also fell over the land. Folk turned slothful, hunting only when absolutely necessary, without regard for unforeseen need. They ceased to make figures of wood and bone. The dance floor grew silent. The teaching-houses went abandoned. The people forgot how to sing.



"However, when the end seemed nigh, a child was born who was different. She hid in the graveyard to escape the knives of the people. The child's ears were so keen she heard the sounds of the underworld far away, past the tomb. To reach the sounds she dug through the grave door when the earth would not let it open. And, she dug down through the earth until the grave filled with water, and through the water until the current turned and she was in the house of the King of the Underworld.

"The King of the Underworld smiled in his heart when he saw the child, who stood before him without fear. He asked her, 'Why do you come here, away from your proper place?' She answered, 'In the house into which I was born, the people hate and fear me, and came to kill me with the long knives. From now on I will live here.' The King of the Underworld said, 'This is the house of the dead. You are one of the living, and out of your proper place. If you would live in the house of the dead, we will have to kill you.' Thus he sent spirits with long knives against the child. They cut her body into pieces and scattered them about the house. But, the child still spoke, and called from her head to her hands. Her hands gathered up the pieces of her body and brought them together into one place. Her heart became the heart of a stag, her arms became the wings of eagles, her legs those of wolves, her chest like a bear's, her voice like the wind's, and she clothed herself in the garments of a magician.

"The King of the Underworld laughed until tears fell from his thousand eyes. He proclaimed, 'To you I give all things not in their proper place — the storm out of season, the freemartin calf, the child born with a caul — you who have died and are yet living. You and yours above all other things have found favor in my eyes. Go back to your country in the sun, and build the greatest road ever seen, for the sake of your people.' The King then showed the child the road that the water had made between the underworld and the graveyard, and the child swam it like a fish, back into the sunlight.

"When the people saw the girl rise up, standing out of the river, they dropped their knives and were struck with wonder. To her they gave all that was not in its proper place. The girl commanded the storm out of season, ran over mountains and rivers with the freemartin calf, and taught the child born with the caul, for she was the first of the shamans. It was this first shaman and her apprentices who found the great center-pole mountain, which the sun had erected to hold the sky above the earth. They drew the river up the mountain and into the sky, making the Great Road of shamans. In this way was the world of the living bound again to the spirit land, that under the earth and that in the sky.

"This is the calling of shamans: to take that which is not as it is supposed to be, those that are not in their proper places, to hold and teach these, for they are what binds the worlds together. This is the calling of shamans: to be outside of where we are thought to be, for in this way we see what is hidden to others, and keep the people from foolishly killing what is different. This is the calling of shamans: to be those for whom the spirit world is still no farther away than the graveyard and the housetop. The calling of shamans is this: to keep this gift for all the clan of the sun, for it was originally given to each of our clan, just as the changing is given to each of the moon, but now we must use it on behalf of all our fallen people."



The Hermetic Perspective

"I have traveled extensively throughout Christendom, and beyond, examining all manner of strange and mystical phenomena. In all my travels to the borders of Christendom I have found a number of startling commonalities. Among the majority of peoples who have no true civilization — people without writing, cities, or sometimes even a knowledge of farming — there are great similarities of magic. Yes, most such peoples have magic, for the Gift seems to fall on all peoples, regardless of who they are.

"Among these peoples there are wizards, who, like our Magi, are trained for many years, through a long and demanding apprenticeship. Of course, this training is not as rigorous as our own because these peoples lack writing and our Classical heritage. Still, they seem well trained for what they are. These wizards go by many names, but the one I have chosen to use for them is shamans, the word used for them among the peoples of the far northeast.

"These shamans do not cast spells like members of our Order. Instead, they go into deep trances, sometimes brought on by consuming foul herbal brews. When entranced, shamans are somehow able to leave their mortal form behind, journeying to the place of spirits, ghosts, and elementals. Once there, they coerce and bargain with the inhabitants to gain the spirits' services. While clearly inferior to our more direct method of spell casting, this variety of magic can be quite formidable. A powerful elemental can be as terrible a foe as any dragon.

"Unlike Magi of our Order, shamans do not usually live apart from mortals, willing to mix even with the peasantry. This co-existence is possible because these primitive peoples have not forgotten that magical power brings with it respect and authority. Thus, the "mundanes" at least treat their shamans with deference.

"What is quite strange is that there are many peoples, from widely disparate parts of the world, who all have some form of shaman as wizard. The wizards on the mysterious island of Malta are shamans, as are the wizards among the wild folk of the far north. In the lands to the east, most wizards found are shamans, both among the Slavic peoples who now war against the Teutonic knights, and among the Mongols, those sons of the Huns and Visigoths who again march westward. I have no explanation for this widespread commonality of magic. Clearly these peoples do not have common origin, and the exchange of ideas over such distances seems unlikely. However, all those peoples I have interviewed claim they originally learned their magic from powerful spirits, who hold all knowledge. Perhaps these stories of spirits are true, because I can see few other possible explanations for such similar magicks.

"The unity of distant shamans goes beyond the magic they wield, even applying to the effects of magic on shamans. All shamans I have met are flawed in some way, either physically or mentally. Some are lame, others blind, some crazed, and others disfigured or unnatural. It seems likely that without benefit of our superior training, the Gift of shamans marks them in some way, or their training in some way damages them. The first explanation seems the more likely, since in some places only the flawed may become shamans."

— Solos, filius of Maria, follower of Jerbiton

"Many have been the reports of these mysterious wizards some call shamans. In recent years, as our Order has decided to investigate the practices of foreign wizards, many of our Order have journeyed far and wide, beyond the borders of Christendom, in search of ever newer, more exotic varieties of sorcery. This effort has largely resulted in no more than the collection of a wizardly 'cabinet of curiosities.'

"However, some useful knowledge has been garnered. Many now agree that in all non-Christian lands visited, and in many quasi-Christian lands, there exist, among a wide variety of uncivilized peoples, trained wizards. Their methods of using magic merit them all the common name of shaman, much as all members of our Order merit the name Hermetic Magus. There has been a great deal of discussion about why such widely distributed peoples should use magic which is basically unified. There have been many arguments on this topic, which I spare my reader from.

"In the course of all these arguments, and many epic journeys beyond the bounds of Christendom, one important fact seems to have been overlooked. There are shamans within many Christian lands. Those scholars of our Order who sit in England and France and read tales of travels to far off lands do not realize shamans also live and practice on their very doorstep. Indeed, in the Camargue of France, peasants in a number of villages look to the hermit who lives on the edge of town for healing and blessing, rather than to the local priest.

"Furthermore, in the German principalities some of the most remote villages don't even have priests. Instead, the peasants have what they call wise ones, or, in some places, holy ones. Don't misinterpret these "holy ones" for Christians, though. These wizards are a part of a tradition which predates even the Christian faith. Like their uncivilized counterparts, these hedge wizards and "holy men" are shamans. When asked about what they do, these wise ones of rural Christendom answer that they fly from their bodies, sometimes in the shapes of animals, to drive away evil and to ask favors of various powerful beings.

"The peoples, whether within or without Christian Europe, who have shamans as wizards are quite diverse and disparate. The definition of what a shaman is must therefore be based on their magic alone, for its is their common factor. Among reported shaman magicks is the ability to leave the body, to travel to various parts of the spirit world, and to ask and order aid from a variety of beings who inhabit the spirit world. Indeed, this delineation of power defines the ability of a number of "holy" men and women in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, as well as among Mongols and Slavs.

"It has also been suggested by a colleague that not only are village "wise ones" shamans, but those known as witches are also shamans. The term witch generally refers to some variety of hedge wizard, usually one who specializes in nature magic. In our own Order we have a number of women and some men who call themselves witches. These Hermetic witches are often the descendants of rural, non-druidic, Celtic practitioners. However, there are other witches who are different. In some cases those called witches are nothing more than petty diabolists, whose ambitions go no further than minor curses and minor evils. And, some whom I have investigated as witches fell into neither of these categories. They were usually solitary people, often deformed or slightly mad, who had magic of a shamanic sort. They were usually the person villagers went to when no other cure or solution to an illness or problem could be found. Whether these last kinds of witches can be classed as shamans is uncertain, but such classification certainly depends on the unique powers of each, whether they are spiritual in design or not.

"Outside Christendom, shamans are sometimes revered advisors to tribal chiefs, and live lives of wealth and prestige. Others are figures of great and mysterious power, living in forbidding wilderness towers. And, some are hermits and beggars. As we have just seen, within our own domains of Christendom there are shamans too, and their position is just as varied as those of shamans outside Christendom.

"As a final note I relate one quite strange phenomenon which I have observed several times in my travels through both France and Germany:

"In most villages with wise ones and "holy hermits," the villagers either never mention where the respected ones obtain their powers, nor perceive them as closer to God. However, in a few villages both villagers and shamans maintain that powers come directly from God, that the shamans drive off devils, and ask saints and angels for aid. These "divine" mystics seem in all other ways to be shamans; they go into trances and leave their bodies, speak to ghosts, and drive off malign spirits. It is my opinion that these folk

are nothing but shamans who delude themselves. To avoid finding their own place in the Christian context, they believe the spirit world is Heaven, and that all spirits they interact with are angels, saints, or devils.

"I have found no evidence of actual angelic or diabolic presence among these unfortunate shamans. However, these distracted wizards remind me of the Order that the Church can lure or delude us from our true calling. And, to insure that such deluded wizards do not cause problems for the rest of us, we might consider suppressing them."

— Demellia, filia of Jersta, follower of Guernicus, from her report on non-Hermetic wizards in Europe.

THE MOON CLAN

Everywhere among peoples who follow the shamanic tradition are stories of common theme. The majority of shamanic tribes or villages consist of people of the Sun Clan, ordinary people among whom a few shamans are born every generation. However, within many tribes or villages there is often one bloodline different from the rest. The children of this bloodline are called the Moon Clan.

All members of the Moon Clan are hereditary shapechangers. In most smaller tribes the entire bloodline has a single totem animal, and all members have the innate ability to assume the form of that animal, at will. In other, usually larger, tribes there can be multiple sub-groups within the

bloodline, each of which has its own totem animal, the form of which sub-group members can assume. In a few cases, each member of a tribal shapechanger bloodline must undergo a special ordeal, or go on a special journey, at the end of which they find their own special animal. In these tribes every shapechanger can assume the form of a different animal.

All shamanic peoples have stories about the origin of the Moon Clan. Most of these stories are different, but most preserve certain similarities. The legends state that in the early days of the world humans were weak and helpless, and did not worship or speak to the spirits. Then, the spirits, who wished contact with the mortal world, came to certain people and said: *"If you make offerings to us and work with us, we will teach you many things and allow your people to be strong and powerful."* The shamans, for that is who these people were, agreed. However, they asked that the spirits give some portion of their power to other members of the tribe, so that all would not be jealous of the power of the shaman. Since the spirits had gifted the shamans with vast power in the spirit world, they decided to give greater power in the physical world to other members of the tribe. The spirits therefore chose one clan of the tribe and gave them the power to assume the form of an animal, or of animals sacred to the spirits. In this way the Moon Clan came into being.

Shapechangers occupy a special place in their homeland. One or two shapechangers usually have the duty of protecting an individual shaman, particularly when the shaman journeys into the wilderness or to various sacred sites. Offering such



protection, shapechangers are rather like the Companions of Hermetic Magi. However, shapechangers have a much wider role in their society. In most shamanic societies, shapechangers are the people who deal with wild animals and the wilderness. Among peoples who farm, shapechangers are the ones who go into the forest to hunt. Among the many pastoral peoples of the east and north, shapechangers are the ones who hunt down predators that feed on herds. In general, shapechangers are the people who look after wild animals and the wilderness, just as members of the Sun Clan are the ones who look after domestic animals and domestic lands. Thus, shapechangers are never the caretakers of farm or herd.

As the people of the wilderness, shapechangers are natural recipients of many duties. In times of warrior raiding, shapechangers form the majority of scout bodies and of guard bodies who protect tribal territory (as opposed to the guards who protect people and village). Shapechangers are also the most well-traveled of the tribe, at least as far as travels in the mortal world are concerned. Because of their extensive travels, shapechangers often know the most about distant peoples, their ways, their speech, and the dangers they represent. Shapechangers are therefore interpreters and guides to distant places. Any trade expedition mounted by a shamanic tribe or village usually includes one or more well-traveled shapechanger, who can warn traders of dangers ahead, guide them on their way, and act as intermediary and translator once the traders arrive at their destination. All of these generalizations apply whether shamanic peoples are reindeer herders in northern Finland, Slavic farmers, or fisherfolk on one of the Mediterranean islands.

Examples of such functions performed by shapechangers abound. In the great north of Lapland, a number of shapechanger clans assume the form of wolves. These shapechangers fend off natural wolves and other predators from their reindeer herds, and scout a path as commoners lead herds to new pastures. In Malta, shapechangers who assume the form of large birds serve as scouts, navigators, and messengers for fishing boats. On the great plains of Novgorod, shapechanger clans, who can assume the form of fierce wild horses, serve as the first line of defense against Teutonic knights, and go to war as sturdy war-steeds under the tribe's best warriors.

Clan Relations

Each tribe's Moon Clan and Sun Clan are mutually dependant on each other. Although each clan sometimes regards the other as different, there exists mutual trust between them, and no fear or hostility breeds in their relations. One institution, which is quite widespread, serves to increase this mutual dependance and trust. In many shamanic tribes the Sun and Moon Clans separate the making and enforcing of laws and customs. Shamans and chiefs of the Sun Clan are the people in charge of reforming and modifying tribal laws. But, elders of the Moon Clan are in charge of enforcing the laws, and of punishing transgressors. This division of authority is said to

have been handed down by the spirits, so that neither clan ever rules over the other. The spirits say each clan should aid the other, as two comrades stand beside each other in battle.

However, for all their internal bonds, one taboo is observed by all shamanic tribes. Members of the Sun Clan and members of the Moon Clan may never marry or produce children together. Any who do are cast out of the tribe. It is believed the spirits want the two Clans to remain forever separate, but interdependent, and tribe members rarely dare defy the spirits.

The Shamanic Perspective (on Shapechangers)

"When the evil days came, there was a group of brave men and women, who went into the spirit land to seek help for the people. They were brave, but they were also alinga — outcasts — and targeted as the first to die when the hunger came. Throwing themselves into the river, they came to the place of spirits. They went about for many months, saying to each of the great spirits they met: 'Will you help us? Will you help our people?' And always the answer was the same: 'You have done nothing for us. There is nothing you can do for us.'

"Finally they came to the place of the King of the Underworld, and there they thought they could appeal to the spirits of their ancestors for help. But the ancestors could do nothing; the hunger was too powerful. There was no where else to turn. Finally, one of the ancestors, Father of Magicians, said: 'You must go to the King of the Underworld. Only the King of all of us here has the power that you need.' All of the other ancestors tried to hush Father of Magicians, for all were so afraid of the King of the Underworld that the name was never spoken. 'Go into the House of Ice,' said Father of Magicians, 'and ask your petition there.'

"The alinga listened to Father of Magicians, and traveled until they found a place like a great-house, but formed all of sea-fog, ice, and darkness. All about was silence, for the spirits had fled for fear of the place. The alinga found the great door open, and went in seeking the King. Inside, the door-posts moaned and shuddered, and the great door swung shut. But still the alinga went on. The floor rolled like rain and fog, but still they went on. The staircase writhed like a serpent and twisted, trying to throw them off, but still they went on. Finally they came to a door, and beyond the door was a shining curtain of darkness.

"From behind the curtain a voice came, saying: 'What are these ants who have been crawling over me? Who are they that they will not be shaken off?' And the people said: 'We have come to see the King of the Underworld, to ask for help on behalf of our people.' Then the voice grew angry and roared like a bull: 'You have walked over my body since you came here, without even asking my leave or knowing my name. Such ants as you, who come into the darkness knowing nothing, such ants must perish.' And the King of the Underworld sent shapes out of the shining darkness to devour them.

"Two of the alinga were quick, and turned into the forms of animals, running and leaping to escape the darkness. Two were slow, and the shapes caught them and tore them apart. The two

alinga in the forms of beasts could have escaped that place, but for the sake of the fallen they turned back. With hooves and claws and teeth they tore down the curtain of darkness that shone and shattered like a mirror, and sent shapes of darkness against them in their own likeness. But the pair dodged away, untouched by the shapes, for the animals were quick as lightning. Behind the fallen curtain they found the face of the King of the Underworld, half woman, half man, half human, half beast, set about and held by shapes of darkness even as the shapes would seek to hold them, and covered by dark and hollow marks. They struck at the King, but the voice of the King threw the animals back. Rising, they discovered their fallen brother and sister rising also, putting together their torn limbs.

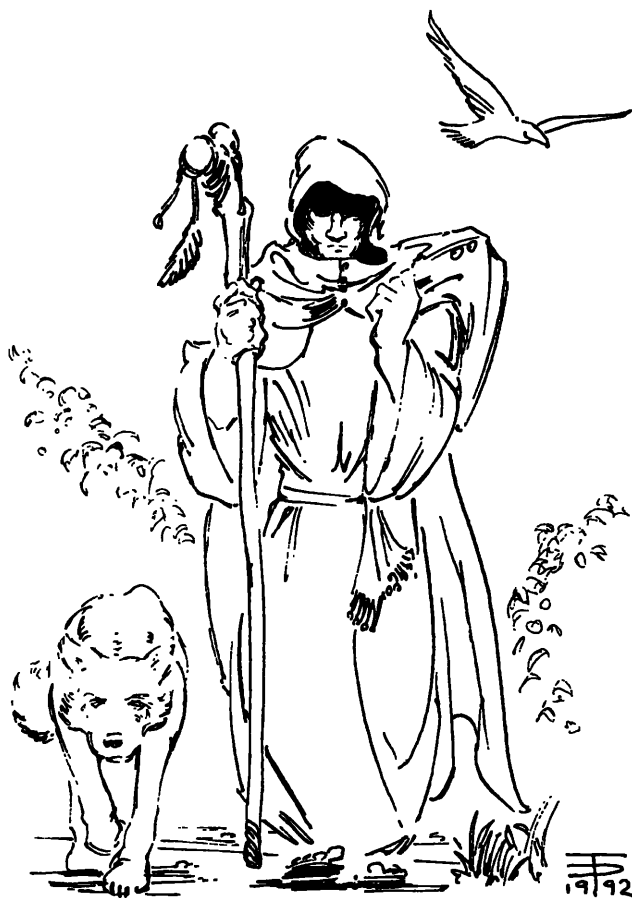
"Now the King said: 'Leave me, and I will let the two who have survived touching the darkness live. You will be magicians. Only the other half of the blood of your people will die.' But the alinga said: 'We are one people. Without half their blood, all creatures die.' So they attacked the King of the Underworld, and found that the King was stronger alone than all.

"Then the strange thing came to pass. The alinga in the forms of beasts began to see with the eyes of beasts and to feel with the hearts of beasts. They saw that the shapes sent to devour them devoured also the walls of the room and the floor and the face of the King of the Underworld, and that the King had no power to stop them. They saw that their brother and sister in the shapes of human beings could not touch the shapes without being wounded, for the shapes had torn them apart before. And when the shapes of darkness came upon the alinga in the shapes of beasts, mocking their forms, the alinga no longer dodged away. They opened their beakmouths wide and swallowed the shapes. The alinga caught and tore and swallowed every shape of darkness until there were no more left. Then the people faced the King.

"We have survived your tests, and we have done a great service for you,' said the people. 'We have saved you from the dreams that devour. Now you must help us in return.' This was the foundation of the Bargain between people and spirit. The alinga gained a portion of the power of the King, and the spirits of the spirit lands gained the help of the people.

"Now we tell the lessons given by the King of the Underworld. Remember this: be courteous in the world of spirits, and ask before entering a land. Remember this: that those who can take on the shapes of beasts protect the shamans, that they may put themselves together again in the shapes of power, that they may survive the tests of the world of spirits. Remember this: that those who can take on the shapes of beasts know the shapes of the monsters, the dreams that devour. We save the people from them. We carry them always inside us. Remember this: we are stronger than the monsters we carry. The King of the Underworld is stronger than we are. These are the Laws by which we must live. If we forget them, the darkness will swallow us from inside.

"What do we do?" That I cannot answer. It's what we are I can tell. We are disorder. We are chaos. We are the ones the solid kings and clerics fear, who would make a wagon-rut out of the wide world. We are keeping the fires of change burning, be it for good or ill. Look to the hart that's always disappearing over the hill, the brightest bird just out of reach, the jewel-colored lizard scurrying



under the stone. That's where you'll find us. We keep you bright. Does the wolf-howl at night make you break out in sweat? You'd best be afraid of us, then. But, if the howl makes you crave to run outside, never mind the snow, never mind the rain, never mind your parents or your priests or your so-called lords, then we're your defenders, your greatest friends. Oh, we don't make the sun come up, that's sure, but we'll make rainbows for you of its rays. Don't worry too much. We know the difference between jest and deadly trick, but that's our business. They think we sometimes make the magic. But I'll tell you a secret, since that's part of our business. We don't make the magic. No. We just make it possible."

— A shamanic informant on the legends and ways of shapechangers.

The Hermetic Perspective (on Shapechangers)

"As far back as Petronious there have been records of werewolves and other shapechangers. Peasant legends abound with stories of men and women who, in the night, take the shapes of savage beasts and frighten and kill innocent people. There seems to be some truth to these stories, but there is another side to shapechanging. There are spells and magical devices which allow one to put on other forms. A Magus in animal form is no more a savage beast than a Magus who takes the form of a cloud of mist is really a cloud of mist. Just as magical shapechanging can be benign, the more common form of shapechanging seems to have a peaceful side.

"Magi of House Bjornaer speak of the Heart-Beast within them. This Heart-Beast is not a savage dangerous animal, unless the person who becomes it is also savage and dangerous. In my travels, I have encountered shapechangers who are creatures of great evil, and shapechangers who seem to change into animal form for no other reason than to experience the joy of being a wild animal, running free in the night. All of this can be found throughout Christendom.

"And yet, when you move outside Christian borders, and even in, some say, isolated pockets of places as civilized as France, another type of shapechanger can be found. Among the uncivilized tribes, and in a surprising number of isolated, Christian villages, there are families known to be shapechangers. Sometimes these families are feared, and in some dark and remote villages these families rule. However, most often shapechanging is, in a sense, the trade of the family, just as another family is of brewers or blacksmiths. These "family" shapechangers are usually hunters, foresters, and guides. In many cases their shapechanging is seen as natural and normal. Still, most visitors of these villages never know of the shapechangers' existence. Fear of persecution by Church or overzealous Magi have made shamanic villages very secretive. Only my abilities as a Beast-Magus, and the powers of my Familiar, allow me access to their secret world.

"All the villagers work together to feign ignorance, and to greet suspicious questions with a stony silence. Those who deal with isolated peasants know this response all too well. Because of this silence, it is impossible to know how widespread hereditary shapechanging is in civilized lands.



"In the lands at the borders of Christendom the situation is somewhat different. Here, various tribes are much more open about shapechangers, accepting their existence as the most natural thing in the world. Only in the lands where Christian knights and missionaries have begun to visit is the situation different. In non-Christian lands shapechangers seem to be most often found in association with those wizards called shamans. The relationship between these two groups is unclear. Shamans are never shapechangers, but often shapechangers seem to serve shamans much as our consors serve us, as friends, companions on journeys, and guards. In many places friendship and a high degree of comradeship characterize the relationship between shaman and shapechanger. On the other hand, among other shamanic peoples, the groups' relationship is formal, much like that of vassals to their lord. There seems to be some real or assumed magical connection between shapechanging and that magic called shamanism, but the exact nature of the connection is unclear.

"In non-Christian lands shapechangers live openly, and perform similar, if often more extensive functions in their villages or tribes than those performed by shapechangers in Christendom. These outside shapechangers have a full place among their people, but in some places are still reserved and distant around non-shapechangers. The only universal exception to this distance is with shamans, who among many people seem equally distant and isolated.

"The information I have gathered here about shapechangers seems important, but I worry that any discussion of shapechangers in Christendom will be kept among only we Beast-Magi, since many in our Order might be only too glad to go werewolf hunting."

— Avia, filius of Draca, member of House Ex Miscellanea

"In the towns and settled places of the Transylvanian Tribunal there live many Vampyres, and all too many Tremere Magi who consort foully with them. However, in the remote mountains and valleys there are other even greater dangers. There live there savage werebeasts: men and women who take on the forms of savage beasts and stalk the night, and sometimes even the day.

"In this remote land, far from the eye of God, these creatures are not a solitary menace as they are in our beloved France. No, they travel in packs. Whole packs of werewolves and other unnatural creatures roam the mountainsides. They seem to have some form of rude society, which even appears to include some debased mundanes, mundanes who ally themselves with these fell creatures for unknown reasons. Perhaps these mundanes foolishly think these creatures will protect them, but I think it more likely they are only kept until other food is scarce.

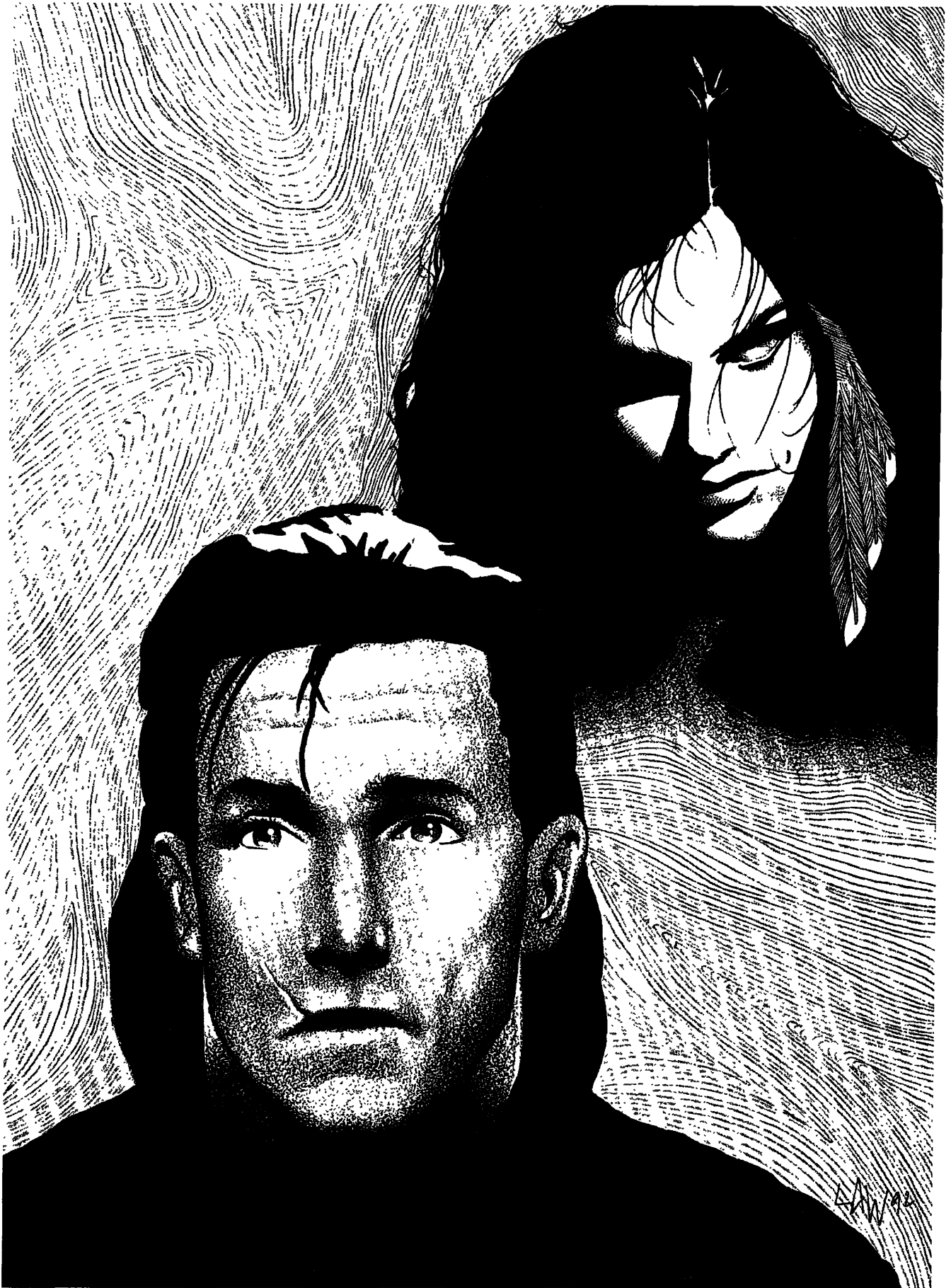
"I have scryed on these creatures and their minions for many months now. They live in small villages, where mundanes farm and herd. The werebeasts act as warriors and guards, scouting their perimeters against all trespassers. They are ruthless in their pursuit of strangers. When a group of monks was going to set up a monastery near the village of one of these packs, the werebeasts and their mundane minions harried and harassed the monks until the pious men were driven off, some monks nearly losing their lives.

"However, werebeasts seem most relentless in their attacks on Vampyres and their Tremere allies. Any Vampyres they find in their lands they destroy, and they drive out or kill all Tremere they find. Undoubtedly, werebeasts fear competition on their hunting grounds.

"If any value may come of werebeasts' ferocity, it lies in their use as a weapon by we Quaesitoris. If it ever becomes necessary to take action against House Tremere we may be able to use the

enmity of werebeasts against the Tremere. Indeed, if the Tremere can be coaxed or forced into werebeast lands, they may surely be destroyed. It has even been suggested that if action against the Vampyre Magi evolves into Wizard's War, we could try to ally ourselves with the werebeasts. I consider this a rash and dangerous option, but one that may prove meritous if no other allies arise."

— Justius, filius of Aurius, follower of Guernicus



CHARACTERS

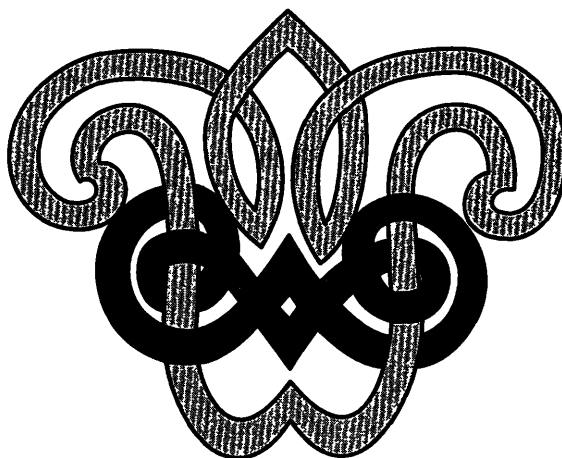
CHAPTER TWO



fter your Troupe has encountered shamans or shapechangers, or even after reading this book, the question of actually playing members of the Sun or Moon Clans may arise. Both options are possible, and both possibilities are addressed here in terms of Ars Magica Third Edition character creation rules. The two typical kinds of shamanic characters — shamans and shapechangers — are discussed separately.

Basic Character Creation

The following are shamanic Vocations that you may adopt in assuming the role of a shaman, shapechanger, dreamer, or Hermetic shaman (all of which are fully explained later on). Use these shamanic Vocations as you would the Hermetic ones of the Ars Magica rulebook.



Shamans

NORTHERN TRAVELER

Intelligence 0 Presence +3
 Perception -1 Communication +2
 Strength -2 Dexterity -2
 Stamina +2 Quickness -2

AGE: 26

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Fury -3, Sense of Doom -3, Dependence on Ritual -4, Gentle Gift +1, Exceptional Talent (Enchanting Music) +2, Strong Fetch +1, Need Not Eat +3, Well-Traveled +1, Luck +2, Strong-Willed +1

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 5, Scribe Own Language 3, Second Sight 4, Magic Sensitivity 2, Occult Lore 2, Area Lore 2, Craft Stone 3, Craft Leather 2, Craft Bone 2, Play Drum 4, Speak French 1, Speak English 1, Survival 2, Leadership 2, Spear Attack 3

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Vengeful (Northerners) 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Driven +2, Humorous -1, Traditional +3, Gullible +2, Noble +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Leather Cuirass, Short Spear

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

SHAMANIC ARTS: Travel 5, Control 4, Alter 2, Ritual 6

FETCH: Deer

From the beginning of your teaching, you were immersed in tradition and respect for the past. Now that you are an accomplished tender of your people, you have decided to leave them to find those who have swayed from the Bargain, particularly those among the so-called Bjornaer. If these people refuse to abandon their ways of magic, you may force them to obey.



"Who are we to undo the ways of our ancestors? They know best and their ways must be observed."

SPIRIT MASTER (HERMETIC INFLUENCE)

Intelligence 0 Presence -3
 Perception +2 Communication -2
 Strength +2 Dexterity -2
 Stamina +2 Quickness +1

AGE: 25

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Weak Magic -2, Incomprehensible -2, Susceptibility to Faerie Power -4, Bad Reputation -1, Reclusive -1, Aptitude with Magical Minions +2, Cyclic Magic +2, Quiet Magic +2, Aptitude with Elements +4

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 4, Speak Latin 5, Scribe Latin 3, Magic

Theory 5, Hermes Lore 2, Hermes History 2, Parma Magica 2, Meditation 3, Finesse 2, Legend Lore 3, Occult Lore 3, Faerie Lore 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Diabolist (Magi) 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Unpredictable +2, Erratic +1, Calm -2, Patient +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Leather Cuirass

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

TECHNIQUES AND FORMS:

Creo 0, Intéllego 7, Muto 0, Perdo 0, Rego 7, Animal 0, Aquam 0, Auram 0, Corpore 4, Herbam 0, Ignem 0, Imaginem 0, Mentem 7, Terram 7, Vim 7

SHAMAN WITHIN CHRISTENDOM

Intelligence +3 Presence -2
 Perception +3 Communication -2
 Strength -1 Dexterity +1
 Stamina 0 Quickness -2

AGE: 44

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Noncombatant -3, Disfigured -1, Orphan -1, Transvestite -2, Soft Hearted -1, Cursed -2, Gentle Gift +1, Exceptional Talents (Healer, Animal Ken, Weather Sense) +3, Purifying Touch (Gift-related madness) +2, Ghostly Warder +2, Intuition +3

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 5, Scribe Own Language 3, Second Sight 4, Magic Sensitivity 2, Occult Lore 2, Legend Lore 2, Area Lore 2, Healer 4, Animal Ken 3, Weather Sense 3, Storytelling 4, Folk Ken 3, Craft Cloth 3, Sing 3, Pretend 2, Fantastic Beast Lore 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Helpful (villagers) 1, Untrustworthy (clergy) 1

PERSONALITY TRAITS:

Friendly +3, Compassionate +2, Patient -2, Calm +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: None

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

SHAMANIC ARTS: Travel 3, Control 7, Alter 3, Ritual 4

FETCH: Swan

You are the appointed protector of a mundane village within Christendom. Though the villagers don't know it, they are descendants of tribal folk and thus are bound to the Bargain. It's your task to serve the villagers' needs and to teach those who demonstrate the Gift, despite the local Church's efforts to sever your peasant ties.



"Because the Bargain has been forgotten does not mean it is not binding. Some must be reminded of it for their own good."

SPELLS:

Demon's Eternal Oblivion (Perdo Vim 15), *Circular Ward Against Demons* (Rego Vim 20), *Coerce the Spirits of the Night* (Rego Mentem 20), *Ring of Warding Against Spirits* (Rego Mentem 20), *Lay to Rest the Haunting Spirit* (Perdo Mentem 15), *Sight of the Transparent Motive* (Intéllego Mentem 10), *Ward Against Faeries of the Air* (Rego Auram 15), *Ward Against Faeries of the Mountains* (Rego Terram 20), *Ward Against Faeries of the Wood* (Rego Herbam 15)

Shamanism was practiced by Magi in the distant past of your line. However, over the generations that tradition has been lost from your legacy of magic, leaving you with mere Hermetic understanding of spirits and their ways. By dominating these spirits you gain power over them and your world. However, the day may come when a spirit dominates you.

"There are things out there we can't even see. They scare me most. If I can touch it I can kill it, but spirits are already dead!"

SPIRIT MASTER (SHAMANIC INFLUENCE)

Intelligence +2 Presence 0
 Perception +2 Communication -2
 Strength -2 Dexterity +3
 Stamina 0 Quickness -3

AGE: 29

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Hedge Wizard -1, Isolated from the Order -3, Magic Susceptibility -1, Discredited Lineage -2, Minor Magic Deficiency (common) with Creo -4, Poor Reader -3, Affinity with Magical Minions +2, Trained in the Order +4, Special Circumstances (music) +1, Knack (Occult & Legend Lore) +2, Personal Vis Source +1

TEMPLE ATTENDANT

Intelligence +1 Presence +2
 Perception +2 Communication +2
 Strength -3 Dexterity -2
 Stamina 0 Quickness -2

AGE: 40

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Delusion (all spirits dealt with are considered "higher powers") -1, Terrors -2, No Fetch -3, Susceptibility to Infernal Power -4, Gentle Gift +1, Free Expression +1, Magic Resistance +4, Exceptional Talent (Visions) +2, Visual Memory +3

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 5, Scribe Own Language 3, Second Sight 4, Magic Sensitivity 2, Occult Lore 3, Legend Lore 3, Area Lore 3, Visions 4, Craft Metal 3, Folk Ken 3, Play Flute 3, Charisma 2, Leadership 2, Drinking 3, Etiquette 2, Bargain 1

CONFIDENCE:

REPUTATION: Improperly Trained 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Lazy +1, Greedy +2, Simple-Minded +1, Likable +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: None

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

SHAMANIC ARTS: Travel 7, Control 3, Alter 3, Ritual 4

FETCH: None

You convey the needs of your temple congregation to the great spirits, the lords of all creation. The spirits rule your life and you obey their every command. Sometimes this means instructing a commoner to make peace with a dead ancestor, and sometimes means instructing a noble to raise an army against another people. Although you would not question the spirits, you wonder why some leave the scent of brimstone.



"My Lord, I bear terrible news. The powers frown upon your foray into the field. They warn that if you do not heed their warning, they will bring swift punishment upon us all!"

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 5, Parma Magica 2, Magic Theory 3, Scribe Own Language 3, Second Sight 4, Magic Sensitivity 2, Occult Lore 2, Legend Lore 2, Area Lore 2, Concentration 2, Chirurgy 2, Fantastic Beast Lore 2, Folk Ken 3, Dodge 2, Pretend 3, Penetration 2, Dagger Attack 1, Dagger Parry 1

CONFIDENCE:

REPUTATION: Hedge Wizard 2, Selling Hermetic Secrets (Quaesitoris) 1

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Secretive +1, Defensive +2, Paranoid +1, Generous +1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Leather Cuirass, Dagger

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

SHAMANIC ARTS: Travel 2, Control 5, Alter 5, Ritual 3

TECHNIQUES AND FORMS: Creo 4, Intéllego 4, Muto 4, Perdo 4, Rego 4, Animál 3, Aquam 3, Auram 3, Córpoem 3, Herbam 3, Ignem 1, Imágonem 1, Mentem 3, Terram 3, Vim 3

SPELLS: Bind Spirits of the Aquam Element (Rego Aquam 15), Bind Spirits of the Auram Element (Rego Auram 15), Summon Spirits of the Aquam Element (Rego Aquam 15), Craft Bottle of the Elements (Muto Vim 15), Summon Creatures of Magic (Rego Vim 15), Gift of the Floating Wood (Rego Aquam 10), Call of the Rushing Waters (Intéllego Aquam 15)

FETCH:

Beaver
 Your Covenant is on the fringe of Creation, where your neighbors are more likely to be pagans than Christians. These strange people have secrets, though, secrets which can heighten your magical power. You have therefore adopted their ways at the expense of Hermes, and have gained much in the bargain.

"Hermetic magic is not a power, it is a limitation. By mastering both spell and spirit, I enjoy true knowledge and freedom."

Shamanic Companions

NORTHERN BEAR DEFENDER

Intelligence -2 Presence +1
 Perception 0 Communication -1
 Strength +2 Dexterity -2
 Stamina +4 Quickness -2

AGE: 19

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Curse (takes effect when confronted with fire) -2, Age Quickly -5, Sense of Doom -3, Shapechanger +3, Will Over Form +2, Speak in Form +1, Hidden Shape +1, Partial Form +1, Well-Traveled +1, Large +2, Long-Winded +1

ABILITIES:

Will Over Form 2, Speak Own Language 5, Bestiality 3, Alertness 2, Dodge 3, Track 3, Survival 3, Brawl 2, Swim 1, Axe Attack 3, Axe Parry 1

CONFIDENCE:

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Violent +2, Compulsive +1, Devoted +3, Reckless +3, Brave +3

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Hand Axe

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

ANIMAL FORM: Polar Bear

SOAK WEAKNESS: Fire

You are the defender of your tribe's shamans. When one of their number decided to set out into the world in search of oathbreakers, you vowed to accompany and protect the shaman. The southern world is filled with strange sights. Although your strength is great, you know you will meet your doom on this journey.



"Fish! This is not fish! What poison do you seek to feed me, woman?"

HOUSE SHAPECHANGER

Intelligence 0 Presence -2
 Perception +2 Communication -2
 Strength -3 Dexterity +2
 Stamina -1 Quickness +3

AGE: 21

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Compulsion (pranks) -1, Meddler -1, Outlaw (among crusaders) -4, Poor Equipment -1, Small Frame -2, Driving Goal (defeat crusaders) -1, Shapechanger +3, Will Over Form +1, Well-Traveled +1, Magic Resistance +2, Light Sleeper +1, Light Touch +2, Sharp Ears +1

ABILITIES:

Will Over Form 2, Speak Own Language 5, Bestiality 4, Search 3, Climb 1, Dodge 3, Guile 3, Survival 2, Animal Handling 2, Dagger Attack 3, Pick Pockets 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Outlaw (crusaders) 4

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Curious +3, Precocious +3, Devoted +2, Brave +1, Meddlesome +1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Dagger

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

ANIMAL FORM: Goose, Rat, Goat, Snake

SOAK WEAKNESS: When bound

Christianity's crusaders have invaded your homeland and tortured your loved ones. As protector of your people, you fight the crusaders, often running messages to others of your cause. However, you cannot help playing pranks and tormenting the crusaders during your efforts to defeat them.

"Anger them? Not me. My 'antics,' as you call them, undermine the steel-clad fools. They are too busy flailing their arms in the air to find me or turn their blades on you."

MALTESE SHAPECHANGER

Intelligence 0 Presence -3
 Perception +1 Communication -2
 Strength 0 Dexterity -2
 Stamina +3 Quickness +3

AGE: 15

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Difficulty with Control -1, Short Attention Span -1, Haunted -2, Reclusive -1, Judged Unfairly -1, Orphan -1, Feral Upbringing -2, Social Handicap (smell like sea) -1, Shapechanger +2, Will Over Form +1, Ways of the Sea +4, Destiny +4

ABILITIES:

Will Over Form 0, Bestiality 2, Climb 3, Swim 5, Stealth 3

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Shy +3, Enthusiastic +2, Brave -1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: None

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

ANIMAL FORM: Eel

SOAK WEAKNESS: When out of water

Your tribesmen were killed by invaders when you were young. You fled to the sea and have lived there ever since. However, out of curiosity you recently returned to your homeland and were caught by one of its fishermen. The local shaman recognized your inner self and now teaches you to harness your power. Though you don't fully understand the surface world, you know you are destined for great things.



DREAMER

Intelligence +1 Presence -4
 Perception +3 Communication +3
 Strength -3 Dexterity 0
 Stamina 0 Quickness -2

AGE: 33

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Magical Air -1, Magic Susceptibility -1, Midget/Dwarf -4, Poor Memory -1, Dreaming +2, Versatile Sleeper +1, Exceptional Talents (Visions, Second Sight) +3, Keen Vision +1

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 5, Dreaming 5, Bargain 4, Visions 2, Second Sight 3, Storytelling 3, Folk Ken 2, Brawl 3, Club Attack 3, Dodge 5, Drinking 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Distracted +2, Energetic +2, Flamboyant +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Ring Mail Hauberk, Club

ENCUMBRANCE: 3

You were born with the shamanic Gift, but your tribe was on the run from invading Christians and your shaman was killed in the pursuit. Although you had no opportunity to fulfill your potential, your Gift did manifest itself in one way, allowing you to control your dream-journeys into the spirit world.

"The mark of the chosen is upon me, and though I am no shaman, I can bring our ancestors to our aid. I need but a few moments alone and we may strike back with the full knowledge of the ancients."

MONGOL SHAPECHANGER

Intelligence +3 Presence -3

Perception 0 Communication -2

Strength -3 Dexterity +2

Stamina +1 Quickness +2

AGE: 30

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Curse (in presence of salt) -2, Offensive to Animals -1, Missing Ear -1, Small Frame -2, Foreigner -2, Enemies -1, Personal Hatred -1, Shapechanger +2, Will Over Form +1, Speak in Form +1, Partial Form +1, Magic Resistance +2, Well-Traveled +1, Good Armaments +1, Tough +1, Good Characteristic +1

ABILITIES:

Will Over Form 2, Speak Own Language 5, Bestiality 4, Stealth 4, Track 3, Sword Attack 3, Sword Parry 3, Speak Russian 2, Pretend 3, Disguise 3, Intimidation 1, Speak Latin 3

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Mongol 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Conniving +3, Corrupt +2, Forgiving -2, Brave -2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Saber (treat as Broad-sword)

ENCUMBRANCE: 1

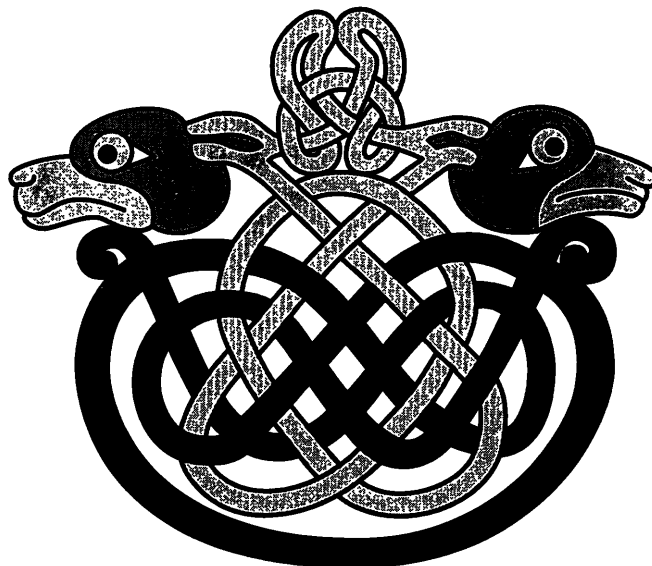
ANIMAL FORM: Rat

SOAK WEAKNESS: When sprinkled with salt

You are an advance scout of the Golden Horde. You have insinuated yourself into eastern Christendom with the intention of undermining local society, thus making invasion easier. Your abilities of disguise and deception allow you to move about with some freedom, and your ability to change shape allows you to disappear in the infested land.



"I beg your forgiveness, sir. I did not know these were your private quarters. This 'Covenant' of yours is so large I have gotten lost."



Sun Clan Grogs

HUNTER

Intelligence -2 Presence -2
 Perception +3 Communication -2
 Strength 0 Dexterity -1
 Stamina +2 Quickness +2

AGE: 27

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Missing Hand -2, Social Handicap -1, Keen Vision +1, Light Sleeper +1, Sharp Ears +1

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 4, Brawl 1, Scan 3, Search 3, Climb 2, Dodge 3, Athletics 1, Folk Ken 2, Animal Handling 2, Survival 3, Track 3, Stealth 3, Hand Axe Attack 3, Chirurgy 1, Area Lore 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Morose +3, Talkative -2, Tender +2, Brave +3

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Leather Hauberk, Hand Axe

ENCUMBRANCE: 2

You are one of your tribe's providers, tracking, trapping and killing animals for food. Most of your time is spent hunting, either alone or with peers, but you also scout out trouble on tribal lands, and coordinate defensive efforts with the tribe's shapechangers. In these situations your job is to protect the people and shamans.



