

ARINA

Canticle of the Monomyth™



Roleplaying

ARIA: CANTICLE OF THE MONOMYTH™

Roleplaying

CONTAINS: PERSONA CREATION BOOK & MYTH CREATION BOOK



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Announcing . . .

Canticle

Canticle is a quarterly newsletter and on-going design forum for those interested in contributing to the arts of world building and myth creation.

Each issue brings you new ideas and perspectives from Aria players nationwide. *Canticle* is meant to be an interactive forum. We welcome your insights and contributions related to the Aria philosophy of metadesign. Best of all, your first issue's free.

To receive your free copy of *Canticle*, send your name and mailing address to:

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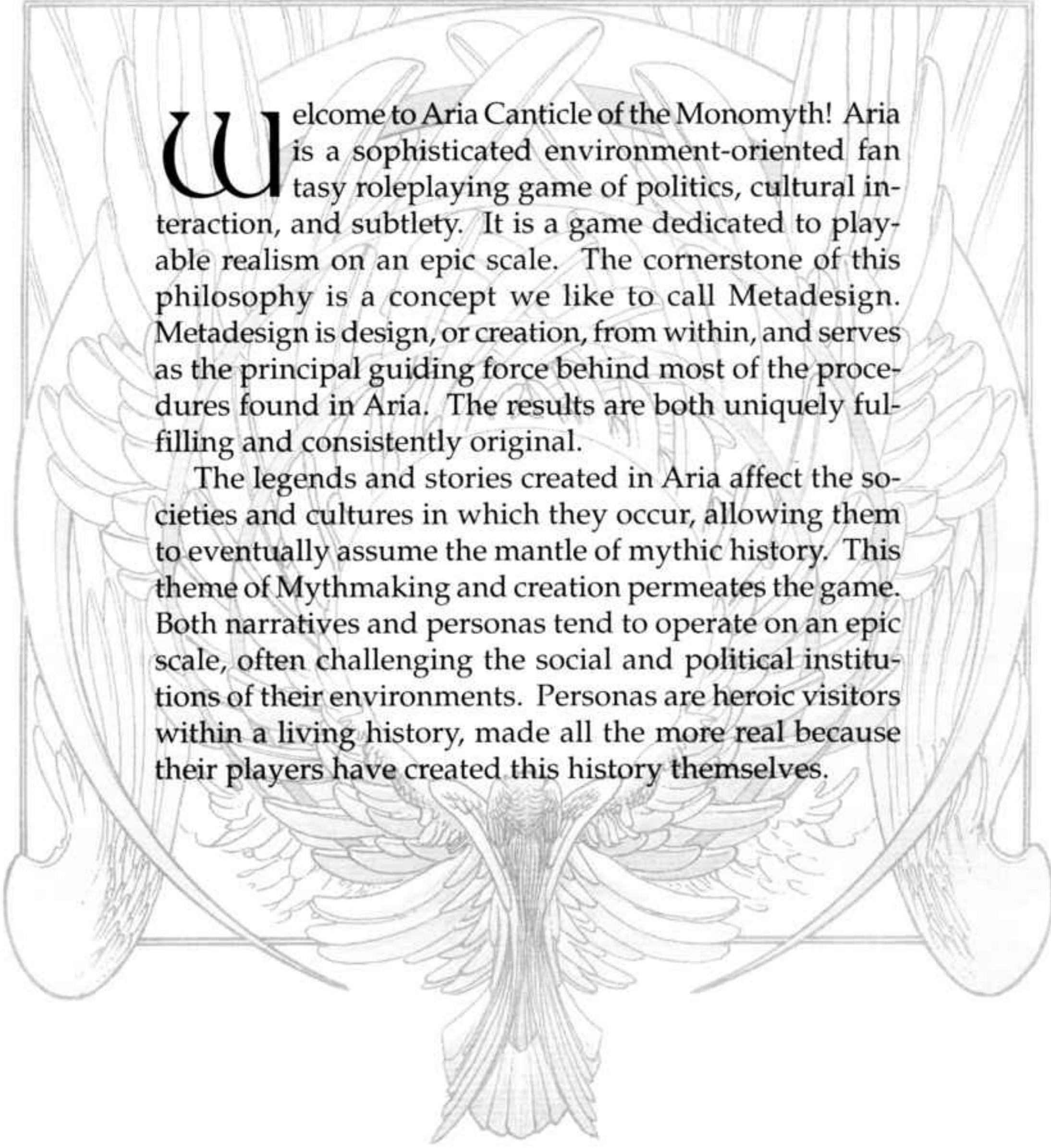


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Prelude to Aria



Welcome to Aria Canticle of the Monomyth! Aria is a sophisticated environment-oriented fantasy roleplaying game of politics, cultural interaction, and subtlety. It is a game dedicated to playable realism on an epic scale. The cornerstone of this philosophy is a concept we like to call Metadesign. Metadesign is design, or creation, from within, and serves as the principal guiding force behind most of the procedures found in Aria. The results are both uniquely fulfilling and consistently original.

The legends and stories created in Aria affect the societies and cultures in which they occur, allowing them to eventually assume the mantle of mythic history. This theme of Mythmaking and creation permeates the game. Both narratives and personas tend to operate on an epic scale, often challenging the social and political institutions of their environments. Personas are heroic visitors within a living history, made all the more real because their players have created this history themselves.



ARIA Concepts

A number of basic concepts and philosophies combine to form the basis of the Aria game system. These ideas, considered as a whole, unite to create the general atmosphere of the game. Players and potential Mythguides are encouraged to read this section carefully. The themes defined here should remain the principal aspects of the Aria roleplaying philosophy.

Reforging the Monomyth

Aria Narratives are an ongoing exploration of the eternal Hero's Journey, its possible incarnations, and its relation to diverse and original social and cultural forms. The Journey of the Hero is one expression of the Monomyth, a term coined by James Joyce and popularized by Joseph Campbell, that represents the One Myth on which all myths are based. The Journey of the Hero signifies the Great Journey, the eternal quest of the archetypal Hero and his minions that comprises many myth cycles.

The images of the Hero's Journey are enduring. They are imprinted on our collective unconscious and explain much of our fascination with fantasy and myth. They combine to create the stories and narratives that touch the deepest recesses of our collective social memory, treading the finest of lines between the curtain of history and the shimmering wall of living myth.

The purpose of Aria is to awaken these images in our own narrative, setting, and world designs. The Hero's Journey and its stations require a concrete setting, one that lives and breathes along with the personas who travel among its inhabitants and experience its marvels firsthand. Legends are built within living environments, and myths take their shape from richly defined cultures and societies. But the myths and histories are somehow more poignant and fulfilling when they evolve from our own creations. It is this creative spirit that is fostered by Metadesign.

Personas interact within a larger social framework to create not only stories, but the imprints and archetypes that will someday govern their own particular worlds. While working to create and shape the history of an individual Narrative Environment, the personas themselves become the world's mythmakers.

The Precepts of Mythmaking

Three essential Precepts of Mythmaking govern both narrative interaction and roleplaying in the Mythguide System. These primary elements of the Aria game, when accorded equal representation and importance, combine to create an enjoyable, challenging, and balanced gaming environment.

Metadesign

In many ways, Aria is as much design tool as roleplaying game. Each Mythguide or Ensemble is responsible for creating their own setting (although several archetypes are given to get things started). Metadesign is 'design within design'. Each Ensemble works within the game's framework (its overall 'design') to develop their own unique version of Aria (their 'design within the design'). Settings, cultures, races, magic and religious systems - if the spirit of Metadesign is truly captured, each Ensemble becomes familiar with a version of Aria unlike any other.

Aria Worlds presents comprehensive guidelines for creating original and self-consistent Narrative Environments. These environments can be of any size, ranging from small villages to entire continents. The parameters that govern their creation are telescopic. The same design framework applies regardless of the environment's size, and also permits the 'nesting' of one environment within the metes of another.

The society creation system allows for most conceivable social possibilities, and provides complete and rational design guidelines that permit these possibilities to be handled in a sensible manner relative to one another. For example, social status does not have to operate according to any Earth-based historical premises. Coherent and flexible guidelines are presented in an archetypal fashion that encourage the design of original status models unique to a particular society or culture. These same creation guidelines also support the ongoing evolution and development of an environment during play, serving as a catalyst for individual Mythguide and player creativity.

Aria Roleplaying allows players to create unique Heritage Templates that define original cultures, races, and species. Intricate background and personal history design are encouraged. Even during persona creation, Aria remains an environment-oriented game. Personas possess many unique background aspects and development opportunities that are based primarily on personal social and cultural interaction.



Combat style and weapons availability also depend on the particular Narrative Environment. Players can design original weapons using available materials and techniques (determined during society creation), or they can explore their society's individual philosophy regarding the use of arms (again based on social considerations).

The design of both magic and religious systems occurs in a similar manner. Different societies evince divergent philosophies, levels of availability, and levels of tolerance toward these disciplines. Magical orders, secret Lodges, churches, and religious military orders are all designed using guidelines similar to those outlined above. The use of these creation rules adds a decidedly esoteric dimension to the Aria game.

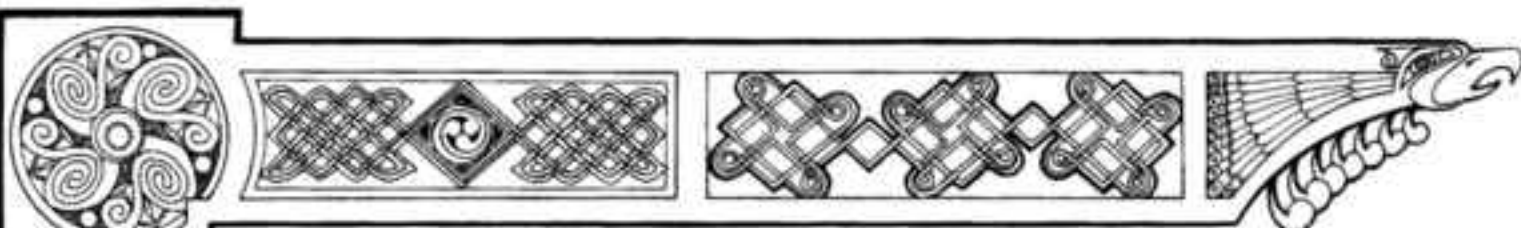
Metadesign is an important aspect of the Aria game because of the attachment a creator feels for his creation. Any author or group of authors derives ultimate fulfillment and satisfaction from the ongoing interaction with and continued development of their own work. Although commercially available settings can be both creative and entertaining, anyone who has ever created a complete setting of their own recognizes this final truth - when you travel the familiar byways of your own creation (as any creator invariably does), you feel singularly at home.

Playable Realism

Playable Realism permeates the Aria game system. Realism can be subdivided into equal parts *detail*, *possibility*, and *believability*. The creation guidelines for both environments and personas are extremely detailed, but the actual mechanics that govern them are fairly simple. This simplicity keeps the progress of the game balanced and allows roleplaying and interaction to flow smoothly. This simplicity fosters Playability.

The *detail* inherent in Aria's realistic nature creates unlimited possibility as well. It also stresses one of the most important and necessary elements of fantasy roleplaying - *suspension of disbelief*. By giving the Ensemble abundant background color and narrative explanation, the *believability* of the roleplaying experience is significantly enhanced. The more defined and interesting a topic or region is, the more believable its existence becomes.

For example, knowing that a society is a small kingdom with many nonhuman races, scant resources, and a full-time militia doesn't tell us very much. The image awakened by this short description is one of a standard fantasy setting offering little possibility aside



from conventional, mundane adventure. Narrative ideas are lost amidst strange hooks or weird gimmicks (normally as an attempted compensation for a weak setting) and often have little relevance to the environment in which they occur. Personas are little more than members of their own self-contained group, and are rarely forced to think of their larger position in society or of the eventual consequences of their actions.

Roleplaying in Aria encourages a far deeper understanding which serves as a general description of the standing of and interaction with the principal social and cultural forces at work in a particular environment. Knowing the general demeanor of the people, the level and type of the society's interaction with surrounding environments, the nature and operation of the society's political and economic systems, the type and preparedness of its military, its general resource level and exploitation philosophy, its outlook on international trade, its tolerance of the arts, religion, and magic, etc. gives an Ensemble a far clearer picture of the social climate in which they are acting. Add to this an interesting history and a colorful profile of the area's current situation and the curiosity of even the most jaded group of players should be piqued.

It is this wealth of inherent detail that gives an Aria society its broad base of possibility. Narrative ideas spring from every step of the society creation procedure. How does the society's political structure affect its Philosophical Orientation? How does its interaction with its neighbors affect its military structure? What type of economy exists? What level of technology? How do these factors influence the environment's authority structure? How do they affect the nature of power and the importance of popular consent? Coupled with an intriguing history, these elements and others like them interact to create a unique environment of social conflict and political tension. Each individual aspect of society can serve as the germination point for narrative possibility. Since the personas are integral players in this complex drama, issues that might seem trivial in weaker settings soon become crucially important.

The society creation guidelines on which Aria is based are completely inter-relative. This means that the various elements which compose an individual environment's description actually work in conjunction with one another. For example, the fact that an environment's Philosophical Orientation leans toward Peace is not mutually exclusive. This aspect of the society's nature has an effect on all other facets of the society description. The simple fact that the design parameters make sense is important; it permits the design of solidly grounded settings into which any amount of fantasy can be injected. The result is a pleas-

antly believable and realistic fantasy environment unlike any other.

INTERACTIVE CREATION and Roleplaying

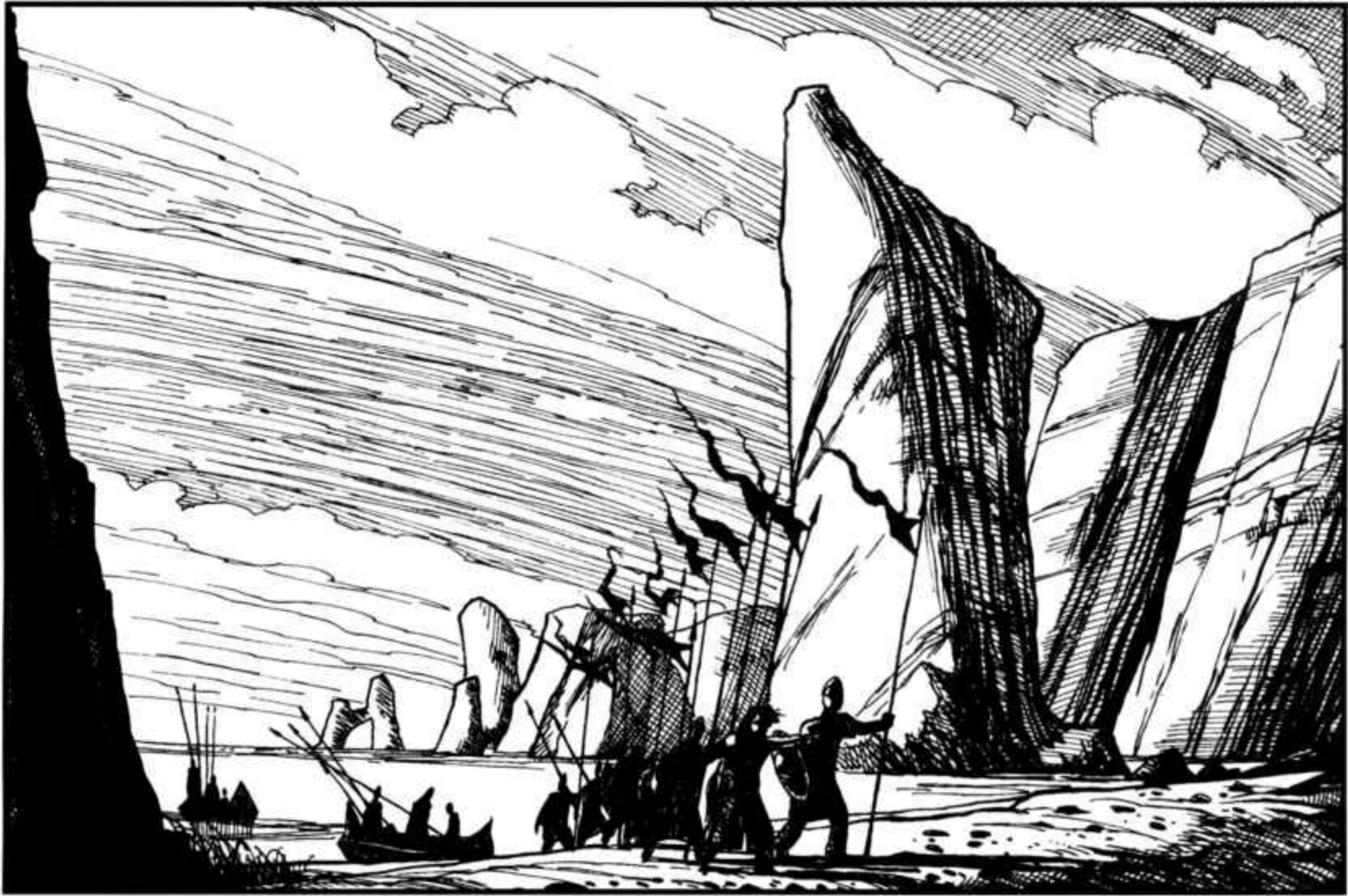
Another enjoyable possibility afforded by the society creation guidelines, and which furthers the concept of both Playable Realism and Metadesign, is the spontaneous creation and roleplaying experience. An Ensemble sits down with their Mythguide and collectively designs an environment in which to set their game. Because of the detail contained in the Aria society design system, it is possible to both create a living and fully realized society and begin play within it in a single evening. This experience can be uniquely rewarding and challenging, especially if the environment created is truly strange or original. Such interactive, all-inclusive, spur-of-the-moment design genuinely captures the pure creative spirit of Aria.

MYTH CREATION

Aria is principally a game of epic narrative interaction and Mythmaking. The sagas and epics in which the personas take part reflect the authority and truths of their age, and often serve to define or detail specific institutions or aspects of the setting in which they occur. This latter element of myth creation stems from the social and environment-related themes common to most Aria games. The marriage of Imagination and Sub-Creation yields mythology.

J.R.R. Tolkien said that "every writer making a secondary world, a fantasy, every sub-creator... hopes that he is drawing on reality". The detailed Aria society creation rules draw on a realistic base to allow unlimited fantastic possibility. The narratives and persona histories that unfold during play both contribute to and become a part of the ongoing mythic history of the environment. The society design and Mythmaking processes are often experiences that involve the entire Ensemble. The results are rich histories, legends, and backgrounds that carry with them the ring of true collaboration.

Aria is designed to be a Canticle-oriented game of Mythmaking that stresses environmental and social interaction. It is meant to be played on an epic scale, and is especially conducive to sweeping political narratives involving region-spanning cultural themes and inter-societal contact. The Ensemble takes the history of their environment in hand, shaping and molding its development through their actions and motivations.



INTERACTIVE HISTORIES

The ability to shape an environment's development is an important element of Aria roleplaying. Players can actually roleplay societies, cultures, and individual political agencies through periods in an environment's history. Such interaction is described by an Interactive History. This level of social development normally occurs in Aria Time, and can be handled in several different ways. Players can switch between Narrative and Aria-level interaction, playing individual personas in specific Narratives and then stepping back to develop the environment itself. Single Intervals represent the passage of years, and play is resolved through a combination of large-scale roleplaying, Action declaration, and Society Trials.

Interactive Histories serve another purpose as well. While roleplaying and persona development are important aspects of any game, the interactive effect a persona has on the environment is often overlooked. By employing the Interactive History concept, we try to rectify this to some extent. Players are able to 'play' societies and cultures, and although one persona may not achieve a certain goal, the continued development of the social environment ensures that a descendant

of that persona will have a chance to pursue a similar goal.

Creating a History

Interactive Histories can be used to develop the history of a region either before or after its use as an environment for more specialized roleplaying. When playing a society, the player controls all of its various elements. Most normal interaction with neighboring environments is handled through the resolution of Actions and corresponding Society Trials. If more detail or precision is required, or if an unusual situation develops, two courses of action are possible: either roleplay the 'society' as a persona or drop into Narrative Time for a while and resolve the situation by playing one or more of the principal individual participants. The choice depends on both the situation and the players' familiarity with the environments involved.

For example, two players are detailing the early history of a continent by roleplaying two young nations. After several hundred years of development in Aria Time (using a combination of roleplaying and Society Trials), a critical diplomatic juncture (see the



Interactive History chapter for more information on Critical Junctures) is reached in the relations between the two states. Will they go to war or will there be a peaceful resolution? A summit is called by the leaders of the states. At this point, instead of continuing in Aria Time, the Mythguide drops into Narrative Time.

The resolution method depends on the players' wishes. Each player can assume the role of a single diplomat or official (and play the role as a persona for a while), or each player can take on the roles of several individuals from each side. Play can progress as individual Narratives (with Intervals of minutes or hours) or as a slightly more specific version of the previous development scale (with Intervals of weeks or months).

We recommend that the most important elements of such grand development be roleplayed as individual Episodes and Narratives on a small scale. The result is that the players become a part of history's pivotal moments; they are intimately associated with great events and with making those events happen. These are the events that eventually become an environment's myths.

Enhancing an Aria

One method of handling Interactive Histories focuses completely on the personas and their role in an environment's history. Personas have the ability to change their environments, and the concept of the Interactive History helps to express this ability. There are three basic ways of handling such interaction --

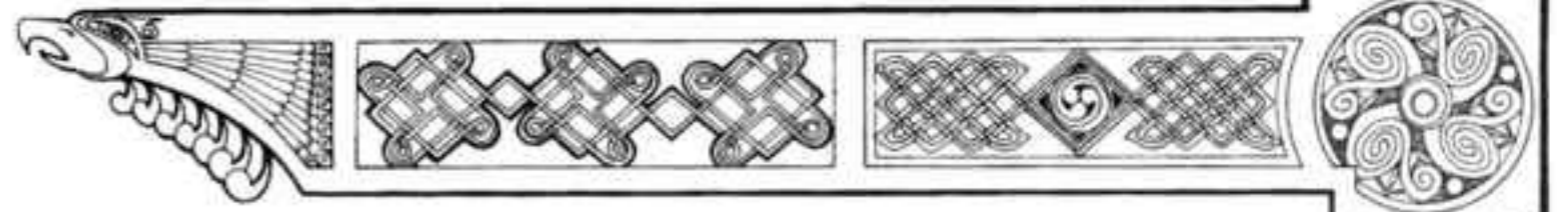
Perpetual Genealogies, Individual Appearances, and Eternal Presence.

Perpetual Genealogies

A player can roleplay an entire family or lineage through history. The player can affect an environment's history directly through roleplaying or in a cumulative fashion, building small effects generation by generation (through successive personas) until the end of the Aria is reached.

The Mythguide may also allow breaks in direct Narrative roleplaying and move into Aria Time to examine the effects of certain persona actions. Such breaks can last a few years or a few generations. For example, an Aria begins as a player plays an initial persona through several Canticles. After this persona retires, the player continues play with the original persona's daughter as her new persona. This persona's actions have some far-reaching effects on the environment, so after she is retired the Mythguide moves into Aria Time. He allows the player to control the environment for fifty or sixty years, permitting her to continue on a larger scale the development begun by her persona during play.

After this sojourn into Aria Time is over, the player picks up the original persona's lineage where she left off. At this point she will be playing her second persona's great-grandchild (and her initial persona's great great-grandchild). The Aria continues for another generation, and will continue in perpetuity as long as the lineage exists.



Individual Appearances

Individual Appearances can be used if the roleplaying itself is concentrating on the development of a social history. The player creates a single basic persona - an 'archetypal persona' - that will reappear in various incarnations throughout a society's history. This method of historical interaction has wonderful mythological connotations. Personas assume the roles of saviors or destroyers, appearing only at crucial points in the society's evolution to turn the tide of development.

When using this method of interaction, a player creates a persona with an initial role in mind. After this persona has been retired (or killed), the Aria moves into Aria Time until an important historical event approaches. At this point the player assumes a new incarnation of his 'archetypal persona' and reenters Narrative Time in an attempt to influence the shape of the environment's continued development. This technique of entrance during diverse periods of history can continue until the conclusion of the Aria.

An Eternal Presence

Players can also create personas who are able to interact with a society's history throughout its development. Such personas may be immortals, long-lived mortals, gods, or other enigmatic individuals. Don't get the wrong impression here; this is not meant to be an excuse to play all-powerful personas. Rather, it is an opportunity for a single persona to consistently affect a society throughout its development. Because of the nature of such interaction, finesse and delicate handling should be stressed. Subtle maneuvering is normally more effective than brute force and ignorance.

This method requires a degree of experience on the parts of both player and Mythguide. The persona's existence needs to be explained in the context of the greater Aria. The rationale behind the persona's eternal nature does not necessarily need to be explained; however, the persona's actions should be relevant to the history being created. The persona may alternate between Narrative and Aria Time, both enjoying personal adventures and contributing to an environment's long-term evolution.

For example, the persona may appear among the society's inhabitants only during times of crisis. Each appearance may be as a different personage, or the persona may become a kind of folk hero, appearing consistently over many years. The most extreme manifestation of this method is an eternal persona who dwells permanently in an environment. The frequency

and nature of the persona's appearance depends on the atmosphere of the environment being used (i.e. How fantastic is the society? Is an eternal persona unusual?).

☯ Narrative Concepts ☯

There are several Narrative Concepts that apply to the Aria game as a whole. These ideas and definitions are defined in the following sections.

Roleplaying

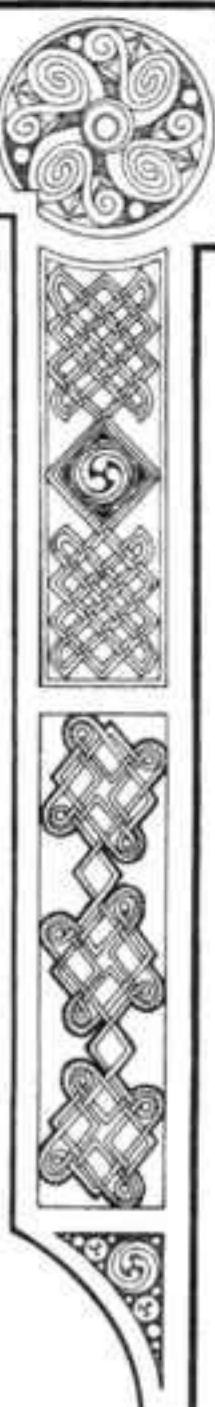
Roleplaying games are similar in many respects to guided storytelling. They provide a detailed framework that allows personas (the 'roles' that players assume during the game) to interact within an imaginative setting. The members of the Ensemble take on the major roles in the tale, while the Mythguide serves as the narrator. The Mythguide is responsible for guiding the overall story and roleplaying the entire supporting cast.

Personas controlled by the players assume the principal roles in the narrative, entering the story and shaping it as play progresses. Their desires, actions, and personalities dictate its eventual course and outcome. Good roleplaying fosters a spirit of creativity and cooperation between Ensemble and Mythguide. It also engenders mutual story contributions when following a narrative through to its conclusion. Aria encourages roleplaying on an epic scale; personas leave a lasting imprint on their environment, both creating and becoming the myths for ages to come.

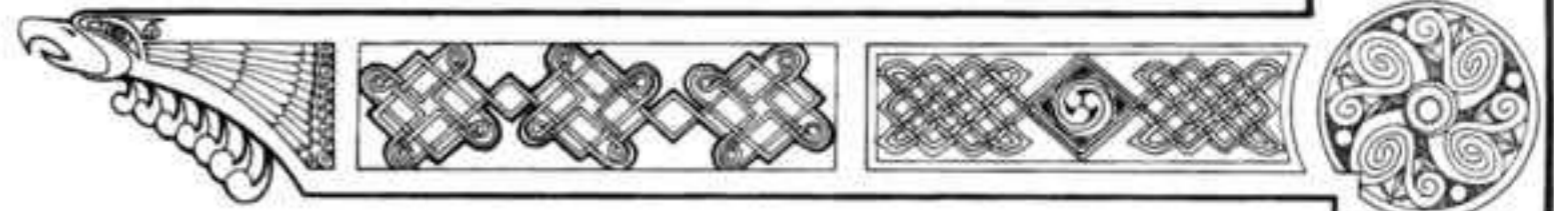
The Narrative Environment

All roleplaying occurs within the bounds of an individual setting. Many roleplaying games are thematic in nature, and are therefore based on existing settings. Aria places emphasis on original setting design, and encourages this design through the society creation guidelines provided in Aria Worlds. By using and applying these guidelines in creative ways, each Ensemble should find themselves in the midst of a truly unique gaming experience.

The setting, or Narrative Environment, is the stage on which most persona interaction takes place. Its laws of possibility are not those of our own world, but are







instead created by each Mythguide or Ensemble as the Narrative Environment is designed. Each Canticle or narrative may be tailored for a particular type of adventure or interaction. High Fantasy, Realistic Medieval, Dark Fantasy - anything is possible. The Mythguide should provide as much detail as his group requires, although a highly detailed environment normally radiates an enhanced aura of believability. It also allows personas to feel that they are truly part of something larger; it creates a pervasive feeling of involvement on a grand scale.

The Mythguide

Aria is a game of Mythmaking, world creation, and epic social interaction; these concepts should always remain in the forefront of the roleplaying experience, supplanting the power and wealth acquisition themes that predominate in some games. To keep these ideas fresh in the players' minds, and to better describe the role itself, we call the Aria gamemaster the Mythguide.

The Mythguide is responsible for moderating and directing the progress of narrative play within the Narrative Environment. He serves as the primary contact between the players and the world in which play is occurring. The Mythguide must have a vivid imagination, for it is his description that makes a particular setting come to life for his players. He is also responsible for playing the roles of the supporting cast, and must therefore also be an adept roleplayer.

The Mythguide acts as referee during necessary Trials and serves as the final arbiter for questions regarding game mechanics or action resolution. However, such interaction between players and Mythguide should never become one-sided. Just as the society creation procedure is conducive to group participation, the actual roleplaying experience must be an interactive one. The Mythguide and players need to work together in order to maintain game balance and the mutual cooperative spirit necessary for rewarding play and Mythmaking.

The Ensemble

The Ensemble consists of the players taking the parts of personas in narrative play. Each player assumes the role of one or more personas, depending on the nature of the Canticle being played. Smaller, more intricate narratives are usually played most ef-

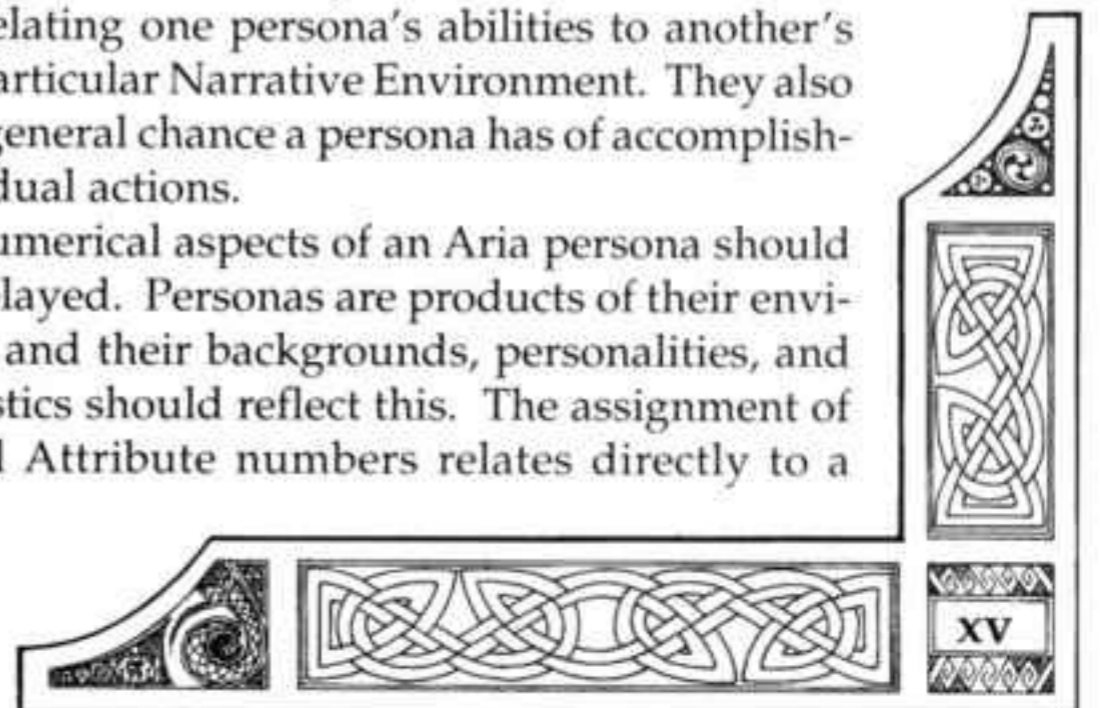


fectively when each player controls a single persona. Larger, epic Canticles or Arias often require each player to take on the roles of several personas. In such cases, one persona will normally be the player's 'central' persona, while the others remain 'supporting' or 'companion' personas.

Each individual persona is represented by a collection of Attributes, Aspects, Personality elements, and Heritage elements. Many of these characteristics are designed by the player, and are based on specific racial, cultural, or social considerations developed during the society creation process. Some of these elements are expressed by numerical values, while others are simply descriptions.

A persona's characteristics define his or her capabilities in game terms. They serve as a frame of reference for relating one persona's abilities to another's within a particular Narrative Environment. They also show the general chance a persona has of accomplishing individual actions.

The numerical aspects of an Aria persona should be down played. Personas are products of their environments, and their backgrounds, personalities, and characteristics should reflect this. The assignment of individual Attribute numbers relates directly to a



persona's social background and opportunity. The Mythguide should try to prevent unjustified min-maxing of abilities.

One additional, intriguing possibility with Aria is for the Ensemble to assume the roles of cultures or nations, roleplaying them over long periods of narrative time. In addition to the unusual experiences this engenders, it also makes possible the development of cultural or national histories with a degree of realism. Roleplaying a culture's or nation's history helps the Mythguide and Ensemble achieve a better understanding of the underlying motives and deep-seated rivalries which make a game setting sufficiently interesting to merit further narrative exploration through ordinary roleplaying.

The Narrative

The Narrative is the smallest complete element of a greater Canticle or Aria. Also called a scenario or an adventure, Aria uses the term Narrative because of its connotation as a recited story. Aria Narratives are the building blocks of an environment's future legends and myths, with each representing an entire tale or story. The Mythguide is responsible for moderating the personas' progress through an individual narrative, which may be subdivided into chapters or episodes for the sake of convenience and mood.

The Canticle

The Canticle represents the most common style and length of Aria play. Most narrative play in Aria is oriented around the Canticle. It consists of several Narratives which have been threaded together by a common theme or objective, and promotes roleplaying on a grand, sweeping scale. Continuing the analogy begun earlier in this chapter, if a single Narrative can be compared to a complete novel (i.e. an entire story), the Canticle must represent a series of connected novels that share common elements. Events occur on an epic stage, and time often passes quickly. In many cases, a persona may grow old during the course of a single Canticle.

The concept of an ongoing Canticle supports the themes of environmental development and Mythmaking promoted by Metadesign and society creation. It allows expansive persona and society development, and tracks the progress of these elements over an extended period of time. Individual Canticles

can last anywhere from several weeks to many decades (in game time), depending on the Ensemble's style of play. Canticles that concentrate primarily on persona development are normally shorter than those which stress social or cultural evolution and interaction.

The ARIA

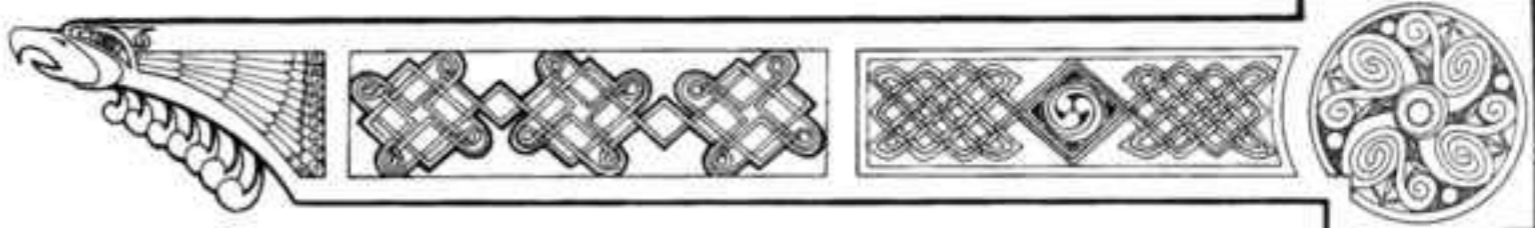
An Aria may contain many Canticles, and constitutes the entire history of a certain persona and his family. Arias recount great battles fought and noble deeds performed. They assume the mantle of a living chronicle of a persona's contributions to his world, his society, his culture, and his family. These histories, while telling the persona's tale, also serve to heighten the mythic nature of his exploits. Over time, the Aria itself is often assimilated whole cloth into a society's mythology.

Roleplaying Aria-length histories also affects other aspects of the game. Players are given the chance to develop entire families and lineages, roleplaying inherited traits in the offspring of their original persona. These lineage records are called Perpetual Genealogies, and their development and use during play is encouraged.

Finally, continuing a single game through many Canticles furthers the development of coherent social and cultural histories. Personas have the opportunity to genuinely affect the Narrative Environment in which they find themselves. They also have the ability to build on initial successes or progress over the course of several generations. This multigenerational development creates an aura of real posterity, and engenders a deeper commitment on the part of the players. Using Perpetual Genealogies makes players aware that they are involved in something *lasting*.

An Internal Language

Experienced roleplayers will notice that several unique terms are employed in Aria. These are meant to convey a sense of internal cohesion and contribute to the general atmosphere of mythic creation fostered by the game. The game's moderator is neither a 'referee' nor a 'gamemaster'. He or she is the Mythguide, responsible for creating entire worlds and mythologies, and for leading the Ensemble through these creations. The game's language gives Aria a sense of tightness and individuality. If veteran gamers disagree, they are free to use whatever terms they wish.



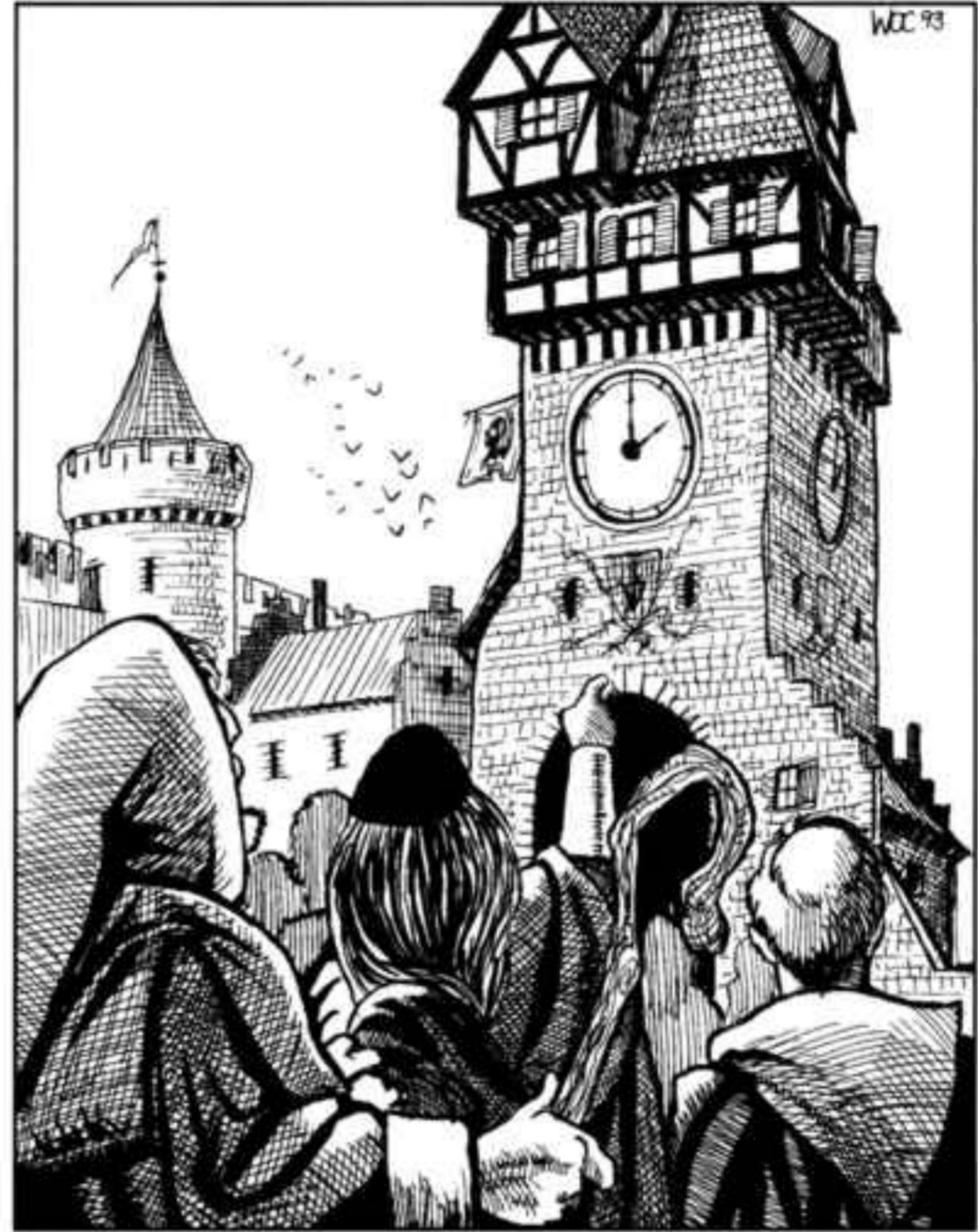
⊗ ARIA Conventions ⊗

Aria uses a number of general rules and conventions on which most game-related actions and procedures are based. These basic conventions are defined in the following sections.

The Passage of Time

The measurement of time in an Aria game assumes varying degrees of importance depending on the Ensemble's current actions. If general roleplaying is occurring, time can be handled in a fluid manner. If grand social developments are being resolved, time may cease to mean much at all except in very large increments. If individual encounters or conflicts are taking place, the measurement of precise intervals may be required.

The Mythguide should determine the current needs of the Narrative and smoothly integrate the appropriate measurement system into play. Several ways of measuring the passage of time are provided for use by the Mythguide. The basic unit of such measurement is the Interval. The passage of time is always said to occur in Intervals, and the length of the Interval depends on the time scale being used. An Interval of Mythic Time might last hundreds of years, while an Interval of Narrative Time might last several hours. Each Time scale and its recommended range of Interval lengths is detailed in the following section.



Common Time Intervals

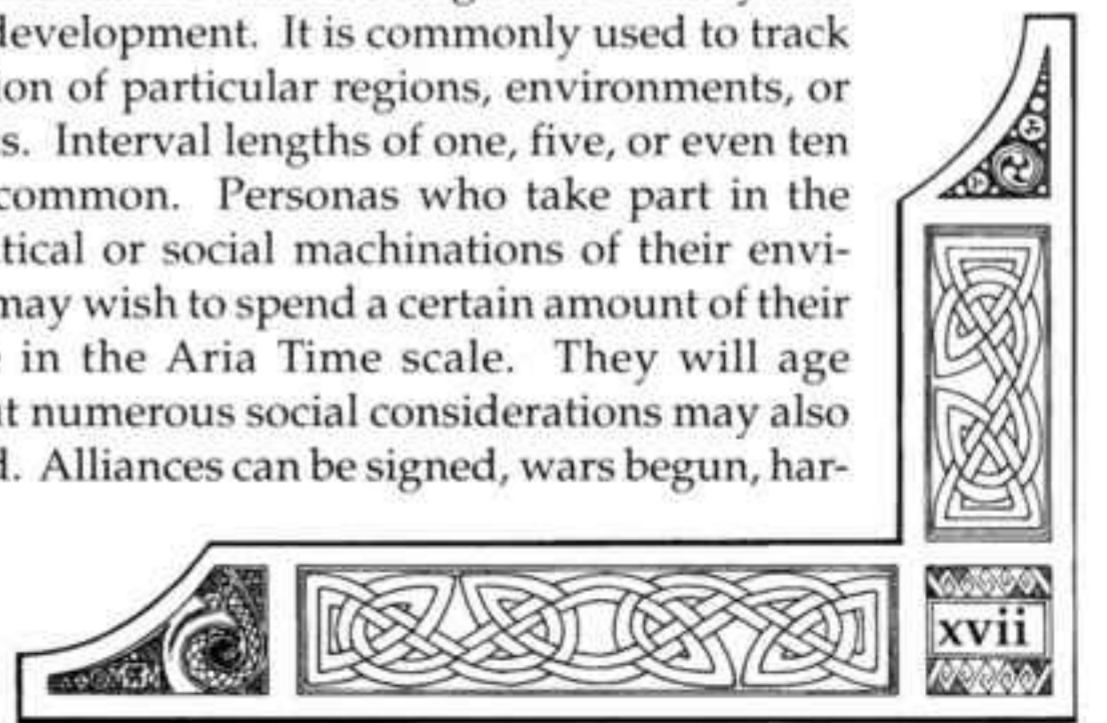
<i>Time Scale</i>	<i>Interval Range</i>
Mythic Time	Decades to Millennia
Aria Time	1 - 10 years
Narrative Time	Hours to Months
Action Time	Seconds (5 sec. average)

Mythic Time

This scale should be employed only for descriptive or specific narrative purposes. If Mythic Time is being used, entire Ages spanning thousands of years can be resolved in a few short minutes. This time scale can be useful when creating a new Narrative Environment and accelerating the region's history to a much later date for narrative reasons. For example, the Ensemble might start play in an environment several thousand years after a great cataclysm. It will probably make play more interesting if the Ensemble knows what existed in the area before the destruction, so they design the pre-cataclysm environment. The Mythguide (or the entire group) then uses the Mythic Time scale to accelerate the region's development until after the disaster. If used creatively, this time scale can initiate some interesting design sessions.

ARIA Time

This time scale is used for large-scale society and historical development. It is commonly used to track the evolution of particular regions, environments, or movements. Interval lengths of one, five, or even ten years are common. Personas who take part in the grand political or social machinations of their environments may wish to spend a certain amount of their downtime in the Aria Time scale. They will age slightly, but numerous social considerations may also be resolved. Alliances can be signed, wars begun, har-



vests brought in, popular rebellions fomented - any grand or epic occurrences are handled in Aria Time.

NARRATIVE TIME

Most roleplaying in Aria occurs in the Narrative Time scale. Narrative Time is used for general roleplaying or time lapse situations. An Interval of Narrative Time can vary from several seconds to several months. For instance, an Ensemble traveling from one town to another will do so in Narrative Time. Intervals in such a journey can range from hours to full days, depending on the requirements of the Narrative itself. Normal roleplaying interactions (discussions among personas, interactions with Mythguide personas, etc.) also take place in Narrative Time. Most aspects of the Canticle and Narrative can be resolved in this Time scale, as can individual Narrative Chapters and Episodes.

ACTION TIME

When precise measures of game Time are required, the Mythguide may shift play into Action Time. Action Time is used when resolving specific actions and maneuvers, and is always employed during combat sequences. An Action Interval normally lasts five seconds.

TRIALS

Aria is a game of constant action and challenge. In a single Narrative, and often in an isolated section of a Narrative, personas will attempt numerous actions and maneuvers. These attempts are governed by a number of simple game conventions. The guidelines presented here form a basic resolution model which handles most situations that arise during play, and which constitutes the core of the entire Aria game system. If the Ensemble understands basic Trial resolution, its members are prepared for just about any game situation or eventuality.

When a persona attempts an action, the attempt falls into one of two categories: it may be resolved Automatically or it can require a Trial. Automatic actions are those which either contribute to the general narrative experience (such as negotiating obstacles while pursuing a foe) or which are entirely routine

(such as walking across an uncluttered floor). Players do not need to check the success of Automatic actions; such attempts always succeed.

Actions that require Trials are those whose outcome is in some doubt. Examples would include attempting a treacherous climb or trying to swim against a fast current. In such cases, personas must pit their own abilities against both the Difficulty of the action and the random hand of chance. The player rolls a Trial Die to determine whether or not the action is successful. If successful, the die roll also indicates the approximate degree of success. The Mythguide must decide whether a particular attempt is Automatic or requires a Trial. An absolutely ridiculous attempt can also be ruled Impossible.

DIE ROLLS

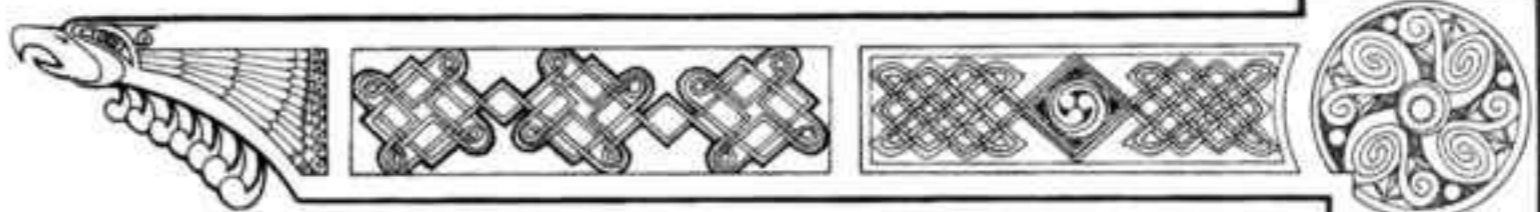
All Aria Trial resolutions can be accomplished by rolling ten-sided dice (d10). For most Trials, only a single die will need to be rolled. When rolling a ten-sided die by itself, a '0' result is read as a '10'. Any relevant modifiers are applied to the result of the roll. For instance, if an action calls for a d10+5 roll, a d10 is rolled and five points are added to the result. Occasionally, results from one to twenty or one to one hundred may also be called for.

If a result from one to twenty is needed, a d20 may be rolled if one is available. If not, two d10s may be rolled. The first die becomes the 'hinge' die; all odd results indicate a final range of 1-10, while even results indicate a final range of 11-20. For example, if the first roll is a 4 (even) and the second is an 8, the final result of the roll is 18. If the first roll is a 7 (odd) and the second is a 4, the final result is a 4.

A d100 roll is also referred to as a 'percentile' roll, because it generates a percentage value. Two d10s are rolled, with the first die acting as the 'tens' die and the second acting as the 'ones' die. For example, if the die rolls are 7 and 4 respectively, the result of the percentile roll is 74. If zero is rolled on the first die, it is read as a zero; a roll of '04' would be read as a four. A '00' is read as a one hundred.

RESOLVING TRIALS

Most action attempts in Aria require a persona to make a successful Trial. Although there are several different kinds of Trial - Attribute Trials, Expertise Trials, Influence Trials, etc. - each type works in basically



the same way. A player rolls a ten-sided die and compares the result to a predetermined Adjusted Trial Chance. If the roll is less than or equal to the Trial Chance, the Trial is successful. The Trial's Degree of Success is determined by the difference between the Adjusted Trial Chance and the actual value of the die roll.

Trial Base

When determining the Adjusted Trial Chance of an attempt, the Trial Base must be found first. Refer to the Trial Resolution Table, where the Base appears in the right column. Expertise Trials use the Expertise Base as their Trial Base. The Expertise Base is found by adding three of the Attributes which govern the Expertise and dividing the result by six (yielding a number from one to five). All non-Expertise Trials (including Influence, Personality, and Attribute Trials) have a Base of three. The Trial Base column on the Trial Resolution Table is actually open-ended. Although a persona's maximum Base is normally five, it is theoretically possible for Bases to progress indefinitely.

Rank

The second element that determines the Adjusted Trial Chance is the Rank of the characteristic or ability being tested. Rank indicates a general level of skill or capability. Both Expertises and Attributes are expressed by Ranks that range from one to ten. Certain other characteristics may also be placed on the Rank scale, which occupies the center column of the Trial Resolution Table.

Occasionally a Trial may be called for which uses several characteristics (and therefore has two or more Ranks). When this occurs, simply average the Ranks to obtain an Adjusted Rank. The Mythguide should always round up when averaging Ranks.

Difficulty

Whenever a Trial needs to be resolved, the Mythguide must give the Trial a Difficulty Value. Difficulty Values provide an objective measure of the challenge posed by a particular action. They normally range from zero to ten, although this scale is in fact open-ended. In certain unusual cases, Difficulty Values can drop below zero or exceed ten (usually as a result of

additional modifiers). The Trial Resolution Table includes a general descriptive for each Difficulty Value.

Remember that a 'Standard' Difficulty Value on this scale represents a reasonable amount of difficulty and strain for the persona. If an action is truly simple or basic, it should probably either be an Automatic action or be given a Difficulty of zero (Routine).

Adjusted Trial Chance

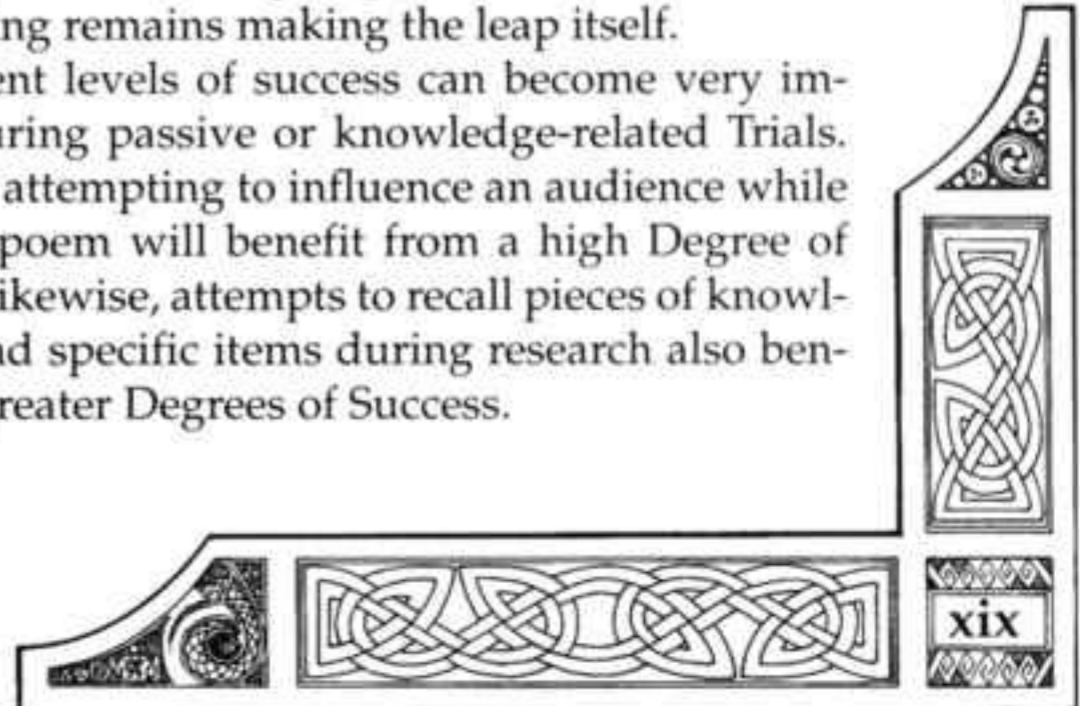
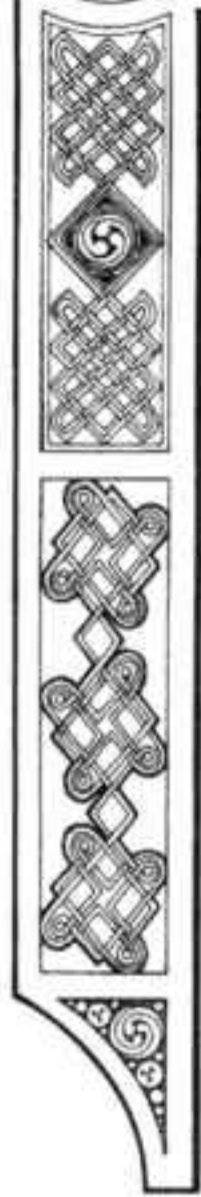
An action's Adjusted Trial Chance is determined by its Base, Rank, and Difficulty. The first two elements are positive modifiers, while the last is a negative modifier. For example, an Attribute Trial has a Base of three, and the Attribute in question has a Rank of five. These two values are added to obtain an initial Trial Chance of eight. However, the Mythguide gives the Trial a Difficulty of Engaging (Value of 3). The Adjusted Trial Chance of the Trial is five (eight minus three); the player must roll a five or less on a ten-sided die in order to succeed.

An Adjusted Trial Chance will never be lower than zero. No matter how miserable a particular Trial might appear, its Adjusted Trial Chance is always at least zero. For example, an Attribute Trial has a Base of three and a Rank of two. Its Difficulty is nine (the Trial is next to impossible). Although this Trial's Adjusted Trial Chance should be negative four, it is zero. Personas always have at least some chance to succeed at extremely difficult actions.

Trial Success

When resolving Trials in ARIA, several Degrees of Success and Failure are possible. Degrees of Success and Failure are described by Success Grades and Failure Grades; there are five of each type of Grade. The Mythguide has to interpret what a certain level of Success or Failure means based on the type of action being attempted. For example, attempting to leap a chasm is a fairly straightforward action. Either the persona makes it or he doesn't. An exceptional success might indicate a leap of great finesse, but the important thing remains making the leap itself.

Different levels of success can become very important during passive or knowledge-related Trials. A persona attempting to influence an audience while reciting a poem will benefit from a high Degree of Success. Likewise, attempts to recall pieces of knowledge or find specific items during research also benefit from greater Degrees of Success.



Trial Resolution

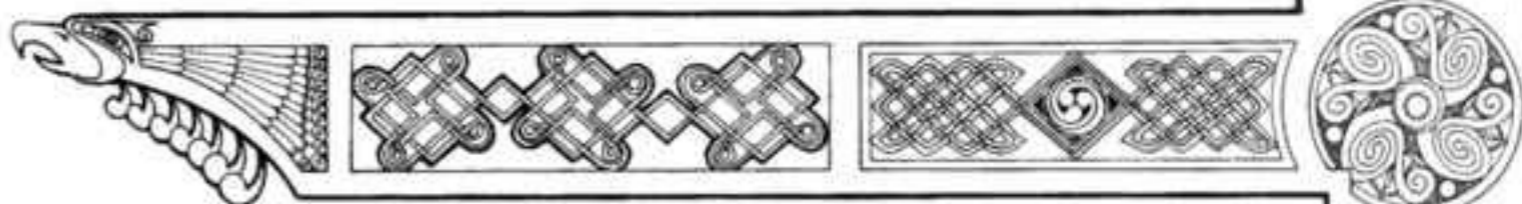
<i>Difficulty Value</i>	<i>Difficulty Description</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Rank Description</i>	<i>Base</i>
0 or less	Routine	0	None	n/a
1	Easy	1	Initiated	1
2	Standard	2	Versed	2
3	Engaging	3	Proficient	3
4	Challenging	4	Practiced	4
5	Difficult	5	Accomplished	5
6	Formidable	6	Experienced	6
7	Strenuous	7	Refined	7
8	Arduous	8	Expert	8
9	Herculean	9	Masterful	9
10	Epic	10	Brilliant	10
11 - 20	Mythic	n/a	n/a	11+

To determine the Adjusted Trial Chance for any Refined Trial, add the appropriate Base and Rank and subtract the assigned Difficulty Value.

$$\text{Adjusted Trial Chance} = (\text{Base} + \text{Rank}) - \text{Difficulty}$$

Different Trials require appropriate Bases and Ranks. To select the appropriate Bases and Ranks, see the chart below.

<i>Refined Trials</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Attribute Trial	3 - all Attribute Trials employ the same Base value.	variable - Trials requiring single Attribute checks employ the single Attribute value as the Rank. Trials requiring multiple Attributes demand that the Attribute values be averaged to find the appropriate Rank. ex. (Strength + Manipulation) values /2)
Expertise Trial	variable - Expertise Trials require that three pertinent Attribute values be added and divided by 6 to find the base for a particular expertise.	variable - Personas possess Expertises in varying degrees of proficiency (Ranks). If a Persona does not possess the appropriate Expertise, then the Rank = 0. Depending upon the type of Expertise, a Persona may still receive the appropriate Base even if the Persona is untrained in the proper area of Expertise.



