

# WIZARD WORLD

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This document makes frequent reference to concepts found in *Ars Magica* by Atlas Games (originally developed by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein-Hagen), *Dungeon World* by Sage Kobold Games (Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel), *Apocalypse World* by Lumpley Games (Vincent Baker) and to a lesser extent, *Monsterhearts* by Joe Mcdaldno and *Sagas of the Icelanders* by Gregor Vuga. Wizard World is intended as a tribute to these games and it does not attempt to challenge any Trademark or Copyright owned by their creators.

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Feel free to share any of the original concepts you find here. I love hearing about people making good use of Wizard World so please let me know about your experiences with it:

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<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
ROLL+ .....	5
GOLDEN RULES.....	5
TIME.....	5
“THE FICTION” .....	5
<b>PLAYERS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES.....	6
PLAYER AGENDA.....	6
TROUPE PLAY .....	7
<b>CHARACTER CREATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
CHOOSE A HOUSE.....	8
CHOOSE A NAME .....	8
CHOOSE A LOOK .....	9
CHOOSE STATS .....	9
CHOOSE STARTING MASTERIES.....	9
CHOOSE STARTING MOVES.....	9
INTRODUCE YOUR CHARACTER .....	10
FORM BONDS .....	10
START YOUR LAB.....	10
BUILD THE COVENANT .....	10
CHOOSE COUNCIL ROLES .....	11
WRITE SOME BELIEFS .....	12
CREATE YOUR COMPANION.....	12
<b>HOUSE OF HERMES.....</b>	<b>13</b>
BJORNAER.....	13
BONISAGUS .....	14
CRIAMON.....	15
EX MISCELLANEA.....	16
FLAMBEAU.....	17
GUERNICUS.....	18
JERBITON .....	19
MERINITA .....	20
TREMERE .....	21
TYTALUS .....	22

VERDITIUS.....	23
<b>ADVANCED MOVES.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>COMPANIONS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>THE BASIC MOVES.....</b>	<b>31</b>
RESORT TO VIOLENCE .....	31
AID OR INTERFERE.....	31
DEFY DANGER.....	31
DISCERN REALITIES.....	31
SPOUT LORE .....	31
<b>HERMETIC MAGIC .....</b>	<b>32</b>
THE ORDER .....	32
VIS.....	33
LIMITATIONS OF HERMETIC MAGIC.....	33
MASTERY.....	35
ARCANE MOVES.....	35
USING VIS.....	38
APPRENTICES.....	38
LAB WORK.....	39
MAGIC ITEMS .....	41
RITUALS.....	42
YOUR FAMILIAR.....	43
PARMA MAGICA.....	45
TWILIGHT.....	45
CERTAMEN.....	47
<b>THE COVENANT .....</b>	<b>48</b>
COVENANT CREATION.....	50
<b>SPECIAL MOVES .....</b>	<b>53</b>
BEGINNING OF SESSION .....	53
BONDS.....	53
HARM & HEALING.....	54
SHIELD GROG .....	56
WARBAND COMBAT .....	57
END OF SESSION .....	58

<b>RUNNING WIZARD WORLD</b> .....	<b>59</b>	RITUALS.....	65
WHAT TO SAY.....	59	FRONTS.....	66
AGENDA.....	59	GM CHARACTERS.....	67
PRINCIPLES.....	60	THE FIRST SESSION.....	68
GM MOVES.....	62	FURTHER SESSIONS.....	70
HARM.....	65	CAMPAIGN PACING.....	71
HEALING.....	65		

# INTRODUCTION

## WHY PLAY WIZARD WORLD?

- Because wizards are cool!
- Because freeform, versatile magic allows for fantastic stories.
- Because the consequences of enormous power are very interesting.
- Because semi-competitive play brings out the best in good roleplayers.
- Because troupe-style play lets you contribute to the story through multiple characters.
- Because everyone gets a chance to be a Hardholder, Operator, Chopper, Hocus and Savvyhead.
- Because the system was designed to let the story continue even when players can't make it to every session.
- Because you're interested in exploring Mythic Europe (historical Europe where every myth and faerie tale is true).
- But mostly because wizards are cool.

It is important to note that while this is a hack of Ars Magica, it is not an attempt to recreate all of Ars Magica. The Ars Magica RPG can accommodate a huge variety of campaigns while this hack is a distillation that is intended to capture one specific type of game:

- The characters are young wizards, fresh from their gauntlets.
- They have been granted a charter (permission to establish a new covenant).
- The game revolves around their struggles to establish themselves.

The rules for Bonds, Beliefs, Council and certamen were all designed with the above style of game in mind.

It's also worth noting that, while Ars Magica is a game about magic, Wizard World is a game about people in a small community who use magic as an important source of power. The distinction may not always be obvious, but it informed many of the design decisions.

As with any game Powered by the Apocalypse, Wizard World can be hacked to suit other styles, but if you choose to change these rules, you'll have an easier time if you keep in mind where they came from.

## BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

This text makes certain assumptions about you as a reader. If either of the following are NOT true about you, some of the concepts presented here might not fully make sense.

1. The first, and perhaps most important, assumption is that you're familiar with the Apocalypse Engine that was originally presented in Vincent Baker's *Apocalypse World*. I highly recommend that you pick it up if you haven't already.
2. You should also be familiar with the basic concepts behind Ars Magica, hermetic magic, the Medieval Paradigm and Mythic Europe. I've roughly summarized these concepts in [Hermetic Magic](#) and [The World](#) chapters, but I highly recommend picking up the Ars Magica game for yourself. The 4th Edition PDF is available for free: <http://e23.sjgames.com/item.html?id=AG0204>.

## ROLL+

When the rules tell you to roll+something, it means: Roll 2 six-sided dice and add the results. Then add a modifier (that's the "something"). If the total is 7 or higher you got a "hit". A 10+ is a solid hit and means full success or even a bonus. A 7-9 is successful but with a cost or compromise. On a 6 or less the GM says what happens.

## GOLDEN RULES

Unless it is specifically stated otherwise, the following two rules apply to every move in this game.

### REQUISITES

The requisites rule says that if a move calls for you to make a roll based on one of multiple stats, always use only the **lowest** modifier.

### THE RULE OF 5

The rule of 5 says that no matter how many modifiers you gain, you can never add more than 5 to any roll.

## TIME

Like most Powered by the Apocalypse games, Wizard World is fairly abstract about time. There are no rounds or turns or any of the specific delineations found in most RPGs. Wizard World does, however, make frequent reference to seasons and scenes. A season is exactly what it sounds like: a period of about 3 months that has certain weather patterns associated with it. A scene, on the other hand, is an abstract unit of storytelling time. It could be a council meeting, a conversation or a battle. It's really up to the group to decide exactly how long a scene is, but if you think of it in terms of a scene in a movie you're on the right track.

## "THE FICTION"

As the game progresses, the GM will describe various settings and situations, and she'll look to you to decide what your character wants to say and do. This conversation may result in moves being triggered (the mechanical side of the rules) and it will always result in changes to the plot of the story the group is telling. In Apocalypse World games, this story is often referred to as "the fiction."

The principle of "lead with the fiction," is a very important contribution the players can make to the game. Leading with the fiction means describing the actions your character takes first, and calling moves out by name second (or not at all if the GM asks you for a roll).

Note that unlike many other RPGs, having something listed on your character sheet doesn't mean you can use it all the time. Each move has a trigger, which requires the correct circumstances to be present in the fiction.

In order for Wizard World to function as intended, the fiction needs to be the first and primary consideration at all times. Focus on creating a cool story and remember that the rules are only here to drive and support your storytelling. It's up to everyone at the table to ensure the consistency of the rules and the fiction.

For this reason, many of the events that take place in the game will not result in numeric changes or modifiers to rolls. Instead, we say that the changes created by these events simply become "true in the fiction." In many ways, such fictional changes can be far more influential and powerful than mechanical changes.

I've tried to include some examples along the way to illustrate this principle, but I also recommend becoming part of the Apocalypse World community, as there are many people that are much smarter than me who have written reams of great stuff on this very subject.

# PLAYERS

Players in Wizard World have four responsibilities and a four point agenda.

## PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Say what your character says.
- Say what your character is trying to do.
- Answer the GM's questions about your character's life and surroundings.
- Maintain your playbooks.

### Say what your character says

Everyone has their own style and comfort level, but try to speak in character at least once in a while. It adds to your immersion in the game and to the tone of the session as a whole.

### Say what your character is trying to do

It can be fun to toss around ideas and speculation, but do your best to focus on what your character is actually trying to do in the moment.

### Answer the GM's questions about your character's life and surroundings

When the GM asks you a question, she is presenting you with a golden opportunity to add to Mythic Europe and Wizard World. Keep in mind that your answers become part of the fiction, so do your best to come up with something appropriate to the story the group is trying to tell. Also remember that your answer is about *your* character and their experience of the world, not someone else's. With that in mind, follow the "No Blocking" rule from improv theatre - you can establish new facts or add to existing

ones, you shouldn't contradict or negate something that has already been established by another player or the GM.

### Maintain your playbooks

The mechanical details of your character are recorded on a playbook (aka character sheet). It is your responsibility to keep your playbook accurate and up to date. The group as a whole is responsible for maintaining the covenant playbook.

## PLAYER AGENDA

- Play your character as a real person.
- Remember what your character has been through.
- Remember what your character is capable of.
- Work with the covenant but have your own agenda.

### Play your character as a real person

Sure, the game is set in a fantasy world where impossible things happen all the time, but always remember that this world is real to your character. Do your best to make decisions for him accordingly.

### Remember what your character has been through

Apprentices are usually selected before their 10<sup>th</sup> birthdays. Who was your character before he or she was taken for training? Rich? Poor? 5<sup>th</sup> son? 1<sup>st</sup> daughter? Orphan? City dweller? Farmer?

What were the circumstances of your selection? What was it about you that attracted the attention of The Order? Sourceless blinking lights, unexplainable fires and floating dinner plates are all signs of an untrained Gift.

Your apprenticeship was at least 15 years of constant study and hard work. Many masters treat their apprentices as little more than slaves during their apprenticeship. What kind of person was your master? What kind of relationship did you have?

To become a full member of The Order each magus must pass a gauntlet - a series of trials designed by the master to test the student's arcane mastery. What kind of gauntlet did you endure? How difficult was it? How has it marked you?

### **Remember what your character is capable of**

A trained maga of The Order is a force beyond the ken of most mortals. Even fresh from her gauntlet she can slay a handful of soldiers with some words and gestures or command the local lord's mind with her thoughts. Magic is a powerful tool and, for all its risks, it opens many, many doors. Think big!

### **Work with the covenant but have your own agenda**

Wizard World centres on a small gathering of magi known as a covenant. All PC magi are equal while inside the covenant, and its survival depends on their cooperation. At the same time, covenant resources are limited and only through planning and politics can you hope to fully realize your magi's potential.

This semi-competitive environment is integral to a Wizard World campaign and the rules for Bonds, Council and certamen (among others) were written specifically to encourage and support a certain amount of political infighting.

Within the rules presented here, each group needs to agree what is considered an acceptable amount of PvP. Especially when dealing with people you don't know well, be sure to clearly define the separation between in-game competition and out-of-game hostility.

## **TROUPE PLAY**

One of the concepts often associated with Ars Magica is “troupe style” play. In essence this refers to two main ideas:

- Each player has multiple characters.
- The role of GM passes from player to player as the campaign progresses.

### **Multiple Characters**

Wizard World addresses the idea of multiple characters by giving each wizard a Companion. The home base or Covenant that the players create together will also contain a large number of less powerful characters known as grogs. Both types of secondary characters can play as great or small a part in the on going story as the group is comfortable with.

Both mechanically and fictionally, neither companions nor grogs will have anything close to the power and options available to the magi. This is intentional (it is called Wizard World after all), but it doesn't mean you can't focus on these secondary characters once in a while. Remember “The Fiction”, and celebrate the story possibilities inherent to mundane folks swept along in the grand machinations of the comparatively godlike magi.

### **Multiple GMs**

While there is nothing specifically written into the rules to support a rotating GM role, it should work just fine. The Ars Magica books have some excellent suggestions on how to get the most out of such a campaign, and there are dozens of articles on the subject across the Internet.

# CHARACTER CREATION

## CHOOSE A HOUSE

Each of the 11 Houses in The Order has its own unique perspective on magic and the world in general. Your choice of House is an important first step in finding out who your character is.

The Houses are split into three types: True Lineages, Mystery Cults and Gatherings.

### TRUE LINEAGES

In order to join a true lineage, a member of the House must apprentice you. It is not possible to join later.

**Bonisagus:** Internal politics or research

**Guernicus:** quaesitors, judges, internal policing

**Tremere:** rigidly organized, certamen experts

### MYSTERY CULTS

Mystery cults focus their attention on one aspect of magic or the magical world. This focus is typically passed from master to apprentice, but it is possible to join later if the correct aptitude is displayed.

**Bjornaer:** Heartbeast, shapechanging, animalistic nature

**Criamon:** Seek the enigma, higher twilight, tattoos, not interested in politics

**Merinita:** faeries

**Verditius:** magic item crafting, poor spell casting

### GATHERINGS

Magi who don't fit into one of the other Houses join one of the Gatherings. This may be a result of temperament (Flambeau), preference (Tytalus), aptitude (Jerbiton) or a lack of formal training (Ex Miscellanea). All four gatherings train their own apprentices, but it is also possible to have joined after passing your gauntlet.

**Ex Miscellanea:** hedge wizards

**Flambeau:** violence

**Jerbiton:** external politics, gentle gift

**Tytalus:** perfection through conflict

Take a look through the playbooks for more detailed descriptions of the Houses and see the Ars Magica sourcebooks for in-depth treatments (4th Edition PDF is available for free from Atlas Games <http://e23.sjgames.com/item.html?id=AG0204>).

## CHOOSE A NAME

Each playbook has a list of names appropriate to the House. Note that this is the character's Hermetic name, which is distinct from her birth name. Choose one that sounds good to you.



## CHOOSE A LOOK

Each playbook lists descriptors for the magi's eyes, hair, body, clothing and sigil. Choose the combination that best matches your vision for your character then expand on them a bit to make them your own.

Note that the term Wizard's Sigil has three aspects:

1. A unique feature of the magi's magic, such as a smell, sound, or visible manifestation. Choose this from the list on your playbook.
2. A unique shape and pattern that serves as the magi's signature. Draw this in the box provided on your playbook.
3. A physical object inscribed with your sigil's unique shape and pattern that is used in voting at Tribunals and councils.

## CHOOSE STATS

### Mundane Stats

Assign the following values to your character's mundane stats in any order: +2, +1, 0, -1.

**Body:** as in toughness, strength

**Quick:** as in reflexes, agility, speed

**Mind:** as in memory, awareness, learning

**Spirit:** as in willpower, charisma

### Arcane Stats

**Book:** as in spellbook - the quantity and quality of the wizard's research

**Orthodox:** as in the degree to which you understand and conform to the tenets of the Code and expectations of The Order.

Assign +1 to one of your arcane stats and 0 to the other.

### Age

Roll 1d6 and add the result to 23 to determine your starting age.

## CHOOSE STARTING MASTERIES

The 15 hermetic arts (5 techniques and 10 forms) are listed on your playbook. Each art is rated from -1 (just opened) to +3 (sublime mastery). The higher the maga's rating in an art, the more consistently she can use it to weave spells.

The arts are discussed in more detail in Hermetic Magic.

1. Spend 6 points to represent the training and experience you received during your apprenticeship.
  - Spending 1 point sets an art at +1
  - 2 points sets an art at +2
  - 3 points sets an art at +3
2. Next choose 2 arts to set at 0 to reflect some amount of aptitude and/or experience.
3. All remaining arts begin at -1. Each Master is required to at least open all 15 arts as part of training an apprentice.

## CHOOSE STARTING MOVES

Each playbook presents one or more choices of starting moves/benefits and limitations associated with your House.

## INTRODUCE YOUR CHARACTER

You should now have a reasonable idea of where your character is heading. Don't feel any pressure to know everything about her – finding that out is a big part of the fun of playing the game. Take the information you've got so far and use it to introduce your character to the party. With the notable exception of House Ex Miscellanea, magi generally use the name of their House in place of a surname. (Publius of House Jerbiton for example).

Give a brief description of your looks, expanding a bit on the suggestions in your playbook to make them your own.

## FORM BONDS

Bonds are mechanical expressions of your relationships with the other covenant members. They represent how well you know your allies as well as how effectively you can manipulate them.

Write the names of all the other covenant magi on the appropriate lines of your playbook.

Fill in the associated values by answering the Bond questions for your House. You may answer the following questions to form additional bonds:

- Which of the other magi are you closest to? Mark +2 next to their name.
- Which of the other magi is your greatest rival? Mark +1 next to their name.

Mark a 0 next to the names of the other magi.

Each Bond question you answer should involve a conversation with the person the Bond is with. For example, if you decide one

of the other magi is your greatest rival, ask the other player if she agrees (you don't need to change your Bond based on her answer, just explore your shared history from both perspectives). If one of the other magi's answers doesn't make sense to you, have a discussion about why you look at the world so differently.

## START YOUR LAB

In addition to your living space, which may or may not be attached to your lab, choose one of the following features of your lab as part of establishing the covenant.

**Scriptorium:** space and materials for writing and binding books

**Forge:** space and tools for crafting items

**Apothecary:** space and tools for experimentation

**Security:** mundane, infernal, faerie

Your lab is automatically protected from arcane magic other than yours, but you can also use rituals and special materials to shield your workspace from the infernal and faerie realms. Magi who are concerned about mundane assault may also construct physical barriers (walls, doors, gates, traps, etc.)