"Less stomping about and be alert. We're closing on the beast and you're making noise enough to rouse its spirit — in the next world!"

TANNER

Intelligence +2 Presence -2
 Perception +2 Communication 0
 Strength 0 Dexterity +3
 Stamina -2 Quickness -3

AGE: 18

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Criminal Brand (performed by crusaders) -1, Common Fear (mounted knights) -2, Common Sense +1, Gossip +2

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 4, Brawl 1, Alertness 2, Guile 2, Folk Ken 2, Animal Handling 3, Stealth 2, Intrigue 1, Craft Leather 4, Dodge 2, Short Sword Attack 2, Area Lore 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Gossip 1

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Curious +2, Brave +2, Sociable +2, Subtle +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Hard Leather Cuirass, Short Sword

ENCUMBRANCE: 1

It is your tribal duty to cure the skins and hides brought in by trappers. These hides are used for clothing, equipment, and temporary shelters. Without your skills, the tribe could not survive the winter. Your nature jeopardizes the tribe, though, as you cannot resist interfering in others' business, and your curiosity has gotten you in trouble with crusaders in the past.

"This one should be ready by the next moon. They say Gerrin brought the buck down right in the face of the crusaders and carted it off before they could catch him! Remarkable tale, no?"

WILDSTENDER

Intelligence -2 Presence -2
 Perception +1 Communication -3
 Strength +1 Dexterity +2
 Stamina +2 Quickness 0

AGE: 16

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Small Frame -2, Deep Sleeper -1, Exceptional Talent (Herbalism) +1, Knack (finding things) +2

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 4, Brawl 1, Herbalism 3, Search 3, Survival 2, Track 1, Sing 3, Swim 1, Sickle Attack 3, Sickle Parry 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Patient +2, Dedicated +1, Brave +1, Resourceful +3

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Ring Mail Cuirass, Sickle

ENCUMBRANCE: 1

Your task is to tend the wilds and forests of the lands that your tribe travels. There you harvest plants, roots, and bark needed for food and medicines. Your calling is demanding, for only you know where certain plants grow. Others who seek to help only hinder you, for they may step on or break herbs needed during other seasons.



"Here are the medicines you need. I didn't think I would get them from the boar's cave, but his shoulders were broader than mine and he could not squeeze under that fallen tree."

FISHER

Intelligence +3 Presence -1
 Perception +1 Communication +2
 Strength 0 Dexterity 0
 Stamina -3 Quickness -4

AGE: 40

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Arthritis -3, Jack-of-all-trades +3

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 4, Brawl 1, Craft Fishing 4, Charisma 2, Folk Ken 3, Survival 2, Boating 4, Debate 1, Storytelling 4, Sing 2, Drinking 2, Chirurgy 3, Area Lore 3, Faerie Lore 2, Legend Lore 3, Fantastic Beast Lore 2, Occult Lore 1, Dodge 2, Club Attack 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Helpful +2, Insightful +3, Interfering +3

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Club

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

You have served your people for years, pulling fish from the sea for food. Your skills are so highly respected that younger tribesfolk often accompany you to learn your art. However, they also seek to experience your wisdom, and are happy to hear any tale or song about the ancients. Given your wisdom, your insight is often called upon in important tribal matters. In fact, you expect to be consulted.

"Here now, the nets are cast and the lines are taut. 'Tis time to wait. 'Twas a time like this when mine own grandfather took me upon the water, like we are here now. He told me a tale then. . ."

CRAFTSPERSON

Intelligence +2 Presence -1
 Perception 0 Communication +2
 Strength -2 Dexterity +3
 Stamina -2 Quickness -2

AGE: 21

VIRTUES AND FLAWS:

Sensitive -1, Fragile Constitution -1, Faerie Enmity -1, Free Expression +1, Aptitude (+1 with all arts) +2

ABILITIES:

Speak Own Language 4, Brawl 1, Folk Ken 2, Charm 2, Concentration 3, Storytelling 2, Sing 1, Forgery 1, Craft Bone 3, Craft Wood 2, Craft Stone 3, Craft Cloth 2, Evaluate 1, Dodge 2, Hammer Attack 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Spirit-Inspired (tribe members) 1

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Friendly +3, Self-Absorbed +1, Brave -1, Thoughtful +2

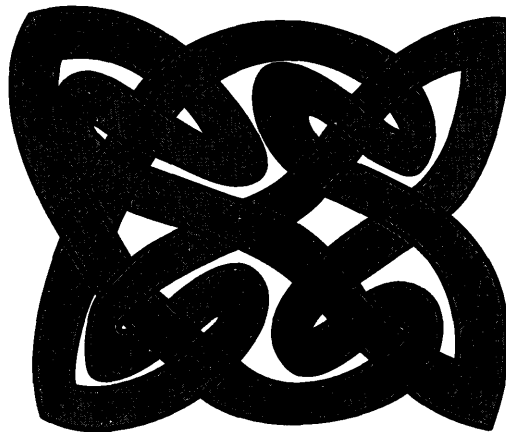
WEAPONS & ARMOR: Hammer (treat as club)

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

You fashion many of the decorations and fetishes that your tribe uses as adornment, currency, and for ritual magic and religion. Your skills are highly valued and you receive much respect. Indeed, you are called upon to participate in tribal decisions, as your livelihood often reflects that of the tribe, and because your art pleases the spirits.



"Our people live, walk the earth, and join our kin beyond. We live and die, but our tribe lives always, and its signs must be preserved. These signs are the signs I know, and my creations are the means by which our ancestors recognize our changing people."



Advanced Character Creation

The rules that follow are guidelines for creating shamanic characters — shamans, shapechangers, dreamers, and Hermetic shamans — from scratch, according to your own specifications. These rules are similar to those for advanced character creation, as presented in the *Ars Magica* rulebook.

Playing a Shaman

Adopting a shaman as a character is somewhat outside the *Ars Magica* norm. If a shaman isn't a lone individual hiding within Christian society, or a reclusive hermit working secret ways, he or she is a member of a tribal society that works secretly within Christian society, or is a member of a tribe that exists well outside the bounds of conventional Christian society. Within or without Christian society, a shaman is not highly accessible, fearing society's persecution, or having many tribal duties.

It's true that Hermetic society, like shamanic society, is largely outside the standard Christian world. Shamanic and Hermetic societies therefore bear some similarities. However, not even Hermetic Magi are as reclusive or evasive as many shamans. Hermetic Magi are also infamous for challenging the shamans they find, if not forcing secrets from them, or threatening them with Order membership under pain of death. It comes as no surprise, then, that shamans can be as prepared to avoid Magi as they are Christian society.

It is in this milieu that shamanic characters exist. To partake of an *Ars Magica* Saga, your shaman must somehow reconcile existence in or relations within Christian society, and must reconcile activity with "enemy" Hermetic Magi. Alternatively, your entire Troupe can adopt shaman, shapechanger, and tribal mundane roles to play a Saga purely in the shamanic milieu. Either option is possible, though the latter is so abstract from conventional *Ars Magica* play that published works may be of little use to your storytelling. Of course, that doesn't limit your own potential to tell stories.

Reconciliation

First of all, a shaman character takes the place of your "standard" Magus character. It's not suggested that you play both a Magus and shaman in the same Saga.

Playing a shaman, you need to provide a rationale for your character's existence in the Saga, be it as an infrequent visitor of the Covenant, a local ally, or a full-fledged Covenant member. There are many ways this reconciliation can occur. The most obvious is for the characters' Covenant to be located in the Novgorod Tribunal, or in another remote Tribunal, such as the Rhine or Transylvanian. Your shaman character may have heard about the Order and approaches the nearest Hermetic "outpost" to apply for membership. Such a character is likely to be accepted in such a Tribunal Covenant because he or she is part of the accepted environment; shamanic tribes

probably abound near the Covenant. To deny membership of such people in a Covenant probably indicates difficult mundane relations for that Covenant.

With the option of a Covenant in tribal territory, several players have the opportunity to adopt shaman characters. This is probably the realistic course since surrounding shamans aren't likely to accept intruders in their domain unless those intruders can be accepted as trusted allies. Whether these shamans are of House Ex Miscellanea or Bjornaer is up to you (although shamanic-Bjornaer relations are not always good, as discussed later in this book). Shamans may only belong to the Covenant in name, or may refuse membership, fully pursuing the old arts. In such a Covenant a few traditional Hermetic Magi might exist as simple missionaries to shamans, hoping to learn from and maybe convert the "barbarians."

Another alternative to this simple set-up is to establish the Saga in a remote Covenant. The Tribunal itself probably doesn't matter, as long as its members are not too preoccupied with urban matters (as Magi of the Roman Tribunal tend to be). In a remote Covenant, characters can perform actions and accept members that are not in the Hermetic tradition. That means shamans are more likely to be accepted and are more likely to have contacts in the surrounding mundane world (i.e., these types of shamans could be the "wise person" variety discussed in the Introduction). However, if a Redcap or Quaesitor ever visits the Covenant, unorthodox practices and "unfit" members had better make themselves scarce.

Of course, the above reconciliations of shamans with Magi are simple ones. Much more complex and dangerous possibilities are available, and are often much more fun to play.

A shaman can secretly belong to a Covenant, possibly known by younger, more liberal members of the Covenant. If older, narrow-minded, and more powerful Magi learn about the "offensive intruder," they might try to dispose of him or her, or might try to rape the character of knowledge and magic. Of course, conventional Hermetic Magi who harbored the shaman must face Hermetic punishment as well.

Hermetic characters can also encounter a group of shamans when traveling, and one player might choose to adopt one of the shamans as a character. The alliance of Magi and shaman might lead to future dealings, in which the shaman lives outside the Covenant and may visit there or be contacted when needed.

As mentioned before, a truly unusual option involves almost all characters as tribesmen. Shamans fill Magus roles, shapechangers Companions roles, and simple tribesfolk Grog roles. Such a group of people may operate as a tribe unto itself, completely outside the Hermetic convention. Or, such a group might approach the nearest Tribunal, offering to join as a new Covenant. What reception the petitioners receive is up to the attitudes of the local Tribunal and its members (particularly its leaders). Certainly conservative members of the Tribunal have mixed feelings about pagan wizards, and Tribunal meetings display this range of response.



If a shaman character does join the Order of Hermes, the nature of the character's powers must be decided. Does your character still practice shamanic ways, or has she been involved in the Order for some time, merging Hermetic and shamanic disciplines? The character creation rules that follow help you create the character you want, but you must first decide how the scales of magical inclination are tipped.

Finally, one important fact to remember about playing most shamans is that, unlike Hermetic Magi, shamans are expected to interact with mortals. They are expected to be the spiritual intermediaries for their tribes or villages. Even if a shaman is an individual, she may be referred to often by local mundanes that respect her power. Such time demands can create difficulties for shamans who join the Order. Seasons of study might be interfered with, and important missions might be disrupted by non-Hermetic duties. Certainly senior Magi are angered at a shaman character who jeopardizes Covenant business with mortal affairs.

There are a number of ways around such time demands. You can play a shaman from Christian lands, who alone or part of a group has retreated deep into Mythic Europe's forests. There he seeks to preserve the old ways of nature, so is largely beyond the reach and demands of mundane man. You can also have more time to devote to Covenant by creating an untrained shaman (one with the Untrained Flaw, discussed below). Of course, these are only two means to allow your character freedom to operate as he will. You are certain to create more, or may create none if you enjoy roleplaying the clash of mundane and Covenant demands.

Generating Shaman Characters

As with standard *Ars Magica* characters, there are several steps to shamanic character creation. However, these steps are similar to those used in the rules, so you shouldn't be faced with anything alarmingly new. Where new rules and ideas are approached, they are intended to capture the unique flavor of shamanic magic and nature.

Of course, the first real step to take in shaman character creation is Conceptualization. Decide who your character is and what she does. How did she become a shaman? What are her goals as a shaman? How is she aligned to the Order of Hermes or even other Hermetic characters (if any). Answering these questions and other identifying ones like them helps you determine who your character is, and what traits she has, before you even roll a die.

To create a tailor-made shaman character, use the following rules.

Step One: Characteristics

First purchase or roll Characteristics (see *Ars Magica*, p. 50). Negative Characteristic Points can still be spent on Flaws and points normally spent on Virtues can be spent on positive Characteristic scores.

Step Two: Virtues and Flaws

Like Magi, shamans have ten points to spend on Flaws. For every point spent on a Flaw, a point is gained to spend on Virtues. Points normally devoted to Virtues can be spent on positive Characteristics, as discussed in the rules.

Shamanic Virtues and Flaws

As shamans are not Hermetic in discipline, they cannot have Hermetic Virtues or Flaws. However, shamans do have Virtues and Flaws characteristic of their nature, and these traits are the shamanic equivalent of Hermetic Virtues and Flaws. Shamanic Virtues and Flaws are listed below. Some traditionally Hermetic ones are even listed here, as their rules have application to shamans.

Shamanic Virtues and Flaws are unique to shamans because shamans are marked in some way, often physically, sometimes mentally, and all have certain unique innate capabilities and manners. These Virtues and Flaws are not the result of shamanic training, but are innate, and are what marked you as a potential shaman.

Half all your points designated for Virtues and Flaws should be spent on the Shamanic Virtues and Flaws in the following list. It's not mandatory to spend half your points on this list, but this list captures many of the abilities and disabilities inherent to shamans, so points are most appropriately spent here.

(Note: Most shamans begin the Saga with the +1 Virtue, Gentle Gift — *Ars Magica*, p.68. This Virtue is free, costing no points. If a Flaw is taken that states the character does not have the Gentle Gift, extra Virtue points are not gained for the loss of Gentle Gift.)

Page references are for the *Ars Magica* rules unless stated otherwise.

Flaws: Variable

Cursed: (-1 or -2) p. 82

Delusion: (-1 to -5) Ordinary delusions, as printed in *Ars Magica*, p. 80, are worth a -1 Flaw. However, some delusions are worth more. Good examples of such delusions involve contact with spirits that are believed angels or saints (-2), demons (-3), Jesus (-4), or Satan (-5). Such delusions are sincerely believed, and are spoken of in earnest — claiming to speak to Jesus or Satan can put you in grave circumstance, especially if the Church gets wind of it.

Flaws: -1

Disfigured: p. 77

Evil Eye: p. 77

Offensive to Animals: (p. 82) Most shamans have the equivalent of the Gentle Gift. Taking this Flaw counteracts the Gentle Gift.

Magical Air: (p. 81) You do not have the Gentle Gift that shamans usually have.

Obsessed: p. 79

Orphan: (p. 88) Many shamanic societies are strongly family oriented. Such a Flaw therefore makes you an outsider among your own people.

Flaws: -2

Hunchback: p. 77

Terrors: p. 80

Lame: p. 77

Blatant Gift: (p.70) This Flaw counteracts the Gentle Gift that shamans usually have.

Transvestite: You dress and act as a member of the opposite gender, and expect to be treated as such. Note: This is not a delusion, you know what your physical gender is, but are driven to live as the other gender. This tendency must be roleplayed!

In pagan lands transvestite shamans, and other characters (not all transvestites are shamans), are socially accepted and treated as members of their chosen gender. In such lands



transvestites often marry and may even adopt children. (If your Saga is set in pagan lands, this is not a Flaw.) However, in lands where people abide by the strictures of the Church you are regarded as a freak, shunned, laughed at, or chased out of town. (Though not a personal Flaw, existence as a tranvestite has definite detriment in the narrow-minded society of Mythic Europe.) In any situation where you try to "pass" for a normal member of your assumed gender, you are at -2 to all Social Talent and Skill rolls.

Flaws: -3

Fury: p. 80

Sense of Doom: p. 82

Flaws: -4

Midget/Dwarf: p. 78

Virtues: Variable

Purifying Touch: p. 80

Immunity: p. 76

Virtues: +1

Exceptional Talent: By purchasing this Virtue you may purchase one of the following Exceptional Talent Abilities: Healer, Empathy, Weather Sense, Hex, or Animal Ken

Virtues: +2

Exceptional Talent: By purchasing this Virtue you may purchase one of the following Exceptional Talent Abilities: Enchanting Music (it is possible to take this Virtue as a form of storytelling, aside from the Ability of the same name, rather than musical ability), and Visions.

Ghostly Warder: (p. 81) The ghost has a Magic Might of 15, and if it gets lost you may journey to the spirit world to try and find it. This Virtue can also be taken if you want your Fetch (see below) to be able to act and perceive in the mortal world, like a ghostly warder.

Gift of Tongues: You are able to speak with any human without difficulty, regardless of language. This ability is of no help with written material, and you may only talk with speakers of one language at one time (i.e., if you know neither Norse nor Provençal, you cannot talk to speakers of both at the same time, but you can speak to one of them at a time).

Virtues: +3

Need not Drink: p. 77

Need not Eat: p. 77

Virtues: +4

Exceptional Talent: By purchasing this Virtue you may acquire the following Exceptional Talent Ability: Entrancement.

Magic Resistance: (p. 81) This Virtue is incompatible with the Magic Resistance provided by your Fetch (see below);

Magic Resistance scores from this Virtue and your Fetch are not cumulative. Your Magic Resistance protects you in the spirit and materials worlds.

Common Virtues and Flaws

The following are Virtues and Flaws common to shamans which arise from shamanic training. Any Virtue and Flaw points remaining after the purchase of Shamanic Virtues and Flaws, above, may be spent on these traits. Of course, you can spend your points on other Virtues and Flaws not listed here, but included in the rules. However, those other traits often require extra "effort" in your explanation of character background.

Flaws: -1

Stingy Master: Your master trained you less thoroughly than do most masters, so you only have 40 Experience Points with which to purchase your four shamanic powers.

Flaws: -2

Untrained: You are an untrained shaman who has come into power without benefit of another shaman. You have trained in shamanism on your own, with only the aid of spirits. Such people are often "chosen" by spirits to be shamans. You have no score in the starting shaman Abilities, Scribe Own Language and Area Lore. In addition, you may not learn the Ritual Power (see below). Due to your close connection to the spirit world you may take the -3 Shamanic Flaw, No Fetch.

Untrained shamans do not have any tribe or village they are expected to aid or work for, so you are in effect a "free-agent," except in regards to the spirits who trained you, and you may request aid from them.

Flaws: -3

No Fetch: A shaman with this Flaw is unable to bond to a Fetch. In addition to not having the advantages of a Fetch, you have a -2 bad Reputation as being only partially trained. You must also purchase the +1 Virtue, Free Expression (p. 78), if you wish to be able to purchase and use the shamanic power, Alter (see below).

Flaws: -4

Dependence on Ritual: You must successfully use the Ritual power to be able to go into trance and to use your other shamanic powers.

Susceptibility to (Divine, Faerie, Infernal, or Rational) Power: p. 73

Virtues: +1

Well-Initiated: Your master trained you exceptionally well. You have an extra five Experience Points to spend on shamanic powers (see below). This Virtue may be taken only once.

Strong Fetch: Add five points to the Magic Might of your Fetch. This Virtue may only be taken once.

Virtues: +4

Trained in the Order: Any shaman may choose to be a part of the Order of Hermes. However, you may only join House Ex Miscellanea, and automatically have the -1 Hermetic Flaw, Hedge Wizard (p. 70), and the -3 Flaw, Isolated From the Order (these Flaws are not purchased, so no points to spend on Virtues are gained from them). Any Abilities denied your starting character by these Flaws may be learned later in the Saga. Remaining starting Abilities of Hermetic background are: *Parma Magica* 2, Speak Own Language 5, and Magic Theory 3. All remaining starting Abilities for being a shaman are received normally.

As a novice in Hermetic Magic, you receive 100 points to spend on Arts, and you know 100 Levels of Hermetic spells. Such training has caused your shamanic powers to suffer somewhat, though. You only have 40 Experience Points to spend on the four shamanic powers.

Hermetic Magi who have had extensive, direct training from shamanic sources may also have this Virtue. If your character is long divorced from the shamanic tradition (maybe only your ancestors were shamans), you are simply Ex Miscellanea; create your Hermetic Magus using the normal rules, and do not apply this Virtue. This Virtue is only for characters who truly balance shamanic and Hermetic powers in their lives.

Step Four: Abilities

As Magus characters have starting, Basic Ability scores, so too do shamans:

Basic Abilities: Speak Own Language 5, Scribe Own Language 3, Second Sight 4, Magic Sensitivity 2, Occult Lore 2, Legend Lore 2, Area Lore 2.

The two Exceptional Talents, Second Sight and Magic Sensitivity, are free and do not require the usual Exceptional Talent Virtues to have. However, for every other Exceptional Talent Ability you take, the Virtue must be taken. The Scribe Ability is gained without having the Educated Virtue, but if further Formal Knowledges are taken, the Educated Virtue must be taken.

It's also required that you take at least one Craft Skill, for use in conjunction with your Alter power. Each of these Skills must have a score of two or more to be of use with your Alter power. Other Abilities of use are Play, Sing, and Storytelling. The last, in particular, is useful in working with spirits.

Now you may select other Abilities and scores in them, and may increase the scores of your Basic Abilities (see *Ars Magica*, p. 52). Abilities are purchased as they are for Magi, except you have Age +10 Experience Points to spend on Abilities.

Note: Unless your shamanic character belongs to the Hermetic tradition (through the +2 Shamanic Virtue, Trained in the Order, or natural origins in House Ex Miscellanea) you cannot purchase the Arcane Skills *Certámen* or *Parma Magica*. Furthermore, without the Arcane Lore Virtue, you cannot purchase Arcane Knowledges (although study and exposure

during the Saga may allow you to acquire Arcane Knowledges, at the Storyguide's discretion). These are Abilities normally available to Hermetic Magi.

However, as a shaman you are like Hermetic Magi in that you can purchase Arcane Talents—Finesse and Penetration—applying them to your own brand of magic. Finesse is used with rolls that involve precision, such as Travels rolls that take you to specific places in the spirit world. Penetration is added to shamanic magic rolls that involve forcing your control of the spirit world on another (which usually involves compared rolls in which yours must exceed the Magic Resistance of a target).

Shamanic Powers

Next you generate your actual shamanic powers. These powers are what you learned from your master in your ten or so years of apprenticeship. Shamans have four primary power types: Travel, Control, Alter, and Ritual. These powers are each purchased with Experience Points, as Abilities are, and you have 50 Experience Points which you can use to purchase scores in these powers only. These powers are what allow you to go into trance, journey into the spirit world, and speak to and command spirits. It is through this manipulation of spirits, commanding them to perform services, that shamans perform their magic.

Shamans also have one additional power which comes to them free of cost. Shamans may communicate with any inhabitant of the Magic realm, regardless of difference in language. And, shamans can fully communicate with any ghost, spirit, or other magical entity they meet, including elementals, animal spirits, and other non-human spirits.

Beyond these powers, shamans have the magical power of the Fetch. The concept of the Fetch is discussed after all other magical powers are detailed.

TRAVEL

This is the power to go into a trance, journey to the Magic realm in spirit, and find a particular location in the Magic realm, whether it is the dwelling place of a spirit, a Magic *regio*, or the location of a particular magical creature.

Shamans and Supernatural Auras

For use of powers, Auras and *regio* of the various kinds—Magic, Infernal, Divine, and Faerie—each affect shamans in the way they do Hermetic Magi (both shamans and Magi are considered relatives of the Magic realm). Thus, the bonuses and penalties discussed on p. 308 of the rules apply to shamans. That is, these standard Aura rules apply to the location of your body and soul, not your spirit. Shamans do not fall under the purview of another Aura because their spirits are elsewhere. Thus, if your shaman character goes into a trance in a church (Divine Aura of 5) and your spirit travels into the Magic realm (Aura of 10), the -5 penalty for Divine influence is imposed (a bonus for being a spirit in the Magic realm does not apply).



Travel in the Near Lands

To use the Travel power you must sit or lie down, and place yourself into a trance. You then choose the destination of your journey, and roll a stress die + Perception + Travel. Finesse is added to this total if you have it.

Familiar Destination

If you have visited your destination before you must roll 9+ to find it again.

If you succeed in your roll to travel through the spirit world, you arrive at your destination. The time spent during your journey is determined by the relative success of your Travel roll. Compare your roll to Table One, below:

Note: All measurements of time refer to time passed in the physical world. It is impossible to measure the passage of time in the Magic realm.

Table One

Roll:	Time Taken:
9-10	4 Hours
11-12	2 Hours
13-14	1 Hours
15-16	20 minutes
17-18	5 minutes
19+	1 minute

If you fail your roll you wander aimlessly in the Magic realm for four hours plus one hour (physical world time) per point by which your roll is short of 9 (so a failed roll of 4 results in 9 — 4 + 5 — hours lost in the Magic realm). After that period of misdirection you may attempt to find your destination again, but each successive roll incurs a cumulative -1 penalty. So, a second attempt to find your destination is at -1, a third is at -2, a fourth is at -3, and so on. After a number of failed attempts your efforts are probably in vain unless you roll a one on the stress die and get a high result.

As an alternative to attempting to relocate your destination after a failed Travel effort, your spirit may automatically return to your body. You must still endure that initial period of disorientation, though. However, if you do arrive at your destination, the return trip takes as long as the initial trip. (If you finally arrive at your destination after previous failed or Botched attempts in the spirit world, your arrival time, and therefore departure time, is based on your final successful roll, not on time spent lost because of failed or Botched Travel rolls.)

If you Botch an attempt to travel to a destination, your spirit is lost in the Magic realm. Once a day (physical world time) you may roll to relocate your body. The roll is the same to find your destination, and you may choose to pursue that destination instead of your body. If the result is 9+ you find your body or destination. If you fail you may try again tomorrow. (There is no cumulative -1 penalty to such successive rolls.)

Every day your spirit is out of your body your physical form loses one Body Level. If it loses all Body Levels it dies, and your spirit stays in the Magic realm. The only other way for your spirit to get back from the Magic realm is for another shaman or special dreamer (see below) to go into trance and find you, on a normal 9+ Travel roll.

Unfamiliar Destination

If your destination is one you have not visited before (e.g., the nearest Magic *regio*, the village of a shaman about whom you have heard have but never visited, or the location of a ghost you have never met) the journey procedure is the same for a familiar destination, but you must roll 12+. The consequences of failure and Botching are also the same as above. To determine how long the journey takes in the mortal world see Table Two, below:

Table Two

Roll:	Time Taken:
12-13	4 Hours
14-15	2 Hours
16-17	1 Hour
18-19	20 minutes
20-21	5 minutes
22+	1 minute

To journey to an unfamiliar destination, be the target of that destination another shaman, a ghost, a spirit, or a magical place, you need more than a simple description or "location on a map." For the journey to be successful you need some sort of Arcane Connection to the destination or subject of your journey, much like the Arcane Connection needed for the spell *The Inexorable Search* (Ars Magica, p. 208).

By worldly means, according to the Law of Contagion, an Arcane Connection can be a piece of a place, a bone from a body, or a fragment of someone's clothing. If a shaman's destination has some contact with the physical world, or you have a Connection to the physical form of the target but intend to visit the target in the spirit world, that physical Connection can be used to arrive at your destination in the spirit world. However, since shamans work with spirits other Connections also do. If your destination is the locale of a person, living or dead, in the spirit world, the presence of someone close to that person — a relative, lover, or dear friend — can serve as an Arcane Connection (but only as long as that person willingly invites or is forced to invite you to journey to the target).

The Trance

Going into a trance is much like going to sleep. If Ritual power (see below) is not used to prepare for a trance, you may only go into the trance for a few minutes, maybe up to ten. This short time limit puts a limit to how long you can travel in the spirit world (i.e., you have to make a high Travel roll to get to your destination in time). When brought out of your trance after the few minutes, your spirit is immediately drawn back to your body.

No shaman may go into trance in a high stress situation, such as combat, without making a Concentration roll. In the case of combat the required roll is 12+. Use the Concentration table for spell casting (Ars Magica, p. 180) to decide on other relevant Ease Factors.

Remember that going into a trance leaves your body totally helpless, unless you want to leave your Fetch to handle a melee (which in itself can be a fatal mistake).

Travel in the Far Lands

The previous information applies only to journeys into the Near Lands. Journeying into the Far Lands of the Magic realm is a more difficult and dangerous prospect; the Far Lands are cut off from contact with the mortal realm, and not even the magic of Hermetic Magi can contact or reach it.

Familiar Destination

To journey to the Far Lands, to a destination you have visited before, you must make the same roll of stress die + Perception + Travel score. Finesse is added to this total if you have the Ability. The result must be 12+. Time spent in transit (see Table Two, above) and risks taken are the same as for travel to an unfamiliar destination in the Near Lands. However, in this situation you must make two Botch rolls.

Unfamiliar Destination

Journeying to an unfamiliar place or entity in the Far Lands is quite a formidable prospect. Some Arcane Connection with your destination is required. Since physical artifacts from the Far Lands are exceedingly rare (unless you are looking for someone's spirit lost in the Far Lands, in which case the person's body, a possession, or loved one can be used as a Connection), other Connections must be used.

You can attempt to visit any spirit of the Far Lands with which your bloodline or tribe has a hereditary allegiance. You may also attempt to visit any location or entity which is described to you in detail by a shaman who has been there or visited the spirit. Or, you may attempt to visit any entity or location which is described in detail by a storyteller (specifically a person with Storytelling Skill of level 4+). For example, if a storyteller recounts the adventures of a long-ago shaman who visited the Far Lands' mountains of burning glass, you may try to visit the mountains of burning glass.

To visit an unfamiliar destination in the Far Lands, you must make a roll of a stress die + Perception + Travel. Finesse is added in you have a score in it. The consequences of failure or Botches are the same as for all other Travel rolls, except that you must make three Botch checks.

If your roll is 15+ you arrive in the Far Lands where you intend. See Table Three, below, for the material world duration of your journey:

Table Three

Roll:	Time Taken:
15-16	4 Hours
17-18	2 Hours
19-20	1 Hour
21-22	20 minutes
22-23	5 minutes
24+	1 minute

Time Spent in the Spirit World

Once you have arrived at your destination in the spirit world, Near or Far Lands, you may do whatever you set out to do. Such action takes a variable amount of material world time, usually between one-tenth and the normal time the action would take in the mortal world. This time factor can be decided by the Storyguide, or by rolling a simple die (with the number rolled being the tenth of normal duration spent, so a roll of 3 means the action takes three-tenths the normal time, and a roll of 10 means the full, normal time is taken).

Returning from the Spirit World

Returning to your body from the spirit world is automatic; no Travel rolls are required to return. However, the duration of that return journey depends on journey events. If the

duration of your trance ends before your spirit world journey is complete, your spirit is automatically and immediately drawn back to your body, regardless of whether your mission in the spirit world is complete. Your spirit might not return if it is somehow held or contained in the spirit world, in which case your body remains a dispassionate automaton (and continues to lose a Body Level a day, unless some other spirit occupies it).

If your attempted journey in the spirit world fails, your spirit may return to your body immediately after your initial period of disorientation is passed. This return journey is automatic, unless some force impedes your return. Returning to your body after a Botch requires its own rolls, as discussed above.

However, if you do arrive at your spirit world destination, your return trip takes as long as the initial trip. (If you finally arrive at your destination after previously failed or Botched attempts in the spirit world, the arrival, and therefore departure, time is based on your final successful roll, not on time spent lost because of failed or Botched Travel rolls.)

If, after a successful journey in the spirit world, you wish to return to the material world more quickly than your initial journey (maybe your body is in jeopardy in the material world), you may make another Travel roll to return. The journey is assumed to be to a familiar destination. Of course, this new roll runs the risk of failing or being Botched, slowing your return progress.

The Storyguide may also require Travel rolls to return to the mortal world if some force restricts your return. But, this roll is dependent on the story situation and the Storyguide's requirements.

Travel Considerations

There are several factors that must be considered in traveling the spirit world. Each requires individual discussion.

Resisting Targets

Sometimes you may search for entities in the spirit world who do not wish to be found. If this is the case the entity seeking to remain hidden must roll a stress die + either its Travel score, or 1/5 (rounded up) its Magic Might (whichever is appropriate or higher). The result of this roll is subtracted from the shaman's roll to find the target. If the entity obscures itself, it may not do anything else for the duration of the shaman's search. If the target's hiding roll Botches, the seeking shaman automatically and immediately journeys to the target, regardless of the seeker's Travel roll.

Remember, if one shaman seeks to hide from another shaman, both must be in trance and may do nothing else except search or hide. If roll subtraction causes the searching shaman's Travel roll to become 0 or lower, the result is counted as a simple failure, not a Botch. Time spent wandering the spirit world is based on the seeker's final roll of 0, or whatever negative value is achieved.

Spying on the Material World

Shamans most often use the Travel power to journey into the Magic realm to find a particular place or entity. However, there are other uses for this power, which apply to the mortal realm. A shaman can journey to the site of any Magic Aura, or Magic *regio* and observe what occurs in that area, since these locations are directly connected to the Magic realm (see Chapter Five for details on this connection).

Beyond places of Magical Aura, shamans in the spirit world are blind to the material world. The only way to see into that world is by "borrowing" the senses of people and creatures in the material world. See *Contacting Material Beings*, below.

Contacting Material Beings

Shamans can journey through the spirit world to arrive at the Mundane world locations of magical creatures and people who strongly connect to the Magic realm. A shaman may journey to any material world creature with a Magic Might score, to any shapechanger, any shaman, or to any Magus with a Mentem or Vim score of 10+. A normal roll of a stress die + Perception + Travel (+ Finesse), versus an Ease Factor of 9, is required for the journey. If the roll fails or Botches, the shaman is stranded in the Near Lands, before arriving in the material world. Failed attempts can be followed up with further efforts to arrive in the material world, as described under Near Land *Familiar Destinations*, above. Once arriving in the material world, the shaman's spirit may return to her body normally.

Targets in the mundane world can also hide from seeking shamans, as usual (see *Resisting Targets*, above). The person or creature in the material world disguises the signature of his or her spirit, making it difficult to recognize and hone in on.

Once a shaman arrives at her destination in the material world, in the presence of the designated target, the shaman may automatically sense the target's basic physical and emotional state (the shaman knows, for example, if the target is Fatigued or wounded, and to what degree, and has a rough idea of what Personality Traits or Passions dominate the target's nature at the moment). The shaman may also freely communicate with the being (using the universal communication ability all shamans have with spirits — see above).

The target, once visited and contacted, may freely allow the shaman to share its senses, and so the spirit-shaman can perceive the mortal world. Shapechangers allied with a shaman are likely to offer their senses and therefore make ideal scouts for shamanic purposes. Without the shared senses of a being in the material world, shamans in the spirit world can perceive nothing mundane, aside from other nearby magical beings (like creatures with Magic Might scores), and places with Magic Auras.

Possessing Material Beings

If the material being does not wish to aid the shaman, the shaman has other options. The shaman may attempt to possess the being. To attempt possession, make a stress roll + Control + Stamina. (Control is one of the four shamanic powers,

Spirits and Souls

Within the living human body resides soul and spirit. Upon death, these two elements are freed from the body. If the person is devoted to God, both go to Heaven. If the person is devoted to Hell, both go to Hell. Spirit and soul may also go to another afterworld, depending on the person's faith.

Occasionally, spirit and soul get separated. Soul always goes to a reward or punishment, but spirit can remain bound to body, can walk the earth without body or soul, or can go to the spirit world. For instance, if a Christian dies without proper burial, her soul goes to Heaven, but her spirit may remain lost on earth or may go to the spirit world (and can be visited and controlled by shamans).

In the case of pagan people, soul and spirit together go to the spirit world upon bodily death. Dead human beings encountered in the spirit world are therefore usually the combination of spirit and soul. Like all spirits and souls, these are immortal. Spirits and souls in the spirit world can be "destroyed," but in reality they still exist. Such spirit and soul combinations are simply reduced to a more sublime form. In this form, spirit and soul may be unrecognizable as their former selves (thus the mistake some make in thinking spirits and souls destroyed).

Like those of most people, spirits of pagans do not always go to their appropriate afterworld. The soul of a pagan always goes to the spirit world, but spirit may remain on earth if some terrible fate befell the pagan, or if some mission requires completion on earth. Not even spirits on earth can be destroyed fully. One that is completely defeated is reduced to its barest essence, in which state it is unrecognizable.

When travelers of the spirit world are attacked, their spirits too can be assaulted. Such a spirit may even be "killed," but these spirits too are immortal. They, like

others, are reduced to their barest essence and may wander the spirit world aimlessly, without any intelligible form. When shamans rebuild the spirits of others, it is this reduced spirit that they work from.

As animals, objects, and creatures usually lack souls, they have only spirits. Their existence in the spirit world is based on spirit alone.

Human soul and spirit combinations, which exist in the spirit world as a result of bodily death, cannot usually leave the spirit world on their own power. However, shamans can bring spirits out of the spirit world. The spirit's soul remains behind. It cannot leave the spirit world. The soul left behind is a listless being, devoid of passion (as spirit encompasses such passion and motivation), until the spirit returns. Such abandoned souls can be communicated with, but may not be helpful given their state.

Note, however, that it is possible for human spirit-soul combinations in the spirit world to enter physical places of Magic Aura or *regio*.

In a nutshell, then, shamans cannot deal with those spirits or souls which have gone to Heaven, Hell, or some other realm of the spirit world, like Faerieland. They can deal with the spirits of humans, objects, places, and animals in the spirit world and on earth. This means shamans can communicate with, summon, and control these spirits. Shamans cannot bring human souls out of the spirit world, nor can they command them, but shamans may communicate with souls in the spirit world.

For simplicity purposes, any reference in this book to the spirits of the dead in the spirit world are references to spirit-soul combinations. If a spirit there lacks a soul (maybe being the lost projection of physical shaman's spirit), such is stated.

discussed below). Penetration is added to this total if the possessor has the Ability. If the possessor has the Strong-Willed Virtue, +3 is also added to the roll.

Resistance provided by the target of possession is determined by the nature of the target. In the case of a Magus target, Magic Resistance applies but is based on *Parma Magica* only. (The shaman is able to hone in on the Magus based on Mentem and Vim scores, and attacks through one of those Forms, so that Form offers no Magic Resistance protection.) Other shamans resist with their own Stamina + Travel scores (if a shaman has *Parma Magica*, the higher of the two protections is used). Shapechangers resist with their full Magic Might scores, and if none is had or it generates a higher total, Stamina + 10 is used. Of course, each of these resistance factors is modified by a stress

die. (There are no Natural Resistance rolls allowed by targets because it is the inherent magic of the target that attracts the shaman, so only that magic may resist the invading spirit.)

If the shaman succeeds he enters the body of the target. Once inside, the shaman may now freely use the being's senses, but may not control the actions of the being in any way. Controlling actions is another process, discussed below.

If the shaman's possession attempt fails, a Fatigue stress roll against an Ease Factor of 6 is required. If the roll is failed, the shaman loses a Short-Term Fatigue Level and is repelled from the body. If the Fatigue check Botches, two Short-Term Fatigue Levels are lost. Further attempts to possess are allowed, but each suffers a cumulative -1 penalty, making successive attempts more difficult (and, of course, any Fatigue penalties incurred from previous possession attempts make further attempts more difficult).

If the shaman's attempt at possession Botches, the spirit is repelled from the body and can never make another possession attempt on that target. The shaman also automatically loses a Short-Term Fatigue Level. If the target's Magic Resistance roll Botches, the shaman receives +3 bonus to any efforts to control (see below) the host.

Controlling Actions

If a possessing shaman so chooses, a subject can be made to perform actions. Each action commanded of a subject requires a separate contest of wills between possessor and host. These rolls are made for various commands like, "attack that man," "leave town," or "cast this spell."

For each action commanded of a subject, both participants make Stamina stress rolls (the Strong-Willed Virtue adds +3). If the action commanded is opposed to the inherent nature of the subject (e.g., the shaman commands a host to attack friends), the host receives a bonus to the Stamina roll. This bonus is usually based on a pertinent Personality Trait (the Friendly +1 Trait offers a +1 bonus in the above example). The nature of a command can also trigger use of a Passion in a scene. If a host has the Love Passion and is commanded to attack friends, the Passion may be applied as resistance to rolls throughout the scene (at the risk of one Confidence Point, as usual).

Commands cannot be too elaborate, either. If they are, the host does not perform the action and makes an attempt to break free of control, with a +3 bonus (on top of any Personality Trait or Passion bonuses gained). The Storyguide decides when commanded actions are too complex for the host to carry out (although wise possessors may break down complex actions into individual commands, each of which must be rolled for, making overall command easier).

If the shaman wins the Stamina contest by 3 or more points the shaman gains control and may make the host perform one action (assuming it is not too complex). The host must make a Short-Term Fatigue stress roll against an Ease Factor of 6.

If the host's Stamina roll is 3 or more points above the shaman's, the host retains her will for the Round. The shaman now makes a Short-Term Fatigue stress roll. In the next Round the shaman may try to force another action on the target.

If neither party wins the Stamina contest by 3 or more points, the host's body scream, writhes, and thrashes about, with no one in control.

If the possessing shaman loses all Fatigue Levels his spirit is expelled from the host's body. The shaman's spirit is left Unconscious in the spirit world in a place relevant to the place in the material world where he was expelled. Floating in the spirit world, the shaman may recover lost Fatigue Levels as discussed in Chapter Five. After recovering just one Fatigue Level, the shaman's spirit may attempt possession again (although another Travel roll is required to arrive at the target's material world position). Returning to the host also requires that the possession procedure be resumed from the beginning.

If the host in a possession ever loses all Fatigue Levels, she can no longer defend, but is also incapable of any further actions. Further actions can only be attempted or commanded by the possessor when the host regains at least one Fatigue Level.

Also keep in mind that Fatigue penalties incurred from possession apply to Stamina competition rolls, and to further Fatigue checks. These penalties are suffered by both possessor and host.

A possessing shaman only does himself disservice by pushing a host to the limits of Fatigue. After all, if the host is forced into Unconsciousness, he cannot be made to perform any actions. The wise shaman allows a possession victim to recover somewhat before demanding further actions, ensuring that more than just a few actions can be commanded before Unconsciousness sets in again. (But, of course, the more a host is allowed to recover, the more potent her Stamina rolls, and so the more difficult the person is to control. Shamans therefore find themselves between a rock and a hard place, forced to balance ease of command with duration of command.)

If a shaman's Stamina roll ever Botches, he is immediately driven from the host and can never resume control of that person. If the host's Stamina roll ever Botches, the shaman receives a +3 bonus to all further Stamina rolls during the current possession. If the host Botches on several occasions, the shaman's +3 bonus accumulates. If either party ever Botches a Fatigue roll, two Short-Term Fatigue Levels are lost.

Powers of Possession

A shaman who possesses another person has direct access to all the physical abilities and powers of the host. For instance, if a host is good with a sword, a shaman may command the host to use that sword, at the host's trait scores. However, the possessing shaman does not have direct access to the host's mind. The shaman cannot use the host's knowledge for her own purposes, but may command the host to use his mental abilities on the shaman's behalf. In this case, even spells can be commanded from the host, using the host's Art, Intelligence, Stamina, and other related scores.

The possessing shaman may also impose her own mind upon the host, making him perform actions the shaman knows how to do. In this case the host is not in his own element, though. Two control contest rolls are required of the shaman and host. The first is to accept the foreign order, and the second is to carry it out. So, if a shaman commands a host to ride a horse, and the host does not know how to ride, the host must first be commanded to accept the order, and then to ride the horse.

Fatigue checks are made for both Stamina contest rolls.

A possessing shaman may also order shamanic functions from her host, but if the host is not a shaman, each function commanded requires two control rolls. If the host is another shaman, who understands what the possessor commands, only a single control roll is required of participants. Which of the shamans' scores — like Ritual score — used in this situation

depends on the possessor's will. If the possessor commands the host to perform a function according to the host's own knowledge, the host shaman's traits are used. But, if the possessing shaman orders the host to perform a function according to the possessor's knowledge, the possessing shaman's traits are used.

Note: If a shaman possesses the body of another shaman, and the possessing shaman commands the host to enter the spirit world, both shamans' spirits enter the spirit world. The possessing shaman does not retain control of the host's body. In the spirit world the two shamans may fight, or if the possessing shaman can return to the physical world first, the possessing shaman may achieve complete control of the host shaman's body. The foreign shaman may be evicted from the body on the original shaman's return, but if the original shaman's spirit gets lost in the spirit world, the foreign spirit may occupy the body for some time. (Of course, you may also decide that a command to enter the spirit world is too complex a control for a possessor to impose upon a host. But, if the possessor successfully commands the host to perform the travel action in small increments, spirit travel as a whole may be achieved.)

Magi can also be possessed by shamans. The shaman may demand spells cast by the Magus, and can utilize shamanic powers through the Magus. In the latter case, only a single Stamina contest is required, as the Magus's Gift makes shamanic magic somewhat familiar. Two Stamina contests are not required to work shamanic magic through a possessed Magus.

Attacking Possessors

If a shaman from the spirit world possesses a host, that shaman may be attacked by spirits in both the spirit and physical worlds. The spirits fight as if in the spirit world. For every Round spent fighting another spirit, the possessing shaman loses control of the host, and the host may act of its own will. The shaman is not expelled from the host, though. The shaman may make commands of the host in other Rounds, but during those Rounds the shaman cannot fight spirit opponents. The possessing shaman is only expelled when depleted of Fatigue Levels or Body Levels, or if otherwise driven off. If the possessing shaman ever Botches a roll in combat with another spirit, the shaman is expelled from the host, and suffers appropriate effects of the Botch in question. The Botch-expelled shaman may never possess that host again.

Shamanic Communication

Shamans can communicate with other shamans many leagues distant. This is done by going into a trance. A Communication + Travel stress roll is made against an Ease Factor of 9, but the shaman's spirit never actually leaves the body. It merely calls through the spirit realm. The recipient of a message need not be in a trance and may even resist (as per *Resisting Targets*, above) the sender's message, muffling the sender's voice in the spirit realm if the intended receiver knows an attempt at contact is being made.



If the intended receiver of a message wants to receive your message, the receiver may also go into a trance. The receiver makes a Communication + Travel stress roll and the result is added to the sender's result to determine success of the transmission. If the receiver's roll fails, its result is not applied to the sender's roll. If either roll Botches the message may be misinterpreted, catastrophically so.

Shamans or spiritual beings may even interfere with the spirit world communications of shamans. The interfering being makes a Communication + Travel stress roll (or, if more appropriate, a stress roll + Magic Might divided by 5, rounded up). If the result is greater than the messenger's, the intruder may tamper with the message, changing it as desired. If both messenger and receiver are in trances, their combined Communication + Travel score is probably high enough to overcome the interferer's, but may not always be. If the interfering being has the lower of the compared Travel rolls, the messenger is allowed a Perception simple roll (with a bonus equal to the difference between the messenger and interferer's Communication + Travel rolls) against an Ease Factor of 9. If this Perception roll is successful, the messenger knows something strives to tamper, but cannot recognize the interference. To find the intruder requires a journey into the spirit world; a Travel roll into the Near Lands, to an unfamiliar destination, is made. If the interfering being's roll to modify the message Botches, parties involved in the communication are immediately made aware of the interference and the messenger may arrive in the being's presence as if traveling to a familiar destination.

If a being interferes with a message and is discovered, it may still disguise its spirit in hopes of eluding any pursuing messenger, as per *Resisting Targets*.

Furthermore, if communicating shamans foresee interference in a message being sent, either or both may add their Penetration scores to their Communication + Travel rolls. They force their message through the spirit world, driving it past would-be interferers.

The results of a message interfered with are determined by the situation, the interferer, and the shamans in communication. The interfering being may have a specific intent in mind, and may change message content subtly or grossly. However, if the message receiver is familiar with the sender, a drastically altered message may still be treated with suspicion.