Degree of Success/Failure

To determine the Degree of Success or Failure of a particular Trial, roll 1d10 and consult chart below.

If die result < or = Adjusted Trial Chance, then trial succeeds to some degree.

If die result > Adjusted Trial Chance, then trial fails to some degree.

* Note that the 'Rule of One and Ten' may alter the initial die result. See text for further detail.

*Result (Die Roll above or below
Adjusted Trial Chance)*

Degree of Success/Failure

15+ below	Mythic Success
10 - 14 below	Extraordinary Success
5 - 9 below	Superior Success
1 - 4 below	Complete Success
0 below	Marginal Success
1 above	Marginal Failure
2 - 4 above	Complete Failure
5 - 9 above	Serious Failure
10 - 14 above	Miserable Failure
15+ above	Catastrophic Failure

During Challenged Trials, each participant rolls against his own Adjusted Trial Chance. Whichever participant rolls the greatest degree of Success is declared the winner. In the event of a tie (i.e. Complete Success vs. Complete Success), a winner may be chosen according to the actual numerical difference (instead of categorical success) or the Trial may be declared a draw. See text for more details concerning Challenged Trials and Margins of Victory.

Trial Difficulty (additional modifiers) routinely come from any of six general categories.

Environmental Modifiers - environmental weather, temperature, obstacles, terrain, lighting, noise, etc.

Situational Modifiers - crowds, observers, strange magical or spiritual effects, random events

Conditional Modifiers - physical, mental, or spiritual condition of Persona, including Injury, Fatigue, loss of Faith, and relevant Background Aspects

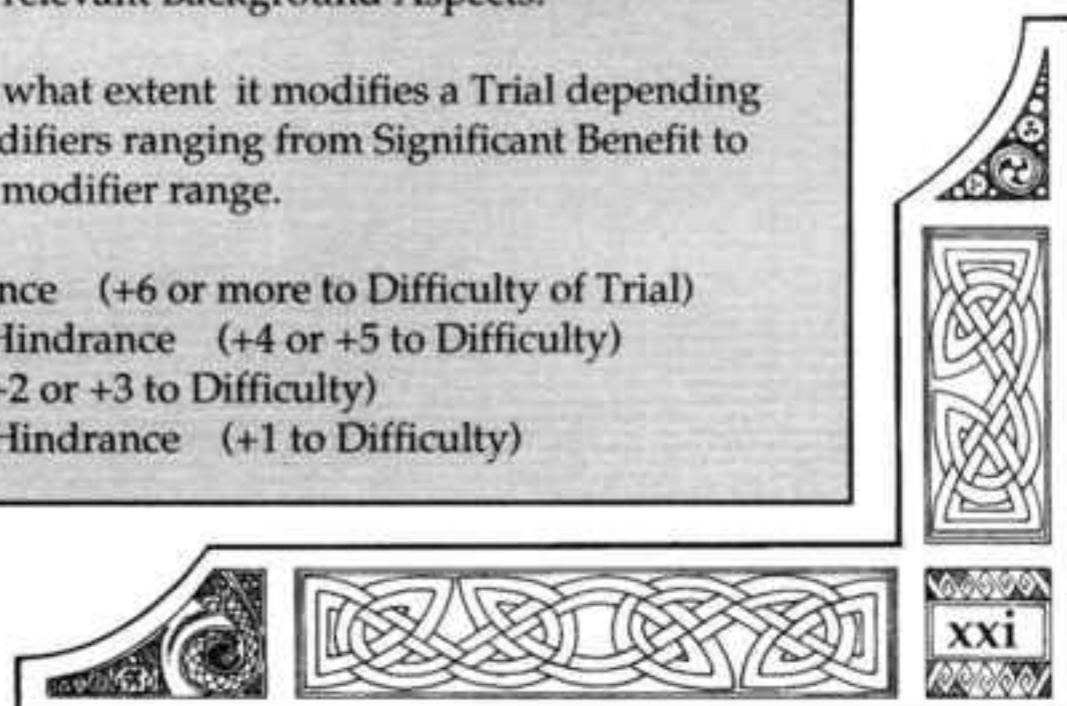
Psychological Modifiers - Psychological state of one or more Trial participants, Personality Traits, and Psychological Background Aspects

Social Modifiers - social considerations such as Heritage, Status, Renown, Official Vocation, Influence, Leverage, and Social Background Aspects

Philosophical Modifiers - ideals, values, and morals of Trial participants including Heritage Orientation, Family Orientation, Faith, Insight, Personality Traits (related to ideology), and relevant Background Aspects.

The Mythguide must determine from which areas Difficulty arises and to what extent it modifies a Trial depending on the specific nature of the Trial. There are eight grades of Difficulty Modifiers ranging from Significant Benefit to Severe Hindrance. Difficulty is categorized by the numerical value of the modifier range.

Significant Benefit (-6 or more to Difficulty of Trial)	Severe Hindrance (+6 or more to Difficulty of Trial)
Considerable Benefit (-4 or -5 to Difficulty)	Considerable Hindrance (+4 or +5 to Difficulty)
Benefit (-2 or -3 to Difficulty)	Hindrance (+2 or +3 to Difficulty)
Minor/Slight Benefit (-1 to Difficulty)	Minor/Slight Hindrance (+1 to Difficulty)





An action's Degree of Success or Failure is measured by the difference between a Trial's Adjusted Trial Chance and the result of the actual Trial Die. For example, if the Adjusted Trial Chance is seven and a player rolls a four, his Degree of Success for the attempt is Complete (three). Occasionally the numerical Degree of Success may be needed; this is simply the difference between the Trial Die result and the Adjusted Trial Chance. The accompanying table defines each Success and Failure Grade.

The Rule of One and Ten

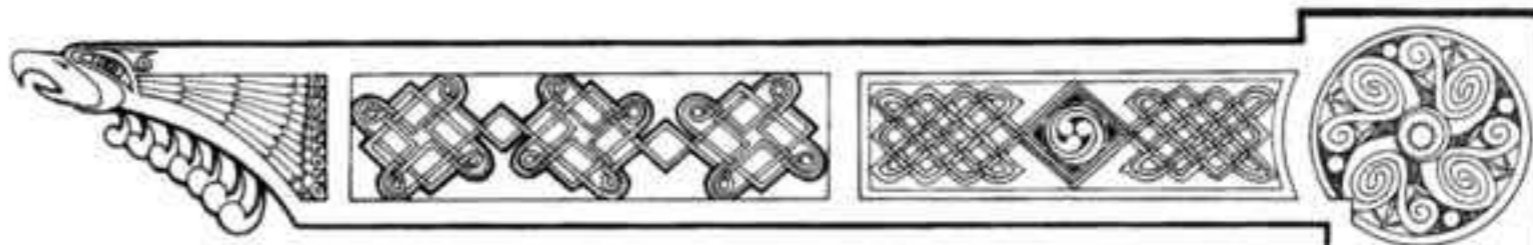
In previous sections, the open-ended nature of the Trial Resolution Table has been mentioned. This fluid quality allows for both monumental Successes and Failures, and is represented by the Rule of One and Ten. Whenever a player rolls a one on a Trial Die, he must roll again. As long as the succeeding roll is less than the Adjusted Trial Chance of the Trial, the Trial's Degree of Success increases by one Grade. This process continues until a Trial Die result other than one is achieved.

For example, if an action's Adjusted Trial Chance is four and the player rolls a one, the persona has al-

ready achieved a Complete Success (difference of three). Since a one was rolled, the player can roll again, and gets another one. Since this second roll is also below the Adjusted Trial Chance, the Trial's Degree of Success becomes Superior (an increase of a single Grade); since the second roll was another one, a third roll is called for. The player rolls a ten, which is not below the Adjusted Trial Chance. The final Degree of Success for the action is Superior. If a three had been rolled instead, the final Degree of Success would have been Extraordinary.

The Rule of One and Ten also works in the other direction. When a ten is rolled on a Trial, the player must roll again. Each succeeding roll that is above the Adjusted Trial Chance increases the Degree of Failure by a single Grade. A player rolls a ten against an Adjusted Trial Chance of seven (difference of three). The Trial's initial Degree of Failure is Complete. Because the roll was a ten, the player rolls a second time and gets an eight, thereby raising the Degree of Failure to Serious. If the second roll had been seven or less, the Degree of Failure would have remained Complete.

This rule is especially useful when an Adjusted Trial Chance is either zero or one. For instance, an inexperienced persona attempts a truly Epic feat. The Adjusted Trial Chance is zero, and the player rolls a



one, scoring a Marginal Failure (result is one higher than the Adjusted Trial Chance). However, since a one was rolled, the player may continue to roll. For each additional one rolled, the Degree of Success increases by one Grade. The same player rolls two more ones in succession, indicating a final result of Complete Success. The same guidelines hold true for an Adjusted Trial Chance of one; two ones rolled indicate a Complete Success. With luck, even average individuals are able to occasionally perform heroic acts.

This Rule also governs exceptional cases. If a persona's abilities are exceptional, he may eventually obtain an Adjusted Trial Chance of ten or higher. The difference between the roll and the Adjusted Trial Chance still indicates the result. For example, if the Adjusted Trial Chance were eleven, and the player rolled a ten, the initial result would be a Complete Success. However, because a ten was rolled, the player rolls again and gets another ten. The Complete Success is lowered to a Marginal Success. If the player rolled another ten, the final result would become a Marginal Failure. This rule leaves room for the invariable chance misstep, no matter how masterful an individual might be with a particular expertise or ability.

Two Types of Trial

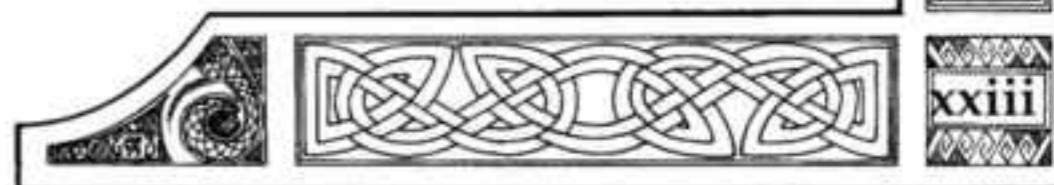
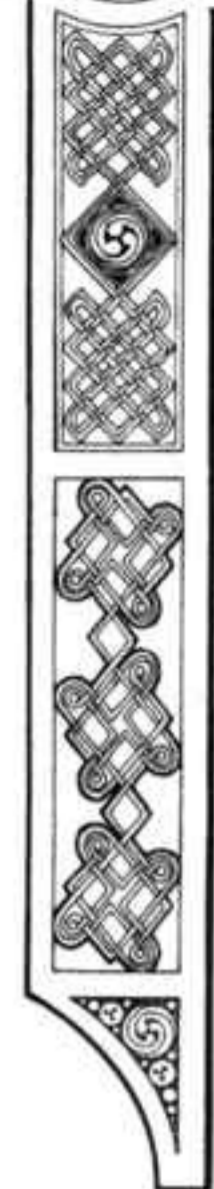
Aria Trials will take one of two distinct forms: Refined or Challenged. Each of these resolution forms is detailed in the following sections.

Refined Trials

A Refined Trial is the most basic form of Trial, and is essentially the one we have been discussing in the previous sections. Its Adjusted Trial Chance is found by adding the Base (which is either a predetermined value or derived from specific abilities) to the appropriate Rank (or Adjusted Rank) and subtracting the Trial's Difficulty from the total. A single roll (the Trial Die) determines the Degree of Success or Failure, although the Rule of One and Ten may contribute to this determination.

Challenged Trials

Challenged Trials are those in which one individual's abilities are in direct contention with another's. There are two common types of Challenged Trial: Contest Trials and Opposed Trials. Contest Tri-





als include both mental and physical contests; logic problems, footraces, and arm wrestling matches are all examples of contests. Expertise-related contests also fall into this category. When comparing abilities in a contest, each participant compares the same abilities.

Opposed Trials are slightly different. In an Opposed Trial, the participants are often using different abilities (while still pitting these abilities against one another). For example, a persona who is trying to hide his tracks is being followed by another persona who is attempting to Track him. The first persona would make a Trial to determine how well he hid his tracks, while the second persona would determine how well he Tracked the first persona. The greater Degree of Success would succeed (although the specific results would be handled by the Mythguide).

When making a Challenged Trial, the Trial's Difficulty Value depends on the circumstances of the situation. Normally, Difficulty will be the same for each participant in the Trial (the default Difficulty is Standard). Occasionally, outside influences may conspire to shift the Difficulty in one direction or another (maybe one participant's vision is obscured, for instance).

The standard procedure for making a Challenged Trial is for each of the participants to roll normally

(against equal or similar Difficulty Values). The player who achieves the highest Degree of Success wins the Trial. The difference in Success Grades provides the final Degree of Success for the winner of the Trial. For example, if one persona scored a Complete Success and another a Marginal Success, the higher persona would succeed at a final Marginal Degree of Success. If the first persona had received an Extraordinary Success, the final result would be a Superior Success. The lower Success Grade is taken off the winning Grade to arrive at the final adjusted winning Grade.

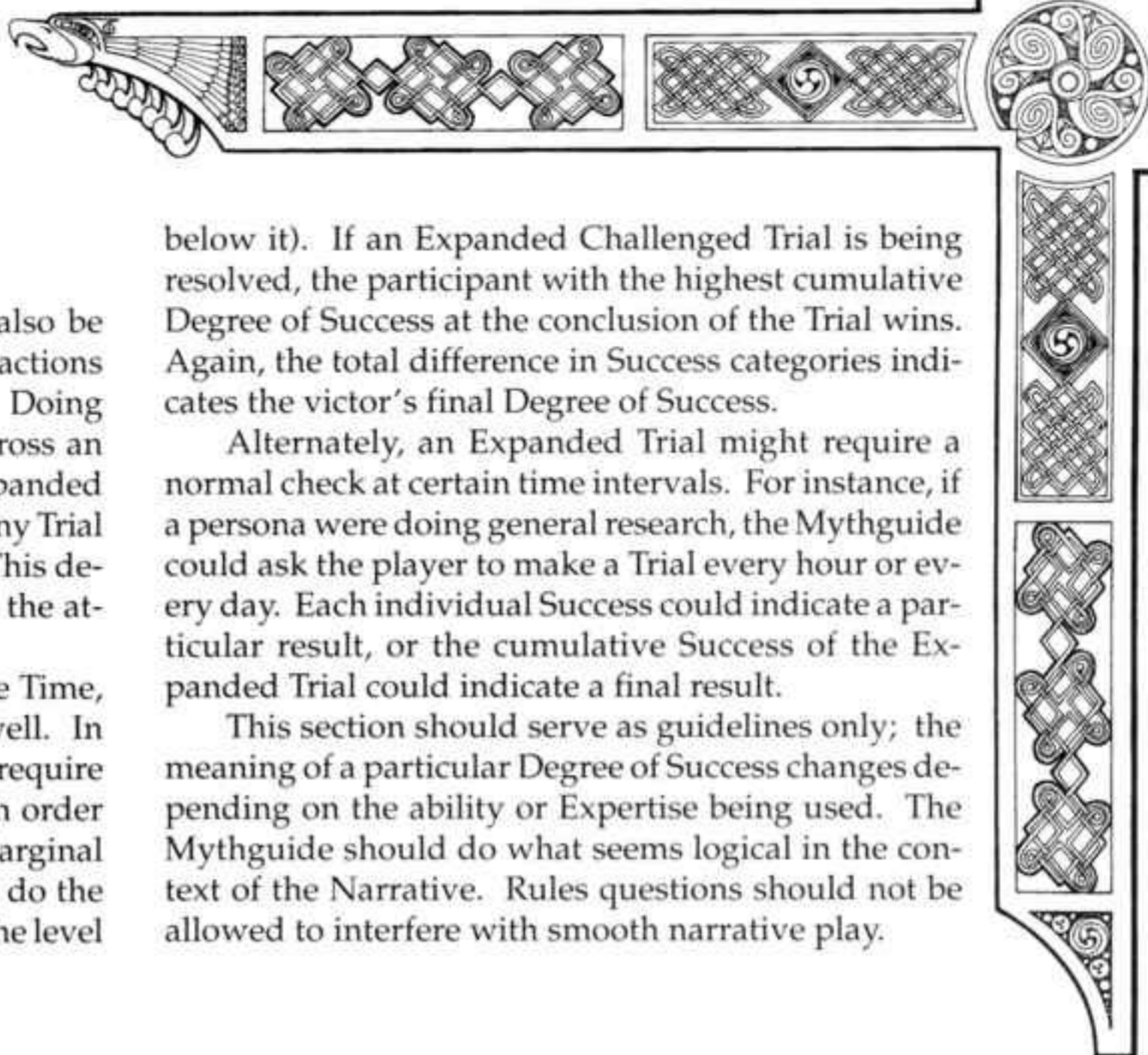
If the rolling becomes deadlocked (two personas each receiving a succession of Complete Successes, for instance), the numerical Degree of Success can be used instead. The player with the greater difference between his Trial Die result and Adjusted Trial Chance is the winner. Alternately, depending on the nature of the Trial, the persona with the higher ability being tested can be declared the winner. Of course, some actions may result in a draw (a game of chess, for example). The Mythguide should decide whether a clear-cut winner is required.

MARGIN OF VICTORY

For certain types of Challenged Trials, the Mythguide may require a Margin of Victory. This depends on the circumstances of the situation, and allows highly skilled individuals to stalemate more often. Margins of Victory are assigned by the Mythguide, but they rarely exceed a value of three. For example, if a Challenged Trial had a Margin of Victory of two, a persona would have to score two Degrees of Success higher than an opponent to win the Trial rather than just one. The employment of this rule is optional, but it is useful in certain situations.

MULTIPLE PARTICIPANTS

If a persona is being opposed by more than one individual, the Mythguide may also want to impose further penalties to the persona's Difficulty Value depending on the situation and the number of other individuals taking part in the Challenged Trial. In an Opposed Trial, the Mythguide should also keep track of exactly who each participant is opposing. Contests are handled more easily; the highest Degree of Success wins the Trial. This is normally true for Opposed Trials as well, but occasionally other considerations may apply.



Expanded Trials

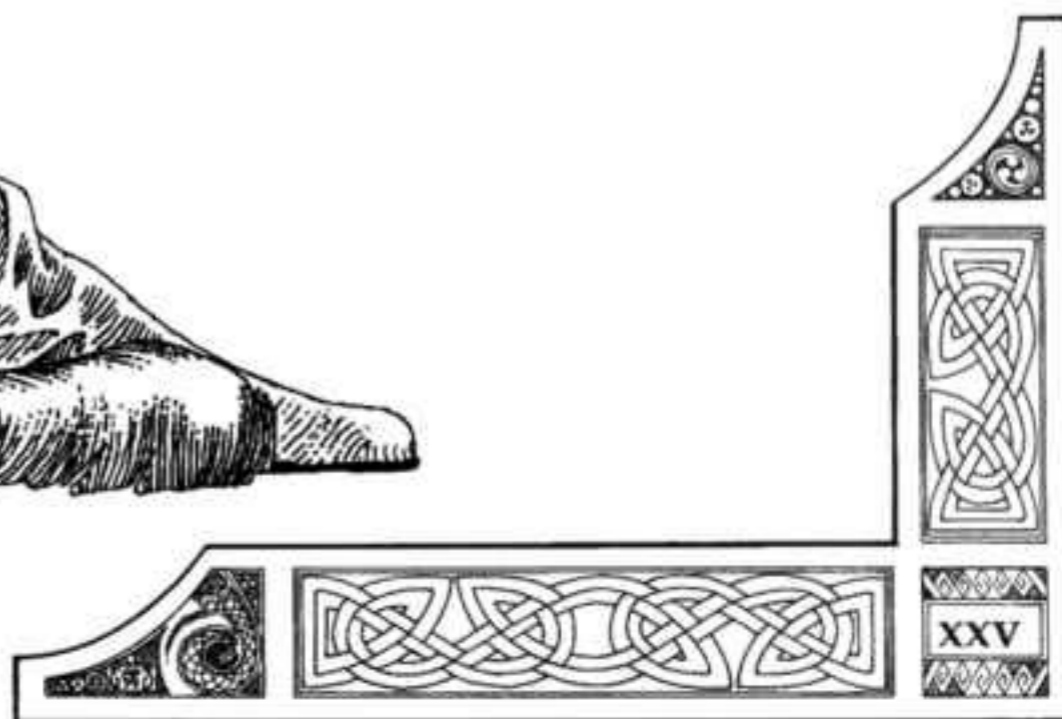
Both Refined and Challenged Trials can also be Expanded Trials. Expanded Trials represent actions that require some amount of time to complete. Doing extended research or sneaking all the way across an enemy encampment are both examples of Expanded Trials. The Mythguide must determine how many Trial Dice need to be rolled and at what intervals. This determination often depends on how successful the attempts are.

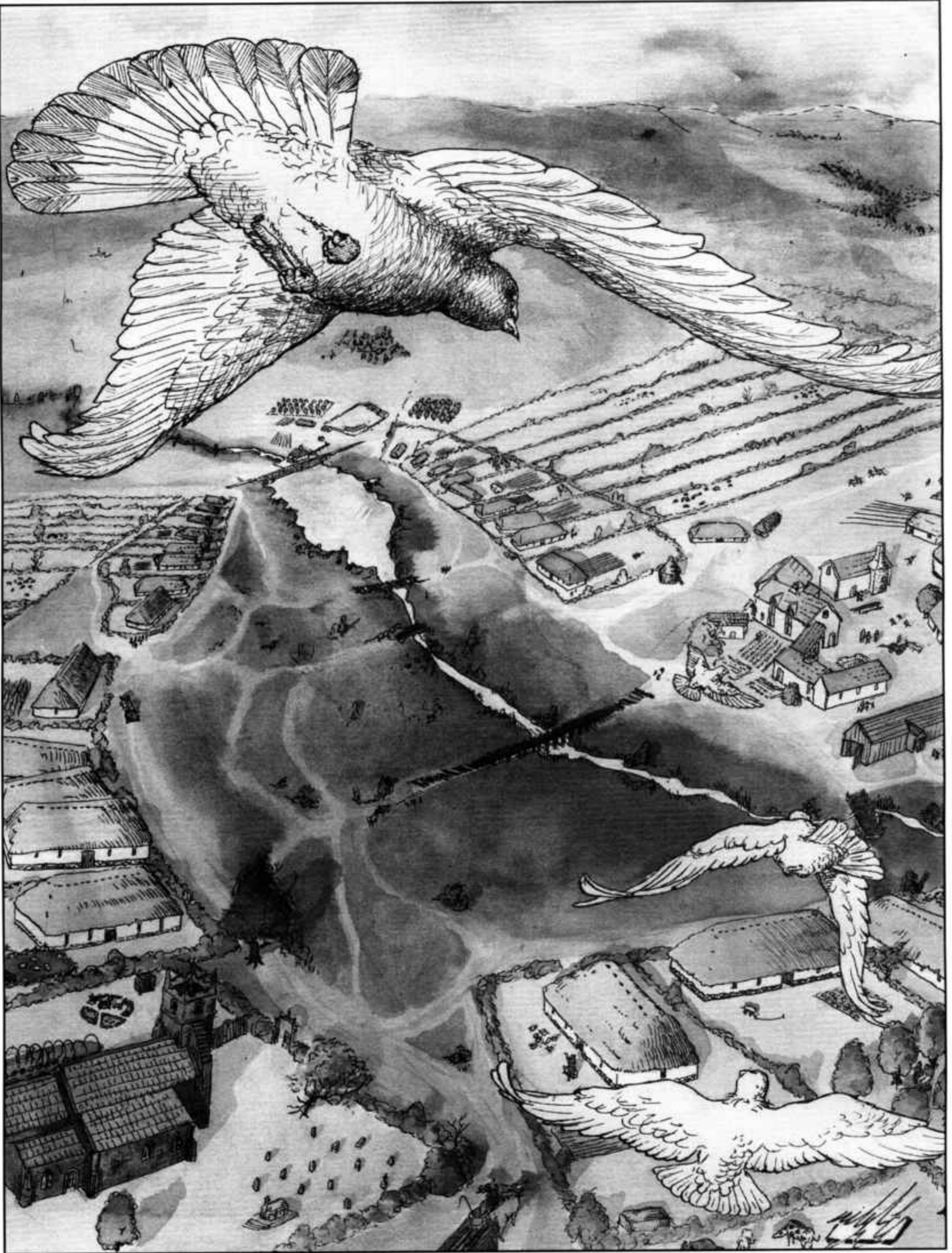
Most Expanded actions occur in Narrative Time, although they may occur in Action Time as well. In the previous example, the Mythguide might require the player to make two Complete Successes in order to sneak all the way across the camp. Four Marginal Successes or one Superior Success would also do the trick (each Degree of Success counts as double the level

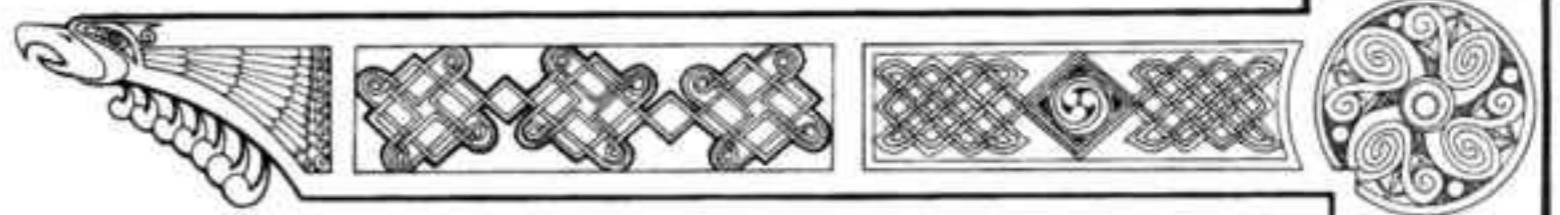
below it). If an Expanded Challenged Trial is being resolved, the participant with the highest cumulative Degree of Success at the conclusion of the Trial wins. Again, the total difference in Success categories indicates the victor's final Degree of Success.

Alternately, an Expanded Trial might require a normal check at certain time intervals. For instance, if a persona were doing general research, the Mythguide could ask the player to make a Trial every hour or every day. Each individual Success could indicate a particular result, or the cumulative Success of the Expanded Trial could indicate a final result.

This section should serve as guidelines only; the meaning of a particular Degree of Success changes depending on the ability or Expertise being used. The Mythguide should do what seems logical in the context of the Narrative. Rules questions should not be allowed to interfere with smooth narrative play.



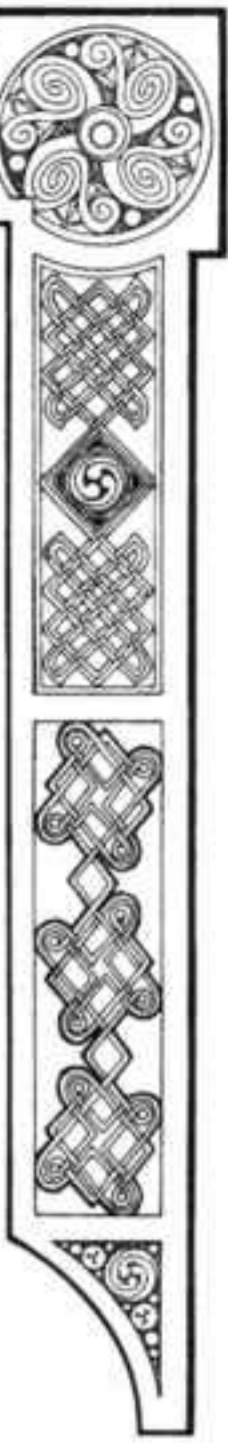




ARIA LEXICON

NARRATIVE TERMS

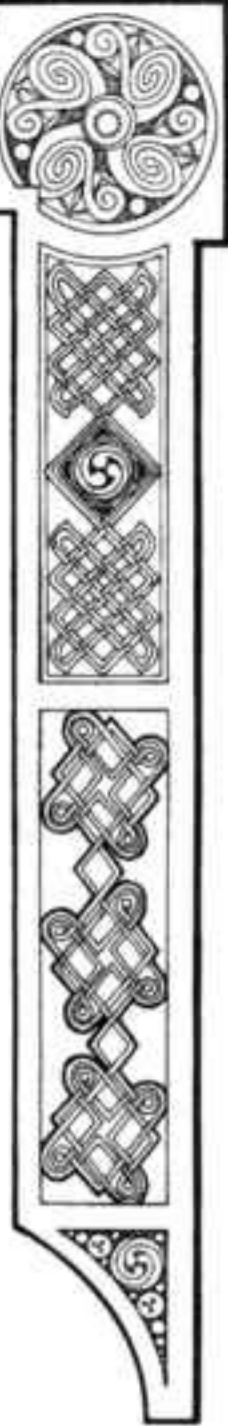
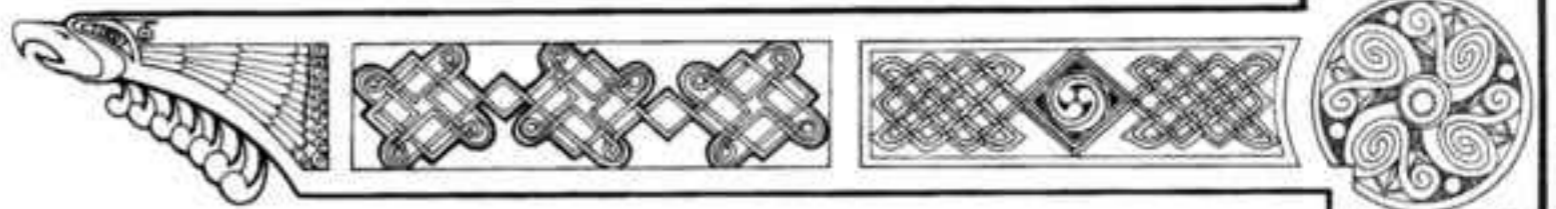
Aria:	A grand history or tale that often concentrates on a particular family or lineage. Can span many generations and include many Canticles.
Canticle:	Several Narratives threaded together by a common theme or objective. This is the most common type of Aria play because it supports action on a larger scale.
Chapter:	Divisions of a complete Narrative. Chapters often represent specific plot elements or encounters.
Ensemble:	The group of personas active in narrative play. Each player may have one or more personas in an Ensemble.
Episode:	Division of a Chapter. An Episode normally represents a single complete event.
Heritage Template:	Similar to an Environmental Profile, Heritage Templates are used to design original Cultures, Races, or Species. These Templates may fall within Narrative Environments or contain them. Where Environ Parameters concentrate primarily on a society, Heritage Templates concentrate on their people. These templates are fully described in Aria Roleplaying™.
Interactive Creation:	The spontaneous creation of a Narrative Environment. The Mythguide employs the Interactive Creation Method and cooperates with the players on a collective society design.
Metadesign:	This is the concept of 'design within design', or of building a game from within. The players and the Mythguide work within the intra-architectural framework of the game to develop their own unique version of Aria.
Monomyth:	Represents the eternal and archetypal Journey of the Hero, which in its most basic form is described by the Departure - Initiation - Return motif.
Mythguide:	Responsible for creating and guiding the progress of a Narrative, Canticle, or Aria. Serves as the primary link between the players and the environment in which play is occurring. The Aria 'gamemaster'.
Mythguide Persona:	A member of the game's 'supporting cast'. The Mythguide is responsible for playing the roles of all personas not belonging to one of the players.
Mythmaking:	Historical interaction on an epic scale. Grand histories and legends are often assimilated into the mythology of a society or culture. In Aria, Interactive Histories - living histories in which players 'play' societies or cultures - are a principal component of Mythmaking.
Narrative:	An element of the larger Canticle, a Narrative represents a complete story or tale. Can be subdivided into Episodes that represent individual events.



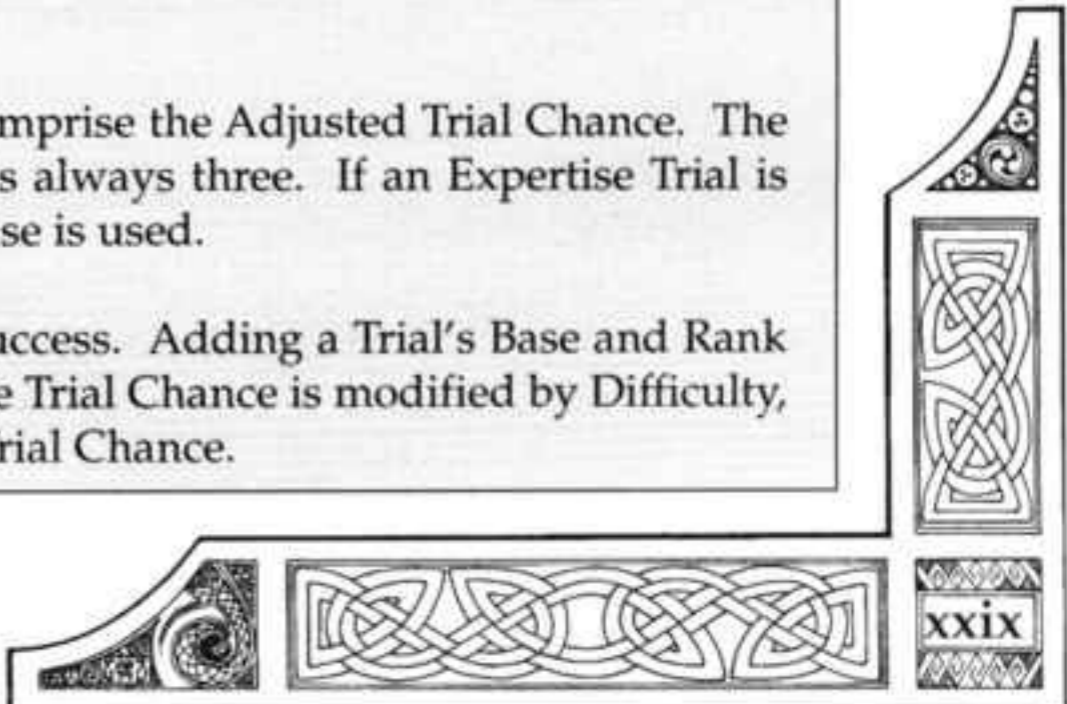
Narrative Environment:	An original setting created using the design guidelines found in <i>Aria Worlds™</i> . All game play occurs within a particular Narrative Environment, which can be of any size.
Perpetual Genealogy:	The lineage record of an individual or family. The use of Perpetual Genealogies is encouraged by the great length of a full Aria. Players often play the grandchildren of an original persona.
Persona:	The imaginary role assumed by a player of the Aria game. A group of personas constitutes an Ensemble.
Playable Realism:	Promotes simple and playable interaction among the elements that comprise Realism - detail, possibility, and believability. Lends to the Suspension of Disbelief necessary for balanced and enjoyable roleplaying.
Precepts of Mythmaking:	The three primary game elements that contribute to broad-based Mythmaking. They are Metadesign, Playable Realism, and Myth Creation.
Society:	A region large enough to fully represent each of its Social Determinants. An individual society can theoretically be any size, and may contain numerous Cultures, Races, or Species. In game terms, society is usually synonymous with Narrative Environment.
Suspension of Disbelief:	The ability to believe in an environment or Narrative. Abundant detail, possibility, and background breathe life into a setting and foster believability. Enhanced believability translates into more intense and satisfying roleplaying.

CONVENTIONS

Action Time:	Used when resolving specific actions, conflict, or Trials. An Action Interval lasts five seconds.
Adjusted Rank:	If a Trial uses more than one characteristic, the Ranks of each component of the Trial are averaged to obtain an Adjusted Rank.
Adjusted Trial Chance:	The Adjusted Trial Chance equals Base plus Rank minus Difficulty. A player must roll equal to or less than a Trial's Adjusted Trial Chance to succeed at a particular Trial.
Aria Time:	Used for grand social and cultural development and evolution. Aria Intervals are normally one, five, or ten years long.
Challenged Trial:	A Trial in which two or more individuals are in opposition. Two types - Contest and Opposed - are possible, and the highest Degree of Success indicates the victor.
Degree of Failure:	Measures the level of a Trial's failure, and is determined by the difference between a Trial's Adjusted Trial Chance and its Trial Die result. Five Degrees of Failure are possible.



Degree of Success:	Measures the level of a Trial's success, and is determined by the difference between a Trial's Adjusted Trial Chance and its Trial Die result. Five Degrees of Success are possible.
Difficulty:	Objective measure of the challenge posed by an individual Trial attempt. Normal Difficulty ranges from zero to ten, although levels up to twenty are theoretically possible. Standard Difficulty is two.
Expanded Trial:	A Trial that requires an extended period of time to complete. Both Refined and Challenged Trials can also be Expanded Trials.
Failure Grade:	One of five Degree of Failure categories. In descending order, they are: Marginal, Complete, Superior, Miserable, and Catastrophic.
Interval:	Base measurement of game time. Intervals represent different amounts of time depending on the Time scale being employed.
Margin of Victory:	Used to increase the chance of a stalemate during a Challenged Trial between two highly skilled or evenly matched opponents. The victor must win by a number of Success Grades equal to or greater than the Margin of Victory.
Mythic Time:	Usually employed for accelerated historical or narrative purposes. An Interval of Mythic Time can last anywhere from several hundred to several thousand years.
Narrative Time:	Used for general roleplaying or time lapse situations in a Narrative. A Narrative Interval can range from several seconds to several months.
Refined Trial:	Basic form of Trial. The result of a Trial Die is compared to an Adjusted Trial Chance, with the difference between the two numbers providing the Trial's Degree of Success.
Rule of One and Ten:	Whenever the result of a Trial Die is a one or a ten, another Trial Die is rolled. Depending on the result of this succeeding roll, the Trial's Degree of Success or Failure may be raised or lowered by a single Grade.
Success Grade:	One of five Degree of Success categories. In ascending order, they are: Marginal, Complete, Superior, Extraordinary, and Mythic.
Trial:	Trials are made whenever the outcome of an action is in some doubt. Trials may be Refined, Challenged, or Expanded. If a particular attempt does not call for a Trial, the Mythguide may rule the attempt either Automatic or Impossible.
Trial Base:	One of the three elements that comprise the Adjusted Trial Chance. The Base for Attribute-related Trials is always three. If an Expertise Trial is being attempted, the Expertise Base is used.
Trial Chance:	A Trial's unmodified chance of success. Adding a Trial's Base and Rank yields the Trial Chance. When the Trial Chance is modified by Difficulty, the result is the Trial's Adjusted Trial Chance.





Persona Creation

⊕ Book One ⊕

Symbolic meaning - through amplification of myth and legend, dream and story - restores to individual life the numinosity it has largely lost.

- Gerhard Adler

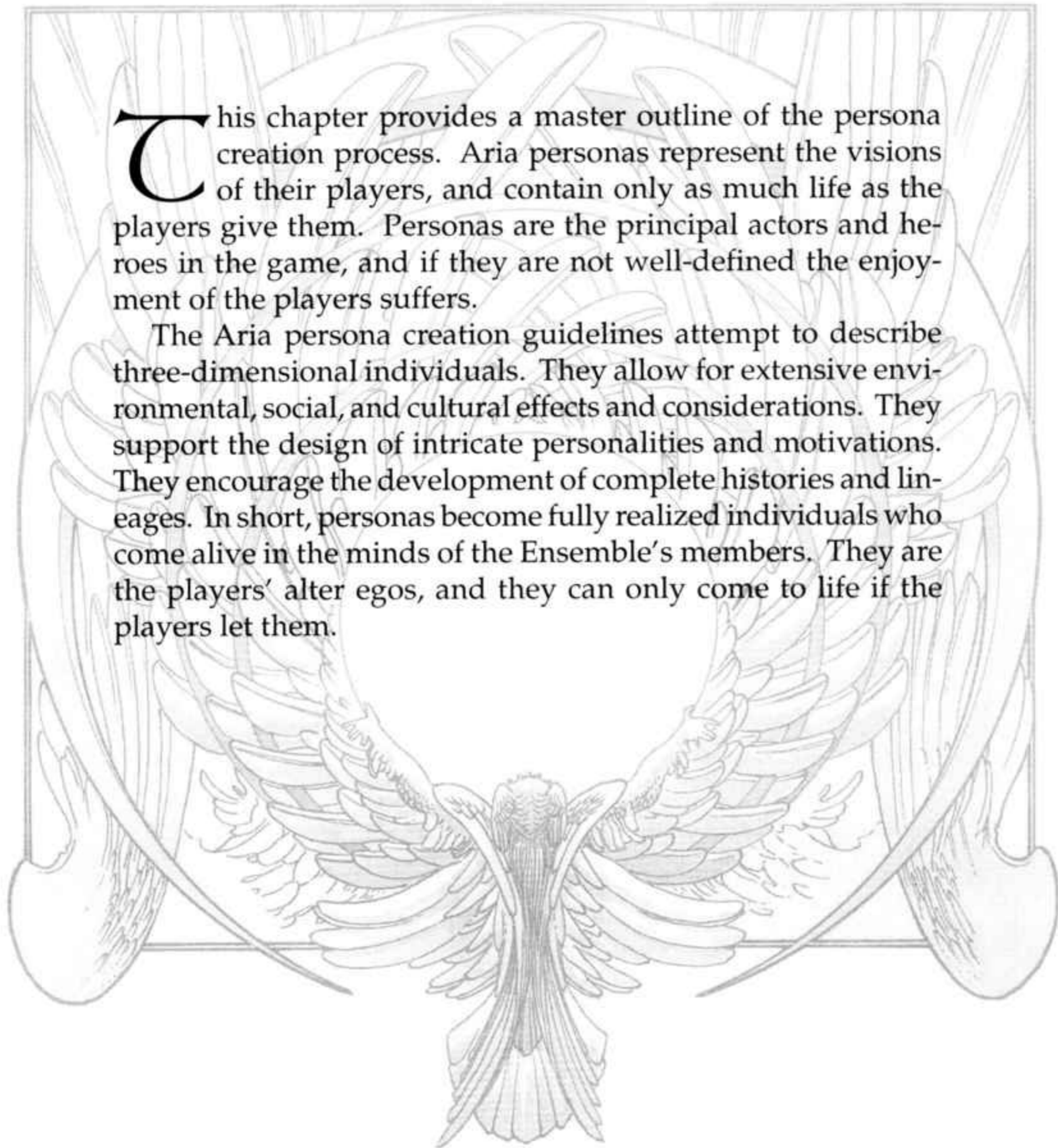


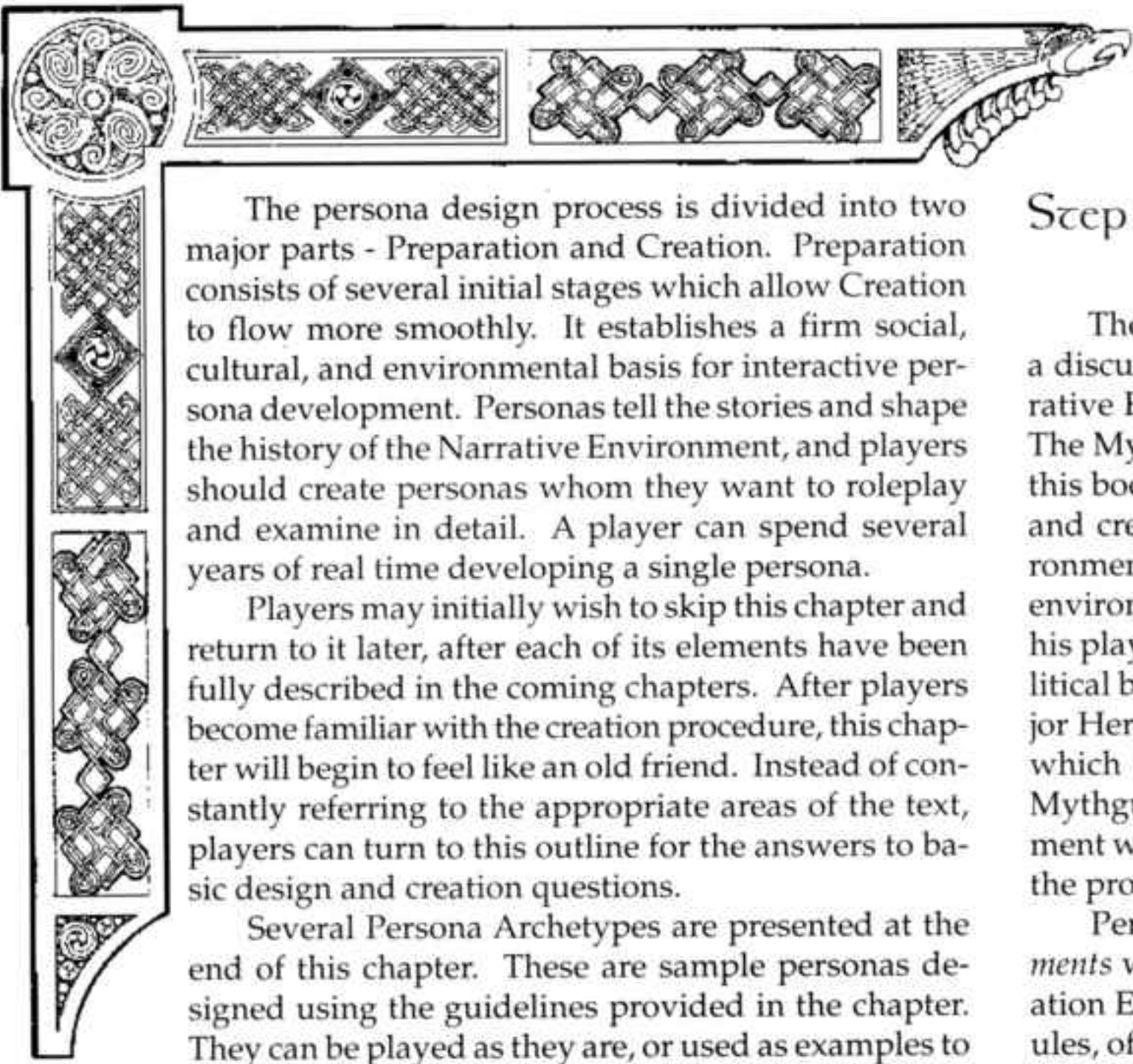
CREATION PROCESS

⊗ CHAPTER ONE ⊗

This chapter provides a master outline of the persona creation process. Aria personas represent the visions of their players, and contain only as much life as the players give them. Personas are the principal actors and heroes in the game, and if they are not well-defined the enjoyment of the players suffers.

The Aria persona creation guidelines attempt to describe three-dimensional individuals. They allow for extensive environmental, social, and cultural effects and considerations. They support the design of intricate personalities and motivations. They encourage the development of complete histories and lineages. In short, personas become fully realized individuals who come alive in the minds of the Ensemble's members. They are the players' alter egos, and they can only come to life if the players let them.





The persona design process is divided into two major parts - Preparation and Creation. Preparation consists of several initial stages which allow Creation to flow more smoothly. It establishes a firm social, cultural, and environmental basis for interactive persona development. Personas tell the stories and shape the history of the Narrative Environment, and players should create personas whom they want to roleplay and examine in detail. A player can spend several years of real time developing a single persona.

Players may initially wish to skip this chapter and return to it later, after each of its elements have been fully described in the coming chapters. After players become familiar with the creation procedure, this chapter will begin to feel like an old friend. Instead of constantly referring to the appropriate areas of the text, players can turn to this outline for the answers to basic design and creation questions.

Several Persona Archetypes are presented at the end of this chapter. These are sample personas designed using the guidelines provided in the chapter. They can be played as they are, or used as examples to guide players through their own persona designs. These sample personas also appear in illustrative examples throughout the remainder of this book.

⑤ PREPARATION ⑤

The Preparation process includes all of the preparatory stages that need to be completed before actual persona creation can begin. Most of these steps can be completed by the Mythguide based on his conception of the game world and his desires for the initial Canticle. The Mythguide may want to make the Preparation process interactive and work with the Ensemble to define the initial setting and its parameters.

Although the persona Creation process moves quickly, Preparation can become very involved if the players aren't careful. The Mythguide should use the guidelines presented in the environment chapters of this book (Mythmaking, Status, Heritage, Interactive History) to create a richly detailed initial environment, but he shouldn't go overboard. Only the regions that will play a role in the first Canticle need to be created initially. A general outline or collection of notes should suffice for the surrounding areas. As play in the Canticle progresses and the personas begin to travel farther afield, new areas can be defined as they are needed.

Step One Narrative Environment

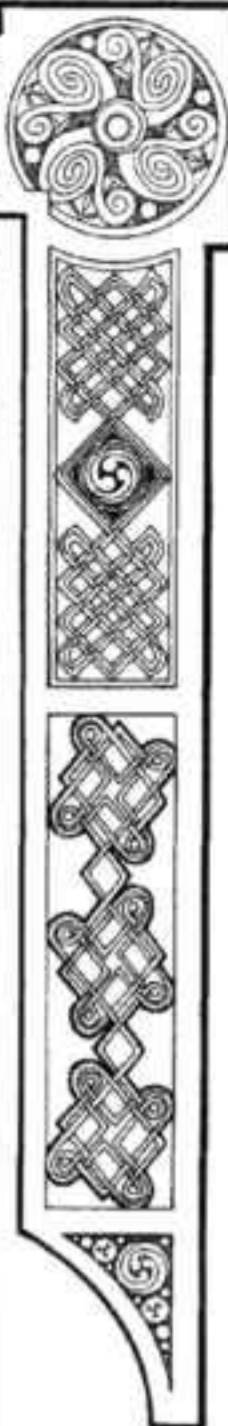
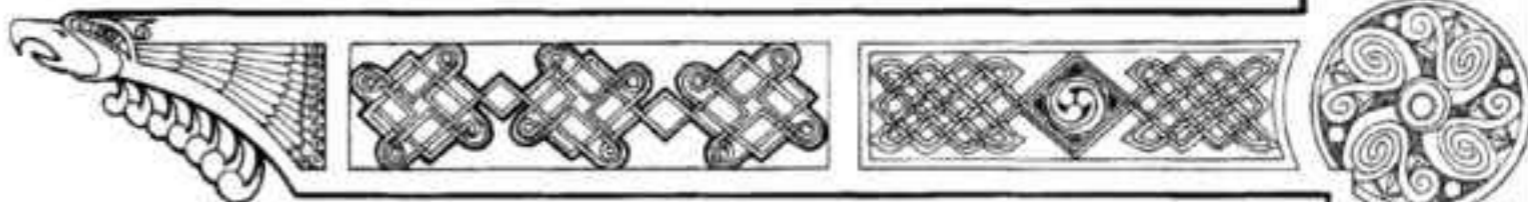
The initial step in the persona creation process is a discussion and planning session detailing the Narrative Environment that will be used in the Canticle. The Mythmaking and Interactive History chapters of this book provide detailed information on the design and creation of original worlds and Narrative Environments. If the Mythguide has already created an environment, he should present the environment to his players, giving them any necessary cultural or political background material. He should detail the major Heritage groups and social divisions, and explain which of these groups are available for play. If the Mythguide wants to cooperatively design an environment with the Ensemble, he should lead them through the process before persona creation begins.

Personas are created in smaller *Creation Environments* within the larger Narrative Environment. Creation Environments represent individual social modules, of any size, that are used specifically for persona development. For example, while an entire coastal region might constitute an Ensemble's Narrative Environment, the merchant district of a single port city could represent the Creation Environment of one or more of the personas. While the Narrative Environment includes the whole region in which play will occur, a Creation Environment contains only the immediate area in which a persona's Early and Background Development unfolds.

Each player chooses a Creation Environment from within the common Narrative Environment. Players may choose any Creation Environment they wish, although the choice is normally based on the environment's vocational possibilities. Creation Environments are abstract descriptions of the area in which vocational development occurs; they allow the Mythguide to determine what vocations are available in the area and what expertises can be learned. Players should remember that no two Creation Environments will be exactly alike. Some are expansive while others are specialized. Some may even be mobile or itinerant. Further information on Creation Environments is found in the Vocations chapter.

Step Two Design Systems

Two principal creation systems are used in Aria, and one of the first things an Ensemble must do is decide which system, or combination of systems, they wish to use during persona Creation. It is important



that the players and the Mythguide agree on a system before persona creation begins. Deciding on a determination system often depends on the nature of the initial Canticle.

The Narrative Determination System

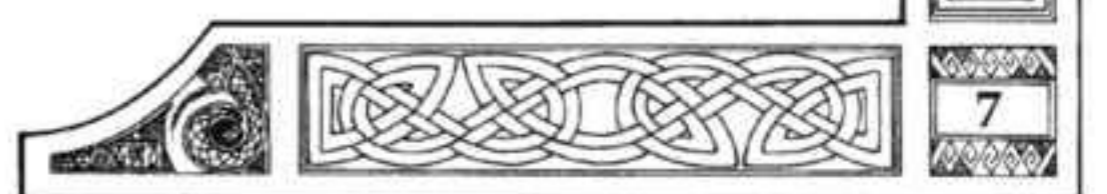
The first and most interactive persona design system is based completely on choice. The player, in consultation with the Mythguide, chooses all of his persona's Attributes, Aspects, Expertises, etc. All of these factors are chosen based upon the Persona Concept. Obviously, this design system offers the most latitude and flexibility. Personas can be precisely tailored for specific Canticles or environments. They may correspond to fictional characters or be designed as members of selective cultures or societies. The possibilities inherent in this determination system are endless, although the opportunity for abuse also exists in abundance. Mythguides and players alike must be careful not to go overboard when using a Narrative Determination system. After all, what fun is there in playing a perfect or super-human persona from the

outset of a Canticle? Such a persona represents no challenge, no struggle. A large part of the satisfaction derived from the game is witnessing the development and resulting success, despite any weaknesses and faults, of a well-played persona. To overrate a new persona during the Creation process robs the player of the most rewarding part of the game.

The Interactive Determination System

The second Determination system used in Aria is based on point distribution. This is the creation system most often used, and is usually the one Ensembles find to be the most effective. Personas receive a specified number of Interaction Points during each year of development.

Interaction Points are used to purchase most elements of persona design. All quantitative aspects of persona Creation have corresponding point values and Ranks, which indicate relative levels of ability. Players expend points to buy Attributes, Aspects, and Expertises. Costs for the various persona elements appear in the appropriate sections of this book.



Interaction Point Allotments

Allotment	IP / year*
Spartan	5
Average	7
Generous	9

*Note: IP allotment is based upon a 70 year lifespan. Heritage groups which have longer Average lifespans receive IP for longer time intervals. To determine IP allotments for longer intervals, divide the Average lifespan (# of years) by 70, rounding up to the next whole year interval.

ex. Average lifespan = 450 years
 $450/70 = 6.4$ (round to 7) year intervals
 Spartan allotment yields 5 IP every 7 years

INITIAL INTERACTION POINTS

There are three categories of Interaction Point allotments - Spartan, Average, and Generous. The category used depends on the nature of the Canticle. If he is running a realistic Canticle, the Mythguide might use Spartan allotments for persona creation. Canticles where most personas are powerful heroes might use a Generous allotment. Most Canticles use an Average allotment.

Personas receive Interaction Points on a yearly basis beginning with the year of their birth, and Age becomes an important consideration during the creation process. Older personas will be able to develop more expertises than younger personas, but they will also succumb to the effects of age more quickly. Players must weigh all considerations when deciding on their persona's age at the conclusion of Background Development.

Each player should declare the age at which his persona will begin play (and therefore conclude Background Development). Interaction Points can then be awarded in one lump sum based on the persona's age. For example, a persona using an Average point allotment decides to end Background Development and begin play at age twenty-two. The player receives 154 (seven points during each of twenty-two years) Interaction Points with which to design the persona. Refer to the accompanying table for recommended yearly allotments. The Creation outline details the manner in which these points can be spent.

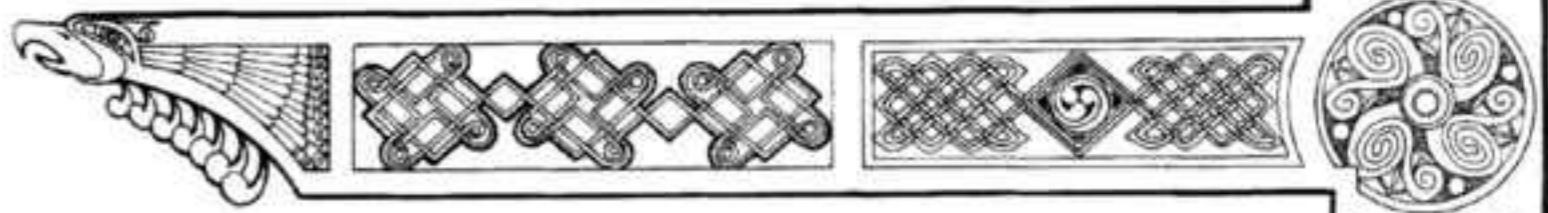
The Combined Determination System

The Narrative and Interactive Determination systems can also be combined to suit Mythguide or player preferences, depending on the nature and Tone of the Canticle. A primarily Narrative system can be peppered with a few point-based elements, or an Interactive system strengthened by the addition of choice-related narrative aspects. The basic systems are meant to be tailored. When combining Determination systems, the Ensemble should arrive at a modified system which suits the specific needs of the group as a whole.

Windows of Opportunity

Windows of Opportunity are used to effect any number of initial or developmental changes in a new persona. Three distinct types of Windows - Situational, Vocational, and Developmental - can be employed during persona design. Each type changes an initial, vocational, or developmental element of the emerging persona. Situational Windows alter specific aspects of a persona's initial situation (Family Renown, Status, Personal Freedom, etc.). Vocational Windows change elements of a persona's vocational training and abilities during Background Development. Developmental Windows affect all other areas of development. Each persona begins the Creation process with a variable number of Windows.

Personas are treated as special cases within their respective cultures and societies. Windows of Opportunity reflect this emphasis, and provide much greater latitude when creating a persona. For a developing persona, any avenue of advancement is theoretically possible, even those which at first glance might seem highly improbable. Could a persona born a peasant rise to aristocratic status? Normally, no. However, by expending a Window of Opportunity, he could indeed. The son of a tavern keeper could discover his magical Talent and travel to find the secret magical School where he can begin his training as an Adept. The son of a great noble could learn music from a wandering jongleur in his father's keep and run off to join an acting troupe. Personas can drastically alter career paths, enter religious vocations, develop magical Talents, or change their rank in society through the judicious use of Windows. The resulting personas are completely personal, infused with abundant narrative color and fresh, unique perspectives.



Master IP Cost Table (Improvement / Outright Purchase)

Rank/Value	Column I	Column II	Column III	Column IV	Column V
1	0/-10	1/1	1/1	1/1	1 /1
2	1/-6	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
3	1/-4	1/3	1/3	1/3	2/4
4	1/-1	1/4	1/4	2/5	2/6
5	1/0	1/5	1/5	2/7	2/8
6	1/1	1/6	2/7	2/9	3/11
7	4/5	1/7	2/9	2/11	3/14
8	5/10	1/8	2/11	3/14	3/17
9	5/15	1/9	2/13	3/17	4/21
10	10/25	1/10	2/15	3/20	4/25

- Column I** - Persona Attributes
- Column II** - Expertise (Talents), Background Aspects (Unfavorable Aspects give IP -- as negative costs)
- Column III** - Expertise (Aptitudes)
- Column IV** - Expertise (Disciplines)
- Column V** - Renown, Faith

The numbers listed in each Column represent IP costs for Improving to the next higher Rank/Value or for Purchasing a particular Rank/Value outright. The first number indicates Improvement cost. The second number indicates the accumulated Improvement costs to reach that particular Rank/Value (this is what it costs to start at that Rank/Value). The accumulated costs (starting costs) are called "Purchasing costs". Negative Costs indicate IP awards for Purchasing an unusually low Rank (starting Attributes). Improving low Attributes have normal costs.

ex. Discipline - Column IV

To open a Discipline (Improve from Rank 0 to Rank 1) costs 1 IP. It costs another point to improve to Rank 2 (or 2 IP to purchase at Rank 2). Once Rank 3 has been reached, it costs 2 IP to increase to Rank 4 (or 5 IP total Purchasing cost). Note that Disciplines never cost more than 3 IP to Improve a single Rank (but accumulated costs total 25 IP to reach or Purchase Rank 10).