## BUILD THE COVENANT

The Covenant is the centre of a Wizard World campaign. It serves as a secure home base for all of the characters and is the place where most of their crafting and research will be done. While *Ars Magica* deals with a wide variety of covenants, *Wizard World* focuses specifically on those starting in the spring phase (though they may become very powerful over the course of the campaign).

Spring covenants are those in the earliest part of their development. The magi have just come together and must collaborate to establish and stabilize their resources, relationships and defences. See [Covenant Creation](#) for more details.

## CHOOSE COUNCIL ROLES

There are six primary roles to fill on the Covenant Council. If you have more than six players in your group (which I don't recommend) you'll have more than one Vicarius.

### Primus

The oldest magus in the covenant is the Primus. If multiple magi are the same age, either vote or determine randomly.

When dealing with The Order outside the covenant, you are considered the first among equals. Among other things, this means you must represent the covenant at Tribunals.

During Councils, you are expected to enforce rules of order. You do not vote on council business, but you do cast the deciding vote if a matter before the council is deadlocked.

### Librarian

The second role necessary to form a quorum in the council is the Librarian. Bonisagus and Tremere are good fits for this role, but any house can potentially complete the associated duties.

In council meetings you are responsible for guiding discussion and ensuring that critical business receives adequate attention. You are also responsible for monitoring and maintaining the covenant library.

### Bursar

The third role necessary for a council quorum is the Bursar.

You are responsible for maintaining and disbursing vis gathered in the covenant. The Code forbids an individual magus from owning vis, so all decisions about its use are technically part of the covenant's (and therefore your) purview.

### Liaison

If the covenant has a maga of House Jerbiton, they should be the first choice for this role. If they are filling another role or if Jerbiton is not represented, choose the maga with the highest Spirit, choose by vote, or choose randomly.

While the Code forbids working for any mundane lord or for the Church, The Order recognizes that a covenant must coexist with these other forces. Your job is to ensure that relations with them remain within the Code and do not threaten the safety of the covenant or Order.

### Militant

Traditionally this role is first filled by a maga of House Flambeau, then by a maga of House Tytalus. If neither House is represented, or if they are filling other roles, choose by vote or determine randomly.

You are responsible for the defence of the covenant. Most Militants focus on magical defences and defer the physical defences to the Turb Captain or Knight if one is available.

### Vicarius

A Vicarius is only chosen if there is a 6<sup>th</sup> magi on the council and all of the other roles have been filled.

You receive one vote on any matter before the council and may present your own business. If any other council role is vacant, you are expected to fulfil the duties of that role until its usual occupant returns or is appointed.

## WRITE SOME BELIEFS

Beliefs are simple statements that help remind you what is most important to your character. Acting according to your beliefs is one of the ways you can earn experience.

You should write one belief that indicates your feelings about each of the following:

- **The Covenant.** How do you feel about the covenant you've been assigned to? Do you have any goals for it?
- **The Order.** How do you feel about The Order and the Code?
- **The World.** How do you see yourself fitting into the world outside The Order? What about forces from the other realms (faerie, divine, infernal)?

The key to writing good beliefs is to make them easy and obvious. Don't worry about cliché; these should be aspects of your character that you were going to play anyway – the simpler and more direct the better.

In addition to earning xp, beliefs are one way for you to say to the GM, "This is what I want to do in this campaign!"

If you find that you haven't earned experience for a belief after a few sessions, change it! You can change one of your beliefs each session during the Beginning of Session moves.

## CREATE YOUR COMPANION

Each player chooses one of the profiles in the Companions chapter to represent a mundane person their magus has formed a bond with.

Each companion has a special move and many also contribute a special benefit to the covenant based on their profession.

# HOUSE OF HERMES

## BJORNAER

### Names

Bastian, Beatrix, Cecilia, Cornelius, Felix, Laurenz, Margrit, Silvester, Silvanus

### Bond Questions

\_\_\_\_\_ may not be Bjornaer, but they can hear the call of their heartbeast. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ is blind to their own bestial nature. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

### BJORNAER MOVES

All Bjornaer magi gain the following move:

#### Shapechange

When you **turn your focus inward and call upon your heartbeast**, roll+Spirit. On a 10+ hold 3. On a 7–9 hold 2. On a miss hold 1 in addition to whatever the GM says.

You take on the physical form of a specific animal, known as your heartbeast. Your possessions and clothing meld with your body you and you polymorph into a perfect copy of the species' form. You have any innate abilities and weaknesses of the form: size, claws, wings, gills, tough hide. You still use your normal stats but some moves may be harder to trigger based on your new shape. In addition to things innate to the form, work with the GM to determine one or more special moves. Spend 1 hold to make one of those moves. You can remain in this form as long as you like and you may revert to your natural form at any time.

And choose one:

#### Wild Senses

Your eyesight, hearing and sense of smell are unusually acute, even while you are in human form.

or

#### Predator

Your heartbeast is a dangerous creature (wolf, bear, wild cat, boar or similar) and you have embraced your predatory instincts. When you are in animal form you count as a trained combatant and your teeth and claws are exceptionally dangerous weapons.

#### STARTING LIMITATION

Bjornaer magi are not capable of creating a familiar (they scorn familiars as “substitute heartbeasts”).

Choose one:

#### Deficiency with Ignem

-1 to any roll that involves both magic and fire. You are also not able to achieve mastery of Ignem. Bjornaer magi generally mistrust the destructive nature of fire and often decide not to rely on it.

or

#### Blatant Gift

Your wild nature is deeply disturbing to non-magical beings.

#### Experience

When you make the End of Session move, mark experience if during the session your heartbeast proved critical to overcoming a problem.

## **BONISAGUS**

### **Names**

Akilina, Adrian, Favian, Felicia, Horacio, Konstantine, Laurentin, Lavena

### **Bond Questions**

\_\_\_\_\_ shows great promise and is an asset to the Order. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ doesn't fully appreciate the time-tested principles of the Order and hermetic magic. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

### **BONISAGUS MOVES**

Choose a specialty and gain the corresponding bonus:

#### **Politics**

+1 Orthodox (max +3)

or

#### **Magical Theory**

+1 Book (max +3).

And choose one:

#### **Brilliant**

You are exceptionally bright, even among the magi of The Order.

+1 Mind.

or

#### **Widely Read**

When you Spout Lore, treat a result of 7-9 as a 10+ and a result of 6- as a 7-9.

### **STARTING LIMITATION**

Choose one:

#### **Deficiency with X**

Bonisagus magi often focus so heavily on one type of magic that they ignore another. Take -1 ongoing to all rolls involving the chosen form or technique.

#### **Blatant Gift**

The intensity of your magical studies magnifies the unease non-magical beings feel in your presence.

#### **Experience**

When you make the End of Session move, mark experience if you made a significant contribution to the covenant during the session.

## **CRIAMON**

### **Names**

Abelinda, Cyrene, Erasme, Marinus, Nephele, Pavel, Ramak, Thalia

### **Bond Questions**

The Enigma has revealed part of \_\_\_\_\_'s soul to you. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ cannot truly see past the mundane world around them. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

### **CRIAMON MOVES**

All Criamon magi gain the following move:

#### **The Enigma**

When you attempt to comprehend a Twilight experience you may add your Book stat as well as your Mind stat (+5 max).

And choose one:

#### **Mysterious**

Your studies and connection to the other realms have strengthened your will. Spirit +1

or

#### **Disturbing**

When you **recognize that someone is about to attack you**, roll+Spirit. On a 10+ they hesitate or cower and do nothing for a moment. On a 7-9 they don't attack you, but they might go after one of your companions.

### **STARTING LIMITATION**

Choose one:

#### **Blatant Gift**

Your immersion in the deeper mysteries of magic makes you very disturbing to non-magical beings.

or

#### **Obsessed**

When you experience a warping event, you automatically enter Twilight (don't bother rolling).

-1 Orthodox

#### **Experience**

When you make the End of Session move, mark experience if you experienced a warping event during the session.

## EX MISCELLANEA

See Arcane Affinity for suggestions on creating a look and name for your magi.

### Bond Questions

\_\_\_\_\_ recognizes that your differences can also be strengths. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ is blinded by their prejudices. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

### ARCANE AFFINITY

Your training emphasized one form or technique. You have mastery +2 of this art (in addition to the arts all magi master during apprenticeship). This form or technique should inform your personal style and outlook on magic.

A few ideas to get you started:

Creo	Fascinated by the act of creation. Bright, bold colours and outgoing personality.
Intellego	Devoted to learning and research. Scrolls, quills, books, parchment.
Muto	Obsessed with change. Robes and pouches arranged differently every day.
Perdo	Obsessed with decay and death. Dark robes with a deep hood.
Rego	Fascinated by movement and manipulating objects. Practical clothing; juggles or rolls a coin across her knuckles.
Animal	Has several pets, possibly even a bird's nest in his hair...
Aquam	Loves the colour blue. Perhaps seaweed woven in the hair.
Auram	Distant and ethereal. Wears light greys and blues.

Corpus	Fascinated by the human body. Carries many small knives and surgery tools.
Herbam	Only wears browns and greens. Carries an elaborate staff.
Ignem	Wears bright red, orange and yellow. Favours flashy jewelry.
Imaginem	Carefully examines and appreciates things in great detail. Fascinated by physical appearances.
Mentem	Distant and thoughtful. Seemingly uninterested in the world around her.
Terram	Wears dark brown and feels uncomfortable without his feet on the ground.
Vim	A true student of magic itself. Fascinated by one of the realms in particular – that choice will inform her look.

### STARTING LIMITATIONS

All magi of House Ex Miscellanea have the following limitations:

#### Disrespected

Magi of House Ex Miscellanea are often seen as lesser mages or "hedge wizards" by members of the other Houses. -1 Orthodox.

#### Arcane Deficiency

Your training excluded one form or technique. Choose an art you have -1 mastery of (if your affinity is a technique, your deficiency must also be a technique). You are never able to increase mastery of that art.

#### Experience

When you make the End of Session move, mark experience if, during the session you solved an interesting or important problem by using the art you have an arcane affinity with.



## **FLAMBEAU**

### **Names**

Arsenius, Hadriana, Julius, Liviticus, Longinus, Sirena, Valentina, Ziska

### **Bond Questions**

\_\_\_\_\_ has the soul of a warrior. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ is too weak to fight for what they believe. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

### **FLAMBEAU MOVES**

All Flambeau magi have the following benefit:

#### **Violent**

Any time you use magic to inflict harm, inflict additional harm.

And choose one:

#### **Soldier**

In addition to your arcane training, your apprenticeship included weapon training equivalent to what a knight's squire would receive. You count as a trained combatant for purposes of Resort to Violence and otherwise determining harm.

or

#### **Tough**

Your training has hardened you against physical damage. +1 Body.

### **STARTING LIMITATION**

Choose one:

#### **Blatant Gift**

Your desire to use magic for violence makes you especially disturbing to non-magical creatures.

or

### **Bad Temper**

When you encounter a situation that frustrates or angers you, roll+Spirit. On a 10+ it's business as usual. On a 7-9 either lash out with your magic and harm someone or something, or choose one.

- You take -1 ongoing for the rest of the scene.
- Your choleric humour becomes imbalanced.

### **Experience**

When you make the End of Session move, mark experience if you used your magic to inflict harm during the session (not necessarily with the Vulnero move).

## GUERNICUS

### Names

Ajax, Augusta, Benedict, Dominus, Fabiana, Geneva, Gordianus, Tacitus

### Bond Questions

\_\_\_\_\_’s respect and compliance with the Code is admirable. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ does not understand the true value of the Code. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

### GUERNICUS MOVES

All Guernicus magi have the following move:

#### Quaesitor

When you **use your status in The Order to make a ruling on a contentious matter related to The Code**, roll+Orthodox. On a 10+ your ruling stands and all magi involved must comply or be in violation of The Code. On a 7-9 the GM chooses one.

- You left a loophole that a learned maga could use to ignore at least one aspect of your ruling.
- You made a small error in your ruling that could come back to haunt you someday.
- While your ruling was correct, it infuriated one or more of the magi involved and they won't soon forget it. The affected magi gain +1 Bond with you.

On a miss, in addition to whatever else the GM decides, everyone present knows you've misinterpreted part of The Code in your ruling and your reputation as a Quaesitor will suffer for it.

### STARTING LIMITATION

#### Dutybound

Once per year your superiors in The Order may give you an assignment that takes you away from the covenant and your personal agendas for a season. You do not earn experience during this season and you may not contribute to your own research or to the covenant.

#### Covenant Benefit

Instead of choosing one of the options available to all magi, a Guernicus maga has the option to act as a formal Quaesitor for the region. This adds +authority to the covenant.

#### Experience

When you make the End of Session move, mark experience if, during the session, you made a decision based on your interpretation of the Code despite it inconveniencing you.

## **JERBITON**

### **Names**

Aemelius, Antonia, Aquila, Caelia, Caius, Cyprian, Laudinus, Luciana, Octavia, Publius

### **Bond Questions**

\_\_\_\_\_ can see how important it is to work with the mundanes rather than against them. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ is a slave to their baser urges. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

### **JERBITON MOVES**

All Jerbiton magi have the following benefit:

#### **Gentle Gift**

You were chosen for training by House Jerbiton in part because your Gift is less disturbing to non-magical beings.

And choose one:

#### **Charismatic**

Your nature and training have honed your ability to work with others. +1 Spirit (max +3).

or

#### **Diplomat**

When you Discern Realities in a negotiation, treat a result of 7-9 as a 10+ and a result of 6- as a 7-9.

### **STARTING LIMITATION**

Choose one:

#### **Non-combatant**

Jerbiton magi generally prefer words to fireballs. Whenever you use magic to inflict harm, you always inflict lesser harm.

or

#### **Pacifist**

You are unable to inflict harm on a living creature with your magic. Gain +1 to any arcane or mundane stat (max +3).

#### **Covenant Benefit**

Instead of choosing one of the options available to all magi, a Jerbiton magus has the option to contribute a positive connection to the local feudal lord. Work with your GM to establish the details of your connection.

#### **Experience**

When you make the End of Session move, mark experience if you established a new relationship during the session (for yourself or for the covenant).

## MERINITA

### Names

Achaius, Drusus, Floriana, Glaucia, Insolitus, Miriam, Plinius, Sergius

### Bond Questions

\_\_\_\_\_ appreciates the beauty and mystery of the fae. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook

\_\_\_\_\_ is a slave to logic and reason. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

### MERINITA MOVES

Choose one of the following:

#### Goblin Blood

You are descended from the dark faeries who rule the lands of darkness and cold. You are short, squat, and ill favoured by humanity. Your Spirit can never be higher than +1 but you can see in the dark as if it was twilight and you take +1 ongoing to the healing moves.

Choose one:

**Savage:** Your goblin blood makes you dangerous in a scuffle. You count as a trained combatant for Resort to Violence.

or

**Fast:** Despite your small stature you can run faster than most adult humans and gain +1 Quick (max +3).

#### Sidhe Blood

You are descended from one of the noble Sidhe who rule the lands of summer and sunlight. The striking and unusual qualities of your nature add +1 to your Spirit (max +3). Many mortals may consider you fascinating or alluring (this does not block the negative aspects of the Gift).

Choose one:

**Woodland Fae:** You may move over natural obstacles such as dense undergrowth, rocky terrain or deep snow as though you were on a smooth road.

or

**Fae Court:** When you **make eye contact with someone who is about to attack you**, roll+Spirit. On a 10+ they hesitate and do nothing but stare at you for a moment. On a 7-9 they don't attack you, but they might go after one of your companions.

### Covenant Benefit

In addition to the options available to all magi, a Merinita magus has the option to contribute a connection to the nearest faerie court. Work with your GM to establish the nature of the fae who live there.

### Experience

When you make the End of Session move, mark experience if you learned something new and significant about faeries and/or the fae realm.

## TREMERE

### Names

Cassia, Claudia, Decimus, Horatia, Regula, Severianus, Thracius, Urs

### Bond Questions

\_\_\_\_\_’s behaviour shows proper respect for their elders and the Order. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ fails to understand the value of obedience and decorum. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

### TREMERE MOVES

All Tremere magi have the following advantage:

#### Certamen Mastery

You may ignore the rule of requisites when making rolls during certamen (you may choose which ever Art has a higher modifier).

And choose one:

#### Tactician

When you Discern Realities in a combat situation, treat a result of 7-9 as a 10+ and a result of 6- as a 7-9.

or

#### Logical

+1 Mind (max +3)

### STARTING LIMITATION

All Tremere magi have the following limitations:

#### No Sigil

A Tremere magi’s vote at Tribunal is held by his parens until he manages to defeat her in certamen.

### Honourbound

Your House superiors expect to be able to call on you at any time. Failure to accommodate their requests can have dramatic consequences.

### Experience

When you make the End of Session move, mark experience if during the session you resolved a dispute through certamen.

# TYTALUS

## Names

Augustus, Laurentina, Lucanus, Marcus, Maximus, Nero, Soteris, Viktor

## Bond Questions

\_\_\_\_\_ is both strong and resourceful. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ is complacent and will soon be left behind. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

## TYTALUS MOVES

All Tytalus magi have the following benefit.

### Inner Strength

Once per scene, when you make an arcane move, you may choose to imbalance one of your humours and get a 12+ result rather than rolling.

And choose one:

### Puissant Casting

Choose one of the Arcane Moves. You take +1 ongoing to that move while you are in direct competition with someone.

or

### Combatant

You count as a trained combatant for purposes of Resort to Violence and otherwise determining harm.