Spiritual Baggage

Shamans and special dreamers (discussed below) may take others with them on journeys into the Magic realm. Once into trance a shaman may find and bring along the spirits of any people sleeping at the time. It is to the Magic realm that all spirits travel during dreams. To find a sleeping person's spirit and take it on a journey, you must make a Travel roll, as if searching for a familiar spirit in the Near Lands (the sleeping person's spirit is already there). That spirit may then be taken on a journey throughout the Near Lands.

Even while their bodies are sleeping, spirits of Magi, shamans, and creatures with Magic Might scores can resist being found, as described under *Resisting Targets*, above. If a resistance effort reduces a shaman's Travel roll enough to make it a failed attempt, the spirit sought is not taken on a journey and the searching shaman is left wandering around the spirit world.

Spiritual passengers can also agree to be taken into the spirit world, arranging the event with a shaman. If all the people who are planning to accompany the shaman go to sleep holding hands, or are otherwise sleeping in direct contact with the shaman, the shaman need only make a roll of a simple die + Stamina + Travel, against an Ease Factor of 7 (+1 for each passenger after the first), to bring all along. If the roll fails, the attempt to bring others into the spirit world fails; they are left sleeping and beyond the shaman's reach. The spirit can make further attempts to lead companions without penalty. If the roll succeeds, normal Travel rolls are made thereafter to arrive at a desired destination. Thus, two rolls are required to travel with a group, one to organize the group's spirits, and one to take that group on a journey.

Once the spirits of people are found and taken on a journey through the spirit realm, they largely share the same fate as the shaman. That is, if the shaman's Travel roll fails or Botches, fellow travelers could remain trapped in the spirit realm with the shaman. Escape from this fate lies with each traveler. If a person accompanying a shaman is another shaman, that person may return to her own body with a successful Travel roll (against an Ease Factor of 9). If the attempt fails, the fellow shaman also remains in the spirit realm and must wait to get reoriented (after the period spent lost is over, as discussed under *Returning from the Spirit World*). If the other shaman's return attempt Botches, days may be spent in the spirit realm.

Lost spirits of traveling companions who are not shamans — this category includes Magi — may naturally gravitate back to their own bodies. This return requires an Intelligence stress roll of 9+. If one member of the party finds his or her body, the others may be guided back to theirs (the rest of the party receives +2 to their Intelligence rolls). If mundane spirits cannot find their way back, they must wait until the shaman is reoriented (again, see *Returning from the Spirit World*). If a mundane spirit Botches an attempt to return from the spirit realm, the spirit remains trapped for days, as a shaman is on a Botch. Successive Intelligence attempts to return "home" are made with each new day. If a mundane spirit does Botch, but is in the presence of a shaman in the spirit realm, that mundane spirit can be taken back to its body by the shaman, when the shaman departs.

The shaman leading the spirits cannot gravitate back to his body because he is the one to have forged an unnatural path into the Magic realm. He must remain in the spirit realm for the period allotted by his Travel roll failure or Botch.

As with shamans, the material bodies of people taken on journeys into the spirit world suffer one Body Level damage for each full day that spirit is absent from body.

Entering Dreams

As well as taking dreaming people along on trance journeys, shamans can visit dreaming people for other purposes. On a successful Travel roll, assuming the destination is a spirit in the Near Lands, a shaman may contact the spirit of any person. If the person is known, the journey is to a familiar destination. If the person is unknown, the destination is unfamiliar. And, the person must be sleeping and dreaming for the shaman to affect his or her dreams.

Once the person's spirit has been contacted the shaman may talk to the spirit, or even (using the Alter power) temporarily shape the Magic realm around the person to manipulate that person's dreams. To create a simple, emotionally neutral dream the shaman must make a roll of Intelligence + Alter + Storytelling + a stress die, against an Ease Factor of 15. Finesse can be added to this roll if you have it. (Alter is one of the four shamanic powers, discussed below.) A failure means the dream seems chaotic and confusing, having no effect on the subject. A Botch means the subject wakes up, receiving no dream at all, but the shaman is recognized in a mental afterimage.

A successful roll indicates the intended events and message of the dream are conveyed. Extremely detailed dreams, or extremely emotional dreams (like a truly horrifying nightmare), require a roll of 18+.

The results of an imposed dream depend on your intent. You might simply want to suggest a warning to the dreamer, a warning she might remember and heed in a certain waking

situation. With more extreme dreams, Personality Traits might be imposed upon the dreamer in waking hours. Say, for example, a powerful nightmare is created in which the dreamer is attacked by immense wolves. During waking hours, the victim might develop a Personality Trait of Fear +3 when faced by wolves. Or, a friend could be made to seem traitorous in a dream, and that person is treated with Suspicion +2 during waking hours. The exact results of an imposed dream are up to player and Storyguide to determine. When a character imposes a dream, the player may state intentions and the Storyguide may allow them or secretly modify them.

Magi, special dreamers (see below), shamans, and people who have dealt extensively with shamans are likely to recognize shamanic-altered dreams, whether the shaman's Alter roll is successful or not. Upon waking up, the dream recipient makes a Perception stress roll, against an Ease Factor of 6. Others, less familiar with shamanic powers, only recognize their dreams as unnatural with a Perception stress roll of 11+. If the subject fails the Perception roll, the dream is accepted as natural. If a Perception roll is Botched, the dream is made to seem inspired in some way. The Storyguide should indicate how the dream seems to have bearing on waking hour events, suggesting the character has certain powers, or has received a blessing. Regardless of what meaning the dream is assumed to have, the character is deluded into putting false or inaccurate credence in it.

CONTROL

The Control power is used to make spirits do your bidding. There are three ways of getting a spirit or other magical entity to perform a service for you: command, awe, and persuasion. When setting out to Control a spirit, you must decide which of the above methods is used. If your initial attempt fails, further attempts may be allowed using that same Control method, but you cannot decide to use another Control form. No other form has effect once one is committed to one method.

Command

Commanding a spirit is the most direct approach to controlling it. Commanding a spirit means you pit your force of will against the might of the spirit, in a contest of will and power. This method of control is very direct, and if you succeed you directly control the spirit. However, command is also the most tiring of the means of spirit Control.

To command a spirit you roll a stress die + Stamina + Control + Intimidation + 1/5 the Spirit or Magic Might of any magical entities aiding you (such as your Fetch). Penetration is also added to this total if you have the Ability. Only one bound spirit at a time can aid you on this roll. The total of your roll is compared to a stress die + the Magic Might of the spirit you wish to command. Any party with the Strong-Willed Virtue receives a +3 bonus to their roll.



If your roll is equal to or higher than the spirit's, you have control over the spirit, and may command it to perform any single action for you, or to truthfully answer any question. If you fail you fail to command the spirit, but may try again (assuming the spirit gives you the chance). Successive attempts in a single "sitting" incur a cumulative -1 modifier to your rolls. That is, every repeated attempt suffers a mounting -1 modifier. But if you separate from the spirit and attempt Control on another occasion, another unmodified command attempt may be made. The Storyguide decides how much time must pass to alleviate this penalty.

If you Botch your command roll you may not try to command that spirit again until after the next full moon.

And, in any case, if your roll does not exceed your opponent's by 10 or more, you must make a Long-Term Fatigue stress roll against an Ease Factor of 6. This Fatigue check is therefore made if you barely defeat the spirit, fail the command attempt, or Botch the attempt. If this Fatigue roll is Botched, two Long-Term Fatigue Levels are lost.

If your contest roll is higher than the spirit's, it may be made to perform a single action, as stated above. However, if the spirit Botches its roll to resist your command, you may command the spirit until the next full moon. Or, if you win command over a spirit but do not require its services immediately, it may be made to occupy an object of your own creation. There it remains until called upon. (See *Alter*, below.) If you intend the spirit to occupy your object, and its resistance to your command Botches, the spirit may be "stored" in your

object and called upon to do services until the next full moon (although the Botching spirit must still be made to enter the trapping object — an *Alter* roll is still required, as discussed below. If the spirit refuses to enter your object, it may still be commanded to perform other actions.)

Awe

When you awe a spirit you attempt to impress it sufficiently with your power that it submits to your will without a fight. This method is simple and easy, but generally works only on spirits significantly weaker than you are.

To awe a spirit you roll a stress die + Presence + Control + Charisma, compared to the Magic or Spirit Might of the spirit + a stress die. There are no bonuses to this roll based on strong will, Finesse, or Penetration.

If your roll is higher than the spirit's, the spirit or entity truthfully answers any question and performs any task which involves no risk. That is, the spirit answers any question or performs any task that is not directly contrary to its interests. If your roll succeeds by 10 or more the spirit obeys you fully, just as if you had successfully commanded it (you have completely awed the spirit). It is now willing to relate some truths or perform some actions that are somewhat opposed to its own interests.

If your roll is lower than the spirit's, you may not try to awe the spirit again until after the next full moon. However, if, before the next full moon, you successfully commanded the



spirit on another occasion, you may again attempt to awe it before the next full moon, but only on yet another occasion (i.e., you can't attempt the awe right away). After a failed attempt to awe a spirit, successive attempts do not suffer a cumulative penalty (too much time passes between allowed attempts to incur such a penalty).

If you Botch your awe roll, the spirit loses all respect for you, and you may never attempt to awe it again, until and unless you have successfully commanded it. Note: Some spirits and magical entities are, by their very nature, immune to awe.

If the spirit Botches its roll to resist your presence, it falls completely under your sway and you may command it until the next full moon as if your roll is 10 points higher than the spirit's.

If you do not intend to use the awed spirit's services immediately, the awed spirit may be made to occupy an object of your creation (an Alter roll is required, as discussed below). The spirit resides there until called upon to perform its service. If the spirit Botches its roll to resist your presence, it resides in your object until the next full moon, and may be called upon to perform services throughout that period. However, the Botching spirit must still be forced to occupy your holding object (again, see *Alter*, below). If it refuses to enter your object, the spirit may still be ordered to perform some other action.

Persuasion

It is difficult to control spirits that are equal to you in power, and nearly impossible to control spirits significantly more powerful than you. If you seek the help of such powerful spirits you must persuade or bargain with them. The best way to do this is to offer to perform a service for the spirit in return for a favor. For example, if you wish the aid of a powerful spirit which is the guardian of a tribe, and you are not a member of the tribe, you can offer to aid the tribe in return for the spirit's aid. Alternatively, you can try to convince the spirit that the aid you request is also of benefit to the spirit's tribe. Or, in asking a question of a ghost you can offer to give a message to its living relatives, avenge its death, offer to build it a lavish monument, or perhaps write a song commemorating its living memory.

In essence, then, persuasion of a spirit involves a combination of supplication and barter. Persuasion always involves roleplaying, and if a shaman's personality clashes with that of a spirit, aid may be denied outright. If there's ever question of a spirit's willingness to comply, Personality Trait rolls can be used, maybe even compared between parties to determine results of persuasion.

The aid requested of a spirit can take many forms. You can ask for any information the spirit has about the spirit or material worlds. You can also request assistance in a task in the Magic realm.

You may even ask the spirit to materialize in the material world (as a ghost). Spirits who still have some connection with the mortal world — ghosts and other spirits of the dead, animal spirits, elementals, or spirits of places — need only be asked to materialize into the mortal world and they may. (Spirits

without ties to the material world are more resitant to materializing.) However, any spirit linked to a particular place in the mortal world appears only at that place, regardless of where the shaman calls it. For example, a ghost appears where its body lies, and the spirit of a stream appears in the stream.

To persuade a location-linked spirit to appear elsewhere in the mortal world, you must go into a trance where you wish the spirit to appear. A normal Travel roll is required to contact the spirit. If the spirit is willing to comply to your wishes, another roll of a stress die + Perception + Travel, against an Ease factor of 9, must be made to find a path to lead the spirit to the desired spot in the mortal world (Finesse can be added to the roll). Remember, the Aura of this material place affects your rolls as it does rolls for all other magical and shamanic powers.

Some spirits such as legendary spirits, those naturally distant from the material world, or ghosts who have been dead so long that their bodies have decayed into dust, have no firm connection with the mortal world. These spirits may appear anywhere in the mortal world, but the shaman must roll 12+ on a Travel roll to lead the distant spirit to the desired spot (of course, this roll is made after the initial Travel roll to find the spirit in the first place).

If a roll to lead a spirit to a spot in the material world fails, the spirit is separated from the shaman in the spirit world. You are not lost, but cannot attempt to find the spirit again for one day (material world time). Such successive attempts do not suffer cumulative penalties as some time passes between attempts. After having lost your companion, you are free to remain in the spirit world or return to your body.

If your roll to lead a spirit to a spot in the material world Botches, the spirit breaks from you and may materialize in the material world wherever it pleases, or may hide anywhere in the spirit world. You cannot seek to lead that spirit to the material world again.

Remember, there are some spirits, such as some hungry spirits and spirits of law, who, by their very nature, can appear anywhere on the mortal world at will. Spirits like these need no rolls to appear in the mortal world; all they need is an appropriate reason to appear (meaning a shaman need only travel to and negotiate with them). No inhabitant from the Far Lands can appear in the mortal world, since the connection between the Far Lands and the mortal realm is very tenuous. The only exception to this rule is if a shaman uses the Alter power to create a mystical link between a Far Lands spirit and the mortal world (see below).

Note: The above rules for leading spirits to the material world can also be applied to spirits that are successfully commanded and awed. Such spirits may be made to manifest in the material world; persuasion is not the only way to get a spirit to appear in the physical world. However, if you want a commanded or awed spirit to appear in a desired spot, it must still be led to that spot, using all rolls detailed above.

ALTER

Alter is the power to directly change the Magic realm, creating objects bound to the Magic realm.

You must buy a Craft Skill (from the Abilities lists) which forms the physical basis of your Alter power. This Skill can take many forms, from wood-carving, to tattooing, to metalwork, to stonework. This Craft Skill is used together with the Alter power to create an object which is the physical manifestation of the change you create in the Magic realm.

The most common use for the Alter power is in the creation of objects which can house spirits that you successfully Control. In commanding or aweing (and sometimes persuading) a spirit, you may order it to enter an object and remain there until called upon to perform a service. (Otherwise, the spirit may be ordered to perform an action immediately, without imprisonment.) In making such a housing object you must use your Craft Skill to create a physical object which serves as a dwelling place for the Controlled spirit. This dwelling, or binding object, is often a small charm you can carry, or a tattoo on your body. Each object is the dwelling place of only one spirit. If you have several Craft Skills your Alter power may be used with each of them. However, all objects which serve as binding objects for spirits must be made with some degree of skill; you must have a minimum score of 2 in any Craft used with the Alter power.

To make a binding object for a spirit you must roll a stress die + Alter + Craft + Dexterity. If your roll is equal to $10 + 1/5$ the Spirit or Magic Might (rounded up) of the spirit you successfully create a binding object within which that one spirit can be housed (it's advised that you record the result of the roll, for reasons explained below). If you fail you have wasted time and materials, and must try again. If you Botch the spirit is so horrified or insulted by your effort that it breaks free from your Control and flees or attacks.

Time required to create a binding object is one Season, and each object is tailored to only a single spirit. So, if a spirit no longer inhabits an item, that item cannot be used to house another spirit; another object must be created. Though only one object can be made a Season, you are not limited to dealing with one spirit a Season. Other spirits can be contacted and dealt with, their services being rendered automatically. Such services are simply less reliable than those of a spirit who is "on your person" at all times.

Once the binding object has been made, the spirit which has been successfully Controlled enters it. The object is effectively a prison for the spirit; the spirit is held in the object until the holder of the object voluntarily releases the spirit. Upon releasing the spirit the holder of the object may ask one service of it. The spirit must try to complete this task to the best of its ability. Whether it succeeds in its effort or not, it returns to the object, reports on the success or failure of its task, and is then free to go (unless the spirit Botched its resistance to your

Control, in which case it returns to the object and remains there, to be called on repeatedly until the next full moon, when it is automatically released).

To make the spirit return to the binding object and remain there once its mandatory service has been completed, you must again command or awe the spirit.

While a spirit is within a binding object, and the binding object is in your possession, the spirit counts as a helping spirit for purposes of Control rolls (see *Command*, above). However, a shaman may only communicate with one bound spirit at a time, so only one bound spirit may aid you in Control rolls.

Since the binding object is magically connected to the Magic realm, you can access the object while journeying in the Magic realm. That is, you can call upon the spirit's services in the spirit and material worlds.

A binding object is a prison for a spirit, so no spirit can simply be talked into entering one, unless perhaps it is in grave danger from some other source. So, persuasion cannot normally be used to hold a spirit. The only exception to this rule is if the binding object is exceptionally well-made. Such objects are exceptionally beautiful and fine to both mortal eyes and spirit senses. For every point that your Alter roll, for the creation of the item, exceeds a rating of $15 + 1/5$ the subject spirit's Might (rounded up), +1 is added to any Social Skill or Communication rolls to persuade a spirit to enter the object. If the spirit already lives a haggard existence in the spirit realm, and is offered an attractive place to escape, it might just be talked into entering the shaman's prison, being put under the shaman's command.

The beauty of the imprisoning object also plays a part in convincing any formerly Controlled spirit to return to your prison once that spirit has been freed (usually after performing its required service). For every point on the original Alter roll (which imprisoned the spirit) that exceeds $20 + 1/5$ the subject's spirit's Might, +1 is added to all future Alter rolls to recapture that spirit. Thus, if the original Alter roll is high, record the resulting modifier for future use. Recapturing a spirit does not involve creating a new prison, and the task may be performed at any time. However, during a Season that an old spirit is recaptured, a new spirit cannot be captured (a new housing object to hold a new spirit cannot be made). Several old spirits may be recaptured during that Season, though.

Anyone who touches a binding object inhabited by a spirit may communicate with the spirit inside, regardless of difference in language. A spirit in a binding object may also serve as a source of information to the holder. In most cases the spirit asks a price for its knowledge, often its freedom — supply of information is the mandatory service the spirit performs. If the spirit Botched its resistance roll against Control and was successfully imprisoned, it can be communicated with and questioned at your will until the next full moon.

Linking to the Far Lands

The Alter power has uses other than binding spirits. For example, shamans can use it to create a link between the mortal world and a spirit or other entity in the Far Lands. This link is not a binding object, as above, but simply a connection between a spirit and the mortal world. As a result of this connection, magic manifests itself in the material world.

To make such a link you must first convince the spirit that it is in its best interests to have contact with the mortal world. Usual motivators are aid from the shaman or worship by the shaman's tribe. Regardless of the terms by which spirit and shaman agree, the negotiation should be roleplayed, and personality clashes between parties may deny agreement from the outset.

To embody the deal between shaman and Far Lands spirit in the material world, you create a story or myth. This myth is the equivalent of a binding object, but it does not imprison the spirit. The myth merely allows the spirit a foothold in the physical, as the story embodies the essence of the spirit. Your myth is a created story, telling how a spirit comes to inhabit a place, such as a mountain, stream, or forest. It takes a Season to create such a tale, and you must have a Storytelling score of at least 3 to attempt the feat.

To determine whether your myth captures enough of the spirit's nature to allow it a foothold in the physical, roll a stress die + Alter + Storytelling + Communication. If the roll is equal to 21 + 1/5 the Spirit or Magic Might (rounded up) of the spirit, the link is created. The spirit now imbues itself into an element of the world, like a mountain, and your myth spreads word of that presence. The player is encouraged to write a myth of her own, and if the Storyguide finds it particularly true to the spirit involved, he may grant a bonus of +1 to +3 to the shaman's myth roll.

A failed myth roll means your myth strays from the nature of the spirit accounted for, or lacks sufficient significance to make possible a foothold in the physical. Certainly further attempts can be made, but each requires another Season's myth creation. It may also be difficult to renew a Far Lands spirit's interest in contact with the material.

A Botched myth roll means you have offended the spirit with the terms of negotiation, or with the content of your myth. The spirit never again negotiates with you for association with the material world.

Once a link between the material world and a spirit of the Far Lands is created, the link endures until either your myth or the physical item imbued by the spirit (e.g., the mountain or stream) is gone from the world. Your myth might fade if only a few know it and they die out, or if it gets altered with time by faulty tellings (Storyguide's discretion).

The result of a Far Lands spirit's "possession" of a place is the creation of a magical site. The place develops a Magic Aura or Magic *regio*. Such changes are under the control of the spirit, and of chance, not the shaman. It is impossible to create such a spirit link to the material world in places that already have

Divine or Infernal Auras. However, such communions of material and spirit are possible in established places of Faerie Aura, but the normal Magic Aura imbued (see below) is halved. If the new, halved Magic Aura is higher than the former Faerie Aura rating (or higher than the highest rating of a Faerie *regio*), the Faerie Aura is overcome. Faerie residents may be driven out, may go into "hibernation," or may become enemies of the spirit and shaman involved in the invasion. If the Faerie Aura is still higher, the difference between the Faerie and halved Magic Aura becomes the new Faerie Aura rating. A Magic Aura foisted upon a place of Reason has its Magic Aura halved as well; the inherent logic of the place undermines the imagination of the myth that represents the spirit. If the halved Magic Aura is still higher than the resident logic Aura, the Magic takes over. Books of logic and knowledge are ruined and made to seem gibberish. In the unlikely event that the Reason Aura is still higher than the imposed Magic Aura, Reason Aura rating is reduced by the halved rating of the Magic Aura. A spirit-induced Aura may also develop in a place of established Magic Aura. The higher of the two ratings is the one that takes precedence.

The Aura rating of a place where a Far Lands spirit imbues the world is determined by the "magnitude" of the spirit. The Aura has rating equal to 1/5 of the spirit's Magic or Spirit Might, rounded up. If this "magnitude" is 5+, the score is generally divided into several Aura scores, creating a place of Magic *regio*, rather than a single place of very high Aura rating. Thus, if a spirit with a Magic Might of 40 imbues itself into a clearing, that clearing acquires levels of *regio*, in this case their combined Aura levels adding to 8. No Magic Aura or *regio* level may have a rating higher than 9.

If a spirit embodies a large physical object, like an entire river or mountain, imposed Aura is assured to be divided among *regio* levels. The lowest levels of *regio* reach as far as the river or mountain reaches, while areas of higher rating concentrate in places particularly true to the spirit's nature (maybe at the mountaintop, or at the river source).

Altering the Magic Realm

As was mentioned earlier, the Alter power may be used when you are in the Magic realm. The simplest of these uses involves changing your own spirit. A shaman may use the Alter power to change his own appearance in the Magic realm, taking on the form of an animal, or some other being. To do so you must roll 7+ on a Alter + Stamina roll. This roll is made on a simple die for ordinary shamans, and on a stress die for untrained shamans (those having the Untrained Shamanic Flaw). If the roll fails, the intended form is not assumed, but further attempts are allowed, each suffering a cumulative -1 penalty. A Botched spirit change means you cannot revert from your assumed form for the duration of your journey, or you assume the wrong shape and cannot escape it.

While in the Magic realm you may also use the Alter power to send a dream to a sleeping person. Rules for doing so are discussed under *Entering Dreams*, above.

You may also use the power to make changes in the structure of the spirit world, specifically in the Near Lands, not the Far Lands. A shaman can actually reshape a portion of the Magic realm. To do this the shaman must make a stress roll + Alter + Storytelling + Communication. Finesse can be added to this roll if you have the Ability. It takes a Season to prepare for the change. The Ease Factor is at least 21, if that section of the spirit world is relatively unpopulated and desired changes are not drastic. At this Ease Factor, for example, changing a meadow into a grove of trees might be possible. More extreme changes are more difficult. Furthermore, if there are entities inhabiting the area, as there often are, and these beings would be greatly or adversely affected, the average "magnitude" of these beings' Might scores is added to the Ease Factor. That is, 1/5 (rounded up) of the average Might score is added to the shaman's difficulty. If you, as Storyguide, are uncertain of various Might scores, make an educated guess.

To alter the structure of the spirit realm, you again create a myth, and by creating it, make it come true. The player is again encouraged to write the character's myth. If you, as Storyguide, find it particularly suited to the changes being wrought, a bonus of +1 to +3 may be added to the player's roll. If the roll fails, the myth fails to capture the true essence of the change being made. Further attempts to restructure the spirit world are possible, but only in another Season, and with a new myth. A Botched attempt to change the spirit world results in the shaman's immediate expulsion from the spirit world, back

to her body. Further attempts to change that area of the spirit world are impossible; inspiration for further myths in and about the area escapes you.

A change imposed on the spirit world remains for as long as the character's myth remains part of tribal legend. If people who know the legend are killed, forget the myth, or alter it over time, the imposed change dissolves. The spirit world reverts to its original state.

Many shamans claim that it was by changing the spirit realm that powerful people, working together, reshaped a part of the Near Lands into Arcadia, and other people shaped part of the Far Lands into Heaven and Hell. Whether this is true or not is the subject of much debate among many shamans and some Magi. The effort behind such changes would surely be monumental, requiring many dedicated and powerful people working together over many years, even generations. The aid of potent spirits might even be required.

Some extremely powerful shamans also claim to have created Magic *regio* by means of altering the Near Lands. While this might be possible, it would take much skill, and cannot be wrought by the roll of a die. Such a change would take a whole Saga to enact. However, simply reshaping a Magic *regio* with the Alter power is certainly possible. Rules for modifying Magic Auras and *regio* are discussed in Chapter Five, under *Shamans in Magic Regio*.

RITUAL

The Ritual power, the last of the four shamanic powers, is not a power in its own right, but rather a power which can increase the effectiveness of the Travel and Control powers. To use the Ritual power a shaman must perform some sort of ritual preparation before going into trance. This preparation can take many forms, dancing, chanting, playing music, or ingesting strong drugs. Each shaman usually chooses one method of ritual preparation used throughout most shamanic practices. That is, the shaman specializes in this type of preparatory ritual, but can use others.

After an hour of preparation you make a roll of a stress die + Stamina + Ritual against an Ease Factor of 9. If this roll succeeds you may add your score in Ritual to any single Travel or Control roll when in trance. You decide when the bonus is applied. If the initial Ritual roll fails, you may spend another hour preparing again, and may roll again. However, each successive attempt after the first suffers a cumulative -1 modifier. If any Ritual roll is Botched you cannot use Ritual for the action intended in the intended trance; you gain no Ritual bonus.

Basically, the Ritual power allows you to hone and purify your spirit actions while in trance. If you are interrupted while preparing your Ritual, you may make a Concentration stress roll (if you have the Ability), against an appropriate Ease Factor (see *Ars Magica*, p. 180). If the Concentration roll fails, the current Ritual attempt fails and another hour must be spent preparing. If your Concentration roll Botches, you gain no Ritual bonus for the intended action.



Without use of the Ritual power, a shaman can only go into trance for a few minutes, limiting time spent in the spirit world (as discussed under *The Trance*, above). If a Ritual roll is successfully made, your spirit may remain in the spirit world until your intended mission is completed or you decide to return. If you enter the spirit world without the benefit of a working Ritual, your soul is pulled back to your body after a those few minutes have passed.

THE FETCH

Beyond the four basic powers that shamans may use, all shamans have one additional advantage: a Fetch. A Fetch is a spirit who is your spiritual ally, aiding your work in the spirit world. Once an apprentice shaman has finished all training (which takes about ten years) the apprentice must journey into the spirit world and return with a Fetch. Possession of a Fetch is the mark of being a full shaman.

Your Fetch can take many forms. For some the Fetch is a spiritual double, for others it's a totem animal. Sometimes the Fetch is the spirit of an ancestor, or of a deceased shaman. In a few cases you can even have more than one Fetch, usually two or three totem animals or spirits. The type of your Fetch determines where in the Magic realm you appear when you go into trance. For example, a shaman who has a wolf spirit for a Fetch appears in the local place of wolves, while a shaman with an ancestor as a Fetch appears in a place which strongly resembles the ancestor's past homeland. A shaman who has a spiritual double — another shaman — for a Fetch appears in a place in the Magic realm which is replete with objects and beings of personal significance to the shaman spirit.

Finding a Fetch

The search for and discovery of a Fetch spirit is a highly personal endeavor. Each shaman goes about it differently, and no two Fetch and shaman companions have the same relationship.

As previously stated, the search for a Fetch is undertaken as an initiation to the rank of shaman status. The hunt is the equivalent of the Hermetic Apprentice's Gauntlet, and the search is not unlike a Hermetic Magus's search for a Familiar. A Fetch must be found in the spirit realm, but wandering aimlessly in search of one is pointless. You are better suited to listen to myths about spirits, searching for one that seems to suit your identity, tastes, and purpose in life. A Travel roll is then required to arrive at that spirit's destination. If you have learned a considerable bit about the spirit, it is considered familiar.

Spirits cannot be forced or coerced into becoming Fetches. They must choose to become your companion, so they must identify with you and your life's motives. Acquisition of a Fetch therefore involves roleplaying, discussion, and cooperation. The Storyguide ultimately decides whether you may have the Fetch you seek, and you may have to listen to several myths and

approach several spirits before finding one willing to join you. A prospective Fetch's personality has much to do with its decision to join you.

Since this search takes place at the very beginning of your shamanic career, you are advised to play out the search with your Storyguide. This roleplaying not only establishes the roots of your character, but establishes who your character is at the outset of the Saga; you have to know who you are if a spirit is going to devote itself to you based on your personality.

Upon becoming your Fetch, a spirit becomes your lifelong companion. It has complete freedom of will and may refuse functions requested of it (although only rarely, and only if such functions are extremely offensive). As such a companion, a Fetch lingers in its native home in the spirit world, around your relative position in the material world. When you enter the spirit world through a trance, you enter that spirit's abode and may then travel elsewhere with it. Being so close to your Fetch, you can communicate with it whenever it is in your presence, even when you are in the material world and it is in the spirit world. However, if your Fetch travels elsewhere from you, you cannot communicate as you usually do, at least not without the use of magic to communicate over a distance in the spirit realm (using the same rules as for two shamans communicating over a distance — see *Shamanic Communication*, above).

Above all, you and your Fetch are friends, and respect each other as such, even if you may disagree at times. In fact, a Fetch is a great gift in the lonely life of a shaman, living as you do between the Mundane and Magic realms.

If a spirit ever does leave you on a permanent basis, it may do so because of alarming changes in its or your personality. If the spirit is magically altered by an outside force, it might turn against you. Similarly, if your identity changes drastically, the spirit may be offended by the new you and may abandon you. Of course, you can try to Control your Fetch before it abandons you, but doing so offends the spirit to its very "heart," and the spirit becomes your enemy as soon as it's free from your service.

It's also possible to have more than one Fetch, but usually no more than two or three, and such extra spirits are very rare. Numerous Fetches are acquisitions determined by Saga events more than anything else. Extra Fetches might be willing to join you if they are immeasurably indebted to you. You might, for instance, save an area of the spirit world from destruction, and the residents thank you with the devotion of one of their number. However, numerous Fetches don't always get along and may haggle or argue in your service. Indeed, if the spirits are naturally opposed, like one of a wolf and another of a hart, they might be constantly at odds, and therefore detrimental rather than beneficial to you. Still, such interaction makes for some great roleplaying and storytelling.

And, who plays your Fetch? It's recommended that the Storyguide assume the role of your spirit companion, but anyone in the Troupe can assume the role. If your Fetch is similar in personality to you, you may play your own Fetch. Fetches with their own identities are best played by others, like any other character.

Fetch Uses

A Fetch has many possible uses. First of all, a Fetch offers you a bonus on all Control rolls, if it is with you in the spirit world, and is not guarding your body (as discussed below). The bonus offered by the Fetch equals +1 for every 5 points, or fraction thereof, of its Spirit Might (see *Fetch Traits*, below).

A Fetch can be a source of information. A Fetch has 25 Experience Points that may be spent on Social Talents, Social Skills, and Knowledges. The Storyguide assigns these points; most such Abilities focus on the Magic realm and are determined by the spirit's nature. A Fetch cannot journey in or even perceive the mortal world unless you purchase the +2 Virtue, Ghostly Warder, and designate your Fetch as the warder.

The Fetch can journey through the spirit world and report on conditions there. It must return to you to relate that information, though, or communicate it over a distance in the spirit world, like two shamans communicating. The Fetch can also carry messages to and from your spiritual allies. Theoretically, a Fetch can journey into Magic *regio* and Auras and report on conditions there, but Fetches are natives of the spirit world, so their reports on conditions in the material world (even such a magically influenced material world) are often dubious at best. More accurate reports on the material world can be gained from Fetches that are also Ghostly Warders; they are more familiar with the mortal world.

When you, as a shaman, go into trances your Fetch may possess your body. This is usually done to prevent any unwanted possession of or magical influence on your body in your spirit's absence. Since the spirit of a shaman in trance is absent from the body, there is no spirit in the body, and if your Fetch does not possess your body, unwanted possession may, in rare circumstances, occur. Since the possessing spirit is the only spirit in the body it may not be exorcised by any normal means, just as your own spirit cannot be exorcised from your body. Since your spirit is the original inhabitant of your body, your spirit may automatically resume possession of the body when it returns, but you may be called to answer for the actions of your body when you were "away."

By occupying your body in your own spirit's absence, your Fetch prevents your body from being possessed. Your Fetch may only do so if you permit it to. Once in control the Fetch is capable of fully perceiving and interacting with the world. However, the Fetch may only use its own Abilities (as determined above), and its own mental Characteristics (Intelligence, Perception, Presence, and Communication). The physical Characteristics of the body (Strength, Stamina, Dexterity, and Quickness) are at the Fetch's disposal. The Fetch cannot make use of your powers, nor can it release any spirits held in your holding objects. However, the Fetch's Personality Traits, not your own, do apply. That means the Fetch may undermine your relationships and anger your friends, though the spirit's Personality might also do you service. Maybe a Fetch can make advances toward the member of the opposite sex that you were always too shy or abrasive to attract.

While you may ask your Fetch to perform various actions while you are in trance, a Fetch in your body is not the best candidate for complex services. Fetches are natives of the Magic realm; they are not familiar with the mortal world. Nobles, the Church, and wild animals are all foreign to a Fetch. Even more importantly, such basics as fire, hunger, night, pain, and physical combat are new to a Fetch. While a Fetch may strive to help, the unfamiliar sensory impressions of a material body may simply overwhelm a Fetch, causing it to become distracted from its task. A normal Fetch is at -3 to all Social, Knowledge, and activity rolls involving the mortal world, including rolls made while possessing your body. However, Fetches that are Ghostly Warders do not suffer from this penalty.

Fetches can learn more about the material world, though. They gain Experience Points as any *Ars Magica* character does, based on involvement in each story and lengths gone to toward achieving goals. With practice a Fetch may learn at least some of the basics of interacting in the mortal world.

Once you are finished with your trance, you may automatically return to and take control of your body. Because your Fetch is the only spirit inhabiting your body during your absence, the Fetch may not be exorcised from your body during that absence. Since journeys to the spirit world almost never last more than the duration of a good night's sleep there is only so much trouble a Fetch can get into, unless you become temporarily lost from your body. However, a Fetch in your body can get into some mischief, often determined by the spirit's personality. Thus, problems may arise when you return from a journey; you may take control of your body in the middle of a difficult or embarrassing situation. Generally speaking, letting your Fetch walk around in your body is best done only when you're given no other choice. For example, your spirit might have something to do in the Magic realm, while your body needs to flee pursuit in the mortal world.

At least during a Fetch's occupation of your body, or any single spirit's occupation of your body for that matter, your Body does not lose one Body Level for every day your spirit is absent. However, this doesn't mean the occupying spirit won't lead your body into harm on its own.

Fetch Traits

The Spirit or Magic Might of a Fetch is determined by rolling a simple die and consulting the following table:

<i>Fetch Might Table</i>	
Roll:	Spirit Might:
1-3	15
4-6	20
7-8	25
9-10	30

You can have a more powerful Fetch, one with a higher Might rating, by taking the Strong Fetch Shamanic Virtue.

Experience

Aside from offering a bonus to your Control rolls, your Fetch's Might score is important toward your protection. As long as your Fetch is in your company in the material world — it's not journeying on its own into the Magic realm or mortal world — you have a Magic Resistance score equal to the Fetch's Spirit Might, minus 5. You only have access to this Magic Resistance in the mortal world. You have no such protection in the Magic realm. If your Fetch occupies your body while your spirit is absent, your body has Magic Protection equal to the Fetch's full Might score.

If you have a Magic Resistance score of your own, the higher of the two — yours or the Fetch's — is that which takes effect. However, if the two of you are separated, your own Magic Resistance resumes protection.

In terms of Abilities, Fetches have 25 Experience Points that may be spent, specifically on Social Talents, Social Skills, and Knowledges. The Storyguide, not the player, decides how these Points are allocated, based on the nature, experiences, and personality of the spirit. These Abilities must also focus on the Magic realm, not the mortal world, so have no application in the mortal world. As Fetches can gain Experience Points (the amount decided by the Storyguide based on Saga events), scores can later be purchased in Abilities (new or old) that apply to the material world. A Fetch can therefore have two scores in an Ability, one for the spirit world and one for the material world, if two such scores are appropriate for an Ability.

Personality Traits for a Fetch are also determined by the Storyguide, based on the spirit's character. Although Fetches are usually friends of shamans, the two need not always get along. Fetches can be stubborn, irritating, lusty, and lazy. The number of Traits allowed is unlimited; choose as many as required to create a well-rounded identity for the spirit.

Powers are certainly available to many spirits, and Fetches may have some. However, as Fetches already offer shamans many bonuses, giving Fetches powers makes shamans very potent beings, maybe unbalancing the game or taking emphasis from the shaman. Thus, if a Fetch must have powers, they should be weak or limited in scope. Powers with Hermetic spell Level equivalents of up to 10 are appropriate. Fetch powers should also be limited to use in the Magic realm, or during possession of a material body.

Shamans and Aging

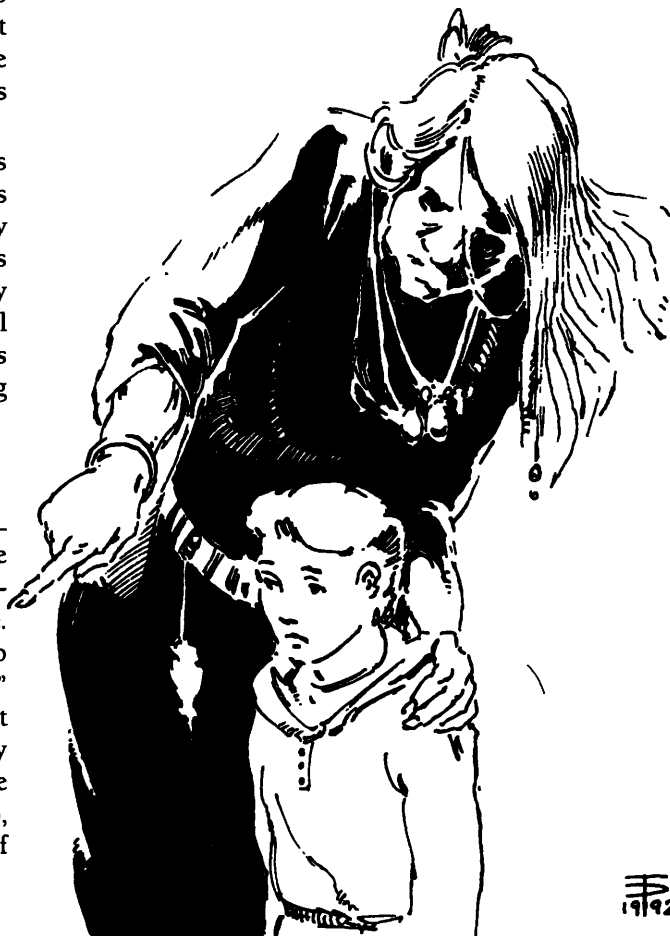
With all the powers offered them, shamans clearly have many of the equivalent capabilities of Hermetic Magi. However, shamans lack one important gift, the gift of prolonged life. Nothing in the powers of shamans themselves allows them to prolong their lives. And yet, shamans don't let this "failing" limit them. Shamans often make deals with spirits of significant power, and these spirits can slow the aging process, but they cannot stop it; they cannot divert death. These supportive spirits usually slow the aging rate by a factor of two to five (so, a shaman only makes Aging rolls every 2 to 5 years, instead of every year).

Shamans gain Experience Points like any other *Ars Magica* characters, and can use these Points to improve any of their Abilities and Passions.

In addition, shamans have two methods of improving their shamanic powers (Travel, Control, Alter, and Ritual). First, they can use Experience Points to raise power levels as if the powers are Abilities (using the same increase scale used for Abilities).

Shamans can also study to improve these powers. Shamans may not learn from books or vis, but may study from more experienced shamans, or from spirits themselves (although Fetches cannot be learned from). Studying from a teacher is dealt with using the same rules as for *Studying Arts*, assuming a Magus studies from a book (see *Ars Magica*, p.238). In this case, though, the equivalent level of the "book" equals the human teacher's score in the power taught, or equals the Magic Might of the spirit teacher. It takes one Season to increase a single power's score through training; shamans may only increase one power score per Season.

For example, a shaman who has a Travel score of 5 is learning from a shaman with a Travel of 12. In one Season of study the pupil gains 2 levels in Travel (the teacher's score of 12 is more than twice the pupil's score of 5). If the same shaman



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Shamanic Activities Table

Action	Roll Modifiers	Notes
Travel to a known location in the Near Lands	Travel+Perception+Finesse+stress die	9+
Travel to an unknown location in the Near Lands	Travel+Perception+Finesse+stress die	12+
Travel to a known location in the Far Lands	Travel+Perception+Finesse+stress die	12+
Travel to an unknown location in the Far Lands	Travel+Perception+Finesse+stress die	15+
Bring your nearby companions into the spirit world with you	Travel+Stamina+simple die	7+ 1 per passenger after the first
Travel to material world destination	Travel+Perception+Finesse+stress die	9+
Possession of material being	Control+Stamina+Penetration+stress die	vs Parma Magica (w/out Form) Travel + Stamina Magic Might, or Stamina+10, whichever is appropriate or highest + stress die
Resist shaman's search for you	Travel+stress die subtracted from shaman's Travel roll	n/a
Communicate w/another shaman	Travel+Communication+stress die (may add Penetration)	9+
Spirit realizing material body is jeopardized (see Chapter 5)	simple die+Perception+Alertness	8+
Command a spirit	Control+Stamina+1/5 Spirit Might of any spirits helping you+Penetration+stress die	vs Magic Might+stress die
Awe a spirit	Control+Presence+stress die	vs Magic Might+stress die
Make a binding object for a spirit	Alter+Craft+Dexterity+stress die	vs 10+1/5 the Magic Might rounded up, of the spirit being bound
Make a link to the mortal world for a spirit in the Far Lands	Alter+Storytelling+Communication+stress die	vs 21+1/5 the Magic Might, rounded up, of the spirit
Craft a dream	Alter+Storytelling+Intelligence+Finesse+stress die	15+
Successfully use the Ritual power to gain the Ritual bonus to rolls	Ritual+Stamina+stress die	9+ once/hour
Change your form in the Magic realm	Alter+Stamina+simple die	7+, this is a stress roll for Untrained shamans
Reshape portion of Near Lands	Alter+Storytelling+Communication+Finesse+stress die	21+1/5 the average Magic Might, rounded up, of spirits in area
Reshape Magic Aura or regio	stress die+Stamina+Travel+Aura rating	12+
Maintain physical senses when entering spirit world in physical form	stress die+Perception+Meditation	9+
Heal yourself of 1 Body Level of damage in the Magic realm	Alter+Stamina+stress die	7+, make a Fatigue roll or lose 1 Fatigue Level. See Chapter 5
Heal another of 1 Body Level of damage in the Magic realm	Alter+Storytelling+Communication+stress die	11+, make a Fatigue roll or lose 1 Fatigue Level. See Chapter 5
Rebuild the spirit of someone who has died in the Magic realm	Alter+Storytelling+Finesse+the patient's Stamina+stress die	16+, multiple shamans can assist total their Alter scores. See Chapter 5
Restore own spirit after spirit world death (see Chapter 5)	stress die+Stamina	5+

had been learning from a spirit with a Spirit Might of 20, the shaman would have gained 3 levels in Travel (the spirit's Might is more than three times the pupil's score of 5).

And remember, shamans and spirits usually require recompense for a Season spent studying under them. Money or material goods for rituals may placate shamans, but spirits usually have other needs.

Playing a Shapechanger

While some players may want to adopt shamans as characters, others may want to adopt shapechangers from tribal societies, as characters. Whereas a shaman character fills your Magus "character slot," a shamanic shapechanger assumes your Companion character slot. The rules for generating shapechangers are somewhat different from those for "ordinary" shapechanger characters (i.e., those created using the standard *Ars Magica* Third Edition and *The Medieval Bestiary* Second Edition rules).

SHAPECHANGING POWER

The essence of a shapechanging character, obviously enough, is his or her ability to assume animal form. To lay down the basics of such a character, the parameters for shapechanging are provided here at the outset.

First of all, shamanic shapechangers have limits on their behavior. All shamanic shapechangers are bound by vows to protect their tribe and cultural ways, to follow the old ways, and to never convert to Christianity. Furthermore, shamanic shapechangers are bound to never give in to the beast inside them; they are forbidden from acting as wild animals. They cannot act without concern for the consequences of their actions. And, shamanic, tribal shapechangers may never seek to produce a child with a non-shapechanger. Failure to follow these strictures can result in various fates, ranging from tribal punishment, to exile from the tribe, to, in truly extreme cases, punishment by the spirits. Punishment by the spirits (usually those associated with the tribe), commonly takes the form of a curse (-1 to -2 Supernatural Flaw), or the acquisition of the Haunted Supernatural Flaw.

There is another limit on shamanic shapechangers. While they may have Second Sight, Visions, or any other ordinary Exceptional Trait (and related Virtue), no shamanic shapechanger may take the Dreamer Virtue (see below). The Dreamer Virtue is a type of shamanic power, and no member of the Moon Clan may have Sun Clan powers. Shamanic shapechangers are also unable to be shamans or Magi of any kind.

Bestiality and Shapechangers

Shamanic characters who can assume animal form must take the Shapechanger Virtue. This is the +4 Supernatural Werewolf Virtue with its name changed. The name is changed to reflect the various animal forms shamanic shapechangers may assume; werewolves are not the only types. Many of the rules of the Werewolf Virtue are also changed for shamanic shapechanger use. When you adopt the Werewolf/Shapechanger Virtue you therefore adopt it in theme only, with new shapechanging rules provided in this book.

Part of the Werewolf Virtue (part which is still retained for use here) involves assigning Experience Points toward a shapechanging Ability. This Ability is called your Bestiality score. Your Bestiality score reflects how close to animal form you are; the higher your score, the more animalistic you tend to be.

In return for obedience to these strictures, shamanic shapechangers may purchase the Shapechanging Virtue (otherwise known as the +4 Werewolf Virtue, *Ars Magica*, p. 81) at a lower than normal cost. To have a battle ready form is a +3 Virtue, and to have a non-battle ready form (in general, any animal of Size -3 or less, or any larger animal with little ability to defend itself, such as a non-poisonous snake of Size -2) is



only a +2 Virtue. (As an exception, those of the household clan must take a +3 Virtue, as discussed below.) In addition, the cost of this shapechanging includes the cost of the Will Over Form Virtue (*Ars Magica*, p. 68). All shamanic shapechangers have the Will Over Form Virtue (it is free); they are trained in it in their maturity ritual. Failure to have Will Over Form brands one as a corrupt shapechanger, an outcast not fit to live in human, tribal society. Because of the training they receive, shamanic shapechangers also begin the game with a free score of 2 in the Will Over Form *Ability* (taken as part of the Virtue).

As an aside, having the +1 Virtue, Strong-Willed (*Ars Magica*, p. 78), offers a +3 bonus to all Will Over Form rolls, and having the -1 Flaw, Weak-Willed (*Ars Magica*, p. 79), imposes a -3 penalty to all Will Over Form rolls.

