

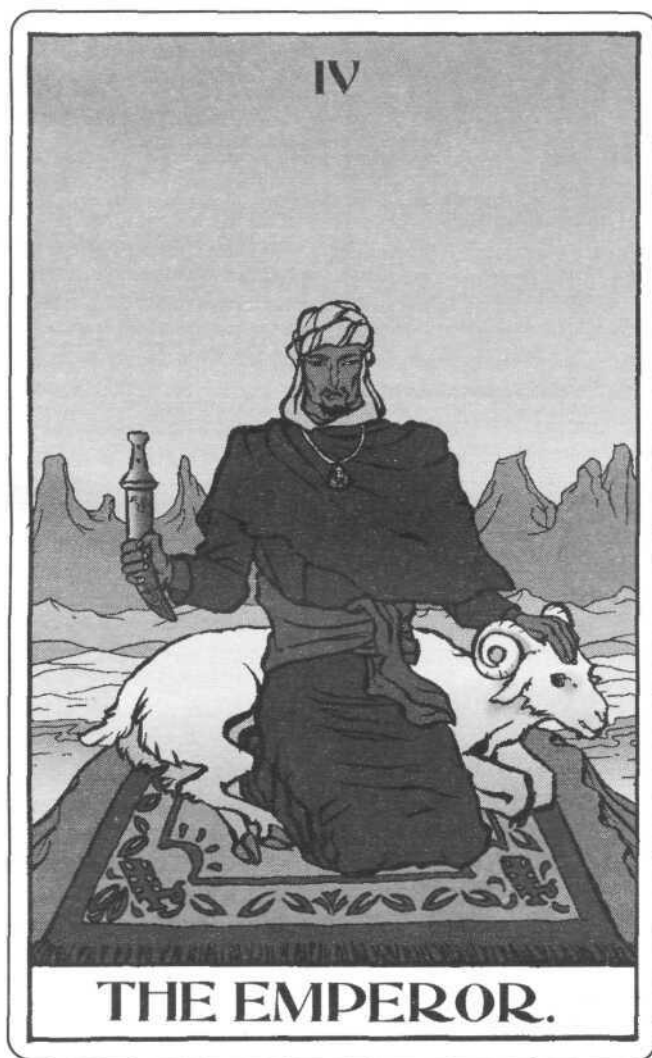
ORDER OF HERMES™



Tradition Book Nine
for Mage: The Ascension®

ORDER OF HERMES™

I AM BECOME THE WORD



BY THE PYTHAGORIC HEXAGRAM

CREDITS

Written by: Allen Varney (Introduction, Chapter 1), Nicky Rea (Chapter 2), Beth Fischi (Chapter 3), Jackie Cassada (Chapter 4), Mary Denning and Steve Long (Appendix). Additional Appendix material by Phil Brucato

Developed by: Phil Brucato, with Allen Varney

Edited by: Ronni Radner

Art Director: Aileen E. Miles

Layout and Typesetting by: Aileen E. Miles

Art: David Leri, Mark Jackson, Eric Lacombe, Heather J. McKinney, Paul Phillips

Front Cover Art: Michael William Kaluta

Front and Back Cover Design: Aileen E. Miles



735 PARK NORTH BLVD.
SUITE 128
ATLANTA, GA 30021
USA

© 1997 White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden, except for the purposes of reviews, and blank character sheets, which may be reproduced for personal use only. White Wolf, Vampire the Masquerade, Vampire the Dark Ages and Mage the Ascension are registered trademarks of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. AEon, Werewolf the Apocalypse, Wraith the Oblivion, Changeling the Dreaming, Werewolf the Wild West and The Book of Shadows, Ascension's Right Hand, World of Darkness: Sorcerers, The Book of Madness and The Book of Crafts are trademarks of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Order of Hermes is a trademark of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. and is used with permission. Bjornaer, Criamon, Diedne, Flambeau, Jerbiton, Merinita, Quaesitor, Tylalus and Verditius are trademarks of Atlas Games, are from the *Ars Magica*™ game, and are used with permission. *Ars Magica* is a trademark of Atlas Games.

All characters, names, places and text herein are copyrighted by White Wolf Publishing, Inc.

The mention of or reference to any company or product in these pages is not a challenge to the trademark or copyright concerned.

This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. Reader discretion is advised.

Check out White Wolf online at

<http://www.white-wolf.com>; alt.games.whitewolf@rec.games.frp.storyteller

PRINTED IN CANADA.

SAD SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Mike "Mignola" Chaney, for winning the war with Saddam but losing it to Hitler;

Ronni "Taskmistress" Radner, for finding a better way to pay the bills;

Larry "Spin Doctor" Freidman, for filling dark nights with song;

Pauly "Babewatch" LePree, for taking Pamela to warmer halls;

Laura "Personal Assistant" Perkinson, for impressing ol' Harlan;

Staley "Not Interested" Krause, for having more integrity than God;

Christian "Caw! Caw!" Naberhause, for flying the coop with style;

Elizabeth "Outspoken" McKee, for falling in battle;

Rusty "Comin' Through" Gunter, for his fleeting, quiet shadow;

Cymon "Clean-Cut" Haight, for leaving us to do our own dirty work;

Trace "Three Strikes" o'Connor, for a bad-luck streak that ended the hard way;

Scott "Midnight Rambler" Cohen, for keeping the ladies happy;

Tim "Spy@White Wolf" Byrd, for wearing out Ken's carpet;

Emory "Huh?" Hester, for being the most puzzling fatality in the bunch;

Kathleen "Club Ninja" Ryan, who'll be missed more than she could know;

... and **Oh Soon Shropshire**, who's gone through such hell that I can't bring myself to attempt a joke about it. God, I wish you a better year this time around.

Take care, folks.

CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

The authors thank Stephen Edred Flowers and Don Webb for permission to quote from their works.

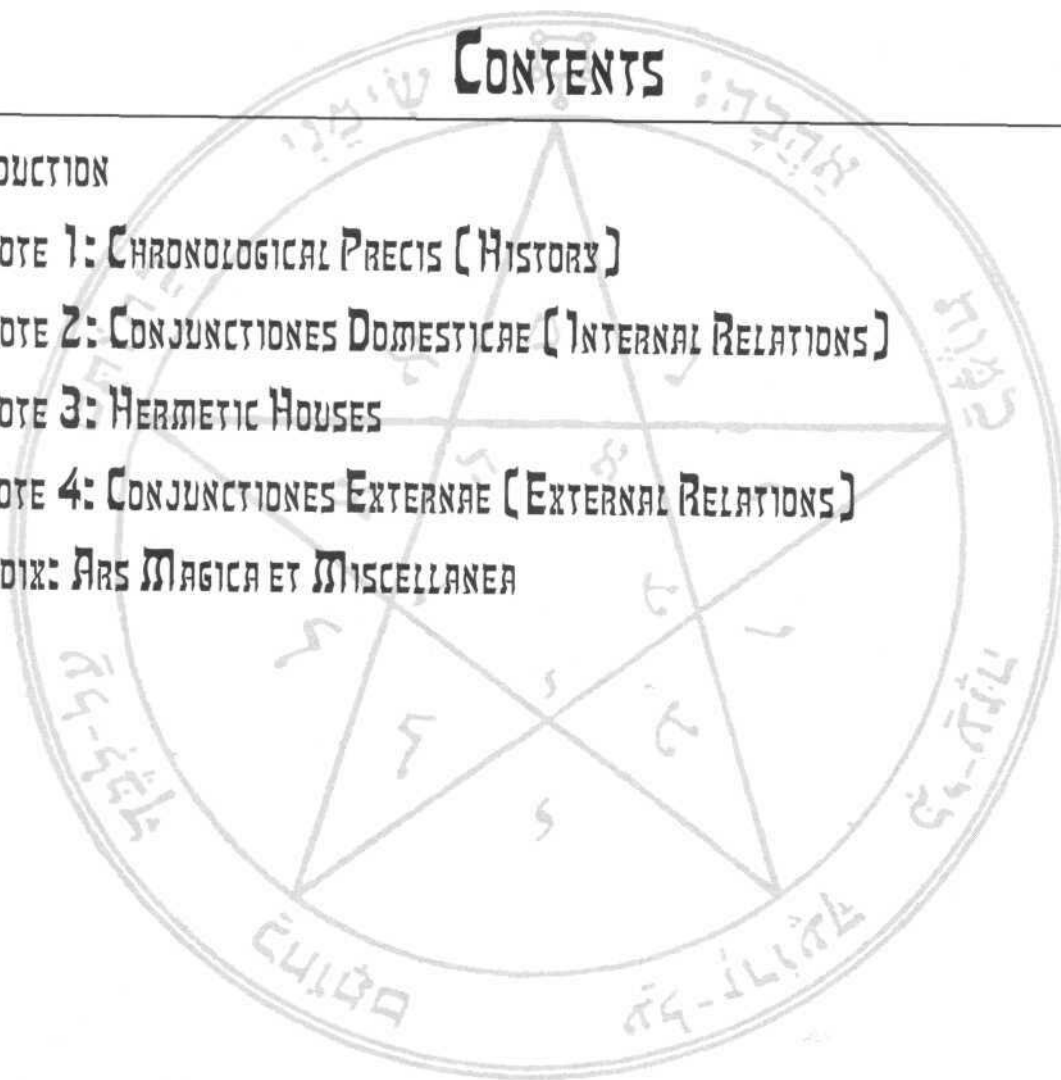
Many of the concepts in this book (including the Houses of Hermes themselves) originated in the game *Ars Magica*, now available through Atlas Games, or in Chapter One of **The Book of Chantries**, by Steven Brown, Phil Brucato and Robert Hatch. The original *Ars Magica* background was created by Jonathan Tweet, with contributions from Shannon Appel, Ken Cliffe, Geoff Grabowski, Nicole Landroos Frein, Peter Hentges, Marc Phillips, Mark Rein*Hagen, Naomi Rivkis and Lisa Stevens. Houses *Fortunae*, *Janissary*, *Shaea* and *Thig* were created by Steven Brown, Phil Brucato, Beth Fischi and Allen Varney. The modern state and membership of the Order comes from the work of the latter authors.

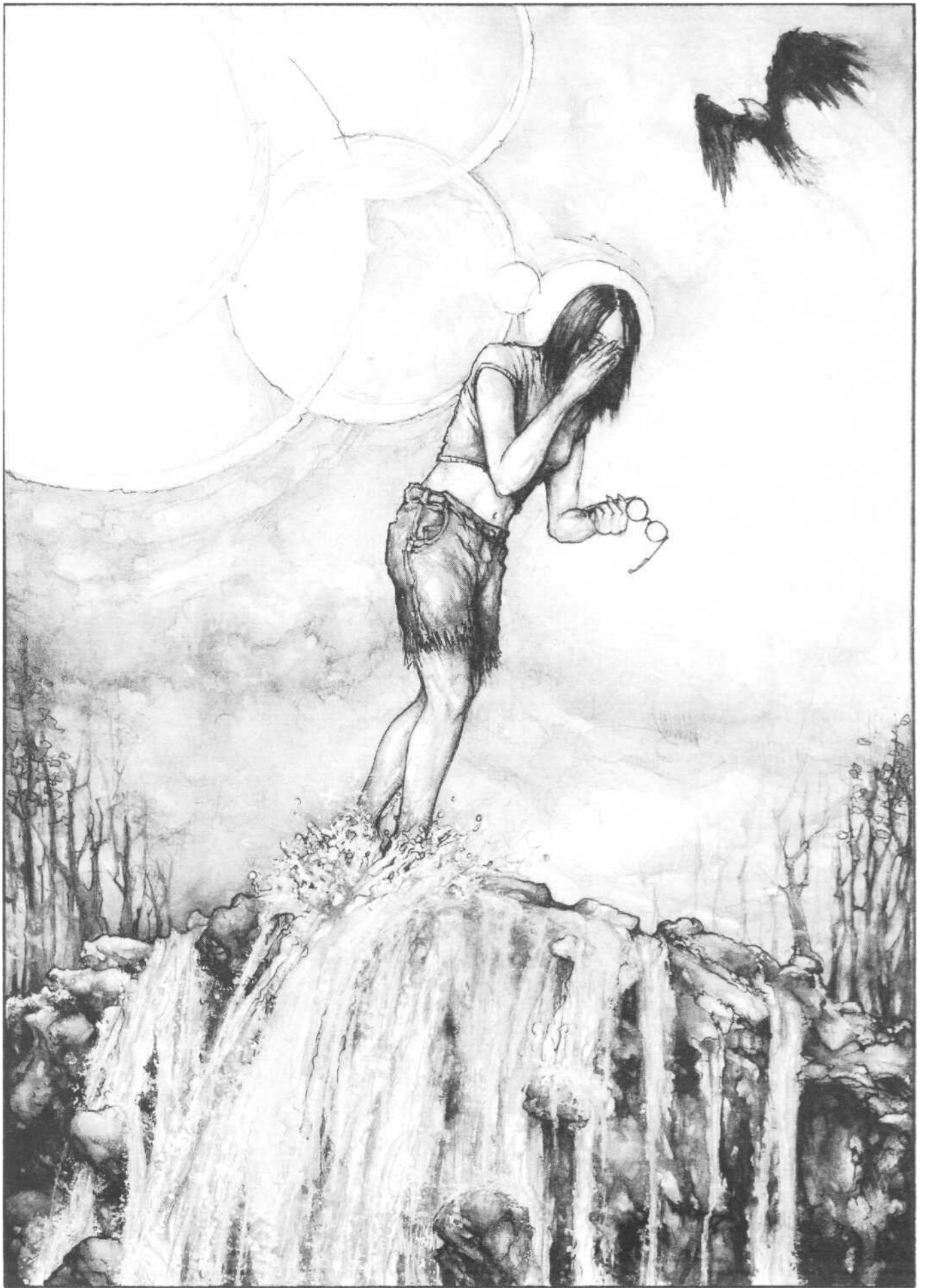
ORDER OF HERMES™



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
FOOTNOTE 1: CHRONOLOGICAL PRECIS (HISTORY)	8
FOOTNOTE 2: CONIUNCTIONES DOMESTICAE (INTERNAL RELATIONS)	18
FOOTNOTE 3: HERMETIC HOUSES	30
FOOTNOTE 4: CONIUNCTIONES EXTERNAE (EXTERNAL RELATIONS)	50
APPENDIX: ARS MAGICA ET MISCELLANEA	54







Another damned, thick, square book! Always scribble, scribble, scribble! Eh, Mr. Gibbon?

- William Henry, Duke of Gloucester, upon receiving Volume II of Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1781



6/27/1997 07:20 GMT

ID#1251/4/1997.06.27.1

To: Master Auris Galina Gritsenko, Horizon Chantry

From: Mahmet Kemal, Disciple, Chantry Oxford

Re: Apprentice Hornbook 37/e

Past Refs: 1251/4/1997.05.12.1,~.2, 23/6/1997.06.04.1

SECURITY: NONE

Honored Master (and Editor) Gritsenko,

Thank you for forwarding to me the prepublication draft of the next Hornbook. I have read it until my eyeballs bled, and I have many comments.

• **Size and Scope:** The exponential growth of the Hornbook disturbs me, and no doubt this new edition will terrify new apprentices. I confess that after page 2,500, I began skimming. Of course a new Hermetic must master voluminous lore, but the

lore is neither an end in itself, nor is much of this particular lore pertinent.

For example, need an apprentice in his first year of study really learn that between 1006 and 1047, Himinis the Mad of House Verditius crafted Talismans with hidden traps? These devices are now gone, to say nothing of House Verditius, and yet Section One offers a full discussion (pages 565-84) presented with the urgency of today's news.

The practice of retaining *all* material from *all* previous editions — all the commentaries, and the commentaries on the commentaries — has made the Handbook a welter, a stew. It is a burden. An apprentice suffers burdens enough already, as I well remember from my recent stays in Doissetep and Horizon.

• **Approach:** Aside from its length, I think the text's nature also works against our best purposes. From the venerable *Paraenesis Primus* (page 24):

Proud is the Order of Hermes, long its lineage, formidable its knowledge. Of resource, no other Tradition commands so much: the greatest number of Magi and Chantries; the greatest number of Masters and Archmagi; the grandest libraries; the deepest under-

standing of the Art. Of influence, no other Tradition wields so much: strong ties to commerce and academe; binding compacts of service from countless Umbrood; the premier Chantry of Doissetep. Of history, no other Tradition may claim so much: the descent of millennia; the codification of magickal study; the 10,000 achievements of the High Mythic Age; the formulation of the Spheres; indeed, the formation of the Traditions themselves.

What mage in any rival Tradition, of whatever skill, can boast the comprehensive knowledge of our least Adept? What other mage can offer any shred of theory to support his magick? The aboriginal shaman with his drums and rattle gives over his body to a spirit he knows not. The cleric with his song begs like a child for the favor of deities. The Ecstatic with his vice bums like a meteor and vanishes, and the witch with her blood rites aspires only to procreate. Even the Akashic with his meditation and exercise seeks passive contentment in false belief. Meanwhile the Hermetic with firm will commands, 'Do!' And it is done.

Mostly true, and elegantly expressed in the high old manner. I do not criticize the late Master ter Hoorst's euphuistic style. In a less politically charged environment he might have added a reference to my pater, Master Porthos, who even in ter Hoorst's time was incontestably supreme among magi. But this passage's confrontational attitude, characteristic of the author's Tytalus training, now also characterizes much of the Order — possibly because every new apprentice has encountered it straight away in this Hornbook for the last six editions.

I share the belief of many: The Order has gravely harmed its cause by alienating our allied — not, I hope, "rival" Traditions. During my studies in the Horizon archives, I met many Tradition mages. You, Master Gritsenko, won't be surprised to learn that almost without exception, they distrusted me and indeed all other mages of the Order, though we had done them no injury. Dame Rumour had poisoned their respect. This cannot help us against our common enemies, Technocratic, Chaotic and Fallen.

Horizon itself has shown us the calamitous consequences of our past arrogance. Had we maintained sound lines of communication with the rest of the Council of Nine, I believe Master Porthos would not have deemed it necessary to challenge First Master sao Cristavao, nor would the other Council mages have countenanced this as they did. I take the ensuing intra-Order political chaos as instructive. (Of course I support my pater's action; I disapprove only of the conditions that forced it.)

If common civility holds no sway in the Order, mere pragmatism suggests that this new Hornbook edition take a new, more temperate approach. It should help apprentices (and, perhaps, a few Masters) to recognize that all Traditions partake, in their ways, of the sense of wonder that unites us; to respect and support their members; to share our knowledge without patronizing them. Secure in our power, can we afford no charity of spirit?

• **Obscurantism:** Consider this passage from the *Prolegomenon* (page 44):

The novice shall learn this whole text complete to the fullest, disciplining bewilderment and compelling concentration, before he may aspire to the second degree, whereunto much confusion shall be driven off as the sun dispels the night. For this only is the way to

Truth, which the Seekers travelled in; and by which making their journey in darkness, they at length attained to the light and knew it better for the lack. It is a venerable way, but hard and difficult for the soul to go in that is in the body.

My apprenticeship ended three years ago, and my head has only just stopped hurting. I had to learn Latin, Greek and Enochian all at once; having also to memorize the whole Hornbook cold, all its cryptic formulae and clandestine formulae, would have crushed me. Fortunately, Master Porthos has no patience with writers who arbitrarily hold important issues secret — who write, in his pet phrase, "willful cant." Contemptuous of apprentice "degrees," those antique security clearances, he meticulously explained each secret to me as I encountered it. The Hornbook writers wanted rote memorization, but by my master's aid I achieved understanding. Our next generation of apprentices deserves as much.

Of course, all magickal knowledge is mysterious; it is gnosis, a discovery within the self. Few mortals can make, understand and act on such a discovery. But that profound mystery, an aspect of reality, is different from false secrecy, a mere concealment of known information. It is the difference between the workings of a blast pistol — a technical blueprint which Iteration X would kill to protect — and the nature of transcendental numbers, which only trained mathematicians can apprehend in moments of extreme lucidity.

Like transcendental numbers, Hermetic principles are genuinely mysterious. But I believe too much of our work has become mired in routine secrecy. True, we keep irresponsible people from gaining more power than they can handle, yet we also lose seven out of 10 candidate apprentices in their first year. How many real talents have we lost by erecting a security smokescreen? Which is the greater danger here?

During my training, Master Porthos gave me his translation of four animal fables by Livius (1.352). Those delightful stories taught me more than any hundred pages of the Hornbook's intentionally dense discussions. If you're interested in seeing them, I'd be honored to pass them along.

• **Suggestions:** Only late out of apprenticeship, I understand the dangers of presumption. Most Masters think a mere Disciple should be seen and not heard. But in our many conversations at Horizon, you always solicited and respected my views, Master Gritsenko. This gives me hope that you will consider my bold proposal — and that you won't regret having given me the chance to talk!

I attach suggested draft redactions of several Hornbook chapters. Should you and the Editorial Committee find this material worthy of inclusion, I would take your approval as a singular honor. I'm sure it would be impolitic to replace whole chapters, so you might include these versions as footnotes. A prefatory note could advise the new apprentice that study of the footnotes offers a more practical path into this most practical of Traditions.

You may reach me either at Oxford Chantry headquarters or through Geoffrey Twidmarch, one of the last of the Merinita. His office is marvelous, piled high with books. It's a wondrous little place, like a tiny Horizon Realm.

Yours,
Mahmet

Attachments: Hornbook Footnotes 1-4

6/29/1997 14:09 GMT

ID#24/6/1997.06.29.1

To: Ed. Committee mailing list

From: Master Auris Galina Gritsenko, Horizon Chantry

Re: Mahmet's Hornbook 37/e revisions

Past Refs: omitted

SECURITY: ULTRA

Well. This plucky little Disciple seemed harmless enough whenever I met him in the library. Polite, soft-spoken — I was just glad to see that one of Porthos' apprentices had finally survived his term. I sent him the new edition on the chance that he might suggest a few corrections. And now here he is, inciting revolution.

Understand, everyone: Mahmet sent me these alarmingly plain-spoken files over an unsecured line, without encryption. This, after I'd mentioned past security problems. I'm sure he knew exactly what he was doing. That's all we need, bootleg Hornbook appendices circulating among the apprentices —

I must admit, I'm tempted to add these chapters as footnotes. They would light bombs under a lot of mages who need

it. But Mustai's Janissaries and a hundred others will queue up to aggravate us all, starting with the assassination of our Mr. Mahmet. I imagine we're all willing to fend for ourselves, but even though Mahmet can walk around with Porthos's big stick in his pocket, he won't last long. Opinions?

Master Dinesen, what do you say? Of us all, you're most familiar with security threats and the machinations within Doissetep.

Attachments: Hornbook Footnotes 1-4

6/29/1997 21:17 GMT

ID# 26/9/1997.06.29.3

To: Ed. Committee mailing list

From: Master Leif Dinesen, Horizon Chantry

Re: Mahmet's Hornbook 37/e revisions

Past Ref: 24/6/1997.06.29.1

SECURITY: ULTRA

I say publish, and be damned! — LD

GLOSSARIUM HERMETICUM



Hermetic terminology would fill a dictionary. Most of it comes from Latin or ancient Egyptian; a great deal derives from Arabic scholarship of the early Renaissance; and modern Hermetics have borrowed words promiscuously from many magickal systems. The following terms, however, are used commonly throughout the Order.

Anima: Life Sphere; Spirit Sphere (broader, less favored, interpretation of "spirit"; see *Manes*); also **Ars Animae**, "the Art of Life."

Art (or Ars): Magick; Sphere (pi. *Artes*).

Bani: "Of the House of." Used in Hermetic titles within the Order; also a formal honorific for members of other Traditions ("Winterbreeze, bani Verbena").

Circulus Abstrusus: The Inner Circle of Hermetic Masters.

City of Pymander: A Hermetic Utopian ideal, where all humanity seeks Ascension guided by the Masters.

Concordia: Unity, the theoretical 10th Sphere; also *Ars Concordiae*, "the Art of Unity."

Conjunctio: Correspondence Sphere; also *Ars Conjunctionis*, "the Art of Correspondence."

Covenant: Chantry.

Domus Magnus: A House's ancestral Chantry.

Enochian: Secret language of the Hermetics, derived from the mystick language of Umbrood spirits.

Essentia: Forces Sphere (preferred term, for it emphasizes the idea of "essential" magickal force within the mage; see also *Vis*); also *Ars Essentiae*, "the Art of Forces."

Fatum: Entropy Sphere; also *Ars Fati*, "the Art of Entropy."

Heka: Magick (from Egyptian; now used only by House Shaea).

Instruments: Ritual tools (i.e., foci).

Manes: Spirit Sphere (preferred term, because traditional Hermeticism associates "spirit" with "soul of the dead"; see also *Anima*); also **Ars Manium**, "the Art of Spirit."

Massasa: Vampire(s).

Mater: Mentor (female).

Materia: Matter Sphere; also *Ars Materiae*, "the Art of Matter."

Mens: Mind Sphere; also **Ars Mentis**, "the Art of Mind."

Mi'ahs: Jocular term for politics (Arabic, "quicksand"). When apprentices become mages, they "enter the mi'ahs."

Parma Magica: (Latin, "magic shield.") A specialty of the Order of Hermes — a form of counter-magick that aided in the formation of the Order.

Pater: Mentor (male).

Praxis: Any system of magickal practice.

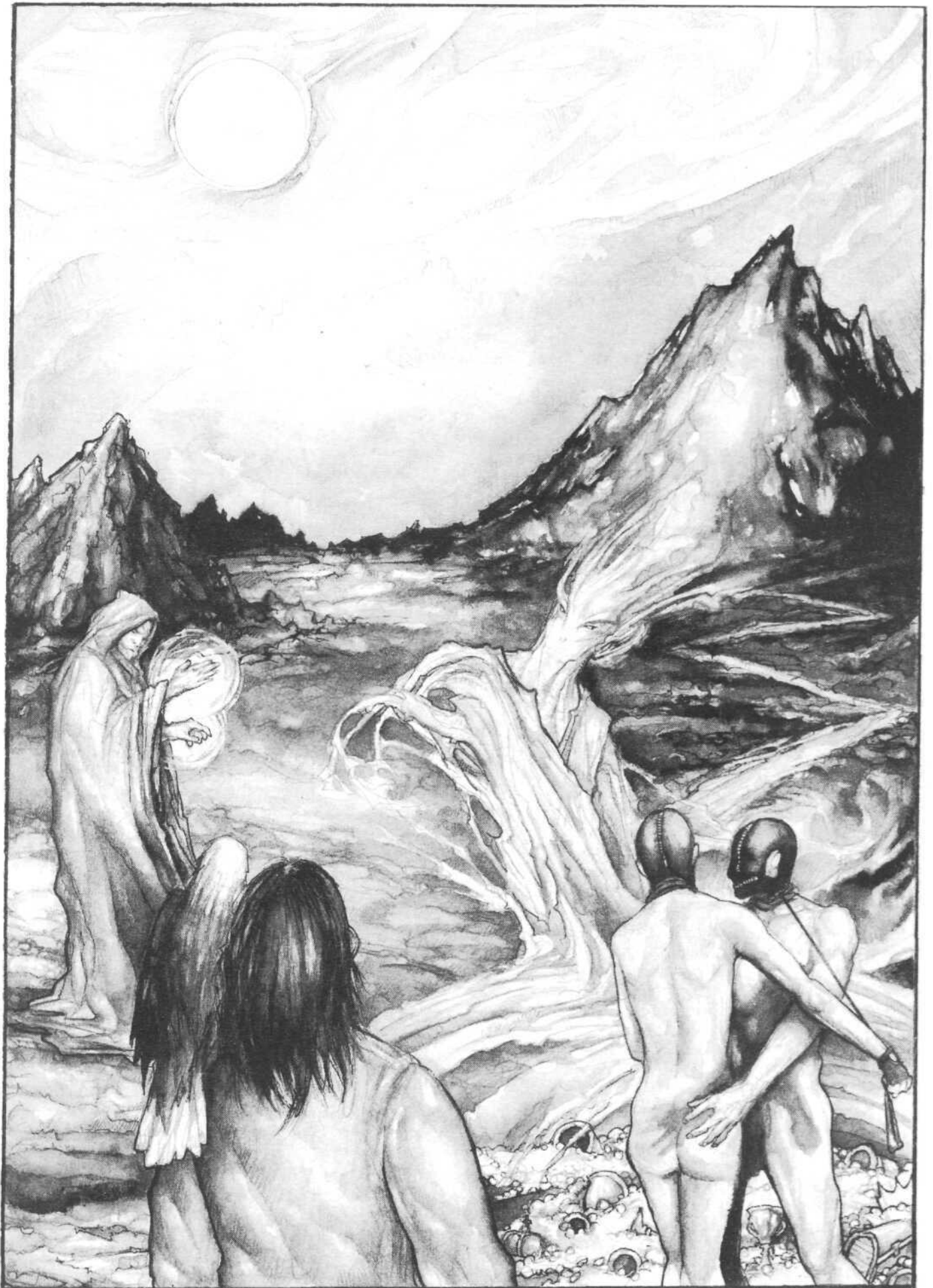
Sa: Political favor (literally, a magical fluid from Egyptian theology).

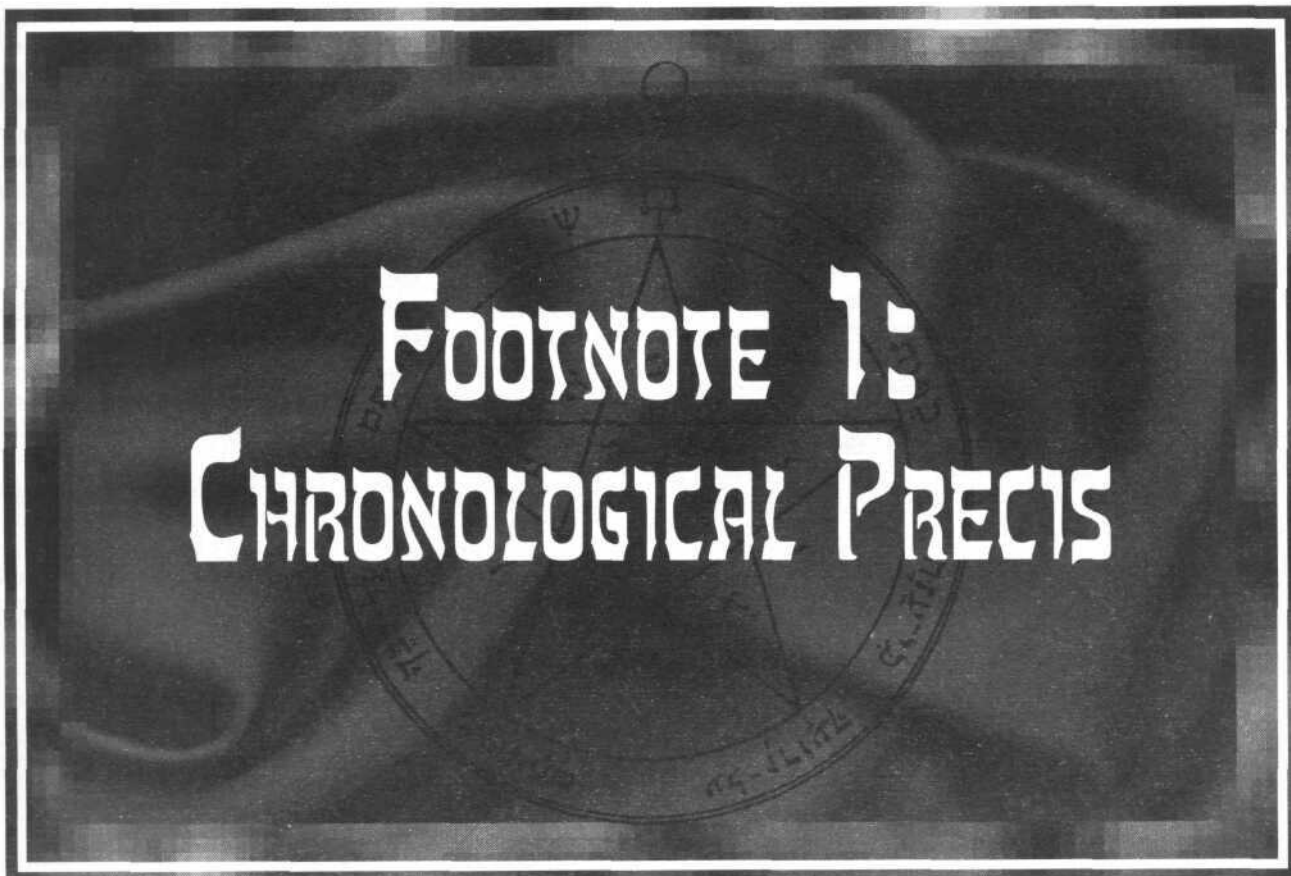
Sancta: A private Sanctum, used for retreats, experiments and study.

Tempus: Time Sphere; also **Ars Temporis**, "the Art of Time."

Twilight: Quiet.

Vis: (weece) Prime Sphere; sometimes refers also to the Forces Sphere (favored by House Flambeau because it emphasizes strength or physical force; see also *Essentia*); also **Ars Vis**, "the Art of Prime."