## STARTING LIMITATIONS

Tytalus magi share a common limitation:

## Competitive Nature

When you encounter a situation that would provide a challenge to your magical abilities, either pursue the challenge at any cost, or choose one.

- You take -1 ongoing for the rest of the scene.
- Your choleric humour becomes imbalanced.

## Experience

When you make the End of Session move, mark experience if you pursued a challenge to your magical abilities despite personal cost.

## VERDITIUS

### Names

Excudo, Fabrica, Fornia, Labos, Pactus, Procuda, Ubertus, Usus

### Bond Questions

\_\_\_\_\_ has the soul of a craftsman. Mark +2 next to their name on your playbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ is impractical and overly concerned with ethereal matters. Mark -1 next to their name on your playbook.

### VERDITIUS MOVES

All Verditius magi have the following benefit:

#### Verditius Magic

Add your Book stat twice to all rolls involving the crafting of magic items (the rule of 5 still applies).

And choose one:

#### Craftsman

You are an expert craftsman, capable of creating exceptional works of your own in addition to overseeing the work of many

apprentices and labourers. Choose an area of expertise or make up your own (armoursmith, weaponsmith, stonemason, woodcarver).  
or

#### Hearty

Time spent working with stone and metal has made you strong and healthy. +1 Body

#### STARTING LIMITATION

All Verditius magi have the following limitation:

#### Verditius Magic

You take -1 ongoing to arcane moves other than Codex and Protego. In addition, you must craft a small tool or implement to accompany each spell you record. If you lack the implement you are not able to cast the spell.

#### Experience

When you make the end of session move, mark experience if you made significant progress on your current magical project.

# ADVANCED MOVES

Numbered moves must be taken in order (for example: Arcane Intuition I must be taken before Arcane Intuition II), otherwise any move can be selected during the Beginning of Session move by paying experience points equal to 3 plus the magi's current number of advanced moves.

Note that some advanced moves are only available to certain hermetic houses. Check your playbook.

## **Adept Student**

When you make the master an art move, you may choose to master two arts during the season instead of one (provided the library has adequate coverage of the two arts you are studying). You still only spend one rook of vis.

## **Arcane Intuition I**

When you make the Specto move you may ask one additional question, even on a miss.

## **Arcane Intuition II**

When you make the Specto move and roll a 7-9 you may choose the arcane mishap.

## **Arcane Intuition III**

When someone else is casting a ritual that requires an arcane connection, you may provide that connection as long as you have been in the physical presence of the target at some point. You may not use this ability in combination with Mercurian Magic.

## **Brilliant Writer**

When you make the Contribute to the Library move, you either add coverage of two different arts or you can increase the coverage of a single art by two degrees (none -> advanced or basic -> complete).

All other rules related to the Contribute to the Library move still apply.

Also, unlike most magi, other hermetic magi can understand your lab texts and spellbook notes. Another magi can copy up to two spells from your spellbook as a single lab move instead of having to spend seasons inventing their own versions (it still costs them one vis).

Similarly, another magi can use one of your magic item lab texts to complete the Research a Magic Item move in a few weeks rather than a full season.

## **Diedne Magic**

You have mastered the old and forbidden practices of the druidic followers of Diedne. When making any of the arcane moves (except Codex) you may ignore the rule of requisites. You also take -1 ongoing to the Codex move. (You cannot have both this move and Flawless Formulaic or Mercurian Magic).

## **Elementalist**

You gain +1 to your mastery of the *Aquam*, *Auram*, *Ignem* and *Terram* arts. You also take +1 ongoing to arcane moves that use these forms. However, you also lose mastery of the *Animal*, *Corpus*, *Imaginem* and *Mentem* arts and cannot achieve mastery of those arts in the future.

## **Embrace of the Enigma**

When you make the enter twilight move, on a 13+ you disappear for weeks instead of months; on a 10-12 days instead of weeks; on a 7-9 hours instead of days, and on 6- seconds instead of minutes.



### **Enduring Magic**

When you make an arcane move with concentration duration you may instead choose to have the spell last for the rest of the scene. This does not apply to your spellbook spells.

### **Fast Caster I**

Hermetic spells typically take five to ten seconds to cast. Through talent and/or rigorous training, you have cut that time in half. In any circumstance where casting speed is a factor, you automatically get to start your arcane move before anyone else.

### **Fast Caster II**

When you make the Fugio move and roll a 7-9 you may choose the arcane mishap.

### **Fast Caster III**

When you make the Fugio move and roll a 12+ you may turn the threat back on itself.

### **Flawless Formulaic**

When you make the Codex move, treat a 7-9 as 10+ and 6- as 7-9. (You cannot have both this move and Diedne Magic or Mercurian Magic).

### **Great Focus**

When you weave the art you chose as your affinity, you may ignore the rule of requisites (you may choose to use its modifier instead of a lower art). However, you are incapable of using your deficient art at all.

### **Hermetic Prestige**

+1 Orthodox (max +3)

### **Inspirational**

+1 Orthodox (max +3)

### **Inventive Genius**

+1 Book (max +3)

### **Language of the Forge**

You can make the Research a Magic Item and Open the Base for a Magic Item moves as a single lab activity.

### **Mediator**

When you **weave an arcane technique and form with the intent to calm a tense situation**, roll+Art. On a hit, anyone or anything who can see or hear you is unable to take hostile actions while you concentrate. On a 7-9 the GM will also choose an arcane mishap.

### **Mercurian Magic**

You are especially adept at leveraging multiple assistants to create grand spells. When performing a ritual, you may substitute additional magi for up to five requisites. Your GM will let you know what the final requirements are once you determine how many helpers will participate. (You cannot have both this move and Diedne Magic or Flawless Formulaic).

### **Mythic Blood**

Someone in your bloodline was a powerful arcane force. This might be one of the Founders or maybe even a dragon. As your arcane power grows, your ancestor's influence allows you to raise one of your hermetic stats by 1 (max +3). The down side of Mythic Blood is that when you draw unwanted attention, it will be from more powerful forces than your lesser-blooded companions.

### **Penetration**

Your magic is capable of penetrating a Hermetic opponent's Parma Magica.

### **Puppet Master I**

When you make the Suadeo move and roll a 7-9 you may choose the arcane mishap.

### **Puppet Master II**

When you make the Suadeo move you gain 1 hold. You may spend that hold to choose one from the list later in the scene.

### **Puppet Master III**

Add the following choice to your list of options for the Suadeo move:

- The spell has Sun duration (it lasts until the next sunrise or sunset).

### **Quiet Magic**

You are capable of casting spells without having to speak in a loud voice.

### **Specialist**

When you weave a spell using an art you have specialized in, you may always use its mastery level, ignoring the rule of requisites.

### **Study Bonus**

+1 Book (max +3)

### **Subtle Magic**

You are capable of casting spells without having to use obvious gestures.

### **Supreme Focus**

(requires Great Focus)

When you weave the art you chose as your affinity, you may add the modifier twice (the rule of 5 still applies).

### **Teacher**

When you make the train your apprentice move, treat 7-9 as a 10+ and 6- as a 7-9. Also, you can spend a season teaching up to three other magi to master any art you have a higher mastery level of in lieu of them needing access to a library with adequate coverage (this counts as a lab activity for the season).

### **War Wizardry I**

When you make the Vulnero move and roll a 7-9 you may choose the arcane mishap.

### **War Wizardry II**

When you make the Vulnero move and roll a hit you may choose a 3rd effect.

### **War Wizardry III**

Add the following choice to your list of options for the Vulnero move.

- Your target is now a large area instead of an individual.

### **Worldly Training**

Increase one of your mundane stats by one (max +3).

# COMPANIONS

Each magi has at least one mundane associate with whom they have developed a close relationship. This relationship may include friendship, but it doesn't have to.

An individual who has formed a bond with a magus is invariably exceptional in some way – either in intelligence, bravery, strength or perhaps all three. These exceptional qualities make companion characters stand out from the crowd – while they may not be as powerful as a maga of The Order, they are still heroes in their own right.

A companion's abilities exist primarily in “the fiction”. Once a fact has been established about a companion – be it physical capacity, belongings or tendencies – that fact is true until fictional circumstances dictate otherwise. A merchant with a ship has the benefit of that ship. A knight with a warhorse and armour benefits both from the quality of his equipment and from his lifetime of training and experience as a fighter. There is usually no need to roll for such things – they are either true or not.

Each companion has a special move related to their core competency and many also have abilities that make a contribution to the covenant as a whole.

Companions have only one stat: Competence, which starts at +1. Each of the special moves listed with each companion will specify when to roll+Competence. If a companion triggers a Basic Move, there are two possible situations:

1. The move is in line with the companion's established abilities: roll+Competence.
2. The move is not in line with the companion's established abilities: roll+0.

Companions are either Healthy, Unhealthy (-1 to Competence), or Taken Out, depending on the harm they suffer.

## COMPANION ADVANCEMENT

Companions do not earn experience themselves, but a player may allocate experience from his magus to advance a companion's Competence stat. It costs 5 experience to advance a companion to +2 and 10 experience to advance to +3 (which is the maximum).

## CREATING NEW COMPANIONS

This chapter provides several examples of suitable mundane professions, but feel free to come up with your own if you have a particular medieval archetype in mind.

For example, in the playtest campaign, the PCs encountered and conquered the fabled Hashashin (Persian assassins). One of the magi wanted to take an assassin as a companion, so I created the following:

### Assassin

You have received extensive training and indoctrination in the physical, mental and spiritual requirements for dealing subtle death.

When you **set out on a mission involving assassination or infiltration**, roll+Competence. On a 10+ all 3, on a 7-9 choose 2, on a 6- choose 1.

- Accomplish the goal
- Don't get caught
- Doesn't take too long

This particular companion won't have much of a benefit to the covenant as a whole, but the special move seems more than powerful enough on its own.

## Bandit

You are crafty and slippery by nature. You probably rely on the magi for protection against the law (you have to do some entrepreneurial work, after all).

When magi go abroad you often accompany them to acquire information - and the occasional trinket.

When you **set out on a mission to steal something or otherwise engage in criminal activity**, roll+Competence. On a 10+ all 3, on a 7-9 choose 2, on a 6- choose 1.

- Accomplish the goal
- Don't get caught
- Doesn't take too long

## Covenant Benefit

So long as you're able to compensate them afterward, you can call on a small group of ne'er-do-wells to assist in covenant business.

## Courtier

You are educated, trained in social skills, and of high enough rank to do as you wish. Courtly life occupies much of your time, but out of curiosity and a desire for adventure, you associate with the covenant. You probably try to keep that association secret, for it could mean social alienation back at court.

When you **use your training and experience at court to parley**, roll+Competence. On a 10+ all 3, on a 7-9 choose 2, on a 6- choose 1.

- Negotiate successfully
- Avoid owing favours
- Maintain the relationship

## Craftsman

You are far more than a mere blacksmith or carpenter; you are a master craftsman capable of creating exceptional works of your own in addition to overseeing the work of apprentices and labourers. Choose an area of expertise or make up your own (armoursmith, weaponsmith, stonemason, woodcarver).

When you **apply your skills and tools to craft something**, roll+Competence. On a 10+ all 3, on a 7-9 choose 2, on a 6- choose 1.

- Finished product is top quality
- Doesn't take too long
- Doesn't cost too much

## Forester

You patrol the wilds deeded to a covenant's magi. Traditionally a forester's primary job was to apprehend poachers and turn them over to the lord. Depending on the covenant's rules, you may perform that function for the magi.

You are of value to the covenant because you know the lands you patrol, and can help magi find things they seek there.

When you **set out to accomplish a task related to your experience as a woodsman**, roll+Competence. On a 10+ all 3, on a 7-9 choose 2, on a 6- choose 1.

- Accomplish the goal
- Don't get caught
- Doesn't take too long

## Covenant Benefit

If you spend the season hunting and gathering, you can supply enough food to keep the grogs well fed during a season of Deficient income.

## Hermit

You once belonged to society, but ostracized yourself or were exiled, maybe for religious reasons. You've learned much about the world and the supernatural in your lonely life. It seems a shame not to share your insight, but ordinary people just don't understand you. The magi listen to what you have to say and treat you with respect since their lives are also devoted to solitary contemplation.

When you **consult your accumulated wisdom and the advice of the spirits, faeries or demons** to answer a specific question, roll+Competence. On a 10+ all 3, on a 7-9 choose 2, on a 6- choose 1.

- Provide a useful answer (+1 ongoing when acting on it)
- Provide the answer right away
- Answer doesn't contain anything misleading

## Knight

You are a warrior who pays homage to a magus, covenant, or the Order of Hermes itself; maybe the covenant has protected you and your people in the past and now you repay the debt. You are able to move through all social circles, both magical and mundane. Magi therefore value you as a mediator between them and worldly powers. Your skills in combat are also essential to the covenant's defense.

Note that chivalry was not widely known in the period usually covered by an Ars Magica campaign. For the purposes of Mythic Europe, a knight is simply a professional warrior of noble birth.

When you **resort to violence** (either alone or when accompanying a warband), choose one additional option from the list (even on a 6-).

## Mendicant

You are a member of the clergy and have dedicated your life to the common folk. You work with the magi because you know they are, or can be, good people. Furthermore, you don't see any harm in trying to convert the magi to Christianity. The covenant also offers you an opportunity to see the world, and invites you to do things your vows fail to prohibit.

When you **call out to a saint in prayer**, declare what you hope for, and tell them what you offer them. Roll+Competence. The saint might have questions for you; answer them truthfully.

On 10+, the saint accepts your offering, and reveals to you what you might do to bring it to pass. On 7-9, the saint tells you whether they will or will not accept your offering. On a miss, the saint will not accept your offering, and be prepared for the GM to do worse.

## Merchant

You are a seller of wares and may be itinerant, traveling the lands to acquire provisions and necessities for your covenant. Magi often take you on the road with them to deal with mundanes and their petty business tricks. When not abroad you maintain lines of communication with your contacts, customers, and suppliers. If you don't, the magi might terminate your services. Then what would you do for profit?

When you **set out on a mission to find a particular item or service**, roll+Competence. On a 10+ all 3, on a 7-9 choose 2, on a 6- choose 1.

- Find exactly the right item(s)/service(s)
- Doesn't take too long
- Doesn't require exceptional costs

### **Troubadour**

You are a minstrel, an actor-musician-comedian. Though you might have wandered the land at one time, you've since settled at the covenant. The people there appreciate your music and pay you well--be it coin, food or ale--for a song. Even the rather aloof magi seem to enjoy the occasional tune. You can also embellish your repertoire at the covenant. There are plenty of legends to learn there, and you can sometimes take part in their making.

When you **use your skills as an entertainer to make contact with a particular person or group of people**, roll+Competence. On a 10+ all 3, on a 7-9 choose 2, on a 6- choose 1.

- Find exactly the right person/people
- Establish/maintain good relationship
- They are inclined to help

### **Covenant Benefit**

+1 Social when you are present and able to influence the events related to the roll.

### **Turb Captain**

You command all the covenant's grogs and were chosen either for aptitude or exemplary past service. You now spend much of your time in administrative routine, either recording information about your troops or ordering supplies. The magi expect you to assemble a turb for journeys and rely on your expert choice of skilled, dependable grogs. At times you're able to escape the tedium of your position by assigning yourself to traveling parties.

When you **accompany a warband as it resorts to violence**, it suffers -1 harm (in addition to choices made based on the results of the roll).

### **Covenant Benefit**

+1 Discipline when you are present and able to influence the events related to the roll.

# THE BASIC MOVES

## RESORT TO VIOLENCE

When you **resort to violence**, roll+Body. On a hit you inflict your harm on the enemy and suffer harm from them. On a 10+ choose 3. On a 7-9 choose 2.

- You take something from the enemy
- You avoid harm (may be chosen more than once)
- You inflict extra harm (may be chosen more than once)
- You control the enemy's movement

If circumstances in the fiction (equipment, relative competence, positioning, etc.) prevent you and your target from inflicting harm on one another, you don't trigger this move.

*Taking something* usually refers to disarming them, wrecking a piece of their armour, or grabbing something they are carrying or wearing. It could also mean seizing a critical position they occupied or even taking them hostage.

*Avoiding harm* means you take less harm from the enemy.

*Inflicting extra harm* means adding to the harm your weapon and training usually allow you to do.

*Controlling the enemy's movement* is about pushing, pulling or luring them from where they started to where you want them to be.

## AID OR INTERFERE

When you **help or hinder someone**, roll+Bond with them. On a hit they take +1 or -2, your choice. On a 7-9 you also expose yourself to danger, retribution, or cost. Note that no matter how many characters aid or interfere with an action, the bonus or penalty is never higher than +1 or lower than -2.

## DEFY DANGER

When you **act despite an imminent threat or suffer a calamity**, say how you deal with it and roll. If you do it...

- by powering through or enduring, +Body
- by getting out of the way or acting fast, +Quick
- with quick thinking, +Mind
- through mental fortitude or using charm and social grace, +Spirit

On a 10+, you do what you set out to, the threat doesn't come to bear. On a 7-9, you stumble, hesitate, or flinch: the GM will offer you a worse outcome, hard bargain, or ugly choice.

## DISCERN REALITIES

When you **closely study a situation or person**, roll+Mind. On a 10+ ask the GM 3 questions from the list below. On a 7-9 ask 1. Take +1 forward when acting on the answers.

- What happened here recently?
- What is about to happen?
- What should I be on the lookout for?
- What here is useful or valuable to me?
- Who is really in control here?
- What here is not what it appears to be?