The mechanics of shamanic shapechanging also work a bit differently than they do for "common" shapechangers. All shamanic shapechangers may attempt to shapechange at will. To succeed in the effort you must roll 9+ on a stress die + Stamina + Bestiality + Will Over Form. To resume human form you must make the same roll, except your Bestiality score is now subtracted from your roll. If either roll fails you may try again, but each successive attempt after the first within the same scene incurs a cumulative -1 modifier. A scene lasts as long as the current time and space frames remain the same. Thus, if you fail an attempt to change, you may try again, but you suffer a -1 modifier, and if you try for a third time, you suffer a -2 modifier. If your change roll ever Botches, you cannot

assume animal or human form until the next sunrise or sunset, or until the Storyguide decides that some outside factor justifies another attempt.

Character Personality Traits may also influence your capacity to change forms. Traits reflecting self-control offer a bonus to change forms, while ones that reflect low self-control penalize rolls to change, or increase rolls to assume beast form and decrease rolls to resume human form. For example, the Violent +3 Trait offers a +3 bonus to assume beast form, but subtracts three from rolls to resume human form. Alternatively, a Trait like Calm +2 adds two to all rolls to change form.

The ability to change physical form upon command is limited to the physical world. Because shamanic shapechangers have pure blood, they cannot take human form at will when journeying in the Magic realm (either when accompanying a shaman on a trance journey, or if physically journeying there through *regio*). The bestial nature of a shamanic shapechanger is tightly bound to the fabric of the spirit realm. So, before a shapechanger enters the Magic realm, she must assume beast form and must maintain it throughout the journey. Only another beast form, if the shapechanger has any others, can be assumed in the spirit world; human form cannot be adopted until you return to the mortal world.

More "common" shapechangers — those that are not shamanic — may also enter the Magic realm (either with shamanic help or with physical travel through *regio*). However, because the spirits of "common" shapechangers are not as pure as those of shamanic shapechangers, more "common" shapechangers can change form in the Magic realm. Their efforts are still strained, though. Their shapechanging rolls suffer a -5 modifier, either to assume animal form or to revert to human form (using shapechanging rules from *Ars Magica* and *The Medieval Bestiary*).

The pure blood of a shamanic shapechanger in the Magic realm does provide the changer with some powers, though. A shamanic shapechanger has a limited version of the communication ability possessed by shamans. That is, a shamanic shapechanger in the Magic realm may communicate with any other shaman, shapechanger, or animal spirit encountered. Furthermore, in the mortal world, a shamanic shapechanger may communicate with any animal of the same species that the changer can assume.

Shapechanging Forms

The origins of your shamanic shapechanger character determine what forms you may choose. Characters from the far north and from the Mediterranean may choose the form of any single animal which is native to the far north or south, respectively. That form may have Size -3 or higher. Shapechanging for these peoples is a highly personalized, individual ability.

In the Slavic lands shapechanging occurs according to clans. Every member of a single clan may assume the form of the same kind of animal. There is a wolf clan, a wild horse clan,



War Horse of Perun

The War Horse of Perun is an example of a Slavic shapechanger of the horse clan, indicating how the changer's traits are generally higher than those of a typical horse. (Note: Shapechangers can have traits like Magic Might, and Virtues and Flaws, but they are not listed here as this example is purely intended to demonstrate the difference between a clan horse and normal horse.)

Vital Statistics: Size +2, Intelligence 0, Perception (alert) +1, Strength (sinewy) +3, Stamina (stubborn) +6, Presence (impressive build) +1, Communication 0, Dexterity (graceful) +1, Quickness (powerful gallop) +3

Personality Traits: Spirited +3, Brave +3

Combat Scores:

Hooves: First Strike +6, Attack +5, Damage +10

Bite: First Strike +4, Attack +3, Damage +3

Body Levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Defense +0 (6 Action), Soak +10 (16 Action),

Fatigue +6

a bear clan, an eagle clan, and a deer clan (the deer of this last clan are exceptionally large and powerful, Size +2, closer in appearance to the Great White Hart than to ordinary deer).

Among the Slavs there is also a clan of household animals. The household clan is the only exception to the rule that shamanic shapechangers may take the form of only one animal. Being a household changer is a +3 Virtue, which includes the Will Over Form Virtue. Household changers have the ability to take on as many different forms as they have Bestiality Points. However, these forms may only be those of small animals, animals normally found around a house or farm (cocks, cats, rat-snakes, rats, crows, and geese are all such animals). No member of the household clan may take the form of a creature with Size greater than -3, or of a creature which does not live in close proximity to humanity.

Furthermore, Slavic horse shapechangers do not take the form of ordinary riding or pack horse. Instead, they become wild war horses, so their characteristics are a little different from those listed in *Ars Magica* and *The Medieval Bestiary*.

Aside from the exception, above, animal forms assumed by shapechangers have, or have traits based on, the traits and capacities listed in animal entries in *Ars Magica* (p. 335) and *The Medieval Bestiary*. The only difference in the animals' statistics is that shapechangers have a +8 bonus to their Soak totals (added to the animals' Soak scores). This bonus is a mystical ability which applies to all damage taken in beast form. However, all shapechangers must choose a weakness, such as magic, other animals, wood, or iron, against which this Soak bonus does not apply. The vulnerability shapechangers have to silver is a modern, not medieval, convention.

Otherwise. . .

Aside from the Shapechanging Virtue, and any factors inherent to it, generation of a shamanic shapechanger is the same as generation of a normal Companion character. Any alterations to that system are discussed below.

STEP ONE: CHARACTERISTICS

In human form, a shapechanger character has Characteristics determined by normal means (see *Ars Magica*, p.50). However, Characteristics in beast form are different from the norm. As stated above, a shapechanger's beast form has traits determined by the animal form taken (traits are taken from the standard beast profile of the rules or *The Medieval Bestiary*). Human Characteristic scores modify "standard" beast Characteristics, though. If a human is physically strong in human form (+1 Strength), she is a physically strong beast (normal beast Strength score at +1). If a shapechanger is weak in human form (-1 Strength), the normal Strength of her animal is reduced by one. This modification also applies to Size. If a character is +1 Size as a human, he has +1 added to standard Size as a beast (with the appropriate Body and Fatigue Levels added as well — one of each if you are Size +1).

Normally a shapechanger cannot speak in beast form, unless the beast can normally speak (as a magpie can). This does not mean shapechangers lack Communication scores. Shapechangers in beast form can still communicate with spirits. Communication score may remain the same in beast form as it is in human form, or may be reduced based on growls and grunts added to words spoken. However, shapechangers do retain their full human Intelligence, so can fully understand human speech, and may respond accordingly. Shapechangers can also fully understand and communicate with all animals of the species they can become. This communication is not speech, but rather typical communication between animals — smell, body movements, and sounds.

A shapechanger with the Speak in Form Virtue (below) can speak to humans while in animal form.

Presence is a score still possessed by shapechangers in beast form. The human's Presence score is translated into animal terms. If a human has +3 Presence for being noble in bearing, that person's animal form has an equivalent noble bearing. If a person has a -2 Presence because of poor hygiene, the beast shape assumed might have a foul smell or mottled fur, and so the equivalent of a -2 Presence. However, the Storyguide might impose a limit on any Presence score based on the animal form assumed. It's improbable that a weresquirrel has a high Presence, for example.

Size also has application to Presence in beast form. If a human has Size +1, animal shapes assumed have +1 added to Presence. If a person is small (maybe Size -1), the animal form assumed has one subtracted from Presence.

By and large, animal Presence has bearing on relations with other animals, spirits, and humans attuned to the animal world. Ordinary people rarely have appreciation for an animal's Presence, other than fear for a large animal, so your animal Presence is rarely used on die rolls in relation to mundane humans.

STEP TWO: VIRTUES AND FLAWS

Since shamanic shapechangers are strongly magical characters, shamanic shapechangers may, at the Storyguide's discretion, take up to 10 points in Flaws, and therefore 10 points of Virtues, like Magi and shamans, rather than the 7 points normally allowed ordinary Companions. By and large, Virtues and Flaws chosen apply to both your human and beast forms. However, Virtues and Flaws bought can be divided amongst human and beast forms, making your forms more distinct.

Aside from the obvious Shapechange Virtue, shamanic shapechangers have others they may purchase that are unique to their nature. Such traits are listed here. You may choose from these and any other appropriate to your character. If any Virtue or Flaw presented here contradicts a Virtue or Flaw from the rules, the one from this book takes precedence. Virtues and Flaws discussed in the *Mutofigura* Chapter of *The Medieval Bestiary* can also be chosen for your shamanic shapenchanger, but, again, if Virtues and Flaws here contradict those of the *Bestiary*, those of this book apply.



Flaws: -1

Offensive to Animals: As printed in *Ars Magica* (p. 82), except this Flaw also applies when you are in beast form. Other animals know you are a magical being, not a normal animal.

Difficulty With Control: You have difficulty controlling your ability to change. Your score in the Will Over Form Ability is divided by 2 (rounded down) for purposes of rolls only. (Thus, you purchase a score in the Ability, and may invest Experience in it normally, but the score is divided by two for rolling purposes.) You have a Basic starting score of 0, not 2, in this Ability.

Flaws: -2

Curse: At certain times, or under certain conditions, you must take the form of a beast. This change may not be resisted, even by Will Over Form. As long as the circumstances appropriate to the curse are in effect you remain in beast form.

Flaws: -3

Uncontrolled: You have the Will Over Form Virtue, but lack a score in its associated Ability. Furthermore, you cannot acquire a score in the Ability by the expenditure of Experience Points. You automatically gain a bad Reputation of 4, within your tribe and beyond, as a savage or dangerous person. You are ostracized by shapechangers who know of your problem. Shamans who look at you with the Second Sight Ability (on a roll of 12+) recognize your defect.

If you are lucky you can find someone who might teach you the Will Over Form Ability. Such training requires that you do nothing else for one Season; you can't even partake of stories. If this study time is interrupted in any way, your Season's efforts are wasted. After the Season is over, you gain one Experience Point toward the Will Over Form Ability. This Point counts toward any annual Points you earn for the current Saga year (see *Ars Magica*, p. 353). Repeated Seasons can be devoted to this training, each offering 1 Experience Point in Will Over Form Ability, but you must first find a teacher willing to help you in each Season.

Your Ability score can rise no higher than your teacher's, and your teacher must be willing to sacrifice a Season in the first place. Even if you do acquire a score in Will Over Form Ability, you retain your Reputation and those with Second Sight still perceive your inherent flaw.

Virtues: +1

Speak in Form: You may speak normally in your beast form. Your Communication score is the same as when in human form, although few people may be inclined to listen to a talking beast.

Variable Form: You are intimately familiar with the animal whose form you can take, and you may turn into different forms of its shape. Thus, a shapechanger familiar with horses may take the form of any horse, not just one horse.

Hidden Shape: As printed in *Ars Magica* (p. 68), except for you it is only a +1 Virtue.

Partial Form: You may partially assume the form of your beast. A werewolf can assume wolf eyes (for seeing in the dark), wolf ears (for keen hearing), a wolf muzzle (for attacks), or wolf fur and hide (for Soak bonuses). These changes are brought about at will, though a full change still requires the normal die rolls. When making partial changes, you acquire the bonuses appropriate to your beast for the body part changed. If you grow wolf ears, for instance, you gain the wolf's Perception score. You cannot use partial form to assume a humanoid, bipedal beast; that's a modern creation.

Using partial form has the disadvantage of making you look non-human to some degree. Most uses of partial form give you the equivalent of the Disfigured Flaw (*Ars Magica*, p. 77). In the wrong circles, witnesses of such changes may brand you a monster.

Virtues: +2

Magic Resistance: As printed in *Ars Magica* (p. 81), except that due to your highly magical nature this is only a +2 Virtue. However, the Resistance is only +15.

STEP THREE: ABILITIES

Shapechanger characters have starting Experience Points to spend on Abilities equal to double their age, as is the case for all Companion characters. However, as a shapechanger you have the following Basic Abilities, gained automatically: Speak Own Language 5, and Will Over Form 2.

STEP FOUR: COMBAT VALUES

The attacks inherent to a beast are at the disposal of a shapechanger in beast form. The Body and Fatigue Levels of the beast are also those adopted by the shapechanger in beast form. However, if a shapechanger is particularly hardy or frail in human form, the Storyguide may add or subtract certain Levels to an assumed beast's profile. For each extra Body or Fatigue Level a character has above the human norm, an extra Body or Fatigue Level is added to the assumed beast's Levels. For each Body or Fatigue Level a character has below the norm for humans, a Body or Fatigue Level is subtracted from the assumed beast's Levels (these are usually the Hurt Body Level and Winded Fatigue Level). Such extra or missing Body and Fatigue Levels usually arise from having high or low Size scores.

When changing from animal to human or human to animal, any Body or Fatigue Levels lost while in the previous form are subtracted from the Levels of the new form assumed. Thus, if you lose two Fatigue Levels and one Body Level in animal form, those same Levels are taken from your human form. If these lost, "transferred," Levels exceed the total Levels of your newly adopted form, you may fall Unconscious, be Incapacitated, or may die. If you lose more Body or Fatigue Levels than your new form has, left over Levels are subtracted

from the other Level type. Thus, if you have six Body Levels in animal form, but only three in human form, and suffer four Levels damage as an animal, you are Incapacitated if you revert to human form at that time, and lose one Fatigue Level. (There's one Body Level remaining after the first three are subtracted, so the last is taken from Fatigue Levels.)

Playing a Dreamer

Dreamers are people who either lack the ability to be full shamans, or had the ability and inclination to be shamans, but never received training until their Gift had already established itself in dreaming.

Dreamers possess a +2 Supernatural Virtue, called Dreaming. Aside from this Virtue, character creation is the same as for any other character, and any character type — Magi, Companions, and Grogs (and some of their tribal equivalents) may take the Virtue. However, the Virtue may not be chosen by shamanic shapechangers (those of the Moon Clan may not have Sun Clan powers) or by Faerie Companions (see the Second Edition supplement *Faeries*, p. 89). Faeries do not dream like other beings, so cannot deal with human dreams. By and large, shamans also lack the Virtue as their magical Gift is already devoted to the Magic realm. This Virtue therefore costs 3 points for shaman characters. The parameters of the Virtue are discussed fully here, in a discussion of a dreamer's capabilities.

When most people dream their spirit simply drifts in the Magic realm, unable to control its movements except in an unconscious way. People who have the Dreaming Virtue are aware they are dreaming, and may fully control their actions and movements in the Magic realm. In game terms dreamers have the Travel power, just as shamans do. In fact, dreamers acquire an Ability score in Dreaming. The score is purchased out of the character's starting, age-based Experience Points spent on Abilities. The character's Travel score is equal to his Dreaming Ability score.

Dreamers have access to all the capabilities of the Travel power that shamans do (see the *Travel* power, above). The character's score in the Dreaming Ability replaces Travel score. Dreamers may even attempt to take other sleeping people along with them on their dreaming journeys. However, dreamers lack the Control, Alter, and Ritual powers, and cannot have a Fetch. Dreamers may not attempt to awe or control spirits, though they may attempt to bargain with or persuade them. If a shaman character has the Dreaming Virtue, the two Travel scores had (that for normal shamanism and that for Dreaming) must be kept separate and used when applicable. That is, the normal shamanic one is applied when the character travels the spirit world via trance. The Dreaming Travel score is applied when the shaman actually goes to sleep to dream in the spirit world. (Note: If the shaman character ever loses his spirit, neither power functions.)



Although dreamers don't have the Ritual power, their time spent in the spirit world is not limited. They may remain there for as long as they dream, and are not drawn back to their bodies after a few minutes (as is a shaman spirit sent into the spirit world without benefit of the Ritual power).

While Dreamers lack the Alter power, they may attempt to alter their form and heal *themselves* (not others) in the Magic realm (see Chapter Five), just as shamans do, by rolling 7+ on a stress die + Stamina + Dreaming. Note, though, that if a shaman has the Dreaming Virtue, the higher healing plus spirit altering total (between that for normal shamanism and Dreaming) is used. In addition, dreamers may only journey to the Near Lands of the Magic realm. Only shamans, and those accompanied by them, may voluntarily journey to the Far Lands.

Aside from the Dreaming Virtue, dreamers often have Exceptional Talent Virtues, allowing them Second Sight and Visions. These Virtues and Abilities are purchased normally. The +1 Virtue, Versatile Sleeper (*Ars Magica*, p. 76), allows a dreamer to enter the Magic realm at a moment's notice. Dreamers also have the same ability as shamans to communicate with all sentient inhabitants of the Magic realm (but the capacity only applies when a dreamer is dreaming, of course). And, any dreamer who has the +2 Virtue, Latent Magical Ability (*Ars Magica*, p. 80), has the capacity to become either a Magus or shaman, with the proper training (dealt with in the course of your Saga).

Playing a Spirit Master: Hermetic Shamans

This type of character is a fusion of Magus and shaman, so occupies your Magus "character role." However, spirit master characters are inclined toward either Hermetic or shamanic magic. This inclination determines how such a character is created, as discussed below.

Hermetic-Shamanic Unity

On a fundamental level the principles of shamanism are incompatible with those of Hermetic magic. Shamans journey to the Magic realm, while Hermetic Magi draw power for their spells from that realm. This does not mean shamans cannot join the Order of Hermes; they can and do, though only through House Ex Miscellanea. Indeed, shamans and Magi can learn much from each other. Shamans have been invaluable to Hermetic Magi in learning about the Magic realm and magic *regio*. And, shamans are invaluable in the teaching of another type of magic: summoning.

Summoning has a bad reputation in the Order, and not without reason. A little over two hundred years ago a number of members of House Tytalus were corrupted by demons they summoned. Indeed, they placed the whole Order in danger of becoming puppets of the Evil One. Because of this threat, all summoning, even that involving non-diabolical entities — such as faeries, ghosts, and elementals — is regarded as a potentially dangerous act. And yet, there exists within House Ex Miscellanea a group of Magi who make summoning their stock and trade. These Magi are spirit masters.

The origin of the spirit masters is lost in the mists of time, but some in the Order theorize they were a group of non-Hermetic, spell-using wizards who dealt with shamans, learning something of the structure of the Magic realm and its inhabitants. After the Order was formed, these wizards joined or were forced to join.

Regardless of the origin of these Magi, many of today's have never even seen a shaman, much less talked to one, and function in the Order of Hermes of their own will, albeit with some ill-regard. These spirit masters are the predominant kind. However, there is another, lesser-known kind. It's rumored that some Magi have begun working with shamans again, producing a new school of spirit masters. For instance, the Magi of Ice Crag Covenant in Latvia (the Novgorod Tribunal) have been combining Hermetic magic with shamanic knowledge for the past 70 years. The Covenant has produced a number of young Magi, some of whom have spread their knowledge to other Tribunals. These Magi work with sha-

mans, summoning entities from the spirit world, and journeying to the spirit world with shamans, in order to better understand this powerful realm. As evidence of their improved, combined power, the Magi and shamans of Ice Crag have been of great aid to the locals in the fight against Christianity and its Teutonic knights.

HERMETIC SPIRIT MASTERS

Those spirit masters who are separated from shamans by both time and space may be created as ordinary Magi Ex Miscellanea. The Order of Hermes supplement offers the most ideas on creation of such characters. You must acquire a Virtue of Aptitude with Magical Minions (Supernatural +2). That is, you receive a +2 bonus to any roll that directly involves elementals, magical beasts, ghosts, faeries, demons, and other magical creatures. Magi of your kind also tend to have Abilities like Fantastic Beast Lore, Faerie Lore, Legend Lore, Occult Lore, and you might be learned in the ancient languages of the spirits you speak with. As for magic, you specialize in spells that summon, control, and ward off ghosts, faeries, and elementals. You might even dabble in diabolism.

As your training has been extensively Hermetic and not shamanic, you do not have the Shamanic Trained in the Order Virtue. That Virtue is reserved for more directly shamanic influenced Magi (those below).

SHAMANIC INFLUENCED SPIRIT MASTERS

Spirit masters who belong to the Order of Hermes, but have received direct instruction in shamanic ways, are often located in isolated reaches, like the recesses of Novgorod Tribunal. After all, these are the places where shamans are most common. You are certainly a member of House Ex Miscellanea.

Because of your unique position and knowledge you have a number of unusual abilities, aside from those learned from the Order (although some of your Hermetic training has also been lost). First of all, you must purchase the +2 Virtue, Affinity with Magical Minions, as discussed under Hermetic spirit masters, above. Furthermore, you must purchase the Trained in the Order Shamanic Virtue, which includes the Hedge Wizard and Isolated from the Order Flaws. These Virtues are required of your training and cost six points of Virtues.

You also have other Virtues and Flaws at your disposal. You may have been taught to focus your mind and will through music, so may have the +1 Virtue Special Circumstances when singing or playing music, or when in the presence of such music. Furthermore, if you were born and raised in a remote locale, you probably have the -2 Flaw, Sheltered Upbringing. And, as your shamanic training has weakened your Hermetic capacity (as reflected by the Trained in the Order Virtue), you

Shamans and Bjornaer Magi

One of the fundamental codes of shamanic society, as handed down by the spirits themselves, is the law that shamans and shapechangers may not mingle; those of the Sun and Moon Clans may not have children. According to shamanic folk, then, Magi of House Bjornaer are abominations, for such Magi combine magic (a Sun Clan power) with shapechanging (a Moon Clan power). Indeed, according to shamanic legend, Bjornaer was the child of a Sun and Moon clan coupling.

Given this offense at Bjornaer Magi, such Magi cannot be of "conventional" shamanic origin. They cannot have shamanic powers, only Hermetic powers (and shamans or Magi with true shamanic powers can only belong to House Ex Miscellanea). However, shamanic folk do recognize the kindred spirit between them and Bjornaer Magi. They recognize these Magi as a bad seed, a potential threat and danger, one which must be monitored if not eliminated.

might have the Magic Susceptibility Supernatural Flaw. Lastly, shaman influenced spirit masters often have the Dreamer Virtue and Ability, and may have a Knack (+1 or +2) in Legend Lore and Occult Lore.

Aside from these mandatory and optional Virtues, Flaws, and Abilities, you may create your character as any other Magus Ex Miscellanea. (You can have a Fetch, but cannot have a Hermetic Familiar.)

SPIRIT MASTER SPELLS

As a spirit master, whether aligned more closely to the Order or shamans themselves, you have access to some unique spells more available to you than other Hermetic Magi. Certainly other Hermetic Magi can learn and cast these spells, but they may only discover them through travel and trade, where you are free to choose them at will during character creation.

Destroy Spirits of the Element: Pe (Aq, Au, Ig, Te), Gen.

Spell Focus: A fouled item of appropriate element (e.g., vial of polluted water) (+1)

R: Near/Sight, D: Inst.

Destroys any elemental of the type specific to the spell if you can match its Magic Might on a stress die + spell Level - 5.

Bind Spirits of the Element: Re (Aq, Au, Ig, Te), Gen.

Spell Focus: Appropriate element held in a container (+1)

R: Near/Spec., D: Sun/Moon

You can control an elemental of the type specific to the spell if you can roll its Magic Might or higher on a stress die + spell Level. If the elemental is already bound by a higher Level

Summary of Non-Shamanic Rolls

Shapechanger Rolls

Assume animal form: stress die + Stamina + Bestiality + Will Over Form Ability versus 9. When resuming human form, subtract Bestiality from the roll. Personality Traits modify changing rolls as appropriate.

Dreamer Rolls

Travel in the Near Lands: stress die + Perception + Dreaming Ability + Finesse versus Ease Factors based on familiar or unfamiliar destinations (9 or 12).

Heal Self in Near Lands: stress die + Dreaming Ability + Stamina versus 7

Alter Form in Near Lands: stress die + Dreaming Ability + Stamina versus 7

Restore own spirit after spirit world death: stress die + Stamina versus an Ease Factor of 5 (see Chapter Five).

Spirit realizing material body is jeopardized: simple die + Perception + Alertness versus 8 (see Chapter Five).

Entering Spirit World Rolls

Checking possessions on first journey: stress die + Perception + Alertness versus an Ease Factor of 9. For successive journeys the check is made on a simple die. (See Chapter Five.)

Physically Entering Spirit World Rolls

Maintain physical world senses: stress die + Perception + Meditation versus an Ease Factor of 9 (see Chapter Five).

Far Lands Rolls

Avoiding entrancement by the lands: stress die + Stamina + Concentration or Meditation versus an Ease factor of 11.

binding spell, your spell does not work. A Botch may mean the elemental attacks you to the best of its ability. If you try to bind an elemental again when its first binding wears off, you risk one extra Botch roll for every day (or month if using vis in the spell casting) the elemental has been in your service.

Summon Spirits of the Element: Re (Aq, Au, Ig, Te), Gen.

R: Reach, Spec., D: Ritual, Req.: Vim

You can summon any elemental of the type specific to the spell if you know of it and can roll its Magic Might on a stress die + spell Level. You must summon the creature out of its natural element. A Botch may mean you have summoned the wrong kind of elemental, perhaps an unusually strong or hostile one.

Ward Against Spirits of the Element: Re (Aq, Au, Ig, Te), Gen.

Spell Focus: A Star Ruby (+3)

R: Spec., D: Ring

You form a magical ring, eleven paces in diameter, around yourself, the strength of which the Storyguide secretly determines by rolling a stress die + Level + 5. Any elemental of the type specific to the spell and with a Magic Might equal to or less than this sum is unable to enter the circle or harm those within it. The ring lasts as long as you remain in it.

Craft the Bottle of the Elements: MuVi, Gen

R: Reach, D: Perm., Ritual

With this Ritual you can turn a mundane item into a magical bottle capable of holding an elemental. The item must be suitable to the elemental type to be held (i.e., no fire elementals in wooden containers). After the enchantment the item is able to hold any spirit of the designated element, which is released when the item is broken. One must bind an elemental to put it in the bottle (as per the *Bind Spirits of the Element* spell, above). Before breaking the item, a Magus can bind the spirit again so that it follows orders as soon as it is released.

Elementals

Elementals are everywhere, inhabiting all natural places. Within the Dominion and places of Infernal Aura they are reduced in power, so are rarely found there. Elementals usually exist in spirit form, immersed in their appropriate environments. When they interact with the other elements, either because they have been summoned or because something interests them, they take physical form in the material world. They do not usually notice other elements at all, but can sense magic. Since seeing something outside of its element is probably a novelty, an elemental is often curious about any magical things which come near it.

Elementals are magical, so they get the same bonuses and penalties as Magi for being in areas of supernatural influence.

Listed here are some elemental spells of the most common nature. They are not linked to any specific element, but if a Magus is to invent one of these spells, he has to invent one specific to a certain element. For instance, *Destroy Spirits of the Element* has to be invented four times, once each for fire, water, earth, and air, before you can effect all elementals with it. Basically, wherever you see the word "Element" in the titles of these spells, replace it with "Fire," "Water," "Earth," or "Air," when you give your Magus that spell or invent it.

Summon Creatures of Magic: ReVi, Gen.

R: Reach, D: Spec., Ritual

You can summon any magical entity from the Magic realm, if you know of the entity, and can roll its Magic Might on a stress die + spell Level. Botches can summon anything from the Magic realm.

Bind Spirits of Magic: ReVi, Gen.

Spell Focus: A Lodestone (+3)

R: Near/Spec., D: Sun/Moon

You can control a magical entity from the Magic realm if you can roll its Magic Might on a stress die + spell Level. If the entity is already bound by a more powerful spell, your binding does not work. A Botch may mean the entity either flees or attacks you. If you try to bind a magical entity after its first binding wears off you must roll one extra Botch for every day (or month if vis is used in the spell casting) the entity has been in your service.

Summon Faeries of the Wilderness: Re (Aq, Au, He, Te), Gen

R: Reach, D: Spec., Ritual, Req.: Vim

You can summon any faerie of the type specific to the spell (water and sea, wind, forest, or earth) if you know of the faerie and can roll twice its Faerie Might on a stress die + spell Level (faeries are more resistant to Hermetic Magic than are creatures from the Magic realm). You must summon the faerie in a place appropriate to it — a forest, an open field, or a mountaintop. A Botch may mean you summon the wrong type of faerie, or perhaps some sort of powerful faerie guardian, who is rather upset with you.

Faeries may be summoned and warded against by Hermetic Magic, but no Hermetic Magi have yet discovered a way to destroy or bind faeries. Once a faerie has been summoned it is best to talk and bargain with it.



SHAMANIC SOCIETIES

CHAPTER THREE



Mythic Europe's population is largely made up of Christians and invaders from other lands, such as the Moslems in Iberia. However, in a few areas, in places where traditions older

than Christianity still prevail, there exist peoples who follow the tribal way. These are shamanic societies. Although most of these people still exist among their own kind, there are some who live and ply their trade in Christian Mythic Europe. Needless to say, these latter people pursue their ways in secret, and are known only to a few.

The following Chapter describes the shamanic peoples. You may choose the origins of your shamanic character, or may apply local traditions to a Covenant located in shamanic lands.

Slavic Traditions

To the east of the heartland of Christendom are many lands and peoples to whom Christianity is either a thing newly imposed, or an enemy bitterly fought. In A.D. 988, Prince Vladimir of Kiev was baptized in Constantinople, returned to Russia, and imposed Christianity upon his people. The religion was accepted by some but opposed by others. Even today, in the Thirteenth Century, the native, non-Germanic, pagan people of Prussian are at war with Christian knights of the Teutonic order, fighting for control of the country. In 1200

Latvia officially converts to Christianity. Meanwhile, in the powerful kingdom of Lithuania, paganism and the native monarchy are deeply intertwined; both are strong and show no sign of changing.

In many places of eastern Europe, nominally converted to Christianity, "conversion" is maintained only for appearance's sake. When the local priest visiting a remote manor returns to his church, the peasants, and often their lords, sacrifice to the old gods and nature spirits. The natives' pagan religions are seen by many as a sign of resistance to foreign invaders, and so are held most dear.

At the heart of these lands and peoples opposing Christianity — indeed, the one thing these diverse areas of eastern Europe have in common — is the basic nature of their religion: shamanism. This tradition holds sway beyond where Christianity and worship of the Norse gods predominates to the west. Even in Christian Russia, now known as Kiev, stories of werewolves and other shapeshifters abound. But, the full meaning of these stories has been forgotten, given Christianity's dilution of the old ways. Only in resolutely, non-Christian areas do people understand more of these tales.

Unlike other, more primitive shamanic peoples, the Slavs have cities, kings, priests, and large temples dedicated to various gods. These societies are as organized and civilized as any in the west. The gods worshipped are extremely powerful



spirits, who command the loyalty of tens of thousands of people. In addition to these major deities, there are also a multitude of minor nature spirits which are much the same as those venerated by other, more primitive shamanic peoples.

SLAVIC SHAMANS

In the "organized" shamanic lands of the Slavs, shamans act much like priests of Christendom do. In small villages and hamlets there are minor shamans who propitiate local spirits. In towns and cities there are shrines to these minor spirits, but also elaborate temples to major gods, with shamans of varying rank and power attending them.

The most important god for most Slavs is a god of lightning, thunder, and the sun. In Kiev he is known as Perun, in Lithuania as Perkunas. His temples are usually on hills, open to the air, with statues of the god and numerous oak trees as primary markers of a temple. Another important deity is Zvoruna, goddess of the hunt, and protector of animals. There are also a vast number of other deities, each of whom has a particular sphere of influence: a god of cattle, butter, and milk, one of gardens, and another of the wind. There are an even greater number of local spirits, who reside in certain streams, trees, and lakes. Beyond these, there are individual spirits which guard villages and homes. All such spirits are communicated with and served by Slavic shamans. Indeed, shamans are the ones who carry messages back and forth between spiritual ancestors and the living.

Aside from attending to temples and deities, shamans of Slavic lands have special functions in those lands. Most Slavic lands are quite far north, suffering the brunt of winter for perhaps half the year. For much of the remaining year the ground is an impassable swamp, which is unpleasant under foot, and impossible for travel by horse or cart. Indeed, travel is only possible in the summer and fall, once the ground has dried somewhat after spring thaw, and before winter renders all travel dangerous or impossible. In such a setting any method of easy communication is highly valued.

Shamans, with their ability to leave their bodies and travel to far places, have an opportunity to observe and transmit what others cannot. Since the spirit of one shaman can travel and speak to another shaman in much of the Slavic lands, nobles and princes rely on shamans as a communication network, especially when weather prohibits all other forms of travel. This is another reason why shamans live as powerful and admired advisors to nobles and princes.

Others shamans, as in the far north, live the simple life of a village attendant. However, there are other options than "civilized" and "simple" life. Some shamans, who deal with the most powerful spirits, live in temples and act as priests to these god-like spirits. As such, these shamans are sometimes more powerful than mundane princes, and live truly ostentatious lives.

In contrast, some Slavic shamans prefer a more solitary existence, that is, solitary from mundane existence. These shamans, particularly those in areas troubled by invaders, keep

the old ways alive by retreating into the vast pine forests, with apprentices and assistants, and a large retinue of shapechangers. These shapechangers are usually members of the wolf, bear, and cat clans (as discussed below). These insular shamans and their retainers usually live in fortified keeps, or strong towers, far from villages or towns. These shamans live a life most like that of Hermetic Magi, isolated from the world, but still observing it. These shamanic "Covenants" usually keep to themselves unless the locals have the courage to come to them for aid, or if invaders threaten. If invasion does occur, these normally peaceful holdings become fighting forces terrible to behold.

SLAVIC SHAPECHANGERS

The role of the Moon Clan among the Slavs is as important as that of the Sun Clan. Each shapechanger clan has a specific duty, and all members of a single clan take on the same shape.

Throughout the Slavic lands there are men and women who hunt and guard forests against intruders. These foresters are all members of one clan, the clan of the wolf. Almost all Slavic foresters are werewolves. They are fierce and determined in their protection of the forests, particularly against Christian invaders, who would cut down the wood. The werewolves are also fervent in their attacks on those who over-hunt or needlessly destroy the forest and its animals.

Slavic foresters always live in or near the forests they protect. In some cases, especially where Christianity has made major inroads into tribal lands, shapechanging foresters live in isolated villages of their own, located in the forests themselves. In such villages, foresters always have a shaman or two living among them. In less troubled lands, Slavic foresters live on the edges of forests, in villages with normal folk. These villages are often on important trade routes, since many products of the deep wood, including *vis*; are sold in them, as are items available in few other places. Many a traveler stops at these villages, to trade and perhaps even spend the night, never realizing that much of the population are werewolves.

The Boyar

In Russia (much to the displeasure of shamanic priests), and more openly in other lands, there are special agents of the king. These agents are known as the boyar. The boyar are advisors to the king, being important nobles and often chief military retainers. The boyar perform a variety of functions, from advising, to leading troops into battle, to spying and other covert work, and to governing cities and districts for the king.

The boyar in Russia, Lithuania, and many other Slavic lands are of a unique Moon Clan. All members of this clan can become eagles. It is said that this is why the symbol of Russia is the eagle.

Of high social station, the boyar are often quite wealthy, though their wealth and power comes from the king; none own hereditary land. They most often live at the king's palace, in high towers, or in richly furnished keeps in the center of the far-



flung and isolated towns and districts they administer. In Christianized lands commoners believe the boyar nobles, just stranger ones than usual. However, in pagan lands, and in Christian lands far from major cities (which is where most boyar live), commoners know the truth of the boyar.

Horsemen of Perun

In Prussia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and in far-flung areas of Russia live a branch of the Moon Clan who are perhaps best known outside Slavic lands. These are the famous, or infamous, horsemen of Perun. They are the scourge of the Teutonic knights, who have been known to flee at the sight of the huge, powerful horses. In battle, these horsefolk are ridden by fierce warriors armed with sabre, lance, and bow, wearing light mail. And, mounted on the saddles of these horses are stylized wings of gilded wood, set with the feathers of eagles.

There are many stories about the horsemen of Perun, of how they have sold their souls to the Devil, or are born of inhuman parents, but few outside the Slavic lands know the truth. Men and women who ride the beasts are ordinary mortals, well trained and fierce to be sure, but still normal humans.

The riders and their shapechanger mounts have a curious relationship. Both groups live together in their own villages, or in separate districts of cities and towns. When young every rider is paired with a shapechanger. This bond is for life, and is regarded as binding as the relationship between siblings, or



husband and wife. The pair are always of nearly the same age, but are paired without regard for gender. Sometimes the pairings are arranged out of family tradition, sometimes because of a natural friendship between two people, and sometimes at the behest of a shaman.

As with other shamanic groups, it is forbidden for horsechangers and mundanes, riders included, to produce children together. This barrier does not socially sever mounts and riders, though. The two fight together, are close companions, are honorary aunts or uncles for the others' children, and are sometimes lovers (though not physically). This combination of highly trained warrior, and intelligent, fiercely loyal mount makes the horsemen of Perun a nearly unbeatable force. Many a time Teutonic knights and others have discovered that the horses are quite capable of fighting independently of their riders. And, since they are given the same martial training as their riders, the horsechangers can become human and wield sword and spear as well as any knight.

House Changers

Among many peasant villages of eastern Europe there is a curious and unique type of shapechanger who can take on more than one form. Members of this clan can take on the form of any small animal which is in some way associated with people and village life. Such shapechangers have been seen in the forms of non-poisonous snakes, crows, cats, geese, and even chickens. Unlike the village congregations of foresters

and the organized groups of horsemen, there are never many of the house clan in any one village, perhaps only ten to every one hundred mundanes.

These shapechangers are town gossips, messengers, entertainers, and often trouble-makers. If a town is under the domination of a lord that the people do not like, especially if the lord is a foreigner, these shapechangers often spy on the lord, and make trouble if his demands are ever excessive. They may even let slip embarrassing information about the troublesome lord, may lay an egg under his pillow, or may sharpen their claws on his favorite cloak. These shapechangers also travel from village to village spreading news, watch traders to make sure they are honest, and travel to cities and towns to listen to news and carry messages. In less troubled areas these shapechangers are wandering storytellers.

Ultimately, household shapechangers in the east make sure no one can take advantage of innocent peasants. They protect the rural ignorant and unaware. Such shapechangers may even be village eccentrics, may dress and act unusually, and, to the chagrin of many passing city-dwellers, may act the part of the ignorant country bumpkin, awaiting an opportunity to embarrass city-dwellers before the whole village.

By and large, shapechangers of the household clan are less well-known than their eastern werewolf and werewolf brethren.

Clan of the Cat

Another little-known clan of Slavic shapechangers is that of the cat. Members of this clan all have the ability to take the form of a large cat, often a black leopard. In many places stories of these shapechangers strike terror in the hearts of villagers.

Members of the clan of the cat usually live in remote areas, often in the mountains. They are commonly the lords of small, isolated villages. Sometimes they are also fierce protectors of their villages, killing or driving off all who would harass or harm their people. Such villages may remain safe and free in areas otherwise dominated by invaders, like the Teutonic knights; all knights who venture into these remote mountain villages are killed and eaten.

In the villages they protect, members of the cat clan often enjoy the love and admiration of their people. However, sometimes their rule has another aspect. In some villages clan members are not village protectors and rulers, but masters and overlords. In such villages, members of the clan of the cat rule with an iron claw. The villagers exist to serve the shapechangers, and all who protest are killed. In a few cases the situation is so bad that villagers get together and actually invite in Christian missionaries and Teutonic knights. Even these two foes of Slavic life are preferable to domination by a feline overlord.

Mediterranean Traditions

The most obvious example of shamanic peoples within Christendom can be found on the many islands of the Mediterranean. All of these islands have been conquered countless times, by Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Moslems and Christians, but on many islands, especially the smaller ones, invasions have done little to affect native cultures. Shamanic peoples can be found on many of the Cyclades islands of the Aegean, on the mysterious island of Malta, and even in more remote portions of Crete. Since, in the distant past, all these islands were the homes of thriving and distinct cultures, it seems likely that shamanic societies which persist to this day are direct descendants of these early cultures.

This link with the far past is perhaps nowhere as clear as on the island of Malta. Malta is a small island located between Sicily and the coast of north Africa. Its total land area is only a little over one hundred square miles. However, the people of Malta have their own distinct language, culture, and religion.

Despite centuries of effort, Moslems and Christians alike have failed to convert these people from their old ways. All the Church knows is that the Maltese regularly leave their towns and villages to journey into deep caves, some man-made, some natural. Attempts made by members of the Church to follow them, or to go into these caverns at any time, have met with failure. Some expeditions report wandering for hours in totally empty, winding caverns. Some are politely stopped by guards. Some never return at all. And, a few are driven mad by their experience, unable to coherently report what they saw.

The truth is that the caves of Malta (many of which are elaborate, labyrinthine, man-made temples and tombs over 3000 years old) are all *Magic regio*. On the mundane level they are simply empty caves, and deserted, long-abandoned temples. However, as you ascend a *regio*, the temples and caves become vital and living ritual sites which are home to a few shaman-protectors and a multitude of spirits and guardians. All the natives carry amulets which allow them to enter these *regio* at will, though given their long practice with these *regio*, it is likely that most natives can enter them at will, without amulets.

The people of Malta, shamans and shapechangers among them, as well as the inhabitants of the rest of the islands, never speak with outsiders about their beliefs, their magic, or their *regio*, unless outsiders prove they can be trusted, and unless there is pressing reason to confide in strangers. (Keep in mind that the Maltese and the inhabitants of other islands are not hostile to friendly outsiders, but they are quiet and reserved.)

The facts of religion and worship on Malta and the Cyclades are unknown except for a few details. On Crete, the natives venerate snakes and mark their remote shrines with double axes. On the Cyclades, and on Malta, shrines contain numerous statues of spirits or deities. On Malta some of the statues are of nude female figures, but the vast majority are of a hugely fat being, which is either neuter, or so fat that gender is difficult to determine. The significance of these figures, and the deities or spirits they represent, is unknown. On the Cyclades there are also numerous figures of stylized, tall, slender people — usually women — with no facial features except noses. These figures seem to be deities or spirits, and are often depicted playing musical instruments, or standing, looking upward.

The only thing that is known about the religion of these islands is that it is shamanic in nature, and that it is quite old. In addition to being found in caverns, and sometimes houses, island figures are occasionally dug up from the ground, in a state suggesting they have been there for an exceedingly long time.

For more information on Malta and the surrounding islands, see the *Ars Magica* supplement, *Mythic Europe*, p. 127.

MALTESE SHAMANS

Shamans on Malta live much like shamans in most rural areas. They live in towns and villages, serving as healers and advisors to the populace. Or, they live solitary lives in the sacred caverns, serving spirits and guarding. The shamans who live in villages and towns bear little to distinguish them from the mundane populace, except for the flaws and oddities which all shamans have. Shamans, like shapechangers on Malta and on the rest of the islands, do as little as possible to draw foreign attention to their existence. However, shamans who live in the *Magic regio*, far from the prying eyes of outsiders, are indeed strange in act and form. Their mannerisms, dress, and behavior

The Mongols

During this era of the *Ars Magica* Saga, the Mongols are on the move, putting in motion a wave of conquests which eventually washes over the entirety of China and Russia, as well as much of Arabia, and part of eastern Mythic Europe.

Like the many peoples of the lands they conquer, the Mongols have shamanism as the basis for their religion and magic. Indeed, they uphold a rather pure form of shamanism, with no deities or temples. The magic of the Mongols is a subject of much speculation and worry in the west. There are many stories about these barbarians. Among many people they are said to be an evil and debased people who dress in the skins of rats, and whose shamans bind the spirits of slain enemies into the very skulls of the dead. According to such stories these spirits are forced to act as servants and guards for Mongol shamans, or are forced to endure unspeakable torments. Such blood magic is taboo and anathema to all other shamanic cultures. And, in these same stories, shapechangers are said to be able to take on the forms of enormous rats, eating human flesh.

However, others who have observed the Mongols report them to be a proud and honorable people whose shamans are adept at interacting with animal spirits. These reports claim Mongol shamans look after the spirits of slain enemies as they would the spirits of their own people who died honorably. Those who respect the Mongols also claim their shapechangers are able to take the forms of eagles and stags.

What the actual truth is about the Mongols is difficult to determine given the fear and hatred their invasions engender.

speak of a life closer to the spirit world than the mortal one. Many solitary Maltese shamans are quite eccentric, and even the more "normal" of them have auras of mystery and magic.

One strange fact which is true of Malta, and of a few of the smallest of the Cyclades islands, is that natives are either immune, or at the least highly resistant to Hermetic magic. No one knows the source of this resistance, except perhaps the Maltese, and they aren't talking. The most prevalent theories state that theirs is either a protection offered by the amulets they wear, or a gift given them by the spirits they venerate. Their resilience could also be a consequence of growing up on Malta and spending so much time in unusually strange and powerful Magic *regio*. One theory, suggested by a number of Magi, is that these people are an isolated remnant of the even more mysterious northern peoples (see below), but the validity of this idea goes untested.

MALTESE SHAPECHANGERS

On Malta shapechangers are important members of daily life. Shapechangers here each have different shapes, much like each Bjornaer Magus has a Heart-Beast. These shapes are often those of birds, but sometimes dolphins, or even fish or other sea creatures. Maltese shapechangers aid with mundane sailing and fishing; an important job, since the Maltese get most of their food from the sea. Shapechangers guide boats away from rocks and reefs, lead them to large schools of fish, fly ahead to scout the weather, and carry messages between boats and the shore.

A few shapechangers become creatures of the land, often small creatures, like serpents, lynxes, cats, and the small Maltese foxes. Landbound shapechangers usually lead relatively normal lives, except that they are often called upon to spy on whatever invader currently occupies Malta. Landbound shapechangers also serve as covert messengers in times when invaders seek to restrict native gossip and communication. Also, at any given time, a number of earthly shapechangers may act as guards and observers in the sacred caverns, reporting on, and harassing any outsiders who enter.

For the Maltese, being a shapechanger is no more exotic than being a carpenter. But, aware of the problems outsiders have with shapechangers, the Maltese never shapechange where an outsider can see them. As the existence of shapechangers is a secret from outsiders, many who visit Malta notice their presence, without recognizing the truth behind what they see. Numerous visitors have noted that, on many of the Mediterranean islands, the locals have unusual customs relating to animals. Indeed, the Maltese and others have often been observed using sea-birds as guides to schools of fish, or having dolphins guide their ships into harbor. When asked about these practices, the islanders respond that animals are wise, and can be of great help to those who care to listen to them.

Northern Traditions

To the north of the civilized lands of Christendom lives a mysterious pagan people, inured to frost and darkness and vast expanses of untouched wilderness. The ignorant call all peoples of the north Vikings, and assume they are the same as the ferocious seafarers who have battered the shores of the Christian world for so many years. However, those who know better know stories of other pagans, men and women of mystery whom even the Vikings fear, people whose lands and worlds are vastly different from both Christendom and those of the Vikings.

In their own lands, the Northerners seem to live, spread across vast countries, countries larger than any civilized land. Stories are told of the quiet pagan hunters and fishermen of northern Germany and Poland, who appear to be the same peoples that Slavic pagans and Russian Christians speak of as

their northern neighbors. A Russian saying goes: *"Where the snow closes over the forest, the ice closes over the rivers, and the wild lands close over the farms, there our land ends and the land of the Silent People begins."*

According to rumor, these same people reside in the hidden places of the Alps and Pyrenees. And, stories are told of pagans in traditional Viking lands who do not even follow the Order of Odin. The Vikings have their own stories of the "elf-people," or "elf-cousins." Even the barbarian Mongols have tales of the "people of magicians," the "flying people," and the "people without horses."

The pagan shamanic peoples of the north truly seem to be foreigners in every land they have spread to. Their numbers and power must be great, for they control thousands of leagues of alpine meadows, arctic plains, spruce forests, and seacoast. Yet few know anything of them or their world.

Northerners are as striking in appearance as they are unassuming in behavior. Details of dress vary from place to place, but the folk are said to always wear brilliant tunics, robes, shirts, and cloaks, which are elaborately patched and embroidered. The Vikings describe their neighbors dressing in blue and scarlet, while Russians speak of mountain people in the east who wear robes of orange, green, and gold. The goods and gear of these mysterious people are uniformly fine, made with designs of great beauty. Indeed, the Northerners seem to be highly skilled crafters, but all their skill goes into clothing, small carvings, and decoration for their goods; they have little which they cannot carry.