Windows of Opportunity (Master Usage Table)

Window Type

Possible Window Usage

Situational

Situational Windows of Opportunity may be used to establish a single element of a Persona's Early Development period. A Situational Window may be used to affect any of the following areas of Persona Creation: Heritage (Species, Race, or Culture), Kinship (Legitimacy, Sibling Rank, Estrangement, Reaction Orientation, or Family Background Aspects), Attributes, Physical Characteristics (Height, Frame, or Physique), Faith, Innate Renown, Background Aspects, Environ Class of Family or Persona residence (Wilderness, Rural, Semi-Urban, or Urban), and Inherent Expertises. Situational Windows may only be used to Establish an element of a Persona's initial Situation. In most cases, Situational Windows substitute for IP Purchase costs.

Vocational

Vocational Windows of Opportunity may be used to establish or alter a single element of a Persona's Vocational Path or occupational performance/development. A Vocational Window may be used to affect any of the following areas of Vocational development: Vocational Availability, Environ Class, Specialization, Prominence, Internal Potential, or External Potential, single Available Expertise, Official Performance over 1-5 year period, and entrance into Additional Vocational Settings. A single Vocational Window usually performs one of four basic functions – 1) takes persona to a Vocational Setting of his own design, no cost for Specialization, Prominence, Potentials, or Itinerant/Official Vocation, 2) grants free and immediate entrance into any Vocational Setting that the Mythguide has created within the Persona's initial Creation Environment, 3) allows persona to open 1 expertise which is not Available Internally or Externally at Rank 5 or less, 4) allows a Persona to Improve a single Vocation-related Attribute (Strength, Logic, Communication, etc.) to any Rank.

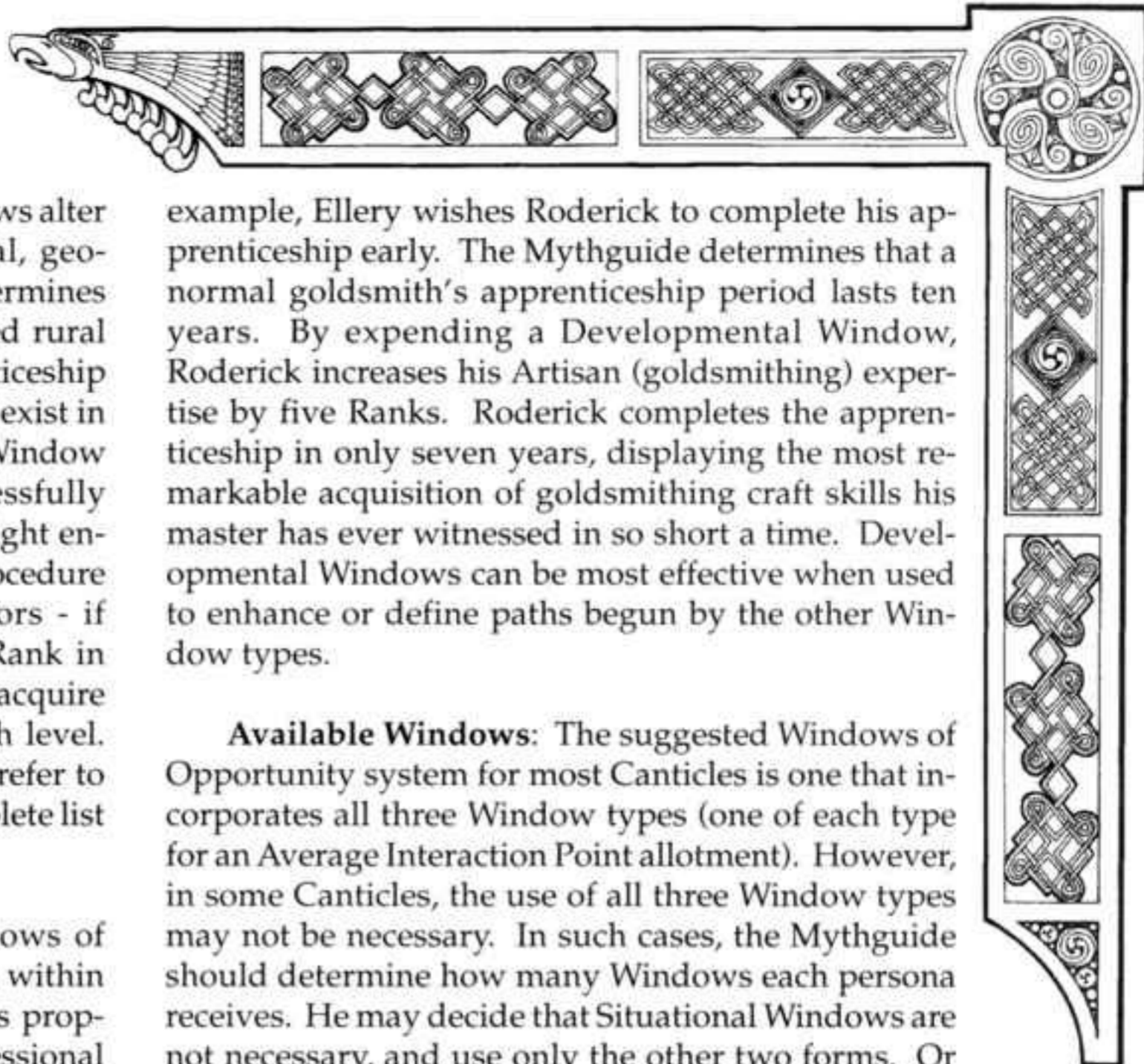
Developmental

Developmental Windows of Opportunity may be used to establish or alter a single element of a Persona's Background Development Period. The use of Developmental Windows indicates that a Persona has improved or altered a facet of his or her initial situation or predicament. The developmental change can represent nearly anything, from a change of residence or citizenship to the improvement of Family relations or Inheritance. So long as the change occurs during the Background Development period (and makes sense to the Mythguide), Developmental Windows can cover the effect. The usage of Developmental Windows may overlap that of Situational or Vocational Windows so long as it makes sense to the Mythguide. For example, changing Species with a Developmental Window does not make sense (unless the Persona experience some form of supernatural metamorphosis), but experiencing an auspicious event which increases Renown does. The Mythguide is the final authority for judging whether a Developmental Window is used properly during the Background Development period of the Persona creation process.

The most common uses for Developmental Windows include Purchasing or Improving the following areas of Persona creation: Inheritance (activation), Estrangement (improvement), Family Renown (improvement), Attributes (improvement), Physical Characteristics (final growth spurt for Height, Frame, or Physique), Faith (improvement), Insight (improvement), Renown, entering an additional setting, Background Aspects (discovering or improving), and Expertise (final purchase or improvement).

Note: The usage of Windows of Opportunity should always be described or recorded on the Persona Record. Windows are meant to inspire unique or unusual Persona Creation, enhancing Persona Histories rather than serving as 'Interaction Point loopholes'. Because the careful use of Windows does allow players to maximize their IP expenditures, Mythguides may want to limit the number of available Windows if their intent is being abused.

The Mythguide has the final authority over all Window usage. Even if a Window is being used within its suggested limits, the Mythguide may disallow or restrict its usage if it will disrupt the Narrative Environment or unbalance his Narrative or Canicle. Mythguides may want to work with players to prevent misunderstandings.



Situational Windows: Situational Windows alter a persona's initial situation - social, cultural, geographic, or material. For example, Ellery determines that his persona, Roderick, is from an isolated rural society. Roderick wishes to serve an apprenticeship under a goldsmith, a vocation which does not exist in the countryside. Ellery expends a Situational Window of Opportunity, allowing Roderick to successfully make his way to an urban center where he might enter such an apprenticeship. This same basic procedure could be repeated for any number of factors - if Roderick wanted to alter his initial Sibling Rank in order to become the Inheritor; if he wished to acquire a family-related Background Aspect at a high level. The possibilities are endless. Players should refer to the accompanying descriptive table for a complete list of Situational Window possibilities.

Vocational Windows: Vocational Windows of Opportunity affect a persona's development within Vocational Settings. By using these Windows properly, a persona may change vocational or professional concentrations several times over the course of a protracted Background Development period. These Windows represent the unusual opportunities which need to arise for such changes to occur. For example, a persona could serve an apprenticeship in one Vocational Setting and then expend a Window to learn an entirely different profession in another Location. Personas who pursue a number of divergent vocational paths are generally older when they begin play. Returning to the previous example, Roderick has arrived in a new city. He may attempt to gain an apprenticeship with a goldsmith through normal admittance channels or he may expend a Vocational Window of Opportunity to gain admittance immediately. Ellery decides to expend the Window, and Roderick enters into an apprenticeship soon after his arrival in the new environment (which is now his Creation Environment). If Ellery eventually decided that Roderick should embark on a new Vocational Path, he could expend another Vocational Window to institute the change. By using intelligent combinations of the three Window types, players can maximize both the abilities and the possibilities available to their emerging personas.

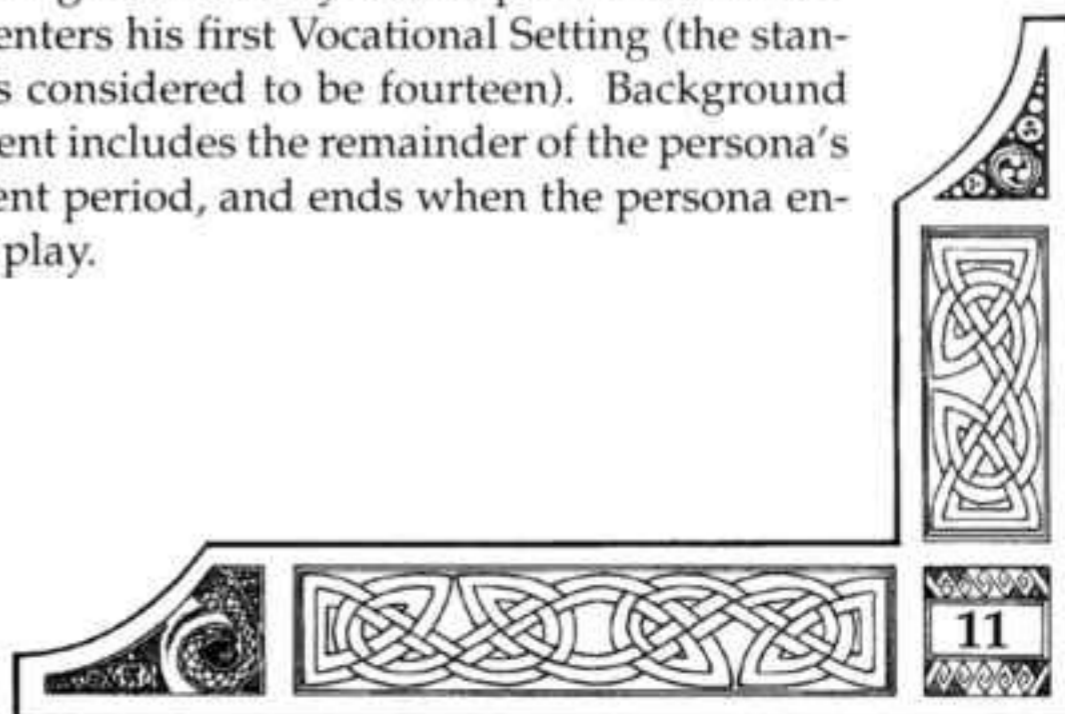
Developmental Windows: Developmental Windows include all other unique developmental changes undergone by a persona within the Creation process. Using Developmental Windows, personas have the ability to accelerate the development process within a single aspect of overall development. These Windows can affect the purchase of Attributes, Background Aspects, and Expertises. Returning once again to the

example, Ellery wishes Roderick to complete his apprenticeship early. The Mythguide determines that a normal goldsmith's apprenticeship period lasts ten years. By expending a Developmental Window, Roderick increases his Artisan (goldsmithing) expertise by five Ranks. Roderick completes the apprenticeship in only seven years, displaying the most remarkable acquisition of goldsmithing craft skills his master has ever witnessed in so short a time. Developmental Windows can be most effective when used to enhance or define paths begun by the other Window types.

Available Windows: The suggested Windows of Opportunity system for most Canticles is one that incorporates all three Window types (one of each type for an Average Interaction Point allotment). However, in some Canticles, the use of all three Window types may not be necessary. In such cases, the Mythguide should determine how many Windows each persona receives. He may decide that Situational Windows are not necessary, and use only the other two forms. Or he might bestow only Developmental Windows. For instance, if all of the personas are developing along the same Vocational Paths, it might be prudent to only include Developmental Windows in the system. Finally, always remember that it makes no sense for players to 'save' Windows for later use. Once the Background Development process is complete, any unused Windows simply disappear.

⑧ CREATION ⑧

The Creation process describes the methods for designing Aria personas, and consists of several steps that remain the same from one environment to the next. These steps are detailed in the following sections. Persona Creation can be further divided into two major periods - Early Development and Background Development. Early Development represents development during childhood and adolescence. It also represents family-related development. Background Development begins and Early Development ends when a persona enters his first Vocational Setting (the standard age is considered to be fourteen). Background Development includes the remainder of the persona's development period, and ends when the persona enters actual play.





Step One: Persona Concept

The Narrative Environment provides the 'where' for the Creation process, but little of the 'how' or 'why'. The next step in the persona design process is conceptualization. The players decide what type of personas they wish to play, and then allow these decisions to guide them through the creation process. There are no 'character classes' as such in *Aria*, so this initial design process becomes significantly more important than in many other games. The Persona Concept serves as the guiding force behind a persona's development. The player should begin to think about his persona's background history, family, and possible vocational paths. The Concept establishes a basic direction for such development. A player creating a new persona needs to keep several factors in mind throughout the conceptualization process. The first is the persona's home region or society. Depending on the nature of this area, certain restrictions or parameters might apply. For example, a persona cannot enter a vocation which is technologically beyond the capabilities of his society or culture. Certain Heritage groups can also carry specific restrictions or requirements with

them. Perhaps all members of a certain culture are required to take the Enhanced Sense Background Aspect. Finally, the Mythguide may have imposed some of his own restrictions on his Canticle. Perhaps no personas will be able to use a certain type of magic, or maybe they are not allowed to be members of the Ruling Status Archetype. The Mythguide should inform the player of any unique requirements or restrictions, and the resulting Persona Concept will fully complement the Narrative Environment being used.

The Persona Concept is a series of broad strokes and ideas to which further detail, creativity, and development must immediately be added. The conceptualization process acts only as an outline, a starting point, for the more specific Creation procedures which actually define the persona's background and abilities. Its major role is to serve as a basis for early interaction between the player and Mythguide, and to help prevent any narrative or environmental inconsistencies or impossibilities.

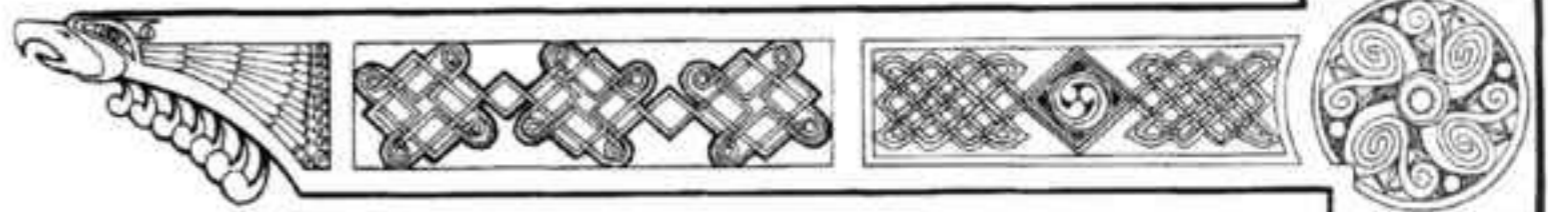
Interaction Points

Interaction Points are used during Creation to purchase Attributes, Expertises, Kinship Elements, and Background Aspects. Before actual Creation begins, each player should use their Persona Concept to determine the Age at which their persona will start play. Depending on the Interaction Point allotment being used in the Canticle, the Mythguide should give each player their initial Interaction Points. An Average allotment provides seven points per year of a persona's life.

The Mythguide may allow a player to change his mind about his persona's initial Age after development has begun. Since Interaction Points are given on a yearly basis, reduced or increased Age will simply add to or subtract from the persona's available points. However, it is more convenient if the players conceptualize their personas well enough to arrive at approximate initial Ages.

Concept Foundations

Concept Foundations give further direction to the Persona concept. Foundations are tools to encourage players to think creatively and uniquely regarding their personas' backgrounds and development patterns. Foundations represent persona 'types', if you will, standards upon which abilities, development styles, and future advancement can build. They are extensions of the conceptualization process, and are



often useful tools for new or inexperienced players. Experienced players may wish to ignore them.

Social and Cultural Foundations: A vivid society or culture can form the basis for a new Persona Concept. Cultural and social considerations can be very different. A number of cultures often constitute a single society, and cultural boundaries are usually more humanistic than societal ones. Considerations in a cultural Foundation might include religious practices or racial customs, while purely social considerations tend toward the political, economic, or scholastic. This Foundation can be affected by a culture's Heritage Orientation or a society's Philosophical Orientation.

When basing a persona on a society or culture, the player decides what aspects of the society he likes and does not like, and which of these he wants to include in his character. This is called the persona's Cultural Orientation, and is further defined in the Heritage chapter. The persona's abilities and attributes are partially dictated by the position the persona occupies in the society. A social/cultural Foundation indicates interest in the placement and importance of the persona in the overall Narrative Environment (such placement is defined by the persona's Status and Renown—refer to the Traits and Status chapters).

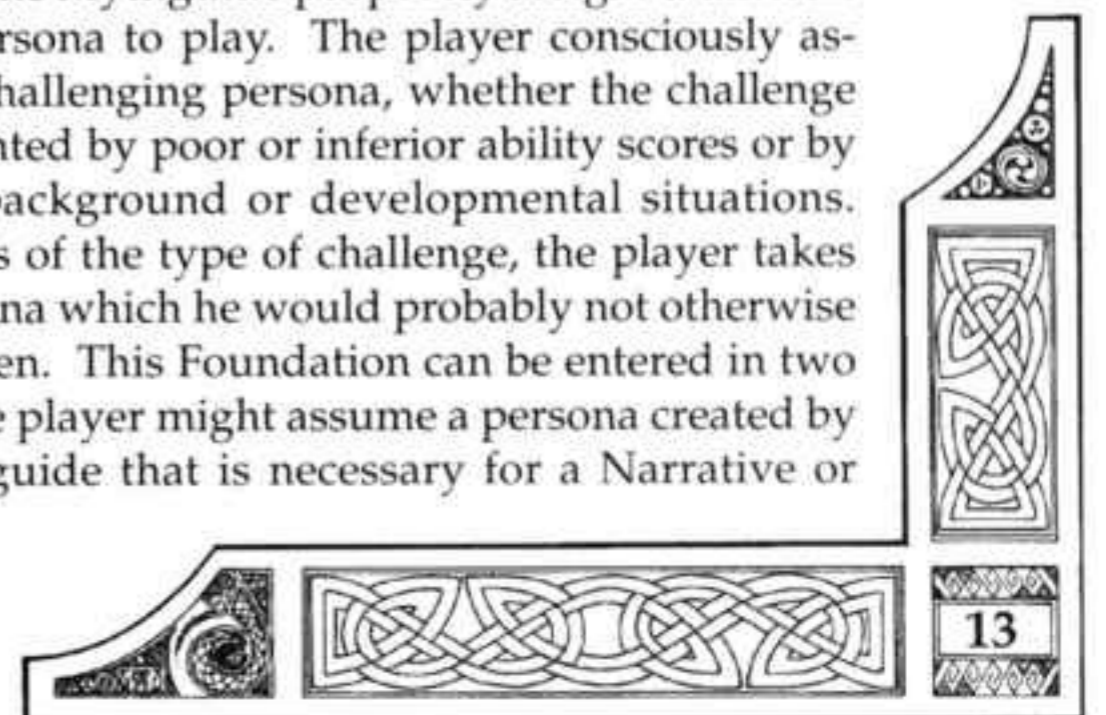
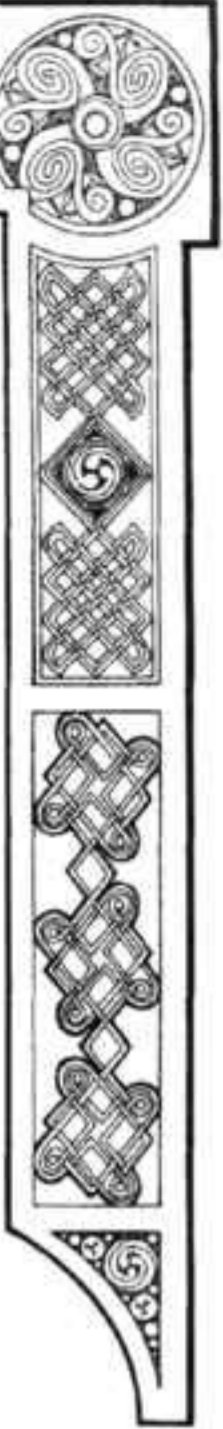
Ability Foundations: Individual abilities or sets of abilities can also form the basis of a persona design. A player might want his persona to have a certain power or attribute, and the creation and development procedures can be tailored to accomplish this end. A persona founded on specific abilities and their improvement is necessarily easier to role-play than one with a more broad-based Foundation. For this reason, Ability Foundations can be helpful for young or inexperienced players. The focus is placed primarily on the persona and its advancement, rather than on the persona's role and position in the larger social environment.

Psychological Foundations: Psychological Foundations may also be used as a basis for persona creation. If such a Foundation is used, the player should concentrate on one or more aspects of his persona's personality. This could be represented by a Personality Trait, Motivation, Passion, Obsession, or Renown aspect. This psychological element provides the player with a general direction for his persona's creation process. The appearance of a trait may be important. Is it something that has been present since youth? In this case the influence will affect all of the persona's developmental years. If the influence develops later, it

will have less of an effect on the persona's Early Development (although it will probably still affect Background Development).

Fictional Foundations: Personas can also be based on characters drawn from the pages of fantasy fiction and literature. This Foundation is somewhat of a combination of the others. The players will want to endow their personas with the abilities, both individual and social, of the characters on which the persona is being modeled. Much of this assignment depends on the nature of the Narrative Environment being used. If the player simply likes the portrayal of a particular character, and wishes his persona to have a surface resemblance to the character, then a great deal more latitude is possible throughout the Creation process. At the other end of the spectrum is the Canticle which actually takes place within a setting derived from literature or comics. In this case, the player might wish to play a specific figure from the story. If such a true derivation is being used, a very open-ended Determination system is often necessary. The player and the Mythguide must assign the persona's attributes and abilities according to the information provided in the source material. This Foundation is also a convenient one for inexperienced players. Much of the initial design work has already been done by the original author, and the player is representing a persona that has already been 'created.' The persona's reactions to certain events, and his overall personality and demeanor, are all predetermined. Using an established setting is also good practice for inexperienced Mythguides, although groups should be careful not to become too dependent on source material. Creativity and imagination are an integral part of the game and a major part of the fun. New and fresh ideas should not be sacrificed for the sake of accuracy in a setting based on fiction. Instead, use the fictional setting as a beginning, a starting point that can be changed and molded. Or use it as a model to eventually create an entire setting of your own.

Challenging Foundations: Personas can also be played as challenges. This occurs when a player assumes or the Mythguide purposely assigns a difficult role or persona to play. The player consciously assumes a challenging persona, whether the challenge is represented by poor or inferior ability scores or by difficult background or developmental situations. Regardless of the type of challenge, the player takes on a persona which he would probably not otherwise have chosen. This Foundation can be entered in two ways. The player might assume a persona created by the Mythguide that is necessary for a Narrative or



Canticle. Or the player may be asked to design a persona that conforms to certain parameters defined by the Mythguide. This Foundation is often used when the Mythguide has designed a very specific narrative or scenario, requiring participants with precisely detailed backgrounds or abilities. Experienced players will often embrace such a challenge. The satisfaction of taking a challenging persona and developing it, watching its progression through continued narrative interaction, is unequalled as a rewarding gaming experience.

Step Two: Heritage

The player should decide on a Heritage Template for the persona. The Mythguide has already given the players some background on the Narrative Environment and its peoples during the Preparation stages. He should now tell them which of the Heritage groups in the environment are available for play. After deciding on a Heritage Template that appeals to them, the players should record any special restrictions or considerations associated with the Template. Refer to the Heritage chapter for a full discussion of these elements.

Heritage Templates can be chosen in one of three ways. They may require the expenditure of a Window of Opportunity, they may cost Interaction Points, or they may simply be picked. The Mythguide should decide on the determination method for his Canticle and inform the players. If a player has to purchase a Template, he should record the cost.

Cultural Orientation: The player should choose a Cultural Orientation for the persona. This choice should be considered carefully, since Cultural Orientation can affect certain relationships within a Heritage group (such as Status). Cultural Orientation may also dictate the presence of a related Motivation.

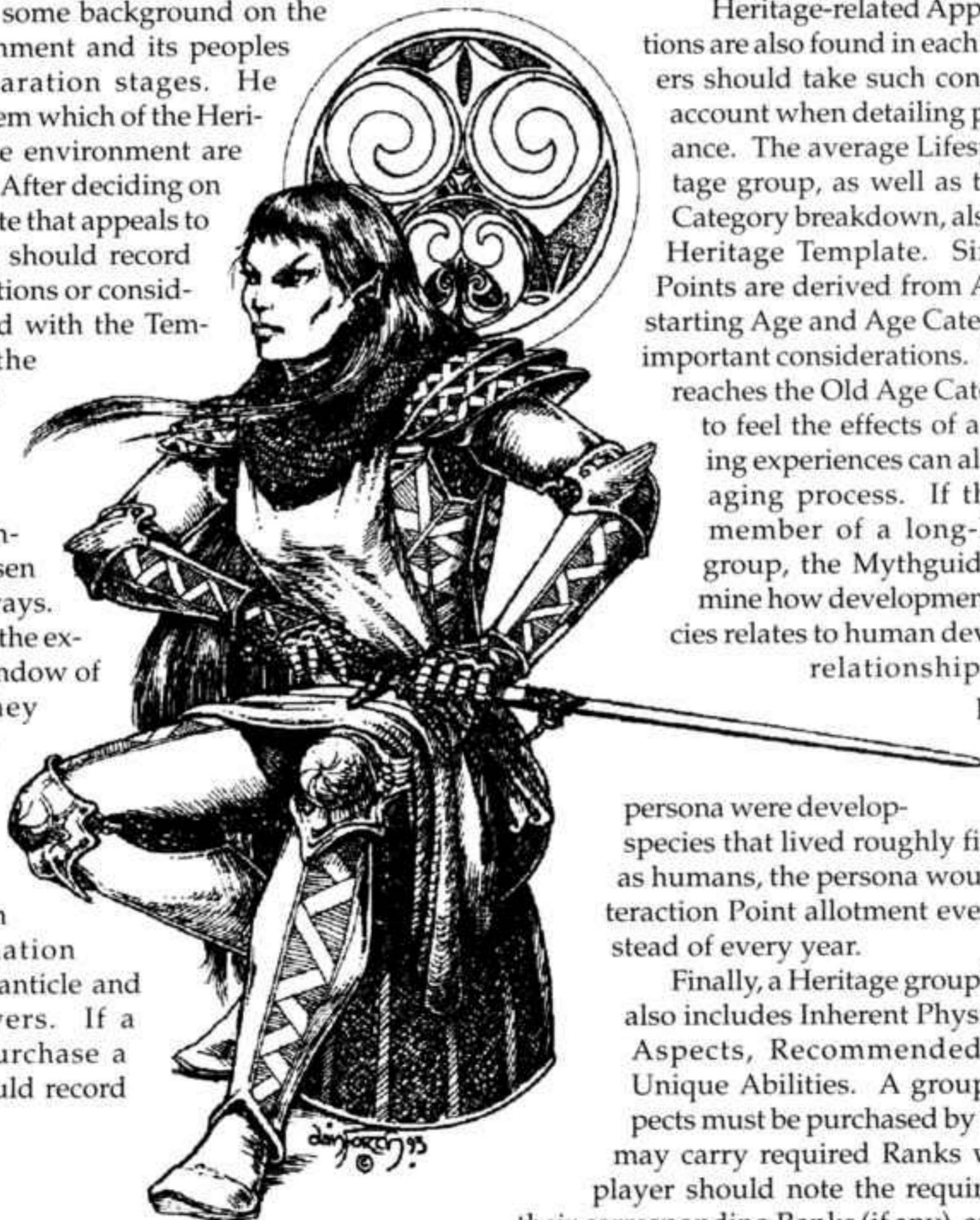
Persona Considerations: The player should record any requirements, restrictions, or recommendations associated with the Persona Considerations of the persona's Heritage Template.

Physical Traits include Frame, Height, and Physique. Every Heritage Template lists average values for these Characteristics. If a persona wishes to alter the average for his Heritage group, he may have to use Interaction Points to do so. Refer to the Characteristics Step of this outline for more information.

Heritage-related Appearance suggestions are also found in each Template. Players should take such considerations into account when detailing persona Appearance. The average Lifespan of the Heritage group, as well as the group's Age Category breakdown, also appears in the Heritage Template. Since Interaction Points are derived from Age, a persona's starting Age and Age Category become an important considerations. When a persona reaches the Old Age Category, he begins to feel the effects of aging. Debilitating experiences can also accelerate the aging process. If the persona is a member of a long-lived Heritage group, the Mythguide should determine how development within the species relates to human development. This relationship is always expressed as a ratio. For example, if a

persona were developing within a species that lived roughly five times as long as humans, the persona would receive an Interaction Point allotment every five years instead of every year.

Finally, a Heritage group's Physical Traits also includes Inherent Physical Background Aspects, Recommended Aspects, and Unique Abilities. A group's Inherent Aspects must be purchased by the persona, and may carry required Ranks with them. The player should note the required Aspects and their corresponding Ranks (if any), and record the In-



teraction Point cost. The player should also note the Template's Recommended Aspects. He may decide to purchase several of them later. If the Heritage group has any Unique Abilities, the Mythguide must tell the player whether the abilities are considered innate capacities or whether they must be purchased as Unique Aspects. If they need to be purchased, they often carry minimum Ranks with them. The player should record the costs of all Unique Physical Abilities (if any).

Psychological Traits include both Inherent and Recommended Psychological Background Aspects. Inherent Aspects must be purchased by every member of a particular Template, and may carry minimum Rank requirements with them. The player should note the total Interaction Point cost for any Inherent Psychological Aspects. Recommended Aspects represent suggested Heritage-related conditions; the player may decide whether or not to purchase them.

Mental and Spiritual Traits include Inherent and Recommended Background Aspects (both Mental and Spiritual), as well as any Heritage-related Unique Abilities. Inherent Aspects are required, while Recommended Aspects are optional. The Mythguide should inform the player if Unique Abilities need to be purchased.

Development Considerations: Heritage groups often carry certain Inherent or Recommended Expertises with them. Inherent expertises are always cultural in nature, and must be purchased by every member of a particular Heritage Template. Inherent Expertises can also have minimum Ranks associated with them. The player should make a note of his persona's Inherent Expertises, since he will be required to purchase them during Background Development. Recommended Expertises are those skills and abilities which complement a Heritage group but which are not required of every member of the culture. Players should consider purchasing at least one Recommended expertise.

Some Heritage Templates also have Profile and Attribute restrictions. Profile restrictions usually limit access to certain vocations, and are often based on considerations of Status and Personal Freedom. The Mythguide should further describe any relevant Profile Restrictions and inform a player if specific Vocational Paths are not available.

Finally, some Heritage groups have minimum or maximum Attribute requirements. Because of the way persona Attributes are handled in Aria (all persona Attributes default to five), players rarely have to worry about Attribute minimums. However, if a Template

has an unusually high minimum, or if a player wishes to take an unusually low Rank in an Attribute, these restrictions may become important. The player should adhere to any Attribute requirements dictated by the persona's Heritage Template.

Cultural Features: The player should read the Cultural Features section of the Heritage Template he is using. Depending on his persona's Cultural Orientation, he might wish to use a Template's Cultural Features to provide a general direction for the persona Creation process. For example, a culture might have a unique kinship system or an odd outlook on a world's Reality. Cultural elements also direct the player when choosing clothing and other accouterments for the persona.

Step Three: Kinship and Status

The Mythguide should describe the Hierarchy of Social Estates and the active Status Foundations for the Narrative Environment in which the persona is being created. He should also describe any unusual kinship patterns or considerations for the persona's Heritage group. The player should then define his persona's Family Concept, including the situation surrounding the persona's upbringing. Did the persona have an Ordinary upbringing? Was he Adopted? Stolen? The player may also wish to detail several important family members (the persona's parents and siblings, for instance), as well as any Family Motivations or Background Aspects.

After the player defines his persona's Family Concept and initial family situation, he may purchase the various elements of Kinship for the persona.

Family Status: The player chooses a Status Archetype for the head of the family based on the Persona Concept and Family Concept. Family Status does not have to be purchased, but its assignment should make sense in terms of a persona's development. Family Status determines the Interaction Point costs of most other kinship elements.

Legitimacy: Is the persona a Legitimate child? If not, the persona receives an Interaction Point award. Refer to the Determining Persona Kinship table for point awards. If the persona is not a Legitimate child, the persona may have a unique Family Background (Orphaned, Runaway, Stolen, Enslaved, etc.).

Family Orientation: The player should define his persona's Family Orientation. Family Orientation is described by the same categories as Cultural Orienta-



tion, and represents the same basic demeanors. A persona's Family Orientation can affect access to Family Renown and Family-related Background Aspects. It can also affect persona Motivations and Personality Traits.

Sibling Rank: The player should purchase his persona's Sibling Rank, which shows where in the birth order the persona falls. Sibling Rank can affect both persona Inheritance and certain family-related Background Aspects. See the appropriate table for costs.

Estrangement: The player purchases his persona's Estrangement according to costs on the Determining Kinship table. Where Family Orientation describes the persona's view of his family, Estrangement describes the family's view of the persona. Estrangement can affect a persona's access to both family-related Background Aspects and Family Renown.

Inheritance: If a persona is an eligible Inheritor, the player must spend either a Window of Opportunity or five Interaction Points to activate an inheritance during the Early or Background Development period. The inheritance received will be average for the Status Archetype involved. If a more valuable inheritance is desired, the player must purchase a modifying Background Aspect such as Favorable Inheritance, Collection, or Heirloom.

Family Renown: The player should choose the Family Renown and accompanying Renown Aspects for his persona's Family. Although it costs a player nothing to acquire Family Renown, the Renown and its Aspects should complement both the Persona and Family Concepts.

Reaction Orientation: Reaction Orientation defines the esteem in which the family is held by its peers

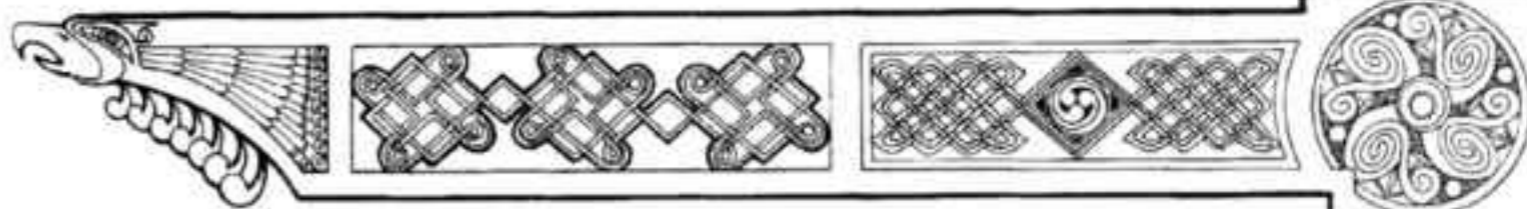
in the Narrative Environment. A player must purchase the Reaction Orientation for his persona's family according to the costs listed on the Determining Persona Kinship table. The Mythguide should inform the players of the types of Renown that are viewed Favorably in the environment so that they can assign Aspects accordingly when detailing their Family Concepts.

Innate Renown: Personas gain innate personal Renown from their family's Family Renown. Such Renown is conferred on a persona based on his Sibling Rank and Estrangement. Players may continue to develop this innate Renown throughout the course of their persona's Background Development. Refer to the appropriate table for the precise modifiers.

STATUS

A persona's initial Social Estate is normally derived from a persona's Legitimacy and Family Situation. It is also based on the active Status Foundations in the environment, and may be affected by any unusual Status or Kinship considerations from the persona's Heritage Template. A persona's cultural Status may differ from his social Status. The Mythguide should inform the player of any special circumstances associated with an environment's Hierarchy of Social Estates. Refer to the Status chapter for a complete discussion of initial Status.

Status Archetype: Status Archetypes provide a general framework for Status in any environment. The same six Archetypes always define the progression of Status; the composition of these Status Archetypes can



Determining Persona Kinship/Family Relations (Interaction Point Cost Table)

Family Status Archetype (Head of Family)

Elements of Kinship *Ruling** *Privileged* *Professional* *Labor* *Marginal*

Persona Legitimacy

Legitimate	0	0	0	0	0
Illegitimate (Acknowledged)	-1/0**	-1/0**	-1/0**	-1/0**	-1/0**
Illigitimate (Unacknowledged)	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3

Family Orientation

Family Orientation possibilities include Embrace, Refuse, Select, Suppress, Consider, and Abstain. Player selects Family Orientation and describes its effect on the other Kinship Elements -- no cost, Archetype Irrelevant.

Sibling Rank

Inheritor	10	8	5	3	1
Penultimate	5	4	2	1	0
Non-Inheritor	3	2	0	0	0

Estrangement

Favorite	5	4	3	2	1
Good	3	2	1	1	0
Average	0	0	0	0	0
Poor	-1	-2	-1	-1	-1
Black Sheep	-3	-4	-3	-2	-2

Family Renown

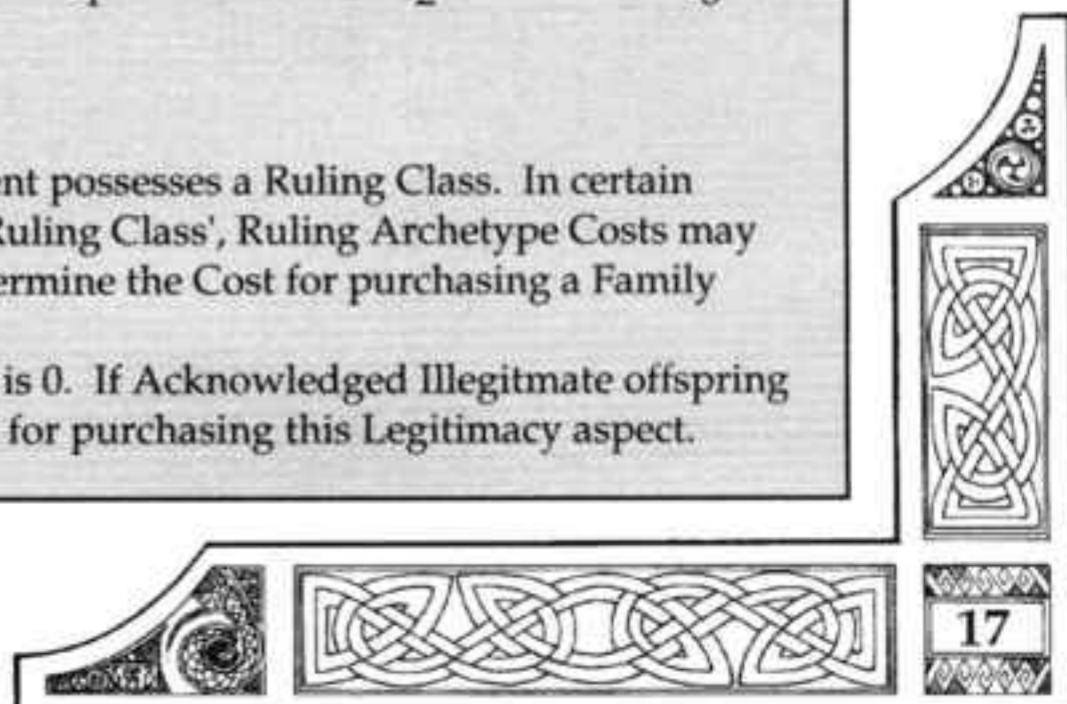
Player selects Family Renown (Renown Value 1 - 10)-- no cost, Archetype Irrelevant.

Reaction Orientation

Favorable	5	4	3	2	1
Average	3	2	0	0	0
Unfavorable	0	0	-1	-2	-3

* The Ruling Archetype costs apply only if the Persona's social Environment possesses a Ruling Class. In certain Societies, such as Primitive or Democratic Societies which often have no 'Ruling Class', Ruling Archetype Costs may substitute for Ruling Agency costs. In all other cases, Mythguide must determine the Cost for purchasing a Family Head which is a member of the Ruling Agency.

** If Acknowledged offspring are eligible to inherit in the Society, the cost is 0. If Acknowledged Illegitimate offspring are not eligible to inherit, Persona receives an Interaction Point award of 1 for purchasing this Legitimacy aspect.



Persona Status Level

Altering Status during Background Development

Method I - Windows of Opportunity*

Method II - Interaction Points

Rigidity Value	IP Cost
1 - 2	1
3 - 4	2
5 - 6	3
7 - 8	4
9 - 10	5

**Note: Windows of Opportunity indirectly raise Status by changing a persona's background situation. If changes of vocation, changes in family relationships (esp. inheritance), etc. effect the persona's Status Archetype, Status level may be altered.*

change from one environment to the next. A persona's initial Status Archetype is the same as his family's Family Status. Even if a persona has no family, he will still have a Family Situation (often Runaway, Stolen, Abandoned, etc.). Such personas often develop within the Marginal Archetype.

Status Level: Every Status Archetype represents a range of Status Levels within an environment's Hierarchy of Social Estates. Since the Mythguide has already outlined an environment's Hierarchy, he should determine a new persona's Status Level. Initial Status Level depends on the active Status Foundations in the environment, on the persona's initial Vocational Path, and on any relevant Family elements (such as Estrangement and Sibling Rank).

After the Mythguide assigns the persona an Initial Status Level, the player may develop Status further during the remainder of the Background Development period. He may develop it in a narrative fashion, guided by the Mythguide, according to his Persona Concept. He can use a Window of Opportunity to raise Status Level. Or he can spend Interaction Points to increase the persona's Status Level. The cost of new Status depends on the Rigidity of Status in the environment. Refer to the appropriate table for costs. If a player uses Interaction Points to increase Status, he cannot raise Status Level higher than the highest Level within the same Status Archetype. If he wants

to move into the next higher Archetype, he must use a Window of Opportunity.

STEP FOUR: CHARACTERISTICS

All personas are defined by a number of Characteristics. Characteristics include physical, mental, spiritual, and appearance elements. Some Characteristics need to be purchased with Interaction Points, while others are simply chosen. The player should assign or purchase Characteristic values and Ranks based on his persona's Concept. For further information, players should refer to the Characteristics chapter.

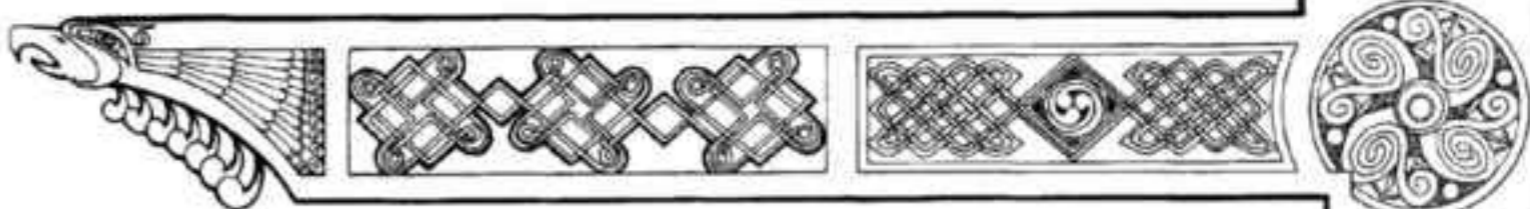
ATTRIBUTES

Every persona is described by six primary Attributes. The player chooses the six Attributes that he feels best represent his persona from among sixteen suggested possibilities. He then purchases the desired Ranks with Interaction Points according to the Purchasing Attributes table. A Rank of five is considered average for personas, while a Rank of four is average for Mythguide personas. A player can always choose a Rank of five in an Attribute at no cost.

Every persona in the game may consist of different primary Attributes. However, since all of the possibilities represent Characteristics that play a role in certain resolutions, all personas are considered to have the remaining Attributes (other than the six chosen primary Attributes) at a default Rank of five.

A player may also wish to take up to two additional Attributes at Ranks below five if such a choice fits the Persona Concept. These Attributes are in addition to the six primary Attributes already chosen. Personas receive Interaction Point awards for Attributes below Rank five. Refer to the Purchasing Attributes table for point awards.

Potentials: Each of the primary Attributes (and also any below-average Attributes) has a Potential Rank associated with it. Players may develop their persona's Attribute Potentials during play through training, practice, and the expenditure of Myth Points. Refer to the Defining Attribute Potential table for Potential values. Below average Attributes are always treated as Rank 4 Attributes (regardless of their actual Rank) when determining Potential.



PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Age: The player has already determined the general Age of the persona. Although the exact age may change slightly before Background Development ends, the player should determine the Age Category in which the persona falls. Age Category indicates any necessary Aging Trials or other effects. The player should consult the Mythguide about the effects of aging within the persona's Heritage group. At the option of the Mythguide, certain Background Aspects (such as Injury, Susceptibility, or Disease) may cause premature Aging Trials.

Frame and Height: All Heritage Templates list average Frame and Height Values for each gender. If a player desires increased Height or Frame, he must purchase the higher Values based on the Variation within his Heritage group. Variation among Frames dictates Interaction Point costs and awards, while Variation among Height Values indicates possible height minimums and maximums within a particular Heritage group. Personas can receive point awards for low Frame Values, but low Height Values give no awards.

Physique: Average Physique for each gender is also listed in the Heritage Template descriptions. The player does not have to purchase his persona's Physique; he simply chooses it. Weight is derived from Frame, Height, and Physique, and the player should compute and record his persona's Weight. Because all of these Characteristics combine to form a persona's Weight, Weight serves as the primary factor in determining a persona's Trauma Resistance (see Derived Characteristics). Certain Physiquest have additional effects on a persona's Attributes. The player should make a note of such effects if they apply.

Coloring and Other Physical Characteristics: The player should describe a persona's Coloring - hair, eyes, and complexion. Common elements and variations are described in each Heritage Template, and the player should make a choice based on these suggested combinations.

The player should also detail any unique or unusual Physical Characteristics. These include Distinguishing Marks or Features, Racial or cultural Resemblances, or Disfigurements as a result of injury, illness, or disease. The player should note the placement and appearance of such features.

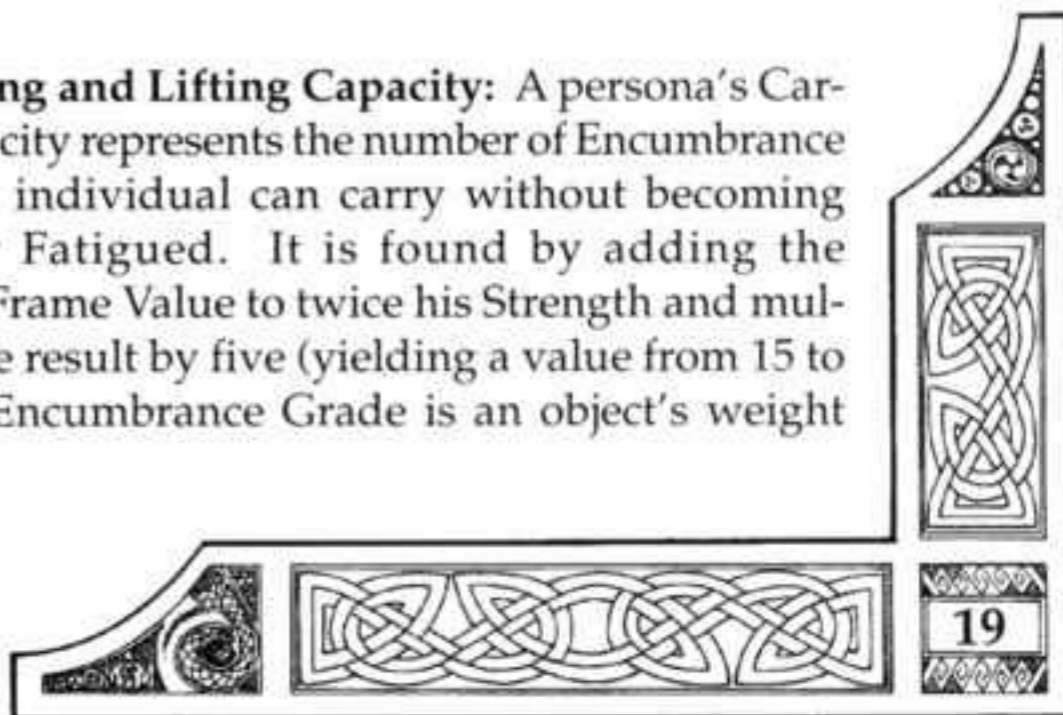
Defining Attribute Potential

Attribute	Maximum Potential*
Agility	Initial Rank + 2
Appearance	Initial Rank + 2
Communication	Initial Rank + 3
Empathy	Initial Rank + 2
Endurance	Initial Rank + 4
Hardiness	Initial Rank + 2
Intelligence	Initial Rank + 2
Intuition	Initial Rank + 2
Logic	Initial Rank + 2
Manual Dexterity	Initial Rank + 2
Perception	Initial Rank + 2
Presence	Initial Rank + 2
Quickness	Initial Rank + 2
Strength	Initial Rank + 3
Willpower	Initial Rank + 2
Wisdom	Initial Rank + 4

** Note: Only the six Attributes initially selected can be improved after the Persona Creation Process has been completed. Though Personas are considered to have all other Attributes at Rank 5, those undefined Attributes are considered to have a maximum Potential of 5 (+0 Ranks). If underdeveloped Attributes (those having Ranks below 5) have been chosen, they are considered to have an Initial Rank of 4 for purposes of calculating their maximum Potential. No Attribute may exceed Rank 10 regardless of the Initial Rank or maximum Potential.*

DERIVED CHARACTERISTICS

Carrying and Lifting Capacity: A persona's Carrying Capacity represents the number of Encumbrance Grades an individual can carry without becoming unusually Fatigued. It is found by adding the persona's Frame Value to twice his Strength and multiplying the result by five (yielding a value from 15 to 150). An Encumbrance Grade is an object's weight





multiplied by its unwieldiness (the Mythguide assigns an Encumbrance Multiplier from one to five).

Lifting Capacity represents the number of Encumbrance Grades a persona can simply lift and hold. Lifting Capacity is three times a persona's Carrying Capacity.

Movement: A persona moves fifteen miles plus his Height Value and Endurance during a single day, traveling at a brisk unencumbered hiking pace. A persona's Action Movement Rate equals his Quickness in yards each Action Interval.

Trauma Resistance: A persona's Trauma Resistance represents the ability to withstand physical trauma and injury. It is based on a persona's Weight and is slightly modified by Hardiness. Refer to the appropriate table to find the precise value. Hardiness represents the persona's ability to resist shock and concussion damage.

Step Five: Vocation and Expertise

Vocational Specialization and Availability depend on an environment's Environ Class and Specialization Aspects, which can include technology, physical isolation, interaction and trade, resources, exploitation, and Heritage or Philosophical Orientations. Personal Freedom and Custom of Status are also considerations when determining vocational availability. Based on his design and conception of an environment, the Mythguide should tell the players what Vocational Paths are available within the environment. The Hierarchy of Social Estates illustrates where the available vocations fall within the environment's social ranking system. The Mythguide should indicate whether Availability Trials will be used to determine vocational availability.

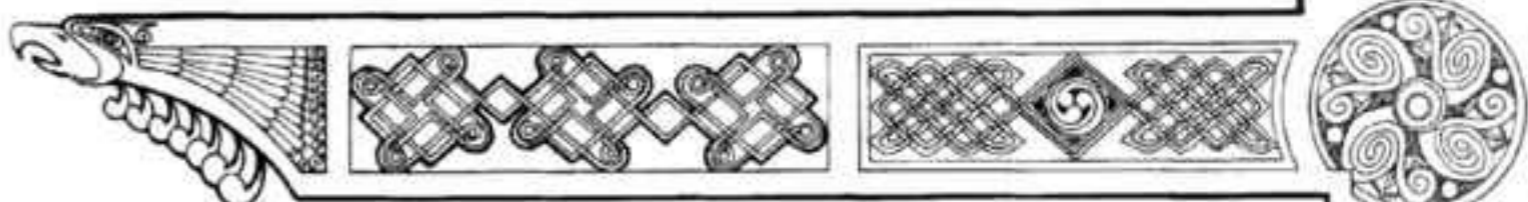
Vocation

Personas move through one or more Vocational Paths during their Background Development period. A single Vocational Path represents an occupation, profession, or avocation. Examples include smith, armorer, mercenary, and priest. Each Vocational Path unfolds within a Vocational Setting, which can be either sedentary or mobile.

Personas develop expertises within each Vocational Path, and a single persona can develop along as many Paths as he wishes during the Background Development period. If a persona develops in more than one Path, the player should describe the order in which development occurs and the amount of time spent in each Setting. Individual vocations and Settings determine which expertises are available for purchase, and time spent in a Setting determines how many Interaction Points can be spent on expertise development within the Setting.

Vocational Setting: After a player decides on a vocation for his persona to pursue, the Mythguide must determine whether the vocation is available in the environment. There are no 'classes' in Aria; personas can theoretically do anything. If a particular vocation is available, the Mythguide should allow the player to purchase its Vocational Setting. Refer to the appropriate table for costs.

A Vocational Setting consists of several elements. Specialization indicates the maximum expertise Ranks available for development within the Setting. Prominence represents a Setting's Renown among its peers.



Internal and External Potential represent the ability to develop expertises both within and outside of a particular Setting. Itinerant Settings or Settings that support Official Vocations cost additional Interaction Points. The player should describe the Setting and its position in the Narrative Environment, and should record the total point cost of the Setting.

The Mythguide should also inform the player of any special considerations regarding the Vocational Setting. Such unusual considerations include Unfree Vocations (possibly requiring the expenditure of a Window of Opportunity to gain the persona's freedom), Hidden Vocations (requiring Potential purchases for both the Apparent Setting and the Hidden Setting), and Omnis (magical or religious orders or groups).

Vocational Path: A Vocational Path is the occupation followed by a persona, and is chosen by the player based on vocational availability in the environment. All Vocational Paths develop within Vocational Settings. After the Mythguide has determined that a particular vocation is available in the environment, he determines the Vocational Cluster or Clusters into which the vocation falls. Vocational Cluster is one of the elements that define expertise availability. Personas develop expertises within individual Vocational Paths.

Official and Itinerant Vocations are special cases. If a vocation is Itinerant, the Mythguide should define the nature of its Itinerancy. The Potential of the vocation's Setting may change during Background Development. Official Vocations represent offices or titles, and entail some type of Responsibility. Responsibility represents the importance and duty associated with an Official Vocation, and is based on the Setting's Prominence.

Personas are also judged by their Performance within an Official Vocation. Players can either purchase Performance with Interaction Points or attempt Performance Trials. Whichever method the player chooses, Performance should be resolved for each Official Vocation the persona develops.

EXPERTISE

Personas develop expertises according to their Vocational Path and the parameters of its Vocational Setting. There are three types of expertise - Talents, Aptitudes, and Disciplines - which are discussed further in the Expertise chapter. All expertises cost Interaction Points to purchase; refer to the Improvement Table for expertise costs.

Purchasing Vocational Setting

<i>Setting Element</i>	<i>Interaction Point Cost*</i>
Specialization	
None/Low	-2/-1 IP
Average	0 IP
High	1 IP
Very High	2 IP
Prominence	
0	0 IP
1 - 4	1 IP
5 - 7	2 IP
8 - 10	4 IP
Internal Potential	
1	-1 IP
2	0 IP
3	1 IP
4	2 IP
5	3 IP
External Potential	
1 - 2	0 IP
3	1 IP
4	2 IP
5	3 IP
Itinerant Vocation	2 IP**
Official Vocation	1 IP

** Note: Negative Interaction Point Costs indicate a bonus IP award for selecting an Underdeveloped Potential (Rank less than 5). Bonus IP add to the Interaction Point Pool and may be spent as normal IP. If Personas are being created Narratively, Prominence and Potential Ranks are assigned without IP costs or awards.*

If Windows of Opportunity are being used in the Persona Creation process, a Vocational Window may be spent to purchase a Vocational Setting with any Prominence or Potential Ranks.

*** Note: Personas who pursue Itinerant Vocations are not required to purchase External Potentials unless the Internal Potential also varies with each new Setting. In this case, treat each move as a new Setting.*



Expertise Catalog (by Category)

Talents

Awareness
 Brawl
 Dodge
 Guile
 Improvisation
 Influence
 Physical
 Physical Adaption
 Savvy
 Social Adaption

Aptitudes

Acrobatics
 Administration
 Animal Handling
 Artisan
 Artistic Expression
 Bribery
 Craft
 Diplomacy
 Disguise
 Elocution
 Favored Weapon
 Forgery
 Healing
 Intrigue
 Leadership
 Manipulation
 Meditation
 Observation
 Performance
 Riding
 Seduction
 Stealth
 Tracking
 Transport
 Unarmed Combat
 Wearing Armor
 Wilderness

Disciplines

Etiquette
 History
 Knowledge
 Language
 Lore
 Military
 Politics
 Research
 Script
 Understand Mechanism

Expertises are purchased during the persona development process. Persona development is divided into two major parts - Early Development and Background Development.

Early Development: A persona's Early Development represents the initial stage of the persona's life, and includes childhood and part of adolescence. In most societies, Early Development ends at age fourteen. However, the length of Early Development depends on the Heritage group; the Mythguide should tell the player when his persona's Early Development period ends based on any appropriate cultural and social considerations.

After the player knows how long his persona's Early Development lasts, he may begin to assign the expertises gained during the period.

Universal Expertises: Universal Expertises represent skills and abilities that all personas have to a slight degree. A persona's Universal Expertises, along with their initial Ranks, are: Native Language (5), Dodge (1), Physical (1), Influence (1), and Savvy (1). These initial Ranks are automatic and do not have to be purchased. Personas can subsequently develop these expertises further.

Inherent Expertises: Inherent Expertises represent expertises that are possessed by every member of a particular culture or Heritage group. They may have minimum Ranks associated with them. Inherent expertises are included in the Development Considerations section of the Heritage Template. If the Mythguide feels that one or two other Inherent expertises might be appropriate, he should assign them. Personas are required to purchase Inherent expertises.

Other Early Expertises: A persona may develop other expertises during Early Development as well. The persona's situation (whether family-related or otherwise) becomes the understood Vocational Setting for Early Development. The Internal and External Potentials during Early Development are both considered to be one. A persona can develop only two expertises per year - one Internal and one External. Personas are also restricted to one half the normal Interaction Point expenditure per year during Early Development; they can only spend one point on each Potential per year. Finally, a persona's Status Archetype determines the maximum expertise Ranks that can be attained during Early Development in any expertise. Refer to the appropriate table for these Ranks.

Personas can purchase Internal Expertises based on the vocation of the head of the persona's family.

Only the expertises in the appropriate Vocational Cluster are available. A persona developing on his own may find a teacher or mentor, or he may not be able to develop Internally during Early Development.

Personas purchase External expertises based on both their Status Archetype during Early Development and the Environ Class of the environment. Refer to the Vocational Expertise Development tables for lists of expertises available as a result of Environ Class and Status Archetype. Players can also buy Universal Expertises during External development.