## SPOUT LORE

When you **consult your accumulated knowledge about something**, roll+Mind. On a 10+ the GM will tell you something interesting and useful about the subject relevant to your situation. On a 7-9 the GM will only tell you something interesting - it's on you to make it useful. The GM might ask you "How do you know this?" Tell her.

# HERMETIC MAGIC

## THE ORDER

You can read a great deal about The Order in the *Ars Magica* books (and I highly recommend doing so), but for the purposes of *Wizard World* you just need to know that it is the single most powerful magical organization in the world of Mythic Europe and that all members are bound by an oath that keeps them from fighting one another and from trying to rule over mundanes.

### THE CODE

The foundation of the Code is the Oath, which states that magi of The Order need to work together and that everyone capable of magic should be part of The Order, for their own protection and for that of the world at large. The Peripheral Code extends the basic premises of the Oath to include decisions made at Tribunals, which has added nearly infinite complexity and grey areas to what was once a simple directive.

### THE GIFT

Stated simply, the Gift is the ability to observe, harness and channel arcane energy. It is an innate quality possessed by about one in every ten thousand people in Mythic Europe. The Gift is generally accompanied by above average intelligence, ambition and curiosity - traits that are often frowned upon in medieval society.

The other negative aspect of the Gift is an aura of untrustworthiness. Everyone who interacts with a Gifted person assumes the very worst about them. Even with no actual evidence to suggest it, a stranger interacting with a Gifted person will assume they are dishonest, malicious, and otherwise not worthy of

trust. It is possible, after years of exposure, to become accustomed to this negative aspect of an individual's Gift, but not to this effect of the Gift in general. For example, the grogs in a covenant will usually come to trust the magi in their covenant after a year or so, but they still experience the full effects of the Gift from any visiting magi.

Without training, the Gift often manifests in strange but harmless ways such as premonitions or minor telekinesis. Rarely, untrained people manage to teach themselves a measure of control over their abilities. Such individuals are usually outcasts due to the negative aspects of the Gift, but they sometimes manage to serve useful roles on the fringes of their communities as wise women and the like.

### PARMA MAGICA

A key element that allows The Order to function is Parma Magica. This ritual helps hermetic magi get along socially by blocking the effects of other people's Gift. It also serves as a protective shield against all external magic, making it much more difficult for one magi to harm or kill another, which encourages negotiation over open conflict.

### TRIBUNALS

The Order divides Mythic Europe into 13 Tribunals. There are small gatherings every 3 years in each Tribunal, but every 7<sup>th</sup> year is the Grand Tribunal, which all magi in Europe are expected to attend.



## Vis

Raw magic concentrated into a physical form is called vis. Precious metals are not particularly useful to magi (many of them can conjure gold if it is required) so vis is the basis for exchange in The Order.

Individual units of vis are called pawns. Ten pawns of vis are a rook and ten rooks are a queen.

Pawns of vis are gathered and consumed by magi on a fairly regular basis during research and magic use. Wizard World does not track vis at this level - it is assumed to be happening in the background and can feature as prominently in the fiction as the group desires.

Rooks of vis require significant labour to gather and are the base level dealt with in the covenant mechanics. In addition to the mechanical effects described later in this chapter, a rook of vis is enough to:

- Open a mundane object in preparation for creating a magic item.
- Make the effects of an arcane move permanent.
- Purchase books and scrolls that qualify as basic coverage of a technique or form.
- Compensate a covenant for a season's use of a library with complete coverage of at least one art.

## LIMITATIONS OF HERMETIC MAGIC

Any use of Hermetic magic requires two elements: a Technique and a Form (referred to collectively as the Arts). Describing the technique and form and how they relate to the fiction is a requirement to trigger any of the moves related to magic use.

Furthermore, magic cannot exceed the following limitations:

### **The Limit of Divinity**

Magic cannot overcome the power of True Faith or the deceptions of infernal powers.

### **The Limit of the Soul**

Magic cannot affect an immortal soul, and so may not create true human life nor restore the dead to life.

### **The Limit of Essential Nature**

Magic cannot alter or determine something's essential nature. This includes natural aging, Twilight, the heartbeast of a Bjornaer magus and supernatural auras.

### **The Limit of Creation**

Magic is incapable of creating anything permanent without using vis.

### **The Limit of Time**

Magic is incapable of altering the passage of time. It cannot affect anything in the past, and can only affect the future by making changes in the present.

### **The Limit of Arcane Connections**

Hermetic magic cannot affect an unseen target without an Arcane Connection. See Rituals for some sample Arcane Connections.

## TECHNIQUES

**Creo:** create something new. The thing being created must be a normal specimen of its type. Adding things to an already existing object would fall under Muto.

**Intellego:** perceive things. Combined with the right forms, Intellego can let you see through things, hear from impossible distances or pluck information from an unwilling mind.

**Muto:** change the properties of something. This can be the shape, the substance, or both.

**Perdo:** destroy things. This might be a wall, a body or a thought.

**Rego:** control things. This usually refers to motion (mind control falls under Creo).

## FORMS

**Animal:** natural animals.

**Aquam:** water.

**Auram:** air.

**Corpus:** human bodies.

**Herbam:** plants.

**Ignem:** fire.

**Imaginem:** sensations, illusions, perception.

**Mentem:** thoughts, emotions, memories.

**Terram:** earth, dirt, stone, metals and inanimate objects in general.

**Vim:** magic itself. This includes magical creatures as well as spells. Vim is the form that governs the ability to counter the magic of other magi.

## ARCANE DIFFICULTY

The baseline requirements for casting a hermetic spell are:

- About 10 seconds of clearly enunciated arcane words and gestures.
- A single target, about the size of a human being.
- Either instant or concentration duration (depending on the nature of the effect).
- The target must be clearly visible.

As a general rule, it gets harder to accomplish things with magic if:

- The target is far away.
- The target is hard to see (in fact, you require an arcane connection of some kind to affect anything you can't see).
- The target is very large (whether a single large object or a large area).
- There are many targets.
- You're in a hurry.
- You're trying to be subtle.
- You want the magic to last for a long time (without requiring concentration).
- You're already using magic to do something else at the same time.
- Your movements or voice are restricted (in fact, if both are restricted the GM may rule you are either very limited or unable to use most of your magic).

**If you narrate an effect or create a spell that brings too many of the above factors into play, your GM has the option to impose a penalty (usually -1, but especially complex effects could demand -2). You're also offering the GM a golden opportunity to make a move in response. The scope and power of that response will relate directly to the scope and power of the spell you're attempting.**

## MASTERY

By the conclusion of their apprenticeship, each magus has at least opened all the arcane arts. Further mastery can be achieved through experience, study and occasionally through comprehension of a twilight experience.

Rating	Description
-1	Just opened
0	Familiar
+1	Mastered
+2	Fully Mastered
+3	Sublime Mastery

## ARCANE MOVES

Most spells created by hermetic magi are created in the moment to deal with a problem or situation they are facing. This flexible method of spellcasting is known as spontaneous magic. The arcane moves provide a framework for creating a nearly infinite variety of spontaneous magical solutions to the problems your magi might face. Each move begins with the choice of a form and a technique and a declaration of intent.

“I want to use ‘X technique’ and ‘Y form’ to do ‘Z.’”

For example:

- “I want to use Creo Ignem to summon a ball of fire and hurl it at the onrushing hoard.”
- “I want to use Intellego Imaginem to spy on the king’s council chamber from a mile away.”
- “I want to use Creo Mentem to give the baron the idea that he’s an old friend of mine.”
- “I want to use Muto Terram to make the swords of the men facing me too hot to hold.”

Sometimes the move will be immediately obvious. In the ball of fire example above, it’s pretty clear that Vulnero would be appropriate, perhaps targeting a small area and inflicting extra harm. In the case of heating the swords, however, you might trigger Fugio if your intent is just to stop them from attacking you, but you could trigger Vulnero instead if your intent is primarily to hurt them.

Use the guidelines found in the Ars Magica books if you have questions about which technique and form are appropriate to the effect you want to create (just ignore all the stuff about range and duration and all the other fine details).

When the text says roll+Art, it means roll and add the lower modifier of the two arts being used in the spell. For example, if you have Creo +2 and Ignem +1, you would roll 2d6+1 for your Creo Ignem spell.

### VULNERO

When you **weave together an arcane form and technique with the intent to harm someone**, roll+Art. On a hit you harm the target and choose 2. On a 7-9 the GM will choose an arcane mishap.

- You inflict extra harm
- You impress, frighten or dismay the target.
- Your target is now a small area instead of an individual.
- You can target an additional individual.
- You can knock down, push or pull your target.

Harm is enough to badly wound most people or to kill a weak person. Adding harm will kill all but the toughest humans.

Keep in mind that there are circumstances that could prevent Vulnero from being fully effective. Parma Magica, True Faith or immunity to certain forms are all examples.

Vulnero spells have instant duration (though their effects linger).

**FUGIO**

When you **weave together an arcane form & technique with the intent to overcome or avoid a threat or calamity**, roll+Art. On a hit, you do what you set out to; the threat doesn't come to bear. On a 7-9 the GM will also choose an Arcane Mishap.

Sample Effect	Arts
Become invisible to sneak past some guards	Perdo + Imaginem
Fly across a chasm to escape pursuit	Rego + Corpus
Stop an animal from attacking you	Rego + Animal
Counter a hostile spell	Perdo + Vim
Destroy an arrow before it can hit you	Perdo + Herbam
Heal someone's wounds (rebalance one of their humours)	Creo + Corpus

Breaking down the trigger of the Fugio move, the key terms are:

- **Overcome.** Something bad has happened and you're using your magic to deal with the consequences.
- **Avoid.** Something bad could potentially happen and you're using your magic to prevent it.
- **Threat or Calamity.** There need to be consequences if the spell fails – otherwise you're probably triggering Utilis.

Fugio spells have either instant or concentration duration. Choose before you make the roll.

**SPECTO**

When you **weave together an arcane form and technique with the intent to study a situation, location or person**, roll+Art. On a hit, ask the GM up to 3 questions about the target that are appropriate to the form and technique used.

On a 7-9 the GM will also choose an Arcane Mishap.

Specto often involves the Intellego technique, but the form should be suitable to the situation and the questions you hope to ask. For example, Intellego + Mentem would be appropriate if you intend to ask questions about people's intentions. Intellego + Imaginem is commonly used to perceive things beyond the range of normal senses.

Specto spells have instant or concentration duration.

**SUADEO**

When you **weave together an arcane form and technique with the intent to manipulate people**, roll+Art. On a hit, choose 3.

- You target a small group instead of an individual
- They give you something you want
- They act as your eyes and ears
- They fight to protect you
- They do something you tell them to.

On a 7-9 the GM will also choose an Arcane Mishap.

For PCs, instead, choose 1:

- They have to defy danger to act against you.
- They take +1 forward.

Suadeo is very concerned with the Mentem form, but could potentially use almost any combination of Arts depending on the situation.

Suadeo spells have concentration duration.

## ARCANE MISHAPS

- The best you can get is a lesser, limited version. The GM will give you the details.
- The spell has an unexpected side effect. The GM will describe it.
- You draw unwanted attention. The GM will explain how.
- The magic inflicts harm on you (usually lesser harm, though it depends on the power of the spell).
- Take -1 ongoing to all arcane moves until you've had a comfortable rest and time to study.
- You gain +1 Warping

## UTILIS

When you **weave together an arcane form and technique to create a useful effect not covered by one of the other arcane moves**, describe the effect and roll+Art. On a 10+ the spell works as intended. On a 7-9 the GM chooses 1.

- It will take a while to create the effect.
- The best you can do is a lesser effect, unreliable and limited.
- It draws unwanted attention or puts you in an awkward position.
- There is an unexpected side effect.

There are two important limitations on the Utilis move:

- This move is only triggered if the GM decides that none of the other arcane moves apply.
- The effect you describe must be simple and it must clearly fall into a single technique and single form. If the GM decides the spell would involve additional techniques or forms, you're probably describing a Ritual. Simplify your concept and run it by the GM again.

Utilis spells have either instant or concentration duration. Choose before you make the roll.

## CODEX

Spells recorded in a spellbook are often referred to as formulaic spells (as opposed to the spontaneous spells governed by the other arcane moves). Formulaic spells sacrifice flexibility for consistency and safety.

When you **speak the name of a spell from your spellbook and channel the corresponding technique and form**, roll+Art. On 10+ the spell works exactly as written. On a 7-9 the spell works and/or choose one. On a 6- choose two.

- You let the spell energy diffuse with no effect.
- The casting takes longer than you hoped, potentially exposing you to a threat of the GM's choosing.
- Take -1 forward to your next arcane move.
- You gain +1 Warping.
- The magic inflicts lesser harm on you.

Each formulaic spell requires a lab text detailing every aspect of its use, including technique, form and a complete description of its effects (including if it requires vis). In the case of Verditius magi, this includes specifying the tool or object required to cast the spell. (See Invent a New Spell for more details). A maga doesn't need to read the spell from her spellbook to cast it, but she must review the text at least once per season to keep it fresh in mind.

## PROTEGO

When you **use your mastery of an arcane form to protect yourself from an appropriate threat**, roll+form. On a 10+ you are completely unaffected by the threat. On a 7-9 you resist the worst effects, but you still suffer some consequences. On a 6- you complicate the situation.

The Protego move doesn't actually involve spellcasting – it is a reflection of the way mastery of hermetic forms can protect you

from being harmed by related dangers. For this reason, Protego does not benefit from bonuses to the other Arcane Moves (such as from a familiar).

For example:

- Ignem can provide protection from burning. On a 10+ you can walk through a bonfire unscathed instead of suffering 4-harm. On a 7-9 that same bonfire would instead inflict 2-harm.
- Corpus can provide from protection from someone punching you. On a 10+ the person's blow hits you but with no force whatsoever. On a 7-9 the punch doesn't inflict any harm, but it will still push you back or even knock you down.
- Aquam can protect you from drowning. On a 10+ you float; you don't even get wet. On a 7-9 you can breathe underwater for a while but you're wet (and possibly sinking).
- Mentem can protect you from mental attacks that penetrate your Parma Magica. On a 10+ you shake off the effect immediately. On a 7-9 you may be rattled or disoriented for a moment, but the attacking spell fails.

## USING VIS

When you make an arcane move you can expend a rook of vis to do one of the following:

- Count as a roll of 12+.
- Make an effect permanent.
- Add an additional effect (a tag, 1 hold, an additional question).

You may spend more than one vis, and you may choose whether to spend vis after you roll for the move.

## APPRENTICES

All magi are expected to train an apprentice at some point in their career, and many train more than one. Training an apprentice begins with finding a gifted person young enough to be eligible. Ten years of age is considered optimal, but anywhere from 8-14 can potentially qualify, depending on the candidate's capacity.

A raw apprentice is not able to assist with any arcane work. Once you make the Train Your Apprentice laboratory move for the first time, you may start a new cycle on your playbook labelled 'Apprentice'. Your apprentice is now in the Spring of their training.

Cycle	Benefit
Spring	Add 1 to the base amount of vis you gather with the Gather Vis move.
Summer	
Harvest	Count as one requisite when casting a ritual.
Preservation	
Rationing	Grant +1 ongoing when they help you with the Invent a new spell, Research a Magic Item, Open the Base for a Magic Item, Complete a Magic Item, Master an Art, or Contribute to the Library moves.
Darkness	Undertake Gather Vis or Contribute to a Ritual on their own (Book stat = 0; no roll required). Your apprentice cannot help you and undertake their own lab activity in the same season).

You may make the Train Your Apprentice move up to twice per year. Each time you do so, mark off another section of the Apprentice cycle to represent the completion of that part of their training. Each completed section increases your apprentice's capacity to aid you in your lab.

By training your apprentice twice per year you could complete their training cycle in less than 7 years. Despite this, The Order still requires that you keep them on as your apprentice for the full 15-year term before administering their gauntlet and training them in Parma Magica.

## LAB WORK

Your lab is a very private and personal space (your sanctum sanctorum) and anyone you allow to enter will constantly feel awkward and uncomfortable. Other hermetic magi are not capable of spellcasting while inside your sanctum and it is therefore not possible to do lab work in another magus's lab. The exception to this rule is your apprentice, though even they become susceptible once you train them in Parma Magica.

Lab activities include:

- Invent a New Spell
- Master an Art
- Train your Apprentice
- Develop your Familiar
- Gather Vis
- Contribute to the Library
- Improve your Lab
- Work on a Magic Item
- Contribute to a Ritual

Magi are usually able to perform two lab activities per season, though being away from the lab for an extended period may prevent one or both in a given period.

### CONTRIBUTE TO THE LIBRARY

- Scriptorium
- Mastery +1 for basic; +2 for advanced; +3 for complete

When you **spend a season writing about a form or technique**, mark an improvement to that art on the covenant playbook (basic - > advanced -> complete) and roll+Book. On a 10+ you learn something new about the nature of magic - mark experience. On a 7-9 everything goes as expected.

### MASTER AN ART

- Apothecary
- Access to a library with appropriate coverage of the art (Basic = max +1, Advanced = max +2, Complete = max +3).
- 1 vis

When you **spend a season researching a specific form or technique**, increase your level of mastery in that art by one, erase one vis from the covenant playbook, and roll+Book. On a 10+ you learn something new about the nature of magic - mark experience. On a 7-9 everything goes as expected.

### IMPROVE YOUR LAB

- 2 rooks of vis
- A major expenditure of covenant resources

Choose a feature:

**Scriptorium:** space and materials for writing and binding books

**Forge:** space and tools for crafting items

**Apothecary:** space and tools for experimentation

**Security:** mundane, infernal, faerie

You must be present and involved in any addition to your lab. Construction will require experts and craftsmen, but their costs are included in the major expenditure.