In their own lands, these people seem to move about, dwelling for a time in one place and a time in another. In most lands they have villages of a sort, varying from small hamlets to vast long-house towns built of stone. While people in Christendom say they are from a village, town, or land, the Northerners say they are of a family, clan, or tribe. A single clan may have several villages, one for summer, one for winter, and one for the season of fishing. For this reason the people say not where they come from, but who they come from. In the most bitter regions of the north, the people may have no villages or towns at all. They move about as wanderers, following animals, scouring their country from edge to edge searching for whatever they need or desire.

Stories also agree that the Northerners live off the land, but not in the ways of "civilized" people. They sow no crops and tend no fields. However, many stories of their lands, especially among the Slavs, maintain that the Northerners harvest great crops out of the wilderness. Flowers, fruits, and wild grains "spring to their outstretched hands." Northern informants have said they do tend crops in their homelands, but do not understand sowing and reaping. Their people tend the wilderness, both by mundane and magical means, nurturing whatever growth can feed them. *"Our land bears food,"* they say, *"which grows again each year without planting. Our beasts are killed and the herds grow large again."*

All Northerners, whether they have towns or not, are builders of great works. Throughout northern pagan lands, a traveler finds mysterious buildings of enormous size. They



may resemble castles or cathedrals; they may be whole cities carved out of the living rock of mountains; they may be great single pillars of cathedral height, covered all over with minute carving; or they may be vast systems of caves, hollowed and painted in colors that do not fade. These are all the works of the people of the north. Many are ordinary parts of the mortal realm, but some are in Magic regio, often regio of significant power. Some structures seem designed to be lived in, either as homes for great families, for special gatherings, or even as cities. Others are the equivalent of churches or magical laboratories of a sort, places for ritual.

Some such structures, particularly those now within Christendom, have been long abandoned, although travelers occasionally report seeing mysterious activity on such sites. Other sites, those still outside spreading Christendom, stand all over the lands of the Northerners and are certainly used. Some Hermetic scholars have even suggested that it is inaccurate to call the Northerners barbarians. *"Though they seem to possess almost nothing,"* say the reasoners, *"their magic may rival our own and they build their pagan palaces with all the skill of guild masters."*

NORTHERN SHAMANS

People from many lands tell stories of the shamanic peoples of the north, although their stories are confusing and contradictory. The Vikings often confuse their neighborly



shamans with elves, and the Slavs confuse them with ghosts or spirits of the dead. The Mongols say the north's shamans are descendants of magicians too powerful to live among men.

Although accounts of these shamans generally differ, a few story features coincide. The Northerners are silent people, speaking little even among those they know well. And yet, they have the power to speak with all others of their kind, even if their homelands are a thousand leagues apart. There is a special tongue these shamans share, a language beyond speech. Some describe it as a language of signs and gestures, elegant and precise. Others stories speak of a language of whistles — eerie, birdlike cries — which can carry for leagues across the wilderness. Still others maintain that the Northerners communicate without sound or sign at all. They seem to have some form of writing, for mysterious signs and messages are sometimes found written on stones within their lands.

Music is the Northern shamans' greatest art. Their instruments are small and unassuming: a drum, a curious multiple-toned rattle, and a special bow. From these instruments, and from their extraordinary voices, Northern shamans can create subtle and haunting music, impossible to forget. A Czech legend tells of a stranger who cursed the town that wronged her. She sang the townsfolk "a song that could not be forgotten." Unable to do anything but remember her beautiful song, the people of the town went mad and disappeared into the forest.

Of the magic of northern shamans something is known. They use elaborate costumes and magical implements in their rituals, and are rarely known to do their work without these

tools. Their magical creations are said to rival those of House Verditius, and those creations usually take the form of musical instruments, small wands with animal figures carved upon them, pipes, or containers for magical herbs used in rituals. When their power is needed, Northern shamans often work magic for long periods of time, sometimes pursuing a single ritual for days.

Among the Northerners, the power of shamans is known and respected, yet their shamans seem to have no fine houses or servants. Indeed, they seem in some places to live as simple peasants. In some areas they have even fewer possessions than peasants. Northern shamans live upon the charity of their tribe even as beggars do in Christendom. Or, perhaps Northern shamans live upon their tribes as bandits, for no one denies their desires. The Northerners say it is a sign of great power and respect for a shaman to live as a beggar, for it shows that everyone, in every place, values them enough to support their needs and fulfill their wishes.

NORTHERN SHAPECHANGERS

Shapechangers seem fairly common among the Northerners, perhaps even more so than among other shamanic peoples. Legends tell of a bewildering variety of forms that changers can take. It seems each shapechanger may have a different shape from any of his or her fellows, regardless of clan or family tie.

The Northerners say a person becomes whatever is inside him. They seem to feel this is an obvious truth, and act surprised when the question is put to them by Hermetic Magi. These beliefs are consistent with the experience of Magi in House Bjornaer, and it is likely that northern shapechangers speak of the idea of a Heart-Beast.

It is a curious fact that Northerners are never reported to take the forms of domestic animals. However, they do take the shapes of wild animals that have some association with people. This association may be tied to the hunter-prey relationship, allowing the form of the salmon and the deer, both of which are food for the tribe. Or, they may take the forms of wild animals near to human settlements, like those of the raven, crow, and bear, or animal forms that are significant in their legends and religion, such as the wolf, hawk, rook, or diver.

Once the form of a young shapechanger is known, it seems he or she is taught and looked after by others in the tribe who assume the same form. To northern tribal folk, the bond of form seems even more important than blood tie. If no one in the village has the same form as a young shapechanger, the child, as soon as she is old enough to travel, goes on a quest to find others who take the same shape.

INTERACTION WITH NORTHERNERS

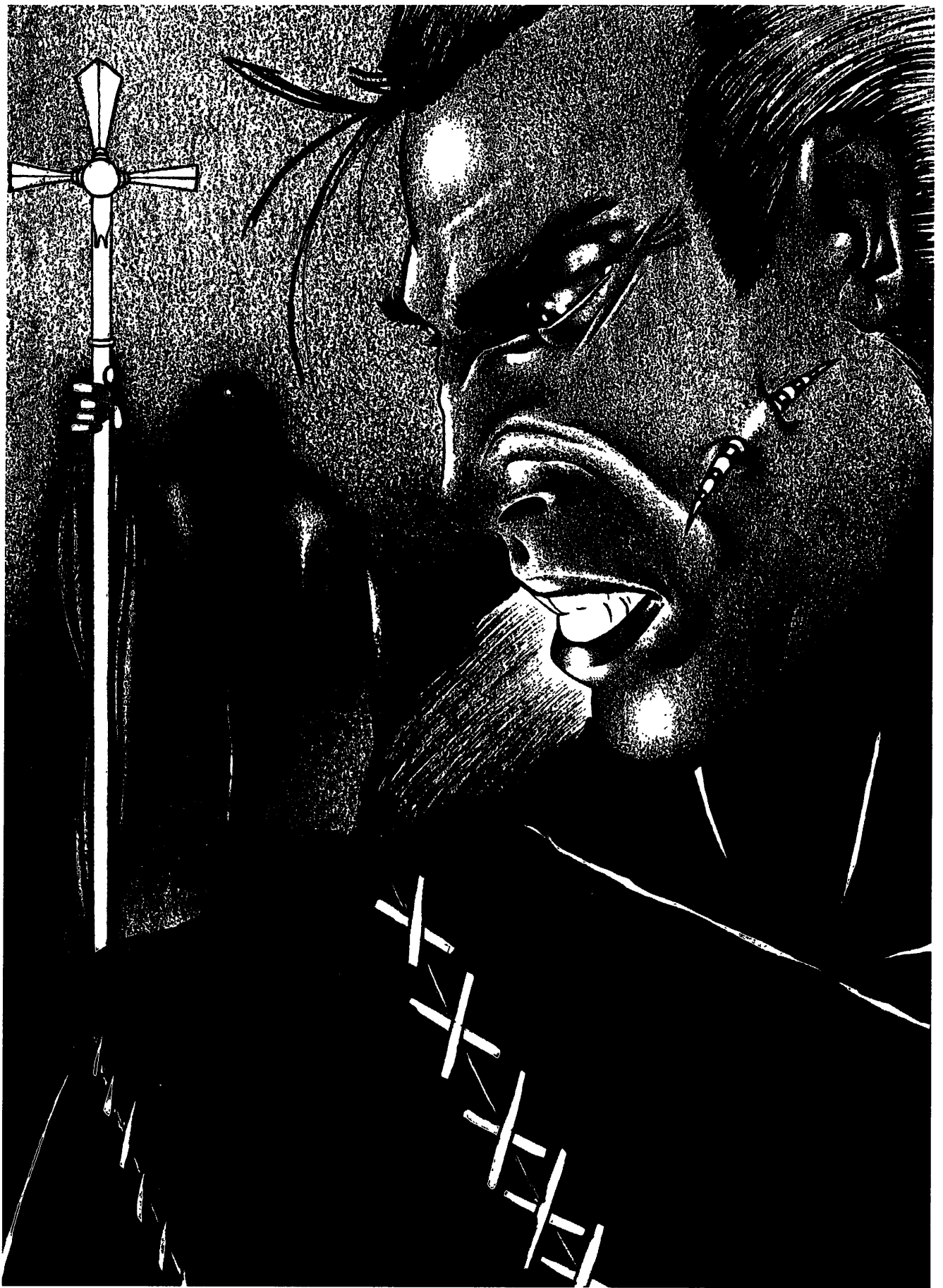
The Northerners are great travelers. A surprising number of these pagans encountered know English, French, Italian, Spanish, and even Latin, Greek, and the tongue of Saracens. It is possible that the best traveled people in Europe are not merchant princes or crusading knights, but these mysterious and unassuming strangers.

Although their native lands lie on the farthest borders of the known world, Northerners are seen fairly often in Christendom. In some places they are even well enough known to take their place in local peasant legends, beside knights and fairies. It seems clear that Northerners think nothing of traveling vast distances, leaving home and hearth for years at a time, in order to visit lands which must seem as strange to them as they seem to southerners.

Sometimes Northerners travel alone, or perhaps have lost the other members of their group. Most times, though, Northerners enter Christendom in small bands of three, five, or ten, but rarely more. These are not war parties or priests eager to convert others to their pagan religion. Neither are these parties of those who have abandoned their old ways and seek the light of Christendom. These travelers move quietly through the civilized world, sometimes showing a surprising understanding of our customs, but without taking a place within the order of our world. They seem almost to observe us, although no one can say why.

Some within Christendom say these strangers are spies, but those who know the Northerners best confirm that they have no armies to sweep down upon the civilized world. Some say they are madmen or diabolists, and tell tales of mysterious deaths and monsters that follow their paths. Others call them holy men, even angels, saints, and messengers of God. These latter speculators tell stories of the sick being made whole, of the casting out of demons, and of the destruction of monsters.

All that is known for certain is that these strangers walk among us. They make no claims and raise no armies. They declaim no philosophies in the town square. They do not join southerners, but neither do they make themselves enemies. Their purpose in Mythic Europe remains unknown.



OUTSIDE RELATIONS

CHAPTER FOUR



hough shamanic tribes have their own traditions of magic and custom, they are not entirely insular from the surrounding world. People from the "civilized" lands of Mythic Europe can encounter

shamanic folk almost anywhere. Tribesfolk may travel into foreign lands, or the daring, such as Magi and their allies, may travel into pagan lands in search of their inhabitants. Regardless of the means of this meeting, this Chapter provides information on the circumstances and results of such meetings.

The Responsibility of Blood

"After the beginning of time, after the light was separated from the darkness and the land was created, the Bargain was made with the people. This story you know. Another time it was, long after the Bargain, when a tribe of people came onto the land. They were strangers, with a tongue no one knew, great sledges going over the ground pulled along by monsters bigger than elk, and a thousand spears of iron, each with a spearhead seven hands long.

"These were the Cannibal tribes. They killed people as if they were deer, and trapped the spirits of their meat inside their camps. One hundred shamans assembled to do battle with their shamans in the Spirit Land, but the Cannibal tribes have no shamans; they do not know the Law. One hundred wolves, one hundred bear, one

hundred elk, and one hundred white owls came out from our forests to do battle in the Land of Flesh, but these they killed with their terrible spears, and trapped the beasts' spirits in their camps.

"Then the people grew afraid. A deer spirit escaped from the camp of the Cannibals, and told the people how the Cannibals kept prisoner all the animals in their camps, using the magic of their ancestors' trapped spirits. They had wolves that grew debased and followed at their feet, ibex mothers who let the Cannibals tie them up and steal their milk, and other animals who waited in the camps of the Cannibals to be killed and eaten. The Cannibals had even captured the grass, and made it grow and give seed in even forms of camp ground.

"When the people heard this, they knew the Cannibal magic was too strong to fight. Some of the people went North with the deer spirit, far away from Cannibal lands, and did not stop until they were safe. Some of the people followed their shamans into the Spirit Land. There the most powerful shamans made a door that closed that place from the rest of the Spirit Land, so the Cannibals could not capture their spirits. But, some of the people hid from the Cannibals, or ran from the Cannibals only into neighboring lands that the Cannibals overran. Some hid well and some hid badly so that they forgot the Bargain and the Law. Some were found and taken into the Cannibal tribes and made to bear children with the Cannibals."

This is the story that my father told, and his mother, and her father before her. We are the people of the North.

The following is a story idea you can use to introduce Hermetic characters to shamanic travelers. The story coincides with *The Responsibility of Blood*.

The characters' Covenant is contacted by the town council of a local city. The citizens need help holding a strange group of foreigners who apparently have magical powers. The characters discover this group consists of a shaman and several shapeshifter "consors" from the far north.

One of the group speaks Latin, and explains their situation: they came to this land in response to the shaman's vision of an uncontrolled, mad shapeshifter killing people in a local village. They tracked the vision to the town and identified the shapeshifter. Unable to either cure, control, or train the person, they killed him in accordance with their law. Unfortunately, they were unaware that the shapeshifter was a person of importance, and that, in addition to being a wealthy merchant, he was concealing his condition. He had been turning into a half-human, wolf-like monster every night since being bitten by a mad wolf months before. (The Northerners explain this wolf attack was merely the event which triggered the latent power in the man's shapechanger blood, but the characters do not have to believe them.)

The derranged shapechanger used his money and influence to construct a cell within his home, where he locked himself every night. However, he escaped four times in beast form, each time killing livestock and people before dawn banished his beast. The townspeople all know about

the monster, since it was seen more than once. (Indeed, in an earlier story of your creation, characters may have investigated reports of the beast.) But, no one connected the beast to the merchant.

The prisoners are aware they have broken local laws and have tried to justify their actions to the townspeople without success. Since the townsfolk have brought in the characters, the Northerners now appeal to the characters for help.

The situation is a sticky one, since the merchant was well-liked and the Northerners have admitted to killing him. However, they are powerful enough to escape if the Magi do not magically restrain them, and the Northerners are powerful enough to put up a good fight if the characters attempt to restrain them. If the characters decide to help, they have to prove that the merchant was the monster to appease the townspeople. The merchant took two trusted servants into his confidence. They are still staying at his house. Furthermore, the local builders' guild knows about the secret chamber, since their members built it without knowing its purpose. Finding the secret chamber without the guild's help requires a thorough search of the merchant's house; the chamber's entrance is hidden beneath a staircase leading to the cellar. Inside the chamber are manacles, animal bones, torn clothes, and hairs. The last, by use of a version of the *Image of the Beast* spell (Intéllego Animál 5), can be proven to belong to the merchant in his beast form. However, not all townsfolk may believe or trust the characters and their magic.

I have told the story of the Bargain. The Bargain is made in the blood forever. The spirits do not grow old, they do not die, they do not forget. The Bargain was made with all our people, by all our people before the Cannibals came. Those who hide from the Cannibals are our people, people of the Bargain even if they forget the Law. Those who were taken into the camps of the Cannibals, their children, and their children's children are our people, people of the Bargain even if the Law was never taught to them. When these people weep, we are their families. When they cry out, we are their healers, their shamans. When they forget the Bargain and the Law, when their flesh makes war with itself or their spirit makes war with itself from ignorance or against their Cannibal blood, the spirits come to us and say: "What has your blood wrought?" We are responsible. They are our people.

In the lands of the Cannibal tribes, we sometimes find the descendants of the Cannibals leave our people alone, not claiming them from ignorance, or fear, or knowledge of the truth. Sometimes, the descendants of the Cannibals claim one of our people, saying this is their child, or their servant, or their husband, or wife. The truth is simple. If this person takes on the shape of beasts, or hears the spirits, or falls free from the flesh and travels to the Spirit Land, they bear our blood. It would not be possible otherwise, for the Cannibal tribes never made the Bargain.

One should not forget that one of our people may have friends, husband, wife, or even parents among the descendants of the Cannibals. One of our people may choose to live among them, even to love them and take on their ways. But the responsibility of blood comes first; they must follow the Law. We travel to teach the Law to those who can learn.

Those who cannot learn are tainted; the mixing of blood has made a monster just as sometimes monster children are born of bad blood, deformed and unable to survive. Those who will not learn are spirit-tainted by Cannibal ways that even some of the Cannibals' children have grown out of. Neither can be left alone, for both bear the power of the Bargain, which cannot be removed. The deformed will destroy all around them before they die. This cannot be allowed. This is why we kill. The arrogant spirit-tainted will use the power for evil, and anger the spirits, who call upon us to reckon with them. The children of the Cannibals have no ways to control or heal the spirit-tainted. This is why we take people away with us. This is the Law. We can recognize no other law above it.

— statement offered by a spokesman for a group of barbarians accused of killing a merchant in the city of Marsielles.

Shamanic Folk in Society

People who have shamanic or shapeshifting powers exist spontaneously within Christendom, that is, without belonging to House ex Miscellanea, House Bjornaer, or to any separate shamanic group of people. The powers of shamans usually manifest themselves either in early childhood or at ascension into adulthood. In some places, such people are killed, shunned, or assumed mad or possessed; the Church may be asked to intervene. In other, less civilized, areas, these people may join House Ex Miscellanea, or be trained in a local pagan magical tradition in which their powers can be useful. Oftentimes their Gift is too uncontrolled or specific to allow them to be trained as normal Hermetic Magi of other Houses. Some of these individuals may also be highly religious and interpret their powers in a Christian context, seeing visions of God, angels, and demons, or believing themselves able to become a beast through the intervention of Divine (or Infernal) powers. People with such religious perspectives on their powers can become powerful holy hermits or charismatic prophets, and some even join the ranks of the Cathars.

Shamanic peoples are aware that powers resembling their own appear in people beyond their lands, in Christendom and elsewhere. Several informants from different parts of the pagan world have repeated the same story, as told by the shamanic spokesperson, above, to Hermetic Magi, town guards, merchants, and travelers all over Mythic Europe. Pagans believe all people who show shamanic or shapeshifting powers are distant blood relations, or adopted members of their own tribes. The powers of shamans and shapeshifters, they say, are gifts from spirits, bestowed upon the pagans' tribes. Thus, when foreigners demonstrate similar powers, they are assumed members of a tribe.

Like any magical Gift, shamanic and shapeshifting powers can be dangerous if not controlled. Those within Christendom who are gifted with the power to see and converse with spirits are often plagued with insanity, delusions, and bizarre behavior. They may spread heretical ideas, disturb the order of society, or even become pawns of demons. The problems caused by shapeshifters within Christendom are at least as severe, for those who take on the forms of beasts often become violent, destructive, or even murderously mad. Pagans of foreign lands often seem remarkably well informed about such individuals, and the problems they cause. They even claim responsibility for such individuals. Some informants have stated their action to control the "wild one" is family responsibility. Others say certain spirits hold them accountable for the actions of any shaman or shapeshifter. Yet others explain that a condition of their Gift is to be responsible for the behavior of anyone else with the spirits' Gift.

Thus, people with shamanic and shapechanging powers can appear anywhere. Their presence is often a lure for others with similar powers, who come to supervise and train the





Gifted. It by this means that members of the Order of Hermes can meet shamanic folk. Indeed, as members of Hermetic Covenants are often outcasts from mundane society, and bearers of the spirit Gift are also outcasts of Christendom, members of your Covenant may actually possess shamanic powers — they may even be Magi — bringing shamans to your very door.

SHAMANS AND HERMES

The articles presented below demonstrate the direct influence shamanic peoples and powers may have on members of the Order of Hermes.

In the winter of this year, I was traveling in the lands of greater Germany on the business of the Order. During this time I saw many ravens, which at first I did not think odd. However, as the days passed I discovered a raven with a white crown reappeared over and over, until I finally realized I was not seeing many ravens but the same group again and again.

Twelve ravens followed my path for two weeks. I could neither evade them nor chase them off, and of them I could learn nothing. At the end of this time twelve hooded men came in the night, overpowered me, and took me to a mountaintop in a place I did not know. They were well-prepared and organized, both as warriors and in the understanding of the magic arts. Their leader came to me. He wore a cloak of feathers, and though he was a young man, his hair was white as snow.

I was held at the place on the mountain for three days and three nights. It was marked with strange stones and carvings on the rocks, in signs I could not read. I believe it was a place of ritual. In all that time none of the twelve men spoke to me. I was put through many tests, some of which were clearly designed to measure my aptitude for magic and my level of control. Others involved the Heart-Beast, and still others I do not understand even now. I thought at the time they were designed to torment me, but now I do not think so. At the end of this time the twelve stood in a circle and saluted me as one Magus does a peer, and when they broke the circle I understood I was free to go.

I returned to my Covenant, and determined that I had suffered no curse or enchantment. With the permission of the Order, members of my Covenant and I returned to that place and set a trap for the raven with the white crown. Though he was difficult to capture, and at first terrible to hold, we were eventually able to make clear that our purpose was to gather information about the ritual which had been performed on me, and, as it turned out, a number of other Magi of our House. After several months in our company the man learned enough Latin to speak effectively, and was persuaded that it was more dangerous for him and his people to hide the purpose for which he waylaid Magi of the Order of Hermes.

This man was a respected noble of his people, and I do not doubt his story. He maintained that, as we suspected, the pagans have no particular interest in testing Magi, but rather members of House Bjornaer. He made clear that the testing is not limited to members of our House, but occurs with anyone in Christendom who has the power of the Heart-Beast in any form. According to this man, organized teams of pagans regularly set off for Christendom, and spend years at a time traveling in search of those who show bestial powers. Such individuals are watched, and if the pagans form any suspicion that their power is warped or dangerous, the person is subjected to tests such as those I experienced.

I also learned something of the magical theory that the pagans hold on shapechanging, and found surprising insights and similarities to our own theories, as well as a clear understanding of the nature and dangers of the Heart-Beast in a flawed heart.

Persons the pagans deem sound are allowed to continue their lives unhindered. But, those who seem flawed or uncontrolled are offered training in the tribe of the pagans, and may be kidnapped if they seem to pose a threat when remaining untrained. Apparently, a small number of persons are judged to be both untrainable and extremely dangerous. These, it seems, are ritually murdered. My informant repeated many times "without malice and without suffering."

We now know the reason for the pagans' actions. We must decide whether to ignore them, assist them, make them exempt Magi of our House from their investigations, or combat them. We must also decide whether to inform the rest of the Order of our findings.

— Artus, filius of Johannsen, follower of Bjornaer

The Legend of House Bjornaer

Those Magi of House Bjornaer, even beyond those Ex Miscellanea, have powers akin to those of shamans and shapechangers. Indeed, their origins are even more intrinsic to shamanic tradition than those of many Magi Ex Miscellanea. Magi of Bjornaer are therefore frequently encountered by shamans. Chapter Two's boxed insert on the origin of Bjornaer suggests some of the tension between shamans and House Bjornaer. The following account delves further into that hostility.

"Many of us who have traveled to the fringes of Christendom have encountered the strange wizards called shamans, and their shapechanger allies. Many Magi have wondered about the exact relationship between these people and members of our own House Bjornaer.

"As you know, I have traveled in the far north, past even where the Order of Odin is known to go, where the people follow great herds of reindeer, and build no villages at all. There, when traveling on a cold autumn night, I shared my fire with an elderly shaman who was returning to his village, after working magic in the wilderness. We talked quietly for a time, and I learned, to my surprise, he knew of the Order of Hermes. When he discovered I was a member, he looked at me suspiciously, and asked if I belonged to the House of the Outcast. I told him I knew not of what he spoke. He then asked if I could change my shape into that of an animal. When I answered no, he looked much relieved. When I asked him about his questions he replied:"

Never trust members of the House of the Outcast, whom you call Bjornaer. I shall I will tell you why.

'Long ago, before any of this world was as it is now, the spirits gave to one clan of my people the ability to take on the shape of animals, and to the other clan the ability to become chiefs and shamans. Shamans and chiefs, and other members of that clan, could never change shape, and members of the other clan could never become shamans or chiefs. The spirits decreed this as Law. Also decreed was that members of the two clans could never marry or bear children together. If this Law is ever broken, either the child must be exposed, and the parents must move to different villages, or parents and child are expelled from our people forever.

'Many years ago, before either of our grandparents were born, there was a great and powerful shaman, who was then much revered by our people. He had as his constant companion a woman of the shapechanger clan who could assume the form of a wolf. They were fast friends and traveled far, aiding our tribe in many ways. But then a sickness entered their hearts, and they fell in love. They wished to marry and have a child. However, both knew this was forbidden by the oldest laws we honor.

'And yet, love conquered their reason, and on their travels they were married by people who knew not of our ways. They planned to raise the child in secret, among friends they had in other tribes. They managed to keep their secret for some years, but one day a traveler from our village chanced upon them playing with their young daughter in the village where she lived. A council of chiefs, elders, and shamans was called, and the decision made. Since the



child was too old to expose, she and her parents were commanded to forever abandon our village, and the villages of those we traded with, never more to enter the sight of one of our people.

Word was passed from village to village, and the three of them went south to foreign lands. We received word that the shaman died from a broken heart, but the mother and daughter lived.

Know this: the child of such a union is flawed. Such a child may learn to practice what you call magic, and to change her shape, but the magic is not as complete as the magic of a true shaman. And, as a shapechanger she does not have all the powers of one whose blood is pure. Her existence is an affront to the spirits who give us our fire, our herds, and our water.'

"The shaman then smiled."

"We are not as ignorant nor as isolated as many of your Order. We know something of events in the south. Word came some years later of a shaman of your people who could change her shape, and who came from the north. It was learned that she taught others her secrets, and that she was part of a great clan of shamans. My ancestors investigated and confirmed that this "Bjornaer" was indeed the child of the two outlaws.

Never trust the student of a flawed teacher. Their existence angers some of the spirits. If ever the spirits take vengeance, those close to these flawed ones may also suffer. Also, be wary of them in their beast form, for they have neither purity of blood nor teaching; flawed shapechangers are not always safe to be near. The one who is your friend and ally while in human guise may become a ravening beast, at your throat, in animal shape. I concede, the members of your House Bjornaer do not seem as dangerous as many flawed shapechangers, but trust them not, because they are children of flawed parentage. This is all I have to say.'

"After this conversation, we spent a comfortable night by a warm fire. I don't know if this shaman's story is true, but, given his knowledge of the Order, it at least seems plausible. I suggest this story be entered in our library, and not be given to Magi outside our House. The unrest this story could cause is daunting, and we need not repeat the Great Schism."

— Corellia, filia of Bernil, follower of Mercere. From a text on the northern lands entered in the great Mercere library.

The Bjornaer Threat

Whether Magi of Bjornaer are truly as dangerous as shamanic folk claim is uncertain by Hermetic understanding. Each Bjornaer Magus is an individual, and as such may be judged on individual standards. Because Bjornaer Magi do not follow the shamanic Law does not necessarily make them corrupt. After all, few if any Magi, regardless of House, follow this law, and not all are dangerous. However, it is true that Bjornaer Magi have powers outside the "norm" of Hermetic Magi. They alone may assume animal form at will. So, there may be grounds for suspicion of them. Furthermore, if Bjornaer Magi are truly outside the shamanic realm as pagans claim, Bjornaer truly belong to neither Hermetic nor shamanic traditions. They are therefore complete outsiders and as such may be regarded with some caution, for no true standard exists on which to base their actions as a whole.

The War with Christendom

It is in the lands of the east — Slavic and Baltic lands — that the inhabitants of Christendom frequently encounter shamanic peoples. For many years, Christian Russians and eastern Mythic Europeans coexisted more or less peacefully with their pagan neighbors. However, in recent years crusading knights and land-hungry barons have turned from seemingly unattainable goals in the Holy Land to pagan lands closer to home.

Some who seek to bring eastern pagans into the fold of Christendom are good-hearted monks and priests who would extend to all people the benefits of true faith and civilized living. Unfortunately, such people are the exception. In Germanic lands, the Teutonic knights hunt and kill the pagans of Prussia, Poland, and Lithuania in a mock-crusade that horrifies even hardened folk of war. Indeed, in some places the land is said to be bathed in pagan blood. Of course, the pagans do retaliate. Redcaps and merchants report that in recent years ravening wolves have come down into Christian villages, slaying cattle, pigs, and humans indiscriminately. No one is certain whether the wolves are drawn by hunger from ravaged forests, are maddened by the blood of battlefields, or are shapechangers sent to avenge the outrages of the Teutonic knights.



The conflicts between Christian Russians and the pagans of Russia and Styria are less bloody and extreme. However, nobles from France, eager for "free" land, have come in recent years to complicate the conflict. The pagans, fearing extermination at Christian hands, have organized themselves into pagan monasteries, kingdoms, and "Covenants" (Covenants which may or may not be recognized by the Order of Hermes). These kingdoms raise armies, and their members may be shamans or shapechangers trained in the monasteries of pagan gods. Furthermore, Covenants of shamans, trained ordinary people, and shapechangers, protect pagan villages from the baser impulses of Christian neighbors, specifically in places where outright war has not broken out.

In the most remote areas, powerful shamans or clans of shapechanger nobles control small lands, and reactions to foreigners depend entirely on the attitudes of these rulers. Relations in such areas may be strained, but in places where villages have not turned into battlefields, pagans usually understand that not all Christians are corrupt. In general, where the Teutonic knights take their sport and where conversion is accomplished by fire and sword, Christians of all countries — noble and peasant, priest and Magus alike — are considered the enemy.

HERMETIC ALLIANCE

In the chaos of these wars Christian-pagan, a strange pattern has begun to emerge. While the slaughter continues, seemingly without end in many areas, in some places the ancient peoples search for a truce. Though it is often said by the prideful and thoughtless that pagans fear the obviously superior power of the Church, anyone who has seen the Horsemen of the Sun arrayed for battle knows the wars cannot be won so easily. Maybe the pagans realize continued war will only result in mutual destruction, so they seek to command their own fate. Regardless of their motivation, the pagans' attempts at truce follow a pattern; they do not aimlessly seek mercy, but look to Hermetic Magi as allies. To see the wars ended they seek the help of Magi, hoping to secure their old ways as a place in the Order. If membership in the Order is impossible, the shamanic folk at least hope to gain the alliance of Magi, creating a united magical force against Christian bishops and "holy" knights.

The most amazing siting of this pagan search for peace is evident in the famous Council of Novgorod. In the year 1214, a delegation of pagan shamans and shapechangers arrives at the Tribunal Domus Magnus, surprising a council of Hermetic Magi who are assembled in Tribunal meeting, to discuss the business of Hermetic role in the local wars. These pagans sit with the Magi in council for three days and three nights, proposing arguments, telling stories, asking questions, and ultimately making a formal petition for alliance between their brethren and the Magi of Novgorod Tribunal. The petition remains a subject of debate, and it is not clear whether Novgorod Tribunal should take it up at the next meeting of the Grand Tribunal.

In the meantime, it is suggested that the various shamans and shapechangers of the east join House Ex Miscellanea. They would then be protected under the Code of Hermes, and their villagers would be protected as consors, no longer suffering pillage by Christians without recourse to Hermetic protection. The recruitment of shamans into House Ex Miscellanea thus begins in some areas.

The entire text of the Council of Novgorod is preserved in the archives of House Mercere. The following texts are excerpts from that record.

The Story of Vedele

"I was born in a forest village, I think in what you call the Kingdom of Poland. We kept the Ways all the time I was small, but then my father died and my mother found Christ Ways. She gave us to the Christ peoples, my brother and myself, and we were taken to live in one of the stone houses of God, with the monks. My mother we never saw afterwards.

"The monks gave us food and clothes and rules and we worked for them as if they were uncles, because my mother had no brothers to give us to. In this way I learned your words and a little of the writing. My brother they liked. Him they taught Christ ways and he told me they were good. He was happy. Me they did not like, for I was marked out even then. They wanted me to take off my shawl and I would not, for though I was born after my father, I took after my mother in manner.

"Because I would not give up my shawl I could not have Christ ways, said the monks, so they were angry instead of glad. They hit me so I ran away, not to my old village where they would find me, but farther, to where a fur trader took me on a river boat to the land of the sun. There the people gave me a new name, and the seer took me into his house and taught me the Ways of the spirit. For many years things were very good and we were happy. The old shaman died, leaving me to tend my people.

"But now the Christ people come again. Hear me: there is a child in my village who hears spirits talking in the wind. He screams sometimes and speaks sacred words. He will be a good tender when I am gone, once he is taught how to be strong and not to let the spirits frighten or tell him what to do. There is a child in the next village. When she is a man she will grow to be a fine horseman and a good uncle for her sister's children. I took council with these Christ people; I went to their house of God and asked: 'What would you do if this was your village, if the next village was also your village, if you were the tender?' They told me they would feed my student black poison drinks, burn him with hot irons until he hears no more voices. They told me they would take away the young colt from the man-woman child, make her wear a shawl and never grow up to ride horses, as they tried to take my shawl away. These Christ people have many spears. I have seen battles fought in villages, barley burned to the ground, babies lying dead before their mothers. The council comes to me and says, 'Should we fight?'

"Now I think of my brother. I cannot find a peace with a people I do not understand. I send a message along the river and find that my brother is dead. There is no one else I can find who is like him,

one of our people in the house of Christ. Know this: I am a mighty shaman in this land. So, I decide to make a journey across the wider river. I am going to see my brother. I am going to find the spirit of the Christ people. I will know what dreams make them wish to harm us. It has been said the people of Christ cannot be found across the river, but I believe I can find my dead brother.

"I go along the road I go on when I am looking for one of our people who is dead and beyond this world. I search many leagues, many nights, many lands, and I do not find him. In my way I find the answer; I go then down the road I go when I am searching for a spirit that is lost, when they leave the body and the body screams and weeps and runs about without sense. This happens when a spirit who is not a tender goes by mistake into the Far Lands.

"I find my brother is in the Far Lands, though he was not tender. The Far Lands are large, and I search for some time until I find a strange place in the land where there is a gate. The gate is made out of gold and lead. It crosses a place where the world has been made so narrow that the gate closes across the whole land, so one can only go elsewhere or go through the gate. I know this is a great magic — whatever was on the other side of the gate had made a Bargain, living by the Rules of that land. I have only seen a gate like this once before — the gate that separates the Far Lands from the mishia [Fairieland] is in such a narrowing of the world.

"I stand at the gate and call my brother. On the other side are the people of Christ, and my brother I know is with them, but to enter past the gate I have to take the Christ ways. So I call my brother.

"A figure comes to the gate. It bids me begone from my place and turns its back upon me. Though I sense the spirits of many are beyond the gate, none answer my call, least of which my brother. In this place fenced from the spirit world I have no voice, and for the first time realize limits to my powers here.

"Thus, I turn too, to learn more about this warded place. I ask myself, 'Are all the spirits of the Christ behind this wall?' I go to the shrouded city, where spirits of men and women behave strangely. There I learn they are the spirits of Christ's children, those who are left untended, abandoned in the natural world of spirits. Of these I ask about Christ's way. Though they lament much, they tell me of the place they are shut from.

"I tell you the words I learned, and tell you the words I have known, for both have bearing on our standing now.

"In the beginning the world was made from out of the waters of the Spirit Lands. The mortal world rides within the Spirit as a fish rides within the water, covered on all sides.

"Long ago, the legends say, the Destroyed Peoples took themselves into the Spirit Lands to escape the Destroyers. Their greatest tender pinched off a piece of the Spirit Lands as one who makes bread may pinch off a piece of dough. At the pinching those fleeing placed a terrible gate, that the Destroyers could not follow them. So then the Spirit Lands became no longer one thing but two: the Spirit Lands and the place called Fairielands. Now it has come again. Some great shaman, or maybe wizards, pinched off another piece of the Spirit Lands, and made a gate to stand between those



who live on one side and those who live on the other. The figure at the gate may have been this shaman, I do not know. The people of Christ speak of Jesus, of Mary. I do not know.

"The shaman who made this separate place called Heaven and Hell did a mad thing. The place called Heaven and Hell is pinched out of the Far Lands alone, not from all of the Spirit Lands as was done before. The Far Lands are those things which do not touch the world of the flesh. Only those with the power and the skill may travel safely to the Far Lands, for its laws are far from the laws of the world of flesh. It makes a madness in the minds and spirits of all those who have not the power. Now you understand what I am saying; Heaven and Hell are made from the land that drives common people mad. This is why the people of Christ are mad, why they kill us without reason, why they care nothing for the beautiful land. Their spirits are like these mad people, lost as they are in the Far Lands they cannot master. They are deaf, dumb, blind, and without joy.

"I tell this story to show you why we ask what we do. You Magi are the ones who go between your people and the Near Lands. You are the ones who make spirit speak to flesh and flesh to spirit. You make the animals come, the fires burn. You make the dreams of people come to pass in the land of the flesh. You are the true shamans of your people, not the priests. The Far Lands are important, they have the great power. But, if the priests of Christ abandon the flesh and the spirits that speak to the world of the flesh, then they destroy their tribe.

"I have heard today many times you saying 'it is not our place to make trouble with the people.' The trouble is already made. You are the shamans of the tribe of the people of Christ. It is your place to heal the wound in your people. Why do you think you were given the Power? It is to tie together the lands of flesh and spirit. If you fail to do this, what do you think will happen to your Power? We call you to join us, for the sake of all our people and all the Lands."

Shamans in Novgorod Covenants

"My dear Maria, your humble filius Asterius has at long last arrived at the Wolfwind Covenant in Lithuania. Numinious is well, as is his apprentice.

"However, I have seen many strange things on this journey. In my last writing I mentioned how strange it was to be traveling through an openly pagan land. That was only the beginning of my confusion. I have visited a number of Covenants in France and Bavaria, and grew up in our beloved Covenant along the Rhine. All of those Covenants are much the same, isolated holdings and keeps, some on mountain tops, others set alone on an open plain. I have also heard of some few Covenants, like those in Iberia and in the Roman Tribunal, existing secretly in cities, disguised and hidden from public view. However, never have I seen anything like this.

"I was traveling along the road two days before I arrived here, and stopped at an Inn. The innkeeper asked where I was bound, and I, not wanting to face peasant fear of magic, noted a town up the road, and made my grasp of his language seem poor. He then looked at me and nodded, saying: 'Ah, you are a foreigner. You

must be bound for Wolfwind village, or whatever it is they call it in your tongue.' I was rather surprised to hear a mundane refer to a Covenant in such an off-hand manner, much less to call it a village. But, I didn't let myself be worried.

"Two days later I arrived. God Our Father, what a shock! There is no stone keep, not even a tower. There is only a closely set number of buildings, built of large wooden shingles, in the Russian fashion. The buildings are set close against each other so as almost to be one building, and the whole collection is quite large. At first I wondered if perhaps this was the largest Covenant I had ever seen. Then I saw the truth. It is a village! There are peasants, chickens, pigs, and screaming children in abundance. And above all belief, after taking in all this, I then saw Numinious walk out of a house, much like the other houses, and he came to greet me.

"After a long talk with Numinious, I learned the Covenant is the village, and the village is the Covenant. The whole structure of Magi, consors, and guards here is different. Numinious explained that perhaps ten years ago his Covenant was approached by several of the local wizards, called shamans. They had heard of the Order of Hermes, and wished to discover more about it. After much discussion these shamans decided the Order seemed a worthy institution, and wished to join and share knowledge. However, when our rule about avoiding mundane affairs was made clear, a problem arose. These shamans were the wizards, spiritual advisors, and, I believe, priests of the villages they lived in.

"After much debate, and a Tribunal meeting, the case and several others like it were decided. It was decided that shamans' villages were their Covenants. For us, protection, aid, and defense of our Covenants is in no way an infraction of the Code. So it was decided for the shamans of Novgorod, making possible their alliance with the Order of Hermes.

"After this Tribunal decision, Numinious and other Magi of his Covenant acknowledged that their own Covenant was poorly equipped, because of its location in the far wilderness. They then saw the practicality of learning from and working with the local shamans. Since the shamans wouldn't leave their villages, Numinious and company moved in, next to the blacksmith and the herb woman. Unbelievable! So it is that Wolfwind Covenant truly is a village!

"The village contains perhaps four hundred inhabitants. Among them are five Hermetic Magi, including Numinious. There are also four apprentices, five shamans working with our brethren, and fifty werewolves! Yes, dear Maria, I did say werewolves, as well as a dozen werebears! As I said, this is hardly an ordinary village.

"This village is located on the edge of a wood, on a main trade road which skirts this huge forest. It seems the werewolves and bears are foresters, who guard and protect the forest, as well as having a role in the 'Covenant' very similar to what consors have in ours.

"This village, almost a town, is indeed a lively place. They have a weekly market fair, where people from many smaller, surrounding villages, as well as traveling peddlers, come to buy,



sell, and trade. Throughout all this bustle no one minds, or even seems to notice the shamans or werewolves. We Magi seem to be regarded as a little odd, but I think that's simply because we are foreigners. As evidence I sight our one apprentice who is a local girl, and seems to be totally accepted as a part of village life, regardless of her education. What is most disconcerting is how the peasants treat me. They are polite, but there is none of the awe or respect I am used to. But, at least there is none of the fear and cringing we are accustomed to.

"At first I was quite disturbed by my treatment, and constantly felt like I was being insulted or looked down upon. However, I think it is merely that people here accept magic and wizards as part of daily life, rather than dubious and fearful creatures who may be in league with the Devil. It is rather refreshing after one gets used to it.

"The only thing which disturbs me is that while the local shamans now belong to Ex Miscellanea, seem content to learn about Hermetic magic, and exchange knowledge, they are training their apprentices to be ordinary shamans, with no ability to practice Hermetic magic. Since Ex Miscellanea has no formal requirements about magical practice all should be well so long as the apprentices study the history and rules of our Order, which they do seem to be doing. However, maybe my arrogance demands more respect, for we are here to save them from Christian crusaders, after all.

"This is a very strange Covenant, but your worries that Numinous is involved in something dubious are, I can honestly say, wholly unfounded."

—a private letter from Asterius, follower of Jerbiton, to his Mater, Maria.

Shamanic Enclaves Within Christendom

There are, within Christendom, a number of well-defined places where groups of shamanic folk may be found. These groups are beyond the individual shamans and shapechangers at work within Christian society. Shamans and their related shapechangers may exist in remote regions of Christianity, working their ways in secret. Or, they may exist "in plain sight," simply going unrecognized or misunderstood by Christendom.

WORKING IN SECLUSION

The fact that coordinated groups of shamanic people exist within the heartland of Christian civilization is not known to most people. Peasants in areas near a shamanic enclave may know of its existence, but nobles, clergy, and Magi are often

kept in ignorance. Sometimes Christian peasants keep quiet out of sympathy for those who live by the land, for those who do not bow to lord or Church. Sometimes peasants have practical reasons or holding their tongues; shamanic enclaves usually have members capable of both helping (with healing, prophecies, and aid to the health of crops and herds) and protecting local peasants. The shamans may also offer services, like communicating with ghosts, that peasants find comforting but the Church does not allow. Sometimes, however, peasants keep their knowledge of shamans secret out of fear. Indeed, if an enclave is a cruel or distorted one, peasants may offer it their babies in sacrifice to wolves. Or, they may offer tithes of crops from their own scant gardens to prevent nightmarish death. Local lords and priests do not know of this evil and are kept from knowing for fear of spiritual reprisal.

Beyond locals, those most likely to know of shamanic enclaves include seasoned travelers (usually merchants who follow fairs across mountains or seas), minstrels (a good minstrel or troubadour hears far more tales than he can afford to tell in public), mountain guides, riverboat captains, Redcaps traveling for the Order of Hermes, wandering Bjornaer Magi, and those who must occasionally seek refuge from the wrath of Christian society — Saracens, Jews, and later Gypsies.

The British Isles

In the British Isles, very little evidence of Shamanic enclaves has been found. A few stories describe colonies of strange people in the remaining wilderness forests and uninhabited rocky coastlines. They are said to be people of small stature, who wear little clothing, paint or tattoo their bodies with figures of animals, go out only at night, and have tools and weapons of stone, wood, and bone. These stories are few and far between, however, and are usually confused with tales of fairies. If the stories are true and do not refer to fairies, these people might be the few, last, original inhabitants of Britain, who lived in numbers before the coming of the Druids.

France

In France, enclaves are more common. In the Camargue, where Christianity coexists with ancient ritual, people are more likely to tolerate pagans among them. Persistent rumors hold that the greatest breeders and trainers of Camargue's famous black bulls and white horses come from families and villages who "keep the old ways." In the isolated swampland and seaside villages of the area, shamans may be far closer than priests. Indeed, locals do not forget the priest who condemned a young bullfighter and sent his bride to a nunnery, but was later gored to death by a mysterious black bull. Furthermore, travelers tell stories of seeing human figures running with wild horses, leaping with flights of hawks and herons, and emerging from dark and trackless lakes.

The Alps

Further east, the Alps offer another refuge for shamans and shapechangers. Here the tales grow sinister. A family of bestial, hairy cannibals is said to guide travelers through a mountain pass. Many may go into their pass, but none emerge alive. Another tales tells of groups of ravens, with a seemingly human intelligence, which follow caravans. After the birds disappear, bandits are said to descend upon the caravans, and amazingly know where all the greatest treasures are carried.

Stories of Alpine hermits and hermit villages are also told. The Church usually dismisses the hermits as eccentrics — Christians practicing the virtue of hermitage, or maybe Cathars, but the local people know differently. Many of the so-called Cathar outposts in the Alps are actually shamanic enclaves. Here shamans and shapechangers change the stories that disguise the nature of their stone halls and valley villages according to the political climate of the day. If Cathars fall out of favor, the stone outposts may become hermitages, Covenants of Magi, or whatever else staves off persecution.

In mountainous lands, shamanic enclaves may take two forms. Some, like the cannibal family, consist of people who cannot tolerate civilization, or of people whom society cannot tolerate. The mountains accept humankind's outcasts and escapees. Other enclaves, it is said, are formed of people who lived on the fertile plains in the days of the barbarians, and who fled into the mountain fastness centuries ago to escape the dawning light of civilization.





The Mediterranean

Mediterranean islands shelter enclaves of shamanic peoples. The most notable example is the isle of Malta, described in Chapter Three, but many of the small and isolated islands shelter other groups.

WORKING IN SOCIETY

Shamans and shapechangers are not always confined to isolated lands. In the very heart of civilized France, they may be found as active members of society, if whispered rumors are true. Indeed, it is said that certain guilds and societies shelter shamanic practices. Guilds of secret or hazardous professions may secretly be shamanic enclaves. Guilds of hunters, bird-catchers, healers, fortune-tellers, wilderness guides, poisoners, animal-tamers, spies, midwives, riverboatmen, and sailors may all be organized groups of shamans and shapechangers, existing within Christian society. Rumor says they practice their rituals in restricted guildhalls or on board ships, and maintain their secrecy with fierce devotion.

Germany

In the forests of Germany, the Low Countries, and Christian Poland and Russia, villages and tribes of shamans and shapechangers exist under the guise of Christian villages. In outward appearance, these folk appear as nothing more than common peasants, and their members often have permission from local lords to guard and keep surrounding forests. These lords may be entirely ignorant of their foresters' strange powers, or may be fully aware of them, themselves being members of the clan. Some lords simply understand that there is no better defense against poachers than werewolves, and no better people to police borders within pagan and hostile lands. Sometimes shamanic enclaves become a kind of guardpost and buffer between civilization and the dangers of the wilderness and its barbarians.