9. How is that, quoth I? Thus, replied he, understand it: That which in thee seeth and heareth, the Word of the Lord, and the Mind the Father, God, differ not one from the other; and the union of these is Life.

- The Divine Pymander of Hermes, II.9

INVOCATION

Hail, O seven Fates of Heaven! To thee I make this offering, that thou wilt open thy ears to me and hear these words.

O noble and good virgins, O sacred ones and companions of INIMIRROPHOR, O most holy guardians of the four pillars! Hail

to the first, HREPRESENTHAES! to the second, MENESCHEES! to the third, MECHRAN! to the fourth, ARAMACHES! to the fifth, ECHOMMIE! to the sixth, TICHNONDAES! to the seventh, EROUROMBRIES! Stay! Dwell in my soul.¹ Do not abandon me, for I command you! Send me a divine spirit, that it may fulfill all that is in my heart and mind. Helios moi, kyrie!

PREAMBLE



Oldest of the nine allied Traditions, the Order of Hermes has influenced the whole human experience of magick. The organization's history is vast. In my recent apprenticeship at two of the most powerful Chantries in the Traditions, Doissetep and Horizon, I found their hallowed halls drenched, if I may so put it, with history. Some of it helped my struggle — the struggle shared by all apprentices — to enlarge my perspective.

Yes, some of it helped, but certainly not all. Beyond doubt, the erudition of the admirable Hornbook historian Master

Alonius has enriched our Order beyond description. But his scholarly discipline, though a great virtue, may nonetheless overwhelm a beginner. The new apprentice, already set the seemingly indomitable task of understanding the inner self, need not apprehend the whole range of our Hermetic heritage on the instant.

Hermetic practice is, above all, pragmatic. We do what we do because it works. In that spirit of pragmatism, I offer the beleaguered student this annotated synoptic timeline. The conscientious apprentice will, of course, pursue study of Master Alonius's comprehensive treatise at the appropriate time.

ANCIENT BEGINNINGS: 2500 BCE — 150 CE

Human magick is at least as old as spoken language, but an identifiable Hermetic heritage begins with written language and its study. Therefore, it begins in ancient Sumer and Assyria and Babylon — and especially in *Khemet*, ancient Egypt, the kingdom of the Nile founded some 5,000 years ago.

As with all the writing systems of antiquity, only an elect elite, the Pharaonic priests, knew the secrets of Egyptian hieroglyphics. Each priest spent 10 years of childhood learning these hieroglyphics. How magickal that understanding! The peasant saw his priest stare at pictures and thereby learn the gods' will. Can our literate age imagine how that seemed... *supernatural*? By the same token, were that priest of Thebes cast forward to today, to see a Sleeper stare at a bar graph and divine the world's economy — would he not share the peasant's amazement?

Sleepers see in this a false lesson, that all "occult" practices may be reduced, through understanding, to the mundane. Magicians take precisely the opposite view and see the truth: that the Art transforms and expands human consciousness. That in skillful hands a magickal working, a Word, can shine through humanity's darkness and guide them forever on the Path. And the first great working, the wellspring of our Tradition, was writing.

BCE (BEFORE THE COMMON ERA)

• **Circa 2500:** Djhowtey and his wife Sesheta active in Phoenicia and Egypt. The New World Order has diligently removed all historical records of these archmagi, who invented the alphabet. They present Djhowtey as a mere deity, an icon no more real than Santa Claus, and erase his partner altogether. But for a thousand years, since the pioneering retrocognitive work (875 CE) of Fenicil, Primus bani Quaesitor, the Order of Hermes has known the truth: Behind the Egyptian mask of Thoth — god of learning, wisdom and magic, known to the Greeks as Thrice-Great Hermes — stand two human magi.

The natures of their lives and magick are unclear in many respects. Soon after Awakening, Djhowtey evidently realized that future Hermetics from Fenicil onward were chronopathically viewing his every move. He learned to blur their perceptions, and details about him remain mysterious. We know Djhowtey was Phoenician, born in Tyre, and that he married Seshati and developed the first alphabet in the city of Byblos. Traveling to Egypt (where they must have changed their appearance to pass among the notoriously xenophobic natives) they became shadowy advisors to pharaohs for five centuries.

The couple's role, if any, in the construction of the pyramids remains controversial; we do know, however, that they propounded their alphabet among Egyptian scribes, helped awaken several followers, and allied with the elusive cat-folk called the *Bubasti* (ref: *Bastet*). Their secret personality cult, with its mysterious initiation rites, exercised hidden influence



for centuries and became the model and inspiration for many orders that followed. Whether these archmagi died or Ascended, no one knows; they vanish from the record after 1970 BCE, upon the death of 12th-Dynasty Pharaoh Amenemhet I. (Some sketchy references indicate Djhowtey's later presence in Babylonia.) After their disappearance, Egyptians deified Djhowteyas, the ibis-headed god Thoth.

- **Circa 2000:** Egyptian Thothian cult at its height.
- **Circa 950:** Career of archmagus Solomon, king of Israel, first great master of spirit conjuration and control. Wrote three magickal books, of which two (the *Greater and Lesser Keys*) survive in several watered-down editions. During the High Mythic Age, the "unabridged" versions become the primary manuals for the Houses of Hermes, as they bind the many spirits that still serve our Order today.

- **660:** Lydian king Gyges sends Greek mercenaries to Egypt to aid Pharaoh Psammethicus I; these Hellenic troops settle in Egypt. First major Hellenizing influence on Thothian practice of the Art.

- **560:** Pythagoras of Samos, an Awakened magus and mathematician, travels to Egypt and becomes an initiate in the Thothian cult, by that time in decline.

- **545:** Returning to Greece, Pythagoras journeys to Athens, Thebes and elsewhere, spreading his ideas among the mystery cults common in all city-states. He receives the strongest response from cults devoted to Hermes, god of communication and eloquence, protector of travelers, escort to the afterlife, crosser of boundaries, bringer of gain and good fortune.

- **525:** Pythagoras carries Thothian ideas back to Croton (southern Italy) and begins his own secret personality cult along Egyptian lines, devoted to ascetic mysticism, number theory, music and astronomy.

- **Circa 500:** Pythagoras dies in his 90s. Greek cult of Hermes at its height in Athens; Socrates and most other educated Athenians are familiar with its ideas, and Plato is probably an initiate. Though he apparently never Awakens, Plato's writings exert tremendous influence on Greek magickal praxis (practice). The Hermetic cult spreads to Rome in later centuries, where Hermes is called Mercury or Casmilus.

- **Circa 400:** A century after Pythagoras dies, the Pythagoreans split into two factions: the *Acousmatics*, devoted to rites and the sayings of their Master; and the *Mathematic faction*, devoted to number theory and music. Most of the Mathematics eventually migrate to Plato's Academy; Acousmatics die out.

- **332:** Alexander of Macedonia conquers Egypt. Called "the Great" because he imposes his will on more people than anyone else to that time (a lesson to all Hermetic students), the Sleeper Alexander initiates a fusion of Greek and Egyptian cultures. This fusion, along with tributary streams from Persian, Gnostic and Qabbalistic beliefs, leads to the classical Hermetic Tradition.

- **Circa 150:** Roman cult of Mercury at its height. Magi cast spells (codified by magus Plentarch) in large groups using many expensive rites. Cult generally operates *sub rosa*.

CE (COMMON ERA)

- **c. 28-30:** Career of Jesus the Magician.

- **First century:** Career of Simon Magus, Samaritan, last important initiate of Egyptian Thothian cult (Dositheus sect). Messianic wonder-worker in Syria, Egypt and the Levant; founder of post-Christian Gnosticism, influential in Hermetic beliefs. His heretical doctrines incur the enmity of Christian mystics Peter and Paul; when Simon attempts flight from high tower in Roman Forum to impress Nero (56 CE), their countermagick makes him fall to his death.

- **96:** Death (age 98) of Apollonius of Tyana, Greek magus and healer. A Neo-Pythagorean ascetic, he studies at Tarsus and in India, defeats a plague at Ephesus, resurrects a young Roman girl, and founds a personality cult that influences later praxis.

- **124-170:** Life of Lucius Apuleius, Carthaginian magus (Isis cult) and author of the autobiographical narrative *Metamorphoses (The Golden Ass)*.

- **204-270:** Life of Plotinus, Roman magus of Egyptian birth. Plotinus propounds Neo-Platonism, which becomes a tremendous influence on Hermetic thinking. The Western tradition in magick, as later embodied by the Houses of Hermes and our Order, derives from Pythagoras and Plato via Plotinus.

- **c. 200-400:** In Rome, Alexandria, Israel, and elsewhere around the Mediterranean, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, 17 papyri that form the basis for our Tradition, are composed. These Platonic dialogues, written by diverse hands, are attributed to Hermes Trismegistus (Thrice-Great Hermes). Drawing on Egyptian, Greek, Gnostic, Zoroastrian and Hebraic philosophy, the scrolls expound on astrology, theology, the hidden sympathies between nature and spirit, the lore of numbers and the beginnings of alchemy.

- **412:** Cult of Mercury disbands, victim of Rome's decay — fewer magi available to cast group spells, fewer sources of funds. By now, however, Mercuric (Hermetic) magi have spread across Europe. In Gothic and Vandal barbarian territories, forest mages develop solitary Arts using inexpensive ritual instruments.

Though opposed to Christianity during the first centuries of the Empire, many Hermetic magi eventually convert and blend their magickal viewpoint with Christian doctrine. Those who do not often suffer for it; see next entry.

- **415:** Death and martyrdom of Hypatia, eloquent Neoplatonist magus and brilliant mathematician of Alexandria; killed with clamshell blades by fanatical mob led by Cyril, the Christian patriarch. Afterward, mob burns her residence and library; Hypatia's Hermetic followers rescue some scrolls, now in Horizon's library. Her death marks the decline of Alexandria's intellectual life.

- **Sixth century:** Career of Merlinius, Celtic archmagus trained by continental Hermetic magicians. His legendary doings embody the Hermetic magickal idea: He establishes himself as advisor to a great ruler, revitalizes local customs and strengthens the local magickal paradigm.



After the invention of writing, the second key step in magickal history was the development of a united continental community of magi. In the East, this task fell to the Akashic Brotherhood, Wu-Keng, Wu Lung and some lesser schools of thought. In the West, credit for organizing willworkers falls entirely to the Order of Hermes, the first official Tradition and shaper of all the rest.

FOUNDING OF THE HOUSES: 731 – 836 CE

• **731:** The "precipice experience" of Trianoma, Mercuric/Gnostic mage of Westphalia. Standing atop Brienzer Rothorn in the Bernese Alps, Trianoma foresees collapse of the Hermetic way. To forestall this fate, she wanders Europe seeking other mages and eventually meets Bonisagus. He is talented at magickal theory, she at politics. Aided by Bonisagus's *parma magica* shield, the two spend decades enlisting powerful European magi and reconciling their differing praxes within a single doctrine.

• **767, Midwinter Night:** Twelve founding magi adopt Code of Hermes at the small Frankish settlement of Durenmar (now Duren, in the German state North Rhine-Westphalia). During the Mythic Age, these founders were called *Primi*, "the first." In modern usage, "Primi" describes the successor magi who would found the Traditions in the 1400s; for clarity, the original Hermetic founders of our own Houses are now simply called "the Founders."

• **772:** Responding to several ambushes and murder attempts among the 12 fractious Houses, Tremere and Bonisagus invent the magical dueling ritual of certamen. Great Tribunal (810) officially adopts certamen to resolve disputes.

• **814-816:** Pralix of House Tytalus forms "the Order of Miscellany," admitted to the Houses in 817 as House Ex Miscellanea.

• **848:** Tremere, youngest and weakest of the Hermetic founders, attempts a takeover of the Houses, but is prevented by a collection of mysterious, independent magi. A warning to the other Houses goes unheeded.

• **876:** Houses occupy Doissetep Covenant. Founded in prehistoric times by sorcerer-king Kwa Hu in Lan Na Thai, the Million Thai Ricefields (now northern Thailand), Doissetep fell to unknown Nephandus necromancer (781 CE), who transported it whole to Nemrut Dagi, an extinct volcano in eastern Turkey. Hermetic Houses Bonisagus, Flambeau, Quaesitor and Tytalus destroy Nephandus and occupy Doissetep; later (891), they relocate entire complex to Spanish Pyrenees north of Gerona.

In the next four centuries, Doissetep rises to supremacy as exemplar of all Hermetic virtues: erudition, discipline, wisdom, influence, composure and the urge toward spiritual perfection. Under its leadership, the Houses of Hermes create a feudal

social system that brings genuine, lasting order to all Europe. Apprentices should always keep this ideal "Springtime" Doissetep in mind, and reflect on its glories. Doissetep's current role in magickal society offers further lessons, which are left as an exercise to the pupil.

THE LATE MYTHIC AGE

• **1003-1012:** The Schism War, ideological conflict among Houses. Widespread violence culminates when Houses Tremere and Flambeau, with the sanction of Quaesitor, destroy druidic magi of House Diedne. Diedne leaders escape, possibly with fae help, but are not seen again. (Speculations still abound regarding House Diedne's influence on the later Verbena Tradition.) In the late 1990s, rumored sightings of some Diedne leaders occur in Great Britain; these have not been confirmed.

• **1022:** Tremere kills and experiments on an ancient Tzimisce vampire; develops potion that turns himself and seven followers into undead monsters. Losing their Art, they develop "Thaumaturgy," a bastard form of hedge magic, and successfully conceal their cursed nature for over 150 years (see year 1199). Soon they begin preying on peasants, fellow vampires and House magi alike, (ref: Tzimisce, *Tremere, Camarilla*.)

• **1067:** Mistridge Covenant founded.

• **1095-1192:** The Crusades. A fervor sweeps Europe to wrest Christian Holy Lands from Muslim influence. Caught up in the furor, some Hermetic magi secretly accompany Crusader regiments to Middle East. Magi bring back many Arabic treatises on alchemy, mathematics, and other arcane subjects; these are translations and amplifications of lost Greco-Roman scrolls. This new lore strengthens and invigorates the Houses.

• **1188:** Hermetic magus Lorenzo Golo, prince of Florence, discovers lost Arabic manuscript *Kitabal Alacir*. Enthralled by it, Golo and a Templar, Simon de Laurent, form a magickal society, the Natural Philosophers' Guild; this in turn eventually forms the core of the Electrodyne Engineers Convention of the Technocracy, which still later becomes the Sons of Ether Tradition. Many of the Nine Traditions owe much to similar work by Hermetic scholars.

• **Late 1100s on:** Sleeper scholars band together to form *studia generalia*, the precursors of universities. Over the next centuries, Hermetic magi support many universities and find them to be convenient sources of apprentices. Growth of academic culture within the Houses, particularly Bonisagus. **1190:** House Bonisagus establishes Fors Collegis Mercuris, a secret magickal college, outside Genoa.

THE MASSASA WAR AND THE POGROM

• **1199:** A Hermetic Tribunal in Transylvania uncovers evidence of Tremere's vampirism. The news spreads slowly, but upon formal acknowledgment at Doissetep (1201), the other Houses try Tremere and his house in *absentia* and pronounce the punishments of Censure, Interdiction and Requit. However, warned by sympathizers within the Order, Tremere and his

followers vanish from their Covenants before justice can be served. Thus begins a war which lasts openly for over a century and still continues in a muted form today: the vengeance of the Order against the renegade House Tremere.

Today, descendants of House Tremere form what may be the principal group of vampires (see Footnote 4); whether Tremere himself still exists is unknown. The Order of Hermes views all vampires as menaces to be expunged, but it reserves particular odium for the Tremere, whose banal power lust caused them to turn against humanity and the quest for Ascension.

Note: Hermetic apprentices must resist any temptation toward vampiric "immortality," for the curse is known to shred a mage's Avatar beyond recovery, rendering True Magick impossible.

- **1210, Winter:** The Craftmasons, a small band of "rationalist" renegades from House Ex Miscellanea, lead a peasant mob and mercenaries with cannons (early technomagickal Talismans) in siege and assault on Mistridge. Betrayed from within, the Covenant falls and is destroyed.

- **Late 1200s:** Christian Inquisition in Italy and southern France, having persecuted and destroyed Cathari and Waldenses heretics, now expands its scope to "wizards, witches and all consorts of Satan and his demons." Over the next four centuries, many minor Hermetic magi fall to the Inquisition's Christian mysticks, raising tension between the two camps that continues today.

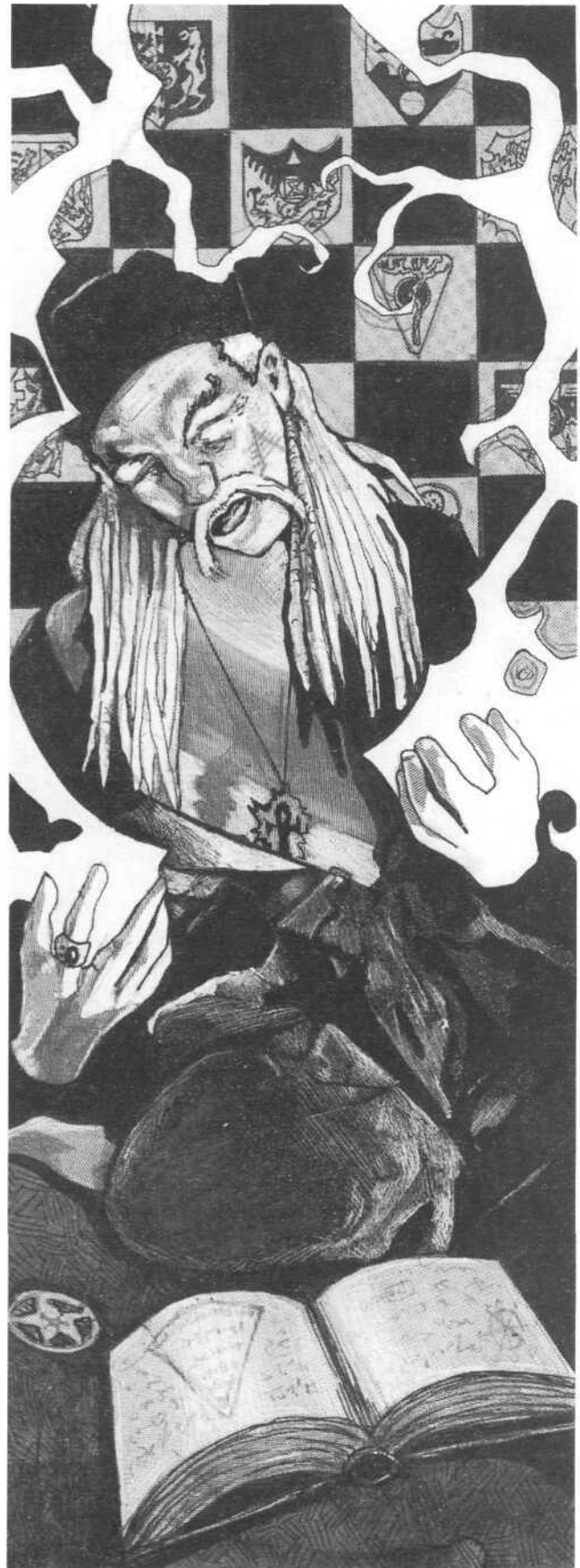
- **1325, March 25:** Convention of the White Tower in Normandy. Craftmasons and several other disgruntled cabals, mostly former Hermetics, formally unite with Chinese, Greek and Arabian allies to create the Order of Reason. Their convocation site adds insult to injury: the tower of Hermetic magus Yoasmy, bani Ex Miscellanea, is seized and "sanitized." Presumably, they kill Yoasmy, though some magi later claim she "survives" as the Umbrood Preceptor Aelida, Lady of Feathers.

- **1330:** Nascent Order of Reason, in its first major working, begins to take covert control of European universities. March 21: Purging and "accidental" death of Hermetic mage Andreas Litolff, bani Bonisagus, instructor at University of Paris. Reason magi try to stop Andreas's lecture "Inquiries Into the Distinctness of Natural Philosophy and Divine Wisdom"; Andreas attempts protective magick before an audience of students, but his spell fails and he enters Twilight, then dies a week later. Persecutions, revolts, plagues and outright battles follow with increasing frequency throughout the next 100 years.

- **1348-50:** Black Plague, a bubonic plague epidemic of unknown origin, kills a third of Europe's population. Many Hermetic magi survive, but the calamity devastates the Houses' support structure and sours Sleeper attitudes toward magi.

- **1393:** Birth of Baldric LaSalle, somewhere in France. Although his early career is unimpressive, LaSalle eventually attains Mastery. His achievements earn him fame (and infamy) in later years.

- **1403:** Porthos Fitz-Empress born in Breslau, Germany (birth name unrecorded); later Deacon Primus of Doissetep and supreme Tradition mage.





- **1429:** Disciple Gilles de Rais, Hermes bani Ex Miscelanea, happens upon a newly Awakened Orphan country girl in Domremy, Lorraine (kingdom of France). Without authorization from his Covenant, Gilles becomes her patron and promoter; the girl, Joan of Arc, leads French armies to victory before the Church burns her as a witch in 1431. Gilles, despairing, turns Nephandus and embarks upon a revolting career of atrocities; his former Hermetic companions arrange his arrest and execution (1440).

- **1440:** First Mistridge Tribunal. It convenes in the ruins of Mistridge Covenant, after several earlier unsuccessful attempts by non-rationalist magi to call a conference about the reality crisis. Hermetic Master Baldric LaSalle meets with two non-Hermetic magi (Lady Nightshade, founder of the Verbena, and Christian mystick Valoran) together with acolytes. With Trianoma's example in mind, Master Baldric proposes a quest across the world to gather the Awakened of every land and unite against the common enemy.

- **1440-57:** The mages travel the world, finding and recruiting willworkers of all disciplines and practices. Interestingly, many previously unregarded Hermetics (notably Master Louis DuMonte, bani Quaesitor) rise to prominence now and, though first suspected of instability or even Twilight, assume leadership positions in the later Convocation.

- **1448:** While Doissetep's leaders are locked in internal power struggles, the Order of Reason destroys Covenant's Earthly aspect. This marks one of their first major victories. Relocated to the Shade Realm of Forces, Doissetep Hermetics pledge attendance at a new Tribunal.

- **1449:** Second Mistridge Tribunal. Mages from across the world agree in principle to unite against the rationalist paradigm. Craftmasons attack the Tribunal, but in vain; the contest only strengthens the magi's resolve to discuss union. They agree to seek a stronghold beyond the Horizon.

- **1450:** Fors Collegis Mercuris relocated to Horizon Realm of Mus, hidden moon of Mercury.

- **1453-6:** Doissetep, wary of security risks, refuses to host conference of magi. Construction of Horizon, ecumenical sister Chantry to Doissetep, in preparation for Grand Convocation. Generous Hermetic donations of needed Quintessence far exceed those of any other magickal faction.

THE GRAND CONVOCATION AND FIRST CABAL: 1457-70 CE

(Ifollow the custom of many Order historians by using the terms "magus" and "magi" for periods before the Grand Convocation, and "mage" and "mages" during and after the Convocation, in recognition of its watershed importance.)

- **1457-66:** Convocation requires nine years, primarily due to extreme difficulty of developing a magickal paradigm that unites hundreds of disparate praxes. Some 29 separate models and innumerable variants are proposed; one, quickly rejected, postulates 324 Spheres! The eventual model, the nine Spheres of current use, is a workable compromise created by a large team of Hermetic theorists led by Master Baldric, with contributions from the newly recognized Master Porthos (1464).

The Masters assume that the Spheres will provide the other Traditions with paths of study toward the ultimate goal of initiation as Houses in the Order of Hermes. To their astonishment, other Traditions reject the Order's authority; most Traditions develop similar plans to assimilate the others. Master Louis DuMonte proposes (1465) that each Tradition appoint champions in contests for authority over each Sphere, but this provokes bitter argument. Eventually (1466) Master Baldric offers another compromise, whereby each Tradition lays claim to authority within one Sphere. Unfortunately, this leaves only one Sphere, Forces, to be shared by the Houses of Hermes; for administrative purposes they agree to formal consolidation as a single Order. **1466, Summer Solstice:** *Resolutions & Protocols* passed; appointment of First Cabal.

- **1466-70:** First Cabal travels across Europe, Asia, Africa and elsewhere, fighting the Order of Reason and winning the

hearts of Sleepers. However, the Cabal suffers from growing internal dissension.

- **1470:** Heylel Teomim, bani Solificati (alchemists), hoping to create a crisis that will unite the Traditions, betrays the First Cabal to the Order of Reason. Heylel completely mistakes the enemy's methods; in the ambush, four Tradition mages are killed, including Master DuMonte; three others imprisoned; one escapes, brings Horizon mages to free them. Heylel captured, christened *Thoabath* (Abomination) and destroyed in body and Avatar; last testament, pleading for unity, goes unheeded. For details, refer to Master Porthos's compilation *The Fragile Path* (1995).

- **1471:** Solificati disband; many find shelter with the Order of Hermes. Throughout history, our Order has consistently protected mages of all beliefs from death or corruption, studied their belief systems and incorporated their strengths into our eclectic and ever-growing praxis.

THE DWINDLING



The so-called Renaissance and Enlightenment represent a continuous fossilization of reality. The rationalist paradigm became entrenched with the rise of a doctrinaire scientific establishment, and with the deistic notion of an impersonal "divine watchmaker" — a presumed Creator who promulgated the universe and then left it to run unsupervised.

In this era, the Order of Hermes made many valiant attempts to resurrect the age of wonder; sadly, the enemy foiled many of them. These troubled centuries, however, have brought wisdom: the clear understanding that the Technocracy, and no other, is our supreme adversary.

- **1482:** Council Master Paracelsus strengthens extant universities and founds new ones across Europe, hoping to combat Order of Reason. However, from the 1500s on, the enemy subverts them all. Doissetep blames Horizon for this. There follows a long cooling of relations between Doissetep and the other Traditions.

- **1509-35:** Career of Johannes Faust, wonder-worker and minor mage. After graduating (barely) as a Disciple of House Tytalus, Faust travels widely, boasts of great power and impresses many local rulers who seek the Philosopher's Stone that will turn lead to gold. Faust never achieves much skill and eventually resorts to diabolism, at which he fails calamitously and perishes. The Order promptly censures Faust and appoints a committee to search the Deep Umbra, retrieve and restore his tainted Avatar. (As yet, no results have been reported.) The enemy turns lurid accounts of Faust's downfall to its own purposes, poisoning Sleeper attitudes still further.

- **1527-1608:** Life of Hermetic Master John Dee, bani Bonisagus, advisor to Elizabeth I. Starts England's spy service, foretells British Empire (and invents the term), revives English interest in mathematics, sets time and space anchor points at Greenwich and establishes his friend Mercator's map projection as the world standard. Dealing with powerful Umbrood Lords, Dee codifies the secret Enochian language (discovered

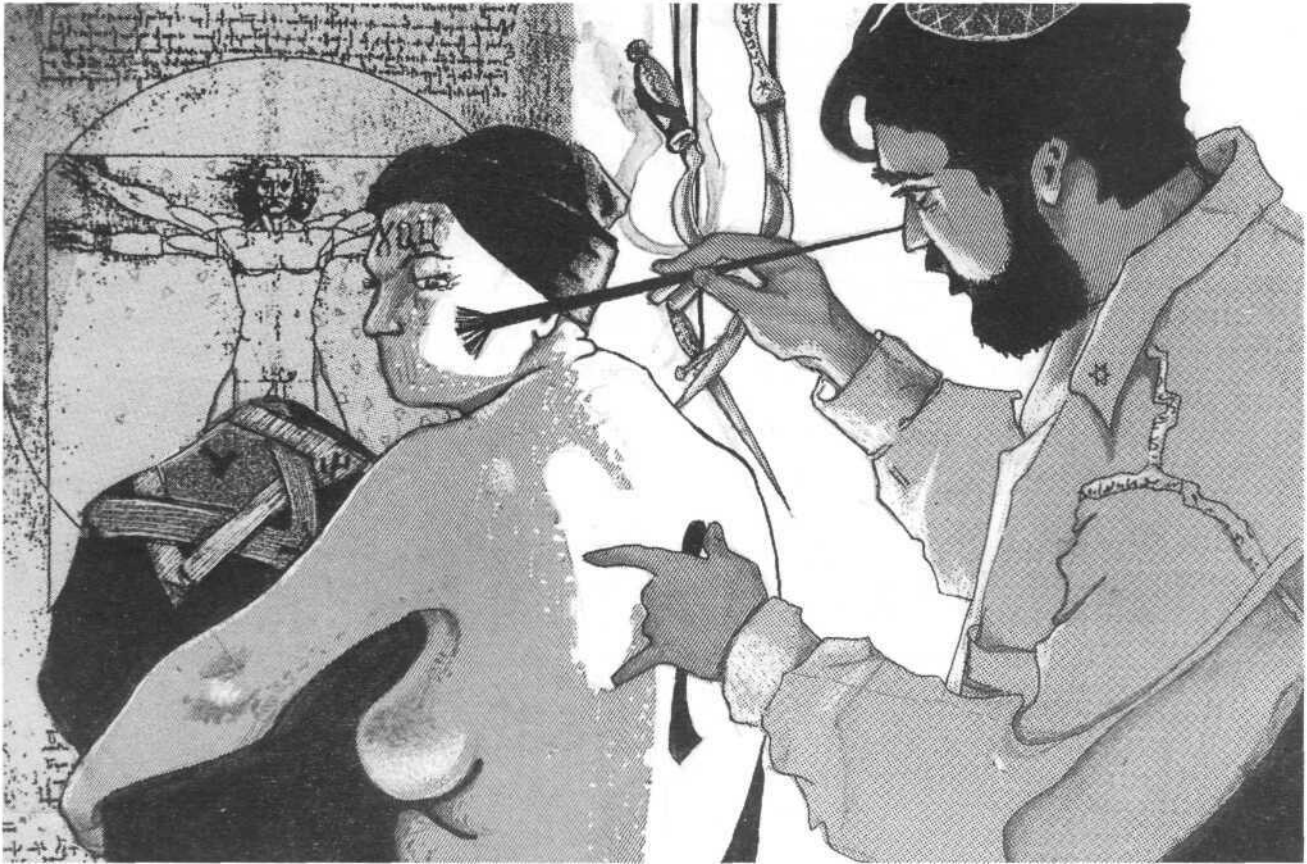
by Hypatia of Alexandria) with assistance of consort Edward Kelley, known for his oracular "shewstones." Dee tries valiantly to adapt the Order of Reason's ideas to Tradition purposes, but ultimately only strengthens the enemy.

- **1645, June 14:** "The Fall." Battle of Naseby, England; victory for Oliver Cromwell's Puritan "Ironsides" (Order of Reason puppets) over Cavalier forces of Charles I. Charles, desperate, secretly hires many Hermetic Adepts and a few Masters to support his forces. Due to poor communication and bad planning, mages find no time to prepare for battle, are caught in the open, and resort to what we now call vulgar magick before hordes of Ironside witnesses. The mages' Effects fail disastrously, and Paradox consumes them all. Two Hermetic Houses destroyed; remnants subsumed into Ex Miscellanea. From this time on, Paradox becomes a permanent feature of magickal life.

- **1645-1800s:** While Doissetep is preoccupied with internal intrigues, most Hermetic mages retreat to sanctuaries in this world or beyond. They search for underlying principles of mass Sleeper psychology, Paradox and the paradigm shift to rationalism.

- **Circa 1750-84:** Career of impostor adventurer "Count Saint-Germain" in many European courts. Painter, musician, polyglot and charmer; he claims to possess great age, an ability to correct flawed jewels, and a secret dyeing and tanning processes. This fraudulent Sleeper, with his conjurer's tricks, plays no role in the history of True Magick, but demonstrates the depth to which magickal practice has degenerated.

- **1770-89:** Career of Alessandro Cagliostro (Giuseppe Balsamo), Sicilian adventurer. Awakens 1770; recruited into the Hermetic Covenant at Palermo; sole survivor after Covenant's destruction by Order of Reason (1771). Travels Europe selling fake elixirs; spends nine months in Bastille prison (1785-6) after implication in Affair of the Diamond Necklace. Banished, Cagliostro writes *Open Letter to the French People*, an account of Bastille conditions instrumental in provoking French Revolution. Starts Egyptian Rite school of



Freemasonry; opens many lodges in his extensive travels. Taken by Catholic Inquisition and imprisoned for life. Though not entirely successful in promoting magickal ideas, Cagliostro becomes a posthumous hero of the French people and an interesting case study for apprentices.

MODERN REVIVAL

In the last two centuries, the Order of Hermes has tried a new tack: introducing minor secrets of the Art to the masses through Sleeper societies such as the Freemasons and the Golden Dawn. For older Masters, the success of this tactic has produced an odd sense of paradox. For instance, owners of the forbidden *Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (1458) were once burned as heretics; now it is a Dover paperback.

- **1810-75:** Life of Eliphas Levi, French Sleeper occultist. Introduces Qabbalistic practices to non-Jews; popularizes occult study of Tarot cards; makes occultism (seances, table-tapping, spiritualism, mediums) fashionable among upper classes.