For example, a persona born into the Privileged Archetype has an Early Development period that lasts twelve years. The player buys the persona's Universal Expertises, and the persona's Heritage Template indicates no Inherent Expertises. The persona's family lives in the city (an Urban Environ Class), and the head of the family (the persona's father) is a member of the College of Heralds. Since Early Development lasts twelve years for the persona, the player can spend a total of twelve Interaction Points on Internal development and twelve Interaction Points on External development. Also, the persona can only develop a single expertise in each Potential per year (this doesn't really matter in this case). For Internal development, the persona may develop expertises made available by the Skilled Professional Vocational Cluster (as a result of his father's vocation). For External development, the persona may develop expertises made available by the Urban Environ Class and the Privileged Status Archetype. No expertises can be raised above a Rank of three, since the persona's Status Archetype indicates the maximum Rank that may be attained during Early Development.

Early Development (Maximum Ranks)

<i>Status Archetype</i>	<i>Maximum Rank</i>
Ruling Class	4
Privileged Class	3
Professional Class	2
Labor Class	1
Marginal Class	3

The Expertises available to Personas during the years of Early Development are determined by their Status Archetype, the Environ Class of their Developmental Setting, and the Vocational Expertise of the Family Head. Persona Heritage may also make certain Expertises available for Early Development.



Background Development

Background Development begins when a persona enters his first Vocational Path. The entire period from the end of a persona's Early Development to the beginning of narrative play is termed the persona's Background Development period. Most personas spend their Background Development periods developing expertises, Traits, and Background Aspects in one or more Vocational Settings. During Background Development, a persona can travel along a succession of Vocational Paths. The player should keep careful track of how long his persona spends within each vocation, since the time spent in a vocation (along with the vocation's Potential) dictates the number of Interaction Points which can be spent on available expertises within the vocation.

The player should go through the same process for each vocation his persona develops. The Mythguide informs the player of the available vocations in the environment, and the player purchases the Vocational Setting associated with his chosen Vocational Path as well as any other special considerations (Hidden Potential, Performance for Official Vocations, etc.). The player should also note the Vocational Cluster into which the persona's vocation falls. After the parameters of the Vocational Setting are established, the player can choose expertises within the Setting based on the Potential of the Setting.

Vocational Expertise: Every vocation has an associated Vocational Expertise, which is chosen by the player. The Vocational Expertise should define the primary skill or focus of a particular vocation. The Mythguide should determine whether the chosen expertise is appropriate based on the Specialization of the environment. A Vocational Expertise is developed as the next lower category on the Improvement Table. For example, if the player chooses a Discipline as his persona's Vocational Expertise, the expertise would be developed as an Aptitude (as far as costs are concerned). Specialization can affect expertise development. Consult the Effects of Specialization table for maximum allowable Ranks based on Specialization.

Interactive Expertises: The player can now purchase his persona's Interactive Expertises based on a Setting's Internal and External Potentials. Internal development is based entirely on the expertises available within the Vocational Cluster of the persona's vocation. Refer to the Vocational Expertise table for a complete list. External development indicates the expertises available as a result of the Setting's Environ

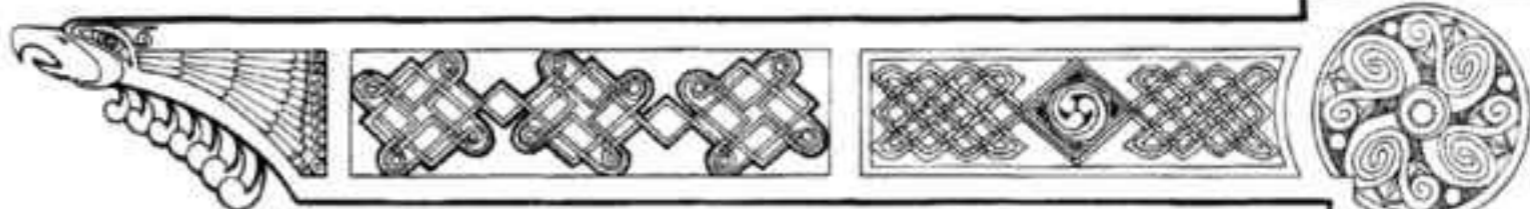
Class, the persona's Status Archetype, or an Itinerant or Official Vocational Path. Universal expertises can always be developed Externally. Players should consult the Additional Expertise Development table. Specialization can also affect the maximum allowable Ranks in certain expertises; refer to the appropriate table for guidelines.

The player can develop a number of Internal expertises each year equal to the Internal Potential of the Setting, and spend twice that number of Interaction Points on Internal development. The same development model holds true for External development. For example, a persona developing as an Itinerant mercenary who is a member of the Professional Status Archetype moves through the same area of country during most of the year. His mobile Setting has an Internal Potential of three and an External Potential of four. After choosing a Favored Weapon expertise as his Vocational Expertise, the player begins to develop the persona within his Vocational Setting.

The player already knows that the persona is going to spend seven years in the Setting. The persona can develop three Internal expertises per year and four External expertises per year. He is able to spend six Interaction Points per year on the former and eight on the latter, for a grand total of forty-two Interaction Points on Internal development and fifty-six on External development. He could open a maximum of twenty-one Internal expertises and twenty-eight External expertises (although he will probably not come anywhere close to those numbers). His Internal development consists of expertises available within the Warrior Vocational Cluster and as a result of his Itinerant Vocation. His External development consists of Universal Expertises, expertises available to the Professional Status Archetype, and expertises available in the Rural Environ Class (which represents the areas through which he normally travels). Since the persona's Background Development occurs primarily in the Rural Environ Class, Specialization may affect maximum Ranks. The player should consult the Vocational Expertise and Additional Expertise tables for lists of expertise that may be available in an environment. The Mythguide has the final say regarding expertise availability.

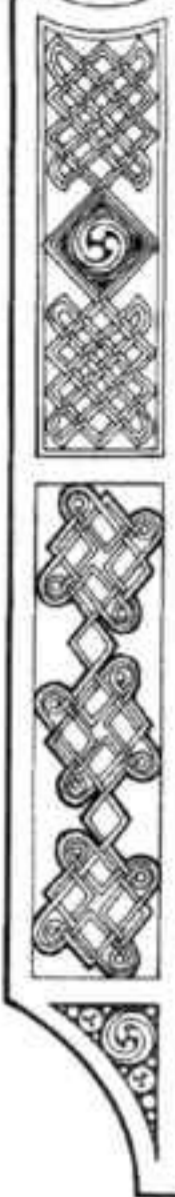
Players should refer to the Expertise chapter for more information regarding the uses of expertises during play.





Vocational Expertise Development (Internal Potential of Vocational Setting)

<i>Vocational Cluster</i>	<i>Available Expertises (Internal Development)</i>
Fringe Cluster	Awareness, Brawl, Dodge, Guile, Improvisation, Influence, Physical, Physical Adaption, Savvy, Social Adaption, Acrobatics, Animal Handling, Bribery, Craft, Disguise, Forgery, Healing, Favored Weapon, Intrigue, Leadership, Manipulation, Observation, Performance, Seduction, Stealth, Tracking, Transport, Unarmed Combat, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Military, Politics, Understand Mechanism
Unskilled Labor Cluster	Physical, Savvy, Social Adaption, Animal Handling, Craft, Healing, Observation, Manipulation, Transport, Stealth, Tracking, Wilderness, Knowledge, Lore
Warrior Cluster	Awareness, Brawl, Dodge, Influence, Physical, Physical Adaption, Acrobatics, Craft, Favored Weapon, Healing, Leadership, Observation, Riding, Unarmed Combat, Wearing Armor, Military
Artisan Cluster	Guile, Influence, Savvy, Social Adaption, Administration, Artisan, Bribery, Craft, Manipulation, Transport, Knowledge, Understand Mechanism
Merchant Cluster	Awareness, Improvisation, Influence, Savvy, Social Adaption, Administration, Bribery, Diplomacy, Elocution, Favored Weapon, Transport, Etiquette, Knowledge, Language, Script
Skilled Professional Cluster	Guile, Influence, Improvisation, Savvy, Administration, Bribery, Diplomacy, Elocution, Healing, Intrigue, Leadership, Riding, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Politics, Research, Script
Ecclesiastical Cluster	Influence, Savvy, Administration, Artistic Expression, Elocution, Forgery, Healing, Leadership, Meditation, Performance, Unarmed Combat, History, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Politics, Research, Script
Academic Cluster	Influence, Savvy, Administration, Artistic Expression, Diplomacy, Elocution, Forgery, Intrigue, Leadership, Meditation, Performance, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Military, Politics, Research, Script, Understand Mechanism
Bureaucratic Cluster	Guile, Influence, Savvy, Social Adaption, Administration, Bribery, Diplomacy, Elocution, Forgery, Intrigue, Leadership, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Politics, Research, Script
Arcane Cluster	Awareness, Guile, Influence, Savvy, Animal Handling, Artisan, Artistic Expression, Diplomacy, Disguise, Elocution, Healing, Intrigue, Leadership, Manipulation, Meditation, Observation, Performance, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Research, Script
Political Cluster	Awareness, Guile, Improvisation, Influence, Savvy, Social Adaption, Administration, Bribery, Diplomacy, Disguise, Elocution, Intrigue, Leadership, Observation, Seduction, Stealth, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Military, Politics, Script
Arts Cluster	Improvisation, Savvy, Social Adaption, Acrobatics, Animal Handling, Artistic Expression, Disguise, Elocution, Forgery, Intrigue, Manipulation, Meditation, Observation, Performance, Seduction, Etiquette, Knowledge, Language, Research, Script



Additional Expertise Development (cont. Internal and External Potentials)

Special Vocations

Additional Expertises (Internal/External Development)

Official Vocations

Influence, Savvy, Administration, Bribery, Leadership, Knowledge, Politics

Itinerant Vocations

Animal Handling, Craft (travel-oriented), Favored Weapon, Riding, Transport, Wearing Armor, Wilderness, Knowledge (travel-oriented), Lore (travel-oriented)

Persona Status Archetype

Available Expertises (External Development)

Ruling Archetype

Administration, Artistic Expression, Diplomacy, Elocution, Favored Weapon, Intrigue, Leadership, Performance, Riding, Seduction, Unarmed Combat, Wearing Armor, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Military, Politics, Script

Privileged Archetype

Administration, Artistic Expression, Diplomacy, Elocution, Favored Weapon, Intrigue, Leadership, Performance, Riding, Unarmed Combat, Wearing Armor, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Politics, Script

Professional Archetype

Diplomacy, Elocution, Favored Weapon, Forgery, Intrigue, Riding, Wearing Armor, Etiquette, Knowledge, Language, Politics, Script

Labor Archetype

Craft, Favored Weapon, Intrigue, Manipulation, Wearing Armor, Knowledge, Lore

Marginal Archetype

Acrobatics, Artistic Expression, Bribery, Disguise, Favored Weapon, Forgery, Intrigue, Manipulation, Seduction, Stealth, Unarmed Combat, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Politics, Research

***Environ Class
(Vocational Setting)***

Available Expertises (External Development)

Urban

Craft, Seduction, Transport, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language (Native)

Semi-Urban

Craft, Transport, History, Knowledge, Language (Native)

Rural

Animal Handling, Artisan, Craft, Healing, Riding, Tracking, Transport, Wilderness, History (Local), Knowledge, Language (Native), Lore

Wilderness

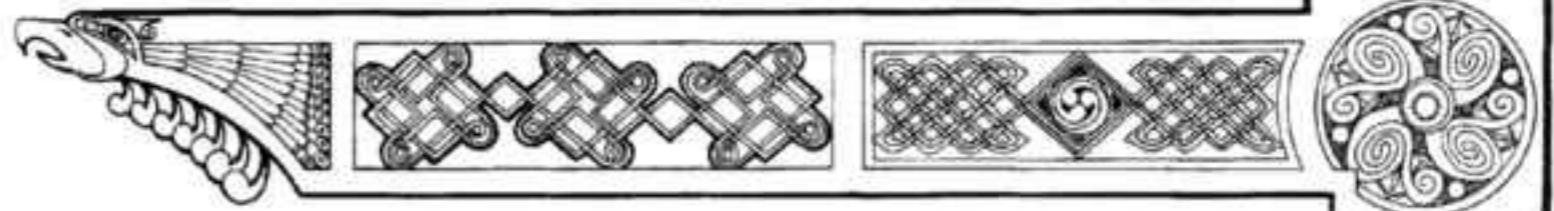
Animal Handling, Artisan, Craft, Healing, Manipulation, Riding, Stealth, Tracking, Transport, Wilderness, Knowledge, Language (Native), Lore

Universal Development

Available Expertises (External Development)

Universal (All Personas)

All Talents (Awareness, Brawl, Dodge, Guile, Improvisation, Influence, Physical, Physical Adaption, Savvy, Social Adaption), Language (Native), History (Local), Healing



Step Six Background Aspects

Background Aspects describe interesting and colorful social, material, physical, mental, psychological, and spiritual traits. They represent those facets of life and personality which truly define a persona as an individual. Personas are either born with a Background Aspect (in which case it becomes an Initial Aspect) or they develop it during Early or Background Development (such Aspects are called Developmental Aspects). The nature of a particular Background Aspect (Initial or Developmental) does not affect its purchase. Rather, an Aspect's nature should be used to flesh out a persona's background and history. The player should detail the acquisition and development of each of a persona's Background Aspects.

A player chooses those Background Aspects that he feels best complement his persona's Concept. Background Aspects can relate to a persona's vocational development, to his family relationships, or to his own personality. Aspects are described by Ranks from one to ten, ranging from least to most powerful. They are also classified as Favorable or Unfavorable; Favorable Aspects benefit the persona in some manner, while Unfavorable Aspects hinder him. The player uses Interaction Points to purchase Favorable Background Aspect Ranks, while choosing Unfavorable Aspects give personas an Interaction Point award. Refer to the Purchasing Background Aspects table for both costs and awards. The Mythguide describes what individual Ranks represent according to the environment being used.

Background Aspects can also be chosen as Heritage or Kinship Aspects. Heritage Templates contain several sections which describe any Inherent or Recommended Background Aspects for a particular Heritage group. Players are required to take Inherent Aspects, although the Interaction Point costs and awards for such Aspects are halved. Some Inherent Aspects may carry minimum Ranks with them. Recommended Aspects are just that - suggestions. Players should seriously consider purchasing at least one Recommended Aspect, but they are not required to do so.

At the option of the Mythguide, a player may choose one or more Kinship-related Background Aspects at half cost as well. Such Aspects are considered Inherited Aspects, and they must be based on a similar Aspect possessed by the persona's father or mother. Inherited Aspects are often based on Family Background Aspects. Additional Inherited Aspects are normally the result of above average Estrangement or Sibling Rank.

Sample Background Aspects

Material Aspects

(Favorable)	(Unfavorable)
Collection	Debt
Heirloom	Dependent
Holdings	Obligation
Savings	Poor Credit

Social Aspects

(Favorable)	(Unfavorable)
Ally	Adversary
Famous Ancestor	Disgraced
Marriage	Hunted
Sponsor	Secret

Psychological Aspects

(Favorable)	(Unfavorable)
Acceptance	Delusions
Born Leader	Fixation
Psychosomatic Resistance	Insanity
Trauma Resistance	Repulsion

Physical Aspects

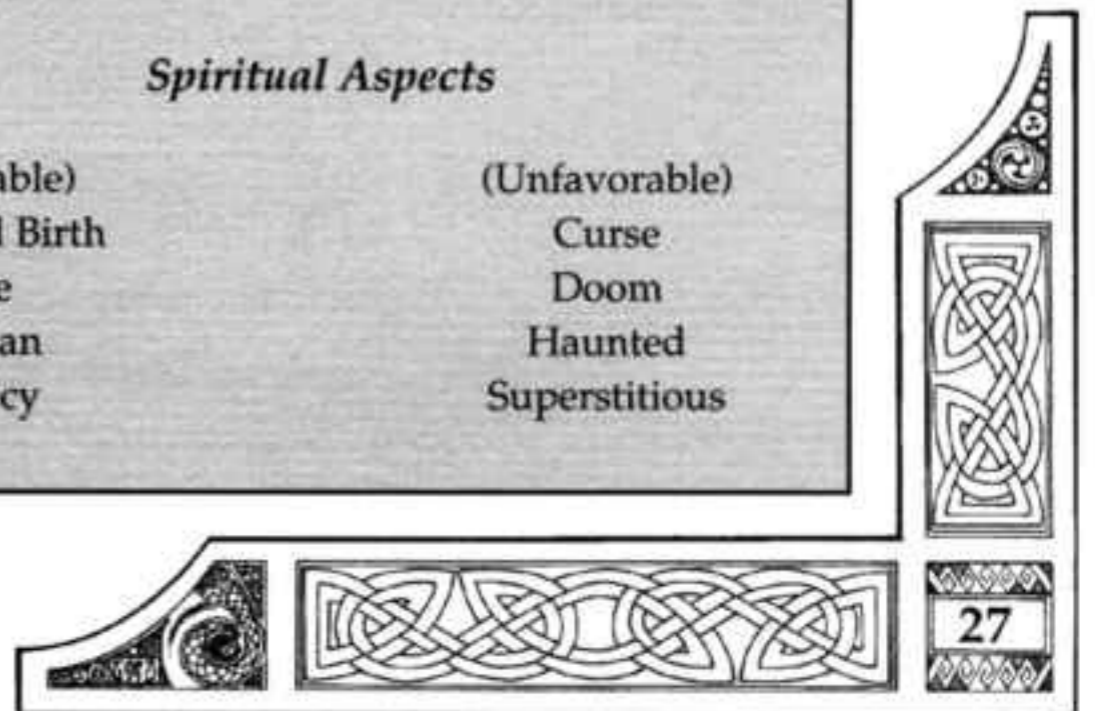
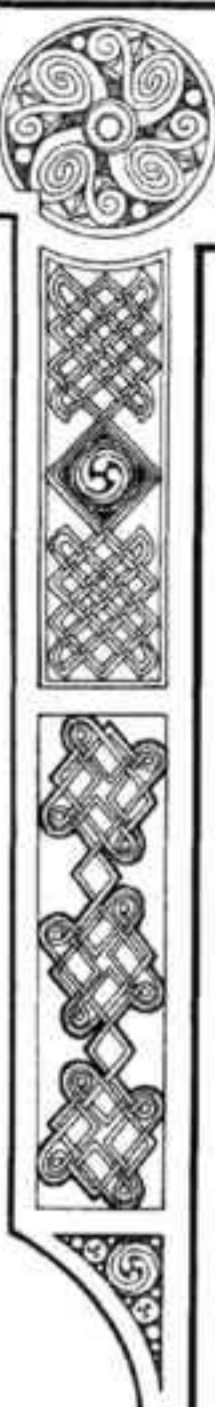
(Favorable)	(Unfavorable)
Ages Well	Ages Poorly
Ambidexterity	Allergy
Ferocity	Disease
Melodious Voice	Mute

Mental Aspects

(Favorable)	(Unfavorable)
Affinity	Low Confidence
Fast Learner	Poor Memory
Ingenuity	Short Attention
Sense of Time	Low Pain

Spiritual Aspects

(Favorable)	(Unfavorable)
Blessed Birth	Curse
Fortune	Doom
Guardian	Haunted
Prophecy	Superstitious





The player should describe the circumstances surrounding each of his Background Aspects, relating these circumstances to his persona's history. How did any Initial Aspects affect the persona's upbringing and family relationships? How and when did the persona acquire his Developmental Aspects? Were they acquired all at once, or were they developed incrementally over the course of the persona's Background Development? For example, if a persona has a Sponsor, what sequence of events created the relationship? What position does the Sponsor hold in the environment? In the persona's Heritage group? How powerful is the Sponsor? By providing interesting and detailed answers to such questions for each Background Aspect, the player defines a rich and fully realized history for the persona. Every persona becomes an individual, and no two Background Development periods are alike.

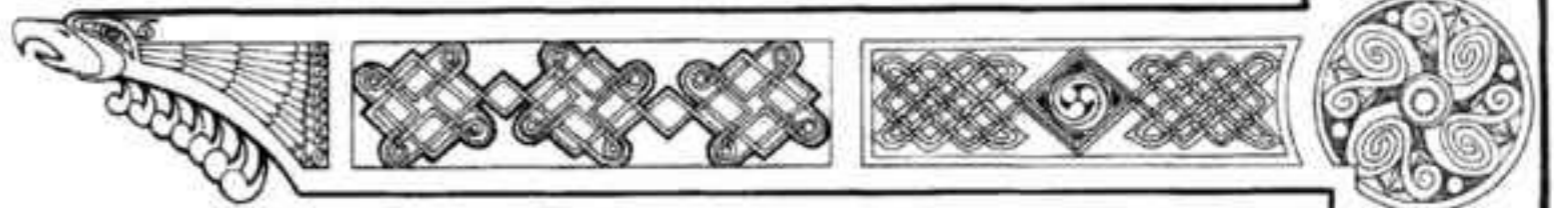


Step Seven TRAITS

Traits are elements that affect a persona's ability to interact with the environment. They serve to further define a persona's personality and influence in society. Some Traits are possessed at the outset of play while others must be developed during play. The player should detail a persona's Traits based on the Persona Concept. Consult the Traits chapter for more information.

Charisma: A persona's Charisma is found by averaging Intuition, Willpower, and Presence. Charisma represents a natural ability to lead, and indicates an inherent magnetism. Charisma affects many social interactions and Influence Trials. It also serves as the Primary Element of many social expertises.

Faith: Faith measures the strength of a persona's beliefs, and is described by one or more specific Aspects. Faith Aspects define the nature of a persona's Faith, and should be assigned by the player. A persona can have Faith in a being, a deity, a philosophy, or an ideal.



Faith is initially purchased like a Discipline, but the Trait can rise and fall during play. In some environments, Faith is also an important consideration when manipulating Reality. It can affect a persona's ability to gain access to Omnescence (magical power).

Insight: The uses of Insight depend on an environment's Reality. This Trait can be very important in magic-rich settings, while its uses in more realistic settings are often limited. Insight represents a persona's knowledge and fundamental understanding of an environment's Reality, and aids a persona when using Omnescence.

Insight is purchased according to the same costs as additional Renown; refer to the Developing Renown table for costs. For example, it would cost a persona 25 Interaction Points to develop an Insight of ten. Insight can be further developed during play.

Social Traits: Every persona can also develop several Social Traits. Social Traits include a persona's Influence Pools and Leverage Pools (Cultural, Social, Political, and Diplomatic Leverage). Personas normally begin play with zero points in all of their Social Trait Pools. However, unique circumstances or Background Aspects (such as Social Creditor or Valuable Information) can give a persona one or more initial points in a Pool at the Mythguide's discretion. Refer to the Aspect descriptions for more information. If such an award exists, the Mythguide should detail its source and nature. Remember that every Pool must have an Object as well.

Renown

Renown affects how others view a persona and how they interact with him socially. Specific areas of Renown (defined By Aspects and Origins) are called reputations; most personas have some kind of reputation, whether localized or expansive. All Renown is broken down into two categories - Limited and Expansive. Limited Renown indicates a reputation within a certain element of society. For example, a persona might be known only within a certain Status Archetype or within a specific vocation. Expansive Renown indicates a reputation that is recognized by all strata of society. Such a persona is recognized by everyone. When developing any type of Renown, the player should state whether the new reputation is Limited or Expansive. Specialized deeds or action within a specific group (Heritage, vocation, etc.) often yield Limited Renown, while heroic actions performed on

Developing Renown

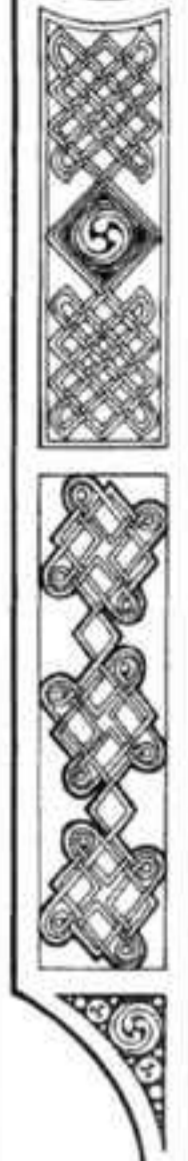
<i>Innate Renown*</i>	<i>Renown Value</i>
Base Renown	Family Renown
Sibling Rank	
Inheritor	-1
Penultimate	-2
Non-Inheritor	-4
Estrangement	
Favorite	+0
Good	+0
Average	-1
Poor	-2
Blacksheep	-5
Family Background Aspect	+ 1 per 3 Ranks

Purchasing Renown

<i>Background**</i>	<i>Renown Value</i>
Vocational Prominence	
1 - 2	0
3 - 5	1 per 3 years
7 - 9	1 per 2 years
10	1 per year
Background Aspect	1/3 Aspect Rank
Official Vocation	
Poor Performance	1 per 2 years
Impressive Performance	1 per 3 years
Exceptional Performance	1 per 2 years

<i>Renown Value</i>	<i>IP Cost</i>
1	1 IP
2	2 IP
3	4 IP
4	6 IP
5	8 IP
6	11 IP
7	14 IP
8	17 IP
9	21 IP
10	25 IP

**** Note:** Background Renown is Free. Vocational Renown is based on the years of practice and is Limited to other practitioners of the Vocation within the Renown Range. Vocational Renown is Favorable. Background Aspects only give Renown if Aspect is publically known. It is Favorable or Unfavorable according to the Aspect. Official Vocations give Renown based on Prominence and years of service. Renown is Favorable or Unfavorable by Performance.



Renown Description

<i>Renown Value</i>	<i>Scope of Renown (Range)*</i>
1	Origin
2	Small settlement/Village
3	Town
4	Small City
5	City
6	Region
7	Adjacent Regions/Province
8	Country/Nation
9	Neighboring Countries/Nations
10	World-wide

* Note: The scope of Renown centers around the point where a reputation originates (the Origin of Renown). Expansive Renown indicates that a reputation is common knowledge among a healthy cross-section of the populace (living or working within the Scope). Limited Renown indicates that a reputation is known only among certain groups within the scope.

Reputations having Limited Renown should be described in terms of the groups that acknowledge them. Such groups might represent Status Archetypes, Heritage groups, Religious or Magical orders, or environmentally specific factions.

Sample groups for describing Limited Renown

Status Archetypes - Members of Ruling, Privileged, Professional, Labor, or Marginal classes within scope

Heritage Groups - Members belonging to a specific non-dominant Species, Race, or Culture within scope

Vocational Clusters - Members of a particular vocational field who work within scope

Organizations/Orders - Members of particular political, religious, magical, or vocational group within scope (ex. guilds, factions, families, Omnis, religions)

Social Affiliations - Members of specific social groups which represent diverse interests and/or backgrounds (ex. Tavern regulars, Art patrons, Brothel patrons, duelists, wine afficianados, gamblers, travelers, etc.)

behalf of an entire society (and witnessed by many) often yield Expansive Renown.

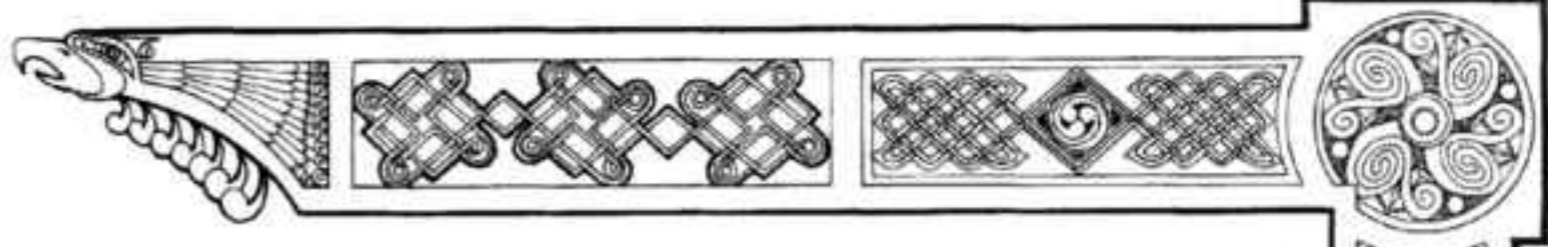
Innate Renown: All personas have Innate Renown to some degree. Innate Renown is based on Family Renown, and is modified by the persona's Estrangement and Sibling Rank. Family Background Aspects can also affect Innate Renown. Refer to the Developing Renown table for additional modifiers. The player should determine the value, Origin, and Aspects of his persona's Innate Renown based on Family Concept and other kinship considerations.

Persona Renown: The Mythguide may also allow a persona to develop additional reputations during the Background Development period. A persona can have a publicly known Background Aspect that could yield Renown. Renown awards based on Background Aspects can be up to one third of the Aspect's Rank. Renown can also be gained by spending a certain amount of time in Vocational Settings with high Prominence values. Refer to the Developing Renown table for exact awards. If the persona is developing within an Official Vocational Path, Renown is gained from exceptionally good or poor Performance.

At the Mythguide's option, Renown can be a result of simple narrative description. The player describes a specific event or action that occurred during his persona's Background Development and the Mythguide awards Renown based on the nature and importance of the event. Finally, Renown can be purchased with Interaction Points during Background Development. The Mythguide may disallow this method of Renown development, so he should tell the players if it is permitted before persona Creation begins. If it is allowed, consult the Developing Renown table for Interaction Point costs.

Every reputation is described by an Origin and an Aspect. The Origin is the location where the reputation originated, and from which it spreads. Renown Aspects describe the specifics of an individual reputation. The Sample Renown Aspects table contains a number of suggestions. When a persona develops Renown, the player should define the Origin and Aspects associated with each reputation.

Esteem: Esteem indicates Renown in an area that a society or Heritage group elevates as a social Ideal. Renown Aspects in areas of Esteem are always considered favorable, and Esteem gives a persona more social influence than a corresponding amount of Renown. The Mythguide should inform the player if any of his persona's initial areas of Renown qualify as Esteem in the environment. If they do, the Mythguide



should describe any unique or additional effects of Esteem in the Narrative Environment.

PERSONALITY

All personas are individuals, defined by unique motivations and personality elements. Personality Traits attempt to describe these elements in game terms. These Traits range from one to ten. Ranks one through five indicate normal Personality Traits. Refer to the Sample Personality Traits table in the Traits chapter for a list of sample Traits. Ranks six and seven indicate a Motivation. Motivations are more prevalent Traits, and tend to play a larger role in a persona's psyche than a normal Trait. Ranks eight and nine represent Passions, which are very strong feelings and orientations. Passions can be difficult to resist, and may require Personality Trials to do so. A Rank ten in a Trait indicates an Obsession. The persona is consumed by the Object of the Trait and can think of little else. Obsessions can be difficult to roleplay.

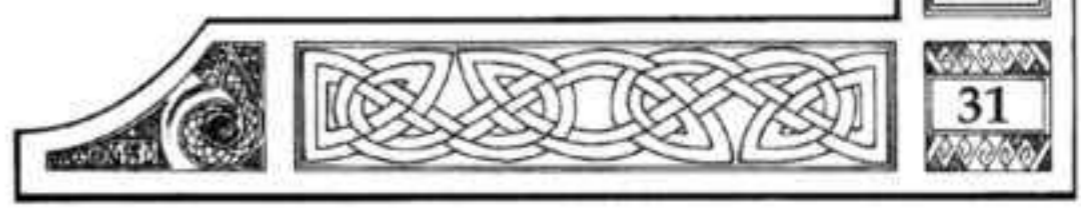
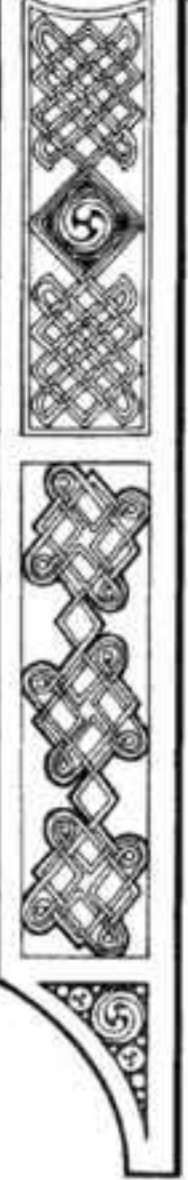
A player should choose those Personality Traits that he feels will best complement his persona's Concept. There is no limit on the number of Traits that may be taken, just as there is no cost to purchase Traits (any Trait can be taken at any Rank). However, the Mythguide should make sure the player knows that any Traits chosen must be roleplayed properly. Personality Traits that are not roleplayed properly may cause Myth Point penalties at the end of a narrative (see Mythmaking chapter). As a general rule, the player may want to limit himself to no more than two Motivations or Passions, and no more than one Obsession. Any more high-Ranking Traits may turn the persona into a caricature, making him unwieldy to roleplay effectively. Several low-level Traits can usually be comfortably roleplayed.

Several other elements must be considered when choosing Personality Traits. Some low-level Traits, and all Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions, have Objects. An Object is the person, group, or thing at which a particular Trait is directed. For example, a persona could have a Motivation of Accepting with an Object of Other Status Archetypes. A Passion of Avaricious could have an Object of Political Power. When a player chooses a Personality Trait that requires an Object, he must choose the Object at the same time.

Finally, all Personality Traits are classified as Apparent, Suppressed, or Concealed. Apparent Traits are obvious, manifesting in many of a persona's actions. Acquaintances will always recognize a persona's Apparent Traits. Suppressed Traits do not manifest themselves often, since the persona Suppresses them (con-

Sample Personality Traits

Optimistic	Pessimistic
Idealistic	Realist/Skeptic
Moral	Amoral
Ethical	Corrupt
Pious	Heathenistic
Hedonistic	Ascetic
Loving	Hateful
Chaste	Lustful
Genuine/Sincere	Conniving/Insincere
Patient	Rash
Charitable/Generous	Craven/Avaricious
Forgiving	Blameful
Compassionate	Callous
Devout	Self-Indulgent
Courageous	Cowardly
Voluntaristic	Self-serving
Sophisticated/Refined	Vulgar/Lewd
Self-righteous	Shameful
Modest	Proud
Supertitious	Cynical
Trusting	Suspicious
Confident	Insecure
Miserly	Squandrous
Wise	Sophomoric
Calm	Irrascible
Curious	Jaded
Hyper-active	Depressed
Garrulous	Quiet
Simple/Superficial	Contemplative/Deep
Tactful	Insulting
Remorseful	Insouciant
Just	Partisan
Loyal	Treacherous
Humerous	Wry/Sour
Outgoing/Extroverted	Reserved/Introspective
Gregarious	Misanthropic
Sadistic	Masochistic
Honorable	Unscrupulous
Dutiful	Rebellious
Ambivalent	Envious
Kind	Caustic
Industrious	Lazy/Idle
Ingenious/Inventive	Unimaginative
Spontaneous	Procrastinating
Individualistic	Conformistic
Traditional	Iconoclastic
Practical	Excessive
Constructive	Destructive
Extravagant	Conservative
Stubborn	Compromising
Fanatical	Indecisive



sciously or unconsciously). Depending on the Rank of the Trait, it might be very difficult to keep a Trait Suppressed. A failed Personality Trial can give a Trait away. Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions can never be Suppressed. Concealed Traits are those aspects of a persona's personality which the persona recognizes, but which he has decided to keep hidden for one reason or another. In stressful situations, a Personality Trial might be necessary to resist the manifestation of a Concealed Trait. When choosing Personality Traits, the player must always declare whether a particular Trait is Apparent, Suppressed, or Concealed.

Step Eight Equipment

The player should determine his persona's starting equipment based on Status Archetype, Inheritance, and any relevant Background Aspects. Unless unique Aspects are chosen, a persona is considered to have average equipment for his Status Archetype. The Mythguide should determine what such items represent in the environment being used. For example, the son of a wealthy baron might have several horses, a decent suit of mail, a finely crafted sword, and a country estate, while the son of a poor stonecrafter might have only the tools of his Itinerant trade, a cheap ax, and the clothes on his back. A persona who has Inherited during Background Development might be in a slightly better situation.

Background Aspects that can have a favorable effect on initial equipment include Collection, Extensive Resources, Favorable Inheritance, Heirloom, and Holdings. The Unfavorable Inheritance and Uniquely Equipped Aspects can have negative effects. Personas should always be able to have basic personal items, clothing, and the tools associated with their vocation. The player should detail the gear normally carried by the persona. Any special gear or stored gear should be described. For example, the young baron in the previous example might have several other fine weapons in storage at his estate. However, he would not have access to these during the course of a narrative unless the player had mentioned their presence.

Starting Wealth: A persona has an average amount of beginning wealth. Such wealth is also based on Status Archetype, and the Mythguide must determine what constitutes 'average' for the environment. This is considered to be wealth on hand. If the player wishes his persona to have a better or worse financial situation at the outset of play, he should purchase appropriate Background Aspects. Creditor, Savings, Holdings, and Unique Income can all give a persona

extra personal wealth. Debt, Obligation, and Dependent can all create poor financial situations for a persona.

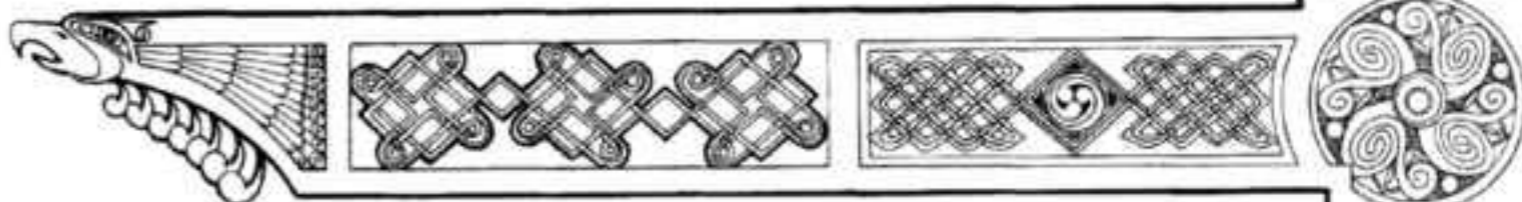
Step Nine History

Last but not least, the player details his persona's History. A good History draws on all of the other Steps of the Creation process and weaves the resulting values and events into a coherent and interesting background for the persona. Where was the persona born? How did the persona develop his relationship with his family? Where did the persona's Passion for Vengeance come from? How did the persona acquire his Developmental Background Aspects? How did he develop his unusual Renown? A persona's History fills in the gaps and provides additional color and detail to the rest of the Creation process.

The player should describe the persona's Early Development and family relationships. He should follow the persona through the Background Development period, describing development within each Vocational Setting. Where did the persona learn his expertises? Who were the persona's early masters? Finally, the player should bring the persona to the current point in the Canticle. Is the persona traveling by himself? Is the persona going to start play while still employed in a vocation? Has the persona left home to seek his fortune in the world? The player should also describe any random mannerisms or personality quirks that further separate the persona from the norm, as well as how these oddities came about. For example, the persona might have a nervous habit of constantly oiling his sword, or the persona might refuse food before midday. Such little enhancements put the finishing touches on an already rich and fully realized individual. The persona is now ready to enter the Canticle.

☪ Sample Personas ☪

In order to facilitate Persona Creation, the following section provides one fully designed Persona and 10 sample Persona Concepts. All sample Personas represent one of three settings -- The City-State of Amilanth, the Kingdom of Imberwyn, and Firnost Heath. The "Northman of Firnost Heath" Heritage Template is provided at the end of the Heritage Chapter, while both Amilanth and Imberwyn are detailed in Appendix A.



Tuszarenne of Baso-Lournye

Tuszarenne is being created using the Interactive determination system, with an Average Interaction Point allotment (7 IP per year) and three Windows of Opportunity (1 of each type). Since the Mythguide's Narrative is set in the City-State of Amilanth, all persona development presumably occurs within the City. Personas therefore enjoy Amilani-Temreloni Heritage and an Urban Creation Environment (Very High Specialization) at no cost.

Step One: Persona Concept

Tuszarenne was orphaned near the Amilani city of Baso-Lournye, located in the southern coastal basin. Her mother was a devout gentlewoman, and upon her death all of her holdings were donated to the Temple of Ärtée in Amilanth City. One of her mother's consorts (probably Tuszarenne's biological father) brought Tuszarenne to the Mission of Equariel, a religious Order dedicated to the teachings of Ärtée, where he commended her into the care of the Initiates of the Diamond. The Initiates raised Tuszarenne among the other orphans, serving as her family and teachers through her Early Development.

Tuszarenne excelled under their tutelage, and entered the Diamond Order of Equariel upon her fourteenth birthday. There she became a Sentinel of the Tetrasteuch, a holy janissary sworn to serve the four Precepts of the Tetrasteuch - God, Law, Order, and Logic. After six years of service, she became Sergeant of the Curtain, an honorific position bestowed by the Priestesses of Equariel. Two years of active duty opened the doors to the Temple Academy where Tuszarenne studied the law of Ärtée. In two more years Tuszarenne completed her study to become an Acolyte-Inquisitor of the Tetrasteuch. This ecclesiastical office, complemented by her military training, enabled her to serve Sobrinia of Armath, Inquisitor-Superior of the Diamond Order. Tuszarenne spent one year serving Sobrinia before entering Narrative play at age 25.



Step 2: Heritage

Amilani-Temreloni descent implies cultural traditions specific to the City-State of Amilanth and racial Heritage shared by the majority of humans living upon the Cape of Sivray in the southern portion of the continent Temrelon.

Aside from their Racial physical characteristics and distinctive cultural heritage, the folk of Amilanth display traits and features which are common to the human species. There are no inherent traits or features that Tuszarenne is required to purchase due to Heritage (see Appendix A: The City-State of Amilanth for a description of the Amilani Heritage Template). Tuszarenne *Selects* her values from those common to Amilani heritage.

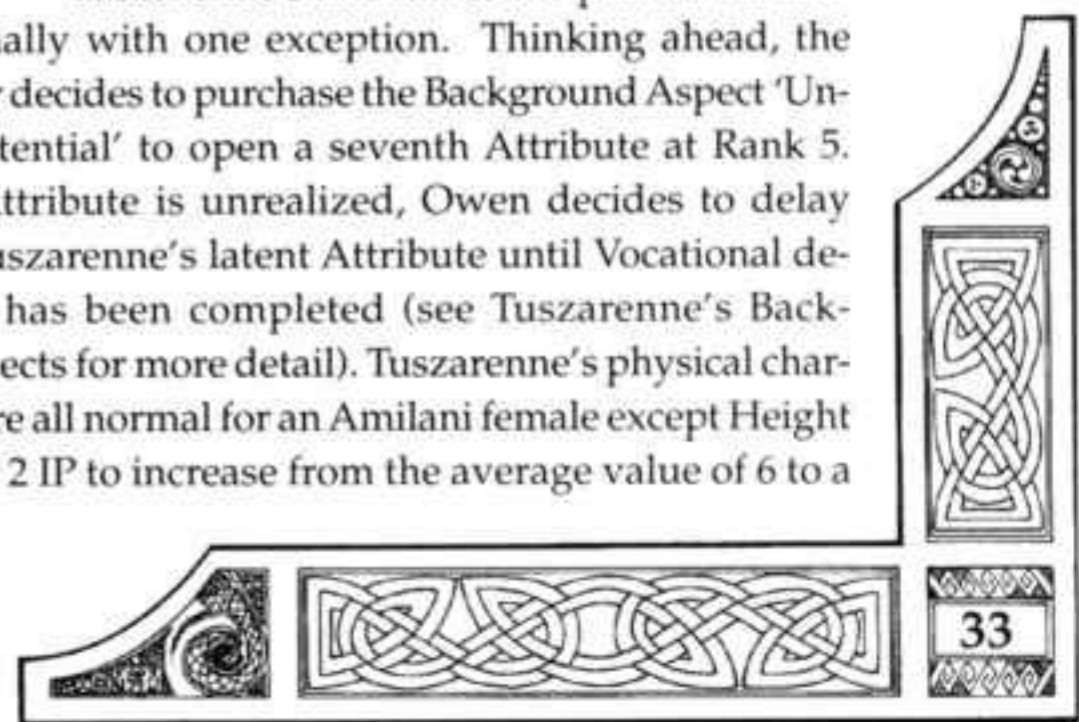
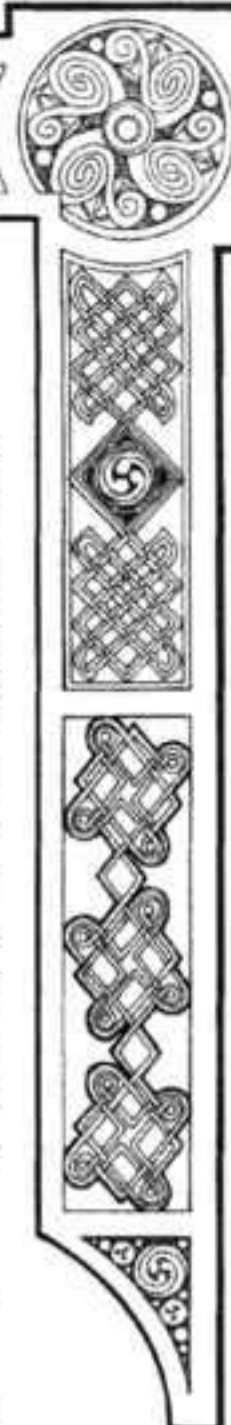
Step 3: Kinship

Though Tuszarenne is an orphan, her persona concept depicts her 'Family' to be the Initiates of the Diamond who administer the orphanage at the Mission of Equariel, which adjoins the vast Temple-complex of Ärtée. Because her Family relationship dictates many of her developmental opportunities, Tuszarenne pays the relevant costs for being a member of this surrogate family.

Tuszarenne's Initial Persona Estate is Professional and the Mythguide assigns her an initial Status Level of 8 for being a Sentinel of the Diamond Order. Over the course of her development, her Status Level increases to 12, which costs her 8 IP on the basis of Rigidity of Status (5 for women) in Amilanth.

Step 4: Characteristics

Tuszarenne's Attributes are purchased normally with one exception. Thinking ahead, the player decides to purchase the Background Aspect 'Unrealized Potential' to open a seventh Attribute at Rank 5. Since the Attribute is unrealized, Owen decides to delay choosing Tuszarenne's latent Attribute until Vocational development has been completed (see Tuszarenne's Background Aspects for more detail). Tuszarenne's physical characteristics are all normal for an Amilani female except Height which costs 2 IP to increase from the average value of 6 to a



value of 7 (5'9"). Tuszarenne's appearance also falls within the Amilani-Temreloni racial norms. Except for the black Diamond tattoo of her Order, her appearance is normal.

Step 5: Vocation & Expertise Development

Tuszarenne's vocational development occurs entirely within the vast branches of Amilanth's oldest religious institution — the Temple-complex of Artée. Because all development centers around religion, expertises falling within the Ecclesiastical Cluster are always available *Externally*. The Environ Class for all of her Vocational Settings is Urban (Located in the Temple complex), and the Specialization class is Very High. These facets of purchasing a Vocational Setting are free (stipulated from onset by Mythguide).

Early Development

Tuszarenne's Early Development occurs within the Mission of Equariel precinct and lasts 14 years. Internal Expertise development is derived from the Ecclesiastical Cluster. External development possibilities include expertises falling within the Innate Cluster, the Professional Archetype (most of the attendants are Professionals), and the Urban environment.

Vocational Path I

Tuszarenne's first Vocational Path consists of religious study and military training within the 'Curtained' precinct of the Diamond Order. The Vocational Setting has a Prominence of 8, an Internal Potential of 5, and an External Potential of 4 (Sentinels have strict curfews and must live within the Order's dormitories). Internally available expertises are found within the Warrior Cluster, while externally available expertises include those within the Ecclesiastical Cluster, the Professional Archetype, the Universal Cluster, and the Urban Environ Class. Tuszarenne spends a total of 8 years in this setting, receiving the Honorific title "Sergeant of the Curtain" after 6 years (Status increases 2 Levels). Entrance into this setting costs 9 IP.

Vocational Path II

Tuszarenne's second Vocational Path involves consecration into the clerical hierarchy of Artée and admission to the Temple academy where she engages in legal studies and further religious devotions. This setting has a Prominence of 7, an Internal Potential of 5, and an External Potential of 5. Internally available expertises are those within the Academic Cluster, while externally available expertises include those within the Ecclesiastical Cluster, the Privileged Archetype, the Universal Cluster, and the Urban Environ Class. Tuszarenne spends 2 years in the Academy, graduating with a legal degree and ecclesiastical title "Acolyte-Inquisitor of the Tetratch". The Vocational Setting costs 8 IP.

Vocational Path III

Tuszarenne's final Vocational Path occurs within the Temple bureaucracy where she serves the Inquisitor-Superior in pursuing legal transgressions occurring within the church hierarchy. This is an Official path. Because her jurisdiction only includes the City Temple and its regional satellites, the Prominence of her official Setting is 4. The potential to learn Internally is 5 (because the Inquisitor-Superior is fond of Tuszarenne), while the external potential of Amilanth City merits a 5. Internal Expertise development occurs within the Official and Bureaucratic Cluster while External development is the same as Setting II. Her final setting would cost 8 IP to enter, but Tuszarenne also purchases an Exceptional Official Performance (for a total of 10 IP) for the year. Tuszarenne purchases this setting (complete with its perks) with her Vocational Window of Opportunity.

Expertises

Tuszarenne purchases her Expertises in stages according to her procession through Early and Background Development. See Tuszarenne's Persona Record for a complete listing of the Skills and Ranks acquired throughout her development.

Step 6: Background Aspects

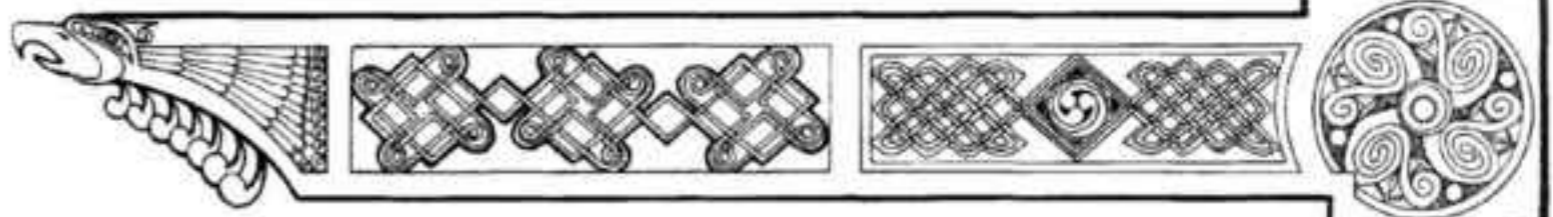
Through the course of her development, Tuszarenne acquires 5 Background Aspects, two of which are Unfavorable Aspects.

Favorable Aspects

Unrealized Potential - Resulting from her unique combination of Attributes, Environment, and Personality, Tuszarenne possesses an Unrealized Potential in a seventh Attribute (Presence). Her confidence and ability increasing with maturity, Tuszarenne is becoming aware of her latent social presence. She purchases this Aspect with her Situational Window of Opportunity and assigns it a rank of 10.

Honored - During her tenure as Sentinel of the Diamond Order, Tuszarenne was honored with the title 'Sergeant of the Curtain' for demonstrating extraordinary devotion and promise to the Order of the Diamond. Because this honor is recognized primarily within the order (and she has already paid the 4 IP for increasing Status Level) this Aspect costs 2 IP. She is Honored at rank 2.

Protector - All veteran knights of the Diamond Order enjoy the ongoing Protection afforded by the Order's bonds of loyalty and honor. Because Tuszarenne maintains her obligations as Sergeant of the Curtain, she enjoys additional protection (in the form of asylum, military assistance, or material aid) whenever the need arises. The degree of protection is measured by the rank (Protector 5) and the fre-



quency of soliciting aid. So far Tuszarenne has not needed to call upon her fellow Sentinels for aid.

Unfavorable Aspects

Social Debt - While Sentinels of the Diamond enjoy the Protection of the Order, they are similarly obligated to assist their fellows or the Order itself whenever the call is issued. Failure to come when summoned results in admonishments ranging from social resentment to loss of rank and ostracism depending upon the urgency of the situation. Tuszarenne receives 4 IP for assuming this debt at the customary rank of 4.

Adversary - Proceeding from her Academy days, Tuszarenne unknowingly incensed Cabella Uoreste, Tetracaste Prioress of the Temple. Cabella resented Tuszarenne for her unswerving faith and military posture. "Arrogant" and "self-righteous" were words frequently uttered by the venomous Prioress when she spoke of Tuszarenne to her superiors. Tuszarenne was ignorant of Cabella's feelings, but learned them during her first year acting as Acolyte-Inquisitor. During this time, Tuszarenne was called upon to investigate the financial records of the Healing ward in the Priory of Ärtée. Administration of the ward being one of Cabella's clerical duties, she was outraged to discover that Tuszarenne was heading the internal audit. Though she herself was not implicated in the internal corruption, Cabella attacked Tuszarenne through the bureaucratic channels of the Temple. Sobrinia the Inquisitor-Superior intervened, humiliating Cabella in the process. Of course this only increased the Prioress's hostility toward Tuszarenne. This adversarial relationship with Cabella is defined as rank 6 because of Cabella's authority and her degree of open hostility.

STEP 7: TRAITS

All of Tuszarenne's Social Traits are derived normally. Only Faith and Renown merit notation here. See the Tuszarenne's Persona Record for other details.

Because of her family background, Tuszarenne developed extraordinary Faith in the religion of Ärtée at an early age. Since that time her Faith has increased to legendary status within the Temple. Tuszarenne expends her final window (Developmental) to purchase Faith at rank 10. Though she does not employ her Faith for magical ends, Tuszarenne gains 3 points of additional Limited Renown for her unswerving Faith.

Tuszarenne has made quite a reputation for herself among devotees of Ärtée. Though her family situation only gives her 1 point of Innate Renown, she acquires 4 more points of Limited Renown for her service within the Diamond Order, and another 3 points from her devout Faith. With a Limited Renown (rank 8) for her unswerving Devo-

tion, Tuszarenne's name arises whenever someone in the know discusses the current affairs of the Diamond Order of Equariel. While her Renown is considered Favorable, its degree causes much resentment among those who feel unappreciated within the clergy.

Personality

Tuszarenne has two primary Personality Traits. Her Apparent Trait results from the common misunderstanding of her stronger Suppressed Passion.

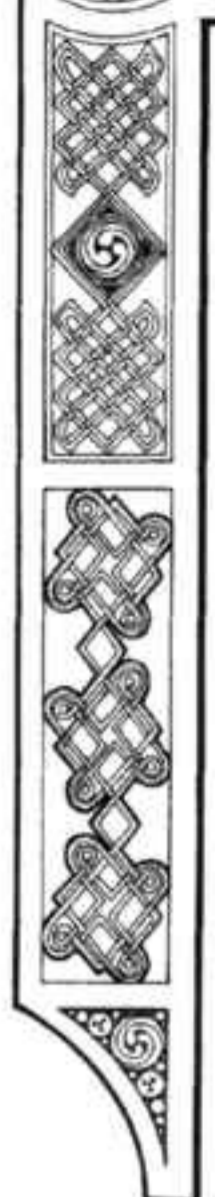
Tuszarenne appears arrogant or self-righteous to those who misinterpret her tranquil sense of purpose. Her persecutors accuse her of sinful Pride, which disrupts the inner balance of the Tetracaste hierarchy of duty (God, Law, Order, Logic). Within the Tetracaste, Pride is numbered as one of the greater sins.

For Tuszarenne, no accusations could be farther from the mark. Tuszarenne suppresses a Passionate Ambivalence which results from her faith in Ärtée's Justice and the natural and social Order of life. While Tuszarenne attempts to be compassionate within the bounds of duty, her inner nature becomes apparent when she convicts legal transgressors with an almost wanton abandon. When onlookers see Tuszarenne pursue the full measure of Ärtée's Justice, only those of unfaltering devotion can empathize with her apparent lack of remorse. Tuszarenne's passionate Ambivalence results from her intense Faith and merits a rank of 8.

STEP 8: EQUIPMENT

Tuszarenne lives an austere lifestyle in accordance with the tenets of the Tetracaste that underline the traditions of the Sentinels of the Diamond Order. While wealth and property are not denied to followers of Ärtée, her military Order maintains that Faith and logic are the riches of the soul. Tuszarenne's equipment amounts to a small unlocked trunk filled with personal affects, a diary of Devotions, a Temple credit voucher for 350 silver 'keels', and a simple pendant of the Diamond Order. From her years of service as Sentinel she keeps an Amilani Longsword made in the Forges of the Equariel Mission, and Aegenru-made Warhammer, a long Composite bow of Jhanyo make with a velvet sleeve and three spare bowstrings.

Her greatest prize is a Plate Complet of Celeyonne manufacture which the Order presented to her upon her promotion as Sergeant of the Curtain. Celeyonne Armor smiths are renowned throughout the seven cape city-states, and Tuszarenne's suit bears the mark of Proof vs. the powerful Jhanyo longbow. The suit is custom tailored to fit Tuszarenne's body, and it is lighter (55 lbs) and more articulate than a suit of lesser manufacture. The Celeyonne armorers have stamped the suit's gorget with the emblem of her Order and the complet has been lacquered with Dyschira



glaze to resist the effects of oxidation and scraping. As a fringe benefit, the proud Celeyonne armorers have vowed to replace the lining and service the armor once per year for the duration of her service to the Order. The suit is worth approximately 3500 silver keels.

Tuszarenne also receives a small stipend from the Temple for performing her duties as Acolyte-Inquisitor. She receives 375 silver keels per month, of which she donates 30% to the Order of the Diamond, returns 10% to the Temple (for City taxes), and entrusts 10% to the Mission of Equariel (on behalf of the Mission orphanage). After giving her tithes, Tuszarenne retains enough money to support her conservative lifestyle.

Step 9: HISTORY

Because she was orphaned shortly after birth, Tuszarenne knows little of her familial History. Tuszarenne embraced the teachings of Ärtée which she first learned in the orphanage maintained within the outer precinct of the Mission of Equariel. Advancing into the Diamond Order, Tuszarenne learned that all of her fellow Sentinels shared similar family backgrounds. Once she questioned a Diamond Initiate, asking why it was that all Sentinels were orphans or children otherwise displaced from their families. Rather than shocking Tuszarenne with directness the Mission Initiate's candor appealed to her acquired religious sensibilities. The response, that displaced children found a life of perfect devotion easier, made immediate sense. "Only those with undivided loyalty can serve the Diamond Order with the unfailing commitment that its existence requires. Orphans and your like find siblings among their peers, guidance from the Initiates, and moral order within the sacred Tetratch. What more is there to family or life," inquired the Master Initiate. Finding the response agreeable, Tuszarenne never questioned her background, or the motives of the Order, again.

The remainder of Tuszarenne's ascetic history is best summarized in the following excerpt taken from her personal Diary. The selection represents a portion of a longer record which details her first official Examination of purpose, conducted by Sobrinia of Armath Inquisitor Superior, overseer of the Temple's affiliations and sub-sects.

Excerpt from the Diary of Tuszarenne

Inquisitor-Superior: Tuszarenne, what is your purpose in aspiring to the High Inquisition of Ärtée?

Tuszarenne: I seek to serve the Goddess, to enforce her Law by means of the knowledge stolen by her holy brother Equariel, passed unto us in the tracts of the sacred Tetratch. I guard the wisdom of the Tome as I value the social Order.

By this virtue I perform Her will, preserving man's innocence and delivering the Justice of Reason to my compatriots.

Inquisitor-Superior: You recite the precepts of the Tetrachaste to me. Do you seek to influence me toward your favor?

Tuszarenne: Inquisitor-Superior, I would do no such thing. As you wear the Diamond mark of our Order upon your brow you know that my faith drives me to speak of truth.

Inquisitor-Superior: Do you know that there are those among the Priestesses who accuse you of Pride? How would you defend yourself against the acts of hubris which they allege?

Tuszarenne: I would do nothing. It is a lamentable fact that all among the clergy are not invulnerable to the World's misgivings. It is undisputed that no hubris is committed by serving the Goddess with one's full talents. Reason is the measure with which I would make my defense. It is the only standard of judgment which the Tetratch permits to the Priestesses.