Italy

In the ancient lands of Italy, shamanic enclaves assume their strangest forms. These lands are unique, for here the heights of civilization lie cheek by jowl with pagan customs. As fairies may live in churches built on the ruins of pagan Rome, so too may shamans and shapechangers live in Christian cities where tribes once camped.

In the lands of Italy, shamanic enclaves may take on Christian guise. The walls of monasteries and nunneries sometimes shelter shamans and shapechangers. A nun "possessed by the glory of God" may be a shaman. Mendicant friars of an obscure order might be werewolves, -lynxes, or -foxes, the "dogs of God who battle demons and devour sin." The local people usually protect these monasteries and their unusual Rules of faith with intense devotion. The monks and nuns are likely to be kind landlords and powerful healers, curing illness and exorcizing the insane. They are trusted to lay ghosts to rest and to fight diabolic influence, particularly in situations where Magi and the rest of the Church are not trusted.

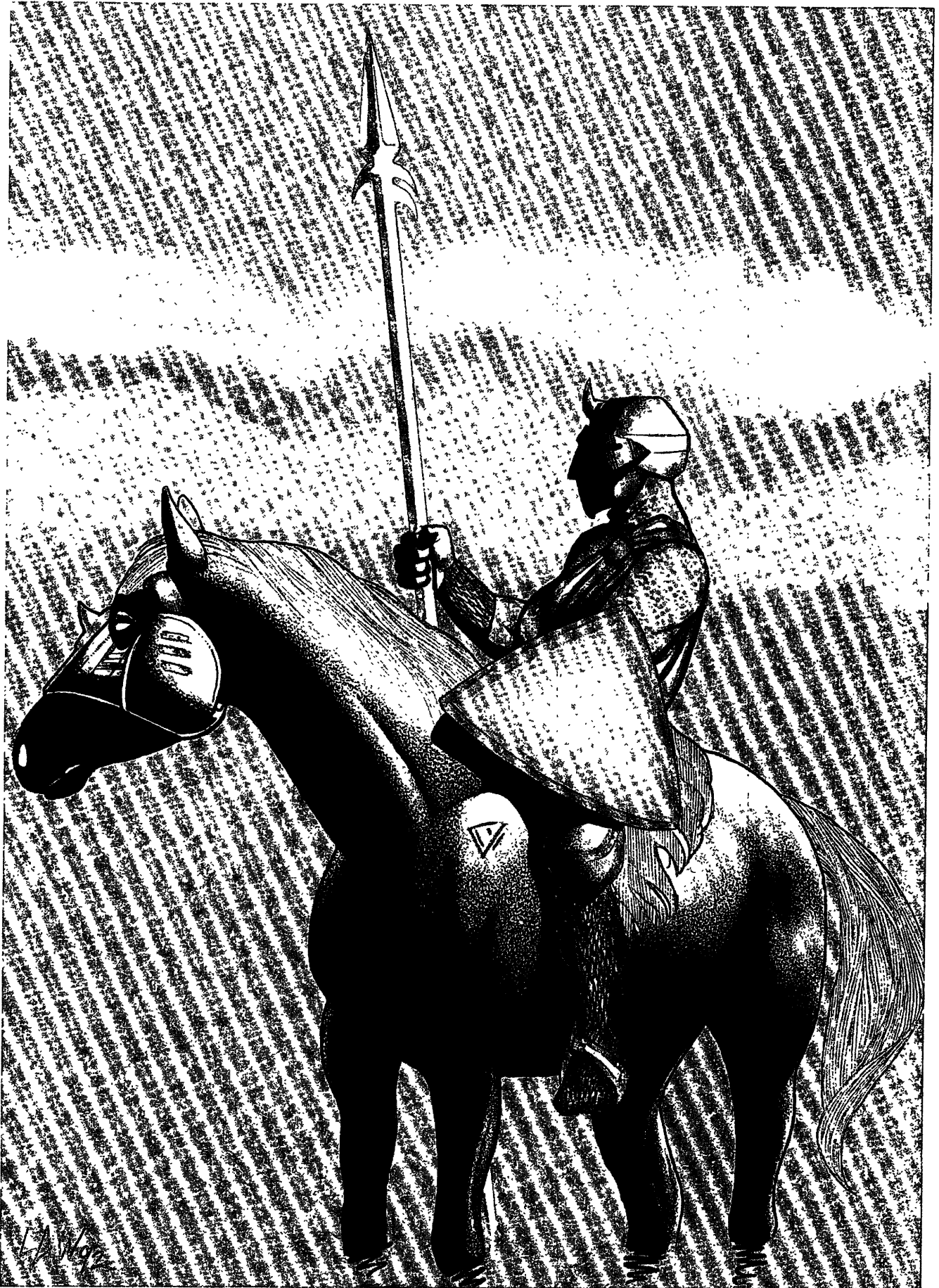
It is interesting to note that the usual stories of evil and dissolute monks and nuns are almost never told by people who live near such unusual orders. The locals publicly profess either the deepest trust in or complete ignorance about local clergy, to protect the secret of those clergy.

Sometimes abandoned or orphaned children are even taken to these monasteries. As long as a child is still quite young, the monks and nuns take it in, adopt it into their Order, and raise it as their own. The same is sometimes done for the feeble-minded and mad.

THEY ARE AMONG US

Although shamanic enclaves are by no means common, they may be found in many guises throughout Christendom. The half-civilized wilderness carries a great share, but shamans and shapechangers may also be encountered in the centers of

cities and in countries of broad farms and parish churches. Clever disguises, and sometimes even real Christian faith, hide the nature of these enclaves from all but the most observant eye. However, some crisis or adventure may bring them, with their strange beliefs and powers, to light at any time or place.



THE SPIRIT WORLD

CHAPTER FIVE

In this Chapter the realms of the spirit world itself are investigated, delving into the milieu of magic and spirit. This Chapter therefore details the place where the roaming spirits of shamans travel.

Geography, Time, and Space

The spirit world, or, as it is called by Hermetic Magi, the Magic realm, is an enormous and powerful body whose extents cannot be measured. Hermetic Magi of many Houses have summoned creatures from the Magic realm in order to question them directly on the nature of their homeland. The results of this questioning have been erratic, but a general picture has emerged. According to the Order of Hermes, the Magic realm is finite in size, though very large. Some maintain that no boundaries exist to mark its end, though others claim informants describe boundary rivers, oceans, mountains, fires, and plains of ice.

Regardless of boundaries in the Magic realm, all Magi agree there is a correspondence in space between Magic and Mundane realms, for certain places of power exist in both. These magic places, often in the form of Auras and *regio*, may not look the same in each realm, but the exact similarity of their magical degree (Aura ratings) proves their shared identity.

"This other place, you are mistaken to call a kingdom, or even a realm. The other place, where we meet the spirits, is a country only as a dream is a country, only as the air is a country, or the clouds, or the way water comes into a footmark left in the springtime. You magicians of the West, you know only the nearest places of spirits. In such places, yes, the world may seem as the earth is here, the sky may be filled with birds, you may make your way always in sight of landmarks. But, go further down the river and you find the river grows beyond you. The far places are as grand as the sea. You little magicians would drown fighting for a ground that looks as that which you know, but it would be like trying to hold the sea in your hands."

— Mytsoc Okyrian, a shaman of Novgorod Tribunal

However, determining correspondences in distance and direction between the Magic and Mundane realms has proved difficult, particularly since many Magic realm informants are ghosts and spirits for whom the angle of the sun and the boundaries of France are not issues of burning importance. In the Magic realm as in the Faerie realms, the answer to questions about whether things look and act as they do in the mortal world is usually *"sometimes."* In fact, a human ghost, questioned by a Magus as to the geography of the Magic realm, answered thusly:

"Yes, the sun rises here when I am walking, and sets when I am dreaming, though sometimes I do not know one from the other. Was it always like this? No, I do not see churches here, though there are many pagan signs, and also many cities. I cannot find Rome, though I have looked, or perhaps it was the city of the velvet curtains and I did not recognize it because there were no crucifixes. I found a cathedral once, but inside it there was no priest and no sacraments, only a mad woman wrapped in furs, who held a musical instrument."

The same Magus later summoned a spirit, in the form of a white bear, from the Magic realm. The spirit answered the same questions thusly:

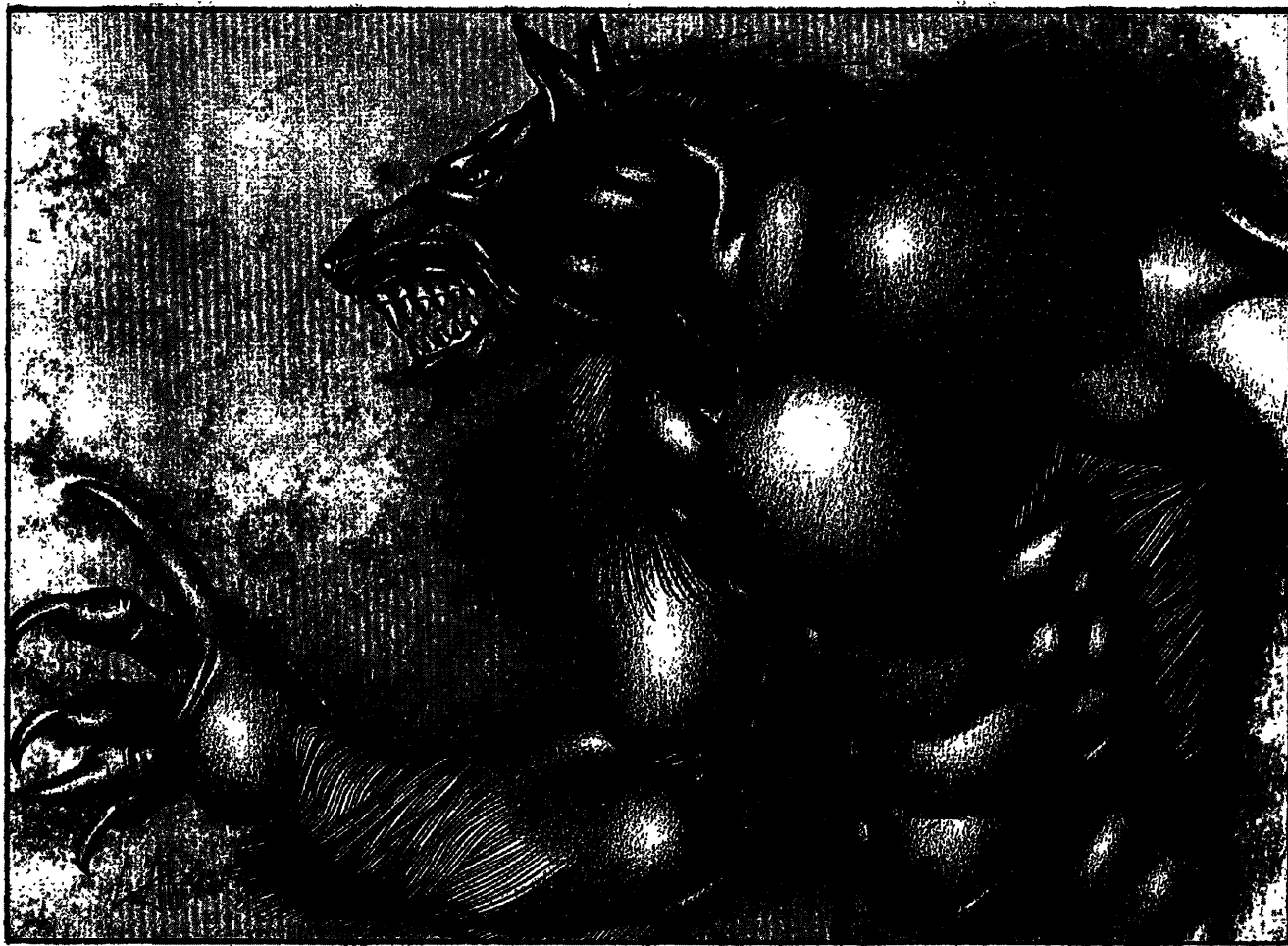
"The sun is bright in the warm time and dark in the cold time, as it should be. The ground is solid, and white, and drifting, opening into water wherever the food comes up to breathe and rest. There is a place with a great shining stone. It is a different place, not of my place, so I know little of it. Small bears come there and shed their skins. They turn into something like great newborn cubs, all naked and shapeless, and then grow skins again. I imagine they are gristly when they do not have their skins, but I am not sure they should be eaten. What is a church?"

The problems involved in getting exact information from Magic realm informants is obvious; the realm assumes different meaning for each spirit, or for each spirit of a different form.

Furthermore, it is clear to Magi that there are other areas within the Magic realm, areas which do not clearly correspond with either physical or political divisions in the mortal world. Neither do the divisions between these areas precisely parallel the way legends and mystical meanings separate areas in the Faerie realms. While movement west is always toward the realms of death and darkness in the Faerie realms, all directions seem to be equivalent and meaningless in the Magic realm. Furthermore, colors, animals, and weapons may represent different things in different places of the Magic realm.

Current Hermetic theory holds that different areas in the Magic realm are inhabited by different types of spirits, or that different areas correspond to the various Hermetic Forms and Techniques: animals inhabit the Animal area, hot things the Ignem area, ghosts the Mentem area, and so on. While there are problems with this theory, shamans have referred to the existence of a "place of wolves," and a "place of fires," which seems to lend some validity to Hermetic theory.

What is clear is that the physical parameters of the Magic realm vary from place to place in a way consistent with the kinds of beings found there. Human ghosts tend to be found in areas that seem much like the human world, for instance, while a white bear spirit might reside in a land of endless frozen waters. And, physical geography is indefinite; despite numerous attempts, no one has ever succeeded in measuring leagues, distances, or degrees within the Magic realm.



"Here is the shape of the spirit world:

"It is round and flat, like the material world, and begins at the center-pole of the house from which you enter the trance of traveling. When you go into the trance of traveling, you climb this center-pole to reach the spirit world, for the center-pole of the house in which you journey is the center-pole of the world. You may climb down the center-pole into the earth, or up it into the sky. From the center-pole of the world you can see all of the Near Lands, up to the grey fog that holds the Far Lands from view. You take flight from the center-pole across the spirit world. There are lands and waters, spirits of the various lands and waters of the world, of the various forests, of the places of mountains, of snow, of ice, and of storms. Thus, to speak with Volga River — a river spirit — you travel south and east, along the lands of rivers, past Rhine River and many other smaller river spirits and their places. It is something like traveling in the flesh. However, in the flesh you could go to Volga River by way of land or water. In the spirit world you must find Volga River in a place of rivers, so you can only go along the rivers to reach it.

"The farther you fly from the center-pole of the world, the closer you travel toward the Far Lands. The first sign that you come to the Far Lands is that everything becomes smaller, for the roof of the sky comes closer to the ground, and all things must be smaller to fit beneath it. Here the world grows less like the mortal world.

"Furthermore, if you travel into the earth at any point in the Near Lands, you travel into the kingdoms of the sun under ground, where the spirits of the dead dwell. This is done by going beneath mountains or into places where the rivers begin. So too may a shaman, who begins journeying by going downward, come up into the light. When the earth comes close to the sky, these two parts of the Near Lands — dark and light — come closer. When they touch, the true Far Lands begin. At this place there is a great wall of fog, like the fog where the fire of a fire-mountain strikes the snow. This fog is filled with spirits of terror and dread. They steal the spirit of any who enters, leading you into madness and confusion. Only a shaman can safely find a way past these spirits.

"Beyond the wall of madness is the Far Lands. Of this place only shamans, wild dreamers, and madmen know."

— description of the geography of the spirit world by Olaus, shaman of the north and advisor on shamanic affairs to House Quaesitor.

Shamanic informants within Novgorod Tribunal have added further information to Hermetic understanding of the Magic realm. Some of that information refutes Hermetic theory on the realm. Novgorod's shamans maintain that, while ordinary mortals and Magi alike would experience the white bear spirit's land as cold, wet, and dark, shamans have the power to experience the Magic realm as if native inhabitants of an area. They are therefore unaffected by the cold. However, special qualities of an area, like a darkness that does not prevent vision, unusually strong odors, or a sense of being close to the

ground, seem to affect all travelers of an area (although shamans may be more comfortable with these effects than are more mundane travelers).

Most shamanic informants also maintain that there are large areas of the Magic realm to which Hermetic Magi have no access. In these areas, they say, neither the appearance of things nor natural law is that of the mortal world, and the beings which inhabit these areas are totally unlike those mortals and Magi know. Shaman informants also claim that spirit world boundaries sometimes talked about by creatures summoned from the Magic realm are actually gateways to this farther realm. Since shamans provide no rational explanation for why Hermetic Magi are unable to affect this area, their insistence that it exists and is important in their magic is treated with some skepticism.

Time, too, seems to run its course differently in the Magic than in the Mundane realm. As with the Faerie realm, time in the Magic realm may go more quickly or slowly than it does in the mortal world. However, there have been no reports of sudden aging after a return from the Magic realm; the effects of time in the Magic realm seem to only be on the mind and spirit of the traveler. It is most common for a traveler in the Magic realm to report much more time passing in that realm than passes in the mortal world, during the traveler's absence. In this way, the Magic realm seems to be experienced almost as a dream.

It is as impossible to measure time in the Magic realm as it is to measure distance; the movements of sun and moon do not seem to follow the same laws they do in the mortal world. Several Magi have attempted to bring or create time-keeping devices in the Magic realm. One Magus reported being unable to understand the use of his own hourglass, while a Magus who attempted to create a striped hour-candle found herself instead with a striped serpent. Furthermore, the distance and time elements of Formulaic Hermetic spells, when they can be cast at all, are generally altered unpredictably in the Magic realm. Most travelers report that, while they are aware of the passage of time and distance in the Magic realm, it simply does not occur to them to measure it precisely.

Regardless of the inability to record its passing, travel in the Magic realm does take time. However, it takes less time to travel between places in the spirit world than it does comparably distant places in the mortal world. Shamans maintain that duration of such travel depends not on the mode of transport (walking, riding, or flying), but on the power and skill of the shaman who travels.

Shamans also insist that a curious story relates to time and travel in the Magic realm. They state that in the Far realms, which Magi cannot reach, time does not exist. Thus, what happened or may have happened in the past, or in legend, exists side by side with what happens now, and with what is happening, or may happen in the future. Shamans use this story to explain instances where they apparently prophesize the future. But, since the Far realms are said to have little to do with the mortal world, such prophecy may be confused or erratic.

There exists an example of such otherworldly prophesy, which meshes events in time. A shaman who visited a Covenant in the Stonehenge Tribunal gave the following warning to the Covenant's chief Magus:

"We have met, for I have seen you. When I walked in a dream after the spirit of one who was lost, I found you beyond the ice. I saw you crying out and covered in flames. You were in the place where we go when we leave this world, even as you are in this place and we are speaking together. I do not know who sent you to the land beyond the ice. I do not know the day of the battle. There are no days to count there. You might take hope that you were in a land beyond the ice, in a better shape than I had chance to meet. But, keep watch against your enemies all the same."

When questioned further, the shaman explained that she sometimes meets beings in the farther reaches of the Magic realm, beings which she identified as "shamans from distant lands who no longer come back to this world." These beings may well be Magi trapped in Twilight. The shaman apparently sought to warn the Magus in question, that he would or might be driven into Twilight in an unpleasant fashion, possibly by an Ignem spell.

The shaman further denied that prophecies represent the operation of fate. As well as could be understood, she seemed to maintain that there could be more than one possible destiny which a shaman might encounter in the Magic realm. In general, shamans seem to have a poor sense of difference between history, legend, past, present, future, dreams, magic, and mundane occurrences. It is possible, then, that in the portions of the Magic realm which shamans visit, these distinctions do not exist.

A last curiosity concerning the geography of the Magic realm should be noted. The physical location from which a journey into the Magic realm begins affects the area of the Magic realm which is "closest" to the traveler. The close areas of the Magic realm do not seem to physically correspond to the location in the mortal world at which the journey is begun, though. In other words, just because a journey in the Magic realm begins in a forest in the mortal world, travellers do not necessarily enter the Magic realm in a forested area. However, if a journey is begun in the Roman Tribunal and travelers are looking for cities, they find Roman-like cities to be a shorter journey than Moorish-like cities.

In an often-discussed example of this phenomenon, a shaman in the Novgorod Tribunal made a formal statement to Magi, that activities of Christian settlements were deforming the nearby "place of wolves" and "place of vultures." More distant "places of wolves" and "places of vultures" were apparently unaffected, though.

Shamans have stated that each of them tends to begin all journeys from a particular type of place in the Magic realm. Wulther, a Magus of House Bjornaer, explains that he believes each shaman has the equivalent of a Heart-Beast, and that spiritual journeys are begun from an area of the Magic realm associated with spirits of that Beast. If, for instance, wolves are

exterminated from England, the spirit of a wolf-associated shaman appears in a more distant area of the Magic realm, in which wolf spirits still have a place.

Travel in the Spirit World

There are several phenomenon which travelers in the spirit world may encounter. Not all of them are outward manifestations of that world, but inward manifestations of travelers themselves.

This section also summarizes the rules for spirit world travel, to make use of those rules more clear.

FORM

Travel in the spirit world is normally accomplished through dreams or trances led by shamans. When non-shamans enter the spirit world through a dream or a trance, they generally appear in the spirit world much as they do in the mortal world. There are exceptions to this rule, however. Untrained shamans may use their Alter power to control their appearance and equipment in the spirit world, as trained shamans can, but must roll 7+ on a stress die + Stamina + Alter. Trained shamans roll a simple die + Stamina + Alter (these rule are discussed fully in Chapter Two).

Dreamers (those who are not true shamans), while they have no Alter power, often appear in the spirit world in forms different from their mortal form. Normally, a dreamer's form in the spirit world is an idealized or symbolic version of his or her mortal body. In addition, like untrained shamans, non-shamanic dreamers may attempt to alter their form in the spirit world, by rolling 7+ on a stress die + Stamina + Dreaming.

Shapechangers must assume animal form upon entering the spirit world; they cannot exist there in human form as human form is not that which bears the spirits' Gift. Shapechangers that have multiple animal forms can assume those forms in the spirit world with normal chances of success (stress die + Stamina + Bestiality + Will Over Form against an Ease Factor of 9), although human form cannot be taken. The same law applies to shapechangers entering the spirit world physically, through *regio*.

When in the spirit world, people with Supernatural Virtues and Flaws often demonstrate those traits in their spirit world forms (a person with Second Sight, for instance, may have unusual eyes). People with intense Passions or Mental Flaws may also show these in a "physical" way (a character with Fury, for instance, may develop terrifying bestial or demonic features when furious). In general, characters do not gain extraordinary powers from these changes in form. In the end, the appearance of a character in the spirit world is up to the character's player.

ENTERING THE SPIRIT WORLD

Non-shamans entering the spirit world through dream or trance for the first time must make a Perception + Alertness stress roll of 9+. A simple die roll is made each time thereafter. If either roll is successful, arrivals enter the spirit world with all of their possessions and equipment intact. If they fail the roll, only their most personal and characteristic possessions (a grog's favored sword, drinking cup, and lucky gambling dice, for instance) enter the spirit world with them. On a Botch, a character appears naked, with no possessions or equipment whatever. The only exception is with magical objects; they always successfully enter the spirit world, although they may not necessarily appear or operate as they do in the mortal world (as a result of a failed or Botched roll upon entering the spirit world).

Shamans and special dreamers need not make the roll to check possessions. If they so choose, shamans leading others into the spirit world, for the first time or not, may ensure that anyone led does not have to check, either. The shaman must specifically do so for each person led in, though (if the shaman is your character, you must state to the Storyguide that you

Destruction of Spirits

When travelers attack spirits in the spirit world, those spirits may be "destroyed." The spirits appear to be damaged and "taken out of existence," but are not precisely destroyed. Spirits are immortal so cannot be destroyed. Thus, when a spirit is made to seem ruined (e.g., chopped to pieces), the spirit is actually reduced to a more essential form. In effect, the spirit is rendered harmless and left a mere shadow of its former self. In such a state, a spirit may wander the spirit lands, or remain on the site of its "destruction."

If a spirit in the spirit world is still bound to its soul, that soul is also reduced to a bare essence, but is immortal as well.

Of course, travelers in the spirit world may also have their spirits reduced to a bare essence. That is, their spirits are "destroyed." Such victims have bodies and souls left on earth. Spirits of travelers can be restored by shamans entering the spirit world (as discussed under *Injury and Death*, in Chapter Five). Furthermore, spirits on earth can be reduced to a bare essence, but cannot be destroyed (it usually takes Mentem spells to render this harm upon a spirit as physical weapons don't usually affect a spirit on earth). A "destroyed" spirit on earth may wander aimlessly and harmlessly, or may linger in a place on earth.

Spirits (and their accompanying souls in the spirit world) that are reduced to a bare essence cannot usually be communicated with, nor made to perform functions. They are ineffectual and useless, though they continue to exist.



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protect each person before they enter the spirit world). Protecting (or not protecting) a person in this way is not a visible action.

INJURY AND DEATH

Travelers who enter the spirit world through dreams or trances find that such travel poses certain dangers. The most obvious is that the mortal body, which is left behind, continues to have mortal needs. Left too long without food, water, or protection from the elements, the body dies (a completely unattended body loses one Body Level per day, though magic, another spirit's occupation, or careful tending by another in the mortal world can keep a body alive longer). A spirit whose body is in danger of destruction (being bitten by an animal, or dying of thirst) may roll a Perception + Alertness simple die (against an Ease Factor of 8+) to notice that his or her body is in dire straits.

The spirit of a traveler can also suffer pain, injury, or even death in the spirit world. Injury usually occurs much as it does in the mortal world. That is, Body and Fatigue Levels are suffered by the spirit as if it still has a physical body. To determine how such harm is delivered and received, treat a person or creature's physical traits as if the being is in the material world. Thus, a Grog in the spirit world delivers an axe stroke on a creature in the spirit world as if her Strength and combat skill is of normal rating.

Time required to recover lost Fatigue and Body Levels is a little less static in the spirit than mortal world. As time passes at an imperceptible rate in the spirit world, there's no way to gauge when Levels should normally be recovered. Thus, the Storyguide must determine when Levels are recovered based on story events. If characters rest in the spirit world, they recover any lost, minor Fatigue Levels. If they sleep, all Fatigue Levels and a couple Body Levels may be recovered. Spells and chirurgy are still effective means of healing as well.

Wounds incurred can also be healed by other means. If a spirit which has inflicted injury is destroyed, successfully negotiated with, or controlled (that is, it is no longer an enemy), any damage inflicted by the spirit in the encounter disappears.

Furthermore, shamans may use their Alter power to heal wounds received in the spirit world. Healing a single lost Body Level on another requires an Alter + Storytelling + Communi-

cation stress roll of 11+. The roll is modified by the penalty incurred to the wounded character. Thus, if a shaman tries to heal another of a Heavy Wound, the shaman's healing roll suffers a -5 modifier. A shaman may also heal himself. The attempt requires an Alter + Stamina stress roll of 7+. Dreamers who are not shamans may heal themselves on a Dreaming + Stamina stress roll of 7+. If any such healing attempt fails, the wound Level to be restored must heal naturally before another attempt can be made to restore another Level. However, if a new wound is incurred, that new Level may be healed, but no further Levels may be treated until natural healing restores the one that confounded the shaman. If a healing roll Botches, the subject is made to suffer another Level; the shaman or dreamer fails to manipulate the spirit world in the correct manner, losing control of its fabric, and the fabric of the subject's spirit body.

People who return to the mortal world with damage or Fatigue to their spirits are tired, confused, or depressed to an extent corresponding to the extent of the damage their spirit suffered. In game terms, this harm is reflected in Wound and Fatigue penalties. Although the character's body is at normal health, Wound and Fatigue penalties had in spirit form are imposed on all actions taken once back in body. If any Body or Fatigue Levels are lost once back in physical form, their penalties do not set in until resulting penalties actually fall lower than those held over from spirit form. Penalties resulting from spirit form are recovered from normally upon returning to the physical world.

Thus, if a character returns from the spirit world with Medium Wounds and at a Weary Fatigue Level, her physical body suffers a -4 penalty on actions taken (-3 for Medium Wounds and -1 for being Weary). However, her body is at normal health levels (presumably full health). If she loses four Body Levels in the physical world, she falls to Heavily Wounded (her physical body was at full strength, so Levels are subtracted from *Unhurt*), she now suffers a -6 penalty to actions (-5 for Heavy Wounds and -1 for being Weary). Once that Weary Level recovers normally, her penalty drops to -5, and when lost Body Levels are healed, the character returns to full health (including the healing of damage suffered in the spirit world).

If, however, a spirit traveling in the spirit world suffers damage of a sort that would be permanently crippling if it happened to a mortal body, recovery circumstances are different. Unless this damage is healed by a shaman or a spirit with the Alter power, it causes permanent harm. For each crippling wound received in the spirit world that is not healed, a character takes a Mental or Supernatural Flaw corresponding to the damage, once back in the physical world. For example, a traveler in the spirit world who loses an eye gains the -1 Flaw, Missing Eye, once back in the mortal world. However, the character's eye in the physical world is still whole; the character's mind simply cannot make it function. When the character returns to the spirit world, his or her eye proves to be missing again.

Death in the spirit world is a serious matter. The bodies of shamans and non-shamanic dreamers who die in the Near Lands lapse into insensibility in the mortal world. Their bodies

Spirits and Fatigue

Spirits in the Near and Far Lands can be harmed by others in those lands, as opponents in the physical world can harm each other. Part of this action involves Fatigue and its loss (although some spirits are immune to Fatigue loss in the spirit world). When in the physical world, spirits do not expend Fatigue as their magic sustains them there; they are not of the physical element, so do not suffer its confines. Thus, spirits that expend Fatigue in the spirit world are exempt from that loss in the material world.

must roll 5+ on a stress die + Stamina in order to awaken and eventually function normally. With a successful roll the shaman or dreamer must be carefully tended to and fed. For a lunar month after waking, the shaman or dreamer cannot act in the spirit world. The shaman or dreamer rebuilds her soul during this time and may use it again after the month is over. (No Mental Flaws, discussed below, are gained during this time.) However, if another shaman enters the spirit world and rebuilds the injured shaman's spirit (as discussed below), the injured shaman may resume normal activity before the month is up.

If the shaman or dreamer fails his or her Stamina stress roll, the spirit is lost in the spirit realm. That person may no longer enter the spirit realm and may no longer dream. A person who cannot dream slowly becomes unstable; such a person gains one point of Mental Flaws at the end of each week without spirit and without dreams. The victim's spirit may be recovered by another shaman or dreamer (see *Travel* in Chapter Two, assuming a familiar destination). Another shaman may also rebuild the spirit of such a person (roll 16+ on a stress die + Stamina of the patient + Alter power of the healer + highest Storytelling of the shamans involved, and +3 if the patient has the Strong-Willed Virtue). If the roll is successful, the subject acquires a new spirit, forged out of the fabric of the spirit world. The subject may then enter the spirit world and dream again. Flaws incurred from the lack of spirit disappear at the rate of one point for each week of normal, dream-filled sleep that follows.

If a roll to rebuild a shaman or dreamer's lost spirit is failed, further attempts can be made, but each only after a week's time (so mental Flaws begin to manifest in the subject). Each attempt after the first also suffers a cumulative -1 penalty. If a roll to rebuild a spirit fails, the subject may never have a spirit again and may soon go completely mad for lack of dreaming (aside from natural anguish at the loss of all shamanic powers).

If a shaman Botches the initial Stamina stress roll to recover from death in the spirit world, that shaman's spirit is lost forever. The person loses all spiritual powers and can never dream (falling victim to madness Flaws that cannot be cured).

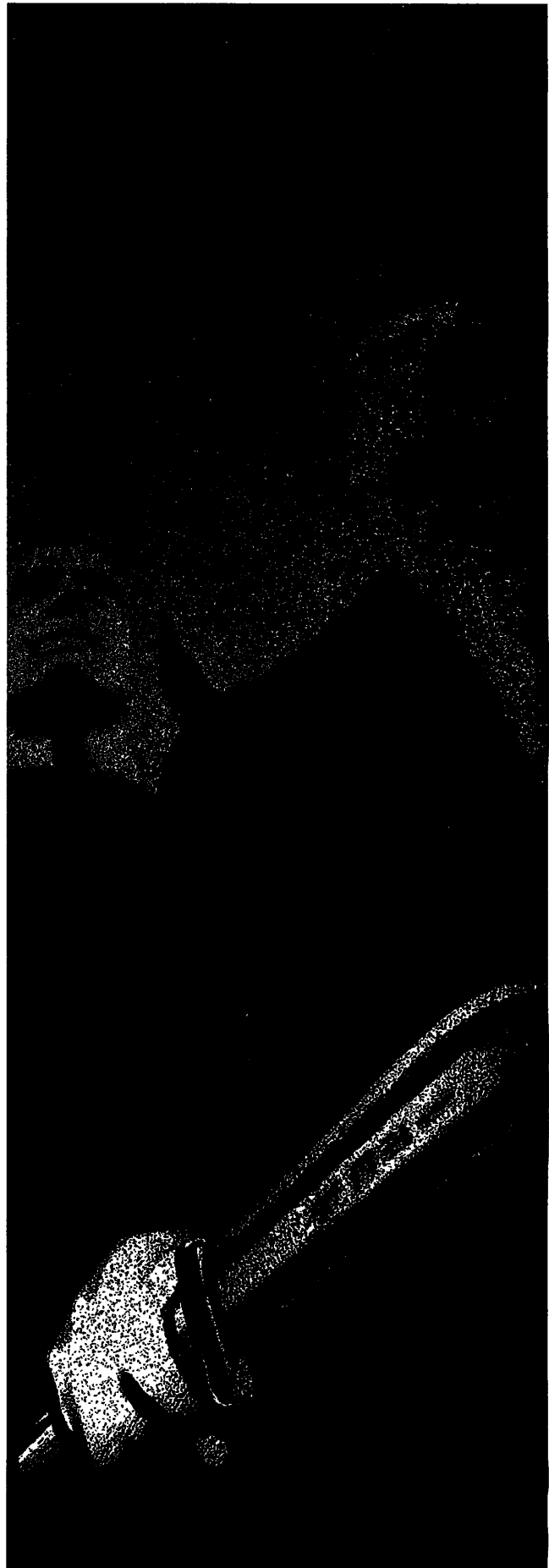
Non-shamans who die in the spirit world lose their spirits. They are no longer able to enter the spirit world or to dream. They also acquire Mental Flaws. Their spirits can be recovered or restored, though, as described above.

MAGIC IN THE SPIRIT WORLD

Magic, depending on its tradition, usually functions differently in the spirit world than it does in the material world.

Shamanic Magic

Because shamans and shamanic folk are akin to the spirit world, their magic functions there as it does in the material world. That is, the magic of shamanic peoples, whether they are





trained or untrained, shaman or shapechanger, or their magic is direct or from an object, functions in the spirit world as it's intended to in the material world. Thus, shamanic magic is not penalized when used in the spirit world or in a magic *regio* of the material world. Indeed, shamanic magic rolls made in Magic Auras or *regio* receive a bonus equal to the rating of the Aura. As for magic bonuses for shamanic spirits in the Magic realm, see *Magic Bonuses*, below.

Non-Shamanic Magic

Non-shamanic magic used in the spirit world is a different matter. Formulaic spells of any kind, whether of Hermetic or of any other tradition, do not function properly in the spirit world (although they function normally in places in the material world of Magic Aura or *regio*, and in fact gain bonuses there, as usual). Because Magi train in non-shamanic traditions, and so are unfamiliar with the raw flow of magic in the spirit world, the following Hermetic Flaws apply when Magi try to cast any spell in the spirit world:

- **Poor Formulaic Magic** (Variable, *Ars Magica*, p.70), at a rating of five: Spell casting rolls for any Formulaic spell cast in the Magic realm suffer a -5 modifier.

- **Chaotic Magic** (p.73): Specify the desired Level of the Spontaneous spell being cast. If your roll at all falls short of that Level or exceeds it by five or more, the spell occurs but its effects are beyond your control. (Ignore the Wild Magic and Loose Magic references in this Flaw's write-up.)

Roll a minimum of three Botch dice for all Botch checks. These extra Botch dice apply to Formulaic as well as Spontaneous spells.

- **Unpredictable Magic** (p. 73): All spell rolls are made on stress dice. No Formulaic spell can be cast with Mastery (see *Ars Magica*, p. 184).

- A -5 penalty to all Finesse rolls is applied. If a Magus's Finesse is less than 5, the resulting negative value becomes a penalty to Finesse rolls.

Note: If a shaman character is of both the shamanic and Hermetic traditions, the two still function differently in the spirit world; shaman magic operates normally and Hermetic magic suffers the above penalties.

Benefits of the Magic Realm

Some Hermetic Magi, whose magic is flawed in the mortal world, find their flaws actually make them more capable in the spirit world. The Flaws such a Magus has make him or her more closely aligned to the nature of magic in the spirit world. Thus, Hermetic Magi with the Poor Formulaic Magic Flaw receive a bonus to casting rolls for Spontaneous magic in the spirit world equal to their score in the Flaw. A Magus with a score of 3 in the Flaw therefore receives a +3 bonus to Spontaneous spell casting rolls in the spirit world (the bonus is applied *after* the spell roll is divided). Formulaic spells cast in the spirit world still suffer the Flaw's penalty, though (Formulaic magic is too structured to function properly within the spirit world's disorder).

Hermetic Magi with the Unstructured Caster Flaw gain +5 to all casting rolls for Spontaneous magic in the spirit world (apply this bonus to the roll *after* it has been divided by 5 or 2).

If you already have the Chaotic Magic Flaw, you can cast Spontaneous spells normally in the spirit world.

Botches

In general, the most common result of a Botch by a non-shamanic Magus in the spirit world is for the caster to be overwhelmed by his own magic; see *Caster Overwhelmed* on the *Magic Botch Suggestions Table* (Ars Magica, p.182)

Magic Items

Magical objects created in a non-shamanic tradition do function in the spirit world, although the appearance of the object and the look of its magical effects may be somewhat different than in the mortal world (as determined by the Storyguide — see *Entering the Spirit Realm*, above). However, items intended to measure distances and time in the spirit world fail to function.

Magical devices can falter in the Magic realm, though. For each use of a magic item, a stress die is rolled. If a zero results, check again for a Botch. If a Botch results, the item no longer functions during that trip through the spirit world (though it may still operate in another journey to the spirit world).

In general, Non-shamanic magical objects cannot be made or altered by mortals in the spirit world.

Affecting the Material World

Spirits of living shamans and Magi in the spirit world cannot normally affect the material world. They may, however, use their powers to affect Magic Auras and *regio* that belong to the physical world. The only way for a spirit projected into the spirit world to affect the physical world is through possession of a being in the material world (see *Travel*, in Chapter Two). A shaman or Magus can use his or her powers and spells through the host of possession.

Spirits and Magic

Spirits in the material world cannot normally affect that world; the spirit and material worlds are separate and therefore largely beyond each other's influence. Spirits in physical world Magic Auras and *regio* can use their powers there, though.

If a spirit can affect the material world, that effect is related to the means of the spirit's death. If a person was burned to death on a pyre, the spirit of that person might be able to create fires in the material world. Another way for spirits to affect the material world is through possession of physical beings (for characters and shamans, see *Travel* in Chapter Two, and for ghosts and other spirits, see *Ghostly Possession*, in Chapter Six). Sometimes spirits are summoned to the physical world, or travel there under their own power. In these cases, such spirits can sometimes affect the material world. This ability to affect

the material world depends upon the spirit (as some spirits in the Bestiary, Chapter Six, can enter and affect the material world).

Magic Bonuses

It is important to remember that Magi and shamans receive bonuses and penalties toward their magic rolls based on the Aura or *regio* locations of their bodies and souls, not on the locations of their spirits. Therefore, when shamans and Magi journey to the spirit world through dreams and trances, they do not receive a +10 bonus to rolls for their location in the spirit world (the spirit world's Magic Aura rating is 10). Instead, they receive whatever bonus or penalty applies to the location where they left their body and soul while traveling.

Magic Regio and the Spirit World

Just as Faerie Auras and Faerie *regio* are places which are closer to the Faerie realm, Magic Auras and Magic *regio* are regions nearer to the Magic realm, which is commonly known as the spirit world. *Regio* and Auras are also places which can act as gateways to the spirit world, just as Faerie *regio* and Auras can be gateways into Arcadia.

But, where Magic *regio* and Auras can act as gateways from the mortal to spirit world, they can also act as gateways from the spirit to mortal world. Indeed, many inhabitants of the spirit world can be found in Magic *regio* and Auras. Sometimes by accident, sometimes by design, spirits and other magical creatures even wander out of Magic areas and into the mundane world. It is possible that this is the way dragons and other powerful magical beings made their way into the mortal world.

PERCEIVING SPIRITS

When spirits, ghosts, and similar beings are in the mortal realm they are normally invisible, except to beings with unusual abilities (Second Sight and *Intéllego Vim* spells). In the spirit world, all such spirits and ghosts are visible normally. In Magic *regio* and Auras the situation is more complicated. As a rule of thumb, spirits and ghosts are visible in any magic *regio* or Aura rated 6+. There are also special *regio* in which it is either easier or more difficult to perceive such beings. For instance, in Magic *regio* that bear gateways into the spirit world at their height, spirits might be visible throughout all *regio* levels, save the mundane at the bottom. As a general rule, the rating of a Magic area acts as a bonus to rolls to perceive spirits, ghosts, and other possible presences.

If a shaman in a Magic *regio* or Aura wants to be seen by inhabitants of the place, the shaman may add her Travel score to the person's Second Sight or spell casting roll. If the person has no such Ability or spell, he may see the shaman's spirit on a Perception + the shaman's Travel simple roll of 11+. The Aura rating of the *regio* level or place is also added to this roll.



If beings exist in the spirit world in physical form, as discussed below, they may be seen normally in the spirit world. If they enter Magic *regio* or Auras, they may be seen by those in the area's physical world counterpart, as if the travelers of the spirit world are in spirit form (using the rules above).

PHYSICALLY ENTERING THE SPIRIT WORLD

Normally, people only enter the spirit world in dreams, through shamanic trances, or after death. However, it is possible to physically visit the spirit world through Magic *regio*. Physically entering the spirit world requires that you travel into and through a place with a Magic Aura rating of 9. This place may be a potent Magic Aura, or a Magic *regio* with several levels, the highest of which has a rating of 9. The place must also have a natural gateway into the spirit world. Just because a place has the required Aura rating does not automatically mean it is a gateway to the beyond.

Passing into the spirit world requires normal *regio* travel rolls, assuming travel into a *regio* level rated 10. (See *Ars Magica*, p.338 for rules on *regio* travel.)

For shamans, physical visits into the spirit world are similar to more normal visits — visits in spirit form; shamans function as they would as if visiting by trance. However, the time limit imposed on a journey based on the Ritual power is

not applied as the shaman is not in a trance. The journey lasts as long as the shaman physically remains in the spirit world. Thus, Ritual power has no bearing on such a journey. Shamans in physical form cannot alter their form in the spirit world either; body is not as malleable as spirit.

Non-shamanic Magi physically entering the spirit world from *regio* find that penalties and limits to their magic (above) still apply. However, if a shaman or Magus physically enters the spirit world through a magic *regio*, he or she gains a +9 bonus to magic rolls in the spirit realm; after all, it is the *regio* that allows the person to be physically present in the Magic realm, so a bonus to magic rolls is gained based on the highest Aura rating of the *regio*.

For others, the situation is different. When physically entering the spirit world, a normal person's body, clothing, and equipment remain exactly as they are in the mortal world. Non-shamanic dreamers also maintain their ability at communication, even though they are awake, but they cannot change shape in the spirit world. Shapechangers, however, must assume animal form before physically entering the spirit world; they cannot enter in human form as human form is not that bestowed by the spirits. If a shapechanger has multiple animal forms to choose from, any of them may be assumed while in the spirit world, but human form cannot be taken. Regardless of a physical shapechanger's form in the spirit world, any communication powers that a person normally has are maintained.

Generally speaking, visitors to the spirit world, who physically enter through *regio*, may find their minds and senses less affected by their surroundings than when visiting spiritually. A Perception + Meditation stress roll of 9+ allows a visitor to the spirit world to perceive a given scene with normal senses, and in a normal frame of mind. Thus, the person may measure time and distance as if in the physical world. If the roll is failed, time and space are perceived as if the spirit world is visited in spirit form (as discussed above). And, if the roll is Botched, the physical character's senses are completely distorted causing him to become lost in the spirit world. Lost shamans can recover their bearings using Travel rolls for becoming lost (discussed in the *Travel* section of Chapter Two). Others must be sought after and rescued by an aware traveler, or may find their way back to the *regio* with a Perception stress roll of 9+ (assume such people have been brought into the spirit world as a group in a dream; again see the *Travel* section for details).

The most obvious difference in physically, rather than spiritually, visiting the spirit world is that injury and death are real. You travel about with all your traits and physical being intact. Any harm suffered is suffered by your body (though you can also deliver damage normally). Thus, when you leave the spirit world, you are still deficient the Body and Fatigue Levels you suffered in the spirit world.

If you travel the spirit world in physical form, and die there, you are dead. Your spirit and soul remain in the spirit world while your body is evicted back to the place where you physically entered the spirit world — on the highest level of the

Magic regio . Of course, shamans and others may travel the spirit world in search of your spirit and soul, but neither can return to your former body.

Even the spirits and souls of Christians and Moslems, physically killed in the spirit world, remain trapped there. Their spirits and souls normally go to Heaven or Hell, or the equivalent thereof. However, those with True Faith or False Faith (from *The Maleficium*), or those who have sold their souls to Infernal powers are generally exempt from this rule; their souls and spirits do go on to Heaven or Hell.

Ultimately, there is one limit on physically entering the spirit world. Only the Near Lands can be reached by walking through *regio*. The Far Lands of the spirit world may only be voluntarily accessed through shamanic trances. The structure and laws of the Far Lands are too alien to allow humans physical entry. This means mortals cannot enter Heaven or Hell until their appointed times.

SHAMANS IN MAGIC REGIO

As was previously discussed, shamans in trance can perceive areas within *Magic regio* and Auras. However, their perception ends at the borders of those *regio* or Auras. They cannot see beyond, into the Mundane realm (at least not without possessing a material being). In addition, a shaman may only perceive one level of a *regio* at a time. When a shaman

in a trance encounters a *Magic regio*, the shaman is automatically at the highest level of the *regio*, and must roll normally to descend down the *regio* levels (see the *Entering and Leaving Regio* rules, *Ars Magica*, p.338). Normal rolls are also required to ascend those levels again. However, the shaman's Travel score is added to rolls to move among *regio* levels, and the highest Aura rating of a *regio* level involved is added to the roll. Thus, if an attempt is made to leave a level of rating 3 to enter one of rating 2, 3 is added to the shaman's *regio* movement roll (as is the shaman's Travel score).

The only difference between this spiritual and normal travel in a *Magic regio* is that the shaman's spirit cannot leave the *regio*; the mundane level cannot be entered. In fact, if the border of the *regio* is moved, the shaman's spirit is automatically dragged along with it.

Finally, shamans have one other power in *Magic regio* and other places of Magic Aura. In any place of Magic Aura level 5+, a shaman may apply her Alter power to the place, allowing her to manipulate her environment as if it is the spirit world (see Chapter Two for uses of the Alter power). A small tale or minor myth is created and a standard Alter roll to change the spirit world is made, although a bonus equal to the Aura rating of the place or *regio* level is gained on the roll. If the roll fails, the shaman cannot manipulate the magical place's fabric. Further attempts may be made after each sunrise or sunset (as measured in the material world), but each after the first suffers a cumulative -1 modifier to the roll. A roll which Botches means you're

The following is a story idea you may use to introduce characters to spirit shamans traveling through physical places of Magic Aura:

A number of Magi in the characters' Covenant (which should have a Magic Aura) have the sense that they are being watched. Some of the more mystically inclined inhabitants have also been dreaming of a foreign woman who watches them. In reality, a shaman was traveling through the spirit world when she encountered the Covenant's Magic Aura.