- **1870s:** Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor: Max Theon (English, 1847-1927), Grand Master of the Exterior Circle, starts mail-order business in magickal teachings ("practical occultism"). His partner Paschal Beverly Randolph (American mulatto, 1825-1875), friend of Abraham Lincoln, starts a secret society, The Brotherhood of Eulis. Both inspire tremendous interest in magick following American Civil War.

- **1866, 1877:** Respective foundings (by Sleepers) of Rosicrucians and Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, two

mortal societies influential in the revival and propagation of magickal thinking.

- **1875-1947:** Life of Aleister Crowley, talented but misguided mage. Out of rebellion against his strict Christian upbringing, Crowley chooses the Word of Excess; pursues a long career mingling Hermetic Arts with Ecstatic ways, influencing Sleepers and Awakened along the way. Between 1904 and 1921, Crowley Falls to Nephandic Path. Rumors insist he was killed in 1947 by NWO agents, but nothing is proven.

- **1890s:** Order of Reason becomes Technocratic Union, or Technocracy.

- **1922:** Ahl-i-Batin desert the Council of Nine, protesting Traditions' apathy to European realpolitik in Arabian homelands. Order of Hermes rescues and shelters the lost Tradition's Adepts and Disciples; assimilates some into Ex Miscellanea. Ahl-i-Batin Masters vanish.

- **1933:** Debate among Hermetic scholars on arithmosophy and probability magick leads to creation and acceptance of the Order's newest House, Fortuna.

- **1939-45:** Rise of Nephandic influence in World War II. Technocracy initiates temporary alliance with Order of Hermes and other Traditions. Huge joint ritual outside Berlin, led by Masters Callistro, bani Tytalus and Creon the Sane, bani Bonisagus, banishes or destroys Nephandi archmages (1944). Alliance ceases at war's end.

- **1950s on:** Sleeper culture creates or popularizes many alternative religions, pseudo-magickal cults and secret societies. These movements (triggered by the Order's subtle influence)

have produced few authentic Awakenings and many Sleeper charlatans, but they highlight the spiritual emptiness of Technocratic society. Many Sleepers begin to reconsider the pervasive dogma of unsustainable "Progress."

PRESENT AND FUTURE

The outlook for our Tradition remains challenging. Politics sometimes leads the Order to present its less attractive aspects to our fellow willworkers, and we are only now resolving (painfully) internal conflicts of long standing. The recent Technocratic assault on the College on Mus (followed by the Chantry's unexpected loss to the Nephandi) emphasizes the growing threat from outside.

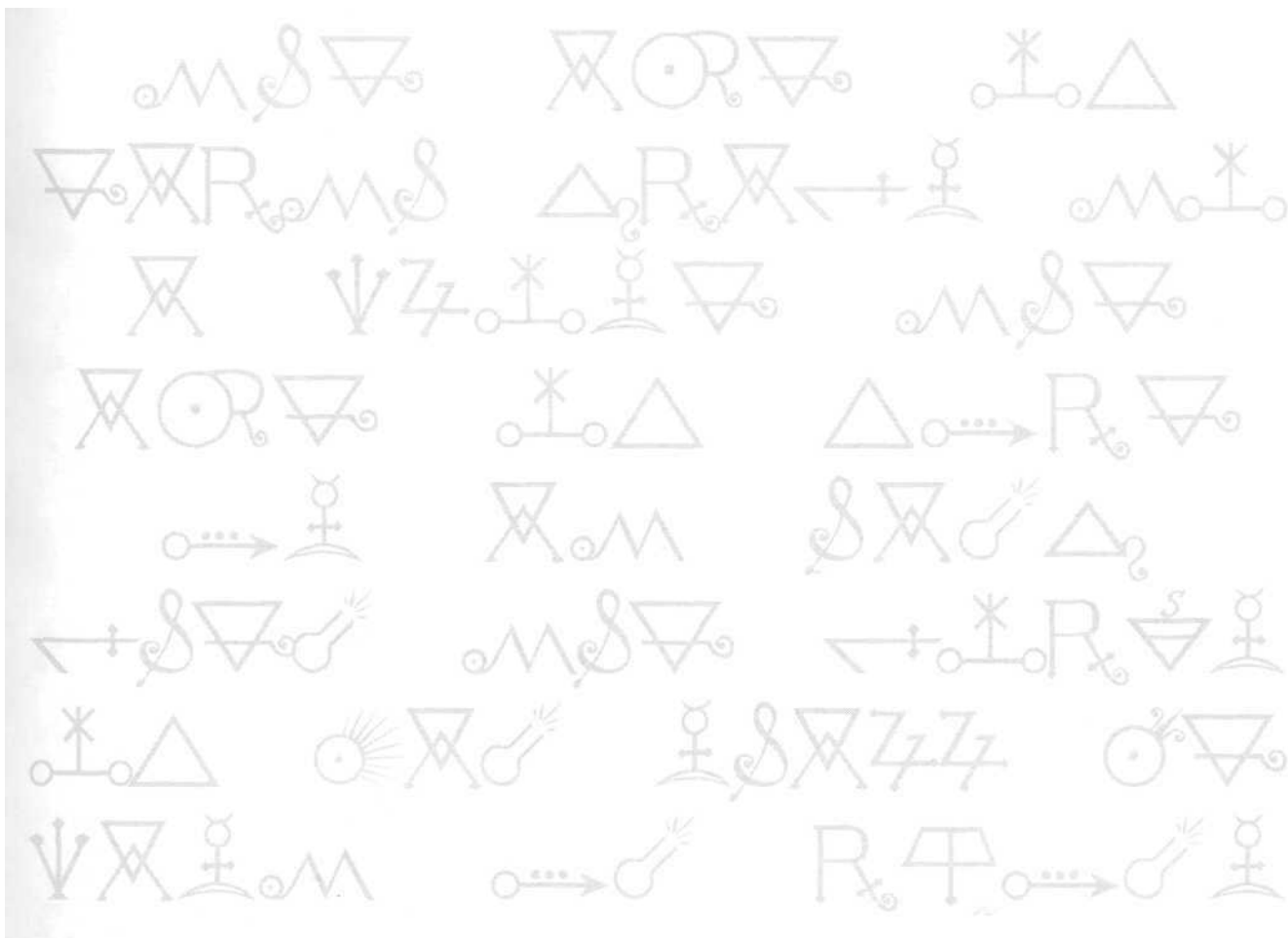
In the world at large, educational systems have declined, reducing the number of good apprentices. Most Sleepers in industrial nations share the magician's overwhelming urge toward power, but lack the idea of Ascension to Divinity — the idea that we must cultivate ourselves, not only temporally and financially, but in all ways. Still, the Order has resolved to retake Mus by any means necessary, to fight beside our fellow Traditions and, early in the new millennium, to carry the battle to ourenemy.

For the god of this age is Hermes. "Fast as death," the messenger of the gods, he is the ideal symbol of the Internet. As

the prototype of angels (Greek *angelos*, "messenger"), Hermes is doing very well as the American cult of angels grows. Go to any flea-market in America and see the lucky candles for sale. Sleepers light them in hopes of winning the lottery. In mythic terms, this makes perfect sense: The Greek term for "windfall" is *hermaion*, from the offerings left at Hermes' shrines by the crossroad.

Wanting divine messages and wanting lottery windfalls are, at heart, the same want. This desire can only increase as the Technocracy continues its stratification of society. People fear the gap between rich and poor as much as they instinctively fear the gap between god and mortal.

Brave spirits always seek to cross these gaps. For them, Hermes is a guide, a *pompos*. In the *Iliad*, Hermes made the aged Priam invisible, then guided him through the Greek camp to sue for the body of his son, Hector. In the same way, Awakened and Sleepers alike wish to move unseen in the hostile territories of our age. We take to the Internet so as to bypass bureaucracy, secretaries and receptionists, sending our notes directly to the chief; we all have ways of moving unseen. To use them, we require a *pompos* with wisdom, learning, eloquence and communication. The Order of Hermes offers the guidance that our world vitally needs. Therefore, remember: Seek the mysteries!







FOOTNOTE 2: CONJUNCTIONES DOMESTICAE

What is below is like that which is above and what is above is like that which is below. They work to accomplish the wonders of the One Thing.

— Second Precept of Hermes Tresmegistus



If you have come to this footnote from the beginning of Master Divraniya's excellent discourse on the Order's inner workings, I envy the great pleasure awaiting you. The Flambeau Master's thoroughness and meticulous documentation stand as shining examples for every apprentice. Yet I remember (from my own recent apprenticeship) how I reacted to this section, before I found sufficient free time to appreciate Master Divraniya's approach: *All those committees! All those bylaws! Help!*

Newcomers who share that reaction may wish to peruse this highly condensed summary. I must stress that these notes

discuss only those praxes and customs pertaining to the Order as a whole. Master Divraniya excellently describes the variations in teaching methods, initiations and other such matters that prevail among the Houses.

Outside observers sometimes consider the Order of Hermes oblique, competitive, and at times, even petty in its dealings. Yet we focus on a threefold good: that of the Order as a whole, that of the Traditions and that of humanity. Our survival against overwhelming Technocratic opposition comes from the essential good will we bear toward one another and to the Sleepers under our care. I hope these notes may further promote the growth of this generosity among our new generation of apprentices.



THE LIFE OF THE APPRENTICE



Initiation essentially aims to go beyond the possibilities of the individual human state, to make possible the transition to higher states and finally to lead the individual beyond any limitations whatsoever.

- Rene Guenon, *Aperçus sur l'Initiation* (Glimpses of Initiation)

Our Order vigorously seeks and recruits apprentices, just as it recruited you. Your training will prepare you to become, not a mere footsoldier in the Ascension War, but a potential general leading an army of Sleepers.

Our Tradition's control of the *Ars Essentiae*, raw power at its most dangerous levels, requires us to reach deeply into the very wellsprings of Quintessential energy. Shaping and controlling the Sphere of Forces demands both a subtle mind and exacting knowledge; both come from years — even decades — of diligent scholarship. Thus we take great care in choosing and training students, lest we create a scholar with no will to go beyond theoretical study — or worse, an uncontrolled, careless child who wields cataclysmic power.

AWAKENING

Very few mortals, perhaps one in five million, have the potential to become mages. Those with a magickal affinity for our Order typically Awaken gradually. Often, these chosen evince some ability that sets them apart — a gift for mathematics or languages, perhaps, or a general love of learning. Most of these magickally latent individuals feel isolated and "different" from their peers. At some time, usually between puberty and the late 20s, they reach a crisis that catalyzes their Awakening into a larger world.

Awakening is never as simple as the mere opening of an inner eye. Some who Awaken without guidance fall to madness, unable to grasp a firm point within their ever-shifting realities. Others become dangers to themselves or others, and may immolate themselves in the first glorious moment of epiphany. Therefore, our Order tries to recognize latent magickal potential, and our mentors carefully husband the novice's Awakening.

RECRUITMENT

Not surprisingly, most Hermetic candidates come from scholastic backgrounds. Given our supremacy in areas of academia — as professors, curators, acquisitions specialists and librarians — this is not surprising. Our Order (particularly mages of House Fortuna and members of the Personnel committee) secretly monitors potential recruits, sometimes for a decade, looking for demonstrations of mental acuity, inquisitive nature, respect for knowledge, strength of will and innate discretion.

During this time, the subject undergoes surreptitious tests. The recruiter may expose her to radical ideas on the nature of reality, give her the chance to cheat in her studies, or even invite her to join a harmless occult society. Some tests assess the

student's ability to absorb new concepts, but the most important ones examine her character and trustworthiness.

The screening usually proceeds methodically; unstable or untrustworthy apprentices present a grave danger to the Order. However, some recruits Awaken spontaneously or attract the attention of the enemy; in such exceptional cases, the recruiter may bring his student to a neutral "safe house" (*never* a Covenant!) until she calms. If the Awakened student is obviously unsuited to the Order, the recruiter may deliver her to representatives of a more appropriate Tradition. If the student presents real danger to herself or to the Order, the recruiter may instead take extreme and permanent action. If the recruit is suitable for apprenticeship — well, you yourself know the test.

FIRST APPRENTICE DEGREE (NEOPHYTE)

New students customarily spend one to three arduous years at a College Covenant. For many centuries, the Order's primary College was the Fors Collegis Mercuris on Mercury's hidden moon, Mus. Since the fall of Mus in 1996, most Neophytes have gone to temporary Colleges in three Earthly locations; for security reasons, these locations remain secret. Proposals to develop a permanent College at Horizon remain controversial at best.

At the College, Neophytes learn self-awareness, rudimentary mental disciplines, philosophy and several languages — usually Ancient Greek, Latin, Arabic, English, French and German. They receive limited exposure to our Tradition's magickal language, Enochian; further instruction continues after their formal initiation into the Order. Actual magickal instruction is limited to *goetia*, minor rites that use precise rituals and many ritual instruments.

After graduation, a student is ready to apprentice with a *pater*, a Master or Adept. ("Pater" is actually an informal term. I use it to avoid confusion between the technical term "master" and the formal magickal rank of Master. An apprentice's master, with a lower-case "m," need not be a recognized, capitalized Master.)

Some Neophytes never attend a College Covenant, but become apprentices straight away. Such an apprentice toils for her pater during one to four years of private study in his sanctum. The pater decides how best to educate his apprentice in the Art, but the instruction always makes extremely high demands of the student. Many apprentices despair of learning all those languages, symbols and esoteric arts — let alone the magick that requires them.

Inundated with drudgework, the apprentice labors in her master's labs, assists with experiments and copies endless tomes. The master usually appears unreasonable, terrifying, even cruel to his apprentices, but a candidate who cannot bear insults or handle surprises has no future as a mage. Rooted out at this early stage, such insecure pupils usually become consors to their pater or hirelings in a Covenant.

Many Neophytes chafe under all the restrictions and wonder why they have so little voice in their training. They desire a more egalitarian "friendship" between student and teacher. I sympathize — my own instruction was none too easy! — yet feel compelled to quote Master Divraniya's famous rejoinder:

Should the servant command his master, who surely knows his business better than one he has newly hired? Shall the apprentice teach his mentor, though such a scholar be revered by the wise or schooled through hundreds of years of experience? Then let us place the harness upon the farmer, and hand the reins to the horse!

In short, leave the driving to adults. Your own turn will come soon enough!

SECOND APPRENTICE DEGREE (ZELATOR)

At some point, each successful Neophyte comprehends that the goetic formulae she studies — all the ancient, numbingly complex minutiae in a dozen languages — are, in themselves, useless. These elements are not magickal themselves, but form a framework that guides the student's own magickal will. The manifestation of that will (which is unique to each student) marks the achievement of the Second Apprentice Degree.

Taken to her master's Covenant, the Zelator continues her physical labor and extended study. Now, though, she begins to apply the theories she has learned. If the Covenant exists in a Horizon Realm, so much the better; the risk of accidental Paradox is much less than it would be on Earth. This "safety net" has its own problems, however. Without it, the Neophyte must learn to work carefully and subtlety. For this reason, some mentors refuse to bring an apprentice into such a Realm until her first year is finished.

Now the apprentice learns the political side of Hermetic life. Though she holds no political power of her own, older mages may seek to recruit her to their own cabals. Being courted by elders is a heady experience. Though some students openly express distaste for politics, the astute apprentice takes this opportunity to advance herself. Friends in high places can mean better instruction, access to rare tomes, and even an easier initiation. Naturally, those who extend patronage to the apprentice expect loyalty in return. It's an easy and tempting trap for those without a head for intrigue.

Instruction now proceeds from *goetia* to *theurgia*, the symbolic union with the Divine. Under close supervision, the Zelator explores the Penumbra and binds minor Umbrood. On escorted trips in the astral Realms, the apprentice learns to conceptualize powerful ideas concretely, within her personal praxis. She starts to understand how to pass beyond magickal rites and literally become magick — to "become the Word."

The Zelator degree presents great peril and great possibility. Though the mentor may warn his student against overconfidence, he expects her to progress beyond her teachings and develop new insights. However, these insights bring with them dangerous power. Most apprentices come through their magickal experimentation with little more than scars and wisdom. Others, regrettably, destroy themselves.

ANTINOMIAN PRAXIS

The magician's Path requires self-awareness, which includes a sharp understanding of how culture shapes one's thoughts. Many, though by no means all, Zelators find it useful to probe their cultural conditioning by consciously violating it. This form of praxis is called *antinomian*, from the Greek, meaning "against the law." The antinomian practitioner holds that enlightened understanding supersedes moral law.

The new apprentice must understand at once that Hermetic study, in itself, does *not* require criminality. Concerning Sleeper laws, the Order takes no position. Antinomian techniques are not goals, merely tools for understanding, which the apprentice uses and then discards when they have fulfilled her purpose.

The student chooses her own antinomian idea. Common choices in recent history include flirtations with so-called Satan worship (as distinct from diabolism, which the Order strictly forbids); work among followers of Nazism, racism or other odious ideologies; or any other lesser deeds which the apprentice finds reprehensible.

For example, knowing my love of reading, my pater suggested that I take one of my favorite books and burn it. Of course, Master Porthos loves books as much as I; he despises book-burning as I do — which was precisely the point of his suggestion. Antinomian praxis should inspire revulsion in the practitioner. Then, having committed the act, the student should examine her revulsion and liberate herself from it. Such feelings represent strictures upon the will, and a true mage tolerates no such strictures.

A final warning: Never let antinomian praxis adversely affect bystanders. For example, an American apprentice who believes strongly in racial equality might attend a Ku Klux Klan meeting in a distant city, and even make a pro-Klan speech to the insipid dullards in attendance; the student should not participate in a cross-burning, however. That would make the antinomian no better than those she plans to fight. The examples of Gilles de Rais and Aliester Crowley mark the Path of one who takes her antinomian praxis too seriously.

MISSIONS

Mentors sometimes require Zelators to undertake missions: simple tasks, such as taking a message to another Covenant, or dangerous tasks that benefit the Order, such as infiltrating a Technocratic classroom. Simple errands are rarely straightforward. A routine courier mission that runs afoul the enemy may conceal a loyalty test; those "Technocratic agents" interrogating the captured apprentice may actually be disguised Hermetic mages. Dangerous missions teach the young mage to think for herself, learn discretion and prove her bravery and resourcefulness.

THIRD APPRENTICE DEGREE (PRACTICUS)

The student achieves the final apprentice degree through personal metamorphosis. All magick is transformative; the secret of magick is to transform the magician. Changing from an ignorant, ineffectual drone into a mage who alters the world to match her personal vision — this is absolutely no less magickal than changing from human to wolf. The first involves no supernatural violation of scientific law, but that is irrelevant. The mage decides how to alter reality, then changes inwardly to gain the power to make the alteration.

In the Order of Hermes, the instrument of change (both internal and external) is usually a Word. The student's praxis leads her to an epiphany, a realization of a suitable life goal or transformative process. Generally (though not always), this goal lacks proper focus until the mage can articulate it as a single Word, which carries with it manifold meanings and implica-

tions. The mage's will carries her Word outward, where it works upon the world independent of her guidance.

All praxis — even non-Hermetic ones — have Words which define their inner spark. All mysticks discover that Word in time, whether they realize it or not. For instance, the Word of Jesus was *Agape*, divine love. That of Francis Bacon, a member of the Order of Reason, was Progress, which has had profound (and profoundly mixed) effects on the world. The 1960s magician Anton La Vey developed the Word *Indulgence*, an unhappy choice with deleterious (though inarguably large) effect on modern society.

The manifestation of a powerful Word is the usual hallmark of the student's graduation to Third Degree. Thereafter the Practicus devotes her energies to transformation, using techniques that her pater provides. At this stage the student acquires skill in the Arts appropriate to the eventual progress of her Word. When she advances beyond the First Rank in each of these Arts, she is ready to become a true magician — to practice the third and highest form of magick: *magia*.

INITIATION

How does an Order apprentice become a Disciple, the first rank of the True Mage? Through initiation. Master Divraniya remarks, "Initiation constitutes the first of many trials we undergo in our never-ending pursuit of perfection." Actually, an apprentice's initiation is more like her 2,025th such trial, but none deny that initiation is arduous, totally personal, and everlasting in the Disciple's memory.

The initiation trial takes many forms, depending on the apprentice's House, the decisions of her master and the needs of the Order. Each test differs; usually the student is unaware she is being tested. The trial challenges the apprentice's fitness to become a mage. She must demonstrate the ability to work magick, influence Sleepers, protect herself and avoid Paradox. Without quick and creative thinking, an aspiring mage is doomed.

The Order strives for perfection — of self, of will and of the world. Challenge is our crucible, our bread and drink. Our greatest members possess power on the scale of tactical nuclear weapons. Command of such power requires coolness and exquisite self-control. For this reason, initiation often involves danger, even life-threatening danger. Those who fail and survive may try again in another year. Some die. This is a harsh penalty, but consider the alternative: allowing an immature, careless or foolish mage to control the primary forces of creation. A gauntlet is a small price to pay for the stability our Order provides — or for the power of gods.

THE TRIBUNAL OF INITIATION

Initiation ceremonies take place at Tribunals, so that all who attend may witness the "becoming" of a new mage. Because Tribunals occur only every two years and apprentices are an impatient lot, each House often convenes special gatherings known as *Tribunals of Initiation* between regular meetings. The chosen dates have astrological or numerical significance; many believe that such matters influence the future of the "graduating class."

The initiate's pater, one Quaesitor and at least one other member of the initiate's House attend the proceedings. The ceremony has five parts:

• **Declaration:** The pater declares that the apprentice has accomplished the studies set before her and has passed her initiation trial. He may offer praise for the student's behavior, scholarship and accomplishments — usually for the first time in their relationship!

• **Oath:** The Quaesitor requires the apprentice to recite the Code of Hermes, then to swear she will uphold that Code.

• **Naming:** The new mage receives a new Hermetic name chosen by her pater. (In modern times, the mentor usually asks the apprentice which name she would like.) In time, this so-called *Shadow Name* acquires new honorifics, which grow with experience and age (see Appendix). The Quaesitor welcomes the new mage using this Hermetic name, by which she will henceforth be known. Secretly, the mentor prepares a scroll with a second secret name — a *True Name*; he shows it to the initiate, then destroys it. Only the initiate and the mentor know all the Names she possesses.

• **Sigil:** The initiate's former mentor presents the new mage with a sigil that symbolizes her membership in the Order, usually a wand. The sigil bears arcane symbols that identify the mage's House and specialties, if any. In essence, the sigil becomes a symbol of the mage herself, representing her vote in council. In centuries past, mages would lend their sigils as proxy

votes, but that practice was subject to abuse and has fallen into disfavor.

• **Declaration of Vector:** First added to the initiation rite in the 1860s, this optional stage requires the new Disciple to declare the guise she will assume in the Sleeping world - including her job, lifestyle, residence and Word. Although her Vector may change over time as her interests broaden or narrow, this declaration sets the mage a goal of her own choosing — a gesture of independence after spending so long at the feet of another.

Once initiated, the *premie* (an ancient term for the new Disciple) becomes a full member of the Order, free to join a cabal or a Covenant and make her own way toward the higher Degrees.

Apprentices, even those who were never close to their mentors, always owe their teachers an irrepayable debt. While many render gratitude through alliance and favor, it is the student's reputation and deeds that form the real payment for the mentor's instruction. Through the pupil's deeds, the mentor enhances — or *besmirches* — his own reputation. Apprentices reading this are advised to remember that their acts shine or shadow their teachers' own. And believe me, few mischiefs are worth an angry mentor.

THE LIFE OF THE MASTER



A desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind; and every human being whose mind is not debauched will be willing to give all that he has to get knowledge.

— Samuel Johnson

Though apprenticeship shapes the mage's early life, her career path is entirely her own. Master Divraniya's writings on mages enumerate their duties admirably; a summary follows.

ENTERING THE MI'AS

Mi'as (Arabic, "quicksand") is a tongue-in-cheek term for politics. As soon as a new mage completes her initiation, she usually finds herself embroiled in the political maneuverings endemic to the Order. Once in, she must sink or swim.

Hermetics continually accept new challenges, measuring their progress toward perfection through the acquisition of power — mastering the Arts, commanding spirits, exercising our will within the mundane world and, ultimately, ruling ourselves. Other Tradition mages sometimes fail to comprehend this central point of our Order's beliefs. We understand the one true Path to Ascension; therefore, we have a duty to lead others to that Path. To prepare for that position, we must perfect ourselves. That process includes gaining political power, both to measure our personal advancement and to learn how to wield power wisely.

If one must wade through "political quicksand," it helps to have a lifeline. The Order provides this aid through the exchange of sa. In Egyptian religion, sa was a magical fluid, the

lifeblood of the gods. When their sa ran low, the priests would ask others' gods to lay hands on them and restore it. In Hermetic tradition, sa represents "political blood," favors bestowed on others. These "charities" may include taking sides in a discussion; voting for or against a particular issue; helping another mage establish a reputation; or getting him elected to office. The more sa a mage "gives" to others, the more favor she potentially controls: It is considered a grave breach of honor to fail to repay a favor.

GAINING KNOWLEDGE

The Hermetic is a scholar in the library of Humanity. Mages who spend their lives battling in the political arena — or in combat, for that matter — sacrifice their access to the higher magickal realms. Knowledge, understanding and awareness are the keys to personal evolution. Each mage must decide for herself which area of study will let her Ascend. At the same time, she must balance the practical necessities of politicking against these — for without sa, her scholarly options are curtailed.

Many new initiates, having cleared the hurdles and won initiation, assume they have won victory. Quite the contrary: After apprenticeship, the mage must study harder than ever! Within the basic texts, she now discerns hidden meanings, numerical significance or unsuspected symbology. These discoveries compel her to reach beyond what she once suspected and attain what she never before envisioned. And beyond this portal lie still more complex mysteries...

TAKING APPRENTICES

Hermetics recognize the duty to teach. Personal improvement is impossible without training new apprentices. As we uncover deeper truths, we feel obligated to pass on our discoveries.

Other factors, beyond mere duty, influence the decision to teach. Many Hermetics have no other family beyond their fellow mages; taking an apprentice creates a bond like that between a parent and her child. Then, too, it is a genuine pleasure to instill in the newly-Awakened mind a thirst for knowledge and a desire to seek the mysteries.

A teacher may have more practical motives also. A pupil provides an extra pair of hands in the laboratory, performs tedious chores, and, not least, provides the mage with companionship. Until she takes an apprentice, a mage may never realize how lonely the Seeker's life can be.

The new mentor rules her pupil in all ways, but the teacher also learns valuable lessons: politics in miniature (through wielding power over another); teaching methods; fresh perspectives on old subjects, which may spark new lines of inquiry; and renewed interest in the mortal world, which so many masters forsake for Awakened company.

FINDING FAMILIARS

The Order does not forbid apprentices to have familiars, but students rarely have the knowledge to summon one, let alone keep it. These spirit companions require upkeep and favors in return for their services. Most new Disciples, however,

try to enlist a familiar at the earliest opportunity; such creatures may offer power, otherworldly knowledge or access to more powerful Umbrood.

Most familiars attracted to Hermetic mages demonstrate extreme intelligence, inquiring natures and esoteric knowledge (if not always wisdom). These Umbral denizens take forms that various cultures associate with intelligence: toads or frogs, falcons, owls, snakes and cats. Sometimes they inhabit clay golems or homunculi that appear to Sleeping eyes as dolls. Familiars destined to reside in Horizon Realms, where Paradox does not intrude, may appear as Mythic Remnants — sphinxes, lammasu, tiny dragons — or (rarely) as random geometric forms, (ref: *familiars*.)

SANCTA

Hermetic law considers the Hermetic Sanctum inviolable. Here, a mage establishes her own individual paradigm and does her most important work. Some willworkers make do with a small Sanctum — little more than a study area — but most include their laboratories, libraries and living quarters in the "package."

A Sanctum's size and situation often indicate the owner's status within the Covenant. Older, established mages have the best sites and most spacious accommodations. In crowded Covenants, Disciples may share living quarters, but each still claims her own tiny Sanctum. A Chantry member can secure a better Sanctum by performing a great service to her Covenant or House, or through political maneuvering. Failing that, she can just get rich and build it herself.





Note that the Sanctum must be clearly marked as described in the *Peripheral Corrigenda to the Code of Hermes* (XVI/254/DD/iii/a). Uninvited entry into another's Sanctum is a crime punishable by Interdiction, and the owner may lawfully kill the intruder in self-defense. (One notable exception: Apprentices may enter their mentor's Sanctum without invitation, and vice versa.) In the Houses' turbulent past, a scheming mage would invite a rival into his Sanctum, slay him, then escape punishment by claiming self-defense. Even today, entering another's Sanctum indicates great trust — or great foolishness.

The laws prohibit certain risky types of experimentation within the Covenant, even within one's Sanctum. In particular, the Order regards major elemental effects, greater Forces magick, all summonings and, of course, diabolism as dangerous. The mage should implement these in a pocket Realm. Extreme cases even require a sealed laboratory within the Realm, so that the mage can blow herself up without taking the whole pocket universe with her.

CERTAMEN

Inevitably, every master gets drawn into a magickal duel, usually by a political rival or by a glory-seeking student. For this reason, the Houses developed the rules of certamen, the ritualized duel arcane.

Certamen within our Order is highly ritualized, with observers, judges and a clearly defined arena. Duelists engage in a set form of challenge, response, the stating of limits on allow-

able magick, use of Quintessence, stakes of the match, and other constraints. Surprise attacks are dishonorable (but occur anyway).

Because we control the most dangerous forces in the universe, our Order strictly enforces the agreed-upon limits in a contest. Brutal opponents are often censured or re-challenged by a stronger compatriot. The most admirable duelists best their opponents through creative and subtle "soft" magicks, or defeat rivals through guile and knowledge of their opponents' weaknesses. Crass displays of power, while effective barriers to repeat business, indicate a lack of grace and imagination.

TWILIGHT

We refer to Quiet as "the Twilight" because it evokes a sense of changing balance. Twilight comprises darkness and light; one surrenders to the other. Although other Traditions conceive of the night as insanity, we consider it a time of reevaluation and transition.

A Hermetic mage in Twilight loses control of her rational thought processes and enters a reality of her own making. In this state, she opens herself to repressed ideas and crazy notions. These visions may lead to new insights into her Word, new abilities and affinities, or even (rarely) a new familiar. Conversely, Twilight may confuse the victim beyond recovery. She may acquire a physical deformity brought on by uncontrolled magick, or lose her affinity of an Art, perhaps beyond recovery. She becomes a different, smaller spirit — one occasionally beset by nightmarish hobgoblins from her subconscious.



Any Hermetic mage must prepare her to experience Twilight. It *will* happen someday, and may happen often. Indeed, the Order's greatest figures have gained unique insights in Twilight. My own pater, Master Porthos, has entered at least 12 by his own count. Some among the Order enter this visionground voluntarily, searching for wisdom, though others fear its horrors and lock themselves away for fear of harm.

AWARDS

Those who diligently pursue the Order's virtues and choose their friends wisely reap great rewards. All Hermetics must learn something of political infighting, and those who learn well may become movers and shakers within Covenants, Houses or even the entire Order. Respected mages may represent their peers at the Grand Tribunal, where they help determine policy for the Tradition as a whole.

Despite our Tradition's reputation, many Hermetics manage to avoid politics (mostly) and pursue knowledge instead. High scholarship, too, brings rewards. Theoreticians and scholars enjoy greater respect in the Order than in any other Tradition; their opinions are sought, their learning revered. They may receive superior laboratory equipment, space and research materials, as well as bright apprentices and consors. The finest thinkers are immortalized on the Order's White Roster of Celebrants. Typically theorists also achieve, if not immortality, then extreme physical longevity.

Other more active members earn prestige through service to the Order: rescue missions, diplomatic successes, Umbral discoveries, telling strikes against the enemy — Some rewards

are intangible: the respect of peers, fame within the Order and gratitude from other members. Some are more concrete but no less valuable. Material rewards include good quarters in the Covenant, promising apprentices and appointments to office. Historically, high-Degree members of House Quaesitor have the best chances to reap rewards of this type, but the Quaesitors are too few to monopolize the spoils.

Each of these paths holds one ultimate prize: access to esoteric knowledge. Every Hermetic mage, however trapped by the *mi'as*, shares the supreme desire to understand. By understanding the Tellurian, we see how to work our will; by understanding our will, we progress toward the ultimate goal of spiritual perfection.

THE SECOND INITIATION

As a hierarchical society, the Order has a pyramidal structure. Disciples provide the broad base, upon which rests a smaller number of Adepts and, at the summit, a few revered Masters and Archmages. As a mage advances in Degree and formulates new praxes to realize her Word, powerful members of our Tradition evaluate her performance. If she proves her excellence, loyalty and ability, they grant her a "second initiation."

This secret and arcane ceremony is known only to those of Eighth and Ninth Degrees (i.e., Masters and Archmages). The initiate enters the *Circlus Abstrusus*, the Hermetic "movers and shakers" found mostly in Doissetep and Horizon. Members of this inner circle establish a Tradition-wide reputation. Others both fear and revere them. Rumor speaks of a third initiation and a fourth beyond that, but the details of such ranks remain mysterious at best.