Inquisitor-Superior: Tuszarenne, I find your vindication satisfactory, but I must warn you that corruption exists within the Temple Hierarchy. I cannot say if this is Her will, but I assure you that Logic and Law are not the only arms by which you will be tested. It is the purpose of the Inquisition to seek out the Fallen, revealing them to Tetrarchs who shall interpret the will of Ärtée. If you accept the duties compelled by your office, aver your Faith and join me presently on my stroll through the inner precinct of the High Inquisition.

Tuszarenne: By my Faith, I do swear allegiance to the High Inquisition of Ärtée. I shall serve Her will invested in the holy body of the Tetrarchy of Amilanth.



ARIA

Canticle of the Monomyth

PERSONA NAME: *Tuszarenne*

PLAYER NAME:

PLACE OF BIRTH: *Baso-Lournys*

HERITAGE

CURRENT RESIDENCE: *Amilanth City (Temple of Artee)*

Species: *Human*

PERSONA CONCEPT:

Race: *Temreloni (Southern Cape-folk)*

Tuszarenne was raised in the Mission of Equariel where she remained until she gained entrance to the Order of the Diamond (a religious fighting Order devoted to Equariel, divine brother of the Goddess Artee. After 8 yrs. Tusza enters Temple academy where she studies the Law of Artee. After 2 yrs. Tusza becomes an Acolyte-Inquisitor serving under the tutelage of Sobrinia of Armath.

Culture: *Amilani (City-State of Amilanth)*

Cultural Orientation: *Selects*

Heritage Restrictions: *None*

Kinship & Status

Family Situation

Family Status: *Professional (Mission of Equariel)*

Status Level (Fam. Head): *10 (Mission Abbot)*

Legitimacy: *Illegitimate (Acknowledged by Mission)*

Family Orientation: *Embrace*

Sibling Rank: *Non-Inheritor*

Estrangement: *Good*

Reaction Orientation: *Favorable*

Inheritance: *None (Not able to Inherit)*

Family Background

Description (Background Aspects, Notes, History)

Tuszarenne was orphaned by a noble-merchant of Baso-Lournys, and brought to the orphanage at the Mission of Equariel in the Temple district of Amilanth City. The Initiates of the Mission fostered her and became her Family.

Family Background Aspects: Famous Relation (Rank 5) Famous Relation is Sobrinia of Armath who is an Inquisitor-Superior of the Temple of Artee. Sobrinia was also an orphan raised by the Initiates of the Mission of Equariel.

Status

Status Archetype: *Privileged*

Status Level: *12*

Innate Renown: *1 (Orphan-child of Equariel)*

Family Renown

Renown Value: *5 (Favorable)*

Renown Aspect(s): *Pious Devotion, Protector and Benefactor to the Poor, Aged, Sick, and Homeless.*

CHARACTERISTICS

ATTRIBUTES

Attribute/Aspect	Rank	Potential
<i>Endurance (Stamina)</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Intuition (Personality /Motives)</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Logic (Deductive Reasoning)</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Perception (Sight)</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Quickness</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Willpower</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Presence*</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>10</i>

** Unrealized Potential (Rank 10)*

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Age: *25*

Frame Value: *4*

Description: *Medium*

Height Value: *7*

Description: *5'9" tall*

Physique Value: *4*

Description: *Ideal*

Weight Value: *11*

Description: *137 lbs.*

Coloration:

Fair Olive skin/complexion

Dark Auburn Hair

Mysterious Hazel Eyes

DERIVED CHARACTERISTICS

Carrying Capacity: *70 Encumbrance Grades*

Lifting Capacity: *210 Encumbrance Grades*

Movement Rate

Miles per Day: *29* Yards/Action Interval: *8*

Trauma Resistance: *3*

Physical Characteristics:

Black Diamond Tattoo centered on brow



Background Aspects & Traits

Background Aspects

Aspect	Rank	Description
<i>Favorable Aspects</i>		
<i>Unrealized Potential</i>	10	<i>7th attribute (Presence)</i>
<i>Honored</i>	2	<i>'Sergeant of the Curtain'</i>
<i>Protector</i>	5	<i>Sentinels of the Diamond</i>
<i>Unfavorable Aspects</i>		
<i>Social Debt</i>	4	<i>Obligation to the Order</i>
<i>Adversary</i>	6	<i>Cabella Uoreste, Prioreess of the Ward</i>

Personality Traits

Trait	Value	Description/Notes
<i>Self-righteous</i>	3	<i>Apparent (misinterpreted)</i>
<i>Ambivalent</i>	8	<i>Suppressed Passion</i>

Influence Pools

Object	Rank

Leverage Pools

Object	Rank

Traits

Charisma (Intuition + Will. + Presence)/3: 7
 Faith: 10
 Object of Faith: *Tetrateuch (Teaching of Artee/Equariel)*
 Insight: 1
 Insight Aspect: *Deistic Reality*

Renown/ Esteem

Reputation (Fav. or Unfav.)	Value	Origin	Renown Scope (Limited or Expansive)
<i>Devotion to Artee (Military Order)</i>	8	<i>Temple of Artee (Amilanth)</i>	<i>Limited (City-State followers of Artee or Equariel)</i>

Expertises

Talents	Rank	Aptitudes	Rank	Disciplines	Rank
<i>Dodge (Melee)</i>	2	<i>Administration (Temple office)</i>	3	<i>Language (Native 5+)</i>	7
<i>Influence (Intimidation)</i>	5	<i>Diplomacy (Arbitration)</i>	5	<i>Etiquette (Privileged Society)</i>	2
<i>Physical (Swimming)</i>	1	<i>Elocution (Disputation)</i>	4	<i>History (Religion of Artee)</i>	4
<i>Savvy (res. Rhetoric)</i>	3	<i>Favored Weapon (Longsword)</i>	6	<i>Military (Strategy/Reconnaissance)</i>	4
		• • (Warhammer)	4	<i>Politics (Temple Hierarchy)</i>	3
		• • (comp. Longbow)	3	<i>Research (Investigation)</i>	2
		<i>Wearing Armor (Rigid)</i>	5	<i>Knowledge (Rituals of Artee/Equariel)</i>	4
		<i>Healing (First Aid)</i>	3	<i>Knowledge (Science: Math/Physics)</i>	3
		<i>Intrigue (Temple Politics)</i>	4	<i>Knowledge (Ecclesiastical Law)</i>	5
		<i>Leadership (Military)</i>	4	<i>Script (Amilani)</i>	4
		<i>Observation (Search)</i>	3	<i>Script (Artesian Code)</i>	2
		<i>Performance (Singing)</i>	2		

Equipment & History

Equipment

*Amilani Longsword, Aegenru Warhammer, Jhanyo comp. bow w/ 3 strings and 24 arrows. Celeyonne Plate Complet. Diary (Records of Duties)
 Pendant (Diamond Order of Equariel)
 Clothing, Trunk, lamp w/oil, Magnifying lense, Lodestone*

History

See Text for full description

Amilani Matriarch

Three argent sails upon a sinister midnight sea addressed by the tiger salient, sable on a field of gold — I see this emblem waving above the headmasts of more than fifty Amilani galleasses, carvels, and quatremes, the amassed fleet of my noble House. These ships brandish the ledani banner for all to see, heralding vast profits as they sail throughout the twin continents of the known world. If I seem to speak of these vessels with too generous praise, it is because they represent dream come to fruition and the expansive reach of my power. And if I appear to depend on them too greatly it is because they have never failed my house. Never has one strayed at sea, not once has the crew disbanded or Captain erred — I sponsor the most reputable officers and recruit the most capable sailors available. And their appreciation of my fabulous rewards manifests in a loyalty so deep as to be called 'fanaticism' among my rivals and my peers. I am Nayetsha Iedani, Matriarch of House Iedani, leader among the noble families and Warden of the Port-Harbor Keep.

Until recently most of my daylight hours were spent engaging the traditional affairs of mercantilism which have made my house strong. My official duties, including the stewardship of Port-Keep and representation in the ruling council were carried out by my cousin Adriani, appointed Councilor of House Iedani. Under her guidance and maneuverings licensed trade routes magically opened to us, official privileges flourished, and political allies accrued. My days were devoted to affairs of trade, evenings allotted to socials and political gatherings, and my nights, late lusty nights, committed to my private pleasures. All this changed when Adriani was found poisoned in the Senetat baths, private rooms within the legislative forum of



the City-State. Though Adriani kept me abreast of all current political dealings I had not suspected the attempt to come so soon, or so successfully. I will miss Adriani, she was an invaluable member of my household.

So now it appears my routine must change. Until I rectify this apparent intrigue my eldest daughter Ilastra must head our trade affairs. A shame that, for she has been groomed for the position of state and I had not wished to expose her to the mysteries of our financial holdings before her loyalty could be tested. Ah well, we shall see to that. I, of course, shall oversee the political welfare of our house. Clearly, there is a faction opposing us and that must be handled delicately. Certainly I shall get to the bottom of it quickly, but planning my retort, the careful eliminations and especially the artful humiliations, that could take months. Well, what must be must be. The ruling factions love their games, and it is known that I am a formidable player myself.

My husbands of course must be put on hold, their pathetic love-plays can be directed elsewhere for a time. But I should see to my great cats, insure that the groomer is appropriately cautioned that not all of my spies will be out of house. I must also be certain the House lieutenant be duly informed. I must inform Ilastra that the house treasury be reallocated to allow for the additional soldiery that my lieutenant is certain to request. I had nearly forgotten the demands of a political feud. Oh there is so much that needs attending to.

Amilani House Mentor

How could I have permitted this to happen? But then I never thought they would target her. The Matriarch is who they wanted, I was so sure of that. And now my Andriani is dead — Dead by those coward-bitches. There was no other way for me though . . . was there? They knew I have the Talent. Isn't that what their messenger intimidated? But how? And now to be summoned by the Matriarch herself? Gods, what machinations have I landed myself into? Into the midst of swarming wasps in heat, to be certain. But what to do, what to say? I must calm myself. Yes. Certainly the Matriarch must know of my, er, special capabilities. Is it possible that she did not know of Andriani's teaching? Could she have been that trusting of her Councilor that she overlooked our obvious involvement. No, she must have had reports from her spies. That is what has happened. When she lost Andriani she lost not only her cousin and councilor, but also her most powerful adept. I wonder if her adversaries suspect the true boon of Andriani's death. Her death, poisoned like a common serving boy! Oh, what have I done?

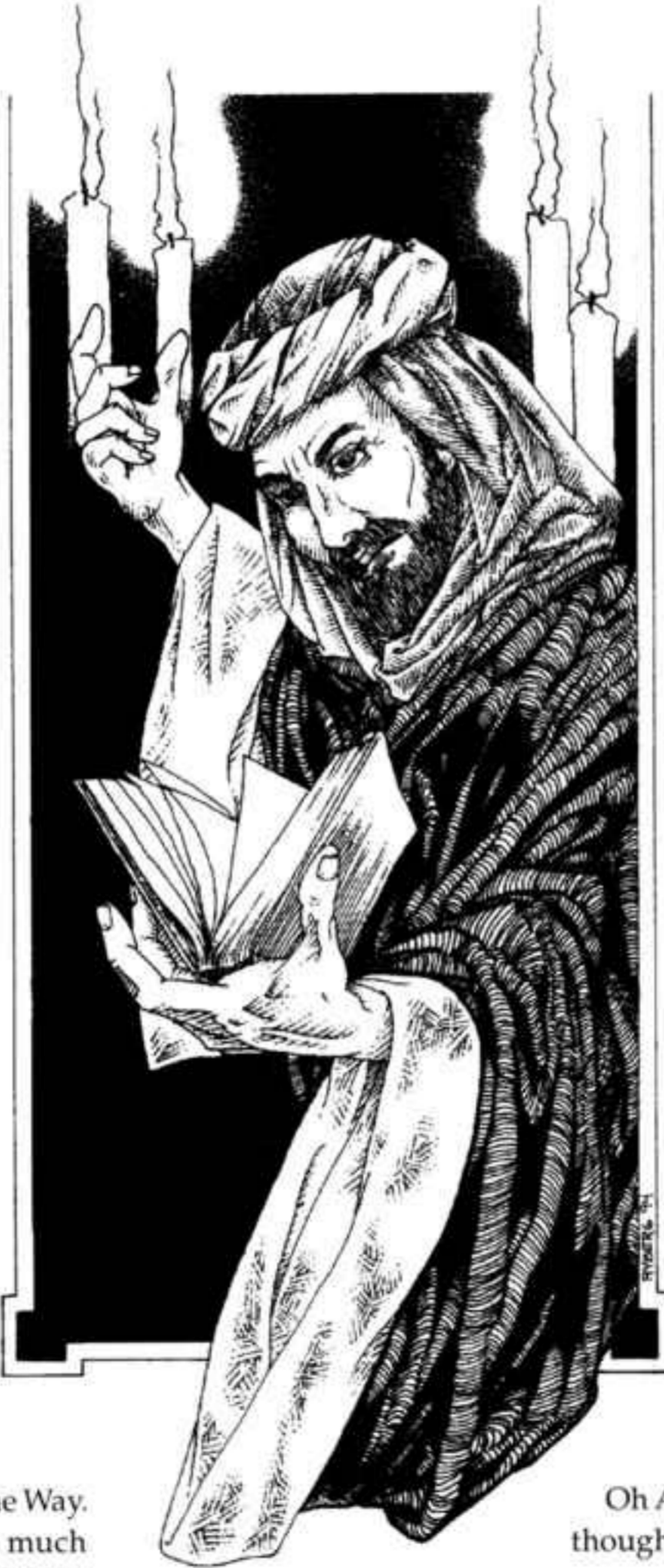
It is clear now what I must do. I must confess my relationship - how cold a word for it - with Andriani. I must put it carefully though lest she throw me to those damnable tigers of hers. What a temper she has! And she would be well within her right. Common law decrees that no man shall be instructed in the Way. That will not concern her overly much though, other powerful families have been known to overlook certain proprieties where private house matters are concerned. Indeed. . . I can turn that to my advantage. Demonstrate my ability. Suggest that perhaps her enemies were seeking to turn her against me. To cause one to destroy one's own assets is a standard plot

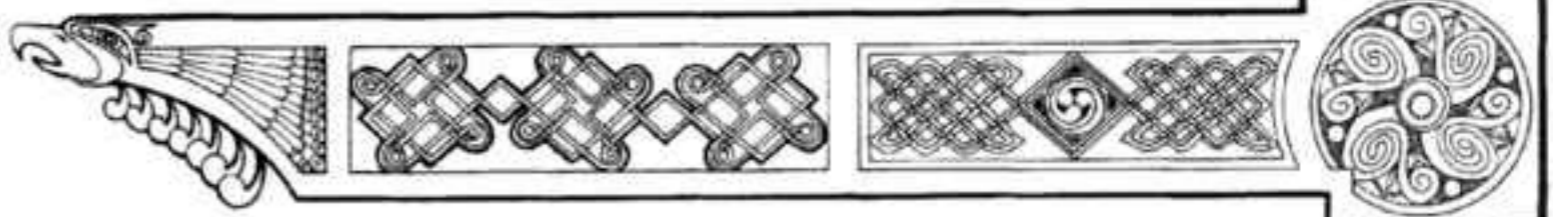
— she will see the logic to it. I must also allow my sorrow to show. Let her commiserate and see how I must hate them. In affronting my Matriarch they also affronted me. It could work. I am, after all, innocent of their scheming. I but told them of my darling's routine ministrations. A private place

beyond house surveillance — that is what they requested. A place for talk and subtle persuasion. And I bought into it. There is so much to learn about the secret politics of these duplicitous women. In that field even my arts cannot hasten comprehension.

It seems ironic that in eliminating my dear Andriani, they deprived me of teacher and lover, but removed the only witness of my true talents. I suspected they thought to blackmail my beloved, to use her for their own ends. How clearly I misjudged. If the Matriarch permits, I will assist with her vendetta. She can find another mentor from the academy to replace me in my capacity. I never relished teaching those she-tiger daughters of hers and my obvious worth as an adept guarantees that my abilities be put to other use. If I am not dispatched to her man-eaters, I will regret only the private time that instructing permitted me. Oh but I do play the fool. If I am retained, the Matriarch will give me as much time as I need to make my enchantments. Perhaps she will give me the whole south wing of the Port-harbor Keep dungeon for my ministrations. And the wealth of resources that I should have at my disposal. If I play this right I could become the most powerful man in the entire City-State.

Oh Andriani, how quickly you fade from my thoughts.





Amilani Freedom Fighter

Our fraternity is called the Order of the Ebon Claw. Our purpose is to deliver the men of Amilanth from the thralldom of the Menagerie. Since the Tracts of the City-State deny us voice in council we utter our complaint through violence and subterfuge. No man among us can abandon the cause. We are bound by the ceremonial rite of brotherhood.

We are many and we are strong. Our leader, called Iret Saith among us, organized the fraternity one hundred twelve years past. It is said he served high in the ranks of one of the aristocratic houses and it is uttered that he possessed latent powers that are now silenced by stilling the hearts of newborn males. Whether this brutal edict existed before his coming or was instituted as a result of his deeds we do not know. It is not permitted that men should have access to the legal records of the City-State. We do know, however, that he assembled the finest men the resistance has ever had. Uga Bornig, author of the Order's doctrine recorded Iret's words so that we may profit from them. Estan Renesi, Uga's predecessor, scripted "Tactics and Restitution," the guerrilla code instituted by our brave founder. Many other fine names — Fazehd, Djori, Anestru, fine thinkers all — conjoined or inspired our cause. Through their courage and enlightened teachings we stand united, clear of purpose and quick of hand. Through them we learned that subtlety prolongs life and bravery commands respect. By their education we persist as splinters in the paw of the beast.

The commandments of our affiliation are strict and precise. Information is a double edge, we require it to assault but resist it to protect. Except by hand signal and secret name we do not recognize one another. If one of us should be



caught the others cannot be revealed. Tradition brings us together by complex timing and diversified meeting places. In times of great emergency when our accustomed timetables hinder us, we send word through our workplaces by actions so subtle only a fellow compatriot could discern. Any officer of the organization can summon the Order by these

means, and it is the responsibility of that officer to signal the appropriate place of meeting.

Though I cannot speak with certainty I believe the backbone of our force lies in the laboring forces of the City-State. We toil during the day and our hate grows full with the moon. By night we conspire, carefully developing alibis and forging writs of passage so that we may move freely after curfew. It is likely that our leader Saithson - since the death of Saith all leaders wear this name - is higher born. It would be required to move unwatched and to work at leisure. It is unfortunate that few with such privileges join our cause. But I suppose if I were living the good life and bedding down highborn maids I might be loathe to bite the hand that pleases me, so to say. It is, after all, our goal to enhance the quality of life for the men of Amilanth. If those who have plenty do not have the courage

to help us we will do without their soft ilk. We have precious little time to discuss the finer points of life; and since our purpose is to gain liberty for all men, we cannot divide ourselves by turning against our more docile brothers.



Imberwyn Nobleman

When I consider my ancestry I am both ashamed and infuriated. My great grandfather Duke of Raensly opposed the succession of our nations founding families. His Eleduric loyalty guided his hand against his fellows — and in only in the end, after the Gate Pass Skirmish, did he convolute his apparent treachery into a modest act of heroism and sacrifice. The careful removal of key witnesses, bribes to the right Eledu founding families, and a few calculated mistruths bought him the credibility required to salvage what was left of his familial holdings. The same holdings that have been denied to my family by our greater cousins in Alathel.

The Duchy of Raensly continues to hold sway in our capital, though it is not the powerful faction it once was. Though many have forgotten the perfidy of my great grandfather, those in key positions suspect the truth. It has become my charge to keep this knowledge alive. My father, son of the estranged Duke's son, has passed the secret along to me that I might one day exploit it to our family's advantage. Our cousins know that we would defame our ancestor to restore our own family's standing. They fear this, and that is why they take great measures to keep us here upon the fringe of the kingdom, 'living among the barbarians' as they like to joke at court. They have foiled our every attempt to gain a seat on the Thalnoch, and they seek to ruin us through economic underhandedness.

In many ways my family has been living a renegade existence here on the edge of the great waste. We strive to diversify our economic interests so that our distant cousins cannot undermine our trade markets. Lately, I have initiated a campaign which reaches out to the nomadic peoples of the waste in the hope that we may find allies which cannot be bought out by our adversaries. It is a difficult enterprise and nomadic custom does

not swiften the process. We must earn their trust and allegiance with just treatment, and I treat my own subjects fairly to establish a reputation which the nomads will receive favorably. Perhaps with the nomads as allies I shall be able to return my attention to Alathel and exact payment for my cousin's past wrongs.

In general I am something of an oddity among my local peers. They misunderstand my motives and gossip incessantly about my intentions. But I must not yet divulge the secret burden which I bear, even though doing so would redeem me among my peers. One day all will be known. I will stride to my rightful seat at council, take my oath of allegiance, and publically praise the gods for their just mercy. Then the defamiation of my enemies shall begin. By mine own words, the wicked half of my family shall be cut from power by the axe of polity. By the swan sword of my father I swear it shall be so.



Nomad of the Imber Wastes

I am the youngest member appointed to the Histheya, our Chieftain's elite war council. I was elected for my quiet demeanor and perceptive contemplation. The high Priest called me from my life of solitary devotions to serve this body of warriors with my advice and insight. I do not relish war though I've a fine body for it, and I do not enjoy bloodletting though I've had training in the art. Though I prefer to follow the ways of the Master, I am patient. When my duties to our Chieftain have been fulfilled I may return to my ascetic lifestyle.

As I understand it, my people are divided as to the course they should take in dealing with the Imberfolk who dwell to the south of our homelands. They are a peculiar lot, in possession of great knowledge but little wisdom. They think us barbarians and generally leave us alone. This, my elders say, is as it should be. We are not a warlike people and do not care to initiate a feud with our neighbors, but as we watch their progress we see that they are a thriving people. As their numbers increase we see them spread out like a swarm of hornets. We fear that in providing for their basic needs they may advance further into the west and trespass on our sacred winter hunting grounds.

It is to investigate the needs and motives of these people that I have been summoned. I have listened to all of the wisdom of my elders and now prepare to enter their world. Through cautious negotiations with a particular young nobleman my elders have eased my passage into their strange land. I will join this man in his home and we will share our knowledge to better understand our peoples. I will watch and learn their customs,

and eventually return to make a recommendation to my elders. I am not certain how this agreement came to be, but I wonder at the motives of the young nobleman. Could he have reports of our gathered forces? Does he realize that

my death would be considered a great affront to my people? Is

his invitation some sort of political game that his people customarily play?

Many apprehensions I have regarding my visit, but over the

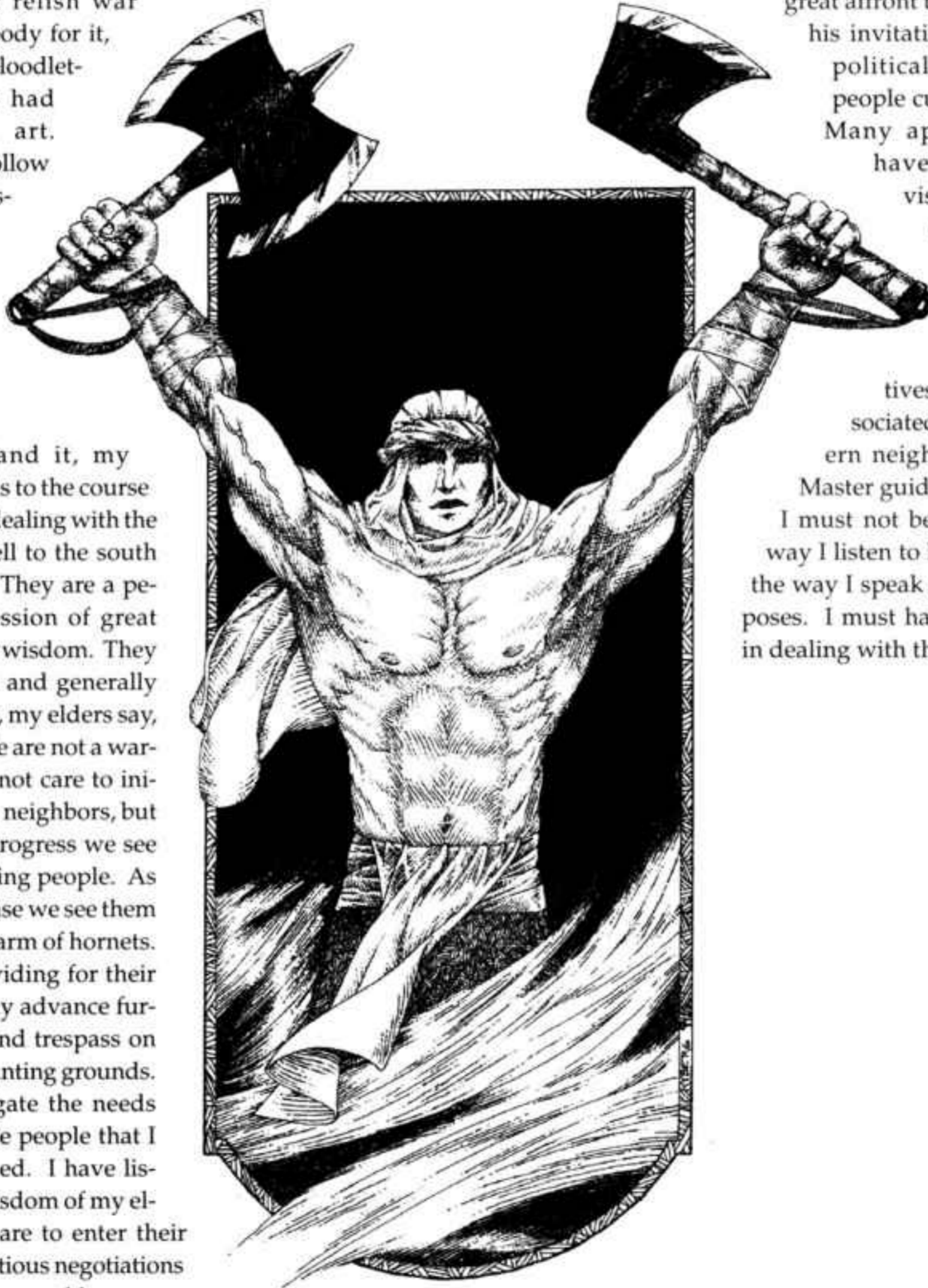
next several months I will

certainly learn much of the mo-

tives and dangers associated with our south-

ern neighbors. May the Master guide me in my part.

I must not be reckless in the way I listen to his words nor in the way I speak of our own purposes. I must have great reserve in dealing with this man.



Imberwyn Gentlewoman-Thief

I came to Imberwyn when I was fourteen. It is an amusing story actually. I ran away from my family to avoid a marriage which was being arranged with a young litigant in Galenir. He served under my father in the King's Bench and was highly esteemed by my father. I was at university at the time, studying grammar, etiquette, and the arts — suitable studies for the prospective wife of an admired citizen of the Court. Be assured that I was not overjoyed with the marriage. It was not so much the thought of his hands on my body that bothered me but the idea of emulating my mother's role in life. I remember wishing that I had been born a boy, free to carouse, at liberty to draw arms over trivial insults, assured of the freedom to choose my own lifestyle.

My university training fostered this yearning for independence and it revealed a place where gender equality was less of an ideal, more of a reality. It was not long after that I made my way to Imberwyn.

One night in mid-summer I stole out from my chamber and joined a troupe of entertainers who travel semi-annually between Galenir and Imberwyn. My elder brother had escorted me to the circus and while he made conversation with the ladies I gathered information about the company. My flight from the university was carefully timed, and I had saved enough of my school pension to buy myself an apprenticeship with the traveling company. Arriving in Imberwyn I remained with the troupe through the winter. During that time I learned many acrobatic skills and acquired the ability to throw knives with great accuracy. With the onset of spring the troupe set out on its return to Galenir and I parted company, deciding to remain in Alathel, proud capital of Imberwyn. For a while things were hard but my brief term as a troubadour earned me renown among the common people. I easily found work but nothing that could satisfy my peculiar lust for adventure.

In the early autumn, fortune smiled on me at last. My knife work which had entertained countless admirers in the

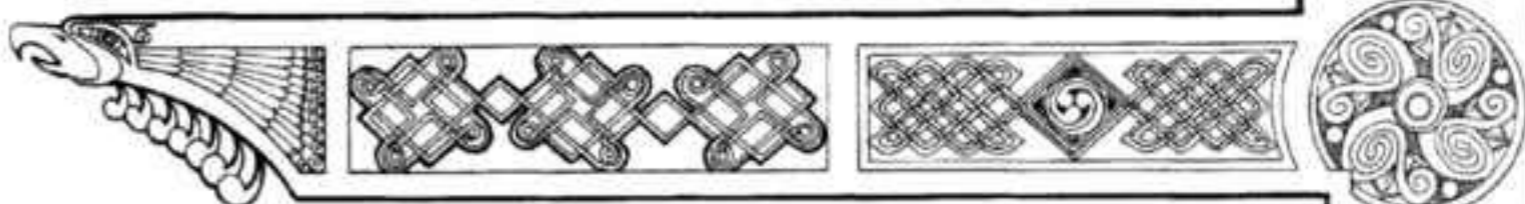
bawdier taverns earned me a place on a small overland caravan. The caravan was led by widow named Lihara, who had refused to sell her husband's enterprise after his death. Oftimes I thought her more a Vazshun, a member of the tinker-traders, than a proprietor, so strange and diverse were the goods that she sold. But because of her loss and loneliness she welcomed me, taking it upon herself to train me to be useful. Under her tutelage I learned many things. I learned to appraise the value of metals and estimate the purity of coinage. I was instructed in the ways of acquiring rare goods and fencing them in hidden markets. And I

learned the price of authorities and which ones to avoid. These skills have been invaluable over the years and I owe Lihara my eternal debt.

Over the course of my service with Lihara I also learned that services as well as goods were sought in the hidden black markets. Acting upon Lihara's advice I continued my acrobatic training, and learned the use of the quarter-staff, sling, and garrote from several of the seedier caravan henchmen. The men joked and cajoled, but were mostly gentle with me. My knives kept them on their guard but all agreed the learning of arms is never time ill spent, especially in the wild lands of Imberwyn. Lihara's advice proved sound and it was not long before I found work acquiring information and objets d'art in the capital city.

Since that time I have become something of a legend in Alathel. With my illicit earnings I purchased a home in the privileged quarter and became an enfranchised citizen of foreign heritage. I socialize when necessary but retain much of my private life. It is difficult sometimes to suppress a grin when I hear of my exploits in decent company. The common citizenry calls me the Dame of Nightfall and many crimes are mistakenly attributed to my name. Though my deeds have angered merchant and administrator alike, the prevailing attitude toward my exploits can be described only as amusement among the people. Rumors of my engagements spread quickly, offering the workforce momentary diversion from an otherwise ordinary day.





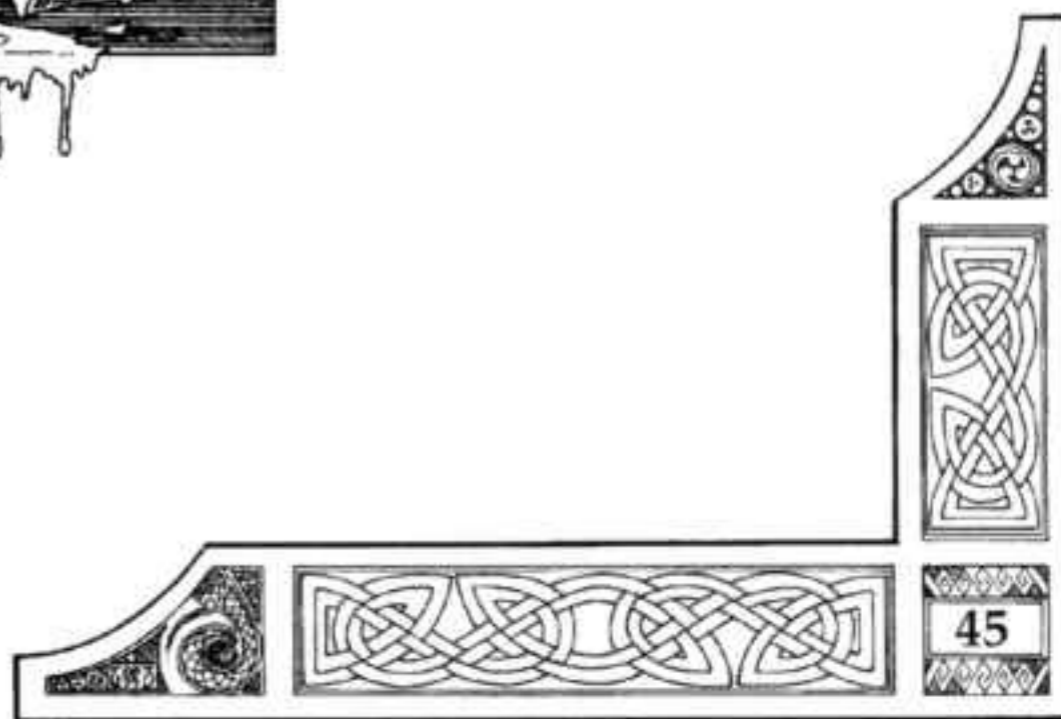
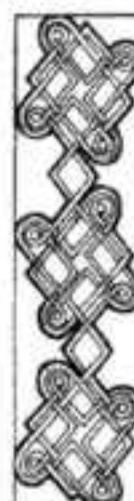
Imberwyn Alchemist

Like hounds at the hunt they seek the sly fox; but you I bidion, you outwit them even as they sniff at your trail and bay in your wake. Hiding in their midst, in the guise of mortal youth! You clever, clever thing. So busy are they racing toward death that they'd be better to chase their own tails than to try to discover your carefully kept secret. Look at that handsome young face, that boyish grin. What a perfect mask. A wolf in sheep's clothing, that's what you are, you devil.

Ah, not quite. What nonsense do I utter to this phantom reflection before me? No, I bidion, you have not been so clever. Look, the eyes betray you. Black stones from too many incantations, set in the wrinkled grey flesh of age. The mirror does not lie. I tell you (tell myself!) that they are on to you. They are not hounds but perilous timberwolves waiting and circling, circling and waiting to strip you of your most precious accomplishment — the secret of youth. Remember how they watch you. They mock you with the smug knowledge that you will one day slip. Look how you mutter to yourself. Who but the aged do such things? And what if your powers should fail? Blackened bones and a pile of ash, that's what'll be left to you. Your soul has already been eaten to prolong the life of the body, how shall you continue?

I am over-tired. That is all. I prattle to myself, driven by fatigue. It seems ages since I've slept, truly rested. It is the plight of the fox revisited. Finding a hole one can rest, but smell the spring air, stretch the bandy legs, admire the sun, and the hounds are on you again. Damn them! Never to build a home, never to find the solace of reprieve. The price one pays for power. There is a lesson in that. The same simple lesson they taught at the Mount. Use power sparingly, lest you live forever. Ha! Well the old masters have gone, sacri-

ficing that which I only I have been brave enough to claim — stolen immortality. One day, the Order will thank me. They'll read my journals and records of history and know that I was in the right. The right! It is my life to end or to prolong. Who are they to hunt me out, spreading their spies among the rabble for whom I perform my ministrations? I have successfully evaded them but find that I am less able to witness and record the plight of life. Mankind knows not what it gains in this senseless persecution of my person. My intentions are good, I have not fallen to the seductions of my arcana.



Firnost Clanhead

When I was but a mancub my father told me that herding a flock and leading a people were similar responsibilities. "The good shepherd," he cited, "allows his flock to find their own way. The little red bearded goats that you see before you, they know how to grub roots through the frost, how to run from the fox, and how to choose mates in the spring. The shepherd's task is not to lead them in this, but only to love them. To guide them to pasture, to alert them to danger, and to call them home — these are the obligations of the shepherd. He who does these things with affection, sees his flock thrive. Mother wilderness takes care of the rest." That is the shepherd's creed, and my clan has prospered because its wisdom governs my service as Clanhead.

I was born under the sign of the Greyraven, tongue of the animal realm. My uncle, Shaman of our tribe, prophesied that I would become voice of my people and so his legendary insight is proven once again. On the day of his great passing one of our goats strayed far into the highlands leading me upon a chase that ended in the familial burial grounds. Sighting movement within the Henge of Great Clanheads, I stalked closer to find the misty form of a man kneeling within the clearing. As I approached he turned to reveal the kind elderly smile that my uncle so often bore. Noting my flush of agitation and heavy breathing he moved to present the little goat which he petted beside him. "This little one has not erred in bringing you here," he said. "It is a sign that your people require your guidance — the climate is soon to change." Handing the kid into my arms he continued, "take this one home and return a man. Honor your birth sign and voice your ordeal. Your initiation into manhood is past." Unaware of his recent death, I hurried to do as my elder commanded. Halting to ask how he had come to be here in the

burial grove I turned to see that he had vanished, the Henge of Clanheads was empty.

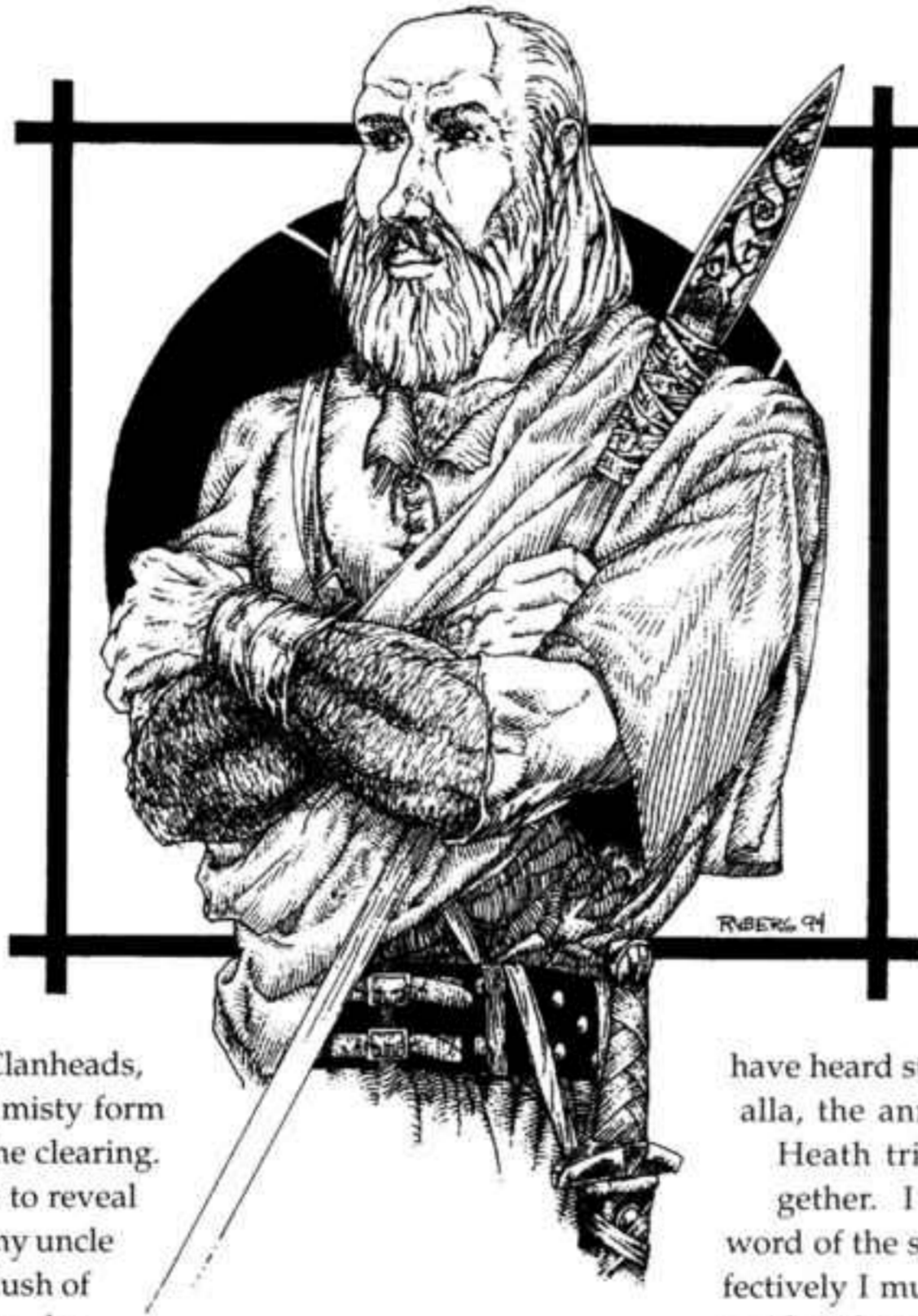
The relevance of my vision became clear when I learned of my uncle's passage. Our Chieftain received my story and decided that I should indeed become the voice of my clan. With my aging father's consent the Chieftain bestowed a geas upon me. My mission was to seek out the Seer of Flatlake, situated upon the great heath plain. My cousin Eirik was not yet ready to assume the shamanistic duties of his father, and since it seemed that I had been ordained to

speak for my people, my journey would bring no dishonor upon him.

Four years later I returned to my tribe and family, recently arrived at our spring encampment. In my absence my father had joined my uncle in the henge grove and I became Head to my clan. The seer had spoken of foreboding omens and signs of which I still do not profess to understand. Most importantly she foretold the coming of a divine conqueror who would bring unrest to the tribal communities of the heath. She intimated that the loose affiliations which bind our tribes into a nation would prove our weakness in the coming struggle. Though the destroyer has not shown his face in the five years past I

have heard strange reports at the recent Cherralla, the annual festival which gathers the Heath tribes and foreign merchants together. I believe it is my duty to spread word of the seer's prophesy, but to do this effectively I must allow each tribe to weigh my words independently. The current leader of our nation is a rash youth who places more importance upon building his personal guard and adding to his harem than he does in regarding the needs of his people.

He rebuffed my warnings at the gathering and implied that my motives were governed by self-interest. Under his leadership the tribes begin to stray. He is of the hunter class and has never benefited from the wisdom of the Shepherd's creed.





Firnost Skald

I do not remember how I came to be among the clansfolk of Thyren Forest but I have heard the tribal skald sing of my heritage in countless imaginative lays. One tells of how the tribal hunters found me laughing among a litter of yipping silverfox pups. Another lay verifies that I am a lost womanchild of the noble Fairyfolk who occasionally revel in the mistgroves of the forest deeps. A third song tells that I was captured by Merchants while attempting to steal a tall white horse at the Great Cheralla, and that Andrulok the Skald bargained for my release with a barrel of stinking fish oil. My adopted family cannot verify any of the tales because it was Andrulok who brought me to the tribe and there is not a man or woman in the heath who can force a truthful story from that shamefully inventive rogue.

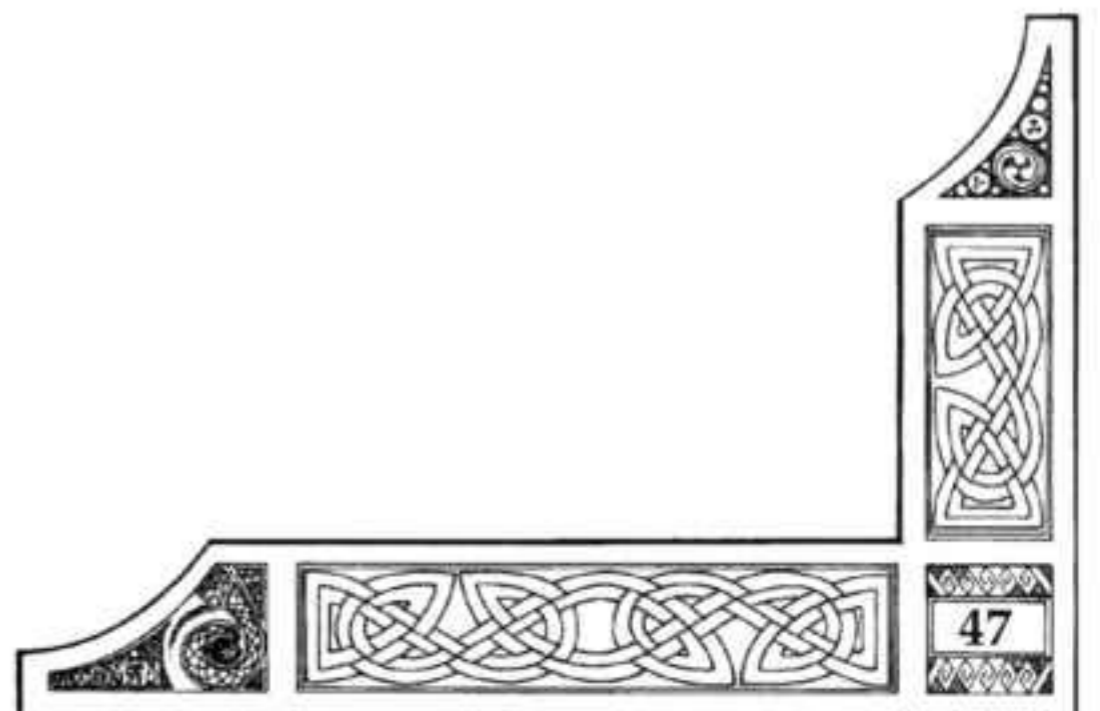
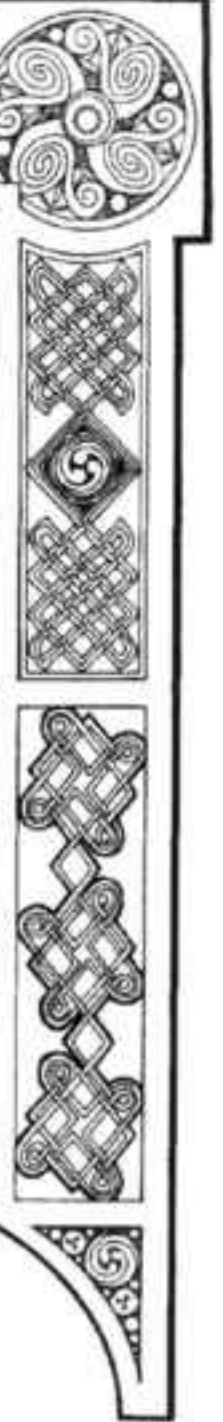
The truth of my origins continues to mystify me for it is clear from my appearance that I am not a descendant of the proud Northman Race. Though my family admonishes me for such impractical behavior, I often shed tears of loneliness during holiday gatherings when I see clansmembers rejoin their kin and express the familial love which binds the Northmen together. It is at these times that I know I am different, that I can sense latent memories boiling within my breast reminding me that I have lost my own people and calling me to search for them. In knowing them I hope to finally know myself. I realize that such thoughts hurt my family which has ever demonstrated love for me, but I must put an end to the mystery of my existence.

Though many claim that my natural talents have guided me to a logical vocational choice, I believe it is these hidden emotions which have driven me to become a wandering skald. When Andrulok finally agreed to become my mentor, I wept with joy. I knew that from time to time he came to our village to check on me, but I feared his independence would preclude the possibility of my joining him. He is a wise man of many talents, and is also something of a mystery among my people.

Perhaps this is what has bound us together during the past few cycles of my apprenticeship.

I owe much to Andrulok, for he has become my second family. He has taught me the custom of the Skald, the duties and rewards associating from tribe to strated the

ated with endless wander-tribe. He has demonstrated the art of arms and the art of conversation, the etiquette expected of guests and the proper method for collecting information. 'Never to interfere but ever to observe and relate,' is his unspoken creed, and as a skald I see the wisdom of his teaching. Ours is a lonely vocation though you'd never guess it from the mirth and kindness shown by my teacher. There is a mystery here but Andrulok has yet to recognize it. I question him always about my heritage, but his response is seldom helpful. He kids and denies, changes topics and fabricates tales, but like the silverfox he always escapes the traps I set for him. I love him as a father and it pains me to commence the independent journey which is inevitable. Andrulok says that to know a people's songs is to know their history, but that it is unbecoming to sing one's own exploits. Perhaps that is the mystery of the skald and the enigma of myself.



FIRNOST Seer of Flatlake

As long as I can remember my existence has been shrouded in dreams and symbols. I live here alone upon this boggy, mosquito infested island positioned in the midst of the great Flatlake. Honored as shaman, revered as magician, and feared as prophet, the lake tribesman dump fish, skins, and other necessities upon my shores knowing that I return their devotions with my vision. I am their Shaman though I willingly serve all those of the Heath who seek my insight.

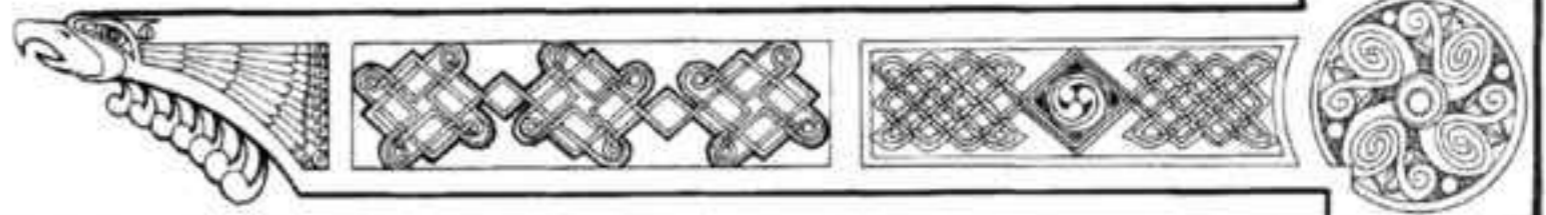
Every year they come, vain or hopelessly lost souls asking me to foretell of glorious battle or honorable marriages. For them a casting of bones and a flash of powder suggests truth, and they depart content often mistaking my intuition and goodwill for something divine. If only the spirits would bestow me with all of their knowledge! Occasionally a few possessing Talent come and it is of these that the spirits most often whisper. Studying their souls and interpreting their dreams I use some of my vision to help them find the answers they seek. But it is rare that I can bring my full insight to bear during such audiences.

My talents remain a mystery to me for I was never taught of the Shaman's way. Our tribal Shaman augured my birth and studied me from time to time, but he refused to instruct me in his art. It is not unknown for a woman to be shaman to her people, so his adamant refusal is all the more enigmatic. Initially, I could see in his eyes a certain caution, but it was not until my first revelation that I came to perceive the magnitude of his respect. Coming into womanhood I had my first waking dream. Where the water meets the land, I heard the whisper of my fetch, the invisible agent from netherwhere who watches over me. Throughout the seasons my fetch appears at intervals, always assuming a form

of wild kind. In the form of ibis, dog, or toad it speaks to me, intimating future events. The fetch is the secret of my power; rituals, unguents, and charms I use more for legitimacy than for the entrancing state that they induce. Without the fetch spirit, my future sense is unreliable.

For many years the spirit of wood and water had been still. My dreams were frequently of the mundane variety and my reproachful charms and powders did little to help summon the state of true sight. I'd sworn I had lost all talent when at last my spirit ward returned to me and conveyed a haunting message. The fetch, a blue-gilled toad in earthly form, said that the elementals had been sleeping, and the spirits of the wild kin enthralled. Darker powers had advanced bringing a confining lethargy to the guardians of the tribes. Having concluded, the toad withdrew from my hut, and in dream I followed him to the water's edge. In the moonlight I saw the sign of the greyraven. In the wind I heard the yipping of the silverfox. A shadow of blood passed before the moon, and I beheld footprints of a man in the distant snows. In the recesses of my consciousness the fetch whispered its final words, "The wolf comes unbidden, the flocks begin to stray. With the howling of the destroyer, the slaughter shall begin."





Persona Examples (Reference Listing)

Each of the Persona concepts described in the previous section are expanded throughout the remaining chapters of the Persona Creation and Myth Creation books in order to illustrate methods for using textual guidelines to create personas who reflect their native environments. The following passages list the pages on which the example Personas are further detailed. PC refers to pages found in the Persona Creation Book, while MC refers to pages found in the Myth Creation Book.

PERSONAS FROM AMILANTH

The City-State of Amilanth is fully described in the Appendix.

AMILANI MATRIARCH	
Nayetsha's Leverage Pools	PC 89
The Holdings of House Iedani	PC 118
Nayetsha's Initial Persona Estate	MC 244

AMILANI HOUSE MENTOR	
Family of Verbedys	PC 65
Verbedys's Reputation	PC 67
Verbedys's Misgivings	PC 109

AMILANI FREEDOM FIGHTER	
Petruchae's Natural Advantage	PC 133
Petruchae's Heritage	MC 196
Petruchae's Status & Freedoms	MC 231

PERSONAS FROM IMBERWYN

The Kingdom of Imberwyn is fully described in the Appendix.

IMBERWYN NOBLEMAN	
History of Firian Litigus Mensinople II	PC 56
Firian's Inheritance	PC 59
Firian's Passion for Vengeance	PC 105
Firian's Pastime	PC 155

NOMAD OF THE IMBER WASTES	
Wyshitra's Personal Attributes	PC 75
Wyshitra's New Status	MC 249

IMBERWYN GENTLEWOMAN THIEF	
Dirdrian's Self-assurance	PC 139
Dirdrian's Vocational Journey	MC 262
Dirdrian's Iternancy with Lirah	MC 266

IMBERWYN ALCHEMIST	
The Trials of Age	PC 78
Ibidion's Prime Delusion	PC 129

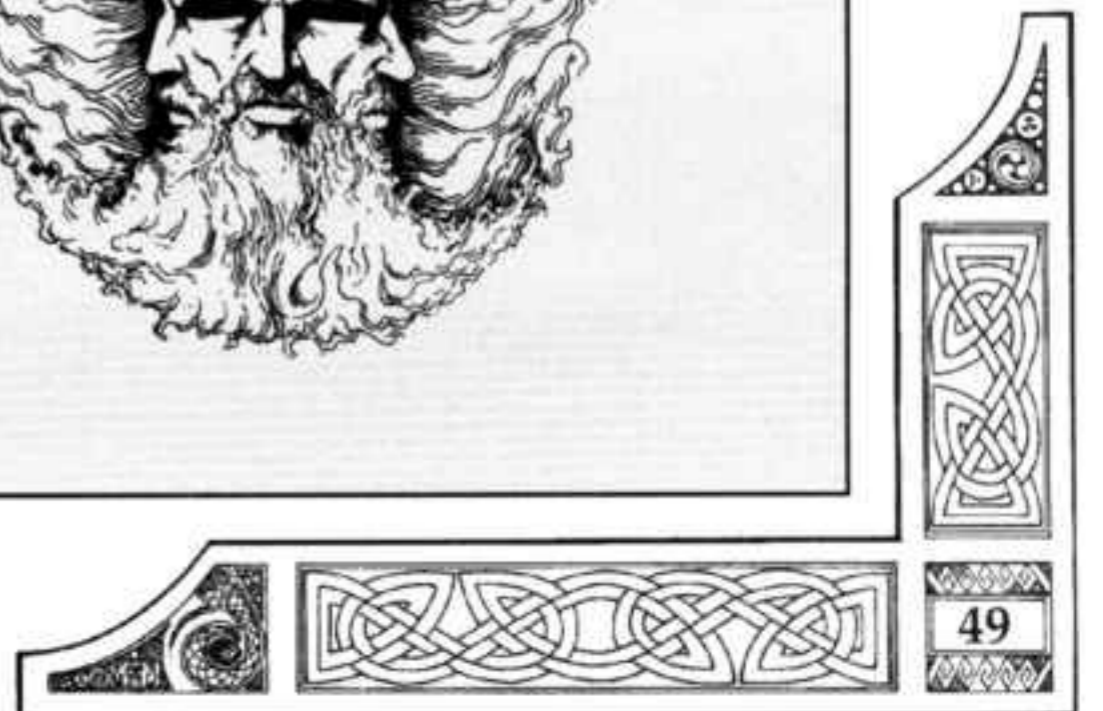
PERSONAS FROM FIRNOST HEATH

The Northman of Firnost Heath culture is fully described at the end of the Heritage Chapter in the Myth Creation book.

FIRNOST CLANHEAD	
The Young Clanhead's Influence	PC 88
Fymn Connor's Innate Leadership	PC 128
Fymn Connor's Vocational Path	MC 267

FIRNOST SKALD	
Faethelstaed the Fairy-child	PC 61
Faethelstaed's Appearance	PC 82
Recognising Faethelstaed	PC 98
Faethelstaed's Sponsor	PC 124

FIRNOST SEER OF FLATLAKE	
The Renowned Seer of Flatlake	PC 96
Enomi's Spiritual Guide	PC 145
Enomi's Observational Ability	PC 162





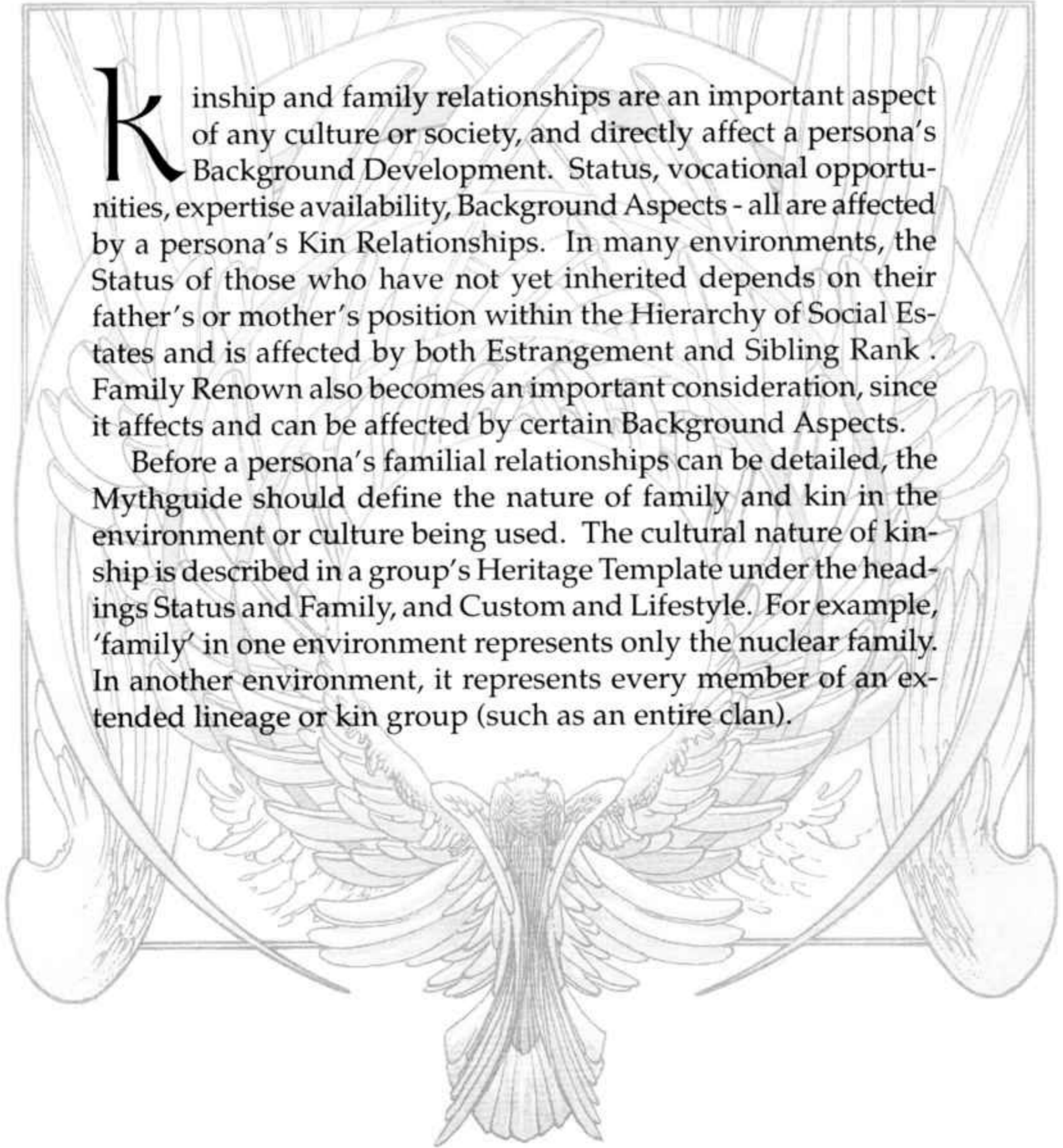
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Kinship

⊗ CHAPTER TWO ⊗

Kinship and family relationships are an important aspect of any culture or society, and directly affect a persona's Background Development. Status, vocational opportunities, expertise availability, Background Aspects - all are affected by a persona's Kin Relationships. In many environments, the Status of those who have not yet inherited depends on their father's or mother's position within the Hierarchy of Social Estates and is affected by both Estrangement and Sibling Rank. Family Renown also becomes an important consideration, since it affects and can be affected by certain Background Aspects.