Having only heard distant stories of the Order, not all of them complimentary, the shaman decided to spend some time observing the Covenant. The shaman has been spying on the Covenant for about a week, growing more interested in, and less afraid by, what she has seen. However, she is too embarrassed by her spying to announce her presence. If she is spotted (either with Second Sight, or an *Intéllego Vim* spell of Level 15+) she apologizes for spying if the characters prove friendly. If they're hostile she flees.

This scenario works best if characters have encountered shamans in the past. The characters may assume their former associates are spying on them now, and may seek those people out. The innocent shamans may be offended, or may help the characters root out the spy. She may be persuaded to join the Order (through House Ex Miscellanea).



Limits to Shamanic Power

Shamans are able to travel the spirit world, both Near and Far Lands, may manipulate these places, and may control their inhabitants. However, there are areas of the spirit world that shamans cannot go. Shamans cannot enter Heaven, Hell, or Faerieland. Although each of these realms belongs in some degree to the spirit world, each is also separated from the spirit world. In the case of these three realms, the spirit world is pinched close and a gate blocks the path beyond.

It's important to note, however, that Heaven and Hell belong to the Far Lands while Faerieland belongs to the Near Lands. Faerieland is therefore closer to the material world. Thus, shamans have a better understanding of Faerieland and its inhabitants than they do of Heaven and Hell.

And, as shamans cannot enter Heaven, Hell, or Faerieland, neither can mortals who dream, people who enter the spirit world in physical form, nor can those able to control their dreams (those with the Dreaming Virtue).

expelled from the magic place, back into the spirit world. You cannot enter that magical place again unless its inherent nature is somehow changed in the future.

Any shaman who is capable of using Alter power to manipulate a magical place is visible to those in the magical place. In a Magic regio, the shaman is visible to those on the same regio level.

Note: Although all normal rules for changing the spirit world (as discussed under *Altering the Magic Realm*, in Chapter Two) apply for changing Magic regio and places, it does not take a Season to prepare such a change. Magic places can be altered at the shaman's will.

On the Nature of the Spirit World

The following is a Hermetic treatise on the parameters of the spirit world, presented in the Iberian Tribunal of A.D. 1207, to explain the capacities of shamanism and how more might be learned about the discipline.

"It has now been determined that the realm from which ghosts and other spirits of the dead can be summoned is the same as the Magic realm. Among other things, the Magic realm is the land of the dead. This is not to say it is Heaven or Hell. These, the church teaches, are separate places, from which souls may not be summoned. No, the Magic realm is the place to which the pagan dead go.

"In recent years many of our Order have sought information about this realm from those barbaric wizards called shamans, who, it is said, can journey to this realm. Their uncivilized account may be of great value in determining some of the features of this

strange realm. However, many of our Order seem to have forgotten the value of looking to the wisdom of the past for guidance. The Slavs and Mongols to the east, the wild people to the frozen north, and the inhabitants of isolated villages are all pagan, but they are not the only pagans to be found. Here in Iberia we have greater access to the pagan Classics, which have been lost to most of the west. From a study of these sources a clear picture emerges of the land of the dead.

"Virgil's Aeneid is an obvious place to begin. When Aeneas journeys to the underworld to talk to his father; his father, Anchises, tells him of the nature of the underworld, and of the fate of souls who go there. Just as St. Augustine maintains, Anchises states that the soul is pure and bright, and that the body is the cause of all fear, desire, and sorrow. According to the Aeneid, when a pagan dies their body becomes one with the earth, and their soul goes to the underworld. Once there the soul must be cleansed of the faults which it has acquired from inhabiting a body. Through time, and in some cases punishment, souls are gradually cleansed of their faults. Once this is done souls march to the Lethe river, to drink and forget their past life, and return to earth to live again.

"Whether punished in torment, or existing in the peaceful joy of the Elysian Fields, it is clear that the living are different from the dead. While not subject to the sorrows of the flesh, they are also not subject to its joys. Most of the dead seem bereft of passion.

"When looking at older Greek stories, the situation becomes even more intriguing. Here, one's place in the afterlife seems to depend more on proper ritual being observed, than on any sense of right and wrong, or judgement. It seems all spirits whose bodies were properly buried ended up in the same afterlife — pleasant fields, where no ill happened, but no good either. In many of these early stories spirits seem to envy the living. These stories contain valuable information about the underworld, information which is strikingly similar to that acquired from talking with barbarian shamans.

"I do not say we should not use modern sources, but look at what may be revealed if both modern and ancient sources are used. From both we see the spirit world is a less violent and passionate place than the mortal world. Accounts are unclear as to whether the pagan dead are judged, but it seems clear that whatever judgements are made they are not final like those of Heaven and Hell.

"My studies further suggest that insight into the judgement of spirits can be found in the magical Law of Similarity, since the spirit world is also the Magic realm. Perhaps, just as all wolves in the spirit world are found in 'the place of wolves,' all traitors are to be found in the place of traitors, not because of any judgement, but because of a basic similarity between them. This theory also explains why certain souls, like the souls of traitors, may seem to undergo torment. Whether this place is torment to them or not we may never know, but the place is defined by the souls inhabiting it. Therefore, a place of traitors is likely to seem an unpleasant place to visitors.

"All through this account I have been using the term soul. Some in the Order who are familiar with spirits and ghosts may say this is a bit inaccurate, since it is known that the body contains both a soul and spirit. When a Christian dies their soul and spirit go to

Heaven or Hell. If they are buried on consecrated ground, with full rites, both soul and spirit reside in Heaven or Hell forever. However, if the rites are not performed, a Magus can summon the lost spirit, but not the soul, back to earth for a time. When a pagan dies, both soul and spirit go to the spirit world, and spirits of all pagans can be summoned back to earth, assuming you have a portion of their body. No power on earth can bring a soul back to earth without a body, and no power but the will of God can release a soul from Heaven or Hell.

"Thus, the stories of shamans being able to journey to the gates of Heaven or Hell and bring back spirits and souls of the dead are nonsense and blasphemy. However, it is possible that a shaman might be able to journey to the spirit world and bring back the spirit of a pagan, or of a Christian who went without burial. A spirit is merely the impure part of the psyche, that part which contains our memories, and those emotions which have gone beyond the flesh, to become a part of our essence. A spirit can remember and feel and reason, but pure reason, and the highest faculties of thought, are a part of the pure and perfect soul."

— Laertia, filia of Caerus, follower of Jerbiton



BESTIARY OF THE SPIRIT WORLD

CHAPTER SIX



his chapter presents the spiritual beings that travelers of the spirit world may encounter. Some are recognizable and friendly to living visitors. This is often the case in the Near Lands, where the ghosts of dead ancestors reside and may be called upon to aid the living. However, there are many spirits that are unrecognizable to human experience. These tend to be in the Far Lands, but exist in the Near too, and there are spirits in both lands that are hostile to spiritual intruders.

The Near Lands

"In the Near Lands, we touch the sinews of the world. As bone is bound to flesh, so is spirit bound to life, and the Near Lands to the country of all tribes of the living. All that lives, people and beasts and grass and earth, is bound in blood to the spirits of the Near Lands. Our lives are their lives. Their fate is our fate."

All creatures found in the Near Lands have some association with the mortal world. These associations are generally one of three types. Some Near Land denizens are associated with the human world because they are spirits of living or dead human beings, or because the thoughts, dreams, and legends of human beings are the part of the mortal realm to which they are bound. Other spirits are bound to the living world, maybe to the spirits of animals and their herds, or to the magic in healing herbs. The third group is bound to the land itself, to the mountains, forests, rivers, lakes, storms, to the physical features of the mortal world, be they timeless or transitory.

SPIRITS OF HUMANITY

As stated above, there are two types of human spirits in the spirit world; those of the living and dead, and those bound to the myths and folklore of humanity. Each of the beings discussed below belongs to one of these spirit types.

Dreamers

Under normal circumstances, the spirits of human beings travel to the spirit world when they are sleeping. Experiences in the spirit world are often remembered later, as dreams. It is fairly common to encounter the spirits of sleepers in the spirit world. They often, though not always, resemble their mortal bodies, and speak, act, and think somewhat as they do in the mortal world.

Some dreamers, however, are unusual. They may be potential shamans or simply people with an unusual ease in the spirit world. These dreamers have some shamanic power in their dreams. Ordinary dreamers cannot communicate clearly with non-human spirits, cannot comprehend the landscape of the spirit world, nor do they know how to travel at will within it. Dreamers with some shamanic power can travel to a desired location at will, and have the shamanic power to speak with non-human spirits. These special dreamers can also alter their own forms in the spirit world, though they cannot affect the landscape of the spirit world or other spirits in this way, as true

shamans can. And, although they can speak to spirits as shamans can, special dreamers have no power to compel them, and have no Fetches or shamanic tools.

Special dreamers, since they can consciously visit and revisit individual spirits or areas in the spirit world, can have friendly or allied spirits, but in an informal way; these spirits may or may not choose to assist the dreamer in an emergency. Thus, characters with true shamanic powers can know the spirits of several dreamers. These spirits may even be those of people belonging to Hermetic Covenants, those of the players' characters included. There's no telling what a true shaman or a special dreamer can learn about a character's Covenant when he reveals information about it in a dream. Of course, if players' characters are shamans or special dreamers, they may also use the innocent spirits of other dreamers as informants.

Spirits of dreamers, special or not, encountered in the spirit world have the physical characteristics that they do in the material world. Thus, their spirits can be attacked and destroyed, with results as discussed in Chapter Five. As normal dreamers are largely disoriented in the spirit world, they are somewhat defenseless. All rolls made are halved for actions attempted, and twice the normal number of Botch rolls are made. Of course, this rule is only one of thumb, for virtually anything can happen in a dream, and you, as Storyguide, should allow drama to take precedence over rules in a person's dream-actions.

Ghosts

Ghosts are the spirits of human beings whose bodies have died in the mortal world. All mortals have an animating spirit, distinct from their immortal soul. On its own, the spirit is an incomplete being. In a living being it provides power, fervor, desire, and activity.

When pagans die, their spirits normally accompany their souls into the underworld portions of the Near Lands, those areas inhabited by the dead. Their animated souls are single, complete beings formed of a united soul and spirit. Christians, on the other hand, have souls and spirits which go to Heaven or Hell upon mortal death. As with pagans, the spirit normally accompanies the soul, forming a complete spiritual being.

Ghosts in the Mortal World

Sometimes both pagans and believers die under circumstances which change the unified destiny of soul and spirit. If a mortal dies with important business in the mortal world left unfinished, the spirit may choose to stay with the body rather than accompany the soul. If a mortal dies under extremely confusing or traumatic circumstances, the spirit may be disoriented upon death and fail to depart with the soul. Spirits that remain tied to the mortal world in these ways are called ghosts.

To protect against this fate, Christians and people of other religions have developed various sacred rituals and methods of burial performed upon death. These rituals (for Christians, Extreme Unction and burial in consecrated ground) ensure a spirit is sent from the body and accompanies the soul on its

journey to Heaven or Hell. Thus, believers who die with appropriate ceremony do not normally become ghosts, and their spirits cannot be summoned back to the mortal world by magic. However, if believers are left to die without this service, their spirits may roam the earth, or even go to the spirit world.

The appearance of worldly ghosts can vary from very real and physical to a luminous haze in the air, with only the vaguest similarities to human form. Appearance all depends on the spiritual strength of the worldly ghost, its ghostly experience, and its own knowledge of its twisted fate. A worldly ghost that knows it is dead may appear less corporal than one that believes it is still alive. All ghosts can become invisible at will, and only a few can come close to anything more substantial than translucent. The more Magic Might a ghost loses, the less corporal it becomes. Worldly ghosts with current Might Points over 25 can appear almost completely solid, while ghosts with only 3 Might Points remaining may scarcely be seen.

Two things to remember about worldly ghosts in general: 1) their purpose, which gives them added strength in certain situations, and 2) their site of death, which, when they are there, makes them more formidable, but also presents their weaknesses.

A worldly ghost is rarely able to resist showing someone, to whom it is speaking, the site of its death. It is a strange compulsion all seem to share. Ghosts are generally unable to affect something that wasn't at the site of their death. The physical matter they can affect is usually limited to something they had a strong connection with in life.



Eric, a lost spirit

Magic Might: 10

Vital Statistics: Size -3, Intelligence (clever/mad) +2/-2, Perception (bright eyed) +4, Strength (small muscled) -3, Stamina (thin boned) +1, Presence 0, Communication (eloquent/babbling) +1/-3, Dexterity (graceful) +3, Quickness (swift winged) +3

Personality Traits: Curious +3, Brave +2, Devoted +3

Confidence: 0

Combat Totals:

Swoop Totals: First Strike +8, Attack +5, Damage +1

Body Levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

Fatigue Levels: OK, -3, -5, Unconscious

Dodge Defense +10 (16 Action), **Soak** +1 (7 Action), **Fatigue** +2

Powers: Eric has all the powers of an Untrained shaman: Travel 3, Control 5, Alter 8.

Purview

Eric was an Untrained shaman who died while in trance. His spirit was unaware of his soul's sudden departure, at least until he sensed a problem and returned to find his corpse in no condition to be reinhabited. Unable to find his soul, Eric used his Alter power to create himself a new body in the spirit world. He now appears as a rook (a smallish, black, crow-like bird) with human eyes.

While he is better off than most soulless spirits, because of his shamanic talents, Eric is still limited in capacity.

While he can speak, his intelligence sometimes fails him and he becomes confused, occasionally babbling unintelligibly or weeping. He is subject to violent, uncontrolled emotions, often overreacting to emotional situations, good or bad. (At the beginning of any conversation or stressful event, roll a stress die. If the result is 6+, Eric uses the higher of the Intelligence and Communication traits listed above. Otherwise, he loses control of his mind and uses the lower stats. When he loses control of his mind he often forgets he has shamanic powers, or may use them without thinking.)

While Eric only remembers fragments of his life experience, he is fascinated by mortals traveling in the spirit world, and is drawn to trained shamans. (He is subconsciously looking for training or help finding his soul.) Thus, he often hangs around groups of mortal travelers in the spirit world, laughing, crying, pecking at breadcrumbs, reminiscing in fragments about what is obviously a human life in the mortal world. He is something of a clown, and is sincere in his desire to help travelers.

Eric's shamanic powers remain intact, though every roll he makes is stress. In the result of a Botch, he temporarily loses his higher Intelligence and Communication scores. Mention of finding his soul usually brings Eric out of such fits.

Because of his background, Eric has a particular horror of mortals becoming lost or trapped in the spirit world. He risks anything to help a lost mortal, even someone he has never seen before.

Each ghost has a Magic Might score, which serves as its Magic Resistance score, Magic Penetration score, and ability to resist certain spells designed to affect ghosts specifically. If the ghost has special powers, such as spells, using these powers can temporarily decrease Magic Might, as described later. The Magic Might of a ghost depends on the power the ghost had in life, and sometimes depends of the manner of death. A ghost of a powerful person has a high Magic Might, as might a ghost who was betrayed and slain, and has returned to exact revenge. The average ghost has a Magic Might score between 15 and 20.

Most worldly ghosts have some power, even if it is nothing more than causing fear. They often have powers appropriate to their activities in life. Particularly strong powers use up more Magic Points, while weaker ones use fewer. Ghosts gain back used up Magic Might at different rates, depending on the intensity of their emotions. In general, a day or two is long enough to recover all used Magic Might Points.

Worldly ghosts are generally only affected by Mentem spells, both those intended for living people and those intended specifically for ghosts. If two spirits meet in the physical world, they fight as if both are in the spirit world. Thus, their powers operate on each other normally, but usually don't affect the

physical world surrounding the battle. Magic weapons, used in the material world, can sometimes harm ghosts in the material world.

Ghosts in the Spirit World

In addition to appearing in the mortal world, the spirits of dead mortals may be encountered in the spirit world, under several different sets of circumstances.

Mortal world ghosts may project into the Near Lands. Sometimes tension between soul and body for possession of spirit pulls a portion of the haunting spirit into the spirit world, where it strives to meet its soul. In such a case, the focus of the spirit in the mortal world (usually the body) acts like an area of *regio* for the spirit; the spirit haunts in the mortal world and exists in the Near Lands simultaneously (though the two may look different in the different places). In extreme cases, the *regio* of the spirit's focus may be a true *regio*; anyone in the mortal world who approaches the spirit's focus too closely can find herself approaching the spirit world.

The combined spirits and souls of the dead can also be encountered in the spirit lands. These combined entities usually appear as they did in life as their transition into the next world was not traumatic. These beings are the pagan dead. Jews are also found among these beings, since their religion



provides for human souls but not for a Heaven of perfect reward or a Hell of eternal punishment. Christians can sometimes exist in the spirit world as complete spirits and souls, if they entered the place as physical beings and died there. However, truly devout Christian souls lost in the spirit world still go on to Heaven or Hell.

Occasionally, ghosts unique to the spirit world may be encountered there. A spirit may be separated from its soul upon death, but with time seeks to find its soul, maybe after completing business in the mortal world. However, in searching for its soul, the spirit might become lost and end up in the spirit world. This fate may befall the spirits of pagans, Christians, or those in league with the devil (assuming diabolists have not already sacrificed their spirits by making pacts).

Furthermore, people whose physical bodies die while dreaming, in trance, or after a lingering illness can also have spirit separated from soul. After all, the soul automatically goes to somewhere in the spirit world, to Heaven, or to Hell. The spirit wanders the Near Lands, searching for its body or soul, growing steadily weaker in the absence of both (until it is reduced to its fundamental essence). A wandering spirit must find and haunt its body in the mortal world, find its soul, or acquire a new body in the mortal world to survive. A haunted body in the material world can become a walking corpse, and a ghost acquiring a new body possesses that body (in the latter case, see the *Ghostly Possession* rules provided below).

Occasionally spirits lost in the spirit world become malevolent, if they aren't so to begin with. These spirits often resent their transitory existence and seek to possess the bodies of dreamers or shamans who are in trance. Some shamanic peoples say nightmares are the result of the failure of such efforts.

A few exceptional spirits, not necessarily malevolent ones, may even find new bodies. They may possess the newly born, those on the threshold of death, or even objects. Spirits possessing bodies may maintain contact with both the physical and spirit worlds (specifically the Near Lands). A shaman in the spirit world can recognize the dual existence of a possessing spirit encountered in the spirit world. Indeed, a shaman can communicate between the two worlds through the possessing spirit, using the spirit as a medium. Such a possessing spirit can also be attacked by spirits in the Magic realm, and by spirits existing on earth.

Ghostly Possession

Note: These rules are for use in cases where ghosts, and animal, creature, or object spirits seek to possess a living being. These rules are also used when a spirit who has become separated from body and soul seeks to control a living being. These rules are *not* used for the spirits of shamans and living people that seek to possess living beings. If a spirit has a body elsewhere that may be returned to, the possession rules presented in Chapter Two are used. Generally, if a player's character is attempting possession, use the possession rules in Chapter Two.

Ghosts that linger in the material world can occupy the bodies of living people. Spirits that enter the material world from the spirit world may also attempt to possess living people. The rules for this possession are much like those for shamans attempting to possess material world beings; however, the rules presented here are designed for use with ghosts and their Magic Might scores.

Possession takes place in two stages: 1) contact, in which the ghost penetrates Magic Resistance and enters the body; and 2) control, in which the ghost forces the body to take a specific action.

Contact: The ghost “physically” touches the target and tries to enter the body. For the ghost, roll a stress die + Magic Might. If the ghost has the Strong-Willed Virtue, add +3 to its roll. If the ghost’s roll fails, it may try again, but each attempt after the first suffers a cumulative -1 modifier to the roll. If the ghost’s possession attempt Botches, the ghost is repelled from the body and can never attempt possession of that body again.

Resistance is determined by the nature of the target. In the case of a Magus target, Magic Resistance (based on the Mentem Form) applies. Shamans resist with their Stamina + Travel scores (if a shaman has a *Parma Magica*, the higher of the two protections is used). Shapechangers resist with their full Magic Might scores. Stamina + 10 is used instead if they have no Magic Might or if Stamina + 10 generates a higher total. Any other creature resists with its Magic Might score. (Of course, all these totals are modified by a stress die.) And regardless of magic defenses, all people and creatures receive a Natural Resistance Intelligence stress roll against an Ease Factor of 12. If any Magic or Natural Resistance roll is Botched, the ghost automatically receives +3 to all control rolls (see below).

If the ghost’s roll is the higher of the two, the ghost gets “in the target’s head.” Whether its attempt succeeds or fails, the ghost expends 3 Might Points.

Control: If a possessing ghost so chooses, a subject can be made to perform actions. Each action commanded of a subject requires a separate contest of wills between possessor and host. These rolls are made for various commands like, “attack that man,” “leave town,” or “cast this spell.”

For each action commanded of a subject, both participants make Stamina stress rolls (the Strong-Willed Virtue adds +3). If the action commanded is opposed to the inherent nature of the subject (e.g., the ghost commands a host to attack friends), the host receives a bonus to the Stamina roll. This bonus is usually based on a pertinent Personality Trait (the Friendly +1 Trait offers a +1 bonus in the above example). The nature of a command can also trigger use of a Passion in a scene. If a host has the Love Passion and is commanded to attack friends, the Passion may be activated as resistance to rolls throughout the scene.

Commands cannot be too elaborate, either. If they are, the host does not perform the action and makes an attempt to break free of control, with a +3 bonus (on top of any Personality Trait or Passion bonuses gained). The Storyguide decides when commanded actions are too complex for the host to carry out

Marquetra, a tormented spirit

Spirit Might: 25

Vital Statistics: Size +1, Intelligence (single-minded) -3, Perception (confused) -2, Strength (gusty blows) +1, Stamina (wind’s resilience) +2, Communication (howling voice) -2

Personality Traits: Violent +4, Desperate +6

Combat Totals:

Whirlwind of Blades: First Strike +10*, Attack +7, Damage +7

* Marquetra gets 2 attacks every melee Round

Powers: Marquetra attempts to possess any being who attempts to contact its disintegrating mind, but may not attempt to possess anyone unless mentally contacted first. Use the *Ghostly Possession* rules from Chapter Six.

Note: All other statistics are non-applicable, given the spirit’s condition. Furthermore, Marquetra cannot be attacked by any physical or magical means; only Mentem or Imágonem spells can effect it.

Purview

This is the disintegrating spirit of Leon Marquetra, a Moslem scholar of Grenada who was killed by diabolists in A.D. 1194. When the diabolists who killed him captured his soul, Marquetra’s spirit escaped into the Near Lands. Without magical or shamanic skills to find his body or understand his surroundings, the spirit has moved randomly in the Near Lands, seeking anything it recognizes. After several years, only Marquetra’s considerable will and desire to end the threat of the diabolists who killed him still animates his spirit.

The spirit appears as a whirlwind of scarlet and gold, studded randomly with the whirling blades of scimitars. As the spirit moves, it continually repeats Marquetra’s name in a high-pitched shriek. The spirit can no longer distinguish friend from foe; it strikes anything it touches or that touches it.

If spoken to in Latin, Greek, or Arabic, the spirit hesitates, revealing the shadowy outline of a human figure within its whirlwind. The spirit cries for help, its words barely audible above its keening wind. Only Marquetra’s name and a reference to a “jar of lead and green clay” (the vessel that holds his soul) can be understood.

The diabolist cult in Grenada is still active and still holds Marquetra’s soul. Any character who rolls 15+ (on an Intelligence + Area Lore [Spain], or Humanities stress roll) recognizes Marquetra’s name and knows of his sudden and somewhat suspicious death in Grenada. Further research may lead to the cult.



(although wise possessors may break down complex actions into individual commands, each of which must be rolled for, making overall command easier).

If the ghost wins the Stamina contest by 3 or more points the ghost gains control and may make the host perform one action (assuming it is not too complex). The host must make a Short-Term Fatigue stress roll against an Ease Factor of 6. The ghost expends 1 Might Point.

If the host's Stamina roll is 3 or more points above the ghost's, the host retains her will for the Round. The ghost now expends Might Points equal to the difference between the contestants' rolls. In the next Round the ghost may try to force another action on the target.

If neither party wins the Stamina contest by 3 or more points, the host's body scream, writhes, and thrashes about, with no one in control.

If the possessing ghost loses all Might Points it is expelled from the host's body. The ghost may escape to the spirit world, or try to flee in the material world if bound to it. If it can escape capture, the ghost may recover its Might after a day or so and attempt another possession (requiring further contact and control efforts).

If the host in a possession ever loses all Fatigue Levels, he can no longer defend, but is also incapable of any further actions. Further actions can only be attempted or commanded by the possessor when the host regains at least one Fatigue

Level. Also keep in mind that Fatigue penalties incurred from possession apply to the target's Stamina competition rolls, and to further Fatigue checks.

A possessing ghost only does itself disservice by pushing a host to the limits of Fatigue. After all, if the host is forced into Unconsciousness, he cannot be made to perform any actions. The wily ghost allows a possession victim to recover somewhat before demanding further actions, ensuring that more than just a few actions can be commanded before Unconsciousness sets in again. (But, of course, the more a host is allowed to recover, the more potent his Stamina rolls, and so the more difficult the person is to control. Ghosts therefore find themselves between a rock and a hard place, forced to balance ease of command with duration of command.)

If a ghost's Stamina roll ever Botches, it is immediately driven from the host and can never resume control. If the host's Stamina roll ever Botches, the ghost receives a +3 bonus to all further Stamina rolls during the current possession. If the host Botches on several occasions, the ghost's +3 bonus accumulates. If the target ever Botches a Fatigue roll, two Short-Term Fatigue Levels are lost.

Powers of Possession

A ghost possessing and controlling a host has access to the physical abilities and skills of the host, at the host's trait scores. This includes combat scores. However, the spirit does not have direct access to the host's mind. The ghost may not use the host's mental abilities at its own disposal. Rather, the ghost must command the host to use its mental abilities on the ghost's behalf. Thus, mental powers and abilities used by a host are used at the host's trait scores, not the ghost's.

Ghosts are also able to project their own powers and abilities through a host. If a ghost knows how to use a battle axe and the host does not, the host may pick up and wield an axe. However, making a host perform an action that she normally cannot requires a control roll outside the normal roll required to actually perform the action. Thus, if a possessing ghost commands a host to use an axe to kill friends, the ghost must make two control rolls, one to successfully use the axe and another to make the host attack friends.

The host makes the normal Fatigue check for each control roll and the ghost spends the normal magic Might Points for each of the two rolls.

Attacking Possessors

If a possessor from the spirit world enters its host, that possessor may be attacked by spirits in both the spirit and physical worlds. The spirits fight as if in the spirit world. For every Round spent fighting another spirit, the possessor loses control of the host, and the host may act of his own will. The possessing spirit is not expelled from the host, though. It may make commands of the host in other Rounds, but during those Rounds cannot fight spirit opponents. The possessing spirit is only expelled when depleted of Magic Points, Fatigue Levels, or Body Levels, or is otherwise driven out. If the possessor ever

Pretty, a Hungry Spirit

Magic Might: 15

Vital Statistics: Size -1, Intelligence n/a, Perception (obsessive) +5, Strength (passionate) +3, Stamina (strong-willed) +3, Presence (misshapen) -4, Communication (whining) -3, Dexterity 0, Quickness (nervous speed) +6

Personality Traits: Greedy +6

Confidence: 2

Combat Totals:

Grab Totals: First Strike +10, Attack +9, Damage n/a*

Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Dodge Defense +9 (15 Action), Soak +0 (6 Action), Fatigue n/a

* This attack does no Damage. A successful Attack means one object on the victim's person has been grabbed. In the next Round (in the melee phase) this object goes into Pretty's bowl unless the targetted character succeeds in a Strength versus Strength stress roll with Pretty. If either side Botches, the object is broken or damaged in some way.

Powers:

Grab, PeVi/Pe? 20, 0 Points — See below. Pretty can appear in the mortal world and the spirit world, and may grab items in both worlds, but its grabbing and putting of objects in its bowl also affects both worlds. That is, if an object is grabbed in the spirit world, its physical world counterpart is also destroyed. If an object is grabbed in the physical world, any spirit world counterparts are destroyed.

Purview

This spirit appears as a small, emaciated child with an enormous hunchback. It wears the clothing of a beggar-

child and walks about searching for mortals. When it finds them, it approaches, asking in a curious, high, whistling voice for "*something pretty*." These are the only words it knows, though it can speak them in any language.

The spirit makes constant, feeble attempts to grasp anything that especially pleases it. The more powerful an item is, the more the spirit is attracted to it, regardless of whether the nature of the item is mundane, Magical, Infernal, or Divine. It prefers an Infernally magicked book to an ordinary Psalter, and an ordinary Psalter to a penny broadsheet. A rich piece of food is better than a poor one.

Any item placed in the spirit's begging bowl begins to age rapidly, gaining about 10 years of wear every Round until removed or until it ages into nothing. This decay also applies to living things. As the aging of an item occurs, the spirit begins to fill out, looking less wrinkled and starving. It can happily consume any item, regardless of the item's power or substance, without suffering ill effects or changing in nature, even if the item normally damages its user. After having consumed a large, tasty item, say an illuminated book with gold covers, or a lot of little items, say five or six complete suits of clothing, the spirit is sated and content, at least until something more appealing comes along.

If an angry or curious visitor touches the spirit or tears its clothing, it becomes apparent that the spirit's hunchback is actually a huge accumulation of all the objects it has consumed, in their original condition. Whether such items can be retrieved is another question altogether.

Botches a roll in combat with another spirit, the possessor is expelled from the host, and suffers appropriate effects of the Botch in question. The Botch-expelled spirit may never possess that host again.

If a possessing spirit is a ghost trapped in the material world, that possessing ghost may only be attacked by other spirits in the material world. As the possessing spirit is trapped in the mortal world, it is distanced from the spirit world, and is safe from attacks from there.

Wizard Ghosts

Wizard ghosts — those of Hermetic Magi — retain knowledge of their spells, but almost entirely lose the ability to affect the physical world (outside areas of Magic Aura or *regio*, that is). To cast a spell costs 1 Magic Might Point per 5 Levels of the spell. As Magus ghosts are spirits in the spirit world, their spells operate there as described in Chapter Five, under *Magic in the Spirit World*.

Magus ghosts in the physical world cannot normally affect that world with their spells. However, some factor in the Magus's ghost's death might allow it use of a few powers in the

physical world. For instance, if a Magus is murdered by drowning, the ghost of the Magus might be able to use *Creo Aquam* spells in the physical world.

However, if a Magus ghost ever successfully possesses another person, the ghost can cast spells through that person normally. The host body need not have the Gift. If the host does not have the Gift, each spell cast requires two control contests (as discussed above), one for use of magic and another to actually cast the spell.

If a Magus Ghost possesses another Magus, the Art scores of the two Magi may be used interchangeably, depending on the situation. If a Magus ghost commands a spell from its host, the host's Art scores, Intelligence, Stamina, Finesse, and other scores are used. Since the host has the Gift, two control roll contests are not required of the ghost, only one for the command itself. If the ghost Magus casts a spell of its own through the Magus host, the ghost's Art, Intelligence, Stamina, and other related traits are used. Shamans can also be possessed by Magus ghosts, in which case spells may be cast through the shaman host, and two control contest rolls are not required.

Magus ghosts have high Magic Might scores, generally their *Creo* + *Vim* scores + 10.

Hungry Spirits

No one is sure of the exact origins of hungry spirits. While they seem to have some relation to spirits of human beings, they are not precisely ghosts. There are a couple basic theories on the nature of these spirits. The first is that they are the spirits of individual human beings who have died in a fashion horrible enough to sever spirit from both body and soul, in some way that alters the spirit, allowing it to exist alone, without human personality or nature. Another idea says hungry spirits are not human spirits at all, but are created by human beings. A potential shaman or special dreamer might create a hungry spirit in a nightmare or in a bout of insanity. Or, a group of people may collectively create one if many suffer the same tragedy at once or if several meet the same fate in one place over time.

Regardless of their origins, hungry spirits have been encountered in both the spirit and physical worlds. They may exist in one world at all times, or may somehow move back and forth between the two, maybe through *Magic regio*. They can therefore terrorize travelers of the spirit world, and those who exist in the material world.

Hungry spirits terrorize others because they share a few basic, dangerous qualities. All are violent, extremely dangerous, and have needs and motivations that do not follow normal human pursuits. Some may appear as normal human beings or (occasionally) animals, while others have monstrous substantial or insubstantial shapes. Each hungry spirit is fixed on a single emotion or desire, and does anything to achieve it. Some spirits are intelligent and sophisticated, achieving their ends in concealed or roundabout ways. Others are simple, direct, and incapable of subtlety. It is important to remember that hungry spirits are not evil or demonic — they want a specific thing and try to get it, regardless of whether their actions bring help or harm to those they interact with.

Hungry spirits usually act in one of two ways. They either seek out a shaman in the spirit or physical world and ask for the object of their desire, or find humans in the spirit or physical world and try to get what they need from them. The spirits can communicate more easily with shamans, but shamans often refuse to deal with them because they know hungry spirits cannot be satisfied; if hungry spirits are given sufficient amounts of what they desire, they may go away for a time, but they always return.

Hungry spirits have the power to sense a kindred desire in the spirits of mortals, in both the spirit and physical worlds. Indeed, hungry spirits target those who either share their desire, or are most likely to satisfy it. A hungry spirit which desires violence, for instance, approaches the member of a group with the shortest temper or the best combat skills. The spirit generally talks to or interacts with that person for a time. If it makes no progress toward fulfilling its desire, it attempts to attack or harass a spirit in the spirit world, or attempts to possess a person in the physical world.

If the spirit succeeds in its possession and command of the host, it may control the actions of the target to achieve its desire, until the host manages to break the spirit's control, or until the spirit is driven off. If it can, a hungry spirit maintains possession for as long as possible, hoping to sate its desire. But, since hungry spirits are virtually insatiable, possession can go on for some time.

Hungry spirits have been encountered who have cravings for violence, material wealth, art, sex, love, adulation, alcohol, food, magic, and almost every conceivable human emotion and desire.

Ancestor Spirits

These spirits are non-human spirits associated with particular groups of people. Some shamanic tribes maintain that ancestral spirits are the transformed souls of tribal founders, or of the tribe's greatest shamans, shapeshifters, and heroes. Others describe ancestral spirits as creatures, originally from the Far realms, who have made bargains with mortal tribes and therefore are bound to the Near realms as spirits of the mortal world. Both types probably exist.

The first type of spirit — of tribal founders and heroes — typically appears in the spirit world in human or human-like shape. They can be identified by people with Occult Lore or Legend Lore Abilities, on a Intelligence roll, according to the special attributes each spirit carries (e.g., a lion-skin cloak, a shiny black hat, or a medicine bundle with three golden eagle



feathers). These spirits often manifest shamanic or shapechanging powers, and are more powerful than all but the most powerful of shamans and shapechangers. Finally, these kinds of ancestral spirits have Personality Traits and quirks just as mortals do, though ancestral spirits' personalities are often extreme.

The second type of ancestral spirit typically appears in non-human form, though they may have human features. If a tribe that such a spirit represents has a totem animal or animals, the spirit has features of that animal or those animals. These spirits are usually very large in the spirit world, and may appear as giants or even features of the landscape. These spirits also have individual personalities, though their passions and interests may be markedly non-human. In general, these spirits' natures mirror those of their associated tribes; if a tribe is stoic, so is the ancestral spirit; if a tribe values ostentation, the spirit may have embroidered robes, gilded claws, and a booming, resonant voice.

Ancestor spirits of both types are more interested in the behavior, experiences, and health of their tribe than anything else. It is usually possible to get an ancestral spirit to perform a service without cost, as long as the service is of significant assistance to the spirit's tribe. Ancestor spirits are always hostile to the enemies of their tribes, do not assist those

enemies, and may spontaneously attack or inconvenience those enemies. Services which do not affect a spirit's tribe may still be considered, particularly if payment is provided in the form of services useful to the spirit's tribe. Ancestral spirits are violently hostile to being summoned outside the territory of their tribes.

Legendary Spirits

These spirits are creatures of legend. Hermetic theory holds they are created by the magical energy of legends, told by magically powerful persons. Most shamanic peoples maintain the reverse, that beings existing in the spirit world are the source of stories told about them. Legendary spirits may be of two types. The first is an independent being who moves freely in the spirit world, acting and reacting to events and people. The second is as a figure in a story which is eternally in progress, a spirit in a legend which is constantly repeated. This second type of legendary spirit is almost always associated with a *regio*, which represents an event in the story or which is defined in local legend as the place where the story occurs. In general, legendary figures, like the classical Heracles, who appear in many stories exist as independent entities, while creatures which appear in only one story may be part of a legendary tableau.

Harlequin, a Legendary Spirit

Magic Might: 40

Vital Statistics: Size -1, Intelligence (crafty) +2, Perception (observant) +4, Strength 0, Stamina (resilient) +6, Presence (alluring) +3, Communication (riddling) -3, Dexterity (cat-like grace) +5, Quickness (fleet-footed) +5

Personality Traits: Naive +6, Wise +6

Confidence: 2

Combat Totals:

Harlequin does not attack, and cannot suffer "physical" damage, even from magic; he can only be affected by *Imágonem* spells.

Powers:

Prophecy, InVi 30, 0 Points — see the Visions Ability (*Ars Magica*, p.95). Harlequin has visions on a Visions roll of 8+ (assuming an Ability score of 5), without regard to Aura (after all, Harlequin is in the spirit world). These visions are of the future, a possible future, not *the* future.

Understand Objects, In? 30, 0 Points — After looking at and holding any object for a few minutes, Harlequin understands its nature, history, and function. This does not mean Harlequin understands what a mortal does with the item — "A sword cuts, perhaps bread? A warrior's sword hurts people, but why?" This ability can be used to determine the powers of Enchanted Devices.

Travel — 15. Each journey costs 1 Might Point. It costs 1 additional Point for each extra person taken with him.

Alter — 15. Each use of the power costs 1 Might Point.

Purview

Harlequin is an independent spirit who travels constantly across the spirit world in search of his true love. Harlequin dresses in baggy white clothes covered all over in patches of colored cloth. His hair is close-cropped and resembles fur, while his face is neither that of a man nor woman, but resembles both the face of a cat and a child. He wears an expression of perpetual surprise. Harlequin speaks with the voice of a child, asking childish questions as to the nature of the sun and the sky, the source of good and evil, smoke and rain. Sometimes he speaks with perfect clarity, and at other times his words seem senseless, although they are always simple, soft, and clear.

Though he seems vulnerable, even careless, Harlequin is immune to natural harm; he tumbles down ravines to land unhurt, walks on water, and takes a sword's blow with neither pain nor injury, only a certain sadness. He adjusts to landscapes and situations about him, but may change them if he is made to understand they are difficult for others that he likes. In doing so he never creates or changes out of nothing; to bridge a chasm, for instance, Harlequin never causes stones to move or a bridge to appear, but instead throws across a ball of string and leads his friends along the thread.

One peculiarity of Harlequin is that he knows answers to all riddles and solutions to all problems. Rather than offer these answers in a straight manner, he prefers to allude to them through further riddles. After all, giving away the answer is too easy.

Spirits of Law

These spirits administer basic concepts of reward and punishment in the spirit world, guarding taboo areas, testing people who enter their jurisdiction, marking boundaries, punishing transgressors, and rewarding those who follow the codes

of the spirit world. Some spirits of law are called upon by shamans to oversee mortal codes of behavior in the spirit world, while others spontaneously guard agreements made between inhabitants of the mortal and spirit worlds. Any inept manipulations of the spirit world, or of *regio*, are likely to draw the law spirits' attention, as are rituals connecting the mortal and spirit worlds.

Kichera, Spirits of Law

Magic Might: 50

Vital Statistics: Size +2, Intelligence 0, Perception (vigilant) +5, Strength (potent) +3, Stamina (enduring) +6, Presence (terrifying) +8, Communication n/a, Dexterity 0, Quickness (lithe) +4

Personality Traits: None

Confidence: n/a

Combat Totals:

Grapple Totals: First Strike +5, Attack +5, Damage n/a*

Body Levels: Each Body Level of damage removes one limb, when all limbs and head has been removed, the spirit gathers together its parts, reassembles itself, and leaves.

Dodge Defense n/a**, Soak +15 (Action 21), Fatigue n/a

* Each successful Attack removes one limb or the head from a victim.

** Kichera do not Defend against attacks.

Powers: None

Purview

These spirits appear only in spirit world boundary areas, generally between the mortal world and the Near Lands, and between the Near and Far Lands. They do not leave a boundary area under any circumstances.

Kichera vary in appearance — they look somewhat different to each person, reflecting the viewer's fears and flaws — but are always larger than normal human size, hairy, and have bestial or deformed appearance. Any non-shaman who encounters a kichera must make a Stamina stress roll (plus or minus any relevant Passions or Personality Traits) of 7+ or flee in terror. A Botch indicates you are paralyzed with fear and can only defend yourself for one Round (after which another Stamina roll is made).

Kichera often, unaccountably, ignore mortal travelers in a boundary area. Some say those who are profoundly lacking in imagination or power are ignored. Sometimes, however, kichera react immediately to mortal presence, closing in for the kill. Each law spirit only attacks one target at a time, and targets only one individual in an encounter. Kichera always attack in the same way, grappling a mortal and rending them limb from limb. Every successful attack indicates a kichera has torn a limb from the target. If a person is rescued from kichera before the victim is completely torn apart, each limb lost by the spirit translates into two points of new Mental or Supernatural Flaws for the

character in the mortal world. In future journeys to the spirit world, the victim is still missing removed limbs (genuine Flaws for missing limbs are acquired in the spirit world). In the material world, Magi may also develop Hermetic Flaws for "lost" limbs, but only those Flaws dealing in the use of magic apply.

Kichera always dismember a mortal first, completing the attack by tearing off the victim's head. A character who suffers this complete dismemberment must make a Stamina stress roll of 9+. Those who succeed may put their dismembered bodies back together and leave the encounter uninjured (the kichera do not interfere, unless the person continues to try to pass them, in which case they attack again). Those who fail the stress roll have their spirits reduced to barest essence. Their bodies, back in the material world, turn either violently insane or suffer a lethal wasting illness, with no apparent cause or cure. The body dies within a Season. This madness or illness is curable only if someone returns to the spirit world and rebuilds the dismembered spirit. A shaman may do so.

If a beheading victim Botches his Stamina roll, his material world body dies immediately and his soul remains in barest essence in the spirit world. A shaman may journey to and rebuild the torn spirit, but its soul and body are beyond reach, suspending the spirit in the spirit world.

If a person enters the spirit world in physical form and is dismembered or beheaded, injuries are permanent and real to body and spirit. If you die from kichera attack, you are permanently dead; your spirit and soul remain in the spirit realm.

Anyone who survives beheading by the kichera develops a better understanding of the spirit world; a communion with the spirit world results. These people receive one full point in Occult Lore or Legend Lore, whichever seems more appropriate to the situation.

Kichera can be affected by normal weapons, but lose a limb for every Body Level normally lost, rather than suffering normal wounds. If kichera take Body Levels equal to the number of their limbs, they gather up their dismembered bodies, reassemble them, and depart, allowing attackers to pass the boundary defended.

Note: Kichera do not attack shamans or those dreamers who are able to control their dreams. If people accompany a shaman or special dreamer to a boundary, kichera can be warned not to attack those companions.

The Eumenides, Spirits of Law

Magic Might: 50

Vital Statistics: Size +1, Intelligence (knowledgeable) +5, Perception (aware) +5, Strength (powerful) +6, Stamina (iron-willed) +6, Presence (commanding) +7, Communication 0, Dexterity 0, Quickness (darting movements) +4

Personality Traits: Vengeful +6, Righteous +6

Confidence: 5

Combat Totals: The Eumenides do not attack physically, and cannot be physically damaged, either in the spirit or mortal world.

Powers:

Scourge, 1 Point — This power acts as a Perdo spell of Level 20 which instantly affects the target, or its possessions. See below for details. Magic Resistance and *Parma Magica* work normally against such abuse.

Curse, PeCo, PeMe, PeVi 20, 0 Points — Anyone who is pursued by the Eumenides has a penalty -3 to all rolls made, unless those rolls involve acquiescing to Eumenide will.

Purview

The Eumenides are a set of three beings who always appear together. When not pursuing a victim, they appear as three shrouded figures, marginally recognizable as women, whose age, race, and individual features are obscured by long, flowing, gauzy, black robes. They answer to the names Alecto, Megeara, and Tisiphone. When acting out their function, the law spirits' hoods are thrown back, revealing terrible faces with fiery eyes,



serpent's tongues, and writhing black snakes for hair. They are winged, carry scourges, and are accompanied by the sound of baying hounds.

The Eumenides have a specific function. They are called by shamans to punish those who transgress against spiritual laws, to act against those who violate legal, moral, and religious codes. Theft and other minor crimes are irrelevant to the Eumenides; they are concerned with things like the defilement of sacred sites, the murder of a family member, incest, or the breaking of sacred oaths.

In the spirit world, the Eumenides are visible to all. When acting in the mortal world, they may only be seen by shamans, those with Second Sight (on a roll of 8+), and by those they pursue. Anyone who sees the spirits is stricken with terror. Efforts to face the Eumenides, whether pursued by them or not, require Brave stress rolls of 12+. In any shamanic culture, a person pursued by the Eumenides is shunned entirely. The Eumenides never kill their targets, instead tormenting them with nightmares, disease, terror, sleeplessness, and bad luck.

The Eumenides normally only appear in the mortal world when called upon by a shaman. However, they have been known to appear spontaneously in connection with the defilement of certain sacred pagan sites, and in cases where non-shamans call upon them for vengeance. The Eumenides must agree with the summoner that the crimes of the intended target are severe enough to warrant punishment. If someone summons them and attempts to set them upon an innocent person, the Eumenides pursue the summoner instead.

These creatures have almost limitless power; they can move at impossible speeds, appear in closed spaces, and move through solid objects. They can even cross magical barriers to get to their target (assuming their Magic Might is higher than the rating of the barrier facing them). The Eumenides ignore anyone or anything except their target, unless they are actively attacked (they are immune to physical attack and ignore such attacks), or spoken to in reference to the fate of the target. If attacked (outside physical attacks), the Eumenides physically strike attackers with scourges (each successful hit counts as a hex, with the same effects as the Hex Ability, *Ars Magica*, p. 94). The hexes are of the Perdo Art, plus a Form chosen by you, the Storyguide, depending on what curse you wish to impose, at a spell Level equivalent of 20. Hex effects set in immediately, and only subside once an attacker ceases her assault.

The Eumenides cannot be destroyed. The only ways to end their pursuit are to make full atonement for transgression, to be protected or absolved by a pagan deity, or to have the shaman who originally summoned the Eumenides voluntarily dismiss them. Forcing a shaman to summon or dismiss the Eumenides automatically invokes their pursuit of the forcing party.

If the Eumenides are encountered in the spirit world, when not pursuing someone, they converse normally.

These spirits are not taken lightly in shamanic culture. They are rarely spoken of for fear of attracting their attention. Indeed, their very name is a flattering euphemism; it is Ancient Greek for "the kindly ones."

Diver

Magic Might: 10-15

Vital Statistics: Size -2, Intelligence (bright) +1, Perception (observant) +2, Strength (thin muscled) -1, Stamina (patient) +1, Presence (impressive) +1, Communication 0, Dexterity (sleek) +3, Quickness (bold movements) +5

Personality Traits: Sharp-Tongued +2, Wild +2

Confidence: 3

Combat Totals:

Beak Totals: First Strike +10, Attack +8, Damage +5

Body Levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated

Dodge Defense +10 (16 Action), **Soak** +0 (6 Action), **Fatigue** n/a

Powers:

Travel — 10. This power costs 1 Might Point to use, and costs 1 Point for every being taken on a journey.