HERMETIC LAW



The laws place the safety of all before the safety of individuals.

— Cicero, *De Finibus*

Any group is only as strong as the laws that bind it. Hermetics adhere strictly to a code that lets us live and work together — not always in harmony, perhaps, but at least in common understanding. Without the Code of Hermes and its Peripheral Corrigenda, we could never meld so many differing magical praxes into one Tradition.

THE CODE OF HERMES

Bonisagus propounded the Code of Hermes in 787 CE. Disciples must know the Code and swear to uphold it. In the past, breaking the Code incurred one punishment: *Requital*, or death. In modern times, the Order employs many punishments. The Code, at its most basic, is as follows:

- **I swear everlasting loyalty to the Order and its members. The Order's friends and enemies are my friends and enemies, and I shall not spurn a friend nor succor an enemy.**
- **I shall not through action or inaction endanger the Order, nor consort with devils or undead, nor anger the fae.**
- **I shall not deprive any Order mage of magical power, nor through action or inaction attempt bring harm to an Order mage, except in justly declared and open certamen.**
- **I shall not spy by any means or manner upon another Order mage's private works, nor read an Order mage's mind, nor invade or observe an Order mage's Sanctum, save to guard against a clear, direct, forceful and imminent threat to the safety of the Order.**

Note: The Code does not forbid spying upon or scrying those outside the Order; indeed, we often observe Technocracy strong' holds, and occasionally (for their own safety) the Chantries of other Traditions.

- **If called before a Tribunal, I shall abide by its verdicts. If called to sit upon a Tribunal, I shall vote wisely, respect the votes of others, and support the Tribunal's verdicts.**
- **Upon reaching Fifth Degree or higher, I shall train apprentices and instruct them in this Code. I bear the entire responsibility for my apprentice, and shall duly admonish, restrain, discipline or arrest an apprentice who endangers the Order, and shall yield same apprentice to the Order's lawfully appointed agent or Tribunal.**
- **I solemnly swear to uphold this sacred Code of Hermes, and venture any risk or sacrifice to protect it. Should I breach it, may all the mages of the Order rise as one united and hunt me down and destroy me forevermore.**

PERIPHERAL CORRIGENDA

The Code's brevity has necessitated numerous rulings and interpretations. Rulings agreed in the triennial Grand Tribunals are entered into the *Peripheral Corrigenda*, a voluminous

and precedent-setting document. Some noteworthy interpretations:

- Tribunals consist of six Order mages from House Quaesitor, or from at least two other Houses. Tribunals convened to hear capital crimes consist of 12 Hermetic mages from no less than four Houses. A Quaesitor presides over capital Tribunals.

- A mentor must instruct and train an apprentice for at least three months each year. Otherwise, any other mage of Fifth Degree or higher may (with the apprentice's consent) take over the apprentice's training.

- Certamen shall settle disputes between individuals, cabals or Covenants. Challenged and challenger must agree on the limitations and boundaries of the duel. The use of deadly force must be stated and agreed upon by all parties before the contest. No mage may challenge a Tribune judging his fate, a Primus in charge of a House or a Quaesitor protecting the Order. No mage may challenge another mage more than once, unless and until the second mage has challenged the challenger in return.

Any challenged party may refuse certamen without prejudice or dishonor; however, the party seeking satisfaction may then consign the dispute to a Quaesitor for disposition. A mage may not accept a challenge that breaks the Code of Hermes or its Peripheral Corrigenda.

Having accepted certamen, a mage must abide by its results or incur punishment by the Quaesitors.

VIOLATIONS

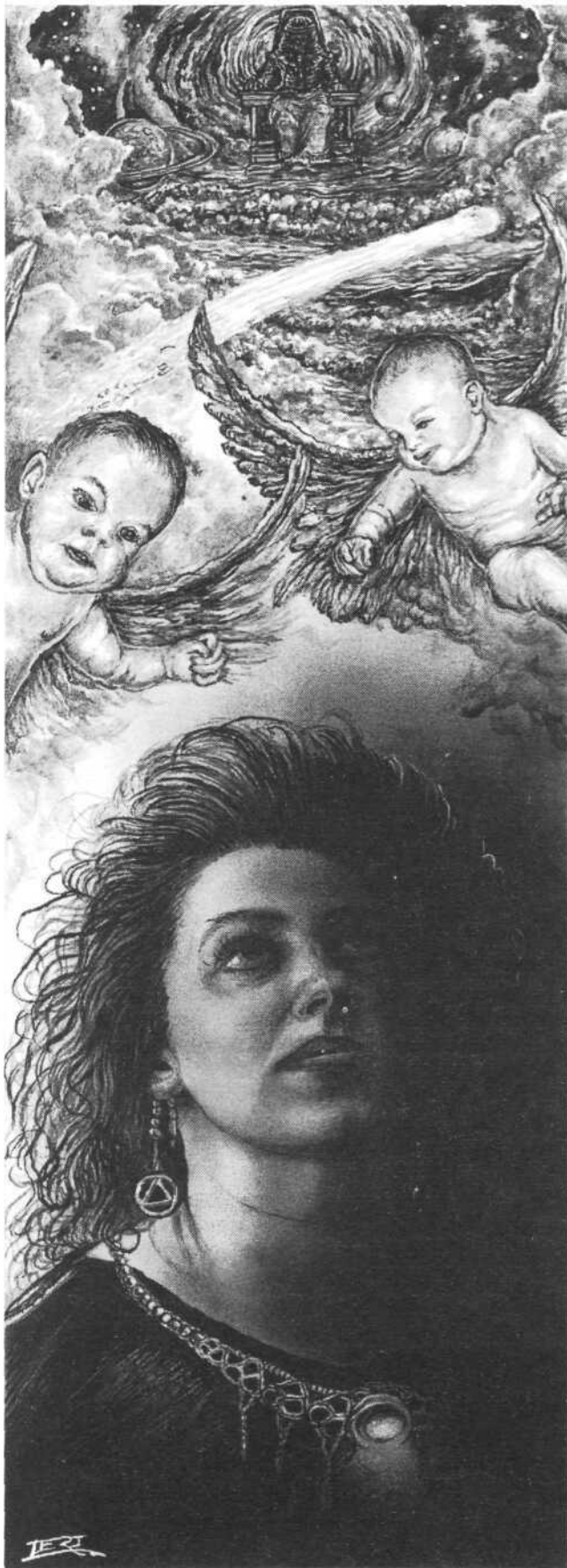
The Order of Hermes recognizes both *high* and *low* crimes.

HIGH CRIMES

These comprise explicit violations of the Code of Hermes: Destroying a mage's magical abilities, slaying a fellow member outside lawful certamen, endangering the Order, dealing with demons or exercising gross malice, sadism and/or murder against Sleepers, allies or other mages. High crimes are heard by the Order's Security Council, a formal body of nine judges; each judge is appointed by the Primus of his House. By majority vote, the Security Council may punish high crimes with either **Censure** (public condemnation), **Interdiction** (shunning), **Requital** (death) or **Gilgul** (annihilation).

- A **Censured** mage's crime is circulated among all Covenants; the criminal may also incur fines or other penalties, such as a prohibition against returning to his Sanctum or Covenant for two years. Though (in theory) publication and associated penalties comprise the entire punishment, Censure has the practical side effect of destroying the criminal's political ambitions.

- No Hermetic mage may aid or communicate in any way with an **Interdicted** magician. Independent vigilantes of the Order often hunt and slay Interdicted mages, claiming that such desperadoes know too much to be allowed to live.



- **Requital** verdicts are extremely rare. If the sentenced criminal is in custody, he may appeal at once to the Primus (leader) of his House for mercy. A willing Primus may convene all available Primi to review the sentence. They may commute the Requital to Interdiction by accumulating five votes in favor. If the verdict stands, three Quaesitor executioners (called the Black Tribunal) carry out the Requital sentence at dawn on the day following sentencing.

A fugitive from justice may earn both Interdiction and Requital, meaning that any Order mage must flee or exterminate the criminal on sight.

- Note that Requital in all cases refers only to the termination of the criminal's physical life. Only a unanimous panel of all House Primi can pronounce the still graver sentence of **Gilgul**, or Avatar-murder. The Order of Hermes has historically issued only one or two Gilgul sentences each century, usually for flagrant diabolism.

LOW CRIMES

These offenses against the Peripheral Corrigenda include harming or stealing another mage's familiar, laboratory or property, or committing gross acts of theft or violence against Sleepers, allies or fellow Tradition mages. Such crimes merit either **Talion** (retaliation in kind by the injured party or his agents) or **Reparation**. Low crimes are judged by a Tribunal, a temporary jury of rank-and-file mages (see "Lawmakers," below).

- The ancient law of **Talion** suits punishment to the crime. If you destroy my library, then a Talion verdict lets me destroy yours. However, Talion within the Order is more flexible than the verdicts of ancient societies. Tribunals recognize that if you kill my familiar, there is no justice in my killing yours, inasmuch as your familiar may have been uninvolved in your crime. In these circumstances, Talion permits alternate solutions. In this example, the Tribunal might sever the bond between you and your familiar, returning the creature to its Umbral home.

- **Reparation**, by far the most common punishment, means the criminal must make restitution, in kind where possible, in cash or favors when not. Tribunals are fond of "sevenfold Reparation." For instance, if the offender took a valuable tome from the victim's library, the offender must give the victim seven other books of equal value.

LAWMAKERS

Here follow the positions of power that you will most often hear about as an apprentice:

- **Tribune:** *Tribunals Ordinary* are temporary *ad hoc* juries of six or 12 Tribune mages. A Tribune is a temporary office, like that of a juror. Such Tribunals convene whenever necessary, weighing important matters or deciding criminal trials. For matters that affect a single House, the Tribunes come from that House; for matters between Houses or affecting the entire Order, Tribunes are drawn from several Houses. Tribunal justice is swift, though its fairness is sometimes inextricably bound to political expediency.

The Corrigenda detail precise routines and procedures for convening a Tribunal Ordinary in every imaginable situation. Typically, but not always, a member of House Quaesitor calls and convenes the Tribunal. The Quaesitor may call any Order mage (except apprentices) to serve as a Tribune; the chosen one must serve unless prevented by injury or illness. However, members of high Degree often develop "Tribune fever" (as they jocularly call it) to avoid this dull service. Therefore, a new initiate can expect early, if not frequent, calls to hear cases. Given this opportunity, do not succumb to fever! Tribunals offer the new mage insights into the Order's inner workings, as well as valuable contacts with other Covenants and potential allies.

Grand Tribunals meet every three years, or more often in times of emergency. The 27 delegates (usually the Primus and two other members of high Degree from each House) convene to enact laws and discuss issues affecting the whole of the Order. In Grand Tribunal, the Primus of House Bonisagus (as leader of the oldest House) acts as Tribune Chancellor. Each attending mage may propose topics for discussion.

- **Quaesitor:** Members of House Quaesitor have a unique position within the Order, for their authority extends beyond their own House. Building on the harsh ancient laws of Ma'at, Egyptian goddess of law, Quaesitors oversee the enactment and enforcement of laws within the Order. A Quaesitor presides over the Security Council and (usually) Tribunals, ruling on questions of precedent and law.

- **Primus:** The Primi lead the Houses and guide their members. Whether Masters or Archmages, Primi always wield major political power, appointing officials within the House organization, settling disputes and planning strategies.

Each Primus may expel any member of her House, in effect making the unfortunate an Orphan within the Order. An "unhoused" mage is not exactly a criminal or an exile, but has no voting rights and, practically speaking, absolutely no political power. Unhoused magicians are rare; most either find refuge in another House or, without support, perish at the enemy's hands.

All Primi serve for life. In Houses Ex Miscellanea, Janissary, Tytalus and Shaea, the Primus chooses his or her successor, who takes over upon the elder's death or retirement. Thig has no Primus. In the other Houses, members of Sixth Degree and higher elect their Primus from among the House's Masters and Archmages.

COMMITTEES

Weighty issues of law and guilt may fascinate the apprentice, but dry administrative matters weigh more heavily upon her life. Such minutiae are the purview of the Order's many committees, divisions and detachments. These organizations and their functions date from the consolidation of our diverse Houses as a single Tradition; in many ways, they hold our fragile fraternity together.

As a new apprentice, you've already encountered the Order's Personnel Division. Take heart: They treat Archmages the same way they treated you! You'll encounter their obtuse bureaucracy whenever you rise in degree, become an initiate, relocate, take an apprentice, win an award or commit a major felony. Yes, many of them are "just consors," but *don't* threaten to fry them. They have power: When a mage locates a likely apprentice but cannot, for some reason, teach her himself, the consors in Personnel locate a likely mentor for her. Therefore, Personnel controls the quality of apprentices a House receives. Thus, mages treat Personnel kindly. A quality recruit means a quality apprentice.

The same situation prevails in most other committees. Supervised by mages but staffed by Sleeper associates, the committees represent a power unto themselves. They serve, but are not members of, the various Houses. Vital Order functions fall to one or another House: research (Bonisagus), defense (Flambeau), recruitment (Fortunae), internal security (Janissary), justice (Quaesitor), history (Shaea), reconnaissance (Thig) and strategy (Tytalus). But the Houses prefer not to burden themselves with mundane duties, and so these tasks fall to seemingly their innumerable consors, aides and (yes) bureaucrats.

Master Divraniya offers a full list of committees and excellent summaries of their domains. This early in your studies, you need only care about a few: the **Logistics Division**, which provides supplies to the Covenants; the **Procurement Committee**, which locates and acquires ancient texts for Order libraries; and various *ad hoc* detachments formed to investigate magical phenomena across the world. These committees concern you because they frequently require minor magicians to carry out tasks considered "beneath" an initiate. So don't be surprised if a Procurement secretary calls you at 4 AM and tells you to get to Istanbul and pick up a 12th-Century Dervish scroll. In our Order, it's all part of the new mage's life.





FOOTNOTE 3: HERMETIC HOUSES

Suffer not yourselves to be carried with the Great Stream, but stem the tide, you that can lay hold of the Haven of Safety, and make your full course toward it. Seek one that may lead you by the hand, and conduct you to the door of Truth and Knowledge, where the clear Light is that is pure from Darkness, where there is not one drunken, but all are sober, and in their heart look up to him, whose pleasure it is to be seen.

- *The Sacred Pyramander of Hermes Trismegistus, VIII.4-5*

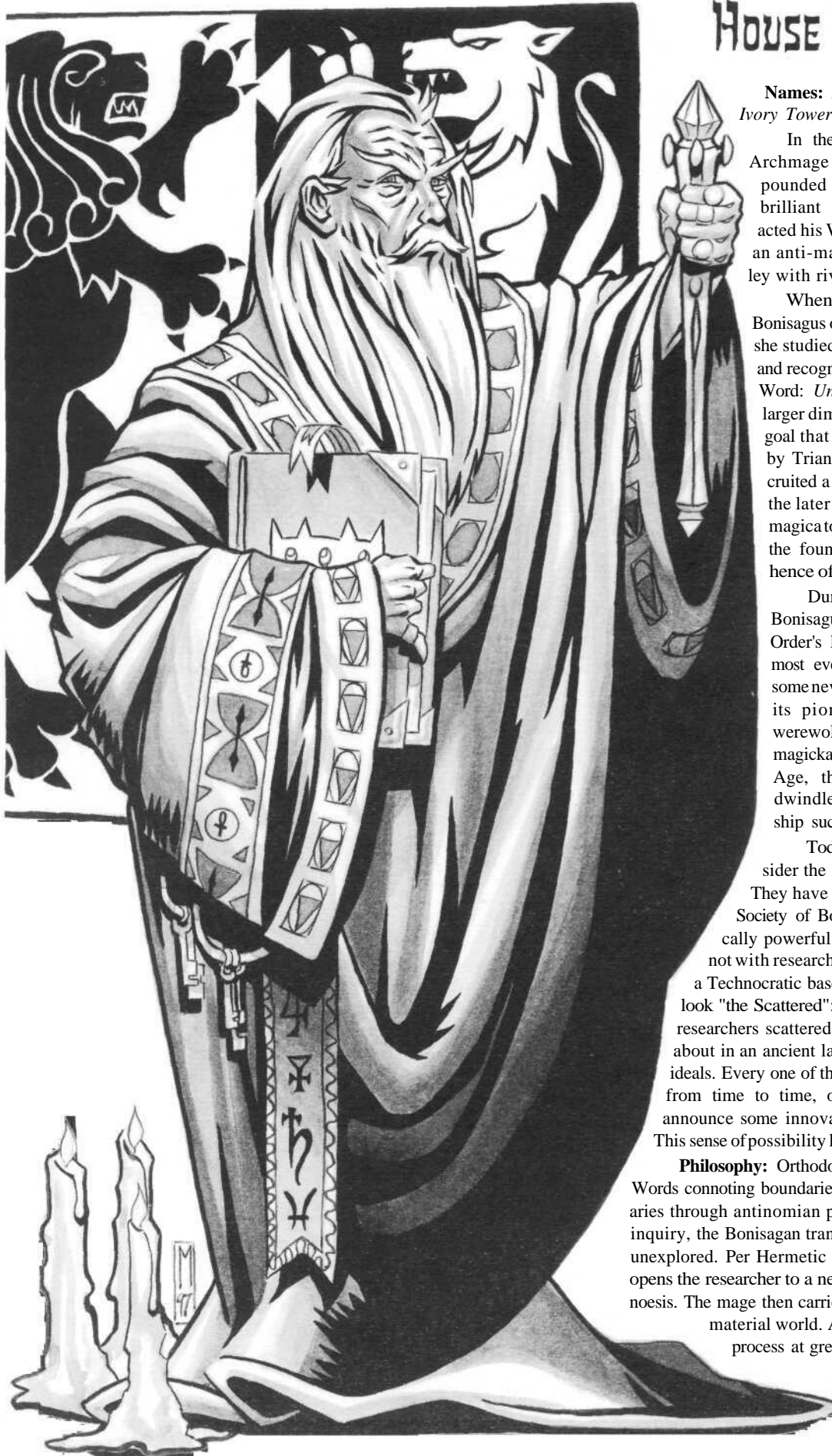


Like the Father's house in the Biblical proverb (John 14:2), the Order of Hermes has many mansions. Within our organization, each House (an older term, "Collegium," fell from favor in the 1700s) is a plenary magickal society unto itself, often many centuries old. Each House alone matches our fellow Traditions, if not in numbers, then in history and independence of viewpoint. Even their praxes display remarkable diversity. Still, all nine Houses share the Hermetic emphases on meticulous discipline, exacting ritual, pragmatic adoption of workable ideas and, above all, language.

New apprentices often wonder why the Houses remain separate within the Order. For five centuries, the discussion has dominated many a Covenant tea room: Why not integrate the

Houses, or else calve them as separate Traditions? Of many competing theories, I favor the so-called pragmatic argument. The path to power requires both a voice on the Council of Nine Mystick Traditions and influence at our Tradition's Grand Tribunals. A House that breaks from the Order loses the first; a House that integrates forfeits the second. So the status quo endures, resented but tolerated.

In this Hornbook's section on the Houses, Master Aram Marangoudakis, bani Tytalus, does not address the current situation. In fact, for all their exhaustive and in some respects exhausting length, his nine treatises omit any references to current politics. With his work, Master Marangoudakis has done every new apprentice an undeniable service — as far as it goes — but a novice entering the quicksand of Hermetic life may find the following notes both accessible and enlightening.



HOUSE BONISAGUS

Names: *Bonisagi, Researchers, the Scattered, Ivory Towers, Pointy Hats* (demeaning)

In the 8th century, a reclusive Mercuric Archmage in the Black Forest, Bonisagus, propounded the Word *parma* (Latin, "shield"). A brilliant and patient researcher, he first enacted his Word by developing the *parma magica*, an anti-magickal shield that let magicians parley with rivals without fear of ambush.

When the Master Trianoma encountered Bonisagus on her search for fellow magi (731 CE), she studied with him, learned the *parma magica*, and recognized it as a key to propagating her own Word: *Unity*. She helped Bonisagus recognize a larger dimension implied in his Word, a societal goal that would shield magi everywhere. Aided by Trianoma's political genius, Bonisagus recruited a small cabal of followers, the nucleus of the later House Bonisagus. Teaching the *parma magica* to magi across Europe, the Bonisagi built the foundations of the Order of Hermes, and hence of all the Traditions.

During the High Mythic Age, House Bonisagus exerted enormous influence as the Order's leading researchers. What vision! Almost every year the group seemed to impart some new and imaginative way to work magick; its pioneering research about vampires, werewolves, wraiths and the fae fascinated the magickal community. But at the end of the Age, the House's Quintessence stockpiles dwindled, its resources shrank, and its membership succumbed to bitter infighting.

Today, young mages in other Houses consider the Bonisagi superannuated and obsolete. They have a point: Only one cabal, the Fraternal Society of Bonisagus in Doissetep, remains politically powerful. Its four Masters involve themselves, not with research or Ascension, but with strikes against a Technocratic base. However, critics of the House overlook "the Scattered": an unknown number of independent researchers scattered around the Tellurian, each pottering about in an ancient laboratory, each cleaving to Bonisagan ideals. Every one of them is a first-class theorist. Even now, from time to time, one of these eremites comes forth to announce some innovative rote or newly discovered realm. This sense of possibility keeps Bonisagus vital in Hermetic life.

Philosophy: Orthodox Bonisagan theorists usually adopt Words connoting boundaries or frontiers. By transgressing boundaries through antinomian praxis, or extending frontiers through inquiry, the Bonisagan transforms her spirit into something new, unexplored. Per Hermetic doctrine ("As above, so below"), this opens the researcher to a new Truth, a new aspect of the realm of noesis. The mage then carries this new understanding back to the material world. Any Scattered theorist can describe the process at great length in completely incomprehensible terms.

As for the House's last surviving cabal, the Fraternal Society of Bonisagus, it is hard to adduce its doctrines. What should one make of a magazine photographer with a night-Ecstatic praxis? Or a one-time mayor of a Swiss canton who spends his days learning languages (total at this writing: 74) and collecting electric trains? The Society's theoretical underpinnings, whatever they are, are certainly eclectic.

Style: Bonisagan researchers specialize in jargon so arcane it puzzles even their fellow Hermetics — and, I suspect, sometimes themselves. Observers joke that the Scattered can talk themselves into Twilight. Never absent-minded — for rudimentary skill in *Ars Mentis* corrects this trivial flaw — the Researchers nonetheless focus obsessively on abstruse ideas; their distracted air gives their nickname double meaning. No other mage, however, can better handle the countless details of an elaborate ritual working or intricate Umbrood conversation.

In the Fraternal Society in Doissetep, by contrast, members emulate the example of Master Trianoma, never a strong theorist but a brilliant politician. These relentless willworkers share a vitriolic hatred for the Technocracy and constantly plot against known Reason mages. Visiting many Covenants around the world, Fraternals use their considerable personal skills to gain aid or resources for their cause.

One elder Flambeau tells of his dealings with the Fraternals: "They always remember your name and your birthday, and they give catnip toys to your familiar," he says. "They wine you and dine you, they engage you in the most delightful conversation, and then when the evening is over you realize that you've promised them an F-14 strike aircraft by Tuesday."

Goals: Among the Scattered, current research includes exploration of the 10th Sphere, *Ars Concordiae* and Paradox avoidance. In practice, it's never easy to determine which topics command these theorists' attention. They work in isolation, usually in Horizon Realms, making occasional forays to Earth to procure some esoteric document or vital ingredient. The Order rarely hears about a Bonisagi's interests until he suddenly shows up at a Grand Tribunal, carrying an armful of scribbled scrolls that show, in precise detail, how to turn a distant enemy into glass.

Some decades ago, the Technocratic stronghold Metropolis2 seized one of Doissetep's most important ley lines. The

Fraternal Society has spent many years making retaliatory strikes against Metropolis!, with little effect thus far. They have, however, succeeded in convincing other cabals to "loan" them the necessary resources

Organization: The Fraternal Society has four members who meet regularly in Doissetep, frequently in the Chantry's Barcelona aspect on Earth. The Scattered do not meet and are not known to communicate with one another, save in emergencies.

Initiation: Each Adept or Master recruits and teaches his own apprentices. Doissetep's cabal often recruits them from secretive government agencies like the CIA. In recent centuries, their membership has sharply declined; the Scattered are

too isolated to meet likely recruits, and the Followers lose rather too many to unusual accidents. How curious that the indomitable walls of Doissetep cannot protect its residents from fatal "accidents..."

NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Philippus Aureolus Paracelsus (1493-1541):** Swiss alchemist and physician. An emblem of the Hermetic Tradition, he wrote extensively on it and made many major breakthroughs. Helped discover effect of Sleeper beliefs on magick. Said to have died in 1541, but some believe he became an Oracle.

- **Phoebe Tetramagestus (1214-1488):** Reclusive French scholar (birth name Isabelle Henault) in

Chantry Sangreal, Marseilles. Marvelously prolific researcher credited with over 80 original rites, countless variants, and three Prix d'Honneur. She lived a cloistered existence and finally succumbed to a decades-long Twilight.

- **John Visballi (born 1833):** Italian-born Hungarian mage, master of *Ars Essentiae*, *Conjunctionis* and *Animae*. Current leader of the Fraternal Society of Bonisagus in Doissetep.

- **Livia Margold (birthdate unknown):** Scattered Researcher, the most recent to emerge from seclusion. Developed improved method for summoning Umbrood snippings. Close questioning revealed that she had secured this knowledge from an Umbrood Lord in exchange for a human zygote. A Tribunal Censured Livia; thus Censured, she entered the Deep Umbra. Her current whereabouts are unknown.



HOUSE EX MISCELLANEA

Names (in addition to individual House names): *Order of Miscellany*, "misk" mages, *Hodgepodge*, *House Salad* (joking), *Rabble* (demeaning)

A highly diverse assemblage of unrelated mages, House Ex Miscellanea gathers the last surviving members of defunct Houses together with outsiders who joined the Order for protection. Unlike the other Houses, which specialize in recruitment, defense, research and so forth, the Miscellany serves no formal function in the Order. Even so, individual "misk mages" often command powers otherwise unknown in our Tradition.

For all its motley variety, the House's historic origin is localized and dramatic. In 816, maga Pralix, bani Tytalus, gathered several English independent wizards to destroy the vengeful necromancer Dav'nalleous. In the wake of their success, Pralix declared them the Order of Miscellany. At first, they planned a campaign against the Order of Hermes, but Master Trianoma convinced them to become a House instead. So they did.

The Hodgepodge's composition has changed a bit over the centuries. In the early days of the Traditions, the Hodgepodge suffered quick turnovers. Some of the original Houses of Hermes with weak political positions (Criamon, Jerbiton and Merinita) were consigned during the Grand Convocation to Ex Miscellanea, where they remain to this day. Other mages left the Miscellany to join other groups. The Bjornaer, a House of Germanic shape-changing wizards (now defunct), spent barely a year in Ex Miscellanea before leaving to join the Verbena.

In the centuries since then, Ex Miscellanea has changed less radically. During the Dwindling, it subsumed the remnants of other Houses; in this century it harbors a few refugees from the Lost Tradition, the Ahl-i-Batin.

Hermetics in other Houses sometimes denigrate Ex Miscellanea; on the whole, however, the Order considers the House a valuable asset. By providing a Hermetic counterpart to the other Traditions, it shows the triumph of the Order's Path. The House's diverse membership employs nearly every praxis imaginable, always with a uniquely Hermetic spin. True, this disorganized House lacks political power, but its great size, vigor

and vitally new ideas make the Miscellany a secret weapon in the war for Sleeping minds.

Most "miskers" are the remnants of four former Houses:

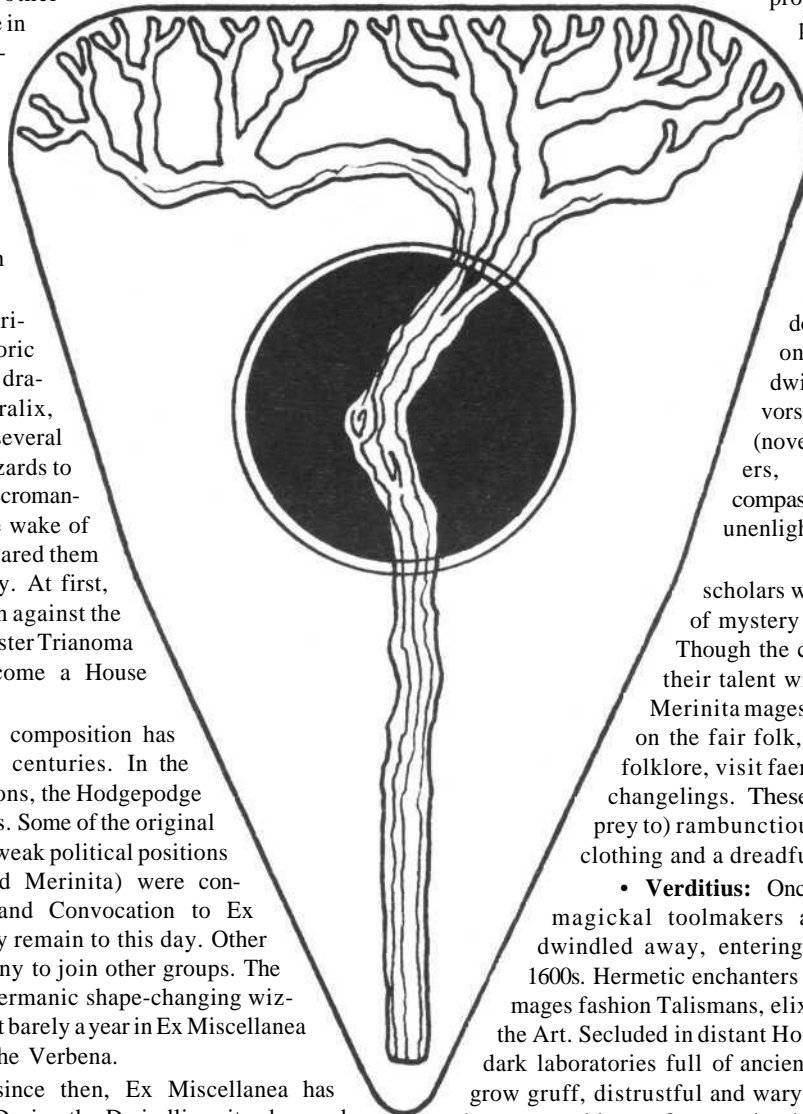
- **Criamon:** Prophets, seers, "swimmers on the sea of Time," these tattooed visionaries specialize in *Ars Temporis*, *Mentis* and *Manium*. Other Hermetics seek the Criamon wizard's prophecies, but he seldom perceives the future in detail. Instead, he hints at obscurities and speaks in riddles.

- **Jerbiton:** These philosophers, arbitrators and poets of the Mythic Age joined Ex Miscellanea in the late 1400s. Hit badly by Paradox and Sleeper distrust, once-haughty Jerbiton has dwindled to a few hardy survivors — humble artist-scholars (novelists, artists, social workers, psychologists) with compassion for the poor and the unenlightened.

- **Merinita:** Romantic scholars who believe the resolution of mystery lies in the faerie world. Though the centuries have decimated their talent with eccentric fae magick, Merinita mages still keep copious records on the fair folk, pore through fables and folklore, visit faerie sites and conspire with changelings. These mages develop (or fall prey to) rambunctious humors, a taste for loud clothing and a dreadful impulse to pun.

- **Verditius:** Once a prominent guild of magickal toolmakers and crafters, Verditius dwindled away, entering the Hodgepodge in the 1600s. Hermetic enchanters without equal, Verditius mages fashion Talismans, elixirs and similar objects of the Art. Secluded in distant Horizon Realms, huddled in dark laboratories full of ancient tomes, these magicians grow gruff, distrustful and wary. Despite their ill moods, they create objects of surpassing beauty and power.

Philosophy: Individual "miskers" adapt pagan, shamanic, artistic and even fae magick to a Hermetic framework — that is, they painstakingly memorize rituals and develop elaborate incantations, rather than "winging it" as mages do in some other Traditions. The House's eclectic theories do not always mesh with accepted Hermetic thought, though, and disputes are common indeed. A Criamon magician, for instance, might repeat short incantations incessantly, sometimes in conjunction with drugs or dancing, to achieve a prophetic trance. By transcending his body and the conditioned world, he achieves



unified awareness of the past and future. This ecstatic approach does not conform (to put it mildly) to Hermetic doctrines of controlled power. Still, the other Houses look on without interference; with luck, they might notice something the Criamon does that could aid their own praxis research.

Style: Magical styles within Ex Miscellanea vary almost as much as the different Tradition styles do. An Indian Criamon utters the names of the seven Torments while tattooing a mystic symbol on her fingertips. An Israeli Jerbiton prepares a high feast fixed with only white foods served in bowls of white marble as part of an artistic peace ceremony. An English Merinita inscribes the rune of Spiritual Water around a tree to draw out a dryad. And a German Verditius chants the 10 Orders of the Blessed and the 10 Spheres of the World to infuse a ring with purifying powers. Ex Miscellanea has almost as many styles as it has members.