Before a persona's familial relationships can be detailed, the Mythguide should define the nature of family and kin in the environment or culture being used. The cultural nature of kinship is described in a group's Heritage Template under the headings Status and Family, and Custom and Lifestyle. For example, 'family' in one environment represents only the nuclear family. In another environment, it represents every member of an extended lineage or kin group (such as an entire clan).





Social elements of Kinship (described in the *Aria Worlds* book) include methods for determining inheritance and lineage in a society. The cultural and social aspects of family often coincide, but they do not have to. If any discrepancies occur, these - along with any unique or unusual kinship practices or traditions - should also be detailed by the Mythguide.

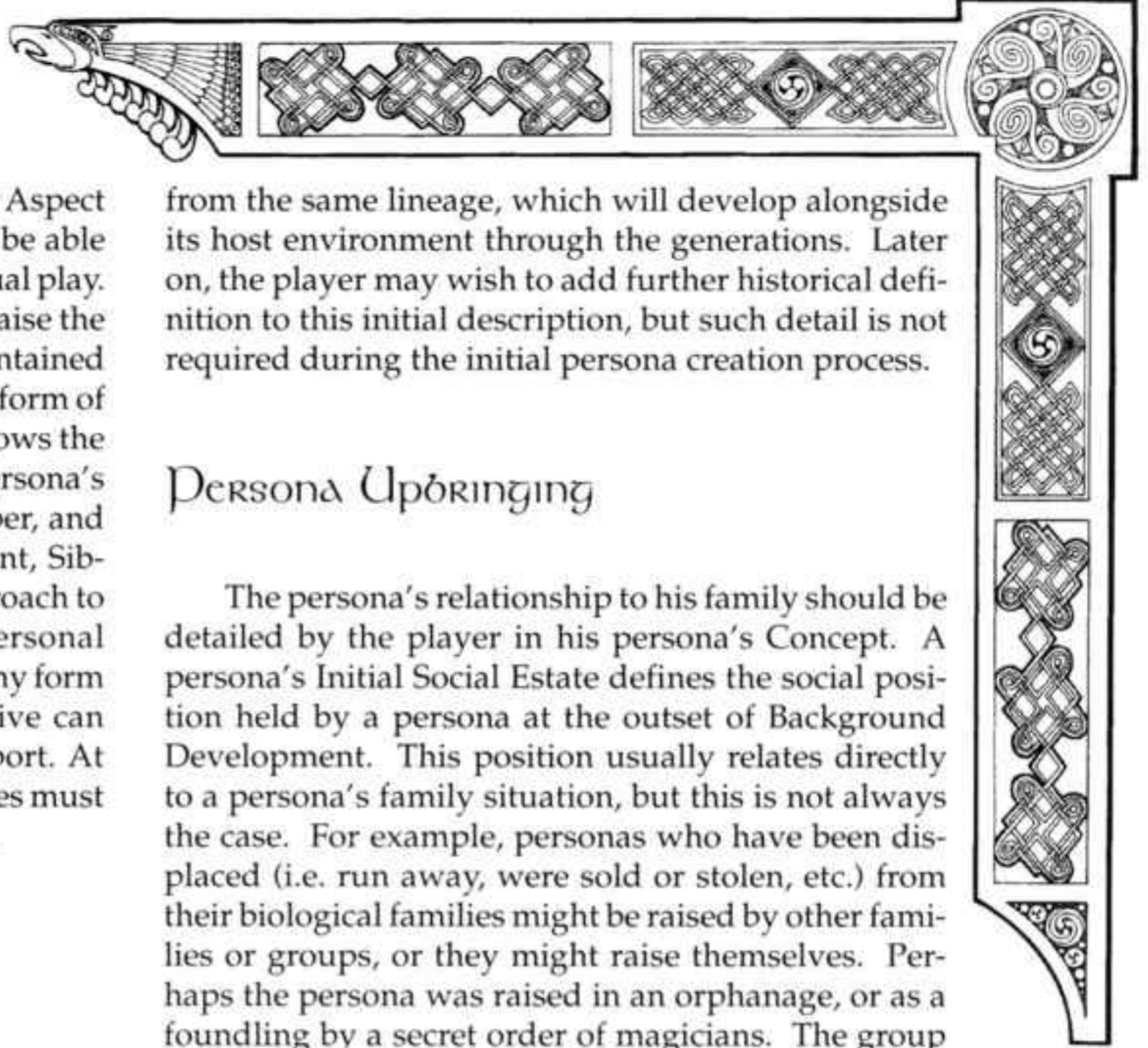
Mythguides should note that much of the material presented in this chapter is optional. Detailed family relationships can enhance the development of Interactive Histories and Perpetual Genealogies in *Aria Time*, but they are not required for effective play. If your Canticle stresses individual persona development, family description can be kept to a minimum (although you should give lineage development a try - it adds a new dimension to the game).

☉ The Family ☉

Considerations of family and kin relationships represent important aspects of many Canticles and Arias. Social considerations and consequences are often taken more seriously when they can affect people close to an individual. The existence of a kinship group or family enhances a persona's relationship with his environment, and knowledge of a family history gives the persona a better sense of his place within the environment. The persona might be called upon to avenge an ancient family wrong or continue a generation-spanning feud. He might be required to revitalize the ailing family estates. Family relationships add another dimension to the roleplaying experience; they immediately place the persona amidst an extended personal and familial history that is already unfolding.

Personas are encouraged to track and continue lineages throughout entire Arias or Interactive Histories. Descendants of an original persona are able to carry on traditions and plans begun by the founders of the dynasty. Fathers can pass valuable heirlooms on to their sons and daughters; children can inherit family wealth and Renown. Hereditary traits are preserved through the centuries. Most Arias last far longer than a single lifetime, and actions committed by a persona during his travels may come back to haunt his children or grandchildren. Depending on the nature of a particular Aria, the establishment and development of a lineage or dynasty may be at least as important as developing an individual persona.

Finally, a family can also provide resources to a needy persona. Access to family help depends on a persona's Estrangement and Sibling Rank, and will change from one environment to another. Family



members can provide unique opportunities for Aspect and Vocational development. They may also be able to provide ongoing aid to a persona during actual play. For example, a wealthy merchant is trying to raise the capital to start a caravan company. He has maintained an excellent relationship with his uncle (in the form of a Valuable Ally Background Aspect), and borrows the money from him. Such aid depends on a persona's relationship with the relative or family member, and can be affected by many factors (Estrangement, Sibling Rank, Family Orientation, a culture's approach to family and status, Heritage Orientation, personal Motivations, etc.). If granted, the aid can take any form (although it can never exceed what the relative can reasonably offer), from money to military support. At the Mythguide's option, all such aid possibilities must be chosen in the form of Background Aspects.

from the same lineage, which will develop alongside its host environment through the generations. Later on, the player may wish to add further historical definition to this initial description, but such detail is not required during the initial persona creation process.

⑥ Creating a Family ⑥

Persona Upbringing

A player should begin with a general Family Concept and move on from there. Concepts can be as general or as detailed as the player wants, but they should always establish some initial direction. A sample Concept could read: Julian's family is close-knit and aware of their ancient shame. The secret is passed from one generation to the next, awaiting one with the courage to put an end to the suffering. The player has established an interesting and mysterious basis for both his family history and his persona's initial development. Note that he also wrote a Family Background Aspect (Family Secret) into his Concept.

The persona's relationship to his family should be detailed by the player in his persona's Concept. A persona's Initial Social Estate defines the social position held by a persona at the outset of Background Development. This position usually relates directly to a persona's family situation, but this is not always the case. For example, personas who have been displaced (i.e. run away, were sold or stolen, etc.) from their biological families might be raised by other families or groups, or they might raise themselves. Perhaps the persona was raised in an orphanage, or as a founding by a secret order of magicians. The group or family who raises the persona gives him his Early Development opportunities and his initial Status Archetype.

Although persona families normally represent a persona's close or nuclear family, families can also consist of members or groups who are biologically unrelated to a persona. For instance, a persona could be orphaned at a young age or his natural parents could abandon him. When creating a family, it is important to remember that you are creating the family or group who raised the persona. This usually means a persona's natural family, but the Mythguide should not be afraid to explore other, more interesting avenues.

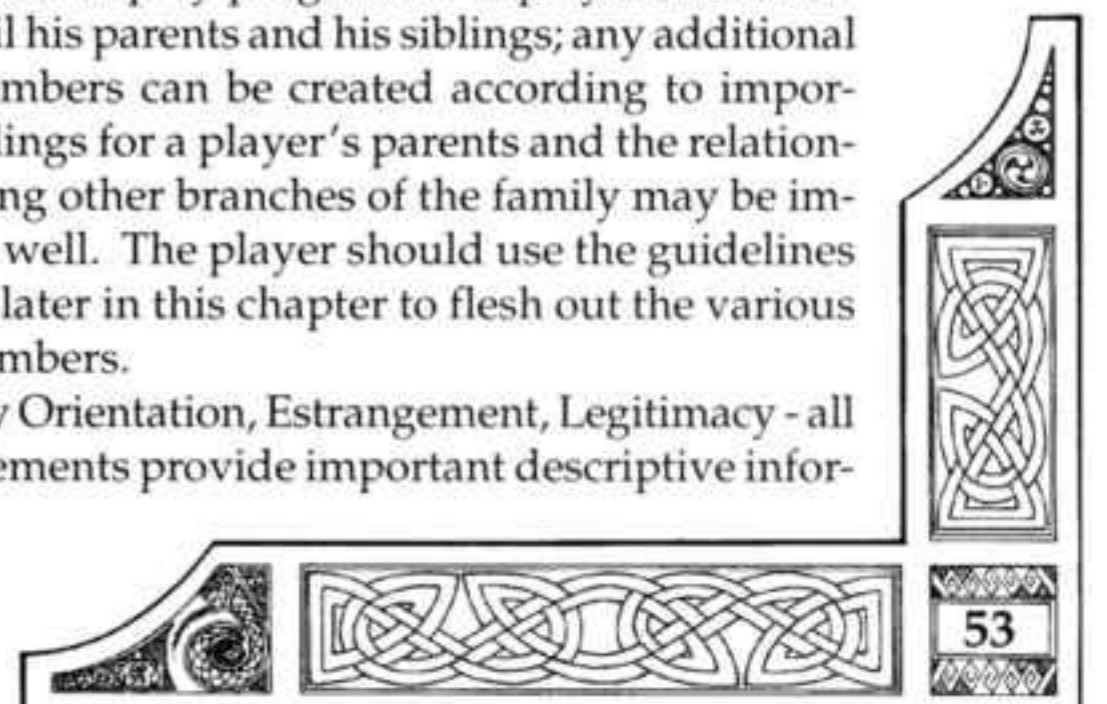
The player should always note the group, organization, or family by whom the persona was raised. The persona might wish to avoid the natural family (if he were adopted, found, or fostered), or he might go in search of his true heritage. If more than one family is going to play a major role in a persona's life, the Mythguide might wish to detail both families. If only one family is created, it is always the family from which the persona derives his initial Status, Family Orientation, Sibling Rank, Estrangement, and Inheritance (whether this is the natural family or not).

If family and lineage are downplayed in the Cantic, the Family Concept may be all that ever gets detailed. However, since lineage and dynastic considerations become important elements in many Arias (in the form of Perpetual Genealogies), the player might wish to expand the Concept with a description of the family, its members, its Background Aspects, and its Motivations. The family becomes a permanent facet of its environment; one persona after another can come

Family History and Design

The player should detail the important current members of his family and any initial historical information that he deems appropriate. Further history can be developed as play progresses. A player should always detail his parents and his siblings; any additional family members can be created according to importance. Siblings for a player's parents and the relationships among other branches of the family may be important as well. The player should use the guidelines presented later in this chapter to flesh out the various family members.

Family Orientation, Estrangement, Legitimacy - all of these elements provide important descriptive infor-

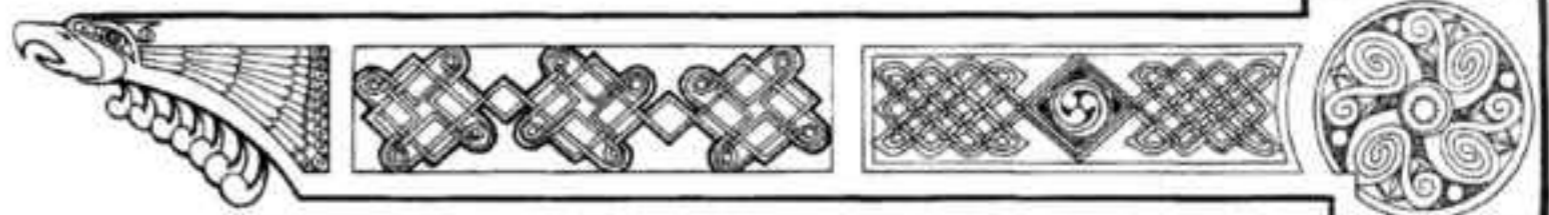


Determining Persona Kinship/Family Relations (Interaction Point Cost Table)

<i>Elements of Kinship</i>	<i>Ruling*</i>	<i>Family Status Archetype (Head of Family)</i>			
		<i>Privileged</i>	<i>Professional</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Marginal</i>
Persona Legitimacy					
Legitimate	0	0	0	0	0
Illegitimate (Acknowledged)	-1/0**	-1/0**	-1/0**	-1/0**	-1/0**
Illigitimate (Unacknowledged)	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3
Family Orientation	Family Orientation possibilities include Embrace, Refuse, Select, Suppress, Consider, and Abstain. Player selects Family Orientation and describes its effect on the other Kinship Elements -- no cost, Archetype Irrelevant.				
Sibling Rank					
Inheritor	10	8	5	3	1
Penultimate	5	4	2	1	0
Non-Inheritor	3	2	0	0	0
Estrangement					
Favorite	5	4	3	2	1
Good	3	2	1	1	0
Average	0	0	0	0	0
Poor	-1	-2	-1	-1	-1
Black Sheep	-3	-4	-3	-2	-2
Family Renown	Player selects Family Renown (Renown Value 1 - 10)-- no cost, Archetype Irrelevant.				
Reaction Orientation					
Favorable	5	4	3	2	1
Average	3	2	0	0	0
Unfavorable	0	0	-1	-2	-3

* The Ruling Archetype costs apply only if the Persona's social Environment possesses a Ruling Class. In certain Societies, such as Primitive or Democratic Societies which often have no 'Ruling Class', Ruling Archetype Costs may substitute for Ruling Agency costs. In all other cases, Mythguide must determine the Cost for purchasing a Family Head which is a member of the Ruling Agency.

** If Acknowledged offspring are eligible to inherit in the Society, the cost is 0. If Acknowledged Illegitimate offspring are not eligible to inherit, Persona receives an Interaction Point award of 1 for purchasing this Legitimacy aspect.



mation about an individual and their relationship to the family. Mortality is another important consideration, and should be detailed where appropriate. Who is alive and who isn't? When and how did they die? Finally, the effects of such historical details should be mentioned where appropriate. For example, did grandfather's criminal enterprises irreparably stain the family's honor (or did they just give the family a really poor Renown)? Do people still remember father's exploits in the City-State's High Council? The life of each family member can affect the family's Renown and history.

Family Motivations & Backgrounds

Families can also have their own Motivations and Background Aspects. These usually affect Family Renown, and are often determined by a family's history. Any Motivations or Personality Traits that apply on a personal level can be chosen for a family. Background Aspects can also be used to further define a family and give it a colorful history. For instance, a family could have a Valuable Ally, a Debt, or a dark Secret. Family Background Aspects help to describe the family's place in and relationship to its environment. The Background Aspects available as Family Background Aspects are detailed on the accompanying table.

Persona Relationships

A persona's family relationships are often very important in an environment. This is especially true because of the extended nature of most Arias; a persona's relationship to his family can affect his children's development opportunities.

Family Status

The first element that needs to be chosen by a persona is the Status of his family. Family Status corresponds to the Status Archetype of the head of the family, and indicates the Status Archetype that a member of the family will occupy at the beginning of their Background Development period. For example, if a persona's father were a high government official and a member of the Privileged Archetype, his family's Status would be Privileged.

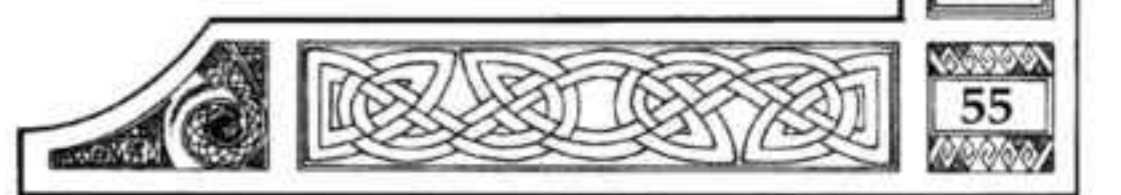
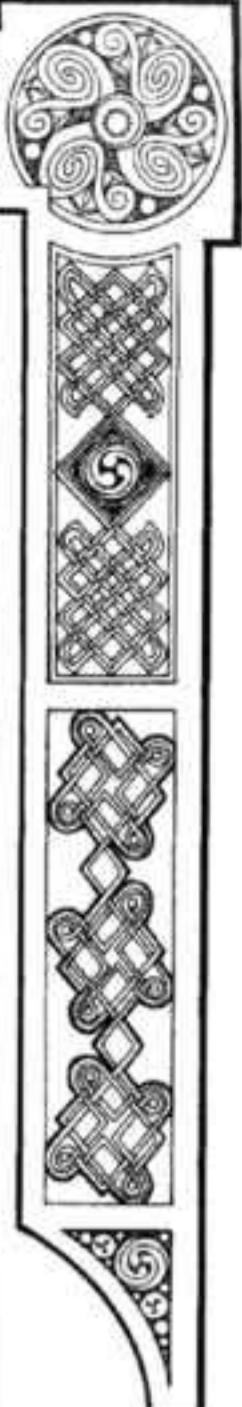
Family Backgrounds

Background	Description
Ordinary	Persona purchases Family Elements normally
Abandoned Orphaned Runaway Fostered Adopted	Persona's Family is lost, the purchase of Family Elements should reflect the fact that Persona has been Fostered or Adopted by another Family or Social Institution*. Depending on Age, Persona may opt to develop without familial aid.
Stolen or Enslaved	Family Situation is Special. Another Family or Social Institution* initially cares for Persona. The Persona's relationship to this 'Family' should be reflected in the purchase of Family Elements.

** Note: Whenever Personae are raised by Families other than their natural, biological parents, the purchase of Family Elements (Renown, Orientation, Reaction Orientation, Sibling Rank, Legitimacy, and Estrangement) should reflect the unusual upbringing. Personae who are Fostered may be sponsored by Social Institutions (Ecclesiastical, Esoteric, Military, etc.) instead of private Families. Adopted Personae usually find surrogate Families composed of Private citizens. For purposes of Family Background, any agency which consistently assists the Persona in its moral and financial development may be considered a 'Family'.*

Sample Background Motivations & Aspects

- Family Motivations (See Personality Traits)**
 Justice, Honor, Revenge, Generosity, Dishonesty, Perfidy, Loyalty, Bravery, Self-Preservation, etc.
 Motivations will be viewed either favorably or unfavorably depending on the specific culture and social environ.
- Family Background Aspects (See Background Aspects)**
 Material - Creditor, Debt, Heirloom, Holdings, Savings, Obligation, Unfavorable Inheritance, etc.
 Social - Ally, Contacts, Famous/Infamous Ancestor, Famous/Infamous Relation, Secret, Social Debt, Social Debt, Follower, Honored, Adversary, etc.
 Psychological - Acceptance, Addictive Personality, Insanity, Narcissism, Repulsion, etc.
 Physical - Ages Well/Poorly, Ferocity, Immunity, Unrealized Potential, Allergy, Disease, etc.
 Mental - Affinity, Berserk, Magical Talent, Learning Disability, Short Attention Span, etc.
 Spiritual - Fortune/Curse, Guardian/Watcher, etc.



Imberwyn Nobleman

HISTORY OF FIRIAN LITIGUS MENSINOPE II

Firian II is driven by the need to redeem his family's reputation which has been besmirched by the history of his ancestor, the Black Duke of Raensley. Raensly had three sons. The eldest delivered his legacy unto the Dasciney-Raensley family, the cousins of young Firian II. The second son, strong upholder of the Raensly name, died in the Gate Pass skirmish, reportedly acting as a hidden spy, in the opposing Eledu professional army. The third son, lord Firian I the blacksheep, served in the Imber conscript force, and survived the conflict to be driven from Alathel by his brothers who sought to kill him for slandering their father. Firian I fled toward the waste where he fathered a single daughter before dying in a suspicious hunting accident. His daughter Israine married the second son of a knight, Orin Mensinople the Kind. Orin and Israine bore four children - Orin II who ruined the estate, Litigus who carved new lands from the foot of the waste, Emereal who gave birth out of wedlock, and young Bisorn who died at birth.

Of the four siblings, Litigus was favored by his mother. Though she could not convince Orin to name Litigus as the Inheritor, she took Litigus into her confidence and impressed her family's history upon him. Attempting to redeem his mother's family name, Litigus spent his life fighting and negotiating with the nomads of the waste. He earned the respect of the Imberwyn locals but never gained the proper audience to redeem his mother's honor. Crushed, he retreated to his self-won fief and lost social standing when he married an Imberwyn noblewoman who had been orphaned and raised in the waste. Litigus sired Firian II, Dounelle, and Janus, dividing the inheritance but entrusting Firian II with the fief manor and family honor. Reflecting his father's desire to see the family honor redeemed, Firian II purchases the Social Aspect 'Valuable Information - family history' (purchased at half the normal cost - see Aspects Chapter) and the Personal Trait "obsession for Revenge" (derived from Family Renown Aspect of same name), both with the mythguide's approval.

Family Status is initially chosen by the player in accordance with his persona's Concept, and it governs the purchase of most of the other important persona family relationships (Legitimacy, Sibling Rank, and Estrangement). Because favorable family relationships benefit personas of higher Status Archetypes more than those in lower Archetypes, the Interaction Point costs have been altered to reflect this. Refer to the Determining Kinship table for the proper costs.

PERSONA LEGITIMACY

Players may wish to play a persona who is not a legitimate child, or whose initial family situation has been altered in some other fashion. Persona Legitimacy affects a persona's Background Development. An orphan might wish to go in search of his real parents. An unacknowledged bastard could attempt to ruin his father as revenge for not recognizing him. A fostered child might resent his original parents or attempt to escape from his foster parents. Any conceivable relationship is possible as long as it follows the general creation guidelines set forth in the Persona Concept. A persona's initial Status Archetype, Sibling Rank, and Estrangement depend largely upon Legitimacy.

There are three classes of Persona Legitimacy - Legitimate, Illegitimate (Acknowledged Bastard), and Illegitimate(Unacknowledged Bastard).

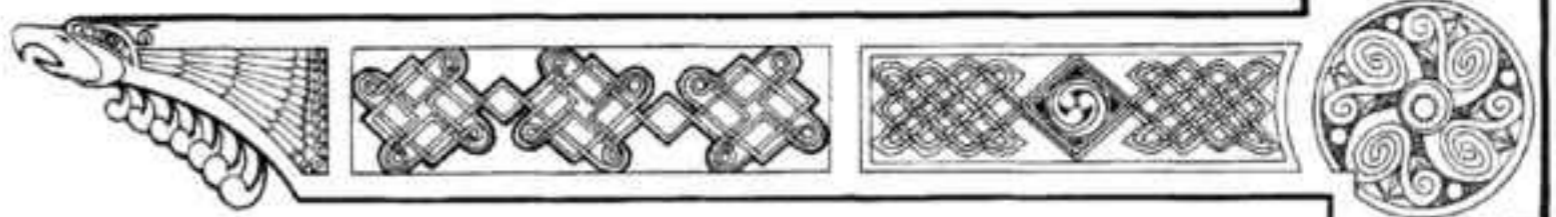
Legitimate The persona was born under accepted cultural or social conventions (i.e. within a marriage) and is eligible to inherit.

Illegitimate (Acknowledged Bastard) The persona was born outside accepted cultural or social conventions, but is accepted as a member of the family. Although the persona is accepted by the family, he or she may not be eligible to inherit in some environments.

Illegitimate (Unacknowledged Bastard) The persona was born outside accepted cultural or social conventions, and is not recognized as a member of his family. The persona cannot inherit.

FAMILY ORIENTATION

Every persona has a different outlook toward their family and its Motivations. Personas may support the



family's general intentions, or they might find them reprehensible. It depends on both the family's and the persona's views and beliefs. Family Orientation is described in exactly the same manner as Cultural Orientation - *Embrace, Refuse, Select, Suppress, Consider, Abstain* - and is handled in the same way. For example, a persona who Refuses his family will not gain many benefits from Family Renown and won't be able to choose any favorable family-related Background Aspects. Family Orientation becomes more of an important consideration in higher Status Archetypes.

A persona can *Embrace* his family's views and intentions. Such personas hold and support beliefs that complement the prevailing designs and motivations of their family. These personas have at least two family-related Motivations (one of which is often a Passion). Of course, a persona may also have additional Motivations based on family or background. Most individuals who wish to Inherit or someday head a family will Embrace their family's views.

A persona who *Refuses* their family opposes most of the views and beliefs that their family embraces. They never have common Motivations, and they will always have at least one opposing Motivation. Depending on the nature of the family and the persona's Estrangement, the persona might be shut out of the family as a result of his Orientation. Inheritors or those with favorable Estrangement rarely Refuse their family.

A persona who *Selects* his beliefs chooses from among the components of his family's views and intentions. He may agree with some beliefs and disagree with others, but his views are generally compatible with those of the family. Such a persona always has a single Motivation in common with the family, although he can also have an opposing Motivation (which is rarely higher than the complementary Motivation). This is the most common Family Orientation..

A persona can also *Suppress* his views. The persona can either agree or disagree with his family's beliefs. However, for some reason he has chosen to keep his true beliefs secret. The persona chooses one or more surface Motivations to disguise his actual views. The Mythguide should determine the ramifications of a discovery of the persona's real beliefs (perhaps an Inheritor will lose his Inheritance). In certain situations a persona may actually convince himself of a surface belief. A persona who Suppresses his Family Orientation will have at least one hidden Motivation and at least one apparent Motivation.

A persona who *Considers* his views reserves judgment on most crucial family matters. The persona has his own beliefs but is still unsure of them. As a result he takes no Motivations that are a direct result of fam-

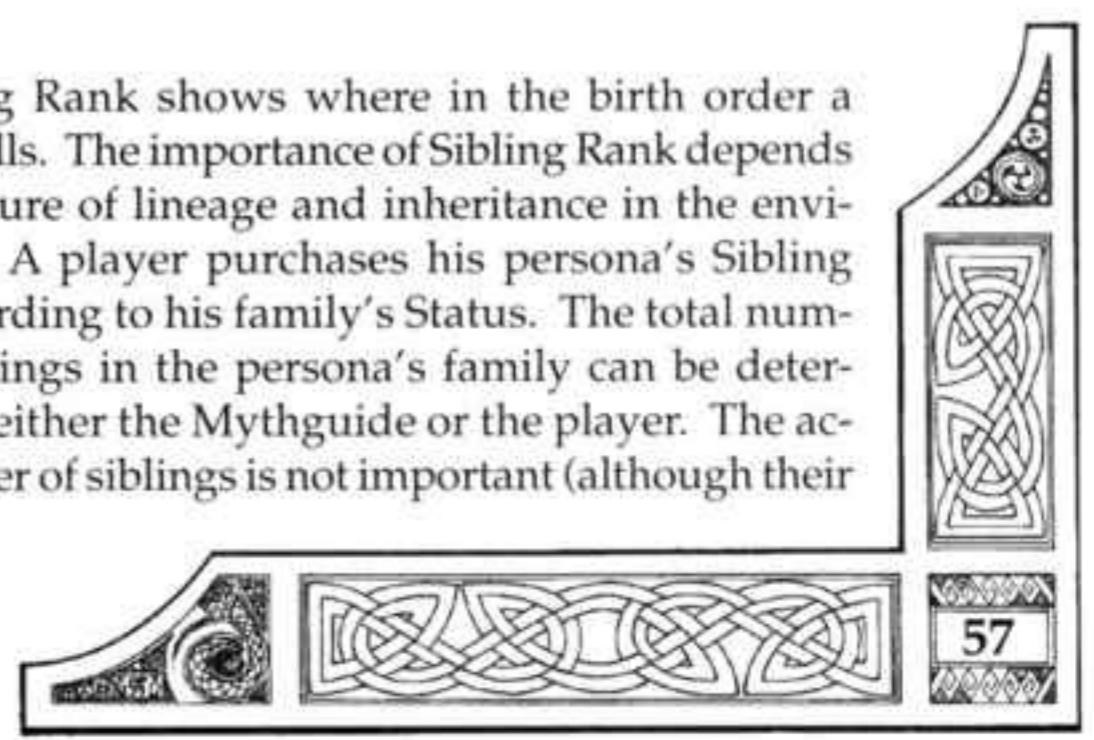
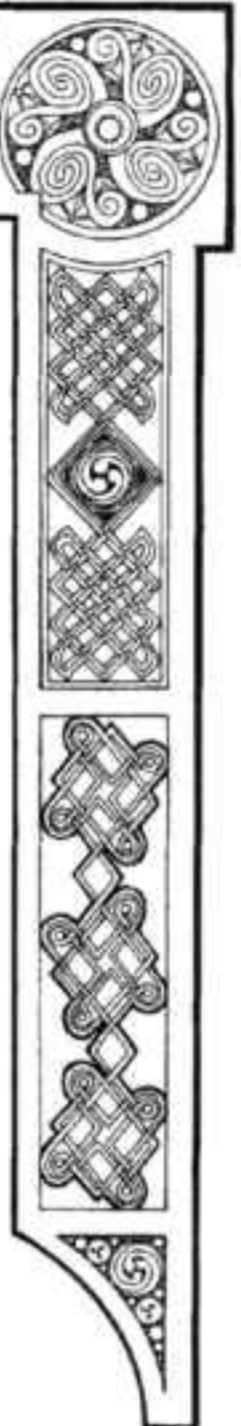


ily influences. This Family Orientation is often appropriate for younger personas; it allows a player to develop his persona's relationship to his family over time through actual roleplaying. If the persona's Orientation changes during play, the player should note the change and choose any appropriate Motivations.

Finally, a persona can *Abstain* from an overt Family Orientation. An Abstaining persona is either removed from such considerations or simply does not care about them. The persona might take no interest in his family whatsoever, or he may have been cast out for some reason. Black Sheep personas often have this Family Orientation.

Sibling Rank

Sibling Rank shows where in the birth order a persona falls. The importance of Sibling Rank depends on the nature of lineage and inheritance in the environment. A player purchases his persona's Sibling Rank according to his family's Status. The total number of siblings in the persona's family can be determined by either the Mythguide or the player. The actual number of siblings is not important (although their





gender may be), but the persona's place among those siblings is.

Sibling Rank is divided into three possibilities - Inheritor, Penultimate, and Non-Inheritor. An Inheritor is the first eligible child in line to inherit from the appropriate parent, parents, or other family member. The Inheritor's exact place in the birth order depends upon a society's or culture's active inheritance patterns. For example, if a system of primogeniture is in use, the Inheritor is the first eligible child in the birth order. If a system of ultimogeniture is in use, the Inheritor is the last eligible child in the birth order. The term 'eligible child' refers to those children who are capable of inheriting according to an environment's inheritance patterns. For instance, only males may inherit in a Patriarchal society, while either sex may inherit in a Nondominant society.

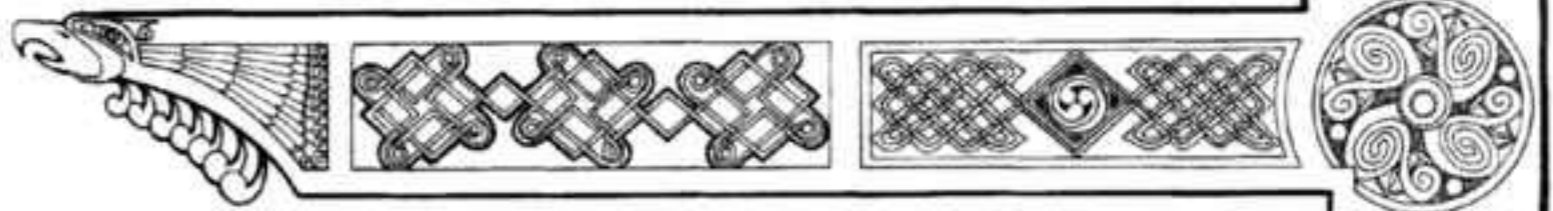
A Penultimate sibling is the second eligible child in the line of inheritance. If something should happen to the Inheritor, this persona inherits instead. The appropriate situation (i.e. the death of the older sibling) could be effected by using a Situational Window of Opportunity during Background Development.

The Non-Inheritor Sibling Rank includes all non-inheriting offspring, regardless of the environment's inheritance patterns. For instance, a family exists in a patriarchal society with inheritance based on primogeniture. A persona who is the third son would be a Non-Inheritor (as would a fourth, fifth, etc. son). The second son is the Penultimate sibling, and the first son is the Inheritor. It does not matter where daughters fall in the society since kinship is patriarchal.

Inheritor An Inheritor gains the full benefits of a Favorable Inheritance Background Aspect or the full disadvantage of an Unfavorable Inheritance Aspect if either is chosen. This Sibling Rank also gives a -1 modifier to the Difficulty of a loan approval Trial (if the family has the Good Credit Rating Aspect). An Inheritor also has greater access to any Valuable Ally, Social Creditor, or Valuable Information Family Aspects, assuming the persona's Estrangement is Average or better.

If the persona actually inherits, he may also become responsible for any of the following Family Aspects: Valuable Ally, Social Creditor, Valuable Information, Social Responsibility, Dependent, Adversary, Social Debt, Secret, or Social Irresponsibility.

Penultimate A Penultimate sibling receives partial benefits from the Favorable Inheritance Aspect. It also gives a -1 Difficulty modifier to a loan approval (again, if the family possesses the Good Credit Reputation Aspect). The persona receives partial disadvan-



tages from the Unfavorable Inheritance Aspect, and has slightly increased access to the Valuable Ally, Social Creditor, and Valuable Information Family Aspects (such access depends upon Estrangement, of course). A Penultimate sibling may inherit part of the effects of the Family Aspects listed above.

Non-Inheritor A Non-Inheritor receives only minimal benefits from the Favorable Inheritance Aspect, and enjoys normal access to relevant Family Aspects. They may also gain a small portion of the responsibility for certain Family Aspects, and receive only minimal disadvantages from the Unfavorable Inheritance Aspect.

Estrangement

Estrangement represents a family's relationship with an individual family member. The member's Family Orientation always affects Estrangement. A persona's Estrangement determines the esteem in which he is held by his family and the aid he can expect to receive from them. Estrangement is divided into five categories: Black Sheep, Poor, Average, Good, and Favorite.

Black Sheep The persona has little or no relationship with his family, and may even be actively disliked by them. Either way, the persona cannot purchase any favorable family-related Background Aspects. Also, the persona is not able to benefit from any Background Aspects possessed by the family. A Black Sheep is not able to benefit from his family's Renown.

Poor The persona has either a poor or distant relationship with his family. As a result, the persona may not purchase the Favorable Inheritance Aspect. The persona's access to Family Background Aspects is limited, and the persona might not gain full benefits from Family Renown.

Average The persona has a normal relationship with his family. Any Aspects and relations are handled normally, and the persona gains the full benefit of Family Renown.

Good The persona has an above average relationship with his family, which may afford him certain advantages or special considerations. If the persona has a Favorable Inheritance Aspect, he can expect to receive a choice portion of any legacy (although prob-

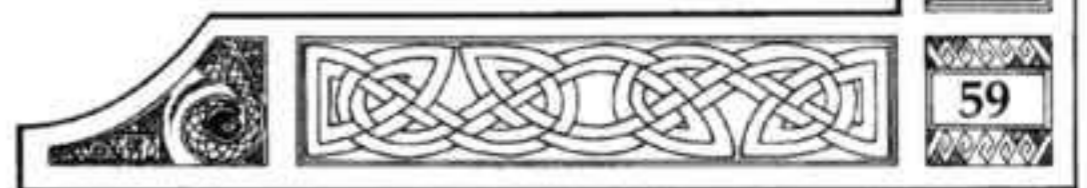
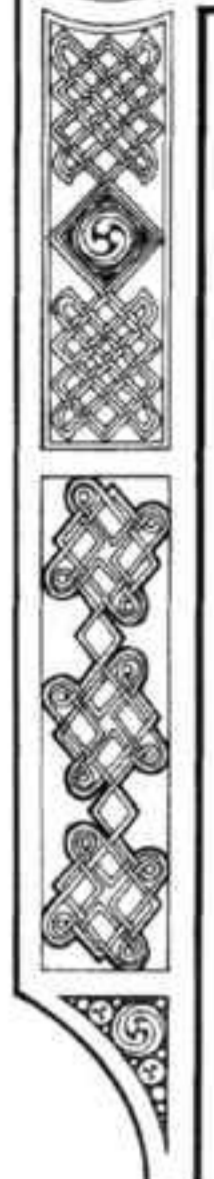
Imðerwyn Nobleman

FIRIAN'S INHERITANCE

When Litigus expired, he divided his wealth among his three children. Firian II was declared the heir to the small manor house and fief lands, but held responsible for the welfare of his younger siblings. In addition to the small estate, Litigus willed that Firian receive the full contents of his war closet. The contents of the closet included the following: one chain hauberk, one steel reinforced half helm, several tabards bearing the family coat of armes, a kite shield bearing the same, three longswords including his favored bastard sword forged of swan steel, a small arming sword of good manufacture, a ceremonial axe of peace (given by a prominent nomadic clanhead), his personal diary detailing his involvement with the nomadic clans, and a vellum scroll written in his mother's hand which recounts the familial history in depth. In addition to these items, Firian inherited several horses, one of which may be considered a medium war horse. Overall, the Mythguide decides that this represents an average inheritance from a rustic country knight and costs Firian only half of the normal activation costs for inheriting during background development.

ably not as much as an Inheritor). In addition, the persona has increased access to Family Background Aspects and gains the full benefit of Family Renown.

Favorite The persona has an exceptional relationship with his family - in their eyes, he can do no wrong. He is given special attention and advantages, and benefits significantly from a Favorable Inheritance, possibly to the extent of displacing older siblings (this may depend on social or familial custom). The persona enjoys favored access to any Family Background Aspects and gains full benefits from the family's Renown.





INHERITANCE

Several primary factors bear directly on the question of persona inheritance. An environment's inheritance patterns define eligibility and are affected by a persona's Family Orientation, Estrangement, and Sibling Rank. Once a player has determined his persona's status as an eligible inheritor, the circumstances surrounding the inheritance process itself need to be determined.

The most important circumstance is the mortality of those from whom the persona will Inherit (often one or both parents). Depending on an environment's inheritance patterns, this may be an important event in the persona's life. It costs a player five Interaction Points to activate a persona's inheritance during either Early or Background Development. After play begins, it is left to the Mythguide to determine inheritance possibility and parental mortality. Remember that a persona must have valid family connections in order to inherit; a player can't spend five points to inherit if there is no foundation (if the persona grew up on the streets, for example).

Impartible Inheritance

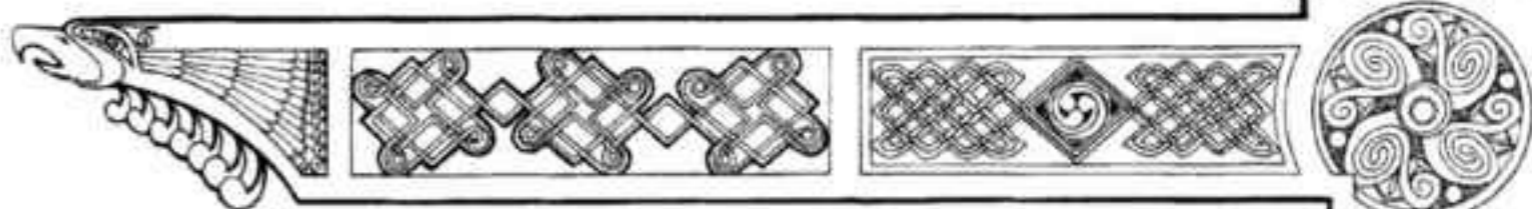
In an Impartible system of inheritance, the bulk of an individual estate passes to a single eligible Inheritor. If a Narrative Determination system is being used, the player can simply detail the circumstances surrounding the inheritance according to his persona's

Concept. If an Interactive system is being used, inheritance depends upon the persona's Sibling Rank and the inheritance-related Aspects chosen. It may be possible for Non-Inheritors with Good or Favorite Estrangement to receive small parts of an estate.

If a player wishes to alter the line of succession during Background Development, a Window of Opportunity must be used. The expenditure of a Window normally moves a persona one step closer to the Inheritor position. An elder sibling may have died or been disgraced. A parent may have disappeared. The nature and cause of the improved position should be explained by the player.

Partible Inheritance

In an environment that practices Partible inheritance, an estate is divided in some manner among the eligible survivors. This division can be totally equitable, or it can be modified by cultural and social considerations. Estrangement and Family Orientation are particularly important in Partible systems, since the favor a persona enjoys within his family dictates how much of the overall inheritance he receives. After taking into account the various elements of the Kinship framework presented in this chapter, the Mythguide should be able to come up with an equitable and narratively supported decision regarding inheritance division among a persona's siblings.



The Form of Inheritance

Regardless of a society's Inheritance patterns, a single question remains the same: what does the inheritance consist of? A family's inheritance is always considered to be average for its Archetype, unless the inheritance is modified by a Favorable or Unfavorable Inheritance Background Aspect. The Mythguide must decide, based on a family's position in an environment and the environment's economic system, exactly what 'average' means. For example, a persona who inherits from the Privileged Archetype in a primitive society might receive five elk hides, an iron knife, and several barrels of whale oil. A Privileged persona in a civilized society might receive a specified value of silver and pewter plate. The nature of wealth and relative value in a particular environment determine the substance of an individual inheritance.

If a persona inherits during Early or Background Development, the inheritance is considered to be average unless a modifying Aspect is purchased. Such Aspects include Favorable and Unfavorable Inheritance, Collection, and Heirloom. If the persona should inherit after actual play begins, inheritance is roleplayed and no aspects need to be purchased.

Family Renown

Family Renown in Aria represents the esteem in which a family is held by its social peers. In this context, social peers are defined by the Status Archetype into which the head of the family falls (the family's Status). In a patriarchal culture or society, the head of the family is invariably male. If this man is a member of the Privileged Archetype, his family's social peers constitute other families in the environment who have Privileged men as their patriarchs. These families are considered social equals, and their actions are often compared with one another in a relative fashion.

Family Renown is defined by a value from one to ten in the same manner as personal Renown. Its reach is also handled in a manner similar to Renown; Family Renown is effective only in its own region or area. Once a family member travels beyond the radius of their Family Renown, the Family Renown can no longer be used to influence Trials or interactions.

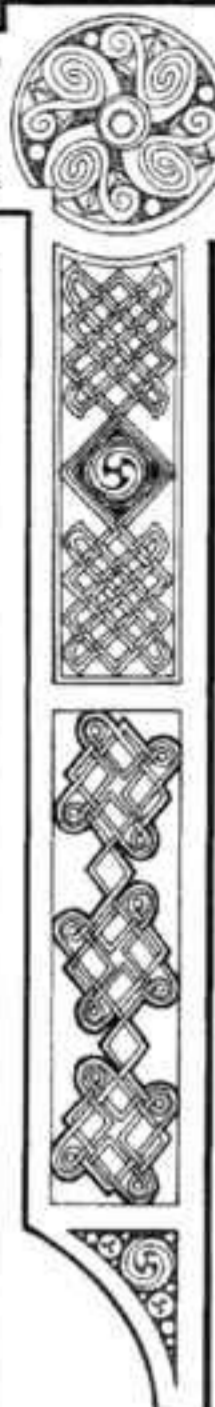
The Family Renown value is further qualified by Renown Aspects and a general Reaction Orientation - Favorable, Average, and Unfavorable - based on the nature of those Aspects. Family Renown Aspects de-

Firnost Skald

Faethelstaed the Fairy-child

It is obvious from her appearance that Faethelstaed is not a true daughter of the heath tribes. Brought to the Northmen by Andrulok the Skald, the legitimacy of Faethelstaed's birth is unknown. Fyrhaeth of the Thyren Ash Clan adopted Faethelstaed and named her Fairy-child in the Northman tradition. The Northmen are an accepting race, and within the Thyren Ash tribe the legendary fairy-folk as revered as ancestral benefactors. As a result, Faethelstaed's estrangement is Good, and according to the tribal custom of partible inheritance she is eligible to share in her sibling's familial inheritance when Fyrhaeth joins his forefathers in the afterlife.

Both the mythguide and the player decide that truth behind Faethelstaed's birth should be detailed, but the player wishes it to remain a mystery to himself and the ensemble. The mythguide assumes the burden of detailing her history but examines the player's Persona Concept for ideas. The mythguide likes the second explanation presented in the Concept (that of a fairy-child) and decides that Faethelstaed is the daughter of Andrulok and Imealstraa, noble of the mythical fairy-folk. The fairy-folk dwell in a magical realm, and being less tolerant of half-breeds, demand that Faethelstaed be returned to the mortal world after her birth. Imealstaa contacts Andrulok, and the rest is history. Andrulok brings her to his native people in the Thyren Forest, but his vocation requires that he continue to wander from village to village singing of news and Northmen history to his people. When Faethelstaed is old enough to join him in such a life, he retrieves her. Seeing her pain, he is yet unable to explain himself and decides to allow Faethelstaed to discover her heritage by chance. 'Leaving matters to Fate,' is his reason for not telling Faethelstaed the truth of her heritage.





scribe what a particular family is specifically known for, while the Orientations show the nature of the Renown in the environment and represent the general sentiment directed toward a family by its social peers.

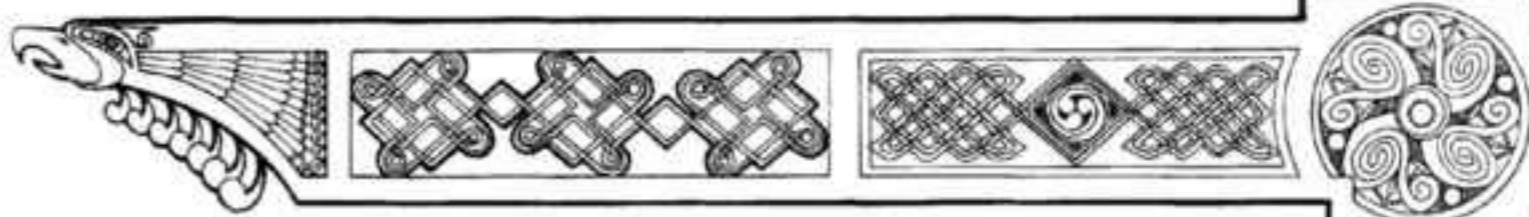
The social forces at work in an environment will affect a family's Reaction Orientation. For example, a family with a Ruling (member of the Ruling Status Archetype) patriarch is looked upon Favorably in a Democratic society because its members are unusually generous to the poor on holy days. The family's social peers respect its charitable intentions, and the family has a Family Renown of four (generous to lower Archetypes). However, the same family transposed into a Feudal society might be looked upon Unfavorably by its peers. The family's generosity to its peasants could breed rebellion among the peasants who dwell on its neighbors' lands, since neighboring families happen to be far less generous. Reaction Orientation depends on common environmental perceptions and conventions, and is usually dictated by the Motivations and Orientations (Heritage, Cultural, etc.) of other members of the environment.

REACTION ORIENTATION

Reaction Orientation represents an abstract view of an individual family and its Renown in an environment. This view is always based on the accepted values of the environment. For example, a family with a Renown of three (cruelty and treachery) could have a Favorable Orientation in a dark environment and an Unfavorable Orientation in a considerably more ethical environment. A single family can have different Reaction Orientations among different environments (in a manner similar to Relative Status).

Favorable A Favorable Orientation indicates an above average regard, acceptance, and respect for the family by the other families within its Status Archetype. It is easier for the family to place children in vocations or arrange marriages for them from among the family's social peers. The family is admired by its peers and may be looked toward for leadership. Players are encouraged to purchase a family-related favorable Social Background Aspect for a persona from a family with this Orientation.

Average An Average Reaction Orientation indicates normal levels of respect and regard. The family deals with its social peers on a relatively equal footing, without the special favors or relationships a family with a Favorable Orientation might come to expect.



The family maintains normal relations with its peers, but it may look to a prominent or Favorable family for leadership in times of social crisis.

Unfavorable An Unfavorable Reaction Orientation indicates a below average level of respect, acceptance, and regard for the family by its social peers. The family is not treated equably by other families in its Archetype - it may be difficult to place children in apprenticeships or to arrange marriages. Social relations are not conducted normally. The family is disliked or even hated by its peers for some reason, and this inherent non-acceptance affects its position in the society. Players are encouraged to purchase family-related unfavorable Social Background Aspects.

Changing Family Renown

Since Family Renown is such an arbitrary concept, its levels change as time passes. Old wrongs and feuds are forgotten, new generations branch off in varied directions, and new successes and failures radically alter the fortunes of even the oldest families. The principal means of altering Family Renown is through active play and interaction. Depending on what sort of role a persona's family plays in the Narrative Environment, the family may develop on its own under the stewardship of either the Mythguide or the player. The extent of this growth and its detail depends on the type of Canticle being run.

Actions of Family Members

First, actions taken by the family as a whole and by individual members in particular will affect Family Renown. The Mythguide might decide that only actions involving the persona who is the family member affect Family Renown. Alternately, the Mythguide may continue to develop the persona's family even when the persona is not directly involved in the family's activities. In these situations, the persona should keep himself apprised of family news and developments. The method of assigning and altering Family Renown depends on the individual Canticle and its needs.

If one or more family members do something of public note in the name of the family, the actions can affect Family Renown. Witnesses to the actions are required, and the environment's rumor mill often does the rest. For example, a house patriarch gives gener-

Family Renown

<i>Renown Value</i>	<i>Value Description</i>
1	Family known only by immediate peers and neighbors
2	Family known in immediate neighborhood/peer group
3	Family known by peers in district (large city) or within the settlement limits (town, village)
4	Family known throughout settlement, including the immediate surroundings
5	Family known by peers throughout the region/province
6	Family known by peers throughout several regions/provinces
7	Family known by peers throughout country, or family renown extends into next higher Status Archetype
8	Family known by peers throughout country/nation. Renown extends into next higher and next lower Status Archetypes
9	Family Renown extends into all Status Archetypes within country/nation.
10	Family Renown extends into foreign countries/regions

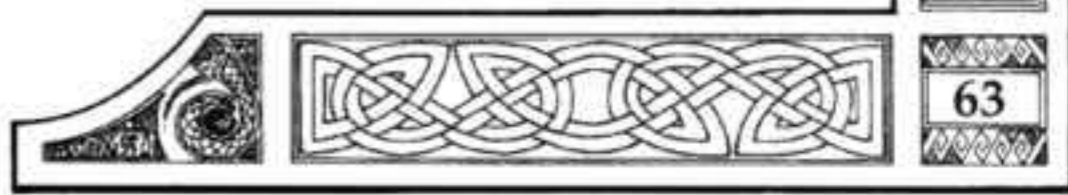
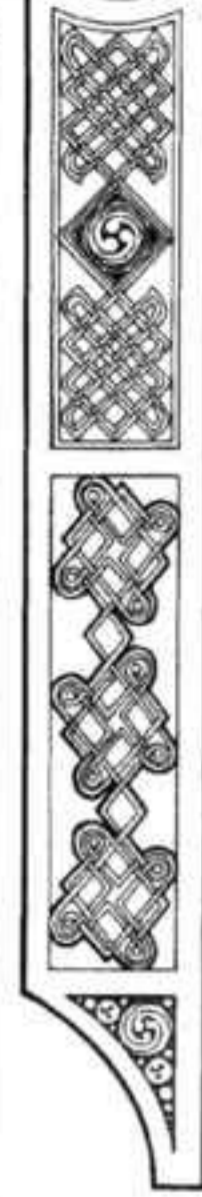
Sample Renown Aspects (Favorable, Average, or Unfavorable depending on perception of peers)

Aspects (Families may be known for Family Aspects)
ex. Infamous Ancestor, Valuable Information

Traits (Families may be known for Family Traits similar to Persona Passions/Motivations)
ex. Avarice, Greed, Honor, Vengeance, Justice

Family Histories (any type of Historical act/event)
ex. Political Treachery, Valiance, Exploration, Colonization, Innovation, etc.)

Current Events (Family role in Social Interaction)
ex. Family member a known criminal, lunatic, hero
Family engaged in important dealings/event



Conferring Renown

Family Renown = Renown of Family Head, and is defined by Family Renown Aspects.

Persona Renown is based on Family Renown Value + modifiers.

<i>Persona Relation</i>	<i>Persona Renown Award*</i>
Sibling Rank	
Inheritor	-1
Penultimate	-2
Non-Inheritor	-4
Estrangement	
Favorite	0
Good	0
Average	-1
Poor	-2
Blacksheep	-5

<i>Family Orientation</i>	<i>Family Renown Award**</i>
Embrace	-1/0
Refuse	none
Select	-2
Suppress	Mythguide discretion
Consider	-2
Abstain	-3

* Innate Persona Renown is derived from Family Renown. If Family Renown increases, Person gains benefits according to Sibling Rank and Estrangement.

** Personas may only confer Renown on Family if they have greater personal Renown. Personas who inherit and become nominal family heads confer entire Personal Renown to family (see top). A Persona's Family Orientation limits the amount of his/her Renown which transfers to Family.

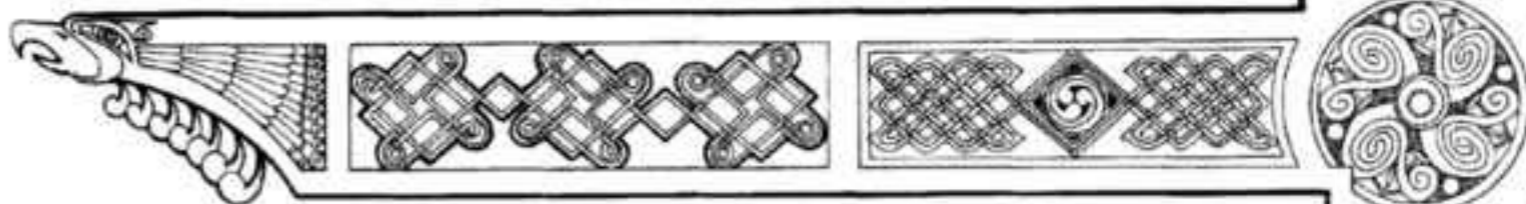
ously to a local hospital run by a religious order and acquires a reputation of piety for his family. A shop owner saves money to move to another community, but his misunderstanding peers assign his family a miserly reputation. When Family Renown rises in this manner, the new Renown Aspect always relates to the event or action that caused the change in Renown.

Although Renown is often developed narratively, the Mythguide can also require Renown Trials. If a situation occurs that might raise Family Renown (regardless of whether its Aspects are favorable or unfavorable), a Trial based on the Charisma of the head of the family is made. The current Renown level is added to the Trial's Difficulty as a modifier. Renown can also develop as the result of rumor. The Mythguide should apply modifiers based on the environment and the individual circumstances, but should allow Trials for gossip-based Renown development. Families can refute such Renown through action.

Conferring Renown

Family Renown affects the personal Renown of individual family members in accordance with each member's Estrangement and Sibling Rank. For example, a Favorite Inheritor will enjoy more benefits from Family Renown than a Penultimate Black Sheep. A family member's personal Renown can also affect Family Renown, in either a positive or negative manner, according to the family member's Family Orientation. For example, a persona whose Family Orientation is Embrace develops a high Renown for smuggling and double dealing. Although his family has remained on the level in their own trading concerns, the persona's Renown overshadows his family's Renown to such a degree that they develop a Renown Aspect of untrustworthy. The Mythguide should describe these interactions as they occur.

When Renown is being transferred, the party conferring the benefits (or drawbacks) has the greater Renown. A persona's ability to confer increased Renown on his family depends on the persona's attitude toward his family (his Family Orientation). A persona who Refuses his family will not give them any benefits. A family's ability to confer Renown depends on their view of the family member (determined by Estrangement and Sibling Rank). If they want nothing to do with a family member, that individual receives few benefits. The personal Renown of the head of the family always coincides with Family Renown, while other members of the family benefit from Family Renown according to their position. The circumstances



surrounding an individual family or situation often affect the outcome of such social and familial influence. The accompanying table discusses the transferal of Renown.

Acquiring Family Renown

Family Renown is initially chosen in the same manner as the Status Archetype for the head of the family. It does not have to be purchased, but it should complement the Family Concept. Family Renown above four or five will be very rare and should be explained carefully. The Mythguide should not allow players to simply state: "My persona's family has a Renown of nine." They have to offer a rational and interesting explanation; if they can link a high Renown to a colorful history, then by all means let them take it. Just remember that famous families and individuals often make the best targets...

Although most family-related developments should be roleplayed, the Mythguide might decide that a persona can expend Myth Points during play to increase his family's Renown. Certain stipulations could be placed on this allowance, such as the persona's current Family Orientation and Estrangement. However, no conditions have to exist. The persona could simply purchase additional Family Renown regardless of his relationship to his family.