## INVENT A NEW SPELL

- Scriptorium
- Access to a library with basic coverage of the arts required for the spell.
- 1 vis

When you **spend a season researching a specific magical effect**, work with your GM to refine your concept. Once you've come to an agreement, erase one vis from the covenant playbook, come up with a cool name for the spell, write it in your spellbook, and roll+Book. On a 10+ you learn something new about the nature of magic - mark experience. On a 7-9 everything goes as expected.

When you add a spell to your spellbook, you must describe:

- The arts required
- Target (handful, bucketful, person, small group, circle, wagonload, building)
- Duration (instant, concentration, sun/ring, moon, year)
- Range (personal, touch, sight, arcane connection)
- Exact effects (harm, tags, questions, emotions, orders, etc.)
- Does it use vis?
- Does it require a focus? (Verditius magi)

Once set, the parameters of the spell cannot be changed. Every time the spell is successfully cast, it will do exactly what it was written to do: no more and no less. This is the limitation of formulaic magic – it may be powerful and consistent, but it is also inflexible.

Always run your spell description by the GM before recording it. If the power level is exceptionally high or if your spell contravenes any of the limitations of magic, the GM may ask you to revise your concept.

If your proposed spell is especially complex, the GM may rule that the effect you're trying for is actually a Ritual. Simply your concept and run it by your GM again.

## EXAMPLE OF SPELL CREATION

Pete has a concept for a spell that creates a wall of stone.

### Choose Arts

Muto+Terram and Creo+Terram are both valid choices. In this case, Pete wants the effects of the spell to last without using vis, so the spell will need to use existing material and form it in ways stone could naturally be formed – Muto+Terram it is.

### Target

A source of stone large enough to form the wall.

### Duration

Instant (well, as long as it takes to cast the spell). Since magic is not required to support the stone, it remains in the new shape after the spell is cast.

### Range

Sight range is appropriate here. Pete doesn't want his magus to have to touch the target.

### Effects

After some thought, Pete decides that the spell will create a wall that is 20 paces long, 5 paces high and 1 pace thick. The GM reminds him that if there isn't enough stone available to make up that volume, the spell will fail. The wall can be a circle, square, straight line or other shape as long as there is enough stone and the area where it is cast can contain the volume.

Pete's magus is of House Verditius, so he also describes a small tool he'll require in order to cast the spell.

### Name

Pete calls his spell Parete Pietra and adds it to his magus's spellbook.



### **TRAIN YOUR APPRENTICE**

It is assumed that you spend time working with your apprentice on a fairly regular basis, but in order to have them advance you'll need to dedicate specific training periods as well. Your apprentice can benefit from up to two seasons of training per year.

When you **spend a season training your apprentice**, roll+Book and mark a portion of your apprentice's training cycle (or open the cycle if you've just acquired a new apprentice). On a 10+ you learn as much as you teach - mark experience. On a 7-9 the training goes as expected.

### **GATHER VIS**

When you **spend a season extracting raw vis from a magical aura**, gather an amount of vis dictated by the strength of the aura and roll+Book. On a 10+ you learn something new about the nature of magic - mark experience. On a 7-9 everything goes as expected.

<b>Aura</b>	<b>Options</b>
Faint	1 magi can gather 1 rook per season
Weak	1 magi can gather up to their Book stat +1 per season
Moderate	2 magi can gather up to their Book stat +1 per season
Strong	3 magi can gather up to their Book stat +1 per season
Powerful	3 magi can gather up to their Book stat +2 per season

## **MAGIC ITEMS**

Crafting a magic item is divided into three distinct lab activities.

- Develop a lab text.
- Prepare the item for enchantment.
- Complete the enchantment.

### **RESEARCH A MAGIC ITEM**

- Apothecary
- Access to a library with advanced coverage of the arts required for the item.

When you **spend a season developing a lab text for a magic item**, work with the GM to determine how the item will work and roll+Book. On a 10+ you learn something new about the nature of magic - mark experience. On a 7-9 everything goes as expected.

A magic item lab text is a detailed record of every step that will be required to create the item and every ability you intend it to have. Here are a few ideas to start with:

- Create a custom move: When you **strike the Staff of Terram Teribilis upon solid ground and speak the command word**, roll+Spirit. On a 10+ hold 3, on a 7-9 hold 2, on a 6- hold 1. Spend hold 1 for 1 to:
  - Build a small stone bridge or other simple structure (lasts until the next sunrise or sunset)
  - Dig a wagon-sized hole
  - Collapse a small building.
- Add a tag to certain actions: A wand that adds +forceful to all uses of Vulnero while it is wielded.
- Mimic an advanced move: A dagger that grants the Bandit's Backstab ability.
- Provide a unique capability: A sword that can affect creatures normally immune to physical damage.

### OPEN THE BASE FOR A MAGIC ITEM

- Forge
- 1 vis
- Suitable base item
- +1 or greater mastery of the arts required for the item.

When you **spend a season opening a suitable object for enchantment**, erase one vis from the covenant playbook and roll+Book. On a 10+ you learn something new about the nature of magic - mark experience. On a 7-9 everything goes as expected.

Depending on the details of the lab text, what constitutes a suitable object may vary wildly. Ars Magica has a great list of shapes and materials and the functions they are related to – if at all possible I recommend working with that list or a similar one to come up with something suitably exotic.

While each enchantment must be done separately, it's quite possible to re-open an existing magic item for further enchantment.

### COMPLETE A MAGIC ITEM

- Forge
- Lab text for the item
- Base item (opened)
- 2 or more vis

When you **spend a season completing the enchantment of a magical item**, come up with a cool name for the item and roll+Book. On a 10+ you learn something new about the nature of magic - mark experience. On a 7-9 everything goes as expected.

The GM will base the amount of vis required to complete the item on its overall power level and how suitable its shape and material are to its intended use. The GM will also add a minor quirk to the item's appearance or function. The quirk will not compromise the item's intended use, but it should serve as a reminder of the fickle nature of magic.

## RITUALS

Researching a ritual requires that your lab have an apothecary.

When you **spend time in your lab figuring out how to create a powerful magical effect through a ritual**, describe what you want to accomplish and the GM will tell you what you're going to need, based on the scope and scale of what you describe.

- Vis (at least two rooks, possibly more)
- Time (certainly an hour, could be a whole season or even longer)
- Mastery of +1 or greater (at least two arts, possibly more)
- Materials (might be a special kind of moss; might be the still-beating heart of an ancient dragon...)
- Expertise (you might need to skim a book on stonework; or have a master sculptor assist you; or you might need to sacrifice the world's greatest living architect...)

As long as you meet all the requirements, *casting* a ritual spell doesn't require you to be in your lab.

If the ritual is going to target something you can't see, you'll need some kind of connection to the target in order to overcome the limit of arcane connections. Some examples of arcane connections in order of strength:

- Something frequently near the target, something made by the target, the target's true name, a tiny piece of the target, a large part of the target.

## YOUR FAMILIAR

A familiar is an animal that a maga forms a special connection with. It is often the closest friend and ally a maga will ever have. A familiar is also the most powerful arcane connection you can obtain to a magi.

The creation of a familiar requires several seasons, during which time the animal is imbued with magical powers and human-like intelligence. In return, the process of creating the familiar enhances the maga's understanding of magic and adds to her mastery in various ways.

### FIND THE ANIMAL

The first step in creating a familiar is to find a suitable animal. A familiar is a reflection of a magi's soul, so you should choose an animal that is appropriate to your magus's personality and approach to magic.

When you **approach a suitable animal with the intent to recruit it as your familiar**, roll+Spirit. On a 10+ you bond immediately. On a 7-9 the GM chooses one. On a 6- the GM chooses 2.

- It's going to take a long time to earn the animal's trust.
- The animal requires you to do something to earn its trust (gather food, chase off an enemy, build it a home)
- The animal's arcane side must be appeased with a ritual (2 vis, 1 day, Animal, Rego)

Start a cycle on your playbook labelled "Familiar".

Even after the initial bond is established, the familiar is still fundamentally an animal, and it retains all of its natural instincts, senses and weapons. You can handle the animal as though it were a long-time pet.

Assign Body and Quick stats to the animal according to its size and other physical characteristics. Some guidelines:

- Body should reflect size. A small bird or rat would have Body -2. A bear could have +4.
- Quick should reflect the animal's size, running speed and reaction time. A bear would have -1. A cat would have +3 or +4.

The two stats may not add up to more than +3.

### OPEN THE ENCHANTMENT

- Mastery of Animal (+1 or greater)
- 2 rooks of vis

When you **spend a season imbuing your familiar with magic**, spend 2 rooks of vis, mark off a section of your Familiar cycle and roll+Book. On a 10+ you learn something new about the nature of magic - mark experience. On a 7-9 everything goes as expected.

Opening the enchantment makes the familiar a magical creature and imbues it with intelligence equal to a human child. At this point the familiar understands what is happening and you can communicate simple concepts as though you shared a language.

## **CRAFT THE THREE CORDS**

When you **spend a season crafting the three cords that will connect you to your familiar**, mark off a section of your Familiar cycle and roll+Book. On a 10+ you learn something new about the nature of magic - mark experience. On a 7-9 everything goes as expected.

The three cords are normally invisible, though it may be possible to detect them with magic. The benefits endowed by the cords function as long as the familiar is within range (100 paces).

Assign 0, +1, and +1 to the three cord scores in any order.

1. The gold cord connects your magic (add the Gold cord score either to arcane moves or to Book rolls – chosen at the time the cord is established).
2. The silver cord connects your minds (add the Silver cord score to Discern Reality rolls and rolls to Defy Danger against intimidation, fear, and mind control).
3. The bronze cord connects your bodies (add the Bronze cord score as a bonus to the harm move and to all healing and recovery rolls).

## **TEMPER THE CONNECTION**

When you **spend a season tempering the three cords that connect you to your familiar**, mark off a section of your Familiar cycle and roll+Book. On a 10+ you learn something new about the nature of magic - mark experience. On a 7-9 everything goes as expected.

- The connection functions within 100 paces.
- The familiar shares your Mind and Spirit stats, but retains all of its physical animalistic traits and instincts.
- You and the familiar can converse as though you have a shared language (which no one else can understand).

## **Connection Effects**

(Choose 3)

- **Extended Connection.** The connection works within 1 mile rather than 100 paces.
- **Shared senses.** Use one of the familiar's senses as though you were at its location. It can do the same with you.
- **Mental Communication.** You can communicate mentally as long as you are within connection range.
- **Language.** Your familiar can speak one language you speak. You can speak with other animals of its type.
- **Shapechange.** Imbalance a humour to either change into the same animal as your familiar or have it change into a human. The effect lasts up to an hour (you can imbalance another humour or accept a debility to extend an additional hour). You gain the familiar's physical stats when shapechanged (and it gains yours if it takes human form).
- **Shared magic.** Your familiar can use two of your arts to create spontaneous spells (chosen at the time the connection is tempered). You gain one of the animal's natural abilities (scent, vision, hearing, speed, resistance to cold, hold breath, climbing, strength, claws, teeth).

## **Independence**

By making the familiar independent, you may choose one more connection effect. An independent familiar will occasionally act according to its own agenda and may not be available to assist when you want it. In life or death situations, the familiar will still defend you. (You cannot choose Independence and At Odds).

## At Odds

By making the familiar at odds with you, you may choose two more connection effects. A familiar who is at odds with you may argue, complain and sometimes actively work against you (the GM will add your familiar to the covenant Front and make moves appropriate to the fiction). No matter how angry it gets, the familiar will not actually attack you, and, in life or death situations, the familiar will still come to your aid. (You cannot choose Independence and At Odds).

## Residual Effect

The GM and the rest of the group choose one aspect of the animal and/or the connection you've formed with it. This aspect is now a permanent part of you.

Examples:

- A maga with a dog familiar may insist on smelling people when meeting them for the first time.
- A magus with a raven familiar may have an obsession with shiny objects, hoarding them and/or attaching them to his clothing.
- A maga who gained natural weapons may display the appendages permanently or they may reveal themselves at awkward times.

# PARMA MAGICA

A significant advantage hermetic magi have over other magic users is the protection offered by Parma Magica. In order for any external magic to affect a magus, it must first penetrate this magical shield.

There are two ways to penetrate another magi's Parma Magica:

- The Penetration advanced move.
- Defying Danger with Orthodox.

PC magi targeted with spells that might penetrate their Parma Magica may attempt to resist by Defying Danger with Orthodox.

A maga may extend her Parma Magica to protect a number of additional people equal to her Orthodox stat. To do so, she must touch each person she hopes to protect. The protection lasts until the maga can no longer see the person she was protecting and she may cancel this protection at any time.

# TWILIGHT

The exact nature of Twilight is constantly debated among members of The Order (in fact, this debate is the primary focus of House Criamon). What is certain, however, is that Twilight presents a danger to anyone who uses magic. That danger is tempered by the potential knowledge and power that can be gained by magi who survive and comprehend the effects of a Twilight experience.

Every time a character is exposed to magical forces, whether through spellcasting, handling large quantities of vis, living in a powerful aura or encountering a powerful magical creature, there is a chance they could experience Warping.

Your Warping Score (Warp) is equal to your Warping Total divided by 10, rounded down (so a Warping Total of 28 is a Warping Score of 2).

## WARPING EVENTS

A warping event occurs when a magus who has already suffered Warping at least twice recently (GM's discretion as to what constitutes recently, but generally within the last week or so) suffers an additional point of Warping in a stressful circumstance. In this case, stressful would be any circumstance where there are significant consequences for failure (combat certainly counts, as could a negotiation or even crafting a magic item).

When you experience a warping event you may choose to deliberately enter Twilight. When you **choose to resist a warping event**, roll+Warp. On a hit, you enter Twilight. On a miss you touch Twilight for a few moments and add 1 to your Warping Total, but there are no other effects.

### Entering Twilight

When you **enter Twilight**, roll+Warp.

- On a 13+ you enter Eternal Twilight. Your body and soul disappear from this world for a number of months equal to your Warp score (minimum one). If you miss on your attempt to comprehend your Twilight experience, your body never returns. If you return, add +1 to your Warping Total.
- On a 10-12 your body disappears for a number of weeks equal to your Warp score (minimum one). It returns to the exact place it disappeared from. Add +1 to your Warping Total.
- On a 7-9 your body enters a comatose state for a number of days equal to your Warp score (minimum one). In this state your body cannot be harmed and you are not able to consciously interact with the world in any way. The appearance of your body changes in some way appropriate to your House and training. Depending on the changes to your physical form, it may be possible for your followers to carry your body with them. Add +1 to your Warping Total.
- On a 6- you fall unconscious for a number of minutes equal to your Warp score (minimum one). Your body is still physically present and can suffer harm as normal.

Returning from Twilight always makes some kind of minor physical change to the maga. Warts, skin, fingernail or hair discolouration, or alterations to the shape, texture or size of body

parts are all potential legacies of time spent in Twilight. In addition to this physical manifestation, your ability to comprehend your Twilight experience can have other effects.

### Twilight Comprehension

When you **attempt to comprehend your Twilight experience**, roll+Mind (Criamon magi may also add their Book stat to this roll). On a 10+ choose 2. On a 7-9 choose 1.

- Learn the formula for a magical effect you have created at least once before. Give the spell a cool name, determine the technique, form and move, and after returning from Twilight, spend a few hours transcribing it into your spellbook.
- Increase your mastery of a technique or form by 1.
- Gain an advanced move from your playbook.

In addition, you gain a minor beneficial "scar" from your experience. Examples: the air around you smells faintly like roses; food served in your presence tastes slightly better; your spells cause all nearby plant life to refresh and grow slightly.

On a miss choose 1.

- Reduce your mastery of a technique or form by 1.
- Lose one of your advanced moves.

In addition, you gain a minor detrimental "scar" from your experience. Examples: the air around you always smells like sulphur; any food you touch smells like it has spoiled (though it might still be fine to eat); your magic always causes nearby plants to wilt.

## CERTAMEN

While Parma Magica prevents most direct magical confrontations between magi, the Code does establish a formal method for settling disputes. This formal method takes the form of a highly ritualized magical duel known as certamen. The ritual proceeds as follows:

**Challenge:** one magi issues a formal challenge to another magi.

**Issue:** both parties agree on the parameters of the argument (what is at stake and what the winner will receive from the loser). Either side may concede at this point, but doing so is a great loss of face.

The challenger proposes the Technique to be used in the duel. The defender may veto the first suggestion, but if she does so, she must either accept the challenger's second choice or concede.

The defender proposes the Form to be used in the duel. The challenger may veto the first suggestion, but if he does so, he must either accept the defender's second choice or concede.

**Exchange:** both magi enter a trance and conjure magical phantasms with which to wage the duel. Typically, the form governs the appearance of the phantasms, while the technique determines the appearance of the contest. For example, Intellego Herbam might be a contest where each magi tries to be the first to unravel a ball of twisted vines. A Rego Ignem contest, on the other hand, might involve two fiery warriors cleaving at each other with molten blades. Regardless of the superficial details, the results of the duel inflict mental stress on the participants that will eventually wear them down.

**Resolve:** assuming both magi are still conscious, after each Exchange either side may choose to concede. If neither side does, another exchange takes place. If both magi are knocked unconscious, the duel is considered a tie.

### Challenge

When you **challenge a magus of The Order to the ritual of certamen**, roll+Orthodox (or roll+Bond against another PC). On a 10+ you establish a dominant opening position, take +1 forward. On a miss your opponent sees through your posturing or gains insight into your strategy, take -1 forward.