Goals: Miscellaneous, of course. This House harbors young radical scholars, fervent Rosicrucians and leftist philosophers who fight their battles with pen and ink. The only goals they all hold in common are following their own praxes and preserving Ex Miscellanea's rights within the Order.

Organization: The Miscellany has no formal governing body and does not meet regularly. Like-minded groups within the House form Covenants or cabals, each with its own rules and regulations. Leaders of these groups can, with difficulty, gather the entire House to defend its rights within the Order.

Miskers communicate efficiently through an informal but very serious "grapevine," using telepathy, spirit messengers, and mundane means such as phones and Internet mailing lists. Other Hermetics may contact any or all "misk mages" through the Personnel Division... if they've got to time to wait.

Initiation: Haphazard. Individual miskers sometimes recruit their own apprentices, hut most simply take students assigned to them by Personnel.

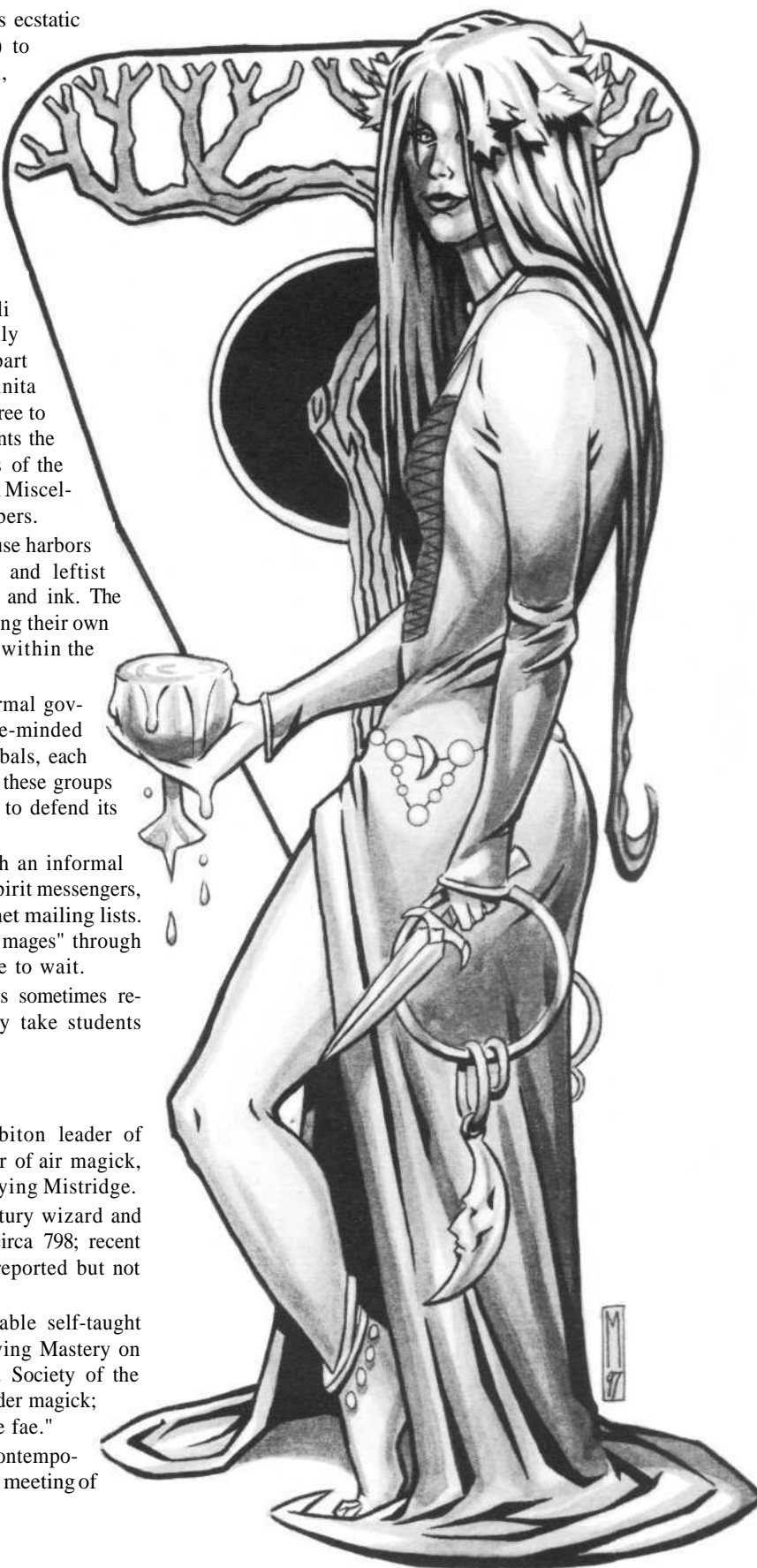
NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Grimgroth (??-1210):** Notable Jerbiton leader of Mistridge Covenant in the Mythic Age. Master of air magick, especially nautical air knots. Killed after betraying Mistridge.

- **Merinita (752-798?):** Mighty 8th-century wizard and founder of her eponymous House. Vanished circa 798; recent sightings of Merinita in England have been reported but not confirmed.

- **Virgil Endrina (born 1410):** Remarkable self-taught mage who joined House Merinita after achieving Mastery on his own. Now leads the small but respected Society of the Esoteric Answer in Doissetep. Expert on Marauder magick; sometimes called "unofficial ambassador to the fae."

- **Geoffrey Twidmarch (born 1922):** Contemporary Merinita historian who recently attended a meeting of mages and changelings in Great Britain.



HOUSE FLAMBEAU

Names: *House Ignis, Flame mages, Apromorians, Nukes* (joking)

If the Traditions could be said to have a nuclear weapons stockpile, it would be House Flambeau. Born from Crusader flames in medieval Europe, Ignis retains its warlike passions to this day. Modern Flame mages bow stiffly to the threat of Paradox by practicing a subtler style of magick than their predecessors, but they still threaten the Technocracy with "Vis" (Essentia) and Materia magick and, just as importantly, with unexcelled tactical cunning. Sent to trouble spots by Tytalus strategists or Quaesitor judges, Flambeau mages form the Order's strike team, its thin red line of defense.

Flambeau himself was a mysterious figure even in his own short, brilliant life (760?-843). He probably belonged to the Christian nobility on the Iberian peninsula. Together with his teacher (whom Flambeau never named, a bizarre and inexplicable omission), Flambeau waged war against Moorish magi. When he lost his master and family to the Moors, Flambeau turned his fire magick against other wizards, incinerating almost 50 fellow magicians before Maga Trianoma convinced him to join the Order of Hermes. He formed his own House, dedicated to the study of fire and destruction, and recruited many followers before immolating himself in an apparent accident.

Originally, Flambeau mages fell into two types: the volatile and the vengeful. This division originated with the founder's first two apprentices, Lucinda and Apromor. After the 17th century, volatile "Lucindan" fire mages who ignored Paradox tended to blow themselves (and their allies) to bits. Today, the more careful, persevering "Apromorian" mages, who practice tactics and plot delayed revenge, dominate House Flambeau.

Philosophy: Flambeau preserves one of the lesser tributary streams of Hermetic thought, Persian Zoroastrianism. (In the Sleeping world, this philosophy survives among the Parsees of northern India, but Flambeau espouses an older, Westernized set of ideas, and Parsee influence on the House is negligible.) In the sharply dualistic Zoroastrian outlook, forces of good (light/fire/inspiration) struggle constantly against evil (darkness/cold/reason).

The Flambeau mage customarily adopts as his Word the name of a Persian god who embodies the mage's chosen goals: Ahuramazda, the Lord of Wisdom; the *Amesha Spentas*, or Immortal Holy Ones; or Atar, the genius of fire.

Through his praxis, the mage aspires to incarnate the chosen god within himself. This union with divinity represents the Flambeau's Ascension.



Style: Flambeau mages harness elemental spirits and the flames of Ignis (the House term for Ars Essentiae, or Forces). In their Sancta, they perform elaborate ceremonies of binding, shackling elementals in carnelian-studded rods and pendants hung with fat heliotropes. In the field, they release these forces with an eye toward coincidental effect. Exploding gas mains, malfunctioning microwave ovens and passing dynamite trucks — the best Flame mages move quickly beyond these elementary stratagems. By employing nearby objects — water heaters, paint fumes and even aerosol cans — these one-time shock troops have become devious arsonists.

Widely traveled, Flambeaumembers pick up elements from many magickal styles. The more exotic, the better. One Canadian Flambeau found herself plagued by a troublesome hobgoblin, a steam imp. To get rid of it, she daubed red paint on her earlobes and performed a Punjabi fire dance. She had to apply cold compresses to her steam bums for weeks afterward, but she vanquished the hobgoblin.

Goals: Flambeau's goals magnify the rest of the Order's: They want revenge on the Technocracy, and they want it now! During the so-called Age of Reason, Technocratic forebears hit House Flambeau first and hardest. Flambeau, whose style had until then relied on vulgar pyrotechnic displays, and whose character couldn't easily admit defeat, literally went up in flames. In 1585, Flambeau mages of Covenant Vapeur hurled themselves against the walls of The Mitternacht Construct, incinerating themselves as magickal oil spilled from ramparts and clung to their skin. Peasants mistook the burning mages for demons howling with unholy glee, and that night assaulted the remaining Flambeau in their Sancta.

The few Flambeau who survived vowed revenge on all Reason mages. Today, the House requires a solemn oath from each initiate to assist wholeheartedly in the Ascension War. Most would love to destroy the current paradigm so they can go back to using fireballs; as we know, they remain unsuccessful at present. Perhaps this is fortunate.

Organization: House Flambeau harbors many of the Order's most competitive mages, second only to Tytalus. To advance within one of their six major cabals, House initiates rely on frequent certamen challenges and a chauvinistic "old boy's network." Female mages have a hard time breaking the glass

ceiling on advancement -- though one, Master Ananiya Divraniya, has risen to leadership of the House. She rides herd on five other recalcitrant councilors, the cahal leaders, and her fellow Primi by force of personality, wit and destructive power.

Most councilors gain office not through leadership skill, but through political pull and devastating explosions. Their headlong strategies, however, make Flambeau easy to manipulate. Since most Apromorians follow a loyal "do or die" code, other, more Machiavellian fellows find them useful weapons; hence, the nickname "Tactical Nukes." Rough and aggressive by Hermetic standards, many Flambeau mages follow their founder's example. By preference, they meet in Horizon Realms, where they can blow up houses or incinerate trees as the fancy strikes them.

Initiation: Personnel forwards nearly a third of all candidate apprentices to Flambeau, because the House runs through them at an appalling rate. Likely candidates are firefighters (job security!), demolition experts, soldiers and physicists.

In the initiation trial (always an individual mission), the apprentice must subvert or demolish a minor Technocratic operation. Success is measured less in annihilation than in courage, creativity and discretion.

Once initiated, Flame mages tend to have brief, though spectacular, careers.



NOTABLE FIGURES

- **William Castille (1427-1449):** Headstrong hut talented Adept; he immolated himself in the Craftmasons' ammunition store during second battle of Mistridge, causing major Reasoner casualties. Held up as an example of Flambeau dedication (among other things...).

- **Porthos Fitz-Empress (born 1410):** Archmage, leader of Drua'shi (Seekers of Truth) cabal and of Chantry Doissetep; by common consent, the most powerful Tradition mage active today.

- **Ananiya Divraniya (born 1945):** Master, leader of the House and of the Order of Sanguine Souls in Horizon, a militaristic cabal dedicated to the Technocracy's destruction. Rumored to have been a top operative in the Soviet government. Holds doctoral degrees in nuclear physics and applied mathematics. Speaks 10 languages.

- **Mack Freeman (born 1960):** Adept, young and impassioned leader of the Society of the Case-Hardened Soul cabal in Doissetep.

HOUSE FORTUNAE

Names: *Fati, Fortune mages, House of Luck, Numismancers, Arithmosophists, Numerologists*

Masters of fortune in all its senses, members of House Fortuna analyze the magick of probability, luck and money. Because they travel in Sleeper society far more than most other Hermetics do, Fortune mages have become the chief recruiters of new pupils for the entire Order.

Qabbalists of Ex Miscellanea founded a Fortuna group in 1910; in the '20s, they propagated a new Pythagorean movement among Sleeper mathematicians; this project flourished for a decade, and well-respected scientists publicized the group's ideas in a series of debates. Because of this success, the Grand Tribunal of 1936 formally admitted Fortuna as a full-fledged House. Since then, the group's original Qabbalistic philosophy has broadened to encompass the esoteric aspects of advanced mathematics.

Fortuna mages don't rely on luck; they manipulate it. Probability is their business and they employ a profound understanding of quantum theory, mathematics, gematria, numismancy, arithmosophy and numerology. Though most Hermetics consider respect for Technocrats to be bad form, Fati often quote a medieval Master of Reason, Roger Bacon: "Divine mathematics can purge the intellect and fit the student for the acquisition of all knowledge."

Every Fortune mage knows that the concept of money, which reduces much of existence to crass and banal avarice, nonetheless is itself magickal. After all, money profoundly shapes every Sleeper's life, yet it does not actually exist. People accept paper (valueless in itself) for their goods and services, because they know other people will accept it too. A phantom idea transforms reality: magick! Fortuna understands the true power of money better than anyone in the Traditions — than anyone in the world, for that matter, save their bitter enemy, the Syndicate. On a practical level, it's always good to have a Fortuna friend. She'll have a wonderful talent for closing that elevator door just as a Technomancer enters the lobby, or for finding the grenade pin you just dropped in the trash can.

Philosophy: Qabbalists believe God has given humanity a fixed place within His celestial hierarchy, along with stewardship over a small portion of the universe: numbers. Interpreting

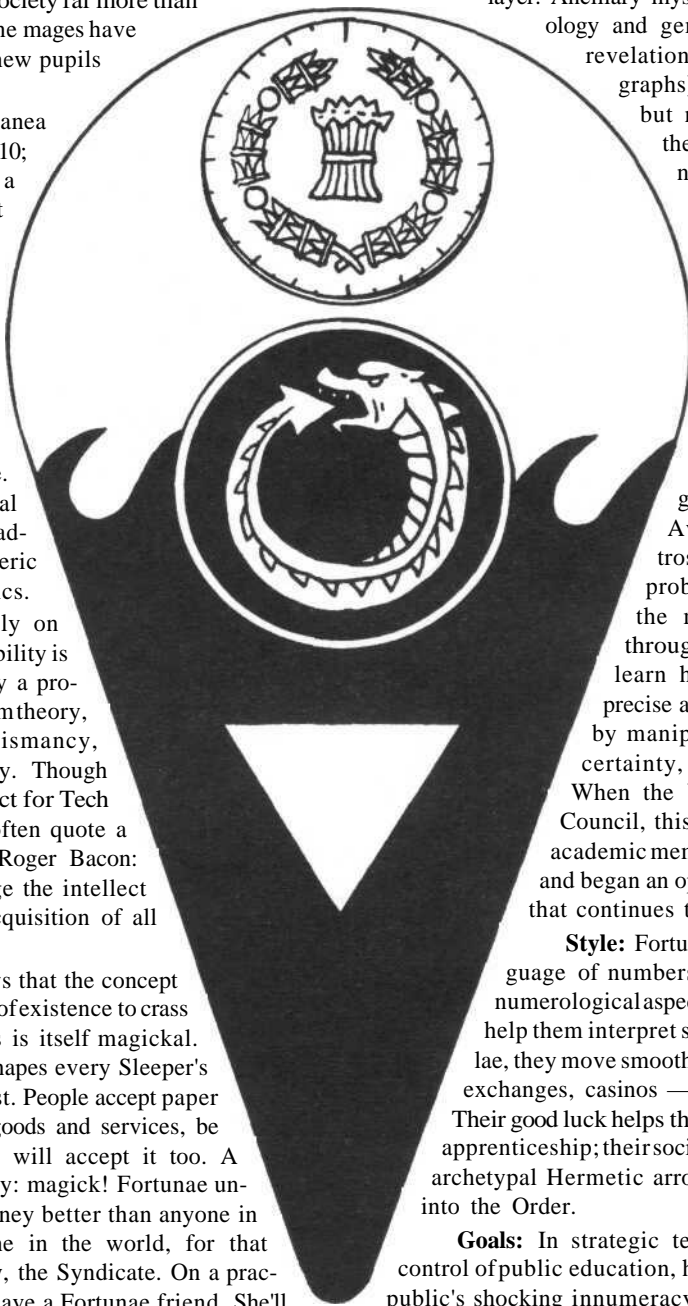
Talmudic and Biblical passages by word and number, these devoted scholars discern double and even triple meanings. By manipulating these findings, Qabbalists uncover still deeper meanings and peel back the mysteries of the universe, layer by layer. Ancillary mystick sciences, such as numerology and gematria (the study of divine revelation through numerical cryptographs), are their bread and butter, but new mathematics and chaos theory provide endless opportunities for study.

Many modern Fati ignore the Qabbalistic ideas that inspired the House. They find guidance in the profundities of modern mathematics: transfinite and transcendental numbers, fractals, cellular automata, high-entropy Prigoginic structures and game theory. Guided by their Avatars, math-minded Fati introspect intensely on these "hard problems," seeking proofs within the mind's reality rather than through objective testing. They learn how to make the one more precise as the other grows inaccurate; by manipulating this irreducible uncertainty, they engineer "lucky" results. When the Virtual Adepts entered the Council, this House embraced their more academic members, citing common ground, and began an open trade of respect and ideas that continues today.

Style: Fortune mages work with the language of numbers, and with Enochian in its numerological aspects. Carrying instruments that help them interpret symbols and calculate formulae, they move smoothly in university mixers, stock exchanges, casinos — in fact, nearly everywhere. Their good luck helps them spot likely candidates for apprenticeship; their social skills, so different from the archetypal Hermetic arrogance, help lure candidates into the Order.

Goals: In strategic terms, House Fortuna seeks control of public education, hoping to correct the Sleeping public's shocking innumeracy. One can hardly say they're near this goal, but they have infiltrated some research institutions. Within the Order, Fortuna plans a more aggressive recruitment of apprentices; they may soon begin liberating young students from Technocratic Constructs.

One Fortune mage (who will remain anonymous) claims his House aspires to break with the Order, form its own Tradi-



tion and take control of the Council Seat of Entropy. Fortunaes (says this mage) views the Euthanatos Tradition as an aberrant band of Nephandi-in-training who represent no authentic historical tradition (with a lower-case "t") of magick. "What are they?" he asks. "Thuggee cultists? Hashishim? Oh, please!" Despite this sentiment, some Fati befriend certain Euthanatos who seem more concerned with Fate than with body counts.

Organization: Fortunaes formerly practiced a rigid seniority system, a legacy of Qabbalistic practice. But a new generation of Fati Adepts, though paying lip service to the elder Masters, has introduced a *de facto* meritocracy. Those who publish the most brilliant mathematical proofs attain high status within the House. As a consequence, they acquire prestigious quarters within the House's Covenants, which almost all stand near major universities worldwide. Highly regarded Fortune mages also receive invitations to lecture at other Covenants. Celebrity among this microscopic elect does not, in itself, make one rich, but the House's mastery of fortune often does.

The older generation maintains its lines of communication through the Personnel Division and, in emergencies, through elaborate Correspondence rites. Young Fati talk over the Internet, encoding their conversations and e-mail with advanced cryptographic algorithms that baffle anyone short of a Virtual Adept.

Initiation: In their ceaseless search for recruits — or, rather, in their constant fortunate discovery of likely candidates — Fortunaes earmark mathematicians and physicists for their own House. As in other Houses, candidates must pass many rigorous tests of intellect and philosophy; Fortunaes is unusual in that candidates may progress at their own pace. At the end of her training, an apprentice must decipher a cryptogram that ordinarily requires years to solve. The candidate must manipulate the probability that she will guess its meaning correctly.

NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Proclus (circa 410-485 BCE):** Proto-Fortunaes magus, born in Constantinople, educated in Alexandria and Athens; became head of Plato's Academy, 385 BCE. Controlled elementals using arithmosophy (number magick). Influenced many schools of arithmosophical thought in the centuries after his death.

- **Hassam al-Jadidi ibnu Faridi (1885-1983?):** Saudi mathematician, mage of Ex Miscellanea; founder and first Primus of Fortunaes; responsible for the rise of Neo-Pythagoreanism and the 1937 debates. Retired 1944; given to long absences at intervals thereafter; not seen since 1983, but not believed dead.

- **Stephen Landon Masters (born 1944):** Cambridge mathematician, current Fortunaes Primus.

- **Marianne Walking Cloud (born 1963):** Navajo cryptographer; combined a love of mathematics with her native language to create security codes that protect Sleeper and Hermetic institutions. Also considered an honorary Virtual Adept.



HOUSE JANISSARY

Names: *Ianusari, Janissaries, Jassassins* (don't use this around them...)

The Traditions are surrounded by enemies; the Order of Hermes is, in the opinion of some, surrounded by hostile Traditions; each House tries to avoid being politically out-manuevered by rival Houses; each Covenant within a House competes for resources and for the favor of its Primus; as for the cabals within a Covenant, their relations are left as an exercise to the reader. In this atmosphere of pervasive suspicion, Hermetics place high priority on internal security. House Janissary fulfills this role with vigor, competence and more than a little paranoia.

In Sleeper histories, the original janissaries (uncapitalized) were elite guards of the Ottoman Turkish sultans. The Turks recruited most janissaries by force, seizing male children from their Christian enemies, then raising them as loyal Islamic warriors. Feared for their valor and unshakable loyalty, the janissaries eventually assumed political power within the sultans' palaces.

One of these influential guards was Dincer Albayrak; Awakening as an Orphan in his early 20s, Dincer escaped with several fellow guards and fled to his homeland. His companions became his consors, and in the following decade they traveled central Eurasia in search of other mages. Dincer found several, primarily Hermetics and Batini — the sole survivors of cabals destroyed by the Order of Reason. In 1733, these mages formally united under Dincer's leadership as the Janissaries (capitalized), a secret cabal opposed to Technocratic dominion. The group rescued others within the sultans' domains, Dincer's one-time companions, and employed them as teachers of battle tactics and military skills. The group's successes against the Order of Reason drew attention from the Traditions. After Dincer's followers defeated the Uludag Construct in Turkey (1716), the Order of Hermes extended them a formal offer of membership in Ex Miscellanea. Dincer accepted gladly, thrilled to belong to the august Tradition.

Though cunning and powerful, Dincer remained unfamiliar with Hermetic philosophy. Still, he modeled his group's organization on the Houses, and encouraged his followers to practice Hermetic ideals. To this end, he located a promising Bedouin boy, Caeron Mustai, and trained him as an apprentice. Student soon surpassed teacher. A first-class Hermetic who attained Mastery in barely a decade, Mustai became the group's leader in all but name. He masterminded several

dramatic successes against the enemy and showed political will that matched his military skill. In 1764, he succeeded in promoting his mentor's small group into the full-fledged House Janissary.

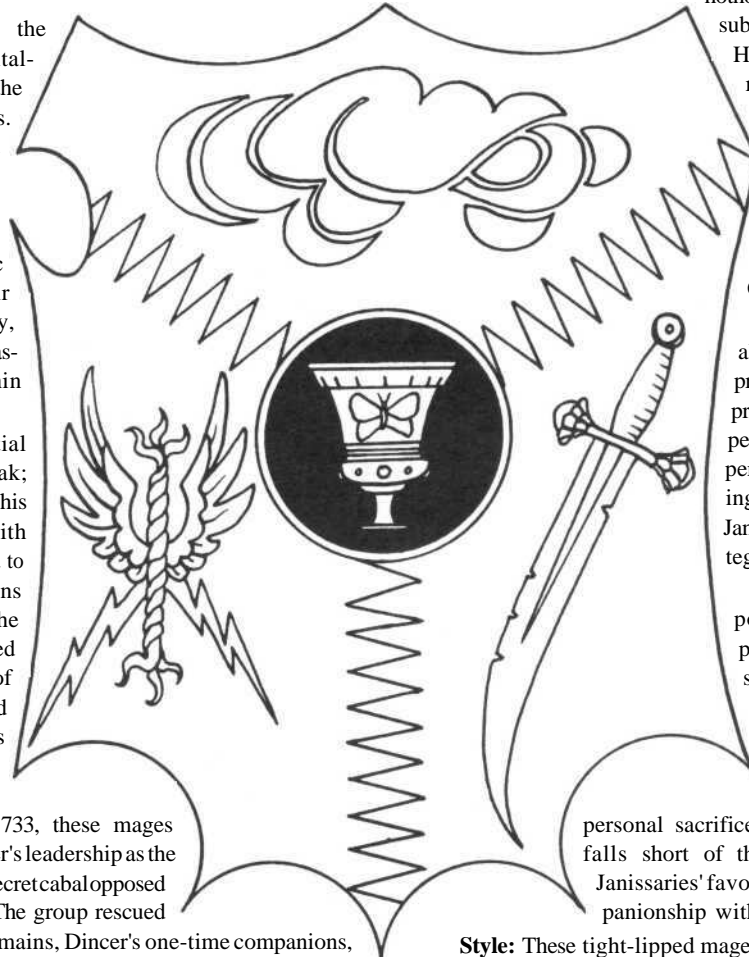
Dincer loved life as a Primus. Though he showed no interest in enlarging the House's size beyond his tiny cabal, he carried out his duties loyally and skillfully until his unexpected disappearance in 1822. Mustai took on the House's leadership unchallenged, and soon he began to change its role in the Order, cultivating friends in House Quaesitor as diligently as he tends the orchids in his Doissetep hothouses. Claiming he'd discovered subversion within the Order of Hermes, he set his followers to rooting out infiltrators. They found several, and their success was Mustai's success. Though they have never been given formal responsibilities — at least not publicly — the Janissaries have become the Order's *de facto* secret police.

Philosophy: Secretive in all things, the Janissaries openly profess only the necessity of safe praxis. A Hermetic who seeks to perfect herself, they say, requires a perfected environment. By rooting out spies and dissidents, the Janissaries work to protect the integrity and perfection of the Order.

Individual Janissaries espouse various personal philosophies, similar to (and, say their detractors, derivative of) Quaesitor doctrine. This outlook requires the mage to uphold the highest possible standards of discipline and personal sacrifice, and to avoid anyone who falls short of these standards. One of the Janissaries' favorite sayings: "There is no companionship with a fool."

Style: These tight-lipped mages prefer to conceal their abilities. What others attempt with magick, Janissaries accomplish through allies, dupes, smooth talk and their formidable reputation. When forced into open display of magickal skill, they perform it quickly and without ceremony, like an aikido master throwing an opponent. On these rare occasions, they show consummate skill with Mind, Forces and Spirit magick. It's said that Mustai himself has bound Umbrood allies to his service; the truth behind those rumors is unclear.

Goals: With official approval from the Quaesitors, members of House Janissary visit each Covenant in the Order. There, they follow irregular schedules, observe their quarries from a distance, then drop in for surprise revelations of "disloyalty." A Quaesitor soon arrives to hear the case and punish the offender. This... diligence... in pursuit of their duty makes Janissaries unpopular within the Order; still, their power does compel respect.



Apart from policing their peers, the Janissaries' expressed goals include toppling several NWO Regional Headquarters. In the meantime, they settle for weakening the Convention's outposts. Detractors insinuate that the Janissaries coerce Orphans and non-Hermetic Tradition mages into service as their expendable soldiers and spies. If this accusation is true, the practice (forbidden in Doissetep) would draw stem punishment from the Covenant's Deacons, and possibly even from a Tribunal.

Organization: In theory, the House comprises only a small cabal in Doissetep and a few anonymous free agents. Rumor, however, insists that several mages or censors in every House pledge secret fealty to this one.

Caeron Mustai leads and the rest follow: The Janissaries (at least the Doissetep cabal) are essentially a dictatorship. Outside the supreme Chantry, individual agents apparently pursue their own agendas, with advice and approval from Mustai's underlings.

Initiation: The Janissaries accept apprentices from secret political organizations in the Sleeping world; the length and details of the initiation process are unknown outside the House.

NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Dincer Albayrak (1682-1822?):** Formed the Janissaries in the early 1700s. Though he never mastered the full range of Hermetic scholarship, Albayrak had tremendous magickal gifts and a potent Avatar. His command of the Art grew until the early 1800s, when he mysteriously disappeared while taking his student, Caeron Mustai, on a visit to the Regnum Essentiae.

- **Caeron Mustai (born 1785?):** Current Primus of the Janissaries. Elegant, self-aware and eternally ambitious, Mustai is a rising power within Doissetep. He occasionally expresses his disappointment at the Covenant's "lack of aggressive thinking" and wants to carry the Ascension War directly to the Technocracy.

- **Robin Herod (born 1939):** A former Verbena, Robin joined the Order two years ago. Since then, he has established himself as a consummate diplomat, especially with other Traditions.

- **Geneva Bye (born 1960):** The only other Master in the House. Her beauty, skill and ruthlessness make her useful in Mustai's many plans. Just as often, however, she seems to have plans of her own.



HOUSE QAESITOR

Names: *Quaesitors, Judges, Praetor(e)s, Magistrati, House of Judges, Ma'ati* (archaic), *Bulldogs* (slang)

The Quaesitors do not actually run the Order of Hermes, but they decide who does. They cannot enact their own desires unopposed, but can prevent others from doing so. In a Tradition concerned above all with power, House Quaesitor commands one of the greatest powers: that of judgment. Magistrati are the Order's lawyers and judges, masters of the arcane codes and regulations of this most arcane Tradition. And they take that legacy seriously.

Every Hermetic Covenant falls under a Quaesitor's jurisdiction; she oversees its Tribunals, judges internal disputes and interprets the Code of Hermes. The Quaesitor does not usually reside on site, but lives within a day's journey. In emergencies, she can reach the Covenant at once using *Ars Conjunctionis*. If need be, she's both judge and executioner: Many Quaesitors command powerful destructive magicks. The dreaded *Gilgul Rite*, which shreds the victim's Avatar, is a Quaesitor invention and remains its province to dispense.

House Quaesitor's official name (never used in practice) is *Guernicus*, after the sardonic magus who founded it. When Magus Trianoma organized the Houses, Guernicus claimed the whole thing would soon collapse from infighting. Eventually, Trianoma convinced Guernicus to establish a House to enforce the Order's laws. For centuries, the House was well-respected by most, feared by others (who sometimes whispered the word "Inquisition"), but it did its job—with occasional missteps.

When House Tremere maneuvered to destroy House Diedne during the Schism War (1003-12 CE), Quaesitor rallied to the questionable side. Other accusations include the "Duresca scrolls" affair. These documents, purportedly by Guernicus, outlined a plan to dominate the Order and then the world. In

940, the Quaesitors (to no one's surprise) ruled that the scrolls were fraudulent and burned them. Ashamed to this day by these scandals, modern Quaesitors strive for vigilance and fairness.

Philosophy: Quaesitors regard the Tellurian's physical laws, Hermetic ritual and the Code of Hermes alike as manifestations of divine order. The universe is fundamentally just. The law represents an ideal attunement to the cosmos, to which imperfect mortals cleave in varying degrees. If the law changes, it reflects a change in the cosmos or a mistake by the mortals interpreting it.

Style: Quaesitors use *Ars Conjunctionis* to catch suspects (although they often employ Flambeau mages to do the actual dirty work) and *Ars Mentis* to read their motivations. Their instruments include blindfolds, scales (of justice), gavels, handcuffs and iron bars.

The House advises its members to avoid "entanglements" such as marriage or children; such relationships leave a mage open to blackmail or worse. Few Quaesitors keep so much as a familiar. It's a lonely lot.

To offset that loneliness, perhaps, the Judges specialize in group magick. The fearsome *Gilgul Rite*, performed by six Masters together, is their trademark. Another spell, the Oath of Truth, is a Hermetic version of the ancient *geas*. The victim must take or avoid a stated action, on pain of death. In

1593, a Quaesitor Tribunal compelled Duke Cornelius de Houtmann to take this Oath, in punishment for destroying a Talisman belonging to the visiting Sultan of Kashan. De Houtmann was sentenced to locate the fabled Jeweled Moon of Pejeng and bring it to the Judges, who would give it to the Sultan in a public ceremony. Sailing to the Moluccas, de Houtmann found the Moon but refused to deliver it to the Quaesitors; thus, he died in agony. No one knows why he kept the Jeweled Moon, nor what became of it.

Goals: House Quaesitor maintains order in the Order, and roots out corruption in the Tradition — and, increasingly,





beyond it. In their vigorous search for Technocratic spies, Quaesitors often reach across the boundaries between our Order and other Traditions. Sometimes their vision blurs.

In one recent case, an unnamed initiate of House Thig, while reconnoitering an Iteration X Construct, claimed evidence of treason among the Virtual Adepts. As per protocol, the mage reported this to House Quaesitor. That same protocol required the Judges to pass along the evidence to their contact among the Adepts. Ensuing events vary according to the source, but all agree that a Praetor of House Quaesitor and a strike team of Flambeau mages were present when the studio apartment belonging to Virtual Adept Bowzer Wowzer burned down. Wowzer (who was later cleared of all charges) challenged the Quaesitor to a flame war in the Digital Web; the Judge issued a certamen challenge in response. The entire issue of cross-Tradition justice promises to make the next Grand Tribunal... interesting.