Purview

A diver is a type of loon, a large, black and white water bird with scarlet eyes and a spear-like beak. Divers are often found on bodies of water in the spirit world. Their presence usually signals a connection to those parts of the spirit world which are underground or underwater, where the spirits of the dead reside.

Divers in the spirit world are larger than those in the mortal world, about three feet long from beak to tail. They can speak, and have the shaman's gift of understanding all languages. Some divers, usually those associated with underworld spirits, become the Fetches of shamans, but most are independent.

Divers have the power to take mortals, unharmed, through the earth and water of the Magic realm, and use that same power to carry travelers to the underworld. Divers swim beautifully and stay in water indefinitely. They can fly, but do not fly as well as they swim. Curiously, divers cannot stand or walk on land at all. If summoned to the mortal world, they are similarly helpless unless on water. (And, in the material world, they cannot attack material beings. If endangered by Mentem spells, Divers summoned to the material world simply travel back to the Near Lands.)

Deer

Magic Might: 10

Vital Statistics: Size +1, Intelligence (gullible) -1, Perception (wary) +2, Strength (rugged) +1, Stamina (tough) +7, Presence (regal) +1, Communication (simple) -2, Dexterity (light-hooved) +1, Quickness (fleet-hooved) +1

Personality Traits: Arrogant +3, Simple-Minded +1

Confidence: 3

Combat Totals:

Antler Totals: First Strike +7, Attack +6, Damage +15

Body Levels: OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Dodge Defense +1 (7 Action), **Soak** +10 (16 Action), **Fatigue** +9

Powers:

Chameleon, MuIm 15, 1 Point — The deer spirit can change its skin color so it matches the color of what it is against. So long as the deer does not move, it can only be seen on a Perception + Scan roll of 15+.

Purview

Deer in the spirit world are magical animals. There are two kinds of deer in the spirit world. The first resemble reindeer, and are found in "northern" areas (wherever the spirit world is cold or snowy, and where creatures of northern climates are found). The second resemble elk or moose, being as large as horses and having manes at the throat. Both types are white in color, and males and females of both types have large antlers.

One of the common modes of travel for shamans in the spirit world is by sledge, drawn by deer, or by mount, again using deer.

Deer in the spirit world often recognize those who hunted them in the past, either in the mortal or spirit worlds. Though they show no fear, deer treat their hunters according to the skill demonstrated by their hunters, and according to the respect hunters gave the deer when caught.

One of the recurring legends of shamanic tribes is of the Guardian, present at the making of the Bargain between mortals and spirits (it is the bargain which created shamans and shapeshifters). The Guardian is the witness to the Bargain, and the spirit whose function is to guarantee that the Bargain is observed. Each tribe has a different Guardian. All are both physically impressive and magically powerful. Guardians only appear if a tribe is driven to extinction, converts to Christianity or another tradition besides shamanism, or if a tribe in some way violates the terms of the Bargain, which sets out mortals' obligations to spirits.

Other law spirits are concerned with the actions of individuals. They may reward or punish actions taken either in the spirit or mortal worlds. Each type of law spirit is generally concerned with a specific part of the code of mortal behavior — punishing temple violators, rewarding exceptional acts of piety or generosity toward spirits, or protecting mortals who guard written records or oral histories.

SPIRITS OF MORTAL LIFE

This type of spirit, located in the Near Lands, is the second of the three that exist there. This type is bound to the living world itself. Such spirits may be those of animals, of their herds, or of herbs and their healing powers.

Animal Spirits

Animal spirits are often encountered in the Near Lands. The almost universal explanation for the existence of animal spirits, offered by shamans, is that animals dream just as people do, and the dreams of animals are found in the spirit world. Many of the animals encountered resemble those of the mortal world, and they behave in similar ways. Other spirit animals are somewhat unusual, having odd colors, sizes, and behaviors. A few are very unlike the animals of the mortal world. Some say these last are creatures created by dreaming animals. Others maintain they are the dream forms of unusual or magical animals.

One story tells that animals were once gifted with varying amounts of magical power. Those that chose the least power supposedly have strongest presence in the mortal world, and weakest presence in the spirit world. Animals like the Panther and Unicorn have great magic, so are close to the spirit world. Also, according to this story, animals with the greatest magic power completely lost their grip on the mortal realm and are now permanent residents of the spirit world. It is also possible that some animals bound to the spirit world were created by the legends of various shamanic peoples. It's true that legendary animals not found in the mortal world have been seen in the Near Lands.

Dragons

True dragons are found throughout the spirit world, in both the Near and Far Lands. They are usually enormous, and, if possible, more impressive than those few dragons found in the mortal world. Some say dragons of the spirit world are "real" dragons, while those in mortal world are only the dreams or magical phantoms of spirit dragons. Others say the opposite is true.

Dragons in the spirit world may have scales, fur, feathers, or a combination of these hides, and may have the features of serpents, four-footed beasts, or birds. All have the shaman's gift of understanding all languages, though they may or may not speak. In parts of the spirit world, there are dragons so huge that their bodies form the landscape; their scales or fur are grass, their teeth and claws are mountains, their eyes are lakes and oceans, and their jaws are gateways to the Far Lands.

Spirits of Animal Groups

Individual animals exist in the spirit world, just as individual human spirits do. And, just as the spirits of clans and tribes are represented in the spirit world, herds and packs of animals have spiritual representatives. Some of these spirits



seem to correspond to particular groups of animals in the mortal world, while others seem to embody legends of animals in the mortal world.

If the people of an area in the mortal world have strong ties with a kind of mortal animal, spirits representing those animals interact with the same mortals, when those mortals enter the spirit world. These spirit-human relations can be positive or negative, so the response of animal spirits can be helpful or dangerous.

Relations between representative animal spirits and mortals in the spirit world are also influenced by the perspectives of mundanes. Whereas conservative elements in the Church perceive certain animals (such as spiders, cats, wolves, and ravens) as Infernally related, shamans and shamanic folk recognize the Christian "error." They insist such animals have spirits beyond the Christian milieu, making them neither evil nor holy. However, as Christian elements are likely to persecute the creatures they perceive as evil or demonic, such as wiping out an area's wolves, a representative spirit of that wolf pack becomes the Church's enemy, and attacks the Church's followers.

However, shamanic folk do recognize that some representative animal spirits can be corrupt. That corruption is not inherent to the spirit, but to factors at work on the spirit's subjects. If an area's wolves are turned to evil by a group of diabolists, the wolves' collective spirit is turned to evil as well. As the wolf pack's spirit is not naturally evil, it may revert to its true form if the work of the diabolists is undone.

Eagle Spirit

Magic Might: 35

Vital Statistics: Size +1, Intelligence 0, Perception (alert) +5/+8 for vision, Strength (rugged) +2, Stamina (persistent) +3, Presence (impressive) +7, Communication 0, Dexterity 0, Quickness (lightning speed) +5

Personality Traits: Merciful +3 Proud +4

Confidence: 5

Combat Totals:

Claw Totals: First Strike +12, Attack +11, Damage +10

Body Levels: OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Dodge Defense +12 (18 Action), Soak +5 (11 Action),

Fatigue n/a

Powers: None

Purview

This spirit takes the form of an eagle, with feathers the colors of a sunrise. It is found in mountainous, bright, cold areas of the Near Lands. It sleeps on and protects eagles' nests in the spirit world when they are not being used, it harasses mortals who casually kill eagles, and it surveys Near Lands in its vast travels. Mortal travelers associated with eagle clans, eagle shapechangers, and scouts may catch the eagle spirit's interest. A group containing such travelers may spot an eagle, silhouetted against the sun. It flies high overhead, making no contact with the mortals, but always moving in a direct path toward the travelers' spirit land goal. Those who follow the eagle or keep it always in sight do not become lost. The spirit can speak but only does so with people associated with eagles.

Raven Spirit

Magic Might: 25

Vital Statistics: Size -1, Intelligence (crafty) +2, Perception (keen-eyed) +2, Strength (small build) -2, Stamina (tenacious) +1, Presence (flashy) +3, Communication (humorous) +3, Dexterity (light talon) +1, Quickness (quick bursts) +4

Personality Traits: Curious +4, Grim +3

Confidence: 5

Combat Totals:

Swoop Totals: First Strike +10, Attack +7, Damage +5

Body Levels: OK, -3, -1, -5, Incapacitated

Dodge Defense +10 (16 Action), Soak +2 (8 Action),

Fatigue n/a

Powers: None

Purview

This spirit appears in the form of a large raven. It moves in areas where the under and upper worlds are connected in the spirit world (at rivermouths, or graveyards, for example). The spirit shows itself to spirit world travelers when a death in the traveler's group is imminent, cawing repeatedly over an item of the one who is in danger. The

spirit also warns of coming hunger or hard times in the same way, cawing over a sign of the tribe or Covenant. The raven spirit may lead travelers to an underworld entrance. It may also point out the locations of desired objects, flying toward and gathering with fellows over a location in the spirit world. However, a representative raven spirit only points out objects over which ravens would tend to gather in the mortal world (e.g., battlefields, animal herds, human armies or caravans, graveyards, or campsites). A raven spirit is capable of speech, though it may only speak in verse or through the telling of stories.

Wolf Spirit

Magic Might: 35

Vital Statistics: Size +1, Intelligence (cunning) +4, Perception (prepared) +5, Strength (sinewy muscles) +4, Stamina (relentless) +6, Presence (ominous) +5, Communication (growling) -2, Dexterity (nimble jaws) +1, Quickness (hurtling pace) +4

Personality Traits: Vicious +5, Hungry +5

Confidence: 5

Combat Totals:

Bite Totals: First Strike +8, Attack +8, Damage +12

Tackle Totals: First Strike +5, Attack +7, Damage +8

Body Levels: OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Dodge Defense +8 (14 Action), Soak +12 (18 Action),

Fatigue n/a

Powers:

Strike Dumb, ReCo 15/ReAn 15, 1 Point — If the wolf spots its prey first, the target is unable to cry out for help as long as the wolf is still in the area (Stamina stress roll of 12+ to break the beast's influence; if Botched, no action can be taken except in self-defense).

Fear, ReMe 15, 0 Points — Anyone who hears the wolf's howl or sees the wolf must make a Stamina + Brave stress roll of 7+ or flee in terror. If the roll is Botched, the victim is frozen with terror and can only defend itself. Once attacked, the victim may run.

Freeze, ReCo 20/ReAn 20, 3 Points — As long as the wolf holds its victim's gaze its victim is unable to move.

Purview

This is an example of a wolf spirit whose pack has been turned from nature, maybe by Infernal corruption. The wolf has glowing scarlet eyes. It stalks mortal travelers of the spirit lands, slinking along in wild areas adjoining their path, waiting for a time of darkness in which to attack. The spirit organizes its attacks as a hunt rather than as an ambush; the mortal prey is chased, pulled down, and devoured. The wolf leaves black footprints behind it. The impresses of its pads smoke faintly when fresh. The spirit moves without sound and never makes a noise when attacking (Perception rolls to detect it are at -6). Its blood-freezing howls may be heard in the woods, though never when the spirit is seen.



SPIRITS OF PLACES

The third and final type of spirit found in the Near Lands is that of places. These spirits are the essence of objects and locations in the material world, imbuing those places with individual identity. The varieties of these spirits are limited only by the terrain of the Mundane realm.

Elemental Spirits

Each place and object in the mortal realm has a counterpart in the spirit world. Shamanic peoples believe that things and places have spirits even as living creatures do. Hermetic theory tends to explain the existence of object and place spirits by referring to Platonic ideals, abstract and perfect concepts from which imperfect, real objects derive. Some Hermetic theorists disagree, though, saying objects exist in the spirit world as creations of the intelligent creatures that live there. Regardless of the explanation for object spirits, the spiritual Near Lands contain rocks, rivers, clouds, mountains, and other familiar features of the mortal world. Many of these "physical" features are active spirits which can communicate with those who enter the spirit world. They can even be summoned into the mortal world under appropriate conditions. However, though it may be that every stone and drop of rain in the Near Lands is an active spirit, such minor spirits do not usually communicate or interact with visiting mortals.

Wathcero

In the mortal world, Wathcero is the name given to a circle of twenty large white stones, in the center of which is a smaller gray stone. The ring can be seen north of Moscow, in Novgorod Tribunal.

In the Far Lands the stones are reflected by twenty shamans of local tribes who now reside in those distant lands, seeking to allow others to join them. In the Near Lands, the twenty white stones are reflected by twenty white bears who reside there to initiate shamans of the local tribe into the spirit world. The shamans and bears stage this initiation continuously, without interruption, standing in the same pattern as the stones.

In the physical world the area is a Magic *regio* (+6 within 50 feet of the stones, and +9 within the circle). It is used by local shamans as a connecting point between the mortal and spirit worlds, both Near and Far. It is the place in which local tribes initiate new shamans (Fetches can be sought after through the *regio*).

Local legend says the place is the local tribe's source of shamanic power. If the circle is destroyed, no more shamans can be initiated. A German *landsknecht*, doing mercenary work for Russian Christians, has heard this story and is looking for people willing to help take the circle down.

Spirits of larger features, which correspond to large features in the mortal world, can almost always communicate with mortals. Hermetic Magi call such powerful spirits elementals. Magi classify elemental spirits as earth, air, water, and fire spirits. There is no such thing as a generic elemental, however; no two elementals are the same in appearance or power, even if they are both elementals of the same Hermetic element.

According to shamans, each elemental is the spirit of a specific place or object. A small, active "water elemental," for instance, may be the spirit of an Alpine stream. A large, powerful, slow-moving "water elemental" may be the spirit of

the Rhine river. These spirits form the body of the stream or river in the spirit world. They are the spiritual counterparts of the actual objects of the mortal world. However, like the spirits of people and animals, the spirits of places do not have to be found in the same location or in the same physical shape as their mortal bodies.

Furthermore, many elemental spirits are not even spirits of places; they have no fixed locations in the mortal realm. The spirit of a storm, for instance, has no fixed place in the mortal world. In the physical world the storm may be over Germany one day and France the next, but in the spirit world the spirit

Maltim's Fire, a Minor Elemental Spirit

Magic Might: 10

Vital Statistics: Size -2, Intelligence 0, Perception (Maltim's activities) +1, Strength n/a, Stamina n/a, Presence 0, Communication (cheery tones) +1, Dexterity n/a, Quickness n/a

Personality Traits: Friendly +3, Loyal +2

Confidence: 3

Combat Totals:

Burn Totals: First Strike +2, Attack +3, Damage +9

Body Levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated*

Dodge Defense n/a, Soak n/a**, Fatigue n/a

* In the event of Incapacitation, the fire burns down to embers, to rekindle itself later.

** Maltim's Fire cannot be damaged by normal means, but can be effected by Ignem magic (depending on the spell). It must make a stress roll of 7+ or lose a Body Level every time someone hurls a bucket of sand or water on it. In the event of a Botch, two Body Levels are lost. A similar roll is made for every magnitude (5 Levels) of a Creo Aquam spell used against it (assuming the spell penetrates the spirit's Magic Resistance).

Powers:

Sense Within Light, InIm 5, 0 Points — Maltim's fire can see and hear everything that exists and occurs within the light of any fire Maltim tends.

Purview

This is a minor elemental spirit, the spirit of the campfire of Maltim Gravas, a wandering Lithuanian hunter. It occupies a place in the spirit realm relative to the material world place where Maltim makes camp. The fire knows Maltim and likes him well. In addition, the spirit knows Maltim's horse and goods, his food, and the immediate area of firelight in any place Maltim camps, has camped, or will camp.

If you summon or encounter a minor spirit like this, in a portion of the spirit world associated with your usual haunts, you may find spirits of your own goods and activities in the spirit's vicinity.

Bialoweza Forest

Magic Might: 65

Vital Statistics: Size vast, Intelligence (widely knowledgeable) +6, Perception (broad senses) +6, Strength n/a (or +10 in giant form), Stamina n/a (or +10 in giant form), Presence (daunting) +7, Communication 0, Dexterity n/a (or -4 in giant form), Quickness n/a (or +6 in giant form)

Personality Traits: Commanding +6 Resolute +4

Confidence: 5

Combat Totals:*

Giant Fist Totals: First Strike +8, Attack +12, Damage +30

* This mighty being does not attack directly unless greatly angered, and cannot be damaged by ordinary weapons or magic.

Powers:

Will Over Wooded Life, ReAn/ReHe 40, 1 Point — The spirit has command over all plants and animals of its physical world forest; all available plants and animals of the region may be commanded to perform given tasks. The spirits of animals, animals which live in the physical forest, can also be commanded by the forest spirit.

Sense the Forest, InHe/InAn 30, 0 Points — The entity receives all the sensory impressions of any and all plants and animals in its physical forest.

Purview

This is a very powerful elemental spirit, being that of a large, highly magical area of Poland. In the spirit world, the forest may appear as it does in its mortal form. It may also appear as a gigantic version of any of the kinds of animals or plants which inhabit it, or as a giant dressed as a Bialoweza Forester. In any of these forms, the spirit carries hoarfrost in its fur, hair, feathers, or leaves (whichever is appropriate), and breathes out mist into the air. The forest spirit understands all languages spoken within its mortal borders, and is fully aware of any creature or event which exists, has existed, or will exist inside its mortal borders. It has particular ties to the shamanic people which comprise the Bialoweza Foresters, and actively intervenes in mortal affairs on their behalf, from the spirit realm. The spirit has total control over life in the mortal world forest; any help or harm done to the spirit directly affects the mortal forest.

of the storm may occupy any spiritually equivalent position that the physical storm has or will travel. Such a storm spirit still has a specific identity; it is the spirit of a particular storm.

In truth, since elemental spirits are the spirits of places and objects, they are not necessarily limited to the Hermetic categories of earth, air, fire, or water. A forest for example, is composed of plants, animals, earth, and water — a combination of many Forms. Hermetic Magi may only summon elementals from individual Form categories, interpreting the elementals they can summon strictly as Terram, Aquam, Auram, or Ignem powers. Thus, Hermetic Magi cannot summon the spirit of a volcano as the spirit is composed of Terram and Ignem Forms. However, a Hermetic Magus can summon an elemental of a simple stone or fire, each of which is composed of a single Form.

Shamans are not limited by single Forms in their elemental summons. Indeed, a shaman can summon and deal with the spirit of a fire just as a shaman can summon and deal with the spirit of a forest or volcano. (Shamanic summoning involves traveling to the spirit's location in the spirit world, and bringing the spirit back to the material world, as discussed under *Travel*, in Chapter Two.)

The boxed text at the end of Chapter Two indicates some of the personality qualities that elemental spirits can have. That text also indicates how Hermetic spells operate in terms of elementals.



The Far Lands

"Between what is, what has been, and what will be lies nothing; Here lies the poet, the madman, and the spirit king."

The Far Lands lie across a great barrier, beyond the Near Lands, on the other side from the mortal world. The barrier between the Near and Far lands may vary in appearance. However, its nature is always the same; it is not a solid wall which prevents all contact, but rather a gateway which prevents passage of inappropriate travelers between the lands.

On the far side of the gateway, the spirit world is profoundly different. Time passes, but does not separate what is past from what is to come; past, present, and future coexist. Legends, dreams, and possibilities cannot be told from certain truths. Indeed, in the Far Lands it is useless, even dangerous, to presume that "reality" is more powerful than "unreality," for things that never were can be more solid than truths that everyone in the mortal world accepts. In the Far Lands, it is not only possible to meet yourself, but possible to meet a self that never was, or will be.

Normal animals, plants, and features of the landscape do not exist in the Far Lands, at least not in any form comparable to those of the mortal world. Even the behavior of objects may be different; stones may float, and creatures may climb down emptiness without falling. At the most basic level, there is air, or at least breathable open space, and ground, or at least a solid surface upon which to stand.

The landscape of the Far Lands is far from featureless. The ground is folded and formed in patterns ranging from elaborate patchworks to enormous ranges, like hills and mountains. Shifting colors and shapes sometimes show in the ground, appearing like stained glass or carved stone. Half-formed faces also appear and disappear in the terrain, and ridges cross the landscape like the backbones of serpents. The ground itself may rise in plumes of sand or foam. Solid-looking surfaces may be as fine as paper or as insubstantial as water or mist, while "lakes" and "rivers" may be as solid as rock crystal. The difference between creatures and objects also blurs, since everything in the Far Lands is an animate spirit, aware of its surroundings.

Nothing in the Far Lands shows a form like that of the mortal world. However, almost everything in the Far Lands evokes an image, memory, or dream in the mind of the viewer, the subject of which can never quite be remembered. *"Was the curve of that fissure the same as the unfolding fern leaves in the valley I was born? Was it the lost emerald of Abdul Aziz that was exactly that shade of green?"* Such thoughts can draw away the mind of inexperienced Far Lands travelers, leading them to forget their purpose, plans, and bodies.

SPIRITS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FAR LANDS

While the Far Lands are separated from direct contact with the mortal world, creatures may be found within the Far Lands that ultimately come from the mortal world. These kinds of beings have traveled through the Near Lands and have crossed the gateway to more distant places.

Magi in Twilight

The Far Lands may be the ultimate resting place of Hermetic Magi who have entered Twilight. The Far Lands might even be the infamous Twilight Void itself. As the spirit, and maybe even soul, of a Magus leaves him or her in Twilight, and the Far Lands are the place where far-reaching, lost spirits exist, there seems credence to this Twilight Void-Far Lands unity theory. In the case of a temporary Twilight, the Magus's spirit may travel here only a short while, leaving a body back in the material world and eventually returning to that body. In the case of final Twilight, a Magus's entire form — soul, spirit, and body — may enter the Far Lands.

Since time does not exist in the Far Lands, Magi in Twilight — temporary or final — may encounter others who have not yet even entered Twilight in the mortal world. Indeed, there are some accounts of Magi in temporary Twilight who remember supposed journeys into the Far Lands. Even more unbelievable, some Magi in temporary Twilight report meeting other "Twilight Magi" in the Far Lands, but Magi never reported to have existed in the material world. Many more temporary

Twilight victims remember nothing of their experience, so there's no telling what Far Lands encounters they made, assuming they went to the Far Lands at all.

Of the descriptions offered of supposed Twilight Magi met in the Far Lands, some information about them can be surmised. The appearance of such Magi is said to vary. However, Magi's forms may give clues as to the nature of events which sent them into Twilight. Some feature always appears to remain which can be used to identify a Magus. This feature may be a sigil, a recognizable facial feature, a characteristic posture or gesture, or the sound of voice. And yet, a Twilight Magus's form in the Far Lands may not even be remotely human.

Magi enter Twilight under different circumstances. If the event which causes Twilight is violent or destructive, parts of a Magus's soul or spirit may be lost. If this is the case, the victim of temporary Twilight may return to her body lacking intelligence, awareness, memory, or the ability to deal with the world (thus the *Bad Effects* of Twilight — see *Ars Magica*, p. 359). Victims of final Twilight may suffer these effects in the Far Lands. If, however, entry into Twilight is relatively quiet, Magi may learn from the experience (thus the *Good Effects* of Twilight — *Ars Magica*, p. 357). Victims of a quiet final Twilight may appear in the Far Lands much as they did in the mortal world. But, since the Far Lands are profoundly different from the mortal world, such Magi's perceptions and responses may be skewed.

Magi in Twilight, if they are complete beings, can sometimes use the magical energy of the spirit world. The Twilight nature of these Magi attunes them to the raw flow of magic in the Far Lands. So, they may use Hermetic magic normally in those lands. Twilight Magi may even develop shaman-like powers, being able to travel and alter the spirit world. Or, they might acquire powers like those of spirit world inhabitants.

Ultimately, the experiences of a Magus in Twilight are determined by the Storyguide. If you don't want a character entering the Far Lands, the Magus's spirit may go elsewhere. At the least, a Twilight Magus may be the center of a story in the Far Lands. And, as time does not pass in the Far Lands, Magi going there might one day return to the mortal world unchanged after the passing of much mortal time. The possibilities of meeting spirits, particularly those of other Magi and maybe even old friends, make it possible to reminisce and to foreshadow events to come.

Spirits of the Insane

Sometimes the spirits of mortals enter the Far Lands. These mortals may be potential shamans, they may be pushed into the Far Lands by hostile magic, they may be overly curious or bold, or they may simply be lost. Shamanic legends hold that mortals who become lost in the Far Lands are allowed to enter because they have unusual abilities or natures. Such people include special dreamers, potential shamans, shapechangers, those with untrained magical abilities, and creative artists (people with the Free Expression Virtue). Shamans can enter and leave the Far Lands at will.

To others, the alien quality and compelling strangeness of the Far Lands are extremely dangerous. Spirits who guard the gateway to the Far Lands may attack and damage uninitiated mortals who attempt to enter the those lands. Even those mortals who escape the attention or attack of these spirits may be unable to deal with the Far Lands themselves.

Mortals who are not trained shamans, and enter the Far Lands, must make a Stamina + Concentration or Meditation stress roll of 11+ to avoid becoming spellbound by the landscape of the Far Lands. This roll is not simply made for the spirits of the dead, but for living mortals who travel to the Far Lands and lack shamanic training (or the guidance of a shaman). Those who become entranced are unable to do anything but examine and explore the landscape; they cannot control or direct their actions, and slowly forget their life in the mortal world.

Visitors of the Far Lands who become obsessed with the landscape must eventually make another Stamina roll, as above, to keep the magic of the Far Lands from taking over their spirits. If they fail, the form of their spirit begins to shift and change in response to the flow of magic around them.

A Botch on either roll indicates the mortal's spirit is entirely enmeshed into the landscape of the Far Lands, actually becoming part of the terrain.

If the spirit of a traveler is entranced by the Far Lands (he fails his first Stamina + Concentration roll), and has a physical body back in the mortal world, that body falls into a coma. If the traveler's spirit is shaped by the Far Lands (the traveler fails the second Stamina + Concentration roll), the person's body moves about in the mortal world as if in a waking nightmare. The body then goes insane, incapable of telling physical world senses from those experienced in the spirit world. Bodies remain in coma or insane until a shaman enters the Far Lands to rescue the spirit and return it to the body. Spirits which are not rescued in this way eventually become part of the Far Lands (as if a Botch was rolled). Ultimately, a body in coma or a body driven insane dies; one Body Level is lost per mundane day that spirit is absent. Only use of extensive magic, or occuptaion of body by a Fetch or other spirit, can keep the distracted traveler's body alive.

Mortal spirits entranced and changed by the magic of the Far Lands move randomly, changing shape, and staring at the landscape. Spirits long trapped may become dangerous, taking the form of conflicts and terrors that afflict the lost spirit. Such spirits may attack travelers at random, or strike out against the fabric of the Land itself. However, shifting spirit bodies may also try to communicate their mortal identity and predicament. Such spirits are often unable to speak, except through the mime of their changing form. When the toll of this existence becomes too much to bear, a tormented spirit in the Far Lands comes to assume a permanent form in the Far Lands terrain. That form often reflects the things which affected the spirit most in the mortal or spirit worlds.



Legendary Shamans

Though shamanic informants are reluctant to discuss the topic, it seems shamans have their own equivalent of Twilight. Shamanic Twilight is considered less accidental and less tragic than Hermetic Twilight. It happens when a shaman dies in the Far Lands or makes a bargain (the details of which remain obscure) with the spirit world, to enter the worlds of legend rather than die a mortal death. Most shamans, however, die as mortals do and reside in the underworld portion of the Near Lands.

Spirits of shamans in Twilight exist in the Far Lands. These shaman spirits are complete beings, intelligent, powerful, and fully capable of using the magical flow of the spirit world. They are no longer mortal, and may or may not appear in mortal form. They have the normal powers of shamans as well.

True Far Land Spirits

These spirits are beings who never enter the mortal world. They have no understanding of mortals, of their lives, or of the nature of the mortal world. Few of these spirits are even aware of and interested in lands beyond their own, and those that are know only the dreams of mortal life.

Most of these spirits have power beyond human comprehension; they simply do not understand being incapable of doing something, or of suffering some irreversible change, like death.

Vainamoinen, in human shape

Magic Might: 60

Vital Statistics: Size 0, Intelligence (widely experienced) +6, Perception (intuitive) +6, Strength (broad chested) +1, Stamina (heartly) +6, Presence (impressive) +6, Communication (expressive) +4, Dexterity (deft hand) +1, Quickness 0

Personality Traits: Clever +4 Peaceful +1

Confidence: 8

Combat Totals:

Vainamoinen does not use weapons to attack.

Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated*

Dodge Defense +5 (11 Action), **Soak** +9 (15 Action), **Fatigue** n/a

* Vainamoinen portrays these Body Levels when in human form but is actually quite beyond harm. If he's "Incapacitated," he fakes the results for drama's sake.

Powers: Vainamoinen is a shaman of vast power. **Travel** 30, 0 **Might Points** per use. **Control** 30, 1 **Might Point** per use. **Alter** 30, 1 **Might Point** per use. Vainamoinen is such a powerful shaman that he doesn't need to use **Ritual** (he can **Travel** for unlimited periods), and attacks by means of his **Alter** and **Control** powers.

Purview

Vainamoinen is, or was, a mortal shaman of a Northern clan. He is among the Far Land's most powerful spirit beings, having participated, by his own account, in the shaping of the world (since there is no time in the Far Lands, it is possible for a person to be born in the mortal world in the 12th century, live a normal life, and engage in activities in the Far Lands before mortals ever walked the earth).

Vainamoinen appears as a man the size of a mountain range, and is often mistaken by travelers for a feature of the landscape. He may also appear as a large bird, with the features of a goose, hawk, and diver. In the Far Lands, Vainamoinen is one of the few spirits who is actively interested in human beings and their fate, and he sometimes intervenes in events for the sake of humanity in general or human travelers in particular. When associating with mortals, Vainamoinen may appear as a mortal shaman, and allows Far Lands travelers to believe he is one of them. As an awesomely powerful shaman, however, Vainamoinen is happy to let inexperienced or inept shamans take their lumps and learn their lessons.

The world of these beings is in constant and eternal flow. They create it and are the results of it. For such spirits, each being and event is unique, precious, and irreplaceable. To them, events happen as they happen, and modifying them seems senseless; there is another, was another, and will be another. Perhaps, to these spirits, the spirits of humans are as snowflakes. They do not pull off our points or add others to please themselves or us, for there is always another snowflake with the desired pattern. Human spirits, if known at all, are considered precious just as they are.

Regio Spirits

These are beings or places in the Far Lands which form *Magic regio* connecting to the Near Lands, which may in turn be *regio* connecting to the mortal world. Since they can link all the lands together, these *Magic regio* are used by shamanic peoples to initiate shamans into full power (as in the example below), and by shamans who forsake normal death to enter the Far Lands as permanent residents.

Greater Elementals

These beings are not associated with any particular place or phenomenon in the mortal world, as Near Land elementals are. Instead, they are enormous spirits of nature. Classically-educated scholars explain stories of such creatures in elemental or Platonic terms — not a spirit of the Alpine storm, for instance, but the spirit of Storm, of movement, of Earth, and of Sky. Shamans do not agree. They say these spirits are to the Far Lands as Earth, Air, Water, Fire, Mountain, and Storm are to the mortal world — they form the Far Lands' structures, landmarks, and foundation. Perhaps they are the elemental natures of a world made from different elements than the mundane.

Some of these vast spirits take an interest in mortals, appearing in the dreams of madmen, special dreamers, and shamans, enfolding mortals who encounter them. Sometimes they let go. Sometimes they do not. Many shamanic peoples have a curious legend. They claim these spirits, which have nothing to do with the waking world, are the source of all mortal inspiration. Thus, the poet is somehow drawn into the greater elemental. Somehow a whisper from the Far Lands sets the rhythm of the smith's hammer when he forges a masterpiece. After such otherworldly inspiration, a mortal can not remember nor tell how such creations were envisioned. Indeed, such creations seem to have come from outside the artist, and actually have.

Sefrasiaan

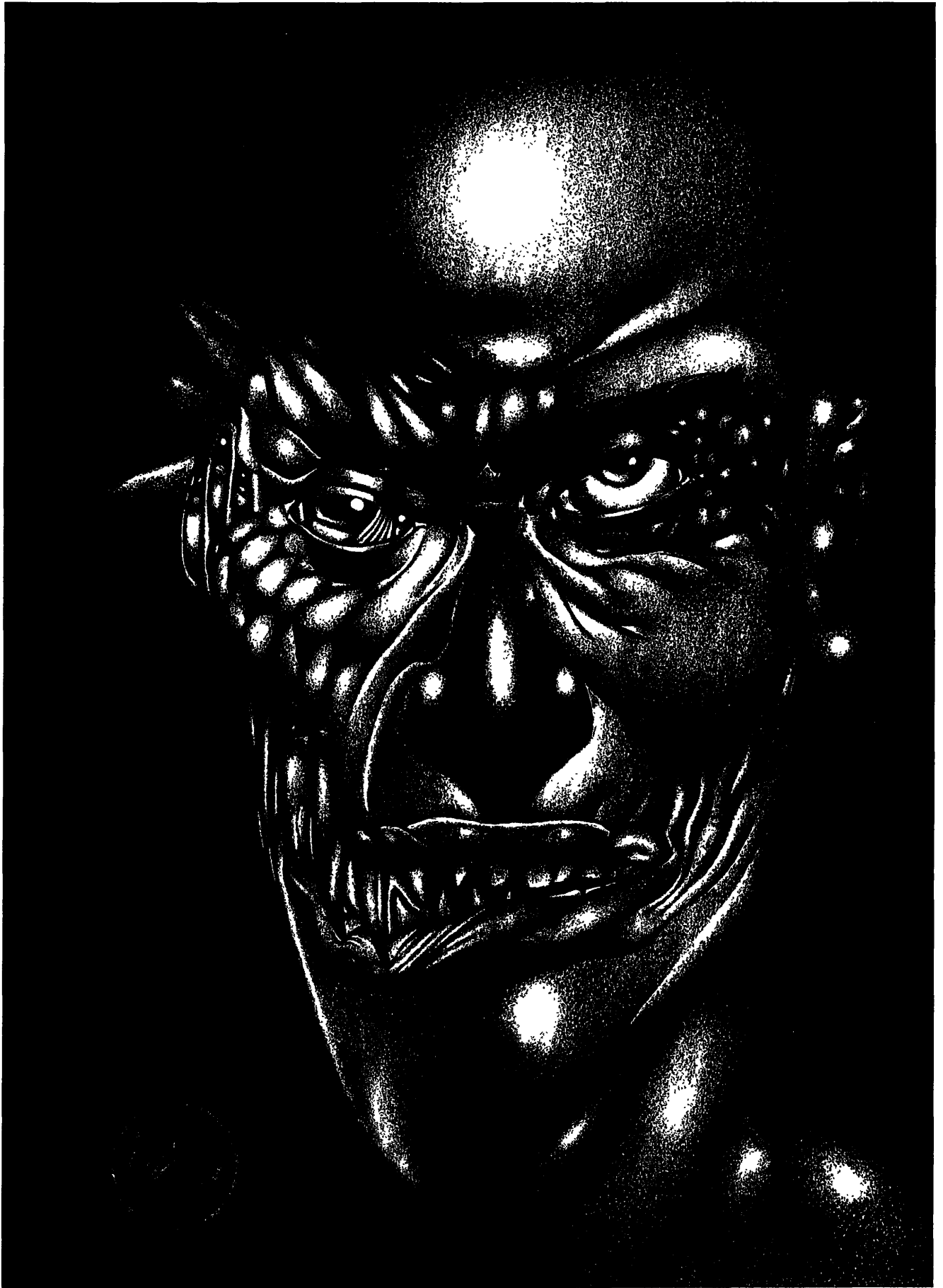
This Far Lands spirit appears as a soft expanse, extending farther than the eye can see. It is formed of uncountable numbers of objects so small that they are imperceptible to normal senses. Special senses, magic, or concentration may bring them into focus. Each individual part of the spirit is different from every other, of a unique shape, color, texture, or pattern. Each part can link, like a jigsaw puzzle, with any other in any position. Sometimes the linkages remain for a long time, sometimes they dissolve almost instantly, as though unstable. The surface of the elemental as a whole, then, is not a true solid but a depth through which grow and shift scattered patterns, often wide and deep enough to

support a traveler. Great linkages traverse leagues of width and depth, like spiderweb mountains, making patterns which may be used as paths for traveling. These patterns constantly grow, shift, and decay.

The spirit's softness, yet stability, supports vast quantities of life. Tiny beings bound and whirl along the forming patterns of the web. Vast networks of projections, like the fingers of enormous hands or paws, reach up from within.

It is said that the expanse of Sefrasiaan is alive with sound. Perhaps the motion of the many grains in the spirit produces these eerie waves of sound, sound that mimics voices, the sounds of animals, noises made by objects that have long been lost, and strains of music not yet written.





TALES OF THE SPIRIT

CHAPTER SEVEN



his Chapter presents the basics for three different stories you can tell in the spirit context, involving both shamanic and Hermetic characters. These stories may be introduced into

larger stories you are telling, or may be fleshed out into full epics in their own right.

The Lottery

The characters are traveling through a Slavic land, on the border of civilization, on a pretense of your own devising. Here, deep forests and high mountains cut the country into a patchwork of small holdings, each under the control of a feudal family. Crossing a family border, the group comes upon an isolated land of small farms, and peasants who gather food and herbs on the mountainside. The land seems healthy enough, there are few problems with invading neighbors or barbarians, and yet misery seems to lie heavy on the people. The peasants work in silence, with bowed heads and heavy hearts. They do not speak to the characters, and respond to all inquiries with obvious fear.

Among the narrow, twisting mountain paths and heavy woods, the group loses its way, even if a skilled scout is among the characters. Attempts at magical direction-finding or scrying are curiously blocked. Informational magic reveals the entire area is protected from spells that gather information about the lay of the land, or about the location of persons or places. This

protection is presumably non-Hermetic, perhaps implemented by local nobles to help befuddle shamanic raiders, denying them immediate information about the valley.

Whenever characters ask local people for help in finding their way, the people respond with terror. Over and over, the group hears the same response: *"There are cats in the forest, and cats have keen ears."* If the group succeeds in persuading or forcing someone to talk to them, the discussion is interrupted by a soft sound. Looking around, the peasants (and group members) spot a dim, enormous animal shape among the trees. The peasants flee in panic. The animal (a huge black panther) stalks away, disappearing if pursued.

Finally, an elderly peasant woman, who has heard of the characters, speaks to them, hurriedly and in whispers, afraid of being overheard. *"The way out of the land is south, past the birch woods and across the flank of the two-toothed mountain. For God's sake, go quickly. Tomorrow is the Lottery!"*

If the group immediately follows the old woman's advice and directions, and travels at top speed, they succeed in leaving the valley before dawn of the next day. Until they leave the valley, they are shadowed by black panthers, who neither attack nor allow contact. If the characters attack any of the watching panthers, they continue to be pursued, even out of the valley, and the group is ambushed in camp on the following night, by a group of panthers with murderous intent.



If the group delays, stops to make camp rather than traveling through the night, or becomes lost again, they are still in the valley by morning. In this instance, a group of twelve black-haired, curiously graceful warriors greets them, accompanied by an obvious local nobleman (a shaman as powerful as the most powerful Magus in the group). The strangers politely invite the characters to join them in town for a colorful local festival, making it clear that "no" is not an option. If the characters resist, the strangers attack them. If any of the warriors are wounded and the characters escape, the strangers pursue and ambush the characters as above.

If the group loses a fight with the warriors, or willingly goes along to the fair, they are led to a village, where all able-bodied people under thirty are assembled. Members of the group under thirty are asked (or forced) to join the crowd. Each person takes a piece of folded white cloth from a basket. Five people get cloths with red crosses. Those who do have obviously met their fate, judging from the grief of their families. If the characters did not fight the warriors, each participating in the lottery has a chance of picking a marked cloth. Each player makes a stress roll. If any Botch, a marked lot is chosen. If the characters did fight the warriors, and were forced into the village, the lottery is fixed so at least one group member chooses a marked lot. Characters with appropriate Virtues and Flaws might also find themselves spared or cursed based on their traits. A character with the Demon Plagued Flaw, for instance, might choose a lot marked by Infernal influence.

Those who receive red cloths are formally invited by the elder noble (the same shaman) in the crowd to "join us at the castle for a feast this night." The chosen are then led away to the castle, under guard, and put into a cell until evening (when they will be the sacrificial main course for the twenty werepanthers of the noble house). Anyone in the group who does not draw a red cloth is free to leave. If the characters choose to rescue peasants or group members who are chosen, the castle contains twenty werepanthers and the above shaman.

The Diabolist

A small group of shamans and shapechangers comes knocking at the door of the characters' Covenant. They politely ask to visit with the Magi, explaining that they have a problem. If they encounter any resistance, they continue trying to explain that their problem will definitely interest the Magi — "it's the devil's thing, and certainly a wizard's problem."

The "devil's thing" is the spirit of a renegade Magus, Voltaran of House Flambeau. He sold his soul to Infernal powers years ago in exchange for increased magical ability. Knowing the Devil would soon claim his due, Voltaran created a magical ruse. He physically entered the spirit world through a Magic regio, just before his bargain came due, magically binding himself to the realm. He then committed suicide. Voltaran now exists as a spirit in the Near Lands, where the Infernal powers can't get at his soul, thanks to his magical efforts.



The problem for the shamans is that Voltaran is still a diabolist. He's set himself up as a "demon," trying to rule his corner of the Near Lands with an iron fist, proselytizing Satanism to everyone and everything within shouting distance. The shamans are sick of him. To them he's insane, but he's corrupt and dangerous and tends to reduce to ash anything in the neighborhood that doesn't please him. Since the shamans understand neither his magic nor his philosophy, they decided to take the problem to the Order of Hermes.

The shamans are happy to *"help you solve your problem"* (from their perspective, the renegade Hermetic Magus is a problem of the "Hermetic clan"). But, they want to know why the Order didn't catch this madman earlier, and want to know what all this shouting about Satan is about.

The shamans are very polite, but beneath their decorum they sense real danger, so are prepared to be insistent. They don't want any taint of Hell (or Heaven, for that matter) abroad in the spirit world, and are afraid of Voltaran's corrupting influence.

The Stranger

Late one evening, a terrified peasant comes to the door of the characters' Covenant. He shivers with fear at the thought of dealing with Magi, but is desperate. If he's assured that it will be passed on, he prefers to tell his story to Groggs or Companions rather than Magi. *"The stranger!"* he cries, *"The stranger has stolen my child!"* If the characters calm the man down, he tells the following story:

"For years, a m'ysterious 'ooded figure has 'aunted my village. It speaks to no one, and cannot be found abroad in daylight. We live'n fear of it, calling it 'the stranger,' they don't know if it is mortal, spirit, er demon. Every few years, the stranger steals a child. Infants are not taken, nor are older children, but only those of a few years. The children disappear, never to be seen again, and now it 'as taken my son!"

If the characters investigate, they are given a slightly different account of the story. The local peasants know the stranger, all right, but are quick to add that it has not taken children from them. *"Only the bad 'uns,"* they say, *"what's not quite right. We didn't think anything of it but good riddance to bad blood. It's kinder this way, so they don't. . ."* Voices trail off.

Some peasants say the stranger is Death, that he takes the sick when they are going to die. What's clear is that peasants are nervous at any line of questioning on the stranger. Intuitive characters sense there's some problem afoot that villagers want the characters divorced from; villagers want to make it appear that everything's under control. Peasants are also very quick to make sure everybody knows their family isn't one of the those that's been visited.

Under all the evasions, the truth is this: Years ago, a madman came into the village from parts unknown. He was happy to service anyone who came to his shack, whether they



wanted a cure for a cough, some flour, or a roll in the hay. Eventually, he fathered a number of children, some to unmarried girls, some to women who let their husbands think the new babies were theirs. Finally, the madman disappeared. Everyone in the village knows what the madman's activities were, just as they know it's only the children that he fathered who are being taken. But, no one wants to admit that the scions of the best families in town are bastard sons of a lunatic, and no one is exactly sure whose sons are his. The villagers simply want to forget the whole thing.

The problem is, the madman's bastard children are strange. They are fine for a time, but then, without warning, they go mad. Violently mad. Magically mad. If the stranger takes them before this madness sets in, so much the better.

The peasant who comes to the Covenant for help has lost two daughters before. The first went mad. She could make animals fall over like they were dead. One night, she made everyone in town fall asleep for a week. Nobody talks about the dreams they had. The stranger took the second daughter, and everybody was glad. But now the man has lost his only son, who was almost eight and hadn't yet gone mad. The man can't bear to let his son go too. He didn't tell the Covenant the whole truth of his story, out of shame, but the rest of the town desperately wishes he hadn't said a thing.

The stranger is actually a fellow tribesman of the madman, who was a shaman. The stranger discovered his mad brother in the village and took the shaman away. When the stranger learned the shaman had fathered children in the village, the stranger returned to claim those children. He seeks those with the shamanic Gift, intending to take them to his tribe to be raised properly.

A wereboar, the stranger sleeps and forages in his animal form in the nearby woods by day, watching the children and village by night. He does not know the local language, and avoids communication attempts with the villagers. Furthermore, the stranger does not fully know what his partner did in the village (besides fathering children), so avoids revealing himself to the villagers for fear of being killed out of retribution. The stranger knows nothing of the Order of Hermes or of the characters' Covenant. He assumes the Covenant is just another castle, manor, or monastery. So, if Magi encounter the stranger and demonstrate their abilities, he assumes them shamans or spirits, and may be willing to relate his story if they seem friendly.

SHAMANIC TRAITS

Hermetic Arts

Techniques

Creo ☐
 Intellego ☐
 Muto ☐
 Perdo ☐
 Rego ☐

Forms

Animal ☐ Ignem ☐
 Aquam ☐ Imaginem ☐
 Auram ☐ Mentem ☐
 Corporeum ☐ Terram ☐
 Herbarum ☐ Vim ☐

Shamanic Arts

Travel ☐
 Control ☐
 Alter ☐
 Ritual ☐

Fetch

Intelligence _____ Presence _____
 Perception _____ Stamina _____ Communication _____ Dexterity _____
 Quickness _____

Fetch Traits

Magic Might ☐

Personality Traits

☐ ☐
☐ ☐

Abilities

	Ser	Exp
[]		
[]		
[]		
[]		
[]		
Specialty		



Spell Casting Speed

Quickness + finesse - Encumbrance

Formulaic

Technique + form + Stamina - Encumbrance

Ritual Magic

Formulaic + Meditation

Spontaneous Magic

Technique + form + Intelligence - Encumbrance

Basic Lab Total

Technique + form + Intelligence + Magic Theory

Wizard's Sigil

Twilight Points



Effects of Twilight

BOUND SPIRITS

Identity	Magic Night	<input type="checkbox"/>	Binding Object
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Object Creation Roll	<input type="checkbox"/>	Binding Duration (1 task or full moon)
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Identity _____ Magic ☐ Binding _____
Night _____ Object _____

Object Creation Roll ☐ Binding Duration
(1 task or full moon)

Identity _____ Magic ☐ Binding _____
 Might _____ Object _____

Object Creation Roll	Binding Duration (1 task or full moon)
1-10	1 task
11-20	1 task or 1 full moon
21-30	2 tasks or 2 full moons
31-40	3 tasks or 3 full moons
41-50	4 tasks or 4 full moons
51-60	5 tasks or 5 full moons
61-70	6 tasks or 6 full moons
71-80	7 tasks or 7 full moons
81-90	8 tasks or 8 full moons
91-100	9 tasks or 9 full moons

Identity	Magic Might	<input type="checkbox"/>	Binding Object
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Object Creation Roll	Binding Duration (1 task or full moon)
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11	11
12	12
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99	99
100	100

MAGUS GRIMOIRE

Spell Title	Level	Tech & Form	Total Bonus	Mastery
Foci & Notes:				
Foci & Notes:				
Foci & Notes:				
Foci & Notes:				
Foci & Notes:				