Using Family Renown

Family Renown is used in the same way as personal Renown. It represents the influence of an entire family in a particular environment, and can be used either to modify power and influence-based Trials or as the foundation of family-based Renown Trials. For Family Renown to be effective as a Social modifier to Difficulty (see personal Renown), the persona or family member must be in an area where the Family Renown is respected and recognized. Reactions in these cases are to the family reputation, not to the individual. A family member simply gains the benefits of a specific Renown Aspect. For example, if an individual family has a Renown of Unfavorable (violent and unpredictable), a docile family member might be left alone because of his family's reputation. The Mythguide should determine whether Family Renown applies to a particular situation; if it does, the situation itself should dictate the appropriate modifiers. Fam-

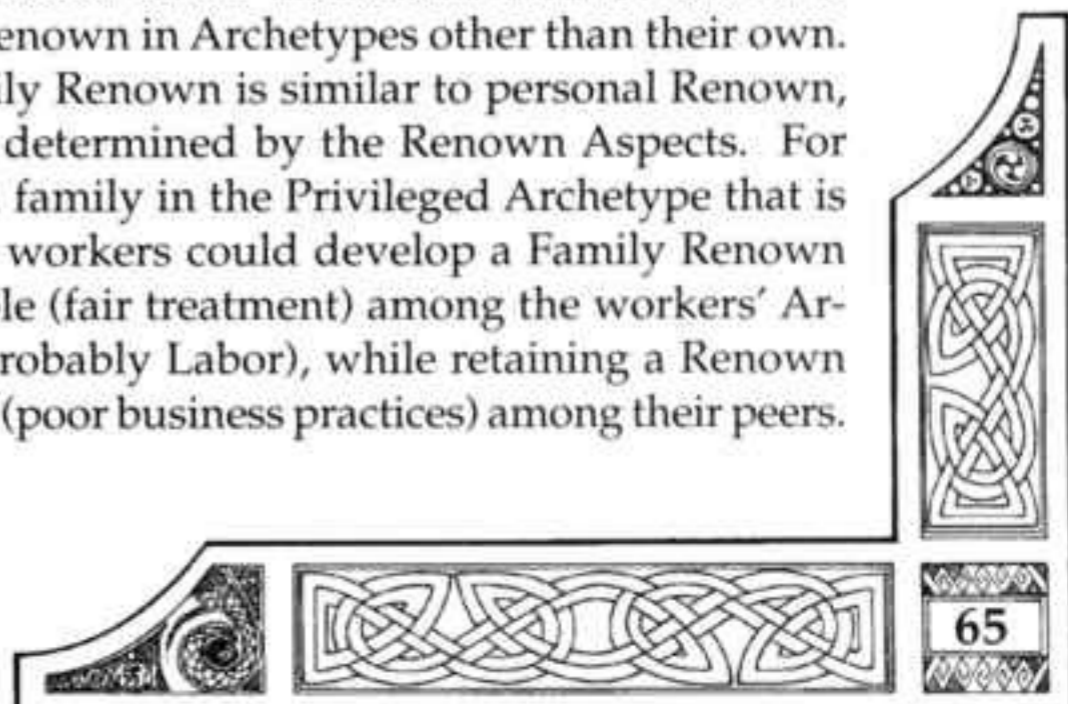
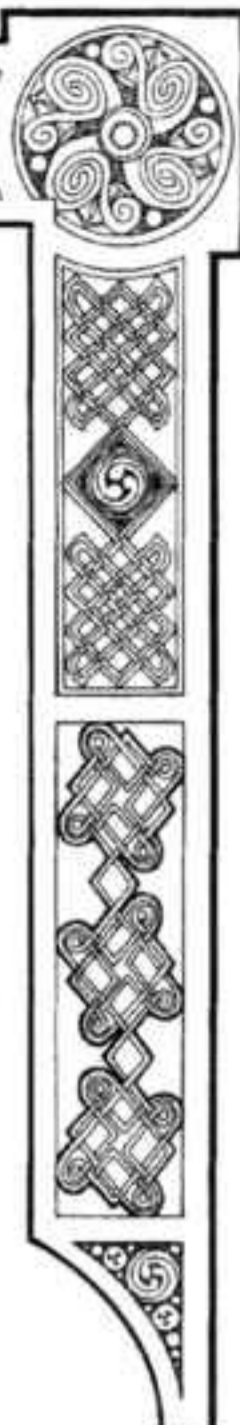
Amilani House Mentor

Family of Verbedys

Verbedys Madgeghanne, resident scholar for House Eidani, is the offspring of Ehlene Madgeghanne and Balan Vinczey. Ehlene, historian and magical adept of some Renown, is perhaps best remembered as female patriot and loyal hero of the Amilani city-state. Once thought to suffer the insanity d'amore, Ehlene achieved great Renown when she betrayed her husband to the Council authorities for his association with the guerilla resistance movement. Because the Order of the Ebon Claw was assumed a matter of legend, the news of its persistence earned Balan an unusually cruel interrogation. Only the inquisitors know what information was divulged, but the common populace came to know Ehlene as celebrated patriot, paragon of duty and virtue within the population of the city-state. The recognition of council and the circumstances surrounding the betrayal (especially the fact that Ehlene publically demonstrated her love by wearing mourning blue at the officium) give Ehlene a personal Renown of 6 (translating to a Family Renown 6 for her offspring), Favorable Reaction Orientation (among her social peers), and the Renown Aspects of patriotism, loyalty, and honor. Verbedys's Family Social Estate and Family Renown cost no Interaction Points but his Reaction Orientation, Sibling Rank, Legitimacy, and Estrangement cost more as a result of his family situation.

ily Renown also plays a role in the development of Interactive Histories.

Although relations within a class dictate Family Renown, relations across Archetypes should not be ignored. Such relationships are always unique to a particular society or culture, and should be dealt with on an individual basis. Individual families can have effective Renown in Archetypes other than their own. Since Family Renown is similar to personal Renown, effects are determined by the Renown Aspects. For example, a family in the Privileged Archetype that is kind to its workers could develop a Family Renown of Favorable (fair treatment) among the workers' Archetype (probably Labor), while retaining a Renown of Average (poor business practices) among their peers.



A family's effective Renown can serve as a social modifier among Archetypes other than the family's.

⊙ Perpetual Genealogies ⊙

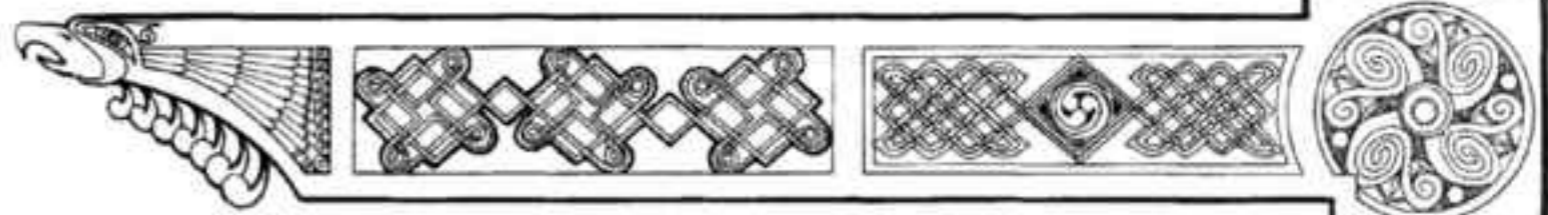
Players are encouraged to begin Perpetual Genealogies for one or more of the personas they are playing. A full record of this type continues beyond the lifespan of a single persona and eventually details the history of an entire family, clan, or lineage. The development of Perpetual Genealogies often complements the evolution of Interactive Histories, continuing the legacy begun by the founder of the lineage. Family histories are often interwoven with the history of a particular environment, Heritage group, or event (such as a war or migration).

Once a persona has lived until old age (and has either died or retired), the player may begin playing another persona who is a member of the same family, perhaps one or two generations later. As this persona develops, the history of the lineage continues to unfold, and the family and its branches continue to grow. A player may choose to play his original persona's offspring, and eventually his grandchildren and great grandchildren, or he may play relations in other parts of the family. Whatever his eventual decisions regarding individual personas may be, the overall development and history of the family continues. Canticles are woven together to form Arias, and Arias merge to form intricate histories that are passed from one generation to the next. These histories ultimately come to infuse a family with its own proud traditions.

Keeping track of family histories and kin relations can affect the characteristics of future members of the family. For example, if a player has a persona whom he wishes to retire, and the player wants to resume play with the persona's son, the new persona gains certain advantages. The player can allow his original persona to design a 'will' in which his desires for his offspring are made known. Young personas can inherit lands, wealth, and obligations from their families, and a player continuing the development of a lineage should account for all such considerations when beginning play with a new family member.

Many traits and attributes are inherited. Certain Background Aspects are either required or free (such as Inheritance, Heirloom, or Famous Ancestor), and family elements such as Orientation and Estrangement can be passed on to a child. Depending on the environment, the new persona may also benefit from one or both parents' Status. The degree to which parental Status affects a new persona depends on both the Heri-





Amilani House Mentor

Verbedys' Reputation & Family Renown

It is unknown that Ehlene never forgave the council for destroying the man she loved, father of the son he should never see. Over the years Ehlene brooded, allowing her resentment to grow. She took other husbands to hide her treacherous thoughts and she bore three daughters which furthered her Renown for duty to the city-state. In secret though, she taught her son the forbidden Way. She read to him from his father's secret papers, and instructed him in the tactics of social resistance. Because of his family's (mother's) Favorable Renown, Verbedys found the gates of opportunity open to him. He easily gained entrance to the Tesuni Cathedral school where he attained the highest circle (highest possible for a male) in the study of astral history and the esoteric Tesuni language. His easy ascendance suggested forbidden training, and were it not for his mother's reputation, the Cathedral scholars might have acted on their disturbing suspicions.

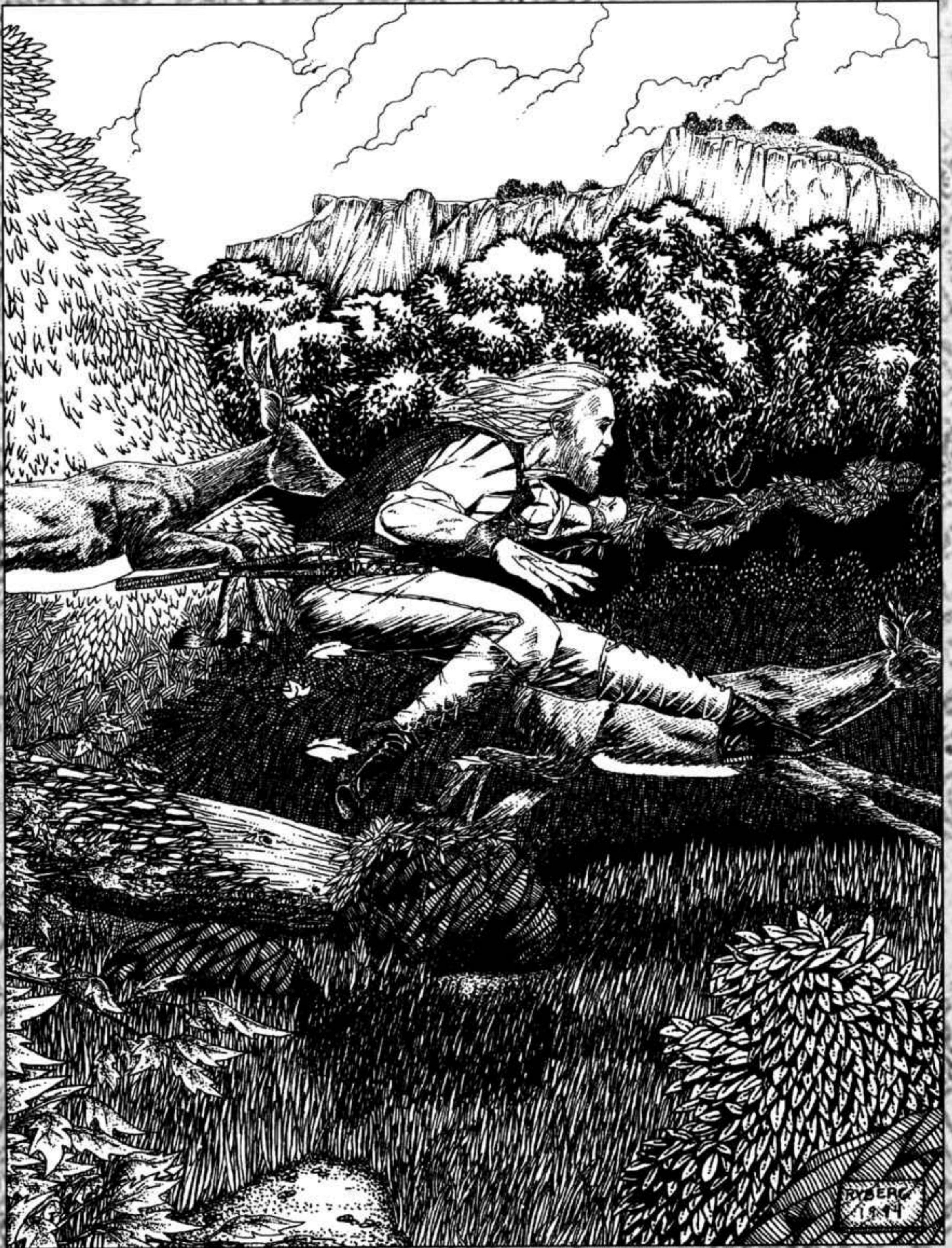
Through his academic diligence (and the prominence of his vocational setting - Prominence 8) Verbedys has acquired a personal Renown of 4 for his Intelligence and Knowledge. Because these Traits are dissimilar from his family's (loyalty and honor), Verbedys cannot hope to increase his Family Renown even if he earns additional esteem in these traits. He does receive partial benefits from his Family Renown (he is the Favorite, Legitimate sibling who Embraces his mother's ideals, but he is also male and may not inherit property or titles - Non-Inheritor). Overall, the mythguide determines that Verbedys merits 2 points of Family Renown for the Traits of loyalty and honor, but should his magical training be publically recognized he would receive a new personal Renown of 4 (treachery to the state) and could severely lower his family's Renown (Renown Trial vs Ehlene's Charisma with a +4 Difficulty Modifier). The Mythguide also suggests that Verbedys purchase the Social Aspect 'Family Secret' to reflect the tenuous nature of his Family's Renown.



tage group and an environment's Custom and Rigidity. Children may also inherit Motivations and Personality Traits that are similar to those possessed by their parents.

Finally, lineage and family development can be accelerated during an Interactive History. When action is occurring in Aria Time, years of family development can happen in the blink of an eye. Depending on the detail required by a Perpetual Genealogy, an entire family can be roleplayed through years of development using the guidelines provided for Interactive Histories.

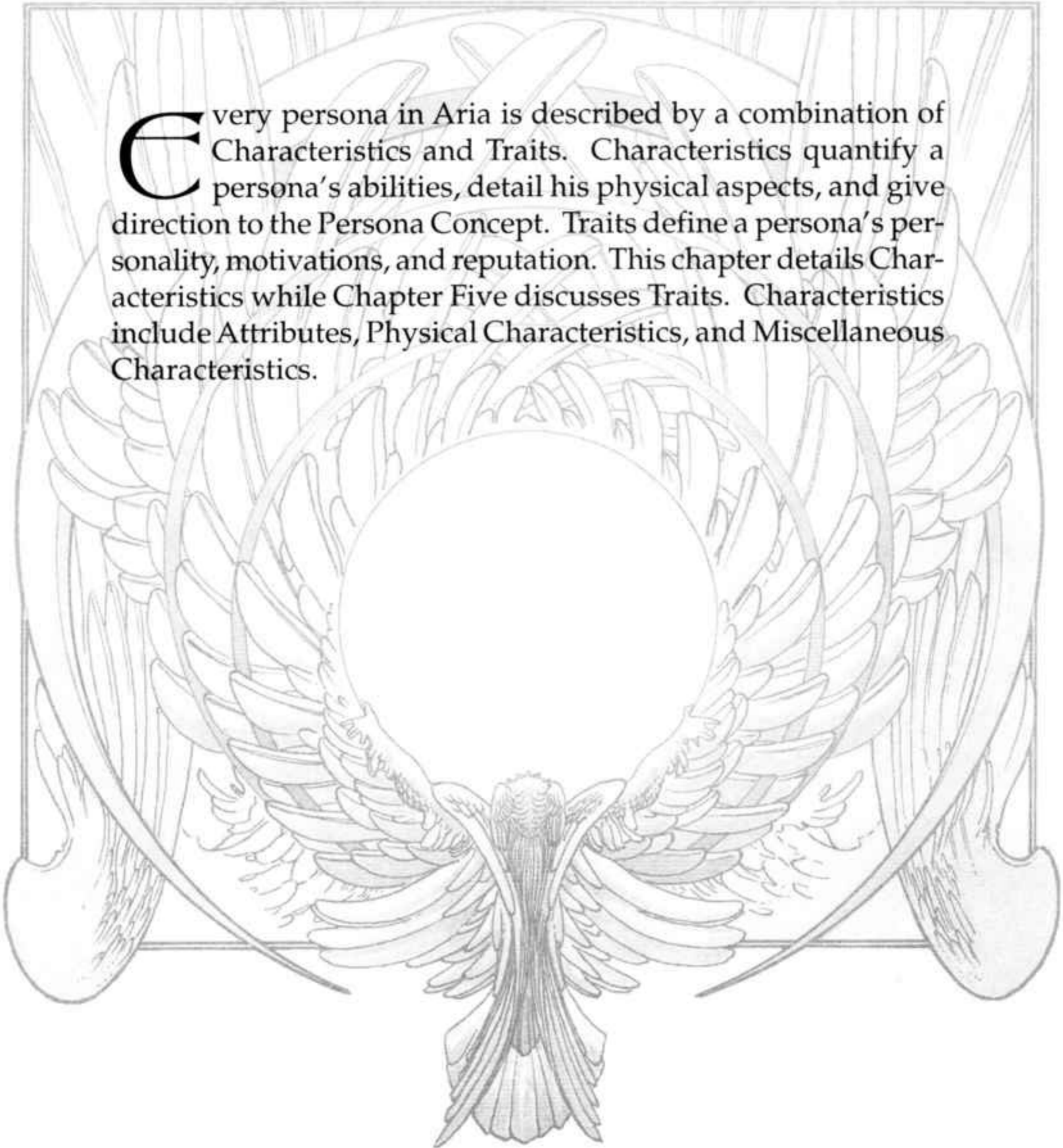




CHARACTERISTICS

☉ CHAPTER THREE ☉

Every persona in Aria is described by a combination of Characteristics and Traits. Characteristics quantify a persona's abilities, detail his physical aspects, and give direction to the Persona Concept. Traits define a persona's personality, motivations, and reputation. This chapter details Characteristics while Chapter Five discusses Traits. Characteristics include Attributes, Physical Characteristics, and Miscellaneous Characteristics.



⊗ ATTRIBUTES ⊗

There are sixteen possible Attributes in Aria. These Attributes outline the fundamental physical, mental, spiritual, and social capabilities of a persona. Their values range from one to ten, with five being the average value for a persona and four being the average value for a Mythguide persona. By quantifying Attributes in this manner, opportunities for relative comparison among personas and among other members of the Narrative Environment become possible. Attributes and abilities are often tested and compared among participants in order to obtain a desired result, effect, or outcome in a particular situation. Attributes are also combined to find expertise Bases.

Choosing Attributes

Although sixteen possible Attributes exist, most personas are remarkable only in a few of them. Each player chooses the six Attributes that he feels best describe his persona. These are usually given values above five, but values below five are allowed if they better fit a persona's Concept. Lower values give the persona bonus Interaction Points. At the Mythguide's option, a player can pick up to two hindering Attributes (values less than five) in addition to the six favorable Attributes. Consult the Purchasing Attributes Table for costs.

Players should pay close attention to both their persona's Concept and Heritage group when choosing Attributes. Some Heritage groups have required Attribute minimums, and certain Concepts might preclude specific purchases. The Mythguide should determine what is reasonable. Remember that even though they are not defined, every persona still possesses the rest of the possible Attributes at level five (the average).

Attribute Aspects

Players may wish to further define their persona's Attributes by giving them descriptive Aspects. For example, a persona would not simply have Intelligence; he might have Intelligence (logic problems) or Intelligence (quick thinking). Choosing specific Attributes from among a larger group helps a player to direct his thinking regarding his persona's abilities. It forces him to really explore the capabilities imagined in relation



to the persona's Concept. Aspects, while optional, can help a player to further direct his thinking.

Attribute Aspects can affect the outcomes of certain Trials. If an Attribute Trial is required that tests the precise ability or capacity defined by a specific Attribute Aspect, the Trial's Difficulty is reduced by one. This represents the persona's heightened ability in that area.

POTENTIAL AND CURRENT ATTRIBUTE VALUES

When a player initially allocates his persona's Attributes, these initial values become the persona's Current values in the different Attributes. During play, it is always a persona's Current Attributes that are used, since these values represent the relative level an Attribute has reached at any given time. As a persona develops his Attributes, he raises the Current values of those Attributes.

Attributes can be developed and increased through extended use and training. Every Attribute has a Potential value; Potential represents the maximum value a Current Attribute can ever attain through normal (non-magical) developmental means. Each Attribute's Potential is given in the individual Attribute descriptions. For example, Agility has a Potential of +2. This number is added to the initial Attribute value to determine the maximum value attainable through development. If the persona initially chooses a seven Agility, he could eventually develop the Attribute to its Potential of nine (7+2).

Only the Attributes chosen (either favorable or unfavorable) can be increased during play. For example, a player chooses Strength, Endurance, Hardiness, Perception, Agility, and Presence as his persona's six Attributes. He also chooses Wisdom as a hindering Attribute, giving it a value of three. After play begins, the persona can develop any of these Attributes to their Potential. Since some Trials may call for Attribute possibilities that a persona did not choose, personas are automatically considered to have average values (values of five) in unchosen Attributes. However, the persona is not able to raise these values during play. No Attribute can rise above ten through normal means. Refer to the Defining Attribute Potentials Table for Potential values.

INCREASING ATTRIBUTES

Attributes can be increased during play through Practical Experience, Training and Instruction, or Prac-

Purchasing Attributes

<i>Attribute Rank</i>	<i>Interaction Point Cost*</i>
1	- 10 IP
2	- 6 IP
3	- 3 IP
4	- 1 IP
5	0 IP
6	1 IP
7	5 IP
8	10 IP
9	15 IP
10	25 IP

** Note: Negative Interaction Point Costs indicate a bonus IP award for selecting an Underdeveloped Attribute (Rank less than 5). Bonus IP add to the Interaction Point Pool and may be spent as normal IP. If Personas are being created Narratively, Attribute Ranks are assigned without IP costs or awards.*

If Windows of Opportunity are being used in the Persona Creation process, a Situational or Developmental Window may be spent to purchase any Rank for a single Attribute.

tice and Study. Only physical Attributes can be increased through Practical Experience. If a persona has received a Superior Success or higher in an Attribute Trial during the course of a narrative, and if the situation were particularly dangerous or Difficult, the Mythguide may allow the player to make a Learning Trial. Learning Trials for increases based on Practical Experience are made as Refined Wisdom Trials. The Trial's Difficulty is equal to half an Attribute's Current Rank (round up) plus the cost of the next Rank on the Improvement Table. A Complete Success indicates an increase of one Rank in the Attribute.

If the Mythguide allows it, personas can also increase Attributes through Training and Instruction. First, the persona must find an appropriate teacher. An instructor should have the Attribute he is teaching at the Rank being taught or higher (i.e. at least one Rank higher than the persona's current Rank). The instructor must also have increased the same Attribute through either Training or Practice and Study at some point in his past. The Mythguide may require some

Defining Attribute Potential

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Maximum Potential*</i>
Agility	Initial Rank + 2
Appearance	Initial Rank + 2
Communication	Initial Rank + 3
Empathy	Initial Rank + 2
Endurance	Initial Rank + 4
Hardiness	Initial Rank + 2
Intelligence	Initial Rank + 2
Intuition	Initial Rank + 2
Logic	Initial Rank + 2
Manual Dexterity	Initial Rank + 2
Perception	Initial Rank + 2
Presence	Initial Rank + 2
Quickness	Initial Rank + 2
Strength	Initial Rank + 3
Willpower	Initial Rank + 2
Wisdom	Initial Rank + 4

** Note: Only the six Attributes initially selected can be improved after the Persona Creation Process has been completed. Though Personas are considered to have all other Attributes at Rank 5, those undefined Attributes are considered to have a maximum Potential of 5 (+0 Ranks). If underdeveloped Attributes (those having Ranks below 5) have been chosen, they are considered to have an Initial Rank of 4 for purposes of calculating their maximum Potential. No Attribute may exceed Rank 10 regardless of the Initial Rank or maximum Potential.*

type of Availability Trial to determine the availability of a teacher in a particular environment.

Once a teacher is found, the persona can begin Training in the Attribute. After training for a number of weeks equal to twice the Rank he is trying to attain, a persona is entitled to make a Learning Trial based on Willpower and Intelligence. If a persona wishes to reduce the Difficulty of the Trial, each additional month of training will lessen the Trial's Difficulty by one.

Finally, a persona can raise his Attributes through Practice and Study. Using this method of improvement does not require a teacher, but it often takes much longer than real Training. Learning Trials are made in the same manner as those for Training-based improvement, but the time required for adequate Practice or Study is tripled. The Difficulty of Practice-based Learning Trials can also be decreased by spending additional time on the development. For each additional month of Practice or Study, Difficulty is reduced by one.

Attribute Descriptions

The following section details each of the possible Attributes used in Aria.

Agility

Agility is a measure of a persona's overall bodily coordination and maneuvering ability. It affects such things as lateral and vertical motion, in addition to accelerated body maneuvers of all types. The Agility Attribute also dictates a persona's ability to dodge or evade blows in the midst of physical combat, as well as certain other attack types directed toward the persona. Agility also forms a part of most expertise bases that deal with precise movement or maneuvers. *Potential: +2*

Appearance

Appearance is a measure of a persona's attractiveness as perceived by another member of the persona's Heritage group or by a member of a group with similar aesthetic standards regarding physical appearance. It represents a relative comparison to the accepted physical standards of the persona's culture. This Attribute often serves as a modifier for influence and reaction Trials. *Potential: +2*



Communication

Communication represents a persona's ability to effectively express thoughts, ideas, or emotions. It affects a persona's affinity for interpersonal relationships and interaction, and contributes to a persona's ability to influence others through word, discussion, and argument. Communication also indicates a certain confidence when dealing with or speaking before groups of people. This Attribute modifies many influence-based Trials, and serves as an element of the expertise Base of many social expertises. *Potential: +3*

Empathy

Empathy reflects both a persona's relationship with and sensitivity to all things spiritual and esoteric. This Attribute measures a persona's ability to feel and comprehend the delicate fabric of a particular Reality, and to harness this energy either on behalf of others or for his own uses. Empathy is also a measure of a persona's psychic sensitivity and his affinity for both magic and pure mental energy. Several power-related traits, including Aura, are derived from Empathy. *Potential: +2*

Endurance

Endurance dictates the amount of physical activity, and the duration of this activity, that a persona can undertake in a given period of time. It represents a persona's exertion threshold, as well as the persona's tenacity in the face of physical adversity, and is a factor in determining Fatigue. Endurance also applies to mental activity, affecting both a spellcaster's concentration and the amount of mental energy available for practicing magic. *Potential: +4*

Hardiness

Hardiness is a measure of a persona's toughness, physical resilience, and bodily constitution. It is a principal factor in determining the amount of physical punishment, trauma, and injury a persona can endure. Hardiness also serves as a gauge for a persona's recovery rate from injury. Additionally, this Attribute is an indicator of a persona's resistance to sickness, disease, and toxins. *Potential: +2*



Intelligence

Intelligence represents a persona's ability to acquire, process, and effectively utilize knowledge. This Attribute also measures the speed and versatility of a persona's thought processes. It serves as an index describing a persona's general chance of success when engaging in scholarly pursuits, or when attempting to learn things related to those pursuits. Intelligence also acts as a gauge of both the accuracy and capacity of a persona's memory. This Attribute is important when determining the Bases for most Disciplines. It also serves as a component Attribute for certain Learning Trials. *Potential: +2*

Intuition

Intuition is a persona's sixth sense. This Attribute represents the ability to properly read people and gauge their intentions. Intuition embodies the insistent and irrepressible 'feeling' a persona might receive about a particular situation, region, or person. The Attribute also enables a persona to gauge the relative



power and ability of an opponent, as well as the general demeanor and motives of a new acquaintance. It serves as a modifier for certain reaction and influence-based Trials, and is one of the Attributes which form Charisma. *Potential: +2*

Logic

Logic represents not only the measure of a persona's reasoning ability, but also his affinity for cognitive deduction and problem solving. This Attribute also affects a persona's ability to think coolly and rationally in an obviously threatening situation (a useful trait in most Canticles), and can be especially helpful when dealing with esoteric or otherworldly beings or creatures. *Potential: +2*

Manual Dexterity

Manual Dexterity represents the digital control and manipulative abilities of the persona. It is a measure both of a persona's hand-eye coordination and of the ease with which the persona can perform complex

manual tasks involving specific motor manipulation. Most expertises involving fine digital manipulation use Manual Dexterity as a part of the Base. *Potential: +2*

Perception

Perception is a measure of a persona's ability to observe a person, area, object, or situation in minute detail. This Attribute enables a persona to note various nuances or peculiarities associated with a particular situation or environment. Familiarity with an object or environment obviously enhances the effectiveness of this Attribute. *Potential: +2*

Presence

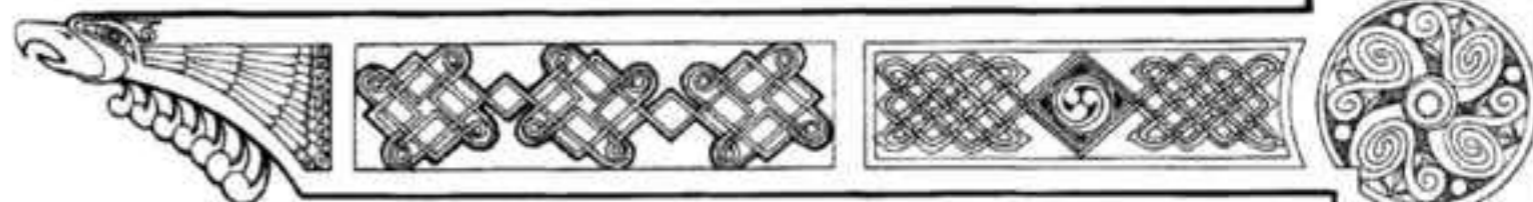
Presence represents a certain intangible magnetism that draws or attracts other individuals. It describes an innate aura of command and respect, and allows a persona to more easily bend others to his will. This Attribute does not in itself impart an ability to lead others effectively, but it is an important asset for a true leader to possess. Presence is also one of the Attributes that combine to form Charisma. *Potential: +2*

Quickness

Quickness is a measure of a persona's speed and directed swiftness. This Attribute includes both forward motion, such as running, and movement of the persona's limbs. Quickness is important in both physical and hand-to-hand combat, dictating such factors as speed of attack. This Attribute is also important when determining both a persona's movement rate and the Bases of selected expertises which relate to directed forms of bodily movement. *Potential: +2*

Strength

Strength is a measure not only of pure muscular prowess, but also of a persona's relative muscular coordination. It represents a persona's ability to use his physical prowess to its greatest advantage. Strength also shows the measure of physical force a persona is able to exert on or with a given object. This Attribute comes into consideration when determining a persona's carrying and lifting capacities, his chance to move or open heavy obstructions (such as doors), and



in association with specific expertise bases. *Potential:* +3

Willpower

Willpower represents a persona's self-control, composure, and tenacity in the face of a delicate or perilous situation. This control applies to both a persona's mind and body, and is utilized primarily in stressful predicaments requiring intense concentration or singularity of mind. A persona uses Willpower to resist the will of others, but he may also use it to hold his own instincts and better judgment at bay. Willpower affects certain magic-related capabilities and becomes part of certain Learning Trials. It is also one of the elements that combine to form Charisma. *Potential:* +2

Wisdom

Wisdom illustrates a persona's overall level of 'common sense'. It represents a persona's ability, as a direct result of past experience or innate capacity, to make sensible and rational decisions. It is also a measure of a persona's ability to remain calm in stressful situations, and to take the necessary time to analyze these situations before deciding on any conclusive action. Wisdom serves as an expression of a persona's level of contentment with his own character, intellect, and beliefs. Wisdom serves as the base for certain Learning Trials. *Potential:* +4

ATTRIBUTE TRIALS

Although most specific actions and maneuvers depend on expertises, Attribute Trials are often used to resolve more general actions. The standard Trial resolution guidelines presented in the Prelude should be used to handle Attribute Trials. All Attribute Trials are made with a Base of three and a Rank equal to the value of the Attribute. The results of particular Degrees of Success depend on the Attribute being tested. A good general rule for using Attribute Trials is this: *If an action is governed by an Expertise, an Expertise Trial should always be used to resolve the action.*

Difficulty is assigned to Attribute Trials according to the circumstances surrounding a particular situation. The Mythguide should take the possible modifiers - *Environmental, Situational, Conditional, Psycho-*

Nomad of the Imber Wastes

Wyshitra Ikantsci's Personal Attributes

Wyshitra is best defined by his extraordinary balance of mental and physical attributes. Born the grandson of a great War Khan, Wyshitra's body reminds one of the powerful blood which runs in his veins. Strength is one of Wyshitra's most obvious characteristics, and it is given a rank of 8. As all nomads, Wyshitra demonstrates exemplary physical constitution. His immaculate health and vigor are defined by his Hardiness, rank 6. Overall, Wyshitra's physical prowess marks him as a likely battle-lord, but it is his undeniable social Presence (rank 9) that suggests there is more to Wyshitra than is readily apparent.

Much of the regard shown to Wyshitra results from his subtle Intelligence. While most of his peers are quick to choose the blood path, Wyshitra maintains a level-headed intellect which initially earned him the quiet respect of his elders. With an Intelligence of 7, Wyshitra is easily one of the brightest of his peers. Contributing to his notable intellect, Wyshitra is quick to identify the subtleties of a given situation. In battle and in negotiation, Wyshitra relies upon his innate Intuition (rank 6) to gain initiative in dealing with the problem at hand. Most importantly, Wyshitra learns from his endeavors. Reflecting upon the perceived alternatives and the eventual outcomes of his decisions, Wyshitra tempers his Intuition with Wisdom. Unusually confident for his age, much of Wyshitra's evident demeanor results from possessing wisdom (rank 7) beyond his years.

logical, Social, and Philosophical - into account and assign a Difficulty that he deems fair. Refer to both the Prelude and the Conflict and Action chapter for a further discussion of these modifiers. It is often helpful to base a Trial's Difficulty on the Standard Difficulty. The Mythguide determines what a similar attempt would represent at Difficulty 2 (Standard), and applies the appropriate modifiers from there.

Sample Attribute Trials

Trial Description

*Trial Type**

Attribute

Refined Trials (Single Attribute determines Rank)

Maintaining Balance	Active	Agility
Physical Attraction (whether Persona instills emotion)	Passive	Appearance
Communication through Expression/Body language	Active	Communication
Sensing Supernatural/Magical Presence	Active	Empathy
Withstanding Fatigue	Passive	Endurance
Resisting Sickness/Disease/Intoxication	Passive	Hardiness
Memory (Recalling Information)	Active or Passive	Intelligence
Learning (Disciplines)	Active	Intelligence
Perceiving Emotion/Intent	Active or Passive	Intuition
Moving in the Dark (avoid objects/stumbling)	Active	Intuition
Sensing Pattern/Problem Solving (Puzzles)	Active	Logic
Maintaining Grip/Hold, Catching (items or objects)	Active	Manual Dexterity
Noticing with Senses (Sight, Hearing, Taste/Smell, Touch)	Passive	Perception
Making a First Impression (favorable or unfavorable)	Passive	Presence
Reaction/Initiative	Active	Quickness
Lifting/Moving Heavy Object	Active	Strength
Resisting Fear/ Sustaining Morale	Passive	Willpower
Avoiding Stupid Mistakes/ Common Sense	Passive	Wisdom
Learning (Talents)	Active or Passive	Wisdom

Refined Trials (Multiple Attributes Average determines Rank)

Catching an Item in Mid-Fall (not expected)	Active	Quickness & Manual Dex.
Landing on Feet (unexpected fall or drop)	Active	Quickness & Agility
Learning (Aptitudes)	Active	Intelligence & Wisdom
Anticipation (Line of thinking, conversation, etc.)	Active	Intuition & Intelligence

Challenged Trials (Single or Multiple Attributes - resolved against same of antagonist)

Armrestling	Active	Strength & Willpower
Logic Contest (Chess, Riddle exchange, etc)	Active	Logic & Intelligence
Footrace/Chase (short Dash)	Active	Quickness
Footrace/Chase (prolonged)	Active	Quickness & Endurance
Drinking Contest		Hardiness & Willpower

** Note: Active Trials refer to those which are initiated by the Persona and are not covered by an area of Expertise. Combinations of Active Attribute Trials may be covered by Expertise Talents such as Physical, Physical Adaption, Social Adaption, or Savvy. Passive Trials refer to any Trial which the Mythguide requires to determine the Effects of external agents which are interacting with or reacting to the Persona. If a Persona wishes to instigate results similar to those represented by a Passive Trial check the Expertise Catalog to determine if the action is governed by a Trait or Expertise. ex. Persona wishes to appear Attractive – Trait (Charisma) governs Trial result, Persona attempts, to create a favorable reaction – Expertises (Guile or Seduction) govern result. Always use Expertise Trials or Trait Trials if they cover an Active (Persona Initiated) event.*

Physical Characteristics

Physical Characteristics are primarily based on a persona's Heritage. Most races and species have innate or consistent physical characteristics. Average values for most of these characteristics - Height, Weight, Frame, Coloring, etc. - are found in the appropriate group's Heritage Template

Age

Persona Age is described in terms of Age Category. Age Categories can represent vastly different ranges among different Heritage groups, and are described in the Physical Traits section of the Heritage Template. For example, a Young human might be twenty years old while a Young elf is one hundred twenty. Since Background Development is handled on a year by year basis, personas can begin play at any age. The longer a persona spends in Background Development, the more Interaction Points he receives. Human personas normally receive seven Interaction Points per year of development.

If a persona is a member of an extremely long-lived species, the Mythguide should decide what development opportunities are available for the persona. Obviously, a persona who has a Background Development period that lasts two hundred years would have an unfair advantage if they received seven Interaction Points per year. For game purposes, development among mythic races corresponds to human development. For example, if a human who lives seventy years receives seven Interaction Points per year, an elf who lives seven hundred years would receive seven Interaction Points for every ten years of development. This evens the ratio of points involved and helps to balance play among different species. Personas should be given plenty of opportunity to develop during play, regardless of their species.

Aging Trials

As a persona grows older, he begins to suffer the consequences of aging. The aging process can be accelerated by a number of other factors as well. Disease, poorly healed injuries, and certain magical effects can all cause a persona to age more rapidly. After a persona enters the Old Age Category, the player should make an Aging Trial each year. Aging Trials are made against a persona's Hardiness, and can be



Determining Age (and Effects)

Age Category	Possible Effects*
Child	Half Initial (all)
Adolescent	Half Potential (all)
Young	None
Adult	None
Old	-1 Potential (Physical)
Elderly	-1 Potential (Physical)
Venerable	-1 Current & Potential

* Note: The Effects of Aging reduce Current and Potential Persona Attribute Ranks. Attribute Ranks are assigned first, then modified by Age. Child Personas possess Attributes at Ranks = half of Initial Rank purchased (they grow into the Initial Rank Purchased). Adolescent Personas possess Attributes at Ranks = half of Potential Rank. Older Personas may suffer Aging effects if they fail Aging Trials (see text). Only Physical Attributes (Agility, Quickness, Manual Dexterity, Endurance, Hardiness, Strength, and Perception) are effected by Old and Elderly Age Effects. Venerable Personas may suffer mental Effects if they are smitten by mental decay/disease. Aging Effects for older Personas are cumulative.

Imberwyn Alchemist

The Trials of Age

Ibidion Gyrvynnian, child prodigy of the Alathel Court, looks to possess fewer than 20 years of age. His youthful jowles and fine blond hair are betrayed only by the grey crow-creased flesh which besets his sinister, glassy black eyes. Having only served at court for 5 years, none suspect that an ancient heart throbs heavily within the boying breast. His every motion and softened voice tell of youth, but Ibidion is a Venerable soul, having lived 125 years in the young Kingdom of Imberwyn.

While most men his age have turned to the grave, Ibidion maintains his vitality through esoteric machinations. Directing the mystical alluvion through his flesh has rejuvenated Ibidion's mind and body. The irrefutable effects of aging have seemed to pass him by, finding other men more suitable for feeding the appetite of time. Of all the benefits afforded by eternal youth, Ibidion suffers only two side effects. First and foremost, Ibidion has grown terrified of his own mortality. The least signs of aging goad him into fervent magical endeavor. Secondly, Ibidion jealously guards his secret of rejuvenation. Consequently, he never remains in the same company for a period of more than a few years. This prevents him from building a future with any degree of permanence, and because of his youthful appearance Ibidion often wastes long periods of time finding proper sponsors for his services and experiments.

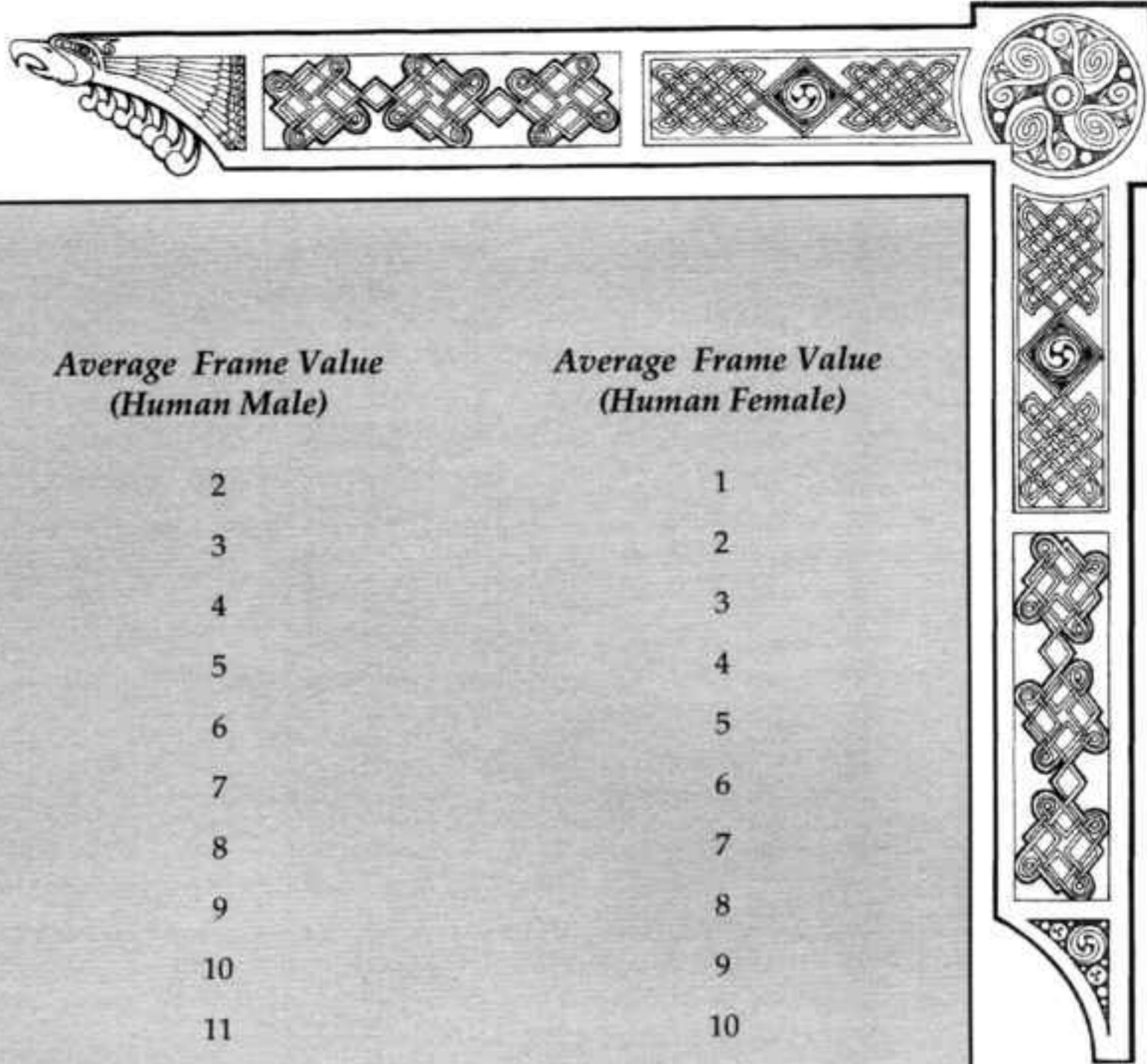
might be unusually healthy (or magically young) for his age. The persona might have some type of severe illness or sickness. Any physical or mental condition that has residual or permanent effects can modify the Trial. At the Mythguide's option, an extreme Failure could result in death.

Aging Trials can also be used during play to see if a particularly harsh ailment or condition permanently affects a persona. For instance, if a persona is recovering from a bad injury, the Mythguide might require an Aging Trial to see if the persona loses any physical abilities. In extreme cases (i.e. an Extraordinary Failure), a condition may cause a persona to age prematurely. If this happens, not only does the persona lose Attribute levels, he also enters the next Age Category (no matter what his physical age is) for the purposes of further aging and Trials.

FRAME

A persona's Frame represents his general build and innate physical proportions. It affects not only how much physical trauma a persona can endure, but also the amount of weight he may carry before becoming encumbered. There are ten Frame categories, which are placed according to Heritage group and Gender along a master Frame Value scale. The possible range of Frame Values is unlimited, since the scale serves as a tool for relative comparison among different species and races, and its values are constant. The Frame Categories 'slide' along it according to Heritage group. For example, a Massive Frame among Elves might be equivalent to a Medium Frame among humans; the relationship would be immediately evident by comparing the constant values of the Frame Value scale. The Massive Elven Frame might carry with it a Frame Value of 6, which translates to a mid-range human Medium Frame. The corresponding Frame for a troll might be Very Light. Remember that the Frame Categories act only as descriptions which illustrate the relative nature of Frame within a Heritage Template (i.e. a Massive Elf is Massive only in relation to other Elves). Frame Values are the constants, representing absolute values which carry over from one species or race to the next. The Mythguide should determine the Frame Values for specific Frame Categories within a particular Heritage group, since these values will differ from one group to the next. The accompanying table gives Interaction Point costs by Frame Category.

modified by several things. A persona who is Old adds one to the Trial's Difficulty, while a persona who is Elderly adds three. A Complete Failure indicates the loss of one Attribute point. The Mythguide should decide the Attribute affected, but generally the physical Attributes will be affected first. Other modifiers can also apply to the Trial's Difficulty. The persona



Purchasing Frame Value

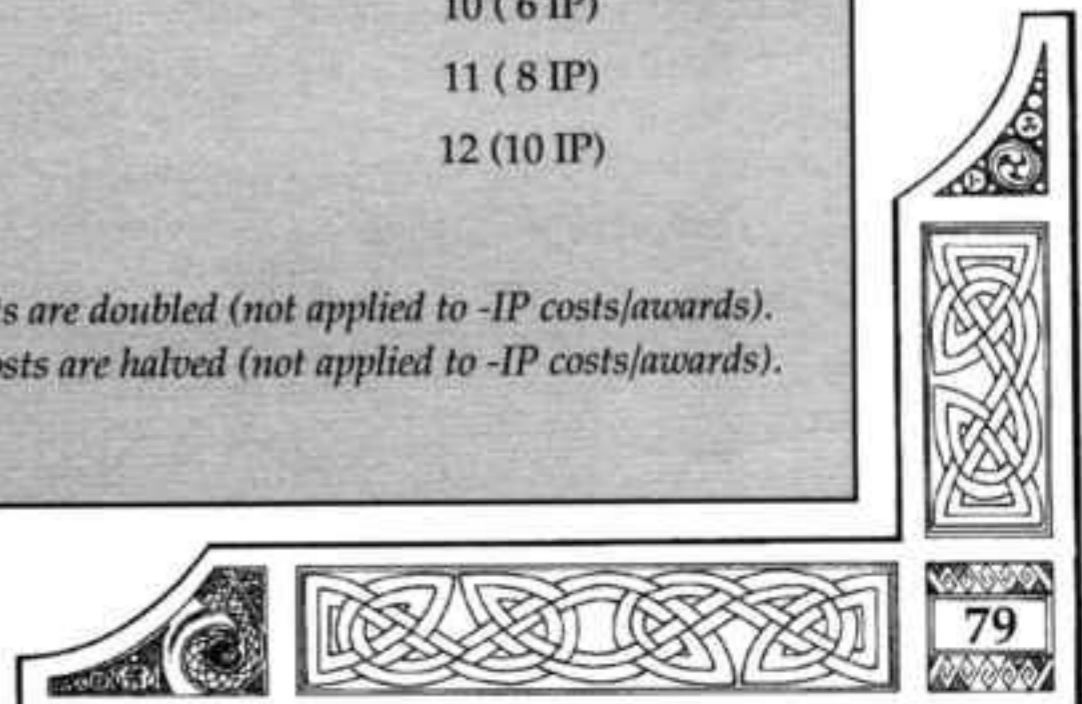
Frame Description	IP Cost*	Average Frame Value (Human Male)	Average Frame Value (Human Female)
Extremely Light	-5	2	1
Very Light	-3	3	2
Light	-2	4	3
Light Medium	-1	5	4
Medium	0	6	5
Heavy Medium	2	7	6
Heavy	4	8	7
Very Heavy	6	9	8
Extremely Heavy	8	10	9
Massive	10	11	10

* Note: Negative Interaction Point (IP) costs represent bonus IP which Personas may use in other areas of Persona Creation. If Personas are being created Narratively, Frame Value is simply assigned (no IP cost or bonus). If Windows of Opportunity are being used in the Persona Creation Process, a Developmental Window may be used to purchase any Frame Value.

Average Frame Value is determined by the Mythguide according to Heritage. Three examples (taken from the Heritage section of this book) are listed below to demonstrate the Heritage relativity of Frame Value. Frame Descriptions appear left and the Average Frame Values (and their variations) are listed right. Average Frame value always corresponds to a Medium Frame (IP cost = 0).

Frame Description	Everdawn Elf (Male) (low variation, cost x 2)	Canyon Dwarf (Male) (low variation, cost x 2)	Northman of Firnost (Male) (average variation, cost normal)
Extremely Light	n/a	3 (-5 IP)	3 (-5 IP)
Very Light	1 (-3 IP)	4 (-3 IP)	4 (-3 IP)
Light	2 (-2 IP)	5 (-2 IP)	5 (-2 IP)
Light Medium	3 (-1 IP)	6 (-1 IP)	6 (-1 IP)
Medium	4 (0 IP)	7 (0 IP)	7 (0 IP)
Heavy Medium	5 (4 IP)	8 (4 IP)	8 (2 IP)
Heavy	6 (8 IP)	9 (8 IP)	9 (4 IP)
Very Heavy	7 (12 IP)	10 (12 IP)	10 (6 IP)
Extremely Heavy	8 (16 IP)	11 (16 IP)	11 (8 IP)
Massive	9 (20 IP)	12 (20 IP)	12 (10 IP)

Frame Variation ranges from Low to High. Low Variation indicates that IP costs are doubled (not applied to -IP costs/awards). Average Variation indicates normal IP cost. High Variation indicates that IP costs are halved (not applied to -IP costs/awards). All fractions are rounded up to the nearest whole number.



Assigning Height and Physique Values

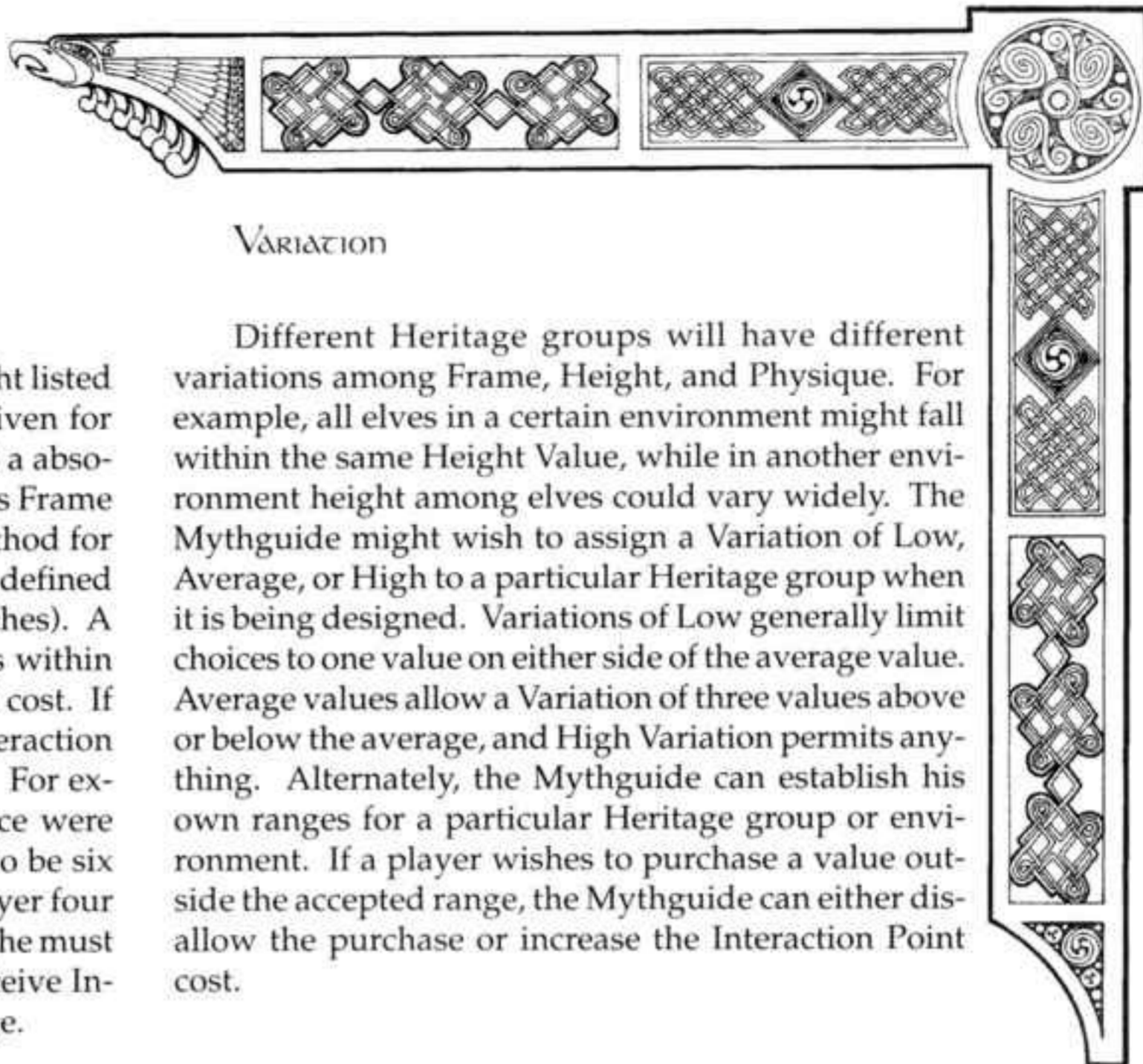
<i>Height Value</i>	<i>Height Description (Range)</i>	<i>Height Cost and Variation</i>
1	up to 3' 5"	<p>Every Heritage group possesses an Average Height Value which corresponds to feet and inches (see table left). It costs 0 IP for a Persona to be Average Height or shorter. Increasing Height costs 2 IP per Height Value. Persona Height is assigned exact measurements within the Height Value range. Height Variation (Low, Average, or High) limits the number of Values that Height can vary from the Average Height Value. Low Variation allows Persona Height to vary 1 level in either direction. Average Variation allows Height to increase or diminish up to 3 levels. High Variation allows unlimited divergence.</p> <p>ex. Average Height Value = 7 Low Variation - Height Value ranges between 6 and 8 Average Variation - Height Value ranges from 4 to 10 High Variation - Any Height value is possible</p>
2	3' 6" to 3' 10"	
3	3' 11" to 4' 3"	
4	4' 4" to 4' 8"	
5	4' 9" to 5' 1"	
6	5' 2" to 5' 6"	
7	5' 7" to 5' 11"	
8	6' 0" to 6' 4"	
9	6' 5" to 6' 9"	
10	6' 10" to 7' 2"	
11+	7' 3" +	

Note: For each Height Value over 11, Height increases in 4'' increments.

<i>Physique Value</i>	<i>Physique Description</i>	<i>Weight Multiplier*</i>	<i>Possible Effects**</i>
1	Gaunt	7 or less	-2
2	Frail	9	-1
3	Thin	11	None
4	Ideal	12.5	None
5	Average	13	None
6	Burly	15	None
7	Stout	17	-1
8	Large	20	-2
9	Cumbrous	23	-3
10	Obese	25 or more	-4

* *Note: Weight Value = Frame Value + Height Value. To determine a Persona's weight (in lbs.) multiply the Weight Value by the appropriate WeightMultiplier. ex. Weight Value = 12, Weight for Ideal Physique = 150 lbs (12 x 12.5)*

Extreme Physique Values may reduce Persona Attributes which deal with movement or encumbrance. Agility, Quickness, and Endurance may suffer from high Physique Values. Strength, Endurance, and Hardiness may suffer from low Physique Values.



Height

Every species or race has an average Height listed in its Template (separate Heights are often given for each Gender), and this Height corresponds to an absolute Height Value in much the same manner as Frame and Frame Value. Height Values create a method for relative Height comparison since each Value is defined by a specific range of Heights (in feet and inches). A persona can always choose a height that falls within the average range of his Heritage group at no cost. If a persona wants to be taller, it costs two Interaction Points per Height Value beyond the average. For example, if the average height for a certain race were 5'4" (Height Value 6) and a persona wanted to be six feet tall (Height Value 8), it would cost the player four Interaction Points to purchase the new height (he must buy two Height Values). Personas do not receive Interaction Points for being shorter than average.

Physique

A player may wish to play a persona with a less than ideal Physique. Physique represents a persona's build, and serves as a general indicator of a persona's current state of fitness. Physique can change during the course of play (if a persona is imprisoned, for example), and in extreme cases can affect physical Attributes. The effects column on the accompanying table lists possible effects. The numbers listed should modify Attributes that deal specifically with endurance or movement. Attributes that are usually affected include Agility, Quickness, Manual Dexterity, and Endurance. The Mythguide should decide on a case by case basis whether such modifiers apply.

Unless a player states otherwise, a persona's Physique is always considered to be Ideal. If a player desires another Physique, he simply chooses it. There is no cost. A persona's Weight is derived from Physique, Height, and Frame. The sum of the persona's Height Value and Frame Value equals the Weight Value. The Weight Value is multiplied by the Weight Multiplier to find the persona's weight in pounds. Refer to the accompanying table for multipliers and possible effects of Physique.

VARIATION

Different Heritage groups will have different variations among Frame, Height, and Physique. For example, all elves in a certain environment might fall within the same Height Value, while in another environment height among elves could vary widely. The Mythguide might wish to assign a Variation of Low, Average, or High to a particular Heritage group when it is being designed. Variations of Low generally limit choices to one value on either side of the average value. Average values allow a Variation of three values above or below the average, and High Variation permits anything. Alternately, the Mythguide can establish his own ranges for a particular Heritage group or environment. If a player wishes to purchase a value outside the accepted range, the Mythguide can either disallow the purchase or increase the Interaction Point cost.

Coloring

This element of a persona's appearance includes Complexion, Hair Color and Texture, and Eye Color. Most species and races have inherent Coloring possibilities and combinations. Most also have certain disallowed combinations (i.e. grey eyes and blond hair). These possibilities and their prevalence are detailed within an individual group's Heritage Template. The Mythguide should determine both the possibilities and the most common coloring combinations. For example, a certain race might normally have Medium Complexions, although Fair or even Very Fair Complexions are possible. Anything below Medium is not found in the race. Brown Hair might be the most common within the race, while blond, red, and auburn Hair Colors are possible. Black hair never appears, and curly or wavy hair is uncommon. Most members of the group have straight hair. Finally, brown eyes are normal for members of the race, while blue, green, and hazel eyes are found. By providing such a description, the Mythguide arrives at a general Coloring integration for an 'average' member of the race. Regional or cultural differences can be evidenced by slight modifications to a persona's normal Coloring. Individual or unique persona qualities can also be brought out in this manner, allowing a persona to stand out from among members of the same Heritage Template. The player should choose his persona's coloring from among the possibilities dictated by his Heritage group.

Firnost Skald

Faethelstaed's Appearance

Because of her extraordinary appearance, Faethelstaed is something of a wonder among the Northmen people. Though her lustrous golden hair and steely grey eyes are not unusual for Northmen heritage, Faethelstaed's elfin physique and gently tapered ears caused much talk among the villagers when Andrulok first brought her to his childhood home.

Because of her unique heritage (offspring of Northman and Fairy-mother) the Mythguide assigns Faethelstaed several appearance Characteristics. Racially Anomalous Features include her tapering eyes, ears, and jawline. While they are not anomalous considering her true lineage, the people of Firnost recognize her as one of their own. These same features are defined as Distinguishing Features and will affect recognition trials and Faethelstaeds personal Renown as a travelling skald. In a crowd, Faethelstaed stands out clearly. This can be both a benefit or a detriment depending upon who is doing the observing.

Other Physical Characteristics

Players are encouraged to write a short physical description of their persona. All of the Physical Characteristics should be combined to evoke a clear image of the persona, and any unusual or additional physical characteristics can be added to enhance the persona's individuality. Possibilities for interesting descriptive characteristics include Racially Anomalous Features (persona has features not consistent with his Heritage group), Racial Resemblances (persona resembles a member of a Heritage group other than his own), Distinguishing Marks (birthmarks, scars), and Distinguishing Features (prominent nose or brow, wide-set eyes - can be hereditary or lineage related).