Organization: The House recognizes three grades of seniority. Initiates hold the position of *Quaesitor*; each administers one or more Covenants. Members of Adept degree are formally known as Praetors; they usually oversee three or four Quaesitors. Seven Magistrati serve as the House's Supreme Tribunal and court of last appeal for all Quaesitor verdicts. When a Seat on this Tribunal opens, the Praetors elect a new Magistratus from their number.

The principal Quaestor Covenant is a courthouse in Stuttgart, Germany. There the Magistrati meet monthly to resolve House business, swear in initiates, and execute capital sentences.

Initiation: The House recruits apprentices from the mundane legal system. The ideal candidate shows profound insight, studious habits and a talent for well-founded decisions.

Apprentices usually train and study Hermetic law for seven years. For the centuries-old test of initiation, "The Gavel," the student is locked in an airtight room for three days with law books but without food or water. There, she must answer 100 essay questions describing hypothetical situations of ambiguous morality. A Praetor judges all essays. Students who miss even one question must train for another year. Students who answer all questions adequately become initiates and begin learning the House's famed (and feared) group rituals.

NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Guernicus (730-1066):** Founder of the Quaesitors and discoverer of Gilgul.

- **Parethis of Ephesus (?-1736):** 18th-century Quaesitor martyr who provided crucial information to the Council of Nine in 1736, leading to the unseating of the Janissaries in Horizon. Unpopular with the Janissaries upon their return, Parethis died mysteriously a few months later.

- **Louis Du Monte (1400-1470):** Representative to the First Cabal; though he opposed uniting all Houses into a single Order, Master DuMonte provided an even hand for his companions. Killed while fighting at Narbonne.

- **Anna "Annie Sisyphus" Hardwyck (born 1963):** Crusader leading the movement to update Hermetic codes into a more modern format and interpretation.

HOUSE SHAEA

Names: *Shaea, Serket, Sesmu, Seshati, House of Seshat, House of the Crescent Moon*

Both the youngest and oldest House, Shaea embraces many opposites. Its history stretches back to the ancient Thothian cult. In the Order, the cult's founder, Djhowtey, gets all the attention, but an equally interesting offshoot was long ignored: the Cult of Seshat, wife of Djhowtey and goddess of writing. Two thousand years before the Common Era, Kemit literature venerated her as "She who is Foremost in the House of Books." Today her House, composed mainly of women, continues her mission.

The Seshati fulfill a neglected but vital (and subtly powerful) function: They are the Order's historians, the guardians of writing as magick, Logos, creation, civilization and knowledge. Fluent in all major languages, living and dead, in all dialects, in all scripts, they keep records, make books, bind scrolls. Most important, the Seshati master our Order's secret language: Enochian.

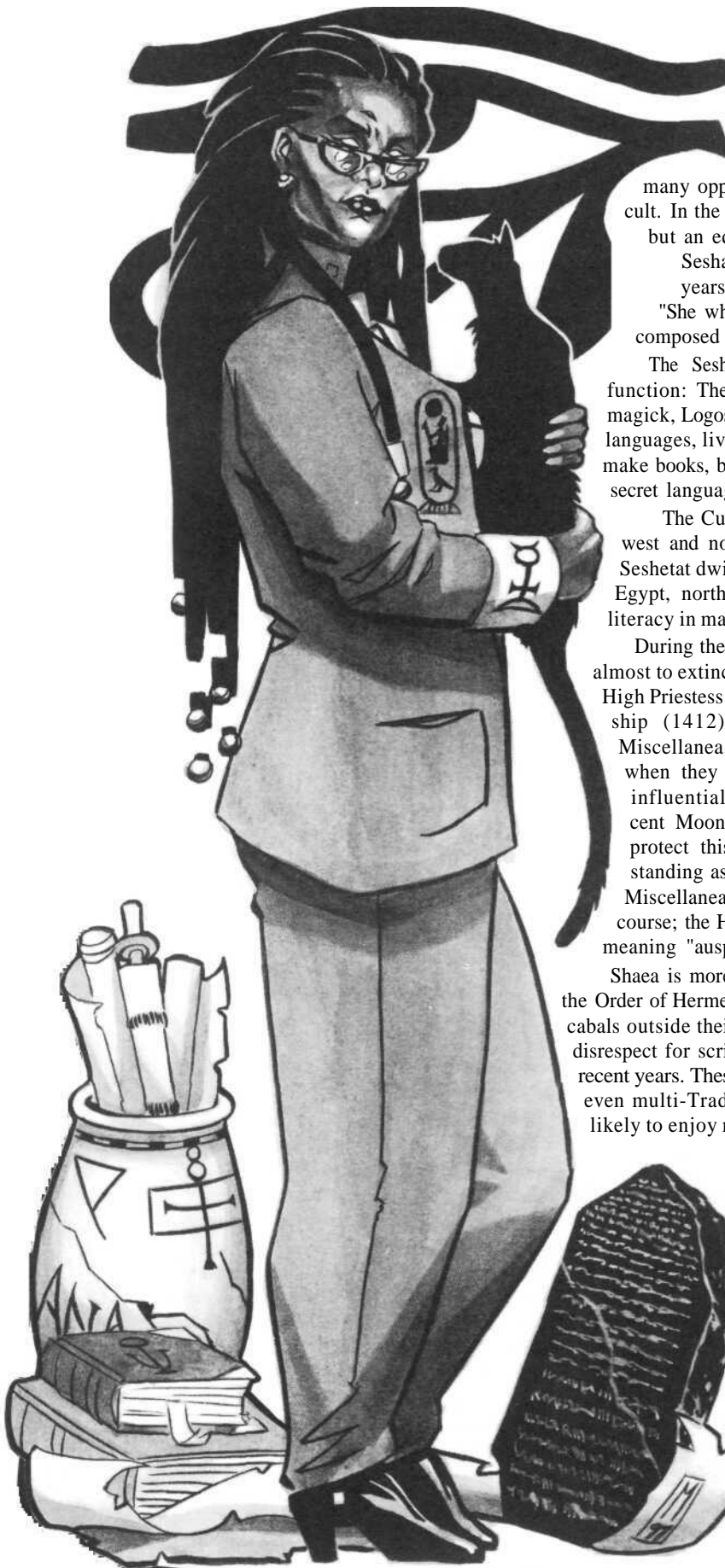
The Cult of Seshat grew into a religion called *Seshetat* that spread west and northwest from ancient Egypt. After Christianity arrived, Seshetat dwindled into an arcane mystickal order, the Seshati, based in Egypt, northern Africa and Turkey. In later centuries, they taught literacy in many different cultures and wrote influential occult histories.

During the Crusades and later witch trials, the Seshati were persecuted almost to extinction by Christians and Muslims alike. Seeking protection, High Priestess Fatima Baijani of Sesmu petitioned the Order for membership (1412). The Council granted the Seshati protection in Ex Miscellanea, but the relationship was notably standoffish until 1982, when they finally decided to break away from the Order. Many influential Hermetics, however, had grown dependent on the Crescent Moon for its linguistic expertise and historical research. To protect this resource, the Order formally offered the Seshati full standing as a House, a move which angered many other Houses in Ex Miscellanea and remains a sore point today. The Seshati accepted, of course; the House name, Shaea, derives from an ancient Egyptian term meaning "auspice."

Shaea is more mystickal and secretive than many other Houses, and in the Order of Hermes that says a lot. Historically, Seshati have rarely joined cabals outside their own tight-knit group. This insularity, fueled by outside disrespect for scribes in general and women in particular, has subsided in recent years. These days, adventurous Shaea initiates join multi-House and even multi-Tradition cabals, supposedly to gather information, but more likely to enjoy respites from study.

Philosophy: The Shaea value many polarities: intuition and reason, impermanence and permanence, the passive and the powerfully aggressive. To a Seshati, the only way to understand the Tellurian's polarities is to understand herself as part of them, as a link that she can follow up the chain of power to the gods. Thus, a Seshati's Name is a derivative of one of God's many names; only the Ascended, as they say, know *all* of God's true Names.

Style: With its ancient Egyptian flavor, the magick of House Seshat emphasizes naming and incantations, usually spoken in Pharaonic Egyptian or Enochian. A language mage's Word describes herself, the essence of her Avatar. It becomes her Name, or one of them; with experience, she discovers other Names, from which



she derives magickal power. As the god Khepera relates in the *Papyrus of Nesi-Amsu*, "I uttered my own Name... and thus I evolved myself out of the primeval matter."

Shaea occasionally bind evil (which they may name Tutu, Apep, Hau-hra, Hemhemti, Qetu, Amam, Saatetta, or Sekhem-hra) to have it serve good. Sometimes they inscribe the air with glowing hieroglyphics, or scribble a name on a small piece of vellum and swallow it, making the name a part of them. Young Seshati also rely heavily on amulets inscribed with protective honorifics in many languages. They're well-known for their affinity with cats, and keep old pacts with the Bubasti Bastet.

On auspicious occasions, when the moon and stars are correctly aligned the Seshati perform magickal ceremonies led by their High Priestess. These ceremonies may involve protection, aggression, initiation or even fertility. Somerites summon the Avatar of Seshat herself, which supposedly appears a black panther with glowing eyes, or as a huge falcon.

Goals: For centuries, the Shaea have hated the Technocracy, which they refer to as *Apep*, after the Egyptian monster. In the Seshati view, Technocrats have failed to pass on the wonders of education, substituting laziness for learning. To counter Apep, these mages encourage school reform or teach Sleepers themselves, opening their eyes to the magick — and the power — of learning. Along the way, they've undermined Technocratic efforts in the National Educational Bureau in Washington and London's Bureau of Educational Reform by exposing scandals — real and invented — among the NWO "reeducaters" stationed there.

Organization: The High Priestess — currently Archmage Maraksha Kashaf — guards the inner Sanctum of the House of Books (called the Hall of Kheseff-hra-khemiu), offers counsel and leads major ceremonies. The Keepers, a rotating group of elders, test the High Priestess every week for signs of corruption; it's vital that she remain loyal to Shaea, for she protects the

sacred genealogies. In turn, the House meets once a month to test the Elder Council.

Within this small House, attitudes toward more inexperienced mages are very open — a point that other Houses might do well to note. Elder mages listen to younger mages attentively and carry their concerns to council meetings with the High Priestess.

Initiation: Shaea are usually female scholars of language, the written arts and Egyptian lore. Apprenticeship lasts years, as would-be mages learn Enochian and at least seven other languages (usually Arabic, Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Latin,

Sanskrit and Farsi).

Recruits learn about Seshat, Egypt, bookbinding, preservation and so forth, and mark initiation by composing a personal Book of Names, lists of Names useful in controlling people and things. To outsiders, these mages seem sedate and worthless; as any Hermetic knows, however, one dares never underestimate the holder of a Name...

NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Isis Samshen (birth and death unknown):** Legendary mystick, founder of the Shaea circa 3500 BCE; her name means "Isis of Eternal Unity."

- **Donatia of Alexandria (368-389):** Sleeper martyr venerated in House histories, consort to the Seshati in Alexandria; burnt alive while heroically rescuing scrolls from the burning Library.

- **Maraksha Kashaf (born 1820?):** Founder of the modern Shaea. Over 170 years old, Kashaf knows 26 languages, has 14 daughters (some on the Elder Council) and has twice prevented "Apep" from destroying the House of Books.

- **Lucian Dark (born 1952?):** Noted scholar; his works on the Verbena, Dreamspeakers and Otherworlds have become standard reference within the Order.



Names: *Thigs, Crucible of Thig, The Children, Hitler Youth* (derogatory)

A young House of techno-Hermetics who channel their Art through modern technology, Thig has rather unexpectedly become the Order's intelligence agency. Though these Ruby Children (so named for their principal cabal) lack raw strength, they have an uncanny ability to divine the Technocracy's goals and movements which makes them invaluable spies... and, unfortunately, objects of suspicion within the Order.

Based in Manchester, England, Thig originated in 1762, founded by Joseph Ryelander, an Adept-level Orphan. After 42 years leading a Sleeper mystery sect based on Hermetic theory, Ryelander applied for membership in the Order under the name "The Ruby Children." At this point, his group comprised only a tiny cabal of occult-oriented Orphans petitioning for protection. The Council stuffed them into Ex Miscellanea and immediately forgot about them.

Over the next century, Ryelander founded two similar cabals, one (Emerald Children) in Providence, Rhode Island, the other (Diamond Children) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The "Children" motif refers to Ryelander's belief that all magicians are children tinkering with the works of God. During the occult revival in late 19th-Century America, both cabals spawned Sleeper chapters that crept gradually across the country.

Meanwhile, the Ruby Children risked themselves on reconnaissance and sabotage missions for their allies the Janissaries — and waded into deep political waters. In 1846, after the Children had uncovered or damaged a dozen covert Technocratic operations, Master Caeron Mustai, bani Janissary, spoke eloquently in their favor at the Grand Tribunal. Thanks to his weighty political support, the Council granted Ryelander's three cabals full recognition as House Thig, an Enochian name that means both "children" and "vengeance." The move sparked outrage among other Ex Miscellanea mages, as House Shaea's promotion would a century later; Thig laid low and waited for their critics to forget.

By the time Ryelander split with his own House in 1877, Thig had lost both American cabals to enemy attacks. The original Ruby Children retreated to Doissetep under the Janissaries' protective wing and became the Order's spies and underground messengers, a role that continues to this day. While reestablishing their lost mystery sects across the United States, the inquisitive Children befriended the early Sons of Ether and Virtual Adepts. When both groups eventually defected, Thig swept Janissary (and later Fortunae) behind the

new Traditions. This move guaranteed House Thig a new lease on life — and the endless gratitude of the Etherites and Adepts. With it, the Children cemented their place as the Hermetic masters of technomagick... a place that grows more valuable each day.

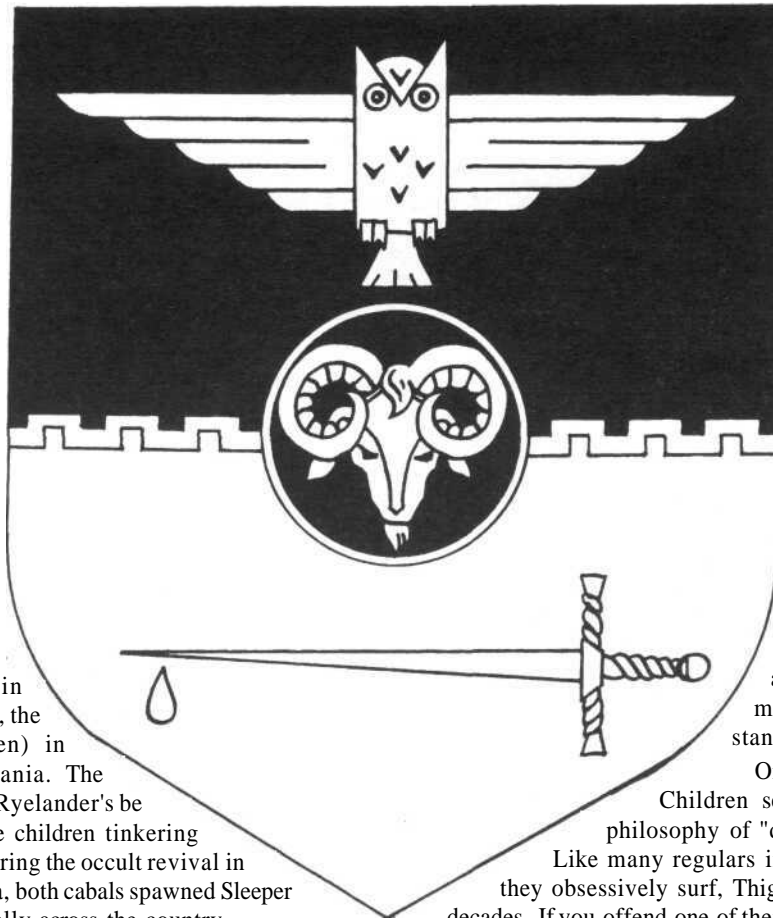
Philosophy: Thigs channel their Arts through modern technology; however, as befits Hermetic doctrine, the Children are less interested in the scientific principles behind these devices than in technology's symbolic role in human society — a significance few Virtual mages or Etherites understand.

On a mundane level, the Children seem to practice a social philosophy of "don't get mad, get even."

Like many regulars in the Usenet newsgroups they obsessively surf, Thigs can carry a grudge for decades. If you offend one of them, be sure that somehow, sooner or later, he'll get you.

Style: Thig magick uses low-level Hermetic formulae, the sort to which the Order of the Golden Dawn aspired. The Children, however, recast these routine workings in modern garb, revealing their deep understanding (and subversion) of Technocratic society. Older Houses still cast magick of Earth, Air, Water and Fire; Thigs prefer the world's modern elements: Cars, Concepts, Plastic and Television.

This understanding isn't merely academic; Thigs understand modern elemental spirits in ways few shamans comprehend. The pacts they've forged with Glass, Steel and Net spirits enable them to keep ties on troublesome rivals —



including, it is said, Hermetic ones. Combining ageless symbols with modern machines, the Children study Artes Mentis and Essentiae like their Janissary counterparts but give old Arts bewildering new directions. Most Thigs find occultism (both real lore and the diluted Sleeper versions) fascinating; the House as a whole maintains a network of Sleeper sects with which it trades mystical secrets.

Goals: Thig's known goals include gaining a seat among the Deacons of Doissetep; the House's young leaders will have to grow peach fuzz first. Adamant enemies of the Technocracy, the Children focus their vengeful hatred on the Technocratic Construct ComNet International (based in Burlington, MA, with offices in London). The source of their grudge is unclear, but seems to involve Avatar experiments on unwilling victims.

Organization: United as they may seem united, Thigs do not operate unanimously. Strong political undercurrents — often generated by House Janissary, the Etherites or Virtual Adepts — tug various cliques this way, then that. These cliques form goals by default rather than by decision. A leader emerges — usually whoever's "coolest," knows the most Janissaries, can recite the most Paracelsus, and has the best complexion. (Unlike the Hollow Ones, Thigs don't fancy themselves tragically hip; rather, they're "nerdy," studious and maniacally focused on learning new magick.) The leader voices his opinion, and the rest of the cabal supports him by default. Note, though, that leadership sometimes changes almost month to month.

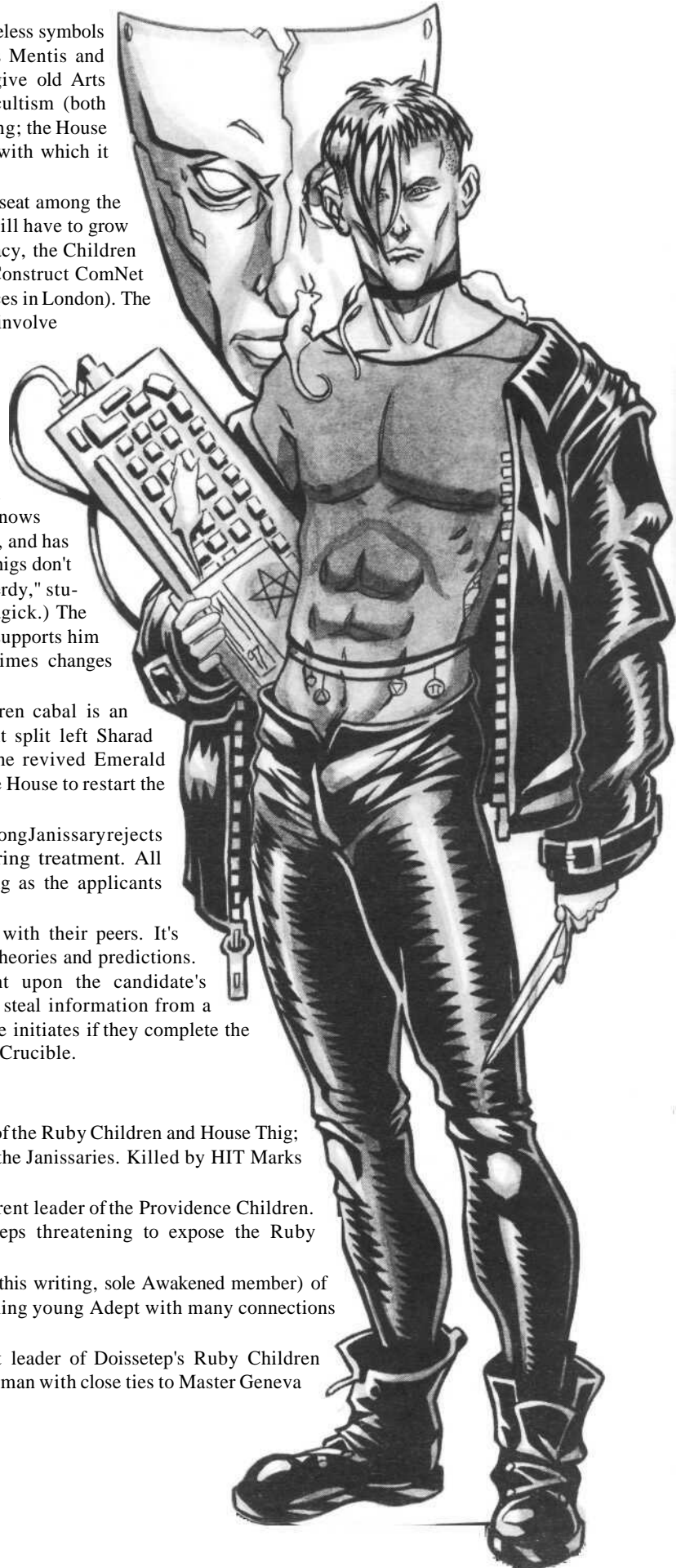
The current head of Doissetep's Ruby Children cabal is an uneasy youth named Altimeas Cowling. A recent split left Sharad Osei, formerly of the Ruby Children, leader of the revived Emerald Children in Providence, while Beulah Frith left the House to restart the Diamonds in Pennsylvania.

Initiation: Thig finds its initiates primarily among Janissary rejects and Technocracy shock patients who Awoke during treatment. All three cabals admit other Tradition mages, so long as the applicants renounce all previous affiliations.

Thig initiates study vigorously to keep up with their peers. It's considered "uncool" not to know the latest occult theories and predictions. After an unspecified time -- highly dependent upon the candidate's sponsor — the candidate undertakes a mission to steal information from a well-guarded Technocratic site. Candidates become initiates if they complete the mission without compromising the secrecy of the Crucible.

NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Joseph Ryelander (1736-1954):** Founder of the Ruby Children and House Thig; later disavowed connections with Thig and joined the Janissaries. Killed by HIT Marks in October, 1954.
- **Sharad Osei (born 1965):** Charismatic current leader of the Providence Children. Some predict he'll soon be assassinated if he keeps threatening to expose the Ruby Children's activities in Doissetep.
- **Beulah Frith (born 1969):** Leader (and, at this writing, sole Awakened member) of Philadelphia's Diamond Children. Secretive, cunning young Adept with many connections among America's minority underclass.
- **Altimeas Cowling (born 1979):** Current leader of Doissetep's Ruby Children cabal. Tightly wound, notoriously vengeful young man with close ties to Master Geneva Bye, bani Janissary.



HOUSE TYTALUS

Names: *Tytalans, Tytali, Followers of Tytalus, Generals, Majordomos, Caesars* (slang), *Red Breeches* (origin obscure)

The most aggressive magus in Mythic Europe, Master Tytalus issued certamen challenges against nearly every willworker he met. He believed in a form of magickal evolution whereby the mage adapts and grows by facing challenges. To an extent, Tytalus's evolutionary theory has influenced the entire Order, but it rules unchallenged (so to speak) in the House that bears his name. Through constant struggle, mages of House Tytalus grow tough and alert, honing their considerable gifts for strategic thinking. These qualities have made the Tytali the natural generals of the Order, the masterminds of our Tradition's war against the Technocracy.

This favor is a recent thing; in the past, Tytal were mainly trouble-makers. In the 10th century, the Order discovered that the Prima and two other leaders of House Tytalus (along with numerous followers) practiced diabolism. The leaders were burned at the stake, and the rest were officially Renounced. That stigma pains them even today; Hermetics don't speak of Tytalan diabolism unless they want a certamen challenge. Another scandal links Tytalus with the *massasa* (vampires) of Tremere. This House opposed Tremere's Interdiction, and opened itself to suspicion by doing so. Master Baldric LaSalle, founder of the Council to which we belong, resisted this trend, but wound up despised as a "weakling" by many fellows of his House, who preferred more warlike ways.

This situation prevailed until Victorian times. Then Master Aram Marangoudakis, a young Tytalan leader — very nearly the *last* young leader the House has seen — persuaded his House to refocus. (Given the Tytalan culture, one may guess his method of "persuasion.") Marangoudakis, a Greek captain before his Awakening, reinterpreted Tytalan doctrine to emphasize challenges not against one's peers, but against the enemy. Given the rise of the Order of Reason, his fellow Tytali agreed. Since then, military strategy has provided them with a focus; their cunning victories saved the

House from dissolution. Today, Tytalus courage and stratagems have won the wary favor of the other Houses.

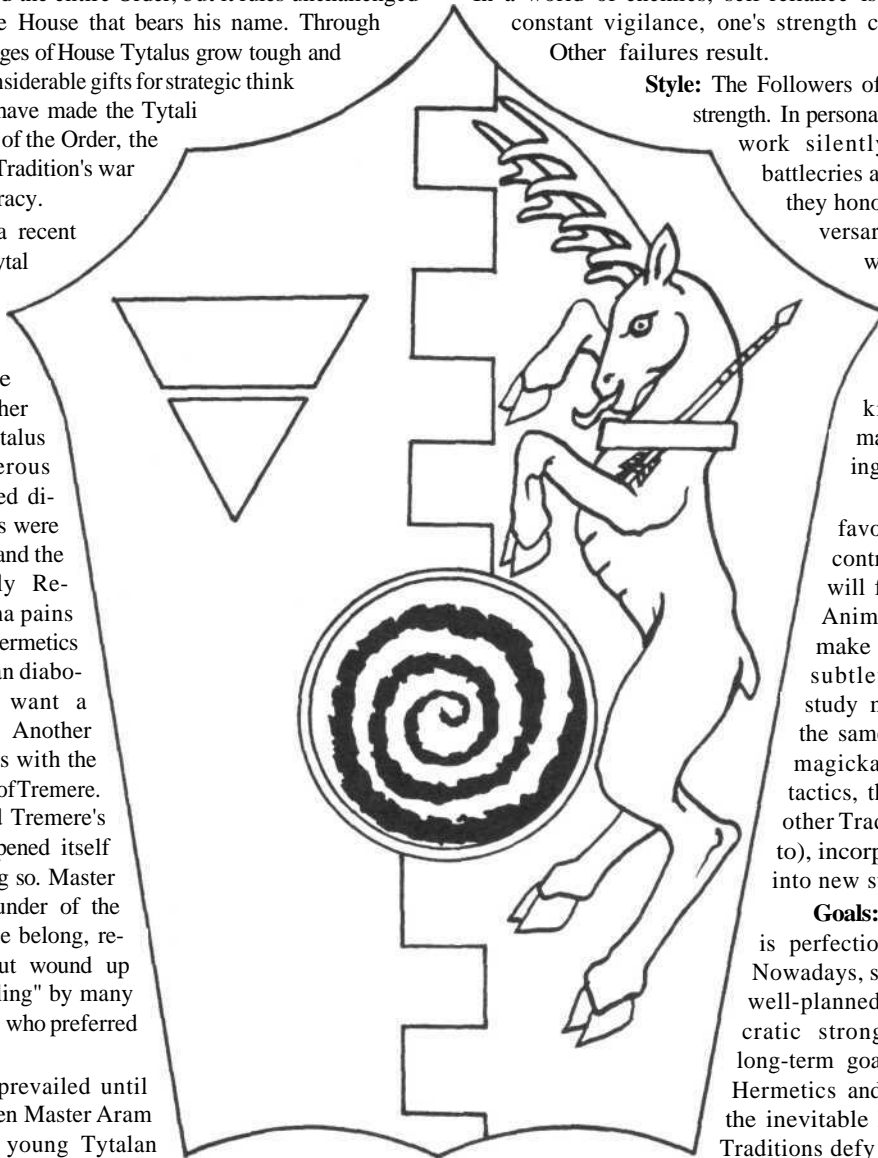
Philosophy: Tytalan doctrine has evolved toward that of the Sleeper philosopher-madman, Friedrich Nietzsche: "That which does not destroy me makes me stronger." Personal Ascension comes only through relentless effort and discipline. In a world of enemies, self-reliance is paramount. Without constant vigilance, one's strength can falter at any time. Other failures result.

Style: The Followers of Tytalus rely on inner strength. In personal combat, they prefer to work silently. Loud chants and battlecries are not for them; rather, they honorably challenge an adversary, flood his thoughts with *Ars Mentis*, then move in physically, shapechanging to grow claws, wings and the like. Tytali favor all kinds of Hermetic magicks, but avoid dealing with spirits.

Ars Mentis is Tytalis' favored Art; if they can control the mind, all else will follow. Naturally, *Vis*, *Anima* and *Essentia* magicks make good backups when subtlety fails. Most Tytali study military doctrine with the same fervor they bring to magickal study. To learn new tactics, they mix freely among other Traditions (when allowed to), incorporating their methods into new strategies.

Goals: The main Tytali goal is perfection through challenge. Nowadays, such challenges involve well-planned assaults on Technocratic strongholds. The House's long-term goal is to prepare other Hermetics and Tradition mages for the inevitable Reckoning, when the Traditions defy the Technocracy (and other rivals) in open combat.

Perhaps this explains why Tytali still associate with *massasa*. Every Hermetic knows the powers of vampiric blood; to a Tytalan, an alliance with the *massasa* provides vital resources. Or perhaps the *massasa* just give them a good challenge. In any case, some Tytalans make open cases for renewed ties with House Tremere. At the moment, such speeches do the House more harm than good.





Organization: Tytalus still commands influence within the Order, and its strategic planning has proven essential to the Ascension War. Still, the House shrinks by the decade as its aging members gradually challenge one another into exhaustion.

The Caesars today consists of a fraternal order of four cabals who call themselves "The Followers of Tytalus." In matters that concern all four cabals, the leaders tally the votes of the entire membership, and the majority wins. One cabal resides in Doissetep, supporting the Drua'shi and maintaining a rivalry with the Covenant's Fraternal Society of Bonisagus. The other three (one in the Tytalan Domus Magnus of Fudarus in Boulogne, France, the others in Bombay and Tehran) support the Doissetep cabal's efforts to undermine the Janissaries. If the Tytali continue to dwindle, a major obstacle to Janissary domination of Doissetep may soon vanish.

Initiation: Tytalus initiates are few nowadays, simply because apprenticeship is so disagreeable. Many drop out because they can't stand the rigors of Tytalan mentorship: their masters test them constantly — in the middle of the night, during meals, when they're making love... nothing is sacrosanct, because "you never know when the enemy will attack."

The first lesson every Tytalus apprentice learns is that if you defeat your master, you can make new rules; the second is that you must challenge your master openly; the third, that you aren't limited to the methods she has taught you. Consequently, experienced initiates seek additional mentors, sometimes outside the House and even outside the Tradition.

A candidate's final test is usually certamen against his master, although some masters pit their students against an Umbrood or captured Technocrat. Nothing is off limits, and the student should expect surprises.

NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Tytalus (740J-807 CE):** Founder of the House. Once, an opponent of the Order, later its most fervent recruiter. Tytalus vanished in 807 CE, when he challenged the Queen of the Faeries in the Maddenhofen Woods (Germany).
- **Baldric LaSalle (1393-1491):** Founder of the Council of Nine Mystick Traditions. Master LaSalle overcame his aggressive nature to unify warring factions — a real challenge, given the hatred between magi, Church and witches. Killed during certamen with another Tytali; buried in Horizon.
- **Getulio Vargas Sao Cristavao (born 1601):** Brazilian Archmage and longtime Council representative. Recently exposed as a spy for the Janissaries (and possibly other parties as well), his position on the Council has been challenged and suspended pending investigation by Quaesitors.
- **Aram Marangoudakis (born 1712):** Greek leader of the Domus Magnus Tytali, member of the Cleisthenic Clinic cabal in Horizon and author of many books, including the House descriptions in this Apprentice Hornbook to which these entries serve as footnotes. Master Marangoudakis played a pivotal role in establishing the recent cross-Tradition Ambassador Program in Horizon when it proved unpopular with the rest of the Order.





FOOTNOTE 4: CONJUNCTIONES EXTERNAE

Use your mind to its full extent and rise from the Earth to Heaven, and then again descend to Earth and combine the powers of what is above and what is below. Thus you will win glory in the whole world, and obscurity will leave you at once.

— Eighth Precept of Hermes Tresmegistus



Is the Apprentice Hornbook an ideal opportunity to present a comprehensive survey of notable mages of other Traditions and the Technocracy, along with extensive descriptions of all currently active Marauders and known Nephandi? You may decide that for yourself after investigating the 1,564 dossiers in Section 4.