### Exchange

When you **weave a form and technique to deliver a magical blow as part of the ritual of certamen**, roll+Art. On a hit you inflict harm. On a 7-9 your opponent also inflicts harm on you. On a miss, you suffer their harm but do not inflict any.

Against a GM character, you will need to inflict harm equal to their certamen threshold to win the duel.

### Certamen Harm

When you **suffer harm as part of the ritual of certamen**, roll+Orthodox. On a 10+ you resist the harm and press on unhindered. On a 7-9 you take -1 ongoing to the Certamen Harm move for the rest of the due (this penalty may stack). On a 6- you are knocked unconscious for a moment (and lose the duel).

PC magi gain +1 Bond with each other at the conclusion of a certamen ritual.

Certamen is a way for a magus to dispute a ruling made by another member of the covenant council. Doing so is considered bad form, but it may be an appropriate response to a ruling that is perceived as unfair.

# THE COVENANT

## STATS

### Discipline

A measure of how well the grogs are able to coordinate their efforts and follow directions.

When **the grogs undertake an unusual and/or important task**, roll+Discipline. On a 10+ all three. On a 7-9 choose two. On a 6- choose one.

- They get it right
- They do it quickly
- It doesn't consume additional covenant resources

### Fight

The aggregate combat skill of the covenant warband. See [Warband Combat](#) for more details.

### Fortune

The degree to which Fate smiles on the covenant. See the [Beginning of Session](#) for more details.

### Social

How effective the grogs are at dealing with the outside world.

When **there could be consequences for the way the grogs deal with outsiders**, roll+Social. On a 10+ they act the way you hoped they would. On a 7-9 the GM will offer a hard bargain or an ugly choice.

## AURA

Hermetic covenants are deliberately located in arcane auras to enable lab work and the collection of vis. An aura of moderate strength is usual, though strong auras are sought after. Powerful auras offer some advantages to the magi, but after a while they cause strange mutations in the grogs and companions (vulnerable: warping).

## BUILDINGS

- Tents. Vulnerable: cold.
- Wooden buildings. Vulnerable: fire.
- Stone buildings.
- Advanced buildings (towers, a keep or castle, enchanted buildings)

## FORTIFICATIONS

- None: The covenant is essentially in the open.
- Basic: Low walls, trenches.
- Respectable: Medium walls, restricted access.
- Advanced: Tall, thick walls; very difficult access; magical enhancements.

## LIBRARY

The covenant's library is judged by both its breadth (the number of different arts it covers) and depth (the degree of coverage in each art). For each art, the library can have basic, advanced or complete coverage.

## SIZE

- Tiny (30-45 grogs)
- Small (46-75 grogs)
- Medium (76-150 grogs)
- Large (151-300 grogs)



## **INCOME**

Items that are typically considered valuable, such as coins and precious stones, are not especially useful to magi. Such things can be conjured with simple spells and small amounts of vis. It is important, however, for the covenant to cover its basic mundane needs, and the covenant's income reflects how successful the grogs are in their subsistence farming and/or gathering activities, as well as any trading or bartering for common goods and services.

## **Deficient**

The covenant's expenses exceed its income this season. Food starts to run low and the grogs start to worry. Anxiety, disease, hunger and unruliness are likely to come into play during the season.

## **Stable**

This is the default state that the covenant returns to at the beginning of each season. As long as the covenant doesn't undertake anything too ambitious, food supplies will remain adequate and finances shouldn't play a major part in the events of the season. The covenant can undertake a single major expenditure, but this will drop the covenant income to deficient.

## **Abundant**

The covenant is producing more than enough to meet its needs. The covenant can undertake a single major expenditure without a negative impact on its income and may undertake a second major expenditure by dropping to stable income.

## **Major Expenditures**

Work with the GM to determine exact details, but as a guideline the following things count as a single expenditure:

- A single large building made primarily of wood.
- New equipment for the warband (improved armour, ranged weapons, superior melee weapons).

- An addition to a magus's laboratory (scriptorium, forge, apothecary or defences).
- One portion of a large construction project like a wall, tower, great hall or other large building made primarily of stone. Large projects are tracked on the covenant playbook using one of the cycles. The GM will tell you how many expenditures will be required to complete the cycle (from 2-6). Note that there is a limit to the speed at which large construction projects can proceed no matter how much money is spent. As a general rule, even if the covenant is able to make two major expenditures in the same season, they cannot both contribute to the same construction project.

The costs incurred for major expenditures includes materials, wages, and food and shelter for additional labourers and craftsmen.

## **SURPLUS**

These are beneficial aspects of the covenant not covered by the other stats. A plentiful resource would work, as would tags such as happy, stable, or safe. A surplus may or may not have a mechanical effect on the covenant, but it should always be considered in the fiction.

## **VULNERABILITIES**

These are tags that the GM will look to when things go wrong. Examples include: cold, fire, idleness, unruliness, savagery, corruption, and warping.

## **WARBAND**

A few fighters, small (about 10 fighters), medium (25-30 fighters) or large warbands (50+ fighters) are all reasonable for a covenant to support as long as the non-combatant population is suitable. Anything larger than 100 fighters would start to look like a standing army and would not only draw negative attention from the local lord but would also be questioned by The Order.

## COVENANT CREATION

The first step in creating a new covenant is to pick a location and get a sense of the setting and history.

- Look at the map of Mythic Europe and decide which country/tribunal you want to set the covenant in.
- Pick a setting (Hidden valley, Forest grove, Behind a waterfall, Mountain pass, Island, Series of caves, Perched on a mountain top)
- Describe the location's hermetic history. Is this the first time a covenant has been established here? Are you building on the site of a covenant that faded away or was destroyed? Perhaps you've all been sent to reinvigorate a covenant that has fallen into decay as its existing aged members take their last steps toward Final Twilight.

### BASELINE

All covenants begin with the following attributes:

- The covenant has 30-40 grogs (tiny). The grogs are aware that they will be serving magi but have little to no understanding of exactly how The Order works.
- A few of the grogs are competent fighters with average equipment. These grogs have been trained to fight alongside magi.
- The grogs are capable of subsistence farming and gathering.
- The library consists of about 10 books and an armful of scrolls (enough to count as a library but no specific coverage).
- The covenant is in a moderate aura.

### STATS

Assign the following four values to the four covenant stats: +2, +1, 0, -1.

**Discipline:** how well the grogs are able to coordinate their efforts.

**Fight:** the aggregate combat skill of the covenant warband.

**Fortune:** the degree to which Fate smiles on the covenant.

**Social:** how effective the grogs are at dealing with the outside world.

### SURPLUS TAGS

(Choose two)

- **Safe:** Outside trouble doesn't come here until the characters bring it. Determine why this is the case (remote, hidden, etc.)
- **Defences:** Curtain walls or other exterior defences are intact from previous occupants.
- **Structure:** An ancient building still stands - possibly from a former covenant. The contents have long been picked over or decayed, but with a little work the structure itself is functional. Choose one or make one up: library, great hall, tower.
- **Entity:** A powerful magical entity still lives within the bounds of the covenant. Choose arcane, divine or faerie, describe the creature and give it a name. The GM will determine its exact motivations and disposition, but it will not be hostile (at least at first).
- **Exotic location:** The covenant is located in a place that requires magic to access or even to exist (underwater, in the side of cliff, floating in the air). Work with your GM to determine the advantages and limitations.

## **VULNERABILITIES**

(Choose one)

- Anxiety: when things start going badly the grogs start to leave.
- Disease: something about the area or residents makes them more likely to get ill.
- Fealty: the land the covenant is built on belongs to a mundane lord and he requires frequent pacifying. This brings with it an expectation of taxation, which can have a negative impact on covenant income.
- Interference: A single powerful creature or a small group of creatures from one of the other realms (arcane, divine, faerie or infernal) does not approve of the covenant and goes out of its way to make life difficult.
- Laziness: when morale gets low the grogs tend to get less and less productive.
- Outcasts: most of the grogs joined the covenant because they are convicted criminals, excommunicated or otherwise ostracized from regular society. (-1 Social)
- Unruly: the grogs are more likely to rebel if things start going poorly. They are also inclined to fight amongst themselves.
- Unsanctioned: the covenant has been established without explicit permission from The Order. While this isn't unprecedented, it can be very awkward and the magi must tread very carefully.
- Untrained: the warband is not especially good at working together in combat (-1 Fight).
- Warping: the covenant's aura is slightly unstable. After a few years at the covenant the grogs and companions will manifest twilight scars and minor mutations.

## **LAYOUT**

Start with a blank piece of paper (the back of the covenant playbook can work). This represents the total area occupied by the covenant.

The GM draws a square somewhere near the middle of the page and labels it “Library”. If Defences or Structure surplus tags were chosen, work with the group to add these to the map.

Each player in turn draws a shape (circle, square or rectangle) somewhere on the page and labels it with the name of their magus to represent the location of their lab. Labs can be placed as close or as far from the library as the player feels is appropriate to their magus.

Once labs have been placed, work with the group to add some natural features and contour lines.

Add living quarters for the grogs, barracks for the warband, workspaces for the craftsmen and/or any other buildings the group agrees should be part of the initial covenant layout.

## **IMPROVEMENTS**

Each player chooses one improvement from the following list (or from their playbook if available):

- Improve the library: Spend 4 hold improving the covenant library. Basic coverage of an art = 1 hold, advanced = 2 hold, complete = 3 hold.
- Recruit: the covenant now has 50-60 grogs (small). If taken a second time, there are 70-100 grogs (medium).
- Warband: Increase the size of the warband to small (about 10 fighters). If taken a second time, there are 25-30 fighters (medium warband). Note that only about 30% of the grogs can be part of the warband.
- Equip: the covenant's warband has better equipment (add +1 harm or the near tag).

- Trade: The covenant has established a connection that will allow them to trade with the outside world (add trading to the list of available jobs).
- Aura: Increase the covenant's aura to strong. This can be taken again to increase to powerful (but gain vulnerable: warping).
- Skilled: Some of the grogs are especially organized and/or resourceful (add one to the number of jobs the grogs can attempt in a season).
- Building: Add one new building to the map and describe its function (great hall, tower, gatehouse...)
- Specialist: choose one or make one up - blacksmith, carpenter, clothier, leatherworker, stonemason, vintner.

The group may select additional improvements by taking additional vulnerabilities at a 1:1 ratio.

# SPECIAL MOVES

## BEGINNING OF SESSION

- Each player may elect to change one of their character's beliefs.
- Spend experience. Pay for increases to hermetic arts or advanced moves and describe the events that lead to the new talent manifesting.
- Make the Deal With The Order move.
- Make the Fortune move.

### DEAL WITH THE ORDER

At the beginning of the session the Primus will roll+Orthodox. On a 10+ both, on a 7-9 choose one.

- The Order doesn't call on the covenant to fulfil an obligation.
- The Order provides a useful resource to the covenant (information, vis, books, item(s)).

Dealing with The Order may represent a visit from a Redcap, attendance at a minor Tribunal meeting, or other direct communication (written or magical).

### FORTUNE

At the beginning of the session the Liaison (or a designate) will roll+Fortune for the covenant. On a 10+ choose two. 7-9 choose one. On a 6- the GM will choose one or more opposites.

- Financial success. Covenant income is abundant this season.

- Recruiting. Covenant increases in size by about 10% (GM's call).
- Aura waxes in power.
- The GM will introduce a benefit from one of his Fronts (feel free to make suggestions).

## BONDS

Bonds in Wizard World are based primarily on Hx from Apocalypse World. I've included them in the rules for two primary reasons:

- They give mechanical weight to the relationships that make up the covenant.
- They provide an additional way for characters to earn XP.

Bonds reflect shared history, but they also reflect how much you know about someone and how open they've been with you.

### ESTABLISHING NEW BONDS

Bonds are initially established during character and covenant creation by answering the Bonds questions. When new characters join the covenant (either to replace a deceased character or when a new player joins the campaign) they should use the questions as a guide and form Bonds that accurately reflect the fiction.

Existing characters should determine the strength of their Bond with the new character based on the conversations they have as the new character is being created.

### **STRENGTHENING BONDS**

Once Bonds are established, they can be increased in two primary ways.

The first way is descriptive. For example, Felix says to Razvan, “I owe you one.” That psychic debt is reflected by Razvan increasing his current Bond with Felix by one. It is also appropriate to increase your Bond with a character who has betrayed you. It is up to the group to decide if a moment in the fiction justifies increasing Bond strength. Leniency will result in faster advancement, which is fun, but the GM should monitor things to prevent it from getting out of hand.

The second way for Bonds to increase is prescriptive. Many moves explicitly state when a Bond should be increased or decreased (Certamen, for example).

### **USING BONDS**

Bonds are most often used in the Aid/Interfere basic move, but other moves may also refer to them.

### **MARKING XP**

Any time you would increase a Bond to +5, don't. Instead, reset the Bond to 0 and mark XP.

This event reflects the fact that people change over time, and so do your perceptions of them – especially at the moment when you thought you had them figured out.

It's also necessary so that the Aid/Interfere move doesn't break down.

## **HARM & HEALING**

In the medieval paradigm, health is tied to balance between the four humours. A person becomes ill when the body contains too much or not enough of one or more of the humours. The humours are:

<b>Humour</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Imbalanced by</b>
Sanguine	lust	courage	blood loss, desire
Choleric	rage	strength	anger, heat
Melancholic	sadness	stability	bruising, exhaustion
Phlegmatic	apathy	clarity	confusion, drowning, cold

While there is no mechanical result from an imbalanced humour, the fiction should reflect it. When working such imbalances into the fiction, it can be helpful to consider whether the imbalance is an excess or deficit of the humour in question.

For example, being cut by a sword results in a decrease in the sanguine humour because of blood loss. A character in such a state would feel weak and perhaps be unable to run as fast or lift as much as usual. The pain of his wound may even be great enough that he forgets his training (he no longer counts as a trained combatant).

On the other hand, a character that has been magically compelled to desire an object may have his sanguine humour unbalanced by his lust for it. This character would feel ill any time he wasn't taking direct action toward the object of desire and his distraction may prevent him from being able to trigger subtle moves like Discern Realities or even from casting spells.

In neither case would there be a numeric penalty, but the character faces limitations in the fiction.

It's only when a humour becomes gravely imbalanced that a numeric penalty comes into effect. Such grave imbalances are covered by the Debilities rules.

There are three kinds of harm:

**Lesser harm**

Painful but unlikely to do permanent damage.

- Gain advantage when making the harm move after suffering lesser harm.
- Tougher companions and grogs are often able to ignore lesser harm.

**Harm**

Significant and dangerous amounts of harm that could result in permanent damage or even death.

- Companions become Unhealthy after suffering harm and grogs become casualties (though they may recover if they receive adequate assistance).

**Terrible harm**

Exceptionally damaging and likely to kill or maim all but the toughest or luckiest.

- Gain disadvantage when making the harm move after suffering terrible harm.
- Suffering terrible harm is enough to put a companion Down and grogs will almost certainly be killed by it.

This scale assumes dealing with human beings, but even at that, what constitutes lesser harm or terrible harm will be different for different people. This is even more true when dealing with creatures from other realms. The Resort to Violence and Vulnero moves specifically allow for additional harm to be inflicted in case the characters need to overcome foes with exceptional defences or toughness.

**THE HARM MOVE**

When you **suffer harm**, roll+Body. On a 10+ you shake off the damage. On a 7-9 one of your humours becomes imbalanced. On a 6- you gain a debility associated with one of your humours.

- If you are suffering lesser harm, you gain advantage on your roll+Body.
- If you are suffering terrible harm, you gain disadvantage on your roll+Body.

Regardless of the outcome of your roll, the GM is free to declare that you've lost something (your footing, an object, a limb...) as appropriate to the circumstances and source of the harm.

It is also possible to suffer so much harm that there is no reasonable way you could survive. In such rare cases this move is not triggered, you simply die.

**DEBILITIES & DYING**

A debility represents a serious and threatening imbalance in a humour.

Sanguine	Weak (-1 Body)
Choleric	Addled (-1 Mind)
Melancholic	Grieved (-1 Spirit)
Phlegmatic	Lethargic (-1 Quick)

A character with two debilities is in imminent danger of dying. When you **suffer further harm or engage in strenuous activity while you have two or more debilities**, roll+Body. On a 10+ you hold on for now. On a 7-9 you fall unconscious for a while. On a 6- you die.

## HEALING

When **an appropriate effort is made to balance one of your imbalanced humours**, roll+Spirit.

On a 10+, the humour comes back into balance right away. On a 7-9 you'll need some food and a good night's rest first.

When **an appropriate effort is made to correct a debility to one of your humours**, roll+Body.

On a hit, remove the associated debility. On a 7-9 you'll still need a full season without strenuous activity to recover or the penalty from the debility becomes permanent.

### Appropriate Efforts

Keeping an injured person warm, dry, well fed and safe can usually be considered an appropriate effort for healing. The length of time will vary, but at least a few hours in the case of an imbalance and at least a few days for a debility.

The same timelines apply to medical care (surgery). Depending on the nature of the illness or wound, medical care of some kind may be required. The power of belief can allow procedures like "bleeding" to provide some benefit despite how ridiculous they might seem in a modern context.

### Hermetic Healing

There are two methods for using hermetic magic to help someone deal with an injury or illness. The first is to help the body heal itself by recreating the humours using Creo+Corpus. The other is to trick the body into thinking its humours are no longer unbalanced by using Muto+Corpus.

In the case of Creo+Corpus, the spell counts as an appropriate healing effort, but the character must still roll+Spirit (for an imbalance) or +Body (for a debility) and abide by the results of the associated healing move.