Some will rightly admire the Personnel Division's thorough work, yet consider it better suited for occasional reference than for close study. For those students, I offer this brief conspectus on our connections within and outside the magickal community.

THE COUNCIL OF NINE MYSTICK TRADITIONS

To say that our Order coexists in relative amity with our allied willworkers unfortunately strains the truth. We joined with the other eight Traditions to fight our common enemy; yet, on the whole, we have never gone beyond mere expediency to create genuine unity. This task falls to you, the new generation.

Historically, our Order has preferred to approach outsiders — both potential allies and sworn enemies — from a position of strength. This practice is obviously wise, but note that "strength" should not imply "disdain." Too many Hermetics think it does, and have thereby soured our relations with valuable compatriots.

In part, we have good reason to be proud: We remember the Celestial Chorus' treacherous complicity with the Inquisition. Likewise, the Verbena censure us, while we disdain their bloodthirsty ways. As for the Cultists of Ecstasy, we remember the example of Crowley. Though not without enlightenment or skill, such mages lack control of the magicks they unleash.

That said, we have no reason to flaunt our differences with other Council mages — no reason save vanity. Only vanity can justify the loud pronouncements our College instructors make about (for instance) the Dreamspeakers: "Playing in the dirt with spirits does not make a mage!" When their students parrot this opinion to some unoffending shaman... well, we can recall Master Sao Cristavao's 1756 insult and its consequences for an apt example (ref: *Horizon, Dreamspeakers*). Need we alienate

one who may lack scholarship, but who could introduce our members to a dozen Umbrood Preceptors? I think not.

Likewise, any mention around the Covenant of the Virtual Adepts or the Sons of Ether soon leads to that pervasive phrase, "the stink of the Technocracy." This hostile attitude has the stink of short-sighted arrogance. The Order supported the admission of these techno-sorcerers to the Council, and both parties have proven themselves well against our enemies. The Adepts are certainly insolent and the Etherites eccentric, but in this age, we cannot afford to show distaste for fellow warriors.

Nor can doctrinal differences justify rudeness. Our closest compatriots, the Akashic Brothers, though profound scholars of Mens, deny the mage's duty to impose his will upon the world and enact change. Nevertheless, we admire their discipline and focus, and we lose nothing by indicating this.

In the years to come, we must seek more common ground with other Traditions. We have the responsibility to rebuild the universe. With the task so large, spurning friendship with those who share our goals would be folly.

UMBROOD

The entities we often call "gods," "demons," "angels" or "spirits" belong to the vast family of ephemeral Umbrood, the source of the mystical Enochian language. Those of us with religious leanings see these spirits as servants of God, expressions of the Great Architect's will. We comprehend such entities well and, with the magick called *theurgia*, we command them. We know the secret names of the gods, and we are not afraid to use them if need be.

Our Order propounded the Umbrood titles — Lord, Minion, Preceptor, and so forth. Of all our kind, we are the ones most qualified to command these potent "forces" of the Tellurian. Note, though, that in so doing, we expose ourselves to unadulterated power. Therefore, exercise caution in all your workings with the Umbrood: *Ars Manium* specifies precise manners of summoning, addressing and commanding the spirits, and preserves exacting rituals for binding or banishing them when necessary.

Communion with the Umbrood Lords is a necessity of our craft. Because they represent the spiritual manifestation of the so-called Sphere of Forces, these beings constitute a vital phase in the mastery of *Ars Essentiae*. In touching them, we touch the essence of reality. Those we can command, we do. Those who require recompense, we offer conduits into the material world and vessels to inhabit as familiars. Such dealings carry ever-present danger, yet offer rewards beyond riches. It is a legacy of our natures to impose our wills upon the "gods."

NEPHANDI AND MARAUDERS

Sooner or later, apprentices learn of former Hermetics who indulged in necromancy and thereupon joined the ranks of the Nephandi. Foul perverters of our sacred rituals, these *barabbi* created the Black Masses, demonic orgies and human sacrifices that led to persecution of all magicians. The Fallen work best within foul Sleeper cults; the un-Awakened cannot distinguish between warped Nephandic practices and our own respectful workings. Turncoats of our Order seek to substitute their own infernal design in place of our Great Work, and leave more

responsible mages to die in their place. Shun their company if you would prosper.

Less foul but by no means fair, the irreconcilably insane mages known as *Marauders* pose a constant (though unpredictable) threat. These undisciplined adolescents give the Technocracy an excuse to exist, and for that, if nothing else, the Marauders deserve contempt and extermination.

THE UNDEAD AND UNDSING

Our Order treats but peripherally those whose existence hovers on the border between life and death. I refer to *massasa* (vampires), their ghoulish servants and other undead such as ghosts. In general, the Order has higher priorities than delving into the affairs of the undead, near-dead and recurring dead. Though Hermetic necromancy has largely died out (so to speak), the *Corrigenda* still restrict the summoning of undead into a Covenant; more than one Tribunal has equated such activities with diabolism. Leave such pastimes to the Thanatoic Ones.

Although some among our number (see Footnote 3) make lapdogs of the so-called Kindred, I cannot see the wisdom in such sport. While some vampires (ref: Sabbat) are more unpredictable than others (ref: *Camarilla*), all of them are predators. The best simply seek to reconcile themselves with that fact and pick their targets well. Those apprentices drawn to the undeniable glamour of the undead should remind themselves of House Tremere. In seeking a shortcut to perfection, these mages found perdition. Some few in House Tytalus suggest reinstating these vipers into our Order, but the screams of Tremere's shredded Avatar still resound through our community. Walk ye careful in the night.

CHANGING BREEDS AND FAIR FOLK

These remnants of the Mythic Age have proved astonishingly durable despite the current scientific paradigm. While the Bubasti catfolk make eager allies, their eyes are ever open to new, exciting toys. As for the lupine folk (ref: Garou), they're best avoided — Curiosities, certainly, allies, never. In times past, some unwary Tradition mages have alienated packs of were-creatures by plundering their powerful reserves of Quintessence (ref: *caerns*). After summary investigations and negotiations, our Order officially frowns on the practice.

Similarly, contact with the fair folk — highly magickal but fickle creatures — is best left to the Merinita researchers of House Ex Miscellanea. For many of us, the Fragile Ones are best studied from a distance. The olde faeries of classical lore have been replaced by banalities of science and concealment; their new shells crumble under close scrutiny, and there's little enough magick as it is. Some Merinita romantics exchange Hermetic secrets for faerie lore, but this trade is a dubious and possibly hazardous practice. Even Fragile Ones have hidden strengths. Curiosity is the flame that blazes the path to perfection, but the wise mage deals carefully, or not at all, with the fae.

THE TECHNOCRATIC UNION

The descendants of the Order of Reason directly oppose magick in general and Hermetics in particular. These paradigmatic monopolists have assaulted our Order and its allies for

nearly a millennium. Although their hold appears to be slipping, they may, like a mad tyrant, strangle us all before they're through.

When the Order of Hermes isolated and identified the idea of consensual reality during the High Mythic Age, we consciously adopted archetypal imagery, thereby giving form and power to our vision of Ascension. The dictators who now style themselves the "Technocracy" (implying rule by technology), learned our lesson too well, and popularized a scientific paradigm so directly opposed to the Order's that no reconciliation is possible.

For us, the practice of magick perfects the being, thus leading the way to Ascension — the Great Work that lies at the core of our Order. Just as the alchemist must first perfect himself before he may transmute base lead into gold, so must the individual mage ennoble himself before trying to lead Sleeping humanity out of its ignorance. By redefining physical and spiritual reality — and thereby murdering magick — the Technocracy prevents us from taking the crucial initial steps to this goal. Under its thumb, humanity will never Ascend. Their Great Work remains forever flawed.

OTHER GROUPS

Our Tradition maintains a tenuous connection to a society of Sleeper occultists known collectively as the *Arcanum*. With our covert aid, this small organization pursues what it calls the "rediscovery of magic (sic) and the pursuit of knowledge of the supernatural world." In so doing, it serves as our watchdog, for these unwitting researchers attract Technocratic attention, offering us ample warning of enemy movements. This *Arcanum* also serves as a touchstone for the Sleepers' attitudes toward magickal ideas. Occasionally, our Order offers their researchers a crumb of true knowledge (part of an entire loaf of misinformation), then track its reception in mundane society. In this way, we gauge our efforts to regain lost ground.

On the other hand, we can ill afford to toy with the self-styled inheritors of the medieval Inquisition: the "Society of Leopold" and its various offshoots. Although several of us have attempted reconciliation with these narrow-minded zealots, our efforts have met with outright refusal — or worse. The Order advises extreme caution toward and discreet avoidance of these dangerous, misguided individuals. Their faith, as we have found, provides protection against mystick Arts — even our own.

SLEEPERS

In our preoccupation with the greater task of self-perfection (not to mention survival), we sometimes neglect our duties toward the masses of un-Awakened humanity. Yet the Great Work encompasses all creation. Unless all of us Ascend, no one truly achieves perfection of spirit; yet only by our doing so can we build the City of Pymander, our vision of a free and united world.

Humanity relies on our direction and leadership, especially in these times of enforced spiritual sterility. Each of us once Slept; have we no compassion toward those who still fear a world beyond their comprehension? It falls to us, then, to nurture and protect Sleepers when we can. In due time they, too, can Awaken.







This is why I am called "Thrice Greatest Hermes," for I possess the three parts of cosmic philosophy.

- Twelfth Precept of Hermes Trismegistus



In **Mage**, the Houses of Hermes epitomize the learned magician. Their complex theories, arcane secrets and elaborate pacts plumb the human experience, looking for meaning in each drop of dew. Hermetics are the classical wizards: the John Dees, Solomons, Merlins, Morgannas and Faustus. They're dangerous, majestic and very, very wise.

Hermetic mages have class; they are, to a fault, meticulous, well-educated, haughty and

verbose. They've got tremendous powers at their fingertips, and have a real attitude about it, too. To outsiders, the Hermetics seem arrogant. The Hermetics themselves agree — after all, they've earned the right to be exclusive!

In the Order, challenge is a mark of distinction; survival depends on quick wits, a sharp mind, good fortune and connections. Each mage in this Tradition has endured hellish exams, brutal Apprenticeships, labyrinthine politicking and endless lessons to master the Ars Arcane. "When you have done what I have done," one might say, "*then* I will treat you as an equal."

ARS HERMETICI



Though they're not the flamboyant fireball machines of modern fantasy, Hermetics command vast elemental powers. Pacts with spirits, bound demons, summoned storms and mighty wards are common toys in their bag of tricks. But the point they constantly make is that such power comes only with a strong intellectual framework. Magick does not lie in throwing a fireball; magick is insight into *how* to throw a

fireball, precisely *why* you should, and *what you must become* to do so.

Thus, this discussion of Hermetic magick begins with philosophy.

THE PYRAMID OF THOUGHT

The Hermetic worldview draws heavily upon Plato's pyramid of thought. Its broad base constitutes the realm of *Faith and*



Emotions. Here, reality is a construct, created by a ruling paradigm and maintained by humanity's diversion from the basic questions: Who are we? Why are we here? Because mundane senses and obedience to authority both rule here, there's no magick in this realm. Sleepers spend their lives here, their vision of reality sequestered by the blue glow of the television set, their faith controlled by technocracies both mundane and otherwise.

The second realm, less broad, is the realm of *Reason*. In ancient times, Aristotle articulated Reason's strengths, its logic and symbolic thinking, in a healthy context of holistic empiricism. At the beginning of the Modern Age, philosopher-scientists replaced this empiricism with the myth of Progress: that Reason alone can perfect humanity, and that science can perfect all things.

Hermetics know that the power of Reason is great; alone it can accomplish noble works. They also know it severs one's connection to the essence that lies within things (Aristotle) or beyond them (Plato). Reason is the method inherent in Technocratic forerunner Francis Bacon's Word, "Progress." Until very recently, this Word has controlled the Sleeping world, and has seriously degraded the physical and spiritual worlds.

The realm beyond Reason is the realm of direct apprehension of Truth — of noesis — called *Above* in the Thrice-Great Hermes' maxims. This is the slender top of the pyramid, the domain of the philosopher-king, for which all true Hermetics strive out of love for themselves and for humanity. This inspired wisdom cannot be reached from the realm of faith, but only through a school of initiation. Here alone, in a realm of pure thought and pure memory, can the mage perceive great truths. Once the Hermetic student grasps this fundamental reality, it is her long, hard job to transform herself in light of its principles.

VIEW OF THE COSMOS

The Order of Hermes views the world of matter as good. They realize that the psyche can only become aware of itself and begin to develop its powers amid matter, that in every myth, the creator god forms a world from Chaos. All myths are pathways of magick preserved by Sleepers, who function as a resting place for powerful ideas and for the sleeping souls of those who will be Awakened. As the experiment with "Progress" shows, it's unwise to try to awaken them too quickly. Only by extending Order gradually in the world do human beings learn to act in the divine realm. The title "Order of Hermes" has several meanings.

A Hermetic magician views power and pleasure as good. If you don't acquire power in this realm, of both magickal and mundane types, you have no true yardstick to measure your personal evolution. If you can't make the universe offer up a series of pleasurable challenges, you're not a mage — no matter what special effects you can whip up in a pinch. True pleasure — as opposed to base stimulation — stimulates mind, soul and body.

Earnest students are never turned away from the Order's door; seeking knowledge is the first step to initiation into the mysteries. The only thing a Hermetic really fears is complacency. Woe to those who think they are perfected! As all gods wait within the breast of man, so too do all dangers.

Force is something the Hermetics understand and respect. You can measure force, and measure what you do with it. You

can determine how far along the Path you are by the forces you control. And because Force is what produces change, both in the world below and the world above, it is the pinnacle Art from which the lesser Arts, or Spheres, descend. It is the doorway to the Tenth Sphere, the *Nous*, or Mind of Noetic Insight. Some refer to the Tenth Sphere as the place of Forms (*Eidos*) or Concordia. Others simply call it the "One Thing," the beginning, end and unity.

THE GREAT TRADITION

The Order's primary political and cultural goal is the reestablishment of the Great Tradition. These magicians seek a New Age, with unparalleled tolerance of all beliefs, but with Hermetic ideals as the pivotal paradigm through which all others communicate. Their first attempt began in late antiquity in Alexandria, where all the civilized world's cultures met. The intellectual paradigm that ruled them then embodied itself in the Library of Alexandria. Hermetic precursors flourished not only as public mages, but also as expert translators. The city acquired knowledge and synthesized the Greek and Egyptian thoughts that led to the Hermetic tradition. When that Library was burned by religious zealots, the flames singed relations between the Hermetics and the faithful forever after.

The Order of Hermes wants to recreate the spirit of Alexandria across the entire world. The mages reveal this goal, known as "the City of Pyramider Project," to newly initiated Disciples. The twin roads to this City are scholarship and instruction. Consequently, most Hermetics work in or near academia, researching linguistics, folklore, mathematics, philosophy and anything else related to their ideals. Typically, they have conservative day jobs — say, as researchers in Old Norse, though some make their livings as book reviewers, New Age press authors or game designers. At night, however, the Hermetic might learn to rearrange the runes to duplicate ancient magical feats, or pioneer a new style of game that transforms the player's consciousness. In any case, the mage's ultimate job is teaching his knowledge, both to the Order and to the Sleeping world, to advance the City of Pyramider.

The Order's best intellectual weapon is the decline of Modernism — the belief that the world can be saved by science alone. Science once replaced faith as the obvious source of humankind's perfection; Postmodern thinking, which judges belief systems on the basis of their function and practical results, is the Order's cultural wedge. All nine Traditions help spread some form of postmodern thinking, or develop its instruments. The Virtual Adepts, for example, helped create World Wide Web pages for most of the world's libraries and museums. What was long hidden in rare texts will soon be available to all. At the forefront, however, the Order stands with its allied Traditions, planning to shape the emerging postmodern City. Under sage Hermetic guidance, that world offers unparalleled chances for freedom and power.

PRAXIS

Hermetic thought postulates three types of magick: goetia, theurgia and magia. Each art corresponds to a section of the pyramid of thought, and to one or more Degrees of Hermetic advancement. The mage must master each type of magick in

turn, for each transforms its practitioner. The first two are apprentice magicks; praxis of the third marks the apprentice's readiness for initiation.

- **Goetia** (Greek goes, "charm") is the magick of substance, what the Sleeping world recognizes as magic (no "k"): precise spells, performed at precise times with precise substances. A focus-heavy art, this "charm" employs chalices, bells, knives and books in the Enochian tongue. Everything relies on memorization and exact performance. In game terms, this step begins a study of Hedge Magic (see Ascension's Right Hand and World of Darkness: Sorcerers), a static art without Sphere Effects.

With goetia, a Hermetic apprentice (First Degree, Neophyte) builds up her faith in the world of matter and learns of the subtle, hidden realm beyond ordinary senses. A Neophyte owns a ton of paraphernalia, closely tracks the phase of the moon, and knows which talismans to consecrate in the Hour of Saturn.

- **Theurgia** is the path of union with godforms. At the Second Degree, Zelator, the apprentice seeks to become one with a traditional archetype. Through a system of invocation, she merges with the idea of a particular god, angel or spirit to perform a magical operation. She wears the colors of the god, eats the god's favored food, burns the god's favored incense and immerses herself in research about the god-idea in its cultural matrix. This symbolic art corresponds to the realm of Reason.

Ultimately, the mage compels the god to manifest through her, thereby achieving the third Apprentice Degree (Practicus). The key word here is "compel" — the god can be forced to perform actions, as can the god's servitors and demons. The Hermetic does not look upon the Celestines that rule the spheres as friends, but as Archons, rulers to be overcome. Hermetics are profoundly interested in Force — the way, the *only* way — and despise the "*Thy* will be done" or "Our will be done" attitudes of others. It must be "My Will be done!" or you are not a mage.

When a Practicus performs theurgia rituals, she touches her Avatar. Goetia requires a literal belief in gods, but theurgy shows the seeker that the gods are within us, part of our psychology; each god reflects the Avatar, just as each art reflects The One Art, Concordia. With this lesson learned, the Hermetic begins her true quest — for knowledge of the Avatar. Then she is ready for—

- **Magia**: By reaching Awakening, the apprentice achieves True Magick, earns Rank One in at least one Sphere, and is duly admitted into the Order as a mage of the Fourth Degree, an Initiate (that is, a beginning **Mage** character). Now she begins Ascension, the quest of lifetimes where the true nature of magick becomes apparent.

Magia is the Art of causing change in the outer world (below) by hanging archetypal patterns in the inner world (above). At this stage, the mage simply speaks changes into being. Although the instruments of her apprenticeship still focus her intentions, her principal focus becomes the language, written or spoken, that she uses to cast her Word. As she progresses through higher degrees and gains Arete, she dispenses with all other foci. Ultimately, an extremely accomplished Hermetic can even transcend the need for language.

HEDGE MAGIC TO TRUE MAGICK

The greatest peril (at least from a game system standpoint) of this step in the Hermetic Path is that the apprentice may never become a mage! Instead of gradually working up to an Awakening, she might lose her way in Hedge Magic's static ways. Unable to make the leap between "I can do magic" and "I can be magick," the apprentice remains a "lesser magician" — a hedge wizard. At some point in her progress, the apprentice must surrender her preconceived notions to embrace her greater potential.

In game terms, she abandons her Hedge Magic dots and starts from scratch. The points she'd spent in Hedge Magic become "freebie points," but do not automatically become Spheres and Arete. These she must earn through roleplaying and game-time passage. After a while, she can buy her Spheres and Arete with those points (see *Mage: The Ascension Second Edition*, page 139), or use them to purchase additional Abilities and Merits that she acquires during her training (see page 61).

If you want to begin a character as a Hermetic consor or apprentice, start her off with normal mage creation points; save the Arete and free Sphere dots, or convert them to Hedge Magick dots. At an appropriate time, toss or trade the Hedge Magick dots. Thus, a hedge wizard might become a True Mage if she's properly trained... and if she's willing to surrender what she has in favor of what she could gain.

Naturally, a self-Awakened mage might join the Hermetic Order after her Awakening, in which case she bypasses the Hedge Magic stage. Of course, a mage without the proper training will have a hard time being taken seriously in the Order....

The magicks must be mastered in this order. To the Hermetic viewpoint (which, by the way, is incorrect), most other Traditions practice mere goetia, and so they have only a secondary role in the Great Work. The Hollow Ones seem especially mired in goetia; the other Traditions, who do not understand the pyramid of thought, cannot see that these larvae still need a few centuries to develop. Some Traditions practice a rather limited form of theurgia, particularly the Celestial Chorus. The Akashic Brotherhood is the sad example of what happens when one approaches magia directly; it brings too much tranquillity, and the great urge to change the world is lost.

HERMETIC DEGREES

Here we see the nine Degrees of advancement within the Order, along with the tasks or requirements involved in each:

APPRENTICE

Although time of apprenticeship varies by House and mentor, most apprenticeships last two to six years.

- **First Degree, Neophyte:** Instruction in mundane languages and basic facts about the Ascension War; development of discipline and faith in the teachings.

- **Second Degree, Zelator:** History of the Order; early study of Enochian; mastery of goetia (minor Hedge Magic spells).

- **Third Degree, Practicus:** Advanced study of Enochian; analysis of Quintessence and Paradox; mastery of theurgia (advanced Hedge Magic); basic instruction in one or more Spheres. At this Degree, an apprentice conceives her Word, which marks out her Path to understanding.

DISCIPLE

- **Fourth Degree, Initiate:** Rank One in *Ars Essentiae*. The leader of the mage's Covenant judges her Rank within narrow guidelines formally established by the Personnel Division. (Note that the Order of Hermes established the Sphere Ranks that all Traditions use.)

- **Fifth Degree, Initiate Exemptus:** Rank Two in any Sphere. An Initiate can usually reach this Degree within a year, sometimes much less.

ADEPT

- **Sixth Degree, Adept:** Rank Three in any Sphere and at least Rank One in another. Achievement of this Degree ordinarily takes one to three years, sometimes longer.

- **Seventh Degree, Adept Major:** Rank Four in any Sphere, Rank Two in another and Rank One in a third. Many Adepts never reach this rank, which requires not only discipline but uncommon talent. Most Adepts Major have reached this Degree after three to 10 years of diligent effort.

MASTER

- **Eighth Degree, Magister Scholae:** Rank Five in any Sphere and Rank Three in at least two others. Mastery is rare and requires exceptional gifts; given these, a mage can achieve Mastery within an ordinary lifetime, even a couple of decades. The Order of Hermes has more recognized living Masters than any other Tradition.

- **Ninth Degree, Magister Mundi/Archmage:** Rank Six in any Sphere. This involves centuries of study, unbroken discipline, challenge and even madness. As a practical matter, one cannot reach Rank Six without first becoming Master of several Spheres and Adept in most of the rest. There are fewer than a dozen living Archmages in the Order of Hermes, all quite old and only marginally sane.

- **Tenth Degree, Oracle:** No mage is definitely known to have reached this Degree, which implies Ascension. Hermetic scholars dispute whether Ascension is a matter of Degree. Some believe that any Awakened person can achieve Ascension, independent of magickal skill.

BENEFITS OF THE ORDER



*Seest thou a man that is diligent in his work?
Before kings may he place himself; let him not place
himself before obscure men.*

— King Solomon the Wise, Proverbs 22:29

Membership among the mystick kings has a great cost, but pays grand dividends. By striving through the Order's ranks, each Hermetic mage earns certain perquisites which open doors across this world... and others.

CRAFT NAMES, SHADOW NAMES AND TRUE NAMES

Like a Verbena, Dreamspeaker or other magus, a Hermetic takes a new "craft name" when he finishes his apprenticeship. As he advances through the mysteries, the Hermetic also gains a list of complications, a *Shadow Name*, which reflects the different ways others see him. Deep down, he maintains a third name, the *True Name*, which contains his birth title, craft name, all honorifics and a secret appellation that only his most trusted companions understand. No matter how mundane he may seem, no Hermetic magus goes by the name he was given at birth. To do so is not only gauche, it is dangerous.

A craft name serves a twofold purpose. On the mundane level, the name signifies a break with the mage's mortal life and the beginning of his magickal quest; on the mystic level, it "rebirths" him, giving him a new form and hiding the old one from outsiders. Although he'll keep a favored name public, the average Hermetic maintains a number of "shadow names" — alternate identities, honorifics or nicknames which add layers of protection to the birth name itself. Taken together, these names become one — *the Shadow Name*, a title of high honor and understanding. The longer it is, the more powerful (or pretentious) the mage.

The True Name, which often runs a dozen words or more, is like a key to the mage's deepest self. In addition to the complex Shadow Name, each True Name includes a secret component which the mage guards with magickal protections. As Hermetics (but few others) know, the secret is a sequence of 10 syllables chosen by the mage, preceded by the term *In Caligine Abditus*, or, "In Darkness Hidden." To recite a mage's Shadow Name in sequence is impressive; to recite his True Name is a threat. It shows you know his deepest secrets and can turn them back with ease.

Birth Name: Steven Carson

Craft Name: Amadeus Chanti DuMarque, bani Flambeau (or simply Amadeus)

Shadow Name: Amadeus Steven Carson Chanti DuMarque, bani Flambeau, Windborne Seer of the 5th House, Drowner of Mad Cats, Jewel of the Beloved One and Ranger of the White Frost

True Name: Amadeus Steven Carson Chanti DuMarque, bani Flambeau, Windborne Seer of the 5th House, Drowner of Mad Cats, Jewel of the Beloved One and Ranger of the White Frost; *In Caligine Abditus*, Mhai Akil Koth Rignorum Ommas

In game terms, consider it a Mind 3 Effect to discern another mage's name. The number of successes necessary depends on the power of the subject; a young mage would require two or three, while an accomplished magus might demand six or more. A Master or Archmage guards her extensive name so intensely that an "intruder" would need to pass countermagick and achieve 10 successes or more to even hope to pull the Shadow Name from hiding. Finding her True Name would be even harder, and might require solving riddles or bypassing magickal mind traps.

Discovering such a Name, however, gives you a great psychological advantage, and may reduce future magick difficulties by -2 against that magus, or add two dice to your countermagick against her spells. Mysticks with Correspondence may consider a target whose True Name is known to be "very familiar" for the purposes of magickal connection (see the "Correspondence Ranges" chart in **Mage**).

What's the advantage of a True Name? Distance. Under most circumstances, a Hermetic magus should be considered "no connection" on the "Correspondence Ranges" chart when it applies to offensive magicks, and subtracts three successes from an opponent's attempt to **Ban** him or penetrate his **Ward** spells. Only by discovering the mage's True Name can a rival bypass his protection. That may not sound like much until you realize that to harm a Hermetic mage, you more or less have to face him in person. That entails its own risks — ones an angry Master would be happy to demonstrate.

Hermetics aren't the only mages to keep True Names, but they're the only Tradition who does so as a rule. Some other magickal societies include such titles among their lore, but the importance of such names differs from culture to culture. The Storyteller may decide that a non-Hermetic sorcerer has a True Name with the abilities mentioned above, but that's his prerogative and should not be considered a given.

ENOCHIAN

Enochian, whose characters resemble the Coptic alphabet, resembles Afro-Asiatic languages such as Akkadian, Egyptian and Hebrew, but is entirely inhuman in origin. According to occult lore, Enochian is a spiritual tongue spoken by High Umbrood and most elementals.

The last librarian of Alexandria, Hypatia, discovered Enochian; John Dee codified its syntax in Elizabethan times. Each sentence can be read two or more ways. The primary meaning, clear to Apprentices of Third Degree, is a goetic spell. Those in the Disciple Degrees can understand the second, profoundly philosophical level of meaning, which is sometimes based on numerological values of the letters. Additional levels of understanding come with higher Degrees, although the levels of meaning encoded in Enochian depend heavily upon the writer's degree of awareness. Sometimes the Avatar speaks through Enochian writings.

In game terms, Enochian is bought as a Knowledge Ability, unique and unrelated to the Linguistics Knowledge. Only



Hermetic characters can purchase Enochian, unless the Storyteller decides otherwise. It's purchased like any other Knowledge, except that the character cannot have more dots in Enochian than in her current Arete rating.

A strict Storyteller might require Enochian as a mundane Knowledge necessary to any Hermetic magickal Effect (**Mage**, page 162); an extremely strict Storyteller may require Enochian at a level equal to the Effect's highest Sphere Rank. More easygoing Storytellers can permit Hermetics to roll Intelligence + Enochian (difficulty 7) as a complimentary roll when casting any defined rote or performing an established ritual; improvised magick may not receive this roll. Each success on the Enochian roll reduces the magick roll's difficulty by -1, up to a maximum of -3. This reduction is not cumulative with those given by other ability rolls.

UMBROOD PROTOCOLS

The Earth being inhabited, as I have before said unto thee, by a great number of Celestial Beings and Spirits... know, O my Son, that from the time that thou shall have the good fortune to be familiar with such kinds of Spirits, and that thou shalt be able to by means of what I have taught thee to make them submit unto thine orders, they will be happy to give thee... that which they uselessly possess...

— (greatly abbreviated) from *The Greater Key of Solomon*, Chapter XIV

Everything's easier when you speak the language. Ages ago, the founders of the Order (and the magi who went before them) established pacts with various Umbrood Lords, Precep-

tors and other notables. Since then, the wizards of the Order have, shall we say, reminded the spirits about those pacts — and about the duties which bind both sides. Most mages have no way to command service from the Umbrood. Hermetic mages do.

It is the way of the Order to demand. Even so, demanding things from gods or their representatives is a risky thing at best. The elaborate protocols which all Hermetics learn as part of their instruction pave the way for a active and profitable traffic between the magicians and the astral hosts; the keystones of that road remain integral parts of magickal lore. With these pacts and protocols, a mage creates a bond of respect (not necessarily goodwill) between a spirit being and himself; while that bond is fragile, it gives the summoner a place to begin.

Summoning a spirit, elemental or agent of Divine or Infernal powers is never done lightly or carelessly. The perils for doing so can be eternal. All protocols begin with a fast, prayers and meditation. Certain pentacles are inscribed (each one having a different purpose), a circle is prepared and other rituals are observed. Since the pentacles create both a boundary and a spirit nexus (see **The Holy Pentacles**, below), compromising these preparations at any point risks disaster. When everything is ready, the magician calls forth an ornate invocation, listing the name of the spirit(s) he wants, his own Shadow Name and titles, and the holy (or unholy) Names by which he compels the Umbrood to arrive. In keeping with the ceremony, the spirit often appears in the most dramatic form it can muster and usually runs through its own list of demands and/or threats. Thus the bargaining begins.

Through a formal exchange of titles, invocations, greetings, promises and compulsions, the magician and the spirit make their desires known. Theatrics — which usually include pyrotechnics and threats on both sides — are all part of the process. Even when both parties agree on something, both make a show offeree, testing the will of the other. Dust swirls, still air whips into winds, water freezes, that sort of thing. The more aggressive the spirit (or the wizard), the more violent the phenomena. Obviously, a spirit manifestation (especially a really powerful one) should be played up for all it's worth.

In game terms, the Storyteller can reflect this contest through resisted Willpower rolls combined with dramatic roleplaying (see **Mage**, page 80). Each party must accumulate as many successes as the opponent has (permanent) Willpower points. Defeating a minor spirit is easy; a greater Umbrood, well...

- If the wizard wins, the spirit will obey his commands — for an agreed-upon price.
- If the spirit wins, it departs without incident (and makes a mental note about the weak-willed magician).
- If the Umbrood botches a roll, it agrees to the mage's demands without further argument.
- If the wizard botches, all hell breaks loose; the spirit takes its revenge through any number of gruesome Charms or Storyteller inventions. Use your imagination —

The difficulty of the Willpower contest depends on the tasks the Hermetic requests; a successful Charisma or Manipulation + Spirit Lore roll might lower the difficulty by -1 or -2 if the roleplaying justifies the reduction.

Demand	Difficulty
Trivial Task (identifying an item)	5
Minor Task (the item's location)	6
Fair Request (retrieving the item)	7
Favor (creating a new item)	
Major Task (fighting an enemy)	9
Extended Service	10

Assuming the Hermetic triumphs, each side has a promise to keep. The spirit performs one or two tasks, and the mage rewards it with something valuable. Enticements include: mortal bodies to possess; sacrifices in the Umbrood's name; charitable (or blasphemous) acts for the spirit's patron causes; Names of other spirits or mages; personal items, etc.. The payment will, of course, depend on the nature of the spirit. Most mages know better than to offer up their own Names or personal tokens, but most Umbrood will ask for them anyway.

Note that this service is *afavor*, not a magickal compulsion. Without some potent Spirit Arts to back it up, it does not bind the Umbrood in any lasting way. A wizard who pushes his luck will discover the limits soon enough. No mage short of an Archmaster can summon or bind an Aeon, Incarna or Celestine, although a friendly spirit might send a totem avatar (not capitalized) to treat with a respectful magician.

If the mage goes onto the Umbrood's homeland (during a trip to the Umbral Courts, for instance), the element of

command is lost. Even so, a thorough knowledge of the correct etiquette works wonders (see **The Book of Madness**, pages 117-118). Most intelligent spirits grant a Hermetic mage (like an experienced shaman) more respect than they would offer the average mage. This deference usually comes across in roleplaying, but could, if the Storyteller desires, reduce the difficulty of the magician's Social rolls by -1 or -2 while in Umbrood territory.

Spirits like to be respected; a mage who does so will go farther than one who blatantly commands obedience. Still, while most mysticks depend on an Umbrood's goodwill, the Hermetic Masters can demand a service or two — and get it. No matter where you are, membership in the Order is a good thing to have.

CONNECTIONS, FAVORS AND KNOWLEDGE

In the halls of Hermes, these three things go together. No Apprentice graduates into the Order without picking up a few useful skills. All of the Traits listed below come with the territory. While only a Master would possess every one, any Hermetic character should purchase a handful of them during character creation. (Note that these Traits must be bought at the regular cost.)

- **Abilities:** Alchemy, Astrology, Chantry Politics, Cosmology, Crafts (House Verditius), Cryptography, Diplomacy, Enigmas, Etiquette, High Ritual, History, Intrigue, Linguistics (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic), Lore (especially Kindred, Spirit and Tradition), Occult, Research and Secret Code Language (most Houses have their own)

- **Backgrounds:** Allies, Chantry, Influence, Library, Mentor, Resources

- **Merits:** Concentration, Faerie Affinity (House Merinita), Fast Learner, Higher Purpose, Lightning Calculator (House Fortuna), Natural Linguist, Past Life, any kind of Ties

- **Flaws:** Curiosity, Dark Secret, Overconfident, Vengeance, Echoes, Magickal Prohibition or Imperative, Dark Fate, any of the Ties Flaws

SEEKERS OF THE TWILIGHT

The Order attracts all different kinds to its fold. The profiles below describe broad Hermetic types, not lone individuals. Use these concepts (changing details to suit the chronicle) as examples or inspiration when creating your own characters. They're not limits, of course, but merely suggestions.

- **Alchemist:** A correspondent with the Children of Knowledge (see **The Book of Crafts**) and the Sons of Ether, she seeks the Stone that is the Medicine of Metals, Perfect Truth and Pure Happiness. Her day job: lecturer on the history of experimental science. She reads Greek, Arabic, Latin and Sanskrit. An expert on the properties of Tass, she has discovered potions that extend life and powders that turn copper to gold. Her greatest discovery is that the Philosopher's Stone — which transforms lead into gold, both inert substances — has a much greater effect on human flesh, a semi-divine substance. Word: "Purify."

- **Astrologer:** Her Art goes as far beyond the newspaper horoscope as post-graduate number theory goes beyond counting on your fingers. Her "day job" is a teaching observatory in



Southern California. She's a big figure in local science fiction fandom, helps run the Planetary Society and teaches orienteering to "Girl Scouts." Her understanding of timing has earned her some welcome favors from other Hermetics. She lives with an Ecstatic and has given more thought to *Ars Temporis* than almost any Hermetic. Word: "Precision."

- **Eremite:** He disdains society, entertainment, romance and sleep, but ventures forth often from his Horizon Realm — more often than he'd like, blast it! — to help his House fight the latest damnfool scheme of the blasted Technocracy. And he's got to hustle all over Earth to get ingredients for his latest experiment, so... as long as he's in Venezuela or Irian Jaya or Nova Goddamn Scotia, he might as well look around, pick up the language, check the local magickal praxes and investment opportunities— Then he has to track his stock portfolio and maintain all that property he racked up in his Sleeping career— It's amazing he ever gets any real work done! At this rate he'll never distill that immortality serum. Word: "Imminent."

- **General:** Count on him to render the situation rectified, pronto. If he can't do it himself, he's got a few regiments who can. Or he'll phone a Senator or a corporate vice-president, one of the guys he hobnobs with at the annual Bohemian Club retreats. He was always a joiner—Elks, Rosicrucians, Air Force, Cointelpro, Masons, PTA, Chamber of Commerce, Military Book Club — and in a secret society, he's in his element. That's because he learned two plain truths early on, as follows: (A) You can command anyone if you command yourself harder, and (B) People take orders a lot better when no one else is watching.

Ramrod straight, dapper in uniform or civilian togs, a hit with his wife and certain other ladies, he keeps his magickal life a secret except during quarterly visits to his Covenant. He's rising pretty well in House Tytalus, though he hasn't had much patience for constant study since OCS. You can study to get ahead, but there's other ways. Who needs a fireball when you can call in a Longbow attack chopper? Word: "Honor."

- **Qabbalist:** He speaks and reads classical, medieval and modern Hebrew, Aramaic, Syrian and Egyptian. His first Ph.D. was on the use of astronomical symbols in the tiled floors of the synagogues of late Antiquity. An expert in Throne Mysticism, he has spoken at important Jewish seminaries. He regularly creates golems, as did the learned Rabbi Loewe, and his focus is the Torah that once belonged to Moses ben Maimon.

A pillar of his community, with a wife, two kids and a nice house on Long Island, he can trace his ancestry through 30 generations of learned Jews, and hopes his son will aspire to the Art. He maintains good relations with many civil rights groups and with certain open-minded members of the Celestial Chorus. Word: "Qabbala," of course.

- **Risi (ree-see):** Born into the Brahmin caste, he discovered the secret interpretation of the Vedas when he was about 30. He runs an Indian restaurant in Manhattan, and seems like a normal businessman until you visit his house, which resembles a Hindu temple of many centuries ago. He plays the sitar very well, helps organize the local Indian community for cultural and political events, and is developing a secret North American alliance of Indian hedge mages to report to him about Nephandi invasions. Word: "Brahma."

- **Stage Conjurer:** Two shows a night and three on weekends at the Palace in Vegas. Her name in lights! Her specials on cable! Her lectures packed at campuses across the country! She debunks fraudulent Sleeper "psychics" -- Uri Geller won't stay in the same city with her — and designs each show as a subtly magickal ritual of wonder and catharsis. She's working on starting her own line of mass-market conjuring tricks, but under another name, she contributes articles to anthropology journals, based on her studies of left-hand-path cults in Hinduism and Jainism. Word: "Performance."

- **Tryllekunstner (trew-ler-konsd-no):** He works to re-awaken the Great Tradition of the North and speaks 10 languages, from Old Norse to Frisian. Though he seems to dislike Viking neo-pagan groups, he helps them in secret, for the Great Tradition has natural (Sleeping) aspects in addition to its supernatural (Awakened) ones.

He teaches Scandinavian Studies at a large university, can carve stone or wood, and took voice lessons for years so that he might sing the runes (or, as he would say, "practice galdur") with a voice that would make Odhinn weep. His covert relationship with a Verbena woman mirrors Odhinn's secret affair with Freya. Word: "Runa."

THE ARTS



The Order of Hermes developed the current magickal convention of the nine Spheres, which they call Arts. However, the system is only a convenience, for magick is beyond rigid categorization. Some Masters stall by blindly accepting the increasingly rigid convention of the nine Arts; others push beyond, learning to push their minds and their Avatars to new levels of understanding.

The Order prefers to call the Arts by their Latin names. When discussing the Arts with outsiders, however, they use the conventional terms (Correspondence, Entropy, Forces, etc.).

- **Ars Animae (Life)**

Known as The Refining Fire, Life refines and ennobles the spirit, making it more like gold, or burning away its dross as ash. One heats oneself to experience further initiation; one creates life to prove one's prowess; one restores to life those who may teach the mysteries of the Cosmos. Life is separate from the four elements that make up the world, and serves as the astral bridge to this world.

- **Ars Conjunctionis (Correspondence)**

Conjunctionis, or Similitude, sends magickal power down the secret paths between one thing and another. Any point in the world of four dimensions and five senses can be viewed as a direct gateway to any other, given sufficient time and energy.

- **Ars Essentiae (Forces)**

Forces is The Gateway, and its mastery reveals one's position on the Path to Ascension. Understanding it is the holy, life-affirming act of the Hermetic.



- **Ars Fati (Entropy)**

Known as Venom, this process causes all material things to pass away. It eats all flesh, all nations, all save Wisdom herself. Venom falls **on** all things as a fine mist; it can be made to fall faster on one's enemies, or it can be halted—for a season — on oneself.

- **Ars Manium (Spirit)**

Called The Pharaoh's Army, Spirit provides useful servants and confers knowledge of alien realms. Greater personal power brings authority to command the denizens of these realms. Trust them but little, for they wish to subvert or distract you from the Great Work.

- **Ars Materiae (Matter)**

Known as Clay, the Matter Sphere is worked in accordance with the will of the artist. A composite of the four classical elements, it is the medium of expression for the Awakened psyche.

- **Ars Mentis (Mind)**

The Mind Sphere is The Watcher. A mirror of the Avatar, it reflects that self's intent. By studying Mens, Hermetics study the Avatar's secret powers, and come to realize that the Watcher is essential to clear sight on the Path.

- **Ars Temporis (Time)**

Time is the Magick All Men Know. All men and women understand how to fill their lives with pleasurable challenge, to make them last — or how to waste their lives in gray ennui, so that those lives pass quickly. This truth of life can be expanded magickally, so learn its lesson well. Either bend time to your will, or be bent to its own.

- **Ars Vis (Prime)**

Prime is known as the South. Just as the Hermetic tradition came from Egypt, the South, so the hidden root of all things is the spiritual South: the pure waters of the Nile, which flood and enrich the fields; the sacred space of the gods; the mighty pyramids, symbols of the Awakened will.

INSTRUMENTS OF THE ARTS

Given the precise nature of Hermetic magick, many Spheres have special "official" foci connected to their use. While the only focus a Master Hermetic needs is language, lesser willworkers typically use tools such as these:

- **General:** Books, charts (of gods, planets, colors, etc.), dice, elements (air, earth, fire, water), formulae, geometric shapes (circles, triangles, etc.), Enochian and other languages, gems, goblets, jewelry, music, pentacles, Names, numbers, pentacles, potions, Qabbalistic symbols, ritual circles (essential for High Ceremonial magick rites), runes, Seal of Solomon, sigils, star maps, stones, Tarot cards, treatments (cleansing the body), vellum, wands, weapons, words of power.

- **Anima:** Small burning pot (The Refining Fire, change), broken cocoon of a silk moth, seeds of a 1000-year old bristlecone pine, delta sign, incantation of the stages of a relevant vowel-shifted word, I (the active principle), (higher ternary acting upon spiritual quaternary), water, ankh, the numbers 3, 11.

- **Conjunctio:** Shewstones, Enochian alphabet, lines drawn between graphical symbols, verbal ellisions, physically inserting one thing into another, the numbers 2, 7, 12.

- **Essentia:** Gilded iron keys (sometimes magnetized), elements, magnets, fire, ice, prisms, names of air, fire, etc. spirits, pentacles, the number 8.

- **Fatus:** Sand from a broken hourglass, acids (sometimes flung at target's magickal representative), rusting nails, cobwebs, obsidian, mica, the numbers 0, 13. Anti-Fatus: diamonds or other incorruptible tokens.

- **Manes:** Hood or black eyeband (for viewing the spirit realm), small brazier of stinking herbs, pentacles of many different kinds, parchment inscribed with spirit names, darkness, smoke, the numbers 5 and 6.

- **Materia:** Ore, clay, half-carved gems, metal plates inscribed with Matter rune, the numbers 4 and 5.

- **Mens:** Circles, rings, sword bearing the mage's Name (for increasing intellect), the number 14.

- **Tempus:** Small pyramids, sundials, star charts, melting ice, the number 2.

- **Vis:** Chalice containing a rare and fragrant drink, gold, the number 1.

ROTES

*I have bedimm'd
The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault
Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt; the strong-bas'd promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up
The pine and cedar.*

— William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Dream Drama (•• Forces, •• Mind, possibly with •• Correspondence)

With this rote, developed in the 16th century by Venetian Hermetic Guiseppe Malatesta, the willworker taps the mind of a sleeping subject and displays light-and-sound illusions that enact the dream. Given the subconscious elements and personal symbolism of most dreams, this may not offer much practical information, but it's better than eavesdropping on someone who talks in his sleep.

To perform the rite, a modern Hermetic lights a roomful of candles and incense, then focuses her **mint!** on that of the sleeping target. It often helps if the mage carries the target's pillowcase, nightshirt or similar possession. The smoke from the incense seems to form the substance of the dream's illusions, which the mage watches until they disperse.

[The number of successes rolled determines the duration and vividness of the illusion. The caster may position the illusion anywhere within her sight, or (with Correspondence 2) anywhere she can reach. This rote is vulgar.]

Tower of Babel/Speak In Tongues (•• Entropy, •• Forces, •• Mind)

During the 14th century, a Covenant in the Italian Alps housed an unusual offshoot of the Order, the theocratic

House Castrovinci. This small group (officially a part of House Ex Miscellanea) tried to prove the Bible's truth by duplicating its miracles with magick. Critics claimed that they were emulating the prophets of old in hopes of becoming gods themselves. The Inquisition eventually burned most Castrovincis as heretics, but a few apparently escaped into Africa and Arabia.

Regardless of House Castrovinci's motives, no one denies that they created some useful rites. The so-called **Tower of Babel** turns the sound produced by the human mouth into gibberish. A sufficiently skillful mage can reduce a whole crowd to incomprehensibility. To produce this Effect, the mage cuts up a written scroll or a page from a book, then tosses the confetti into the air while gibbering quietly. He continues babbling until all confetti has touched the ground.

A contrasting rite, aptly called **Speak In Tongues**, changes a target's speech into any language the mage knows; if the caster understands many languages, then different listeners can hear different languages. For example, spoken French could be changed into German for one listener and Spanish for another at the same time. The rite does not change the speech's meaning, only its language. The mage need not understand the language initially used by the speaker in order to change it. A useful tool during the Grand Convocation, this spell facilitated conversation between mysticks from across the world.

[Every success the mage achieves on in extended roll renders one speaker incomprehensible (**Tower of Babel**) or one language intelligible (**Speak in Tongues**). These effects last one scene, and work only in the caster's presence unless Correspondence 2 is added to the rite. This spell is always vulgar.]

Compel the Unseen (••• Prime, •• Spirit)

Medieval magi of House Bonisagus developed this simple but dangerous Effect. With it, the mage forces an incorporeal spirit to manifest in physical form, so long as the spirit has the Materialize Charm. The rite is risky — Umbrood deeply resent such coercion. Even weak spirits can sometimes bring their stronger cohorts to punish the insolent mage.

To perform the rite, the caster blows into a clear flask until it clouds up. She then commands the Umbrood to appear by speaking its true name and an Enochian chant of binding. If the flask overturns while the spirit is materialized, the Umbrood automatically escapes.

[The spirit receives a Willpower roll to resist the Effect; the difficulty depends on the mage's own Willpower, and the spirit's successes cancel the mage's successes on a one-for-one basis. The mage's remaining successes determine how long the unwilling spirit remains corporeal (one hour per success). The Effect usually cannot last beyond the next dawn or sunset, and is quite vulgar.]

Ignis (••• Forces, •• Prime)

The joy and specialty of all Flambeau Adepts, this ageless spell conjures flames from thin air and works them into patterns of the wizard's choosing. Flame curtains, blaz-

ing shields, fireballs and spontaneous combustion are just a few of the possibilities. The rites Herrnetics use to conjure these fires differ from House to House and option to option. The spell itself is fairly basic, and it's a standard part of any Order mage's arsenal.

[Forces and Prime combine in a fairly basic conjuration Effect. This Effect might be vulgar or coincidental, depending on the circumstances and the mage. Throwing fireballs is obviously out of line, but an exploding water heater, grenade or gun-shot gas tank disguises the carriage well. The same Spheres, it should be noted, can summon ice, rain, lightning or other elemental strikes.]

Lightning Gateway (••• Forces, •• Correspondence, •• Prime)

To reach a well-protected foe, a magician can link-Forces with Correspondence to see barriers and defenses, then project an attack past those barriers. Imagine, for example, a lightning bolt that can strike at someone inside a house — without ever touching the walls. The rite requires that the mage look through a spyglass while his companion ritually crushes a tiny model gate or wall with a golden hammer.

The Hermetic Albrecht, bani Flambeau, of Bavaria is credited with this Effect. A mercenary captain in the armies of many petty German warlords during the 14th and 15th centuries, he found it useful during siege warfare. Timing his energy strikes to match the attacks of catapults and other siege engines, he disguised his use of magick and kept the nascent forces of Paradox at bay — at least for a time.

[This rite inflicts damage as usual, but ignores barriers between caster and target. The circumstances of the casting determine whether the Effect is coincidental or vulgar.]

Parma Magica (••• Prime)

Bonisagus, the brilliant Archmage, ranked as his greatest creation the *parma magica* (Latin, "magick shield"). This countermagickal protection immunized medieval sorcerers against each other's magick, allowing for more peaceful communication. As a tool of diplomacy, the parma magica is extremely important in the history of magick: It permitted the founding of the Houses of Hermes and, indirectly, all the Traditions. The Order made details of the rite available to other Traditions during the Grand Convocation, 1457-66.

To prepare the parma magica, the Hermetic creates a hand-sized shield from a personal item that symbolizes her confidence (for instance, an award certificate cut into a shield shape, or a sapphire carved to resemble her mentor's face). The mage holds the item to her heart, then forehead and channels Quintessence into it. She then utters the "Incantation to Welcome Strangers" backwards and places the parma magica over her heart — often in a shirt pocket or pouch.

[The **Parma Magica** Effect lets a magician "bank" (store) Quintessence, usable only to aid defensive countermagick, anti-magick and unweaving (**Mage**, pages 172-175). For every success she scores on a "coincidental" Effect roll, the mage may bank 2 points of Quintessence, up to the limit on

her Quintessence/Paradox wheel. Banked Quintessence does not fade or lose potency, and may be replenished after use in the same way as a mage's own Quintessence reserve. This shield is coincidental magick. However, the defender needs time to erect the shield; it does not work automatically.

[The Storyteller may assume that any character who knows this spell begins each story with a full bank of parma magica Quintessence, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.]

Phlogiston Manipulation (••• Forces, ••• Life, •• Prime, or ••• Forces, ••• Matter, •• Prime)

According to Georg Ernst Stahl, Sleeper physician and chemist of Prussia (1660-1734), all combustible substances, living and nonliving, contain "phlogiston." Though the Cabal of Pure Thought "disproved" this idea in the 1700s, Hermetic mages still manipulate phlogiston in living beings (using the Life Sphere) or nonliving objects (using Matter), either to ignite them or to render them immune to fire damage. By reinfusing a burnt object with phlogiston, the mage can restore it to its previous condition, so long as it remains largely intact.

To ignite phlogiston, the Hermetic first prepares a special match from a mixture of sulfur, salamander skin and ashes from the victim of a fire elemental. She then strikes the match and touches it to the target.

To protect a target from ignition, or to restore a burned target, the mage must create a personal parma magica shield (see above), burn the shield with a phlogiston match, soak the ashes in water for 10 minutes, then smear the wet ashes over the target.

[Used for damage, the Effect ignites the target's phlogiston, causing damage per the "Damage and Duration" chart as the victim immediately bursts into flames. The burning inflicts this damage each turn for two turns, until the phlogiston is consumed. The victim becomes immune to further fire damage until his phlogiston regenerates (normal healing rate).]

[When protecting a target from fire damage, each success on the magick roll counts as two successes for counter-magick or a soak roll against fire-based damage. When healing a person or repairing an object, each success restores one Health Level of fire-based damage. This Effect is highly vulgar and, in modern times, Paradox-prone.]

Ward the Inner Sanctum (••• Life, •• Correspondence)

This common yet powerful Effect prevents intruders from entering a defined area (often the mage's Sanctum or Covenant). No living thing may enter the proscribed area, whether by magickal or physical means, until the ward is broken.

This very complex rote takes a long time to cast - typically an hour or more. For most castings, the mage must use special enchanted chalks and pigments to draw or paint a circle of protection around the area to be warded. Runes, pentacles or Enochian names are then added to the circle, and specially made candles are lit and placed at the cardinal points of the circle. Finally, the mage must walk the circle, using a wand of silver and carnelian to trace more protective

runes in the air while uttering a suitable incantation. Different casters use different items or procedures that suit their training and taste.

[The number of successes indicates this **Ward's** strength. Anyone trying to penetrate the **Ward** must achieve more successes with offensive counter-magick (or other appropriate roll, as determined by the Storyteller) to break or bypass it. Depending on circumstances, a complementary roll of Wits + a relevant Skill (such as Escapology from **The Book of Shadows**) may reduce the difficulty of the counter-magick roll.

[Other Spheres may be substituted for Life, or simply added to the Effect, to create other **Wards**. Spirit 3 creates a **Spirit Ward**, Prime 3 **Wards Against Magick**, and so on. This rote is usually vulgar.]

The Holy Pentacles (•••• Spirit)

These designs, said to be provided by angels in the early days of magick, are taught to all Hermetic Apprentices during the second rank of their training. It will be a while, however, before they truly master the greatest power of the pentacle — that of summoning and binding the spirits.

Each pentacle conjures spirits to serve a different purpose; although the *Greater Key of Solomon* lists 44 designs, the Order keeps another 66 secret ones for their own use. Each pentacle may be inscribed in stone, metal or wood, or written on virgin parchment; each one must be prepared with inks or metals of appropriate colors and dedicated to the appropriate planets. The names of angels are written in Enochian, Hebrew or Latin at certain junctures of the designs, and the invocations used with each pentacle employ those names. When a magician prepares a ritual circle for her workings, she brings or inscribes the proper pentacles nearby to grant the spirits' cooperation.

A wise magician sets aside a separate circle (inscribed with a sword blade) to keep the Umbrood in. Once an Umbrood has been called, the pentacle keeps it from escaping its circle until the mage finishes her business with the spirit. Hermetic lore promises immediate obedience from astral beings summoned with the right pentacles; while that's an optimistic claim (see "Umbrood Protocols"), this rote, properly cast, does help immeasurably.

[This Hermetic mainstay, a necessity when dealing with summoned Umbrood, combines the **Breach the Gauntlet** and **Gauntlet Prison Effects**. Its borders are the edges of the pentacle. A botch in the casting means the boarder was drawn imperfectly, allowing the spirit to escape if it so desires....]

Time Lock (•••• Time, •• or ••• Forces, possibly with •• Prime)

Through currents of force or elemental favors, a Hermetic magician may select an area or device, key it to a given time, determine how far in the future she wants to trigger the Effect, and choose a form of energy. At the appropriate moment, the defined energy is either projected into or leached away from the target object or area.

The possible uses are almost endless. She can turn on the lights and heat in her home half an hour before she

returns; she can set up a "time bomb" to scrap an enemy's computer by causing it to overload with electricity at exactly 5 PM EST. Some pompous Hermetic mages even use the **Lock** to create portentous sound effects when they enter a room.

This rote requires a watch (or some other timing device) placed in the area of effect. The mage then sets the watch to the time of effect and breaks it.

[Simple Effects with little impact on the story can simply work without a roll. More dramatic uses — such as frying an enemy's computer — require the normal successes (see the "Time Sphere" chart). More powerful Effects require higher levels of Forces; ones that appear out of thin air demand Prime 2.]

Ball of Abysmal Flames (••••• Forces, •••• or ••••• Prime, •••• Time ••• Matter)

The nuke. It took a while (and many dead mages) to unlock this powerful secret. Hermetic rolls give the credit to Belantine Glass, bani Flambeau, but Caron Mustai disputes her claim. The process is simple, but the magicks involved are not.

The spell begins with an invocation of the fire god Agni or the archangel Gabriel; the pentacle that contains his essence (typically a fourth pentacle of Saturn) is inscribed on the doomed object or location. As the spell begins, the air begins to haze and thicken; magickal sensitives feel a monumental force gathering and accelerating, until... well...

The **Abysmal Flames** pull Quintessence from the surrounding area, ignite it and compress everything within the pentacle. The surrounding air is sucked in and fed to the superheated firestorm, which gathers and grows until the **Ball** explodes, causing phenomenal amounts of destruction. Unless the magician and her cohorts have fled the scene, they may well be incinerated in the blast; hence, Belantine added a timing spell to the incantation. Since then, the spell has become a fixture in Horizon War assaults.

[A ridiculously vulgar, destructive Effect, the **Ball** channels Quintessence from every inanimate object (or, with Prime 5, from living beings, too) in the area and feeds the fire with it. Matter, meanwhile, compresses the explosive result into a baseball-sized lump, which Time discharges when the mage reaches safety. The explosion, when it comes, can level a small town.

[The damage, if you care to determine it, multiplies the magician's successes by five. Thus, a mage rolling five successes causes 30 Health Levels (5 + 1 for Forces magick) worth of aggravated damage to everything for roughly a half-mile around. A Forces 6 variant can destroy a city. Countermagick still absorbs successes normally, and beings with the means to do so can try to soak the damage. Primum reinforcements guard Technocratic compounds somewhat, but the Effect is still considerable.

[The caster can use extended rolls for this Effect, adding new successes each time she does so; it's not smart to roll more than twice, however — a botch or failure unleashes the Effect at once. This spell is not, it should be noted, used lightly. The Technocracy, as we can imagine, really hates it — and has developed a similar weapon in response.]

Distill the Azoth Elixir (••••• Life, ••• Prime, •• Matter, possibly with •••• Spirit)

Azoth, the "Life Principle" isolated by Master Paracelsus, is one of history's greatest alchemical creations; modern Hermetic mages often create it using chemical, rather than alchemical, processes. Paracelsus is said to have carried Azoth in a secret compartment in the hilt of his sword. Sleeper scholars claim that what he actually carried was another discovery of his — laudanum — but the Order of Hermes knows the truth.

Azoth, a highly magickal liquid, can heal any wound, eradicate any disease, and even restore life to the recently dead — or so the tales say. Few mages ever attain the understanding necessary to test these tales, for the creation of Azoth is a complex process that requires nine lunar cycles. On the new moon, the Hermetic mixes her own blood with that of a magickal creature (though *never* the undead) in a jasper vial stoppered with pearl. Each dawn thereafter, she summons that day's guardian (as determined by the Pymandic Charts). The mage commands the guardian to incant the Nine Orisons of God's Name; during the creature's chant, the magician burns a small quantity of blood from the vial mixed with mercury or other valuable liquids. After nine months, the last drop of the mage's blood in the vial transforms into a dram of Azoth.

According to Paracelsus, Azoth can be bottled and stored for "no more than a sennight" (a week) without losing potency.

[For every success on the magick roll, the mage may create one dram (dose) of Azoth, at a cost of one Quintessence per dose. Each dose heals three Health Levels of damage (even aggravated damage). Ten doses revive a person or being who has died within the current story. However, the resurrectee is little more than a mindless husk unless its spirit can somehow be returned to the body; Azoth restores physical, not spiritual, life. Additional Spirit 4 magick might remedy this deficiency, but no modern mage has successfully brewed such Azoth. Use of Azoth is always vulgar, and draws Paradox spirits unusually quickly.]

SUGGESTED READING

We'll say it again and again: Mage is a game. Period. For Storytelling purposes, this Tradition book has taken many liberties with its sources. Don't use it to attempt spiritual transformation, okay?

That said, the books below might offer a few insights into the Hermetic paradigm of concept, art and thought. Happy reading... and don't forget to bring a dictionary.

- Barrett, Francis. *The Magus*. Includes a great deal of excellent detail about natural, elemental and magnetic magic, alchemy and Qabbalistic magic, as well as biographies of famous Hermetics.
- Bell, Eric Temple. *The Magick of Numbers*. A History of mathematical magic, with Pythagoras as a hero.
- Budge, Sir Wallis. *Egyptian Magic*. Good general background.



- Butler, E. M. *The Myth of the Magus*. A biographical study of several well-known Order members.
- Copenhaver, Brian P. *Hermetica*. The Greek Corpus *Hermeticum* and the Latin Asclepius in translation.
- Flowers, Stephen E., ed. *Hermetic Magick: The Postmodern Magickal Papyrus of Abaris*. The best popular introduction to Hermetic magickal practices available in the Sleeping world.
- Fowden, Garth. *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*. This explains the Greco-Egyptian synthesis at the core of Hermetic thinking.
- Gager, John G., ed. *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*. A study of European foci, their effects and their methods of manufacture.
- Godwin, Joscelyn. *Robert Fludd: Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds*. Study of a Hermetic and his beliefs.
- Halevi, Z'ev ben Shimon. *Kabbalah: Tradition of Hidden Knowledge*. Complex introduction with lots of illustrations.
- King, Francis. *Magick: The Western Tradition*. A good history of Western occultism.
- Klossowski de Rola, Stanislas. *Alchemy: The Secret Art*. Excellent introduction with illustrative plates.
- Lawlor, Robert. *Sacred Geometry: Philosophy and Practice*. Explains how geometry underlies the structure of the universe.
- Scott, Walter, ed. and trans. *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings Which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*. The core writings of the Order that have been released to Sleepers.
- Supplements for the *Ars Magica* roleplaying game, formerly published by Lion Rampant, White Wolf and Wizards of the Coast, now available from Atlas Games; Tweet, Jonathan. *The Order of Hermes: A Complete Society of Wizards in a Medieval Setting and Houses of Hermes*; both *Ars Magica* supplements detail the Order in the Mythic Age.
- Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Trans. by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. A cross-cultural study of initiation.
- Waterfield, Robin, trans. *The Theology of Arithmetic: On the Mystical, Mathematical and Cosmological Symbolism of the First Ten Numbers*. This translation of the writings of Iamblichus is the key to Hermetic number theory.
- Webb, Don. *The Seven Faces of Darkness: Practical Typhonian Magick*. A study of the "darker" side of Hermetism, the Typhonian path.

ORDER OF HERMES™

MAGE: The Ascension™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature:
Essence:
Demeanor:

Concept:
Mentor:
Cabal:

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●○○○○	Charisma	●○○○○	Perception	●○○○○
Dexterity	●○○○○	Manipulation	●○○○○	Intelligence	●○○○○
Stamina	●○○○○	Appearance	●○○○○	Wits	●○○○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	○○○○○	Do	○○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	○○○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Cosmology	○○○○○
Awareness	○○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Culture	○○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Enigmas	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Meditation	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Instruction	○○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Intuition	○○○○○	Research	○○○○○	Lore	○○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Stealth	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Survival	○○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○	Technology	○○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Spheres

Correspondence	○○○○○	Life	○○○○○	Prime	○○○○○
Entropy	○○○○○	Mind	○○○○○	Spirit	○○○○○
Forces	●○○○○	Matter	○○○○○	Time	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Aurea		Health	
_____	○○○○○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Willpower	Bruised	-0 <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	○○○○○	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○		Hurt	-1 <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	○○○○○	□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □		Injured	-1 <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	○○○○○		Quintessence	Wounded	-2 <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	○○○○○				Mauled
_____	○○○○○			Crippled	-5 <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	○○○○○			Incapacitated	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	○○○○○				
_____	○○○○○				
_____	○○○○○				
_____	○○○○○				
_____	○○○○○				
_____	○○○○○				

Paradox

Experience

ORDER OF HERMES™

MAGE: The Ascension™

Merits & Flaws

Merit	Type	Cost	Flaw	Type	Bonus

Mastered Arts

Preferred Effects

Talismans

Name	Level	Arete	Quintessence	Appearance

Combat

Weapon	Difficulty	Damage	Range	Rate	Clip	Conceal

Brawling Table		
Maneuver	Difficulty	Damage
Punch	6	Strength
Grapple	6	Strength
Kick	7	Strength+1
Body Slam	7	Special

Armor: _____

ORDER OF HERMES™

MAGE: The Ascension™

Expanded Background

Contacts, Sleeper

Contacts, Awakened

Influence, Sleeper

Allies, Awakened

Resources

Mentor

Familiar

Chantry

Acolytes

Node(s)

Possessions

Gear (Carried)

Equipment (Owned)

Hermetic Instruments

Ritual Style

ORDER OF HERMES™

MAGE: The Ascension™

History

Awakening

Goals/Destiny

Seekings

Quiets

Description

Age

Apparent Age

Date of Birth

Age of Awakening

Hair

Eyes

Race

Nationality

Height

Weight

Sex

Shadow Name

Appearance/Nature of Avatar

Visuals

Cabal Chart

Character Sketch





"In Calligine Abdilus"

Despised by outsiders, the magi of Hermes Trismegistus have perfected their Arts for nearly a thousand years. Through wars with mortals, vampires, Technocrats and their own Companions, these mighty wizards have prevailed.

"In Darkness Hidden"

These wizards are nothing if not determined. Though the covenant may be thrown down, though the wind of unbelief might blow across the globe, these hardy masters keep their faith. To them, power is the only fact — and it's a fact they know well.

"Hail, O Seven Fates of Heaven!"

The secret lore of the Hermetic Tradition comes to light in this, the final Council of Traditions book. *Order of Hermes* includes:

- Arcane insights into the nine Houses of the Hermetic Arts
- Potential crossover for Vampire players
- Lore, spells, ritual tools and more



MAGE



KHAVAN