In the case of Muto+Corpus, the injury is masked; so for the duration of the spell the character can ignore both the limitations and mechanical effects of the imbalance or debility. However, the imbalance or debility is still present and must be healed using other means. The danger here is that a character whose debility was masked with Muto+Corpus who then receives another debility still falls under the rules for having more than one debilitated humour.

## SHIELD GROG

When **a loyal member of the turb is in a position to defend you from an attack**, roll+Fight. On a 10+ the grog intercepts the attack and avoids harm. On a 7-9 the grog takes the hit in your place.

Members of the covenant warband undergo special training that makes them more aware of how to work with a magus in combat. The Shield Grog move is a reflection of that training. If the grog accompanying you is either untrained or unwilling to defend you, this move doesn't trigger.



## WARBAND COMBAT

When **the warband resorts to violence**, roll+Fight. On a hit you inflict your harm on the enemy and suffer harm from them. On a 10+ choose 3. On a 7-9 choose 2.

- You take something from the enemy
- You avoid harm (may be chosen more than once)
- You inflict extra harm (may be chosen more than once)
- You move the enemy

*Taking something* can refer to a key position they were occupying, an object or person they were defending, or perhaps a captive from among them.

*Avoiding harm* means you take 1 less harm from the enemy than you would otherwise.

*Inflicting extra harm* means adding 1 to the harm you usually do.

*Moving the enemy* is about pushing, pulling or luring them from where they started to where you want them to be.

### Relative Strength

If your warband outnumbered its enemy:

- 1 ½ to 1: inflicts +1 Harm, suffers -1 Harm.
- 2 to 1: inflicts +2 Harm, suffers -2 Harm.
- 3+ to 1: inflicts +3 Harm, suffers -3 Harm

If it is fighting from horseback and its enemy fights on foot: inflicts +1 Harm, suffers -1 Harm

If it fights in a shield wall and its enemy does not: inflicts +1 Harm, suffers -1 Harm.

When warbands suffer harm, rather than tracking their humours, adjust the size of the warband according to the number of casualties suffered. Some guidelines:

- 1-harm: a few injuries, one or two serious, no fatalities.
- 2-harm: many injuries, several serious, a couple of fatalities.
- 3-harm: widespread injuries, many serious, several fatalities.
- 4-harm: widespread serious injuries, many fatalities.
- 5-harm and more: widespread fatalities, few survivors.

With a strong leader present and visible, the warband will hold together if it suffers up to 4-harm. If the leader is weak or absent, it will hold together if it suffers up to 3-harm. If the leader is both weak and absent, it will hold together if it suffers 1- or 2-harm. If it has no leader, it will hold together if it suffers 1-harm, but no more.

If a PC is a member of the warband when it is taking harm, how much harm the PC takes depends on her role in the fight. If she is a leader or a prominent, visible member, she suffers the same harm the warband does. If she is intentionally protecting herself from harm instead of fighting, she suffers 1-harm less.

If the PC is fighting a specific opponent within the melee, she triggers Resort to Violence instead of Warband Combat.

## END OF SESSION

At the end of the session everyone figures out how much time his or her magus spent outside the lab and then uses the rest of the time for research, development and interaction.

### LAB ACTIVITY

By default, each magi may choose two lab activities per season. However, events in the session may dictate that too much time was spent away from the covenant to have completed one or both. Work out the details with the GM before making your choices.

Lab activity includes Lab Work, Magic Items and Familiars. It can also include long Rituals. See the Lab Work section for more details.

### STRENGTHEN A BOND

Look back over the session from the perspective of your character. Choose one of the other characters you interacted with or learned something new about and mark +1 Bond with them.

### MARK XP

Mark XP if, during the session:

- You fulfilled the XP criteria for your playbook.
- One of your beliefs played an important role in a decision you made (mark XP for each belief that came into play).

Everyone marks XP for their character if, during the session:

- A major threat to the covenant was eliminated.
- There was a substantial improvement to the covenant.

## AGING

At the end of a session set in the winter, if your character is 35 years old or older, roll+modifier from the chart based on your current age (magi may add their Book stat as well). On a 7+ you show no external signs of aging. On a miss, mark off a section of your aging cycle. Spring and Summer have no mechanical impact, but once a character enters Autumn, physical frailty begins to take its toll.

Age	Roll Modifier
35-40	+3
41-50	+2
51-60	+1
61-70	0
71+	-1

### Age Penalties

- Preservation = -1 Body or Quick
- Rationing = -1 to any mundane stat
- Darkness = -1 to any mundane stat

If you miss on your aging roll when your aging cycle is fully marked off, you die of old age during the next season.

Appearance-wise:

- A magus in Spring appears to be in his late 20s to mid 30s.
- A magus in Summer appears to be in his mid 30s to early 40s.
- A magus in Autumn appears to be in his mid 40s to 50s
- A magus in Winter appears to be at least 60

Note that the age ranges above reference contemporary humans - even with the presence of functional healing through Petitions, average people in Mythic Europe don't live much past 50 (which is the default assumption for grogs).

# RUNNING WIZARD WORLD

As with most of this book, this chapter is based on the great work done in *Dungeon World*, *Apocalypse World*, *Sagas of the Icelanders*, and *Monsterhearts*. If you're familiar with those games, you're probably familiar with the basic concepts here. As a quick summary:

To make Wizard World work, you need to accomplish certain things (your agenda). There are guidelines for how those things should be accomplished (your principles) and there are specific actions you take in the fiction to accomplish them (your moves).

## WHAT TO SAY

When you divide the roles in Wizard World into GM and Players, the lists of responsibilities comes down like this:

Players:

- Say what their characters say
- Say what their characters try to do
- Answer the GM's questions about their characters' lives and surroundings

The GM cannot do those things.

Instead, the GM is responsible for:

- Saying everything else.

This includes saying:

- What the world looks like, smells like, sounds like, feels like and tastes like
- What the other residents of the world say and do
- What the principles of the game demand

Quoting from Vincent Baker's *Apocalypse World*:

"Always be scrupulous, even generous, with the truth. The players depend on you to give them real information they can really use, about their characters' surroundings, about what's happening when and where. Same with the game's rules: play with integrity and an open hand. The players are entitled to the full benefits of their moves, their rolls, their characters' strengths and resources. Don't chisel them, don't weasel, don't play gotcha.

If you're playing the game as the players' adversary, your decision-making responsibilities and your rules-oversight constitute a conflict of interests. Play the game with the players, not against them."

## AGENDA

As the GM of Wizard World, you have two points on your agenda.

- Bring the Medieval Paradigm to life.
- Make the magi's lives interesting.

### Bring the Medieval Paradigm to life

Mythic Europe is the Europe we know from history books, but where every myth, legend and faerie tale is real. The medieval paradigm is a reflection of those myths and legends as well as the sum of scientific thought at the time. You can learn more about the medieval paradigm and the Mythic Europe setting in the *Ars Magica* books (and I highly recommend doing so).

Bringing the Medieval Paradigm to life means describing the way it impacts the character's lives. Do this as often as you can and in as many ways as you can think of.

### **Make the magi's lives interesting**

One of the primary means by which a magi gains power is spending time in his library or lab, poring over ancient texts, writing treatises and conducting experiments. While this may be appropriate to the genre, and many players might find it diverting for a while, it can make for very dull stories. Do your best to provide compelling reasons for the magi to leave their sanctums on a regular basis. Constantly put them and the covenant in danger. To quote Apocalypse World, "there is no status quo..."

Each of the Fronts is constantly working against the covenant (either directly or indirectly) and without direct intervention their agendas will take away everything the characters have worked for. Remind the characters of that fact constantly and in as many different ways as you can think of.

## **PRINCIPLES**

In order to fulfill your agenda as a Wizard World GM, you need to follow these principles.

- Make myths and faerie tales real.
- Address the characters, not the players.
- Ask questions and use the answers.
- Be a fan of the characters.
- Think dangerous.
- Begin and end with the fiction.
- Think offscreen, too.
- Use maps, leave blanks.
- Never speak the name of your move.
- Name everyone and everything.
- Advance your Fronts.
- Mythic Europe is not Europe.
- Power attracts power.
- Turn questions back on the asker or over to the group.

### **Make myths and faerie tales real**

In Mythic Europe, demons want to corrupt your immortal soul (and you have one). Faeries play in the woods and their dances can make 50 years pass in a night. Trolls live under bridges. Will o' wisps lure you into the swamp. God exists, faith has true power and the Church is His earthly expression. Magic is real and can be formed by those with the Gift and the skill to wield it.

This principle is especially important given the way that the Wizard World rules "quantify" magic in many ways. Do everything you can to remind the players of the *magical* part of magic by invoking myths, legends and faerie tales.

### **Address the characters, not the players**

Addressing the characters, not the players, means that you don't say, "Ash, is Dominus doing something about that demon?" Instead you say, "Dominus, the demon is casting a spell! What do you do?" Speaking this way keeps the game focused on the fiction and not on the table. It's important to the flow of the game, too. If you talk to the players you may leave out details that are important to what moves the characters make. Since moves are always based on the actions of the character you need to think about what's happening in terms of those characters - not the players portraying them.

### **Ask questions and use the answers**

Part of playing to find out what happens is explicitly not knowing everything, and being curious. If you don't know something, or you don't have an idea, ask the players and use what they say.

The easiest question to use is, "What do you do?" Whenever you make a move, end with "What do you do?" You don't even have to ask the person you made the move against. Take that chance to shift the focus elsewhere: "Liviticus's spell is torn apart with a flick of the faerie's wing. Razvan, that spell was aiding you. What are you doing now that it's gone?"

### **Be a fan of the characters**

Think of the players' characters as protagonists in a story you might see on TV. Cheer for their victories and lament their defeats. You're not here to push them in any particular direction, merely to participate in fiction that features them and their actions.

### **Think dangerous**

Everything in the world is a target. You're thinking like an evil overlord: no single life is worth anything and there is nothing sacrosanct. Everything can be put in danger; everything can be destroyed. Nothing you create is ever protected. Whenever your eye falls on something you've created, think how it can be put in danger, fall apart or crumble. The world changes. Without the characters' intervention, those changes will make it worse for them.

Keep this principle in mind when the players come up with vastly powerful spells. There is no need to protect your locations and characters. Everything you've created is constantly in danger, so who cares if the characters take it over or destroy it? You were going to do that soon anyway.

### **Begin and end with the fiction**

Everything you and the players do in Wizard World comes from, and leads to, fictional events. When the players make a move, they take a fictional action to trigger it, apply the rules, and get a fictional effect. When you make a move it always comes from the fiction.

### **Think offscreen too**

Just because you're a fan of the characters doesn't mean everything happens right in front of them. Sometimes your best move is in the next room, or in another covenant, or even in another country. Make your move elsewhere and show its effects when the characters bring the spotlight to it.

### **Use maps, leave blanks**

Wizard World exists mostly in the imaginations of the people playing it; maps help everyone stay on the same page. You won't always be drawing them yourself, but any time there's a new location described make sure it gets added to a map.

When you draw a map don't try to make it complete. Leave room for the unknown. As you play you'll get more ideas and the players will give you inspiration to work with. Let the maps expand and change.

### **Never speak the name of your move**

There is no quicker way to ruin the consistency of Wizard World than to tell the players what move you're making. Your moves are prompts to you, not things you say directly.

You never show the players that you're picking a move from a list. You know the reason the slavers dragged off Omar was because you made the "capture one of their underlings" move, but you show it to the players as a straightforward outcome of their actions, since it is.

### **Name everyone and everything**

One important aspect of your "bring the Medieval Paradigm to life" agenda is to remember that everyone the players speak with has a name. They probably have a personality and some goals or opinions too, but you can figure that out as you go. Start with a name. The rest can flow from there.

Similarly, every demon, every faerie, every spell and every magic item has a name. Be creative (and/or have a big list of names to choose from).

## **Advance your Fronts**

In addition to the covenant front, each major aspect of Mythic Europe has its own front and each front has as many threats as you care to define. Advance the agendas of those threats as often as you can, and announce those advancements as often as is appropriate to the fiction.

## **Mythic Europe is not Europe**

Use the places, people, myths and legends you know from medieval history, but don't be limited by it. Take at least as much liberty with geography and history as you do with science.

## **Power attracts power**

The magi in a Wizard World game wield vast amounts of power. With a little imagination, the PCs can accomplish nearly anything. Rather than trying to prevent this, embrace it, but use your moves to remind the players that there is always someone (or something) more powerful. Each of your Fronts contains powerful beings that might take exception to arrogant wizards hurling magic with abandon.

An extension of this principle is to ensure that the backlash for the character's spells is appropriate to the power they are wielding. While *Ars Magica* uses an elaborate system of spell levels and requisites to create balance, *Wizard World* let's a maga fresh from her gauntlet attempt to cast a spell that would be level 50 in *Ars Magica*. If the player makes such an attempt and rolls well, good for her! Remember your 'think dangerous' and 'be a fan of the characters' principles – who cares if the character solves an entire storyline with a single powerful spell? You can always come up with new opponents. On the other hand, if the player rolls poorly on that same spell, she needs to expect terrible consequences. Magic is never entirely predictable!

## **Turn questions back on the asker or over to the group**

Don't feel pressured to know everything. Sometimes it's more fun to allow the player asking the question to come up with the answer. It can sometimes be even more fun to let the group come up with something. Just remember to use the answers.

# **GM MOVES**

## **WHEN TO MAKE A MOVE**

You make a move:

- When everyone looks to you to find out what happens
- When the players give you a golden opportunity
- When someone rolls a 6-

There are two types of moves: soft and hard.

A soft move is a setup. It still allows the players to respond before something really bad happens. 'Show signs of an approaching threat' and 'Put someone in a spot' are classic soft moves.

A soft move ignored becomes a golden opportunity for a hard move. If the players do nothing about the hail of arrows flying towards them it's a golden opportunity to use the inflict harm move.

Hard moves have immediate consequences. Inflicting harm is a hard move, since it means consuming a resource (health) that won't be recovered without some action from the players.

When you have a chance to make a hard move you can opt for a soft one instead if it better fits the situation. Sometimes things just work out for the best.

## **Choosing a Move**

To choose a move, start by looking at the obvious consequences of the action that triggered it. If you already have an idea, think on it for a second to make sure it fits your agenda and principles and then do it. Let your moves snowball. Build on the success or failure of the characters' moves and on your own previous moves.

If your first instinct is that this won't hurt them now, but it'll come back to bite them later, great! That's part of your principles (think offscreen too). Make a note and reveal it when the time is right.

## **Making your Move**

When making a move, keep your principles in mind. In particular, never speak the name of your move and address the characters, not the players. Your moves are not mechanical actions happening around the table. They are concrete events happening to the characters in the fictional world you are describing.

After every move you make, always ask, "What do you do?"

- Separate them
- Capture their underlings
- Put someone in a spot
- Announce offscreen badness
- Show signs of an approaching threat
- Imbalance their humours
- Inflict Warping
- Use up their resources
- Push against their limitations
- Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask
- Offer an opportunity, with or without cost
- Make a threat move (from one of your Fronts)
- Reveal an unwelcome truth.

## **Separate them**

Always capitalize on opportunities to split the party. Present situations or objects that might interest some characters more than others, then make a hard move if they start talking about how to get there. Have their superiors in The Order make conflicting demands that can only be met by multiple parties.

## **Capture their underlings**

Capturing a magi is both difficult to maintain in the fiction and disruptive to the game, but capturing a companion or group of grogs inconveniences the magi and demands action, which drives the plot forward.

## **Put someone in a spot**

A spot is someplace where a character needs to make tough choices. Put them, or something they care about, in the path of destruction. The harder the choice, the tougher the spot.

## **Announce offscreen badness**

Periodic reminders that things keep happening even if the characters aren't there is a good way to make the world come alive. Examples: distant roars and explosions in the night; news of a plague or battle; the arrival of an exhausted and traumatized Redcap who refuses to speak of what he has seen. Remember to follow up with "what do you do?"

## **Show signs of an approaching threat**

Similar to, but more urgent than, announcing offscreen badness is providing immediate evidence of a threat to the characters and/or their stuff. This is a classic soft move that can let you make a much harder move with impunity if the characters don't take appropriate action.

## **Imbalance their humours**

This can refer to physical harm, but remember that health in Wizard World relates to balance of the humours, not just capacity for damage.

Imbalance can be the result of exposure to the elements, powerful magical auras, the presence of a powerful creature, eating tainted food, or even experiencing strong emotions. Some moves have specific rules for unbalancing humours, but feel free to do so at any time the fiction calls for it. Normally this hard move will be set up by a softer move earlier.

### **Inflict Warping**

Many of the strange things in Mythic Europe leave permanent traces on people who encounter them. As these traces build up, they can have a variety of deleterious effects. Warping is the mechanical expression of these traces and you should hand out Warping points regularly to reflect the bizarre things that start happening to people who spend time in powerful magical auras and in contact with powerful magical creatures.

### **Use up their resources**

Vis is the most valuable thing a covenant possesses, followed closely by the library and labs. Income can also be relevant, as can health, grogs, magic items, land, favours and prestige. Present situations where the characters either have to spend these resources or just take them away as appropriate in the fiction.

### **Push against their limitations**

While they may be powerful, even magi have their limits. Don't deliberately frustrate them (remember you're a fan) but remind them they aren't omnipotent.

### **Tell them the consequences or requirements and ask**

As part of being a fan of the characters, you should give the players fair warning about the actions they are proposing. This is especially important when dealing with the wide-open nature of the Wizard World magic system. There will likely be times when a player proposes an insanely powerful spell effect – don't automatically say no, but be very clear about the risks associated

and let them revise their idea if they want to. Also be very clear about whether some of the risks are inherent to the spell as opposed to those associated with 7-9 or 6- results.

This is another great soft move as it sets you up to make a very hard move if they ignore your warning.

### **Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost**

Show them something they want: knowledge, riches, power, glory. If you want, you can associate some cost with it too, of course.

Remember to lead with the fiction. You don't say, "This area isn't dangerous so you can make camp here, if you're willing to take the time." You make it a solid fictional thing and say, "Helferth's blessings still hang around the shattered altar. It's a nice safe spot, but the chanting from the ritual chamber is getting louder. What do you do?"

### **Make a threat move (from one of your Fronts)**

Every Wizard World campaign has a number of Fronts, and each Front has a set of moves suited to its agenda. If the situation doesn't call for another specific move, use this one to make sure threats are always moving against the characters, even if it's only in the background for now.

### **Reveal an unwelcome truth**

An unwelcome truth is a fact the players wish wasn't true: that the room's been trapped, maybe, or that the helpful grog is actually a spy. Reveal to the players just how much trouble they're in.



## HARM

When you choose to imbalance a humour, choose the humour that best reflects the source of harm. Guidelines for factors that imbalance the humours are found in Harm & Healing.

Harm is not exclusive to one humour. For example, cutting damage normally imbalances sanguine due to blood loss. However, if the character is already Weak and receives more cutting or stabbing damage, imbalancing his melancholic humour due to bruising is perfectly appropriate.

### GMC HARM

There is no need to track humours for GM characters. A GMC will be out of action either when she suffers 1-5 successful attacks or an equal amount of harm from a single attack (this is the GMC harm threshold). 1 = lesser harm, 2 = harm, 3 = terrible harm, 4 & 5 are for exceptionally tough and/or magical GMCs.

## HEALING

Your decision about what constitutes an appropriate effort to rebalance humours can have a big impact on how the campaign progresses. Easier healing means events in the campaign can progress more quickly, but this comes at the cost of some dramatic tension, as harm becomes less threatening.

The default assumptions about healing are fairly generous. You can make them slightly harsher by being strict about what constitutes a “good night’s rest” and/or what qualifies as “care” in a medical sense.

The rules for recovering from a debility are on the harsher side, as characters will frequently be out of action for a whole season during recovery. Feel free to loosen this restriction if it slows down your game too much.

## RITUALS

When a player describes the ritual they want to create, you'll need to make an arbitrary decision about how powerful you think that effect is. Rate it on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is something just beyond what you'd let them do with the regular arcane moves and 10 is something that could alter the course of history.

A rating 0 ritual requires 2 rooks of vis, an hour, and +1 or greater mastery of the two arts most applicable to the desired effect (plus an arcane connection if the target is unseen). Add requisites until you get to the number you assigned.

- Vis: each additional rook counts as one increase (to a maximum of +5)
- Time: a day, a week, a month, a season (a season of ritual casting counts as a laboratory activity)
- Mastery: each additional art counts as one increase (to maximum of +2)
- Materials: common, uncommon (worth about 1 gold), rare (worth at least 10 gold), impossible (not available for purchase & probably require a quest to obtain)
- Expertise: book, expert consulted, rare book, expert present, expert sacrificed
- Connection: something frequently near the target, something made by the target, a tiny piece of the target, a large part of the target

For example, a ritual you rated at 5 could require a week to cast (+2), mastery of an additional art (+1) an additional rook of vis (+1) and some commonly available materials (+1).

It's more interesting to spread out the requisites rather than just adding a bunch of the same. For example, it would be boring to just say that the rating 5 ritual requires 7 rooks of vis.

## FRONTS

Every Wizard World campaign has the following Fronts. As you develop them, each Front will eventually have the following parts:

- **Cast.** The people or entities that are part of the Front. At the very least this should have some names and descriptions. It may also contain a few basic game stats.
- **Agenda.** Some notes about the plans the cast of the Front are working on. Chances are there will be one plan that is bigger and more important to the campaign than the others, but that's not strictly necessary.
- **Threat Moves.** This is just a list of the types of nasty things the cast of the Front tend to do. Each threat move should advance the Front's agenda in a way that will either directly impact the PC covenant or bring it closer to doing so.
- **Questions.** These are prompts to keep you moving forward with the Front. They should relate to the cast and agenda, tying them together in ways that help keep you as interested in the results as the players.

## INFERNAL

The cast of the Front should include a demon or demons, but should also list any mortals that have already been corrupted (including covenant members).

All demons exist to corrupt mortals, but each demon tends to be fascinated by one of the deadly sins in particular. Depending on the demon, the threat moves for the Infernal Front can include:

- **Lust.** Overwhelming desire for something forbidden. Can lead to theft, rape or murder.
- **Gluttony.** Over-indulgence to the point of harming the covenant.

- **Greed.** Taking and hoarding things for their own sake to the detriment of others.
- **Sloth.** Refusal to work or to complete assigned tasks.
- **Wrath.** Violence against everyone, including those who should be allies.
- **Envy.** Sabotage someone else's possessions or position.
- **Pride.** Cause animosity over real or imagined slights.

## DIVINE

While there are many members of the Church who acknowledge that magic is not inherently evil, there are at least as many who wish to discredit or even bring down the Order. In the short term this might be a minor clergyman, but it could also involve someone as powerful as a bishop with long term plans.

Once you've identified the cast, give them an agenda. A Divine agenda should somehow involve converting covenant members to Christianity, even it turns out to only be a cover for more mundane ambitions.

- **Ostracism.** The clergyman uses his influence to sway people from dealing with the covenant.
- **Aggression.** Fanatical churchmen may try to incite violence against the covenant, or at least against the mundane members (only the truly crazy are likely to confront the magi openly, but they may send underlings to do it).
- **Excommunication.** Only the highest-ranking clergy can perform a true excommunication, but once pronounced it is both a social obstacle and more. (The mechanical effects of excommunication are left to each group to decide).

## **MUNDANE**

The local lord is the most obvious starting place but an evil sheriff is also a good nemesis, as is an entire village bent on ruining the covenant for some real or imagined slight.

Mundane agendas include:

- Trade. Control or prevent the covenant's economic activity.
- Territory. Take away some or all of the covenant's land.
- Population. Recruit the covenant's grogs.
- Prestige. Display the covenant in a negative light.

Depending on the social status and resources of the cast, Threats can be expressed through:

- Violence. Anything from kidnapping to open warfare.
- Theft. From stealing a few trade goods to open raids on the covenant.
- Politics. Since covenants already exist in legally "gray" territory, it isn't that difficult for a skilled litigant to cause trouble, from taxation to demands for sworn fealty.

## **COVENANT**

The largest and most complex front is within the covenant itself. Every visitor worth mentioning and every grog who deals directly with the magi and companions should be added to the covenant front with a name, desire, potential danger and a cycle to track how far along they are in their plans.

## **ORDER**

The nearest covenant should almost always start as a rival, but there could also be bigger and badder forces within the Order that can harm or help the PCs depending on how things go. Feel free to give this front very large, slow-moving goals. Magi live a long time and tend to hatch plans with similar timelines.

The Order Front should also contain information about what The Order expects of the covenant. The PC magi were given a charter for a reason, and The Order expects a return on its investment. Create a few influential members of the local Tribunal (and perhaps someone as high as the Grand Tribunal) and make a few notes about their goals and expectations.

## **FAERIE**

The fae are a constant wild card. The Code forbids disturbing them, but their playful nature and innate power frequently bring them into contact with the magi. Any interaction with a faerie should add them to this front.

Faerie agendas are often bizarre, but they always revolve around the fact that the fae are shaped by the beliefs of mortals. Faeries cannot reproduce, learn or create any permanent changes without interacting with humans. Faeries are masters of illusion, and make use of this power to fool humans into believing things that feed into the fae agenda.

# **GM CHARACTERS**

Name, description and moves are by far the most important pieces of information required for GM characters. If you expect the GMC to participate in combat, you may also want to fill out a stat block:

- Name
- Description
- Harm threshold: 1-5 (hermetic magi may have a separate certamen threshold)
- Immunities or resistances
- Weaknesses (and which immunities they bypass)
- Damage: type of harm and a weapon description
- 3 moves
- The Front the character is associated with

## THE FIRST SESSION

The first session of a Wizard World campaign will revolve around character and covenant creation. As the GM, you have three primary jobs:

- Ask lots of questions.
- Answer the questions the players have about the game and setting.
- Take lots of notes.

When you take notes, always try to relate them to your Fronts. Every single person, item, location or event discussed during character and covenant creation is a potential conflict for you to draw on during the campaign.

If your players are not familiar with Ars Magica, it's probably a good idea to provide a quick overview of the general concepts behind Mythic Europe, the Order of Hermes and the Code. Don't worry about getting into a lot of detail - summarizing the information in The World chapter provides enough background to get started.

If your players are familiar with Ars Magica, you'll instead want to review the major differences between it and Wizard World. The biggest single difference is that while Ars Magica focuses on defining the characters' limitations, Wizard World focuses on the consequences of the characters being able to do almost anything.

Many experienced Ars Magica players were attracted to that system because of its amazing depth and comprehensive coverage of spells, items, familiars, apprentices and everything else related to magic. Ars Magica is also renowned for its extensive system of Virtues and Flaws to differentiate characters. Wizard World purposefully puts almost all of those things into the fiction rather than defining them mechanically. I endeavoured to cut as many

mechanical elements as possible while still maintaining the tone and feel of Ars Magica and Mythic Europe.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE CHARACTERS

Don't try to ask every character all of these questions. Just use them as guidelines to get conversations started.

- Where were you born?
- What was your family like (social class, size, customs)?
- Were you close to members of your family? Any in particular?
- How did your Gift first manifest?
- How did your family react when The Order came to take you away?
- What is the first thing you remember about your Master?
- How did your Master treat you as an apprentice?
- Where did you do most of your training?
- What was your least favourite thing about being an apprentice?
- How do you feel about the Hermetic Code?
- What is your impression of The Order?
- What is your favourite thing about being able to cast magic?
- What aspect of your magical power scares you the most?
- How did your sigil first manifest? What does it say about you and your magic?
- What was your gauntlet like?
- What is your biggest goal now?

If your players are interested in doing so, feel free to have them go through the list of Virtues and Flaws in Ars Magica and choose any they feel are appropriate. Anything they choose becomes true in the fiction, it just doesn't have a mechanical effect. (Be aware that many of the Advanced Moves are based on Virtues so there may be some overlap).

Depending on their previous exposure to Ars Magica, the players may have very definite ideas about The Order, the Code, the Houses of Hermes, and how a covenant should work. Conversely, all this Latin mixed into their Dungeon World may just confuse them. Wizard World works just fine with both types of group, it's just a matter of establishing what everyone's preferences are. If your group wants to use Mythic Europe exactly as described in the Ars Magica books, go for it – otherwise just make up your own.

### **FORMING BONDS**

This is an excellent time to find out which relationships will drive the campaign in which directions. Pushing the players to form rivalries and alliances at this point will make covenant development much more interesting.

### **ESTABLISHING THE COVENANT**

Building labs is the first step in establishing the covenant. Mechanically speaking, a scriptorium is the most useful first choice for contributing to the covenant, while an apothecary will let the magus research rituals right away. Allow the players to choose whichever is most appropriate to their characters and do your best to get them to add at least a brief description that ties each lab to its magus.

There are quite a few mechanical decisions for the players to make when creating the covenant. Make sure they support their choices with elements from the fiction.

- Why is the aura so powerful?
- What attracted the extra grogs to the covenant?
- Who is the skilled craftsman? What is he like?
- What are the defences like? Are they obviously magical or were they built by mundane labour?

Be aware that some groups can get very caught up in the minutiae of covenant building. Try to keep them focused on the bigger picture – after all, they'll be able to change virtually everything about the covenant as the campaign progresses.

### **COUNCIL ROLES**

Depending on the size of your group, you may or may not have enough characters to fill all the council roles. If you're short, fill the roles in the following order:

- Primus
- Librarian
- Bursar
- Fill the Liaison and Militant roles in order according to the expected type of campaign (political or combative respectively).

### **CREATING COMPANIONS**

With so few stats and abilities, most of a companion's power in the game comes from the fiction rather than the mechanics, so it is important that the players put some thought into who their companions are and what makes them heroic. The archetypes and special moves provide a good starting place, but it is also important that the players establish elements about the companion's history and general level of ability. Encourage them to embellish on the brief write-ups in the [Companions](#) chapter and be sure to take notes about any special talents, equipment and contacts that come up in discussion.

The companions will continue to grow and develop during the campaign, but getting a start on their history during the character creation session will help make them more than an afterthought in the bottom corner of the maga's character sheet.

## **FURTHER SESSIONS**

If you're an experienced GM and/or if you've played a lot of Ars Magica, you'll probably find that the covenant relationships and the forces of antagonism in the Fronts will provide more than enough fuel to keep the campaign going. If you're new to the system and/or if you're having trouble getting a session moving, here are a few suggestions that might help you find inspiration:

### **BEGINNING OF SESSION MOVE**

There are quite a few cues in the Beginning of Session move, some of which are more obvious than others.

### **Changed Beliefs**

When a player takes the time to change a belief, be sure to ask a few questions about why. Changing a belief indicates that the player is either unsatisfied with her character's current state and/or she wants to go in a new direction. Take note of the change and do your best to work it into the session.

### **New Advanced Moves**

In a perfect world you'll be able to have a character showcase new moves in the first session they acquire them. This won't always be possible, but take note of their choices and do your best to create circumstances that allow the characters to display their newfound prowess.

### **Deal With The Order**

The results of this move can potentially drive an entire session. If the players opt to have The Order call in an obligation, check your Fronts and start making moves.

## **Fortune**

No matter the result, the Fortune move provides lots of inspiration for session events. Sometimes all you need to do is ask the players to explain the results and be ready to build on their answers.

- Why did some of the grogs abandon the covenant?
- What caused the aura to wax in power?
- Why is the local lord calling for taxes in the Spring instead of Autumn?
- What happened that made some peasants leave the nearby village and ask to join the covenant?

Relate the answers to your Fronts and these types of questions can potentially drive entire sessions.

## **COUNCIL**

When an event comes up at the seasonal Council meeting, you should note it as something important enough to the players that they brought it forward for debate. Relate each point to one of your Fronts and do your best to incorporate the results into the session.

While the intent of the rules is to have a Council meeting in every session, this may not be appropriate to every group. If your players don't seem to be enjoying this aspect of the game, feel free to condense it and/or deal with Council meetings via email or forum posts between sessions.

## CAMPAIGN PACING

The default assumption in Wizard World is that each session covers the events of an entire season. The lab work and covenant development rules were designed with this timeline in mind. You can play at a slower pace, but it will require substantial changes to character advancement, and it will mean that lab activities become a much less important part of the game.

Even at the default pace, however, things like aging and training an apprentice will only come up in very long campaigns.

### PURE LAB SEASONS

You can increase the pace of the game by declaring some seasons as pure lab seasons. This means that all of the magi choose to stick close to home and devote themselves to lab activities. Pure lab seasons can be run through fairly quickly (or even between sessions). Here are some tips on making them as efficient as possible.

### Beginning of Session Moves

**Deal With The Order:** Feel free to hand-wave this move if you like. It's perfectly reasonable for The Order not to interfere with the covenant for a season here and there. Otherwise, make the move and see what happens.

**Fortune:** Make this move as normal, but if the result asks you to make some moves, focus on mechanical changes and avoid introducing story elements that will require direct intervention from the magi.

### Council?

Move through Council as quickly as possible, potentially even choosing not to present any new business at all.

## Income & Expenditures

The easiest way to handle this is to assume that there will be no choices made that have an impact on income. If you prefer, you can instead just limit the group to a single mechanical change:

- If income is deficient, gold from the treasury can be spent to stabilize.
- If income is stable, the covenant can undertake a single major expenditure and drop to deficient.
- If income is abundant, the covenant can undertake a single major expenditure with no change to income.

The goal is to move through such mechanically driven events as quickly as possible.

### End of Session Moves

Since by definition all magi have spent all their time in their labs, there is no need to go through the End of Session moves. Proceed directly to rolling for lab activities.

### Frequency

You can accelerate the pace of the campaign in a logical, consistent fashion by choosing to have one pure lab season per year. Depending on the covenant's location in Mythic Europe, winter is a logical season to spend close to home, as travel varies from merely being more dangerous to becoming nearly impossible. This is certainly not necessary, but such an acceleration will make it more likely that the aging and apprentice rules will come into play during the campaign.

## **CAMPAIGN LEVELS**

A Wizard World campaign is constantly playing out on two distinct levels. These levels often cross over, but it's helpful to be aware of the separation in your campaign planning.

### **Foreground**

The bulk of game time focuses on the events taking place “live” in the game’s conversation. The GM describes a scene and the players describe the actions taken by their characters. Moves are triggered and resolved, and the results lead to new descriptions, which provoke new actions. While some descriptions, actions and resolutions may involve time passing, the events are in the present tense, and, usually, everyone waits to see what happens before moving on.

### **Background**

Background events are things like lab work, rituals, and jobs done by the grogs. This also applies to many of the companions’ special moves. Options are chosen and the activity is assumed to be taking place in the background, or offscreen. The player narrates their intent and rolls the dice, then, based on the result, you work together to determine the timeline and results of the move.

Many of Wizard World’s mechanics are in place to define these offscreen events and it’s easy for a campaign to focus on this group of rules. If your group enjoys this style of game, run with it! To get the most out of the Wizard World experience, however, I highly recommend doing your best to put the focus on foreground events.