The narrative potential of such descriptive items should not be underestimated. A certain birthmark could mark a persona as the heir to a great fortune, or to a family exiled because of some dark disgrace. A Racial Resemblance could cause a persona's own Heritage group to persecute him, or it could cause the persona to be welcomed into a foreign culture. Physical Characteristics can also be related to specific Background Aspects. Perhaps a persona's family is being Hunted for some reason, or maybe they are owed some Valuable Information. If a persona possesses a unique family Characteristic, his appearance alone might be enough to let others know who he is. When used creatively, entire Canticles can be built around individual Characteristics, their histories, and their effect in a particular environment.

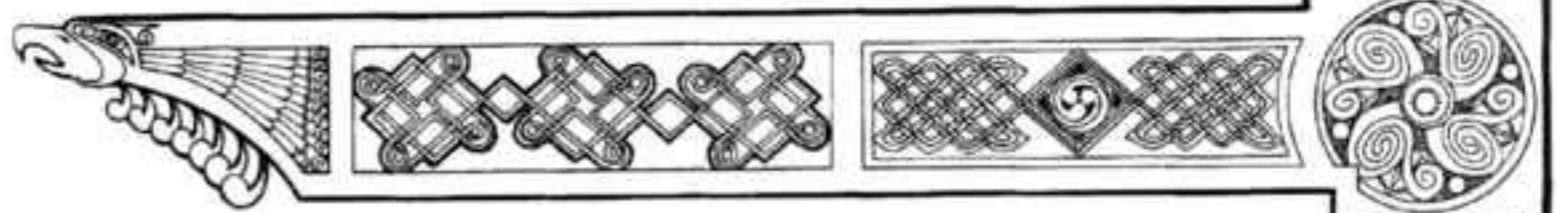
Other Physical Characteristics

- Albinism (no pigmentation in skin, hair, or eyes)
- Anomalous Features (one or more of facial/bodily features resemble those common to another Species, Race, or Culture)
- Birthmark (identifying blemish in hair color or skin)
- Distinguishing Mark or Feature (one feature unusually sized, shaped, or otherwise notable)
- Disfigured (face or body scarred/disfigured from injury or disease)
- Unusual Coloration (one feature unusually colored considering Persona's Heritage)
- Personal Resemblance (Persona closely resembles another individual - either living or dead)

Derived Characteristics

Carrying Capacity

During the course of a persona's travels and adventures, he often has to transport a significant amount of equipment. Armor, weapons, miscellaneous accoutrements - all of these items affect a persona's ability to move and function. All personas have a Carrying Capacity. This value indicates the number of Encumbrance Grades that a persona is able to comfortably carry without becoming unusually Fatigued. A persona may carry more than his Carrying Capacity, but he will suffer the effects of Fatigue more quickly. Refer to the Conflict and Action chapter for guidelines on using Fatigue.



The Encumbrance of an object is derived from two considerations - the object's weight in pounds and the awkwardness of handling the object. In many cases, an object's Weight equals its Encumbrance Grade. A small knife or dagger is an example. The object is small and very handleable, and does not unduly encumber the persona. However, sometimes the size, shape, or volume of an object cause it to be more awkward to handle than its Weight might indicate. In such cases an Encumbrance Multiplier is assigned to the object. For example, a persona is carrying a large wooden chest. The chest itself weighs only twelve pounds, but its size makes it somewhat more difficult to manage. The Mythguide assigns it an Encumbrance Multiplier of three. In terms of the persona's Carrying Capacity, the chest weighs thirty-six (12 pounds x 3 Encumbrance Multiplier) Encumbrance Grades.

A persona's Carrying Capacity is found by adding the persona's Frame Value to twice his Strength and multiplying the result by five. Depending on the number of Encumbrance Grades carried (in relation to the persona's Carrying Capacity), the persona may suffer temporary penalties to his Quickness and Agility Attributes. The Mythguide should assign sensible Encumbrance Multipliers when they are required. These Multipliers will not usually exceed a value of five, and are based on an object's size and ease of handling.

Lifting Capacity

A persona's Lifting Capacity represents the amount of Encumbrance Grades he is able to simply lift and hold. The persona will not be able to hold the weight for an extended period of time. The Mythguide may wish to allow the player to make a Strength Trial every ten or fifteen seconds to determine whether the lift can be maintained. A persona's Lifting Capacity equals three times his Carrying Capacity.

Movement

Personas use several different movement rates depending on the time scale, the individual situation, and the level of exertion the persona is willing to undergo. A persona can move fifteen miles plus his Height Value and Endurance during a single day, traveling at a brisk unencumbered hiking pace. This is known as the persona's Narrative Movement Rate, and is used to calculate the time required to move from place to place within the Narrative Environment.

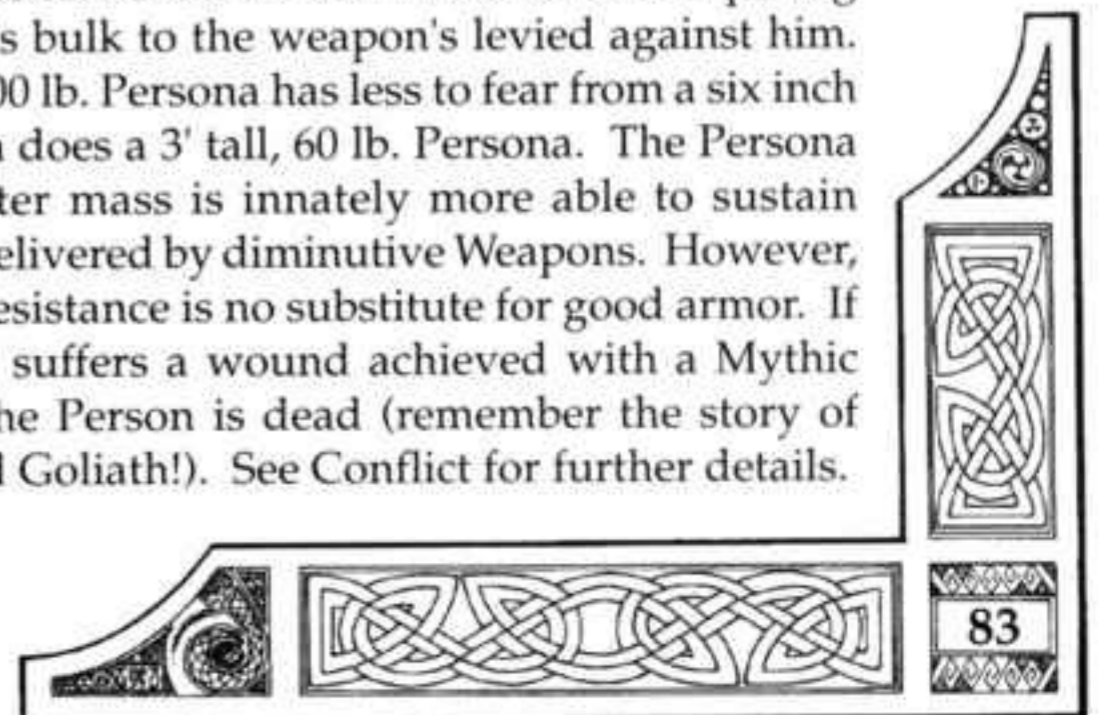
Determining Trauma Resistance

<i>Body Weight (lbs.)</i>	<i>Trauma Resistance</i>
0 - 20 lbs.	-1
21 - 40 lbs.	0
41 - 60 lbs.	1
61 - 100 lbs.	2
101 - 160 lbs.	3
161 - 260 lbs.	4
261 - 420 lbs.	5
421 - 680 lbs.	6
681 - 1100 lbs.	7
1101 - 1780 lbs.	8
1781 - 2880 lbs.	9
2880 - 4660 lbs.	10
4661 - 7540 lbs.	11
7541 - 12200 lbs.	12
12200 - 19740 lbs.	13
19741 - 31940 lbs.	14
31940 - 51680 lbs.	15

Movement affects a persona's Fatigue, and itself is affected by both Fatigue and Encumbrance. Movement is also modified by Pace, which indicates the relative level of exertion involved. For more information, see the Movement rules in the Conflict and Action chapter.

Trauma Resistance

When personas are wounded during play, the wounds are expressed in terms of Injury and Shock. Trauma Resistance represent a persona's general level of health and fortitude. It is expressed as a Difficulty modifier ranging from zero to five (for most Humanoid Personas), and is found according to body weight. Trauma Resistance serves as a measure for comparing a Persona's bulk to the weapon's levied against him. A 7' tall, 300 lb. Persona has less to fear from a six inch Knife than does a 3' tall, 60 lb. Persona. The Persona with greater mass is innately more able to sustain wounds delivered by diminutive Weapons. However, Trauma Resistance is no substitute for good armor. If a Persona suffers a wound achieved with a Mythic Success, the Person is dead (remember the story of David and Goliath!). See Conflict for further details.

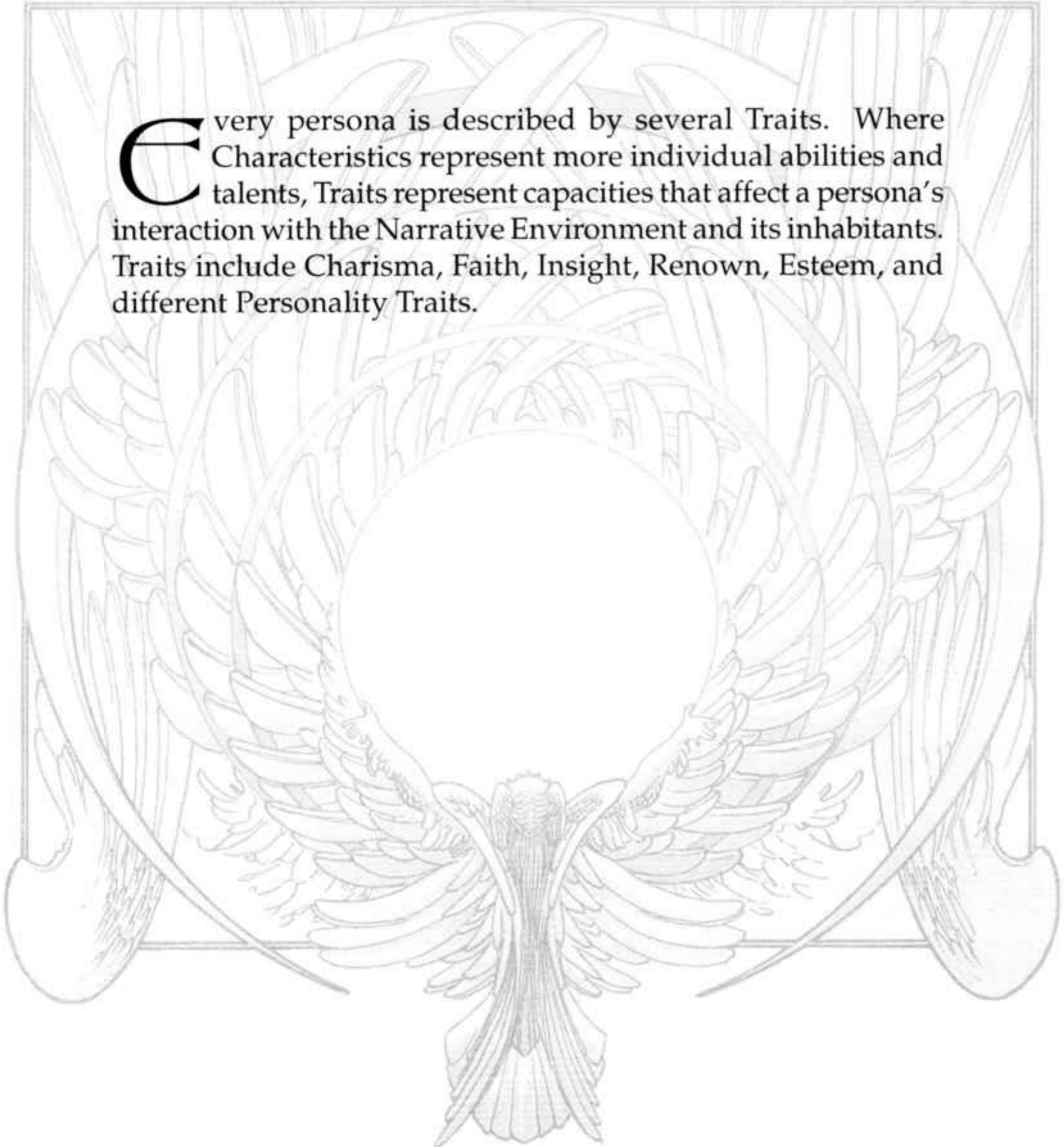




TRAITS

☉ CHAPTER FOUR ☉

Every persona is described by several Traits. Where Characteristics represent more individual abilities and talents, Traits represent capacities that affect a persona's interaction with the Narrative Environment and its inhabitants. Traits include Charisma, Faith, Insight, Renown, Esteem, and different Personality Traits.



CHARISMA

Charisma represents a natural affinity for command and leadership. It defines a certain intangible quality - a combination of charm, appeal, will, and presence - that all personas have to one degree or another. Truly Charismatic people have an aura of competence and command about them. They are better able to influence others, and many lesser souls will naturally follow their lead. A persona's Charisma is found by averaging the persona's Intuition, Willpower, and Presence. This Trait, in conjunction with various aspects of a persona's Renown, Status, and Personality, affects and influences many common interactions. Charisma is used as the Primary Element for many social and persuasion-based expertises.

Purchasing/Improving Faith

Faith Rank	IP Cost
1	1/1
2	2/1
3	3/1
4	5/2
5	7/2
6	9/2
7	11/2
8	14/3
9	17/3
10	20/3

The first number listed indicates the cost for purchasing Faith at an initial Rank. The Second number indicates the IP or Mythpoint cost for Improving Faith from the previous Rank. ex. Rank 7 (11/2) - 11 IP to purchase Rank 7, 2 IP or Myth Points to improve to Rank 7 from Rank 6.

A Situational or Developmental Window of Opportunity may be used to purchase Faith at any Rank. Once Initial Faith has been purchased, it may be improved by Trial or by expending Myth Points.

FAITH

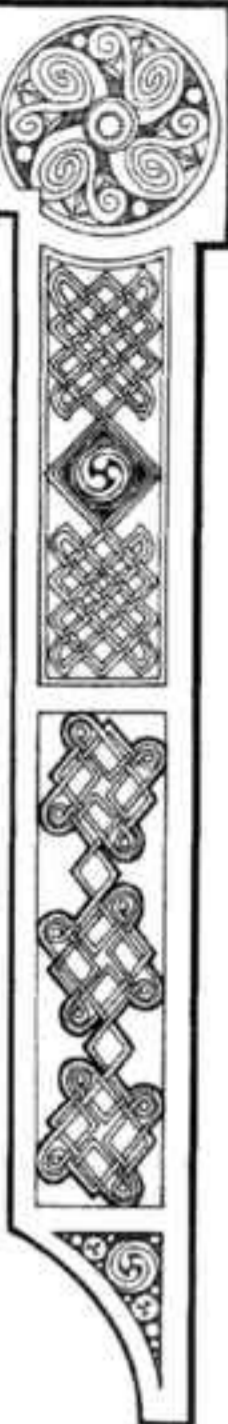
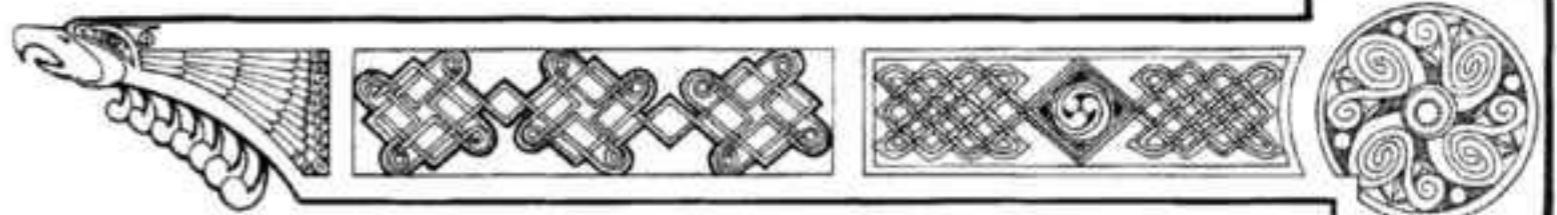
Faith is a measure of the strength of a persona's beliefs, whether these beliefs be in a deity, a philosophy, an abstract source of power, or one's own will. Faith has no bearing at all on a persona's morality or moral alignment, except in a religious or philosophical sense. Morality may be developed either through the use of selected Personality Traits or by careful roleplaying over long periods of time. Personas are rarely bound by conventional notions of 'good' or 'evil'. Faith simply represents belief and conviction, regardless of the attendant moral, religious, ethical, or philosophical connotations. These questions must be answered by the individual persona, within the context of the Narrative Environment and Reality in which he finds himself. Faith is often an important Trait for those who use magic; its precise uses depend on the nature of Reality in the environment.

Faith is purchased like a Discipline, and is described by a value from one to ten. See the accompanying table. Faith is also always described by specific Aspects. For example, a persona could have Faith (magical essence) or Faith (Arinda, goddess of the hunt). Belief is often required for the successful use of magic, and Faith allows a persona to express such belief in diverse ways.

Faith is also a fluid Trait, meaning that it can go up and down during play. Whenever a persona's Faith is tested, the Mythguide may require a Faith Trial. The Trial is made like a normal Attribute Trial, with the Difficulty modified by the severity of the test. For example, if a persona had a high Faith in a benevolent god and witnessed an act of violence, a Faith Trial might be called for. Since the act that caused the test was not extremely severe, the Difficulty modifier would be slight. However, if the same persona witnessed a heinous sacrifice, a Faith Trial with a significantly higher Difficulty modifier would probably be required. Faith can be affected when any act contrary to belief is witnessed. A persona with Faith (mundane world) who witnesses one act of magic after another would probably experience a serious erosion of Faith. The Mythguide determine the nature of Faith and its importance in a particular Narrative Environment.

Faith can also be increased by witnessing acts that affirm the Faith or by performing certain rituals or tasks. It normally requires a far more significant act to affirm Faith than it does to harm it. The Mythguide determine what services or experiences serve to affirm or increase Faith in an environment. For further information on possible affirming occurrences, see the sections on belief in the Reality chapter.





☉ Insight ☉

Insight represents a persona's innate knowledge of an environment's Reality. It signifies not only extensive knowledge of a particular Reality and its composition, but also the *ability* to truly understand and comprehend the nature of power and its possible sources in an environment. Insight defines a persona's relationship to the esoteric elements of his environment, and has an effect on any sort of power use. For example, in some environments an Adept is required to make an Insight Trial to see if any power is unintentionally wasted when casting a spell. Its precise uses will depend on the nature of the Reality being used in the environment. See the Reality chapter for more information.

☉ SOCIAL TRAITS ☉

All personas have several Traits that allow interaction on a larger scale. A few of these Traits govern persona participation in Interactive Histories. Personas can assume active roles in developing and shaping societies over the course of many years.

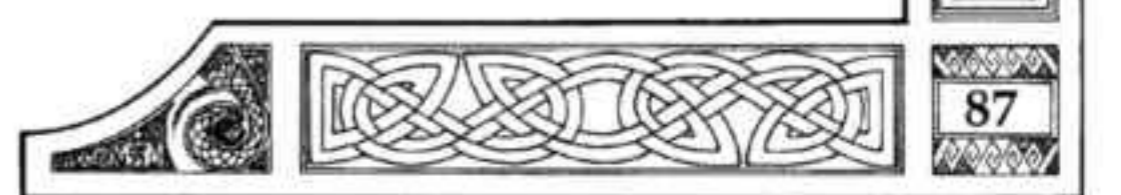
Influence Pool

The Influence Pool is a reserve that allows a persona to modify influence and persuasion-based Trials

by using accumulated social power or favors. A persona normally begins play with zero points in his Influence Pool, although certain Background Aspects can add points to the Pool. Whenever a persona successfully influences another individual, he can potentially add a point to his Influence Pool. The persona must make a successful influence-based Trial; the Trial might be a Status Trial, a Trial modified by Renown or Esteem, an expertise Trial (such as Influence or Negotiation), an Attribute Trial, or a Charisma Trial. After making the Trial, the persona gracefully withdraws his influence, hoping that the Object of the Trial will gratefully acknowledge the gesture by owing the persona a future favor.

In order to successfully add to the Influence Pool, a persona must make a Withdrawal Trial. This is a Refined Charisma Trial and determines whether the persona handles the withdrawal effectively. If the Withdrawal Trial fails, not only is the original influence attempt unsuccessful, but the target might react in a hostile way toward the persona. The Mythguide should apply any relevant Difficulty modifiers to the Withdrawal Trial. Social Modifiers should especially be considered; it will be difficult to gain Influence Pools with Objects of higher power, status, or fame. It may also be more Difficult if the target is dishonorable or unscrupulous. A persona might not respect favors owed or favors done, and a Withdrawal Trial could backfire more easily.

If the Withdrawal Trial receives a Marginal Success, no Influence Pool is gained, but the original Trial remains effective. If a Complete Success is received, one point is added to the Influence Pool. For each higher Success Grade received, an additional point can





FIRNOST Clanhead

The Young Clanhead's Influence

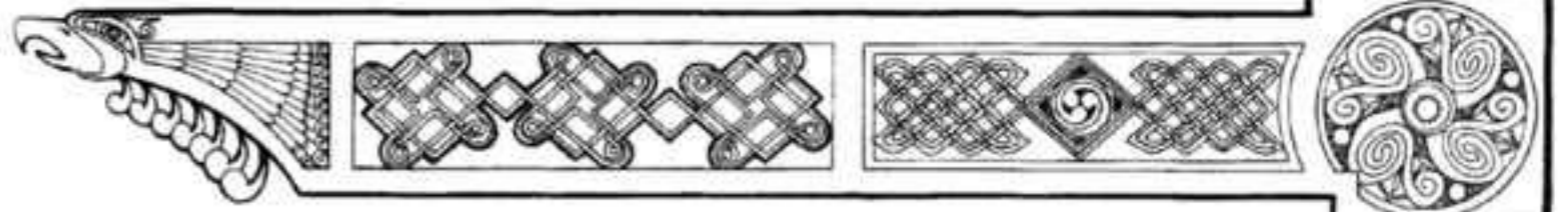
During his few years as Clanhead, Fymn Connor repeatedly demonstrates devotion to his clan and the larger tribal community. Although duty requires attentive governance and impartial dispensation of justice, Fymn earns the admiration of his clanmembers by performing many personal favors and self-less acts for the general welfare of the clan. In addition to the individual clansmen who owe him debts of gratitude, the Tribal chieftain owes Fymn a social debt on behalf of the Tribe. When the Shaman requested that Fymn journey to the Seer of Flatlake, tradition required that the Tribal Chief ask it of him on behalf of the entire tribe. Though his sense of personal honor compelled him, Fymn accepted the quest and earned the Chieftain's admiration and customary favor.

Reviewing Fymn's background development and personal history, the Mythguide decides to award Fymn several influence points to be distributed among several different Pools. Of the five points, Fymn gains three Influence Pools naming Heratha the Hunter-maid (2pts.), Jimus the Sheperd (1 pt.), and Astun the Blacksmith (2 pts.) as the objects of Influence. Fymn's personal influence with the Chieftain merits and additional 2 point pool. Clearly, Fymn can not expect these individuals to fulfill his every desire, but if he ever asks for the return of a favor, his influence pools may make all the difference.

be added to the Influence Pool. For example, if a persona scores an Extraordinary Success with a Withdrawal Trial, three points would be added to the appropriate Influence Pool.

Influence Pools can also be developed through the performance of valuable tasks or favors. If a persona does something valuable for another individual, that individual may feel indebted to the persona. Of course, this again depends on the personality and scruples of the individual. Favors usually add a single point to the Pool, although in extreme cases they can add more. Favors can also include extortion or other pressures. For example, a persona who knows some damaging information about another individual can use this information as leverage to garner favors. The persona is doing the individual a favor by not telling what he knows. The Influence Pool points gained by such actions depend on the nature of the information; if the information is damaging enough, the persona may be able to improve his Influence Pool by several points. As long as the information held is potentially damaging, the persona may continue to replenish his Influence Pool in relation to the targeted individual. Obviously, such forced influence and extortion may cause resentment or even outright hatred.

Every Influence Pool has a specific Object. Objects are usually single individuals, but they can be small groups of people (a faction at court, for instance) or small environments (a lecture hall). Whenever a persona gains points in an Influence Pool, the Object of the Pool is important. Points from an Influence Pool can only be used to affect the Pool's Object. For example, if a persona has an Influence Pool with an Object of the North Guardpost, the points in the Pool can only be used when the persona is trying to influence



the guards at the North Guardpost. A persona can have several different Influence Pools at once.

Once a persona develops a Pool, the persona may draw on the Pool whenever he is attempting to influence the Pool's Object. Each point in the Pool can be used to modify the Difficulty of an influence-related Trial (an expertise Trial, Status Trial, etc.). Points can only be used once; after they are used, the persona must accumulate them again. Influence Pools can be useful for personas who are involved in political maneuverings or other complex social interactions.

Leverage Pools

A persona's Leverage Pools work in much the same way as his Influence Pool, but on a significantly larger scale. Leverage Pools describe a persona's relationship to and influence in the Narrative Environment around him, and represent his ability to alter actions and events on a society-wide scale. They allow the persona to directly influence the outcomes of many types of social and cultural interactions, and are used to indicate a persona's effect on the development of Interactive Histories. There are four different Leverage Pools. Like the Influence Pool, each Leverage Pool must be defined by a particular Object. Leverage Objects can be broader than Influence Objects; they often represent entire spheres or areas of influence. For example, a persona might have Political Leverage with an Object of Derien County or the Barony of Ganyon or the Crimson Guard contingent. The Objects describe the location or group governed by the Pool.

Leverage pools are developed much like Influence Pools, and the two are often interchangeable. Leverage simply represents the possibility of more broad-based influence. Leverage by necessity remains more of an abstract concept; it would be impossible to attempt to cover all of the relevant modifiers and considerations for an individual Pool. If a fully detailed environment is being used, the Mythguide should be able to sensibly handle Leverage Pools and the interactions they affect. Most of the results of such interactions depend on relationships established and nurtured by the personas during the course of play.

The Mythguide can also place certain requirements on each Pool in an environment. For example, if Leverage is being developed in the normal fashion (through favors or Withdrawal Trials), the Mythguide could require a certain Renown or Status from the persona who gains such Leverage. Social Leverage might require a certain Cultural Orientation or a certain Status within a particular Heritage group. If Leverage is

Amilani Matriarch

Nayetsha's Leverage Pools

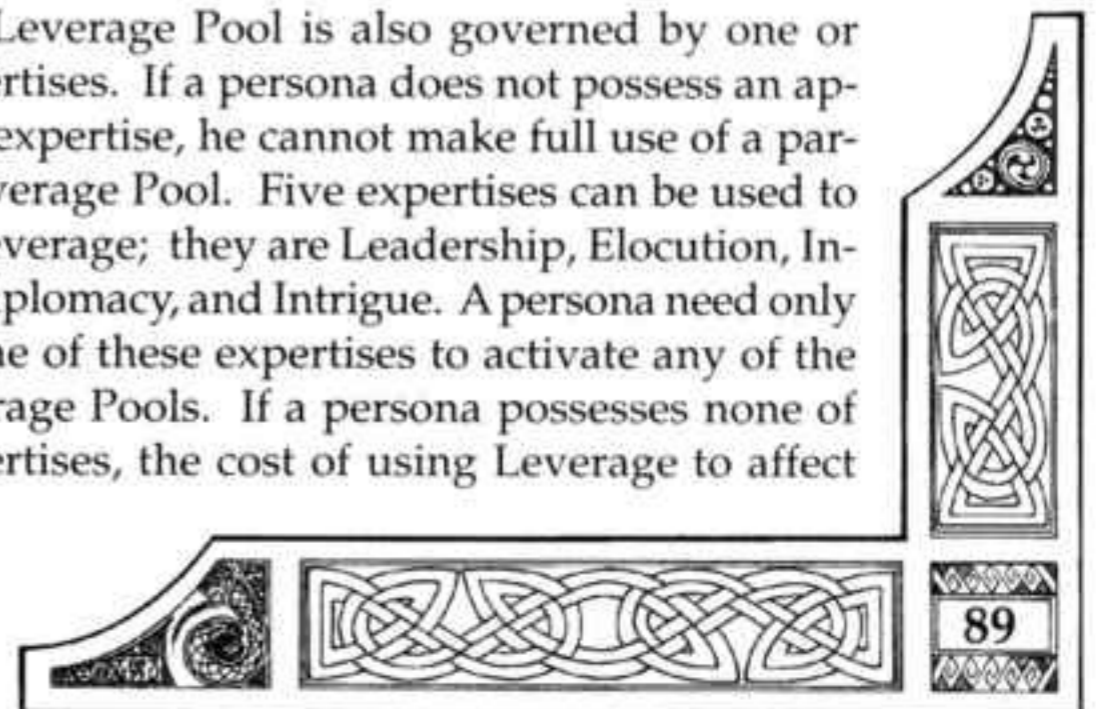
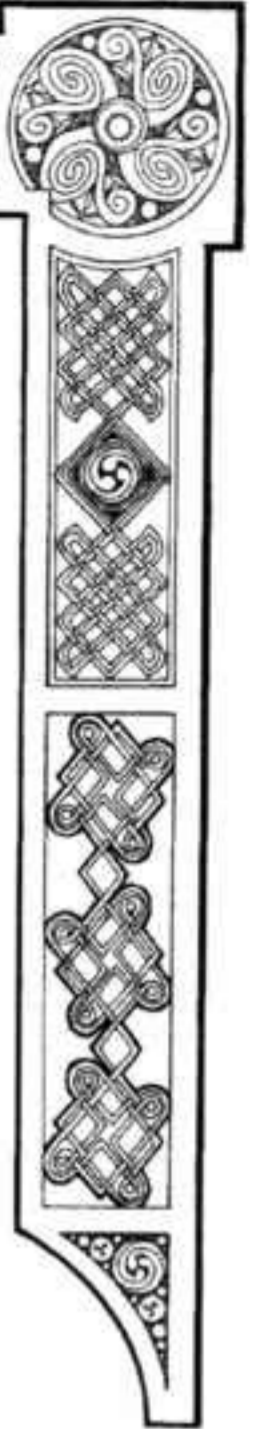
Among the many advantages of being a great house Matriarch, Nayetsha enjoys contact and influence with many diverse political, social, and mercantile interest groups. As the leader of one of Amilanth's most powerful merchant houses, Nayetsha is in the position to grant many favors and collect on many social debts. In the City-State of Amilanth, business and politics make precarious bedfellows; so it is the duty of a House Matriarch to cultivate leverage to ensure that House power be maintained.

Nayetsha has spent the greater portion of her life learning the intricacies of manipulation and motivation. Inheriting many social debts and obligations along with her household ascendancy, Nayetsha traded favors as a matter of course throughout her background development. The Mythguide notes that leverage is transitory for a great house Matriarch and rules that all of House Iedani's hereditary leverage is exploited during Nayetsha's development. Since Nayetsha begins play with so many other advantages, both the player and Mythguide feel that it will be more fun if Nayetsha begins play with a clean slate. For Nayetsha, who has wealth beyond measure, Leverage will be the coinage for which she will aspire.

being developed through extortion or other forms of forced persuasion, such requirements might not apply. The Mythguide should decide based on the parties involved and the circumstances surrounding the individual situation.

Using Leverage

Each Leverage Pool is also governed by one or more expertises. If a persona does not possess an appropriate expertise, he cannot make full use of a particular Leverage Pool. Five expertises can be used to express Leverage; they are Leadership, Elocution, Influence, Diplomacy, and Intrigue. A persona need only possess one of these expertises to activate any of the four Leverage Pools. If a persona possesses none of these expertises, the cost of using Leverage to affect



the course of an Interactive History is doubled. The persona must spend two points out of a Pool to modify the Difficulty of a relevant Trial by one level.

If a persona does possess one of the requisite expertises, this penalty is not assessed. The persona must declare which of the governing expertises he is using when he expends points out of his Leverage Pools. Remember that these Pools affect sweeping social elements of an environment and its development, and the influence represented by the Leverage Pools does not go unnoticed. At the Mythguide's discretion, a persona may develop Renown in an area related to his use of Leverage. If such Renown develops, it will be similar in nature to the expertise used to activate the Leverage. For example, if the persona used Intrigue, he could get a reputation for underhanded influence. Players should be careful when choosing which governing expertise to use (especially if their persona has more than one), since the choice can affect their persona's position in the environment. The level of Renown acquired by a persona depends on the situation for which Leverage is used. The Mythguide might also allow the persona to make a Charisma Trial to avoid gaining undue Renown for using Leverage.

Leverage is normally used to modify the course of an Interactive History. Depending on a persona's relationship to a developing environment, he may or may not be able to employ Leverage to influence such development. If the use of a Leverage Pool is permitted, the persona can usually expend as many points as he wishes to modify the Difficulty of society-related Trials (that pertain to a specific Pool and its Aspects). This reflects the influence wielded by the persona in the environment. Such influence-related Trials can also be modified by certain knowledges on the part of the persona (such as Politics, History, or Etiquette).

At the discretion of the Mythguide, Leverage can also be used in place of a personal Influence Pool. If this is allowed, such influence would only apply if the individual being influenced fell within the parameters of a certain type of Leverage. For example, Political Leverage could be used to personally influence a government official and Social Leverage might be used to influence the leader of a specific cause or social movement. The opportunity for such influence should be determined by the Mythguide. In certain cases, the development of Leverage and the development of Influence overlap. For example, a persona gains Influence with an important noble, and the Mythguide decides that the relationship could also represent Political Leverage. When this happens the player must decide which Pool he wants to develop - Influence or Political Leverage. He can't gain points in both at once.

Political Leverage

Political Leverage represents influence related to an environment's governing and decision-making bodies. Depending on the Aspects involved, this Leverage could pertain to highly placed officials or bodies, independent policy making organs, individual factions, or ideological groups. When initially developing Political Leverage, several factors come into play. These include a persona's Status Level, Renown, Esteem (this can be very important), and position. If the persona has held offices, the Responsibility and Performance associated with those offices can also modify its development.

Social Leverage

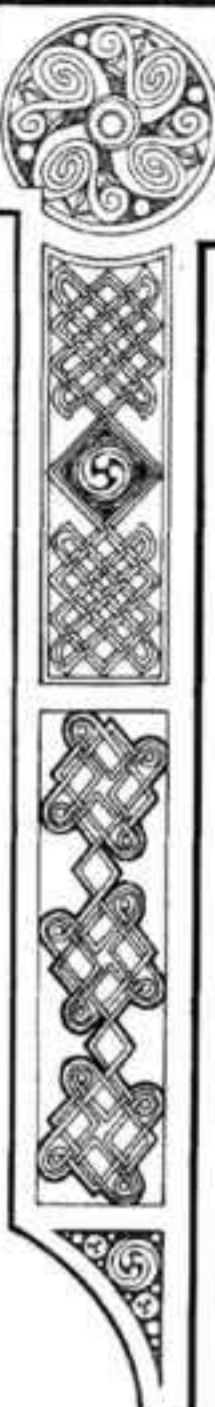
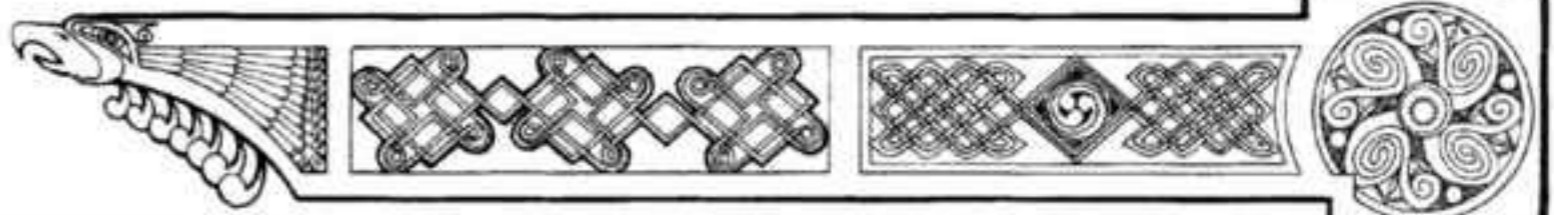
Social Leverage represents influence over social elements not directly related to governmental or administrative organs. This Leverage could pertain to large businesses or economic bodies, religious or magical orders, or ideological factions working for social change. Applicable Renown or Esteem and possibly Status come into play when developing Social Leverage.

Cultural Leverage

Cultural Leverage represents influence over factions and cultural elements associated with a particular Heritage group. This Leverage might pertain to specific races or racial groups, cultures, or subdivisions of the same. A persona's Cultural Orientation is very important when developing such Leverage, as is Renown or Status within the group being influenced.

Diplomatic Leverage

Diplomatic Leverage represents influence over specific elements of a foreign power or environment. This Pool usually relates to other regions or nations, although it can influence other environments or territories within the same nation. It often indicates a relationship with a foreign environment in which a persona's Status and Renown are not recognized (or are recognized in a different or Relative form). A persona's influence in the foreign environment, represented by his relative Status and Renown, is important when developing Diplomatic Leverage.



☉ Renown ☉

Renown indicates the general opinion that others have of a persona. Renown is often based partly on Family Renown, certain Background Aspects (such as Famous or Infamous Ancestor or Relative), and Status Level. However, Renown primarily represents the reputation a persona develops during both development and play. It indicates what the persona is known for and how widely his fame reaches.

The player develops his persona's Renown throughout the Background Development period. Offices held, Titles received, Performance records, and Aspects purchased all affect the development of the Renown. The Mythguide might also rule that specific encounters or circumstances affect a persona's Renown during Background Development. Increased Renown can also be purchased during the development period by using Interaction Points. Renown not only affects the way society at large perceives a persona, but also the possible reaction others will have to the persona.

A persona may have Renown in more than one area depending on the Vocational Paths chosen and the persona's development along those paths. Each

different area of Renown is called a *reputation*. For example, the persona could develop one reputation near his home within his initial Vocation and another in a far-off kingdom unconnected to his homeland. The Mythguide should decide the range and nature of each reputation based on the guidelines presented in this section.

Each area of reputation has an Origin, from which the range of the Renown spreads. Each reputation is either Limited or Expansive, based on the strata of society affected. Renown can also be specific, defined by one or more Aspects. Renown Aspects are assigned by either the player or Mythguide upon the assumption of an individual reputation, although new Aspects can be assigned to a reputation already in use. In addition, single Auspicious or Calamitous Events can bring an almost immediate change to a persona's Renown and its attendant Aspects. The Mythguide must remember that Renown is not a black and white certainty. Any reputation contains numerous gray areas, both in nature and origin, and should be treated accordingly.



Facets of Renown

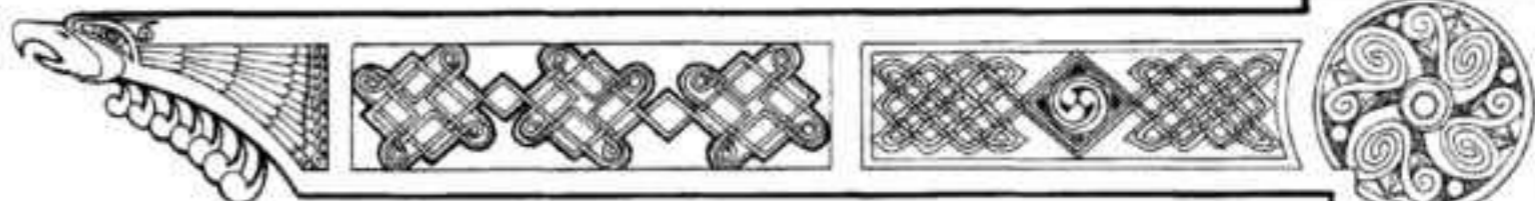
Players may begin developing their persona's Renown during the Background Development period. Renown ranges from a low of one to a high of ten, and represents in an abstract fashion the extent and power of an individual's reputation in a specific area. There is no limit on the number of different areas of Renown an individual persona may possess, although it might become inconvenient if the same persona had several reputations with the same Origins warring with each other. If a single persona does have Renown in more than one area, the player should either place the Origins of the different reputations far apart or make them of different types. If the Origins are far from one another, the ranges of the persona's different reputations may overlap slightly or not at all. If the reputations are of divergent types (if one is Limited and one Expansive, for example), more than one might operate within a single society or from a single Origin. However, the reputations still do not have to overlap because they may affect different elements of society. For example, a persona working as a thief in a large city might be known to the populace as a prosperous and generous merchant, having Expansive Renown with an Aspect of Fairness. In this guise he is known throughout the city. However, in his secret guise as a thief, he might enjoy Limited Renown for Ruthlessness among others of his kind. This example also illustrates the principal differences in the two forms of Renown - the extent of each form. These forms and the recommended methods for handling them are discussed in the following sections.

The Mythguide should also remember that only those elements of a persona's life or career that are generally observed or recognized affect a persona's Renown. Renown represents the fame or infamy of the persona as perceived by others. Persona actions or accomplishments that have been witnessed by others affect a persona's Renown faster than rumors or legends. However, the latter will quickly grow out of the former. In addition, Renown is not necessarily planned by a persona. Situations can force actions, and accidents may occur. Since they are regularly thrust into the forefront of the action, personas often have little control over their own Renown.

Forms of Renown

There are two principal forms of Renown in Aria - Limited and Expansive. The two forms are not mutu-





ally exclusive, and are able to interact (often with colorful results) within the same persona or persona Concept. A single persona may possess both Limited and Expansive Renown. An individual can also have more than one reputation of a single form, although the Mythguide should not let players get carried away with assigning Renown. Renown should develop along purely narrative lines, providing an interesting complementary element to both a persona's history and action within the Canticle.

Limited Renown affects only a certain area, class, or group within an environment. For example, a persona might have Limited Renown that functions only within his Vocation. If the persona had spent his entire Background Development period as a Blacksmith, his Limited Renown would apply only to other Blacksmiths (or possibly craftsmen in general) within the reputation's range. Those holding administrative and official positions often develop specific Limited Renown concurrently with a more general popular reputation.

Expansive Renown represents a more general form of recognition. Continuing the previous example, the persona might have engaged in several tavern brawls during his development period. As a result, he created Expansive Renown for himself in certain quarters of the city. He is recognized as a tough fighter and someone to avoid angering. This Renown, although localized, transcends any class or Vocational boundaries. If the Mythguide is not using Renown Aspects, Expansive Renown can simply represent the general social reputation of the persona. Expansive Renown is more difficult to develop than Limited Renown.

The Origin of an individual reputation, regardless of its type, is always the area or location in which it is created. The Mythguide should remember where each of a persona's various reputations originated. The range of a given reputation begins at its Origin, and spreads outward from the Origin with the range indicating its 'radius'. The Renown Value at which a reputation is possessed dictates the range of the reputation.

Renown Aspects

Most forms of Renown go beyond a general form, detailing a specific quality or trait for which a persona has become known. These specific traits are known as Renown Aspects, and can be either Favorable or Unfavorable. The degree of specialization within the Aspect is left to the Mythguide. For example, a mer-

Renown Description

<i>Renown Value</i>	<i>Scope of Renown (Range)*</i>
1	Origin
2	Small settlement/Village
3	Town
4	Small City
5	City
6	Region
7	Adjacent Regions/Province
8	Country/Nation
9	Neighboring Countries/Nations
10	World-wide

* Note: The scope of Renown centers around the point where a reputation originates (the Origin of Renown). Expansive Renown indicates that a reputation is common knowledge among a healthy cross-section of the populace (living or working within the Scope). Limited Renown indicates that a reputation is known only among certain groups within the scope.

Reputations having Limited Renown should be described in terms of the groups that acknowledge them. Such groups might represent Status Archetypes, Heritage groups, Religious or Magical orders, or environmentally specific factions.

Sample groups for describing Limited Renown

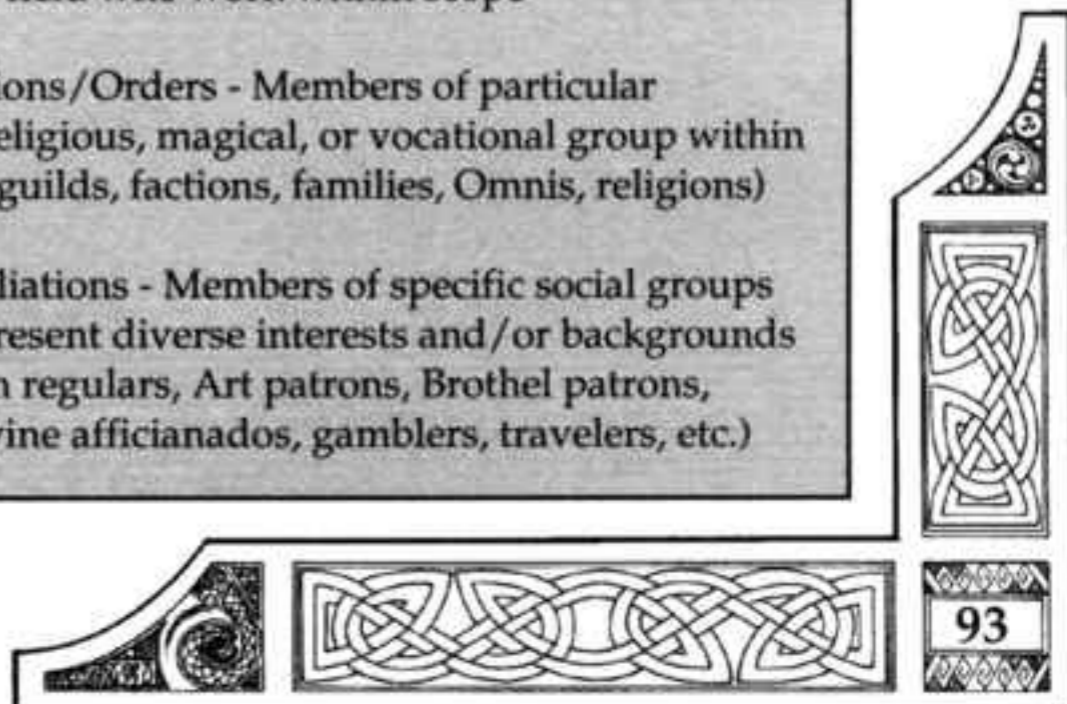
Status Archetypes - Members of Ruling, Privileged, Professional, Labor, or Marginal classes within scope

Heritage Groups - Members belonging to a specific non-dominant Species, Race, or Culture within scope

Vocational Clusters - Members of a particular vocational field who work within scope

Organizations/Orders - Members of particular political, religious, magical, or vocational group within scope (ex. guilds, factions, families, Omnis, religions)

Social Affiliations - Members of specific social groups which represent diverse interests and/or backgrounds (ex. Tavern regulars, Art patrons, Brothel patrons, duelists, wine afficianados, gamblers, travelers, etc.)



Sample Renown Aspects *

<i>Aspect Category</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Personality Traits	Honest, Cruel, Generous, Cunning, Loyal, Vulgar, etc.
Background Aspects	Famous Relation, Holdings, Cursed, Insane, Ferocious, Fortunate (lucky), etc.
Characteristics	Strong, Intelligent, Quick, Foolish, Clumsy, Tall, etc.
Vocational Achievement	Particular Education or Vocation, degree of accomplishment, work style or ethic
Heritage Affiliation	Membership to or affiliation with a specific Species, Race, or Culture
Personal History	Specific Deed, Service, or Accomplishment (ex. Rescue, Marriage, Murder, Arrest, Victory, Presumed Death, etc.)
Behavioral Pattern	Violence, Crime, Heroism, Womanizing, Drinking, etc.
Skills/Expertises	Arms, Brawling, Performance, Savvy, Knowledge, Politics, etc.
Social Affiliations	Membership or Association with a specific social group (ex. cult, fraternity, charity, religion, Omni, etc.)
Family Relations	see Family Renown

* Note: Renown aspects are may be Favorable, Unfavorable, or Neutral depending on the norms and customs of the Society in which they are acknowledged. Renown Aspects that are regarded Favorably may be considered 'Esteemed'. See the discussion regarding Esteem for further information.

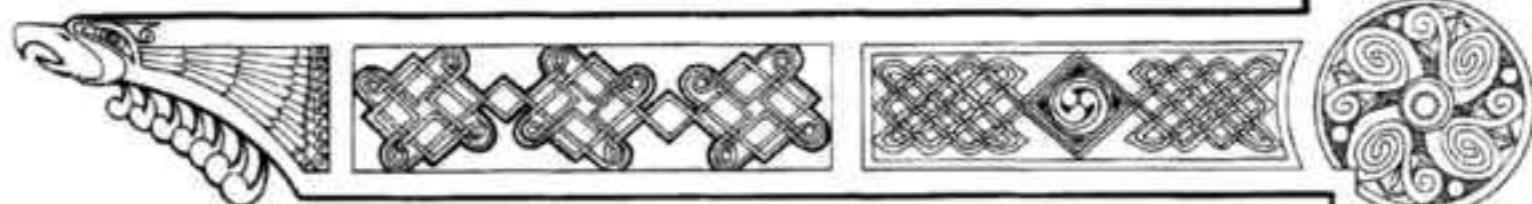
chant might have a reputation for Honesty, or he might have the more specialized Aspect of Honesty in Business Dealings. The nature of the Renown Aspects and their specialization depends on the individual environment being used. Consult the accompanying descriptive tables for sample Renown Aspects. The Mythguide may require specialization within these Aspects at his own discretion. These suggestions barely scratch the surface of possibility, and both the Ensemble and the Mythguide are encouraged to create and develop their own original Renown Aspects.

Developing Renown

Personas begin developing Renown during the Background Development period, and continue development throughout the persona's active narrative lifetime. The extent of a persona's Renown is expressed by its value. Some personas may begin development with Renown already in place. This is called Innate Renown, and is determined by a persona's Family Renown (and Family Orientation) and Status Level. Certain Background Aspects (those that relate to a persona's family) can also affect Innate Renown. If a persona has such an initial reputation, its nature depends on the environment being used. Although the persona might be recognized because of this initial Renown, it is often in the context of being a member of *that* family or so-and-so's younger brother. The accompanying table provides guidelines for establishing possible Innate Renown.

As a persona moves along each of his Vocational Paths during Background Development, he can develop new Renown and add to Renown already possessed. Renown created during Background Development can be affected by almost any specific event or chain of events which occurs during this period. A titled persona might gain a reputation for Just Rule, a persona who has held high Office (and who has Performed well) a reputation for Sympathy, and a persona who has purchased certain Material or Social Background Aspects a reputation for the Aspect's specific area.

Renown can initially be developed in one of three ways. First, a persona can do something of public note (whether favorable or unfavorable). In this case, several witnesses to the actions or events will facilitate the initial development of a new reputation, while the ever-present rumor and gossip mills spread the news throughout the local area. The Mythguide must decide the nature and value of the new Renown. If a

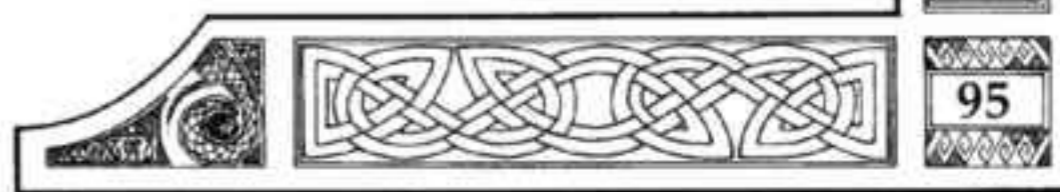
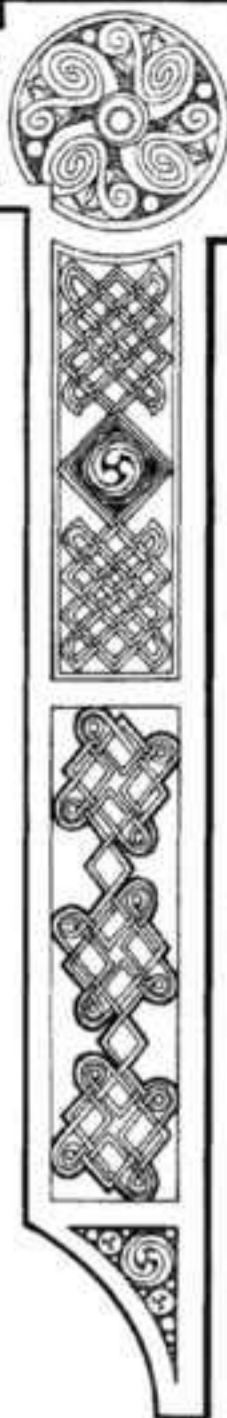


new reputation is developed in this manner, the initial Renown Value is usually a one.

A persona can also initiate conversation or speculation about himself. If the seed of rumor is adequately planted, it will not matter if the persona's actions were witnessed or not. They take on a life of their own. The Mythguide should determine how Renown based solely on rumor is handled. He should remember that the resulting reputation will not always match the rumors by which it was begun. Also, if those within the reputation's range should learn the truth (that the reputation is unfounded), the result could be a Calamitous Event for the persona. The Renown (and possibly other, deserved, reputations) will be lost. The initial Renown Value for a reputation based on rumor normally begins at level one, although in some instances it could be significantly higher. The initial level depends on the skill with which the rumor was disseminated. The Mythguide might require the persona to make a Charisma or appropriate expertise (Influence, Elocution, etc.) Trial in order to determine the success of a rumor. The Trial's Degree of Success can be used to determine the extent of the new reputation. Renown gained in this fashion is always tenuous, and is often easier to lose than Renown gained in a normal manner.

Finally, Renown can be gained through an Auspicious Event. This represents an exceptional occurrence or action that immediately creates a significant reputation for a persona. Depending on the nature of the Auspicious Event, Renown created in this fashion could initially have almost any Renown Value. For instance, if a persona prevented the assassination of a prominent governmental official, in full view of a crowd of people, he would probably gain substantial Renown from the act (possibly a Renown Value of five or six). A player must use a Window of Opportunity to purchase an Auspicious Event during Background Development. Once play begins, the circumstances leading up to an Auspicious Event, in addition to the Event itself, should be roleplayed.

When a persona develops Renown, during either Background Development or narrative play, the Mythguide must decide what form it takes. Certain development methods lend themselves to specific forms. For instance, if a persona gains Renown as a result of an Auspicious Event, the new Renown is usually Expansive. Renown developed in other ways can be either Expansive or Limited depending on its source. For example, actions can be witnessed or rumors heard by a specific group. In this case, the reputation would be Limited. If the audience were a larger one, the reputation would probably be Expansive.



Developing Renown

<i>Innate Renown*</i>	<i>Renown Value</i>
Base Renown	Family Renown
Sibling Rank	
Inheritor	-1
Penultimate	-2
Non-Inheritor	-4
Estrangement	
Favorite	+0
Good	+0
Average	-1
Poor	-2
Blacksheep	-5
Family Background Aspect	+ 1 per 3 Ranks

Purchasing Renown

<i>Background**</i>	<i>Renown Value</i>
Vocational Prominence	
1 - 2	0
3 - 5	1 per 3 years
7 - 9	1 per 2 years
10	1 per year
Background Aspect	1/3 Aspect Rank
Official Vocation	
Poor Performance	1 per 2 years
Impressive Performance	1 per 3 years
Exceptional Performance	1 per 2 years

<i>Renown Value</i>	<i>IP Cost</i>
1	1 IP
2	2 IP
3	4 IP
4	6 IP
5	8 IP
6	11 IP
7	14 IP
8	17 IP
9	21 IP
10	25 IP

**** Note:** Background Renown is Free. Vocational Renown is based on the years of practice and is Limited to other practitioners of the Vocation within the Renown Range. Vocational Renown is Favorable. Background Aspects only give Renown if Aspect is publically known. It is Favorable or Unfavorable according to the Aspect. Official Vocations give Renown based on Prominence and years of service. Renown is Favorable or Unfavorable by Performance.

FIRNOST SEER

The Renowned Seer of Flatlake

Because her Persona Concept calls for her to become the Great Seer of Flatlake, Enomi's Renown requires careful consideration by the Mythguide and player alike. After discussing the concept of her Renown and its implications to the Narrative Environment, both player and Mythguide agree that her Renown will extend throughout the entire Heath (Value 8) and reach all members of society (Expansive) through the oral tradition of the tribal Shaman.

Since Enomi has purchased the Spiritual Background Aspect at Rank 8, the Mythguide awards her 2 points of Renown toward her Expansive Reputation as Seer of Flatlake. Suggesting that Enomi be one of many great Seers which have all lived on Theosanya Isle off the shores of Flatlake, the Mythguide assigns a Prominence of 10 to Enomi's Vocational Setting. This gives her 1 additional point of personal Renown per year of development, but allows all the folk of Firnost Heath to know of the Isle and its Seers (regardless of whether they recognize Enomi as the current Seer). Normally, Enomi's vocationally-derived renown would be Limited (to Shamans or other spiritual dabblers) but the Mythguide rules that half the Renown become Expansive as a result of the Firnost oral tradition of folklore. Enomi spends 7 years developing her talents on the Isle of Theosanya and gains another 3 points of Expansive Renown.

Enomi requires an additional 3 points of Expansive Renown to fulfill her Persona Concept. Because raising her Renown from 5 to 8 would cost 18 IP (9 x2 for Expansive Renown), Enomi uses a Developmental Window of Opportunity to purchase an Auspicious Event. Describing the Event, Enomi's player explains that several years ago, a great Northman Warlord came to Flatlake to discover which of the tribal daughters he would wed as his bride. Enomi foretold the circumstances and arrangements of the marriage which eventually earned him a Chieftom among the Highland tribes. The Mythguide evaluates the Event and awards Enomi 2 more points of Renown. Enomi spends 6 more Interaction Points and gains the final point of Renown to complete her Persona Concept.



Renown and Background Development

Players are encouraged to begin developing their persona's Renown during Background Development. This development can be handled in two ways. First, the player may develop Renown in a purely narrative fashion, roleplaying his development and assigning Renown Values (in consultation with the Mythguide) which he feels are appropriate. The guidelines presented in the previous sections should be used as a foundation for such development, since this is also the manner in which Renown is developed during play.

A player can also purchase Renown during Background Development with Interaction Points. If this method is permitted by the Mythguide, a player buys Renown for his persona based on opportunities presented during development. If the Mythguide wishes to use this method for Renown development, Renown Values are purchased according to the accompanying table. Expansive Renown costs twice the IP listed for Limited Renown.

Recognition

Renown represents the extent of a persona's individual fame and notoriety. Each reputation possessed by a persona is expressed in terms of its Aspect and its Renown Value. The nature of a reputation and its Value let a player know how far knowledge of his persona reaches, and the reactions to expect when the persona interacts with others. Is the persona known

only in his home area? Does he have divergent reputations in two or more different areas? Is he Renowned throughout an entire environment? The range and effects of a particular reputation are determined by its Renown Value.

If a persona is within the range of a particular reputation, the persona might be recognized. If he is recognized, any interaction or reactions will be colored by the persona's Renown. When in an area where such recognition is possible, a Recognition Trial may be required when the persona interacts with strangers. This Trial is slightly different from most Trials; its Base is half of the observer's Intelligence, and its Rank is equal to the Renown Value of the Trial's object. The Mythguide should apply any additional Difficulty modifiers that he deems appropriate. For example, a persona traveling in his homeland comes upon a merchant in the woods. The Mythguide allows the merchant to make a Recognition Trial. The merchant's Intelligence is six and the persona's local Renown is five. The merchant's Trial Chance becomes eight, but the Mythguide assigns an additional Difficulty modifier of +2 because the persona has been abroad for several years. Since the original Difficulty was Standard, the adjusted Difficulty is four. The final Adjusted Recognition Chance is four. If a persona is recognized in an area, and the recognition is communicated throughout the area, the local populace will react to the persona according to the reputation for which he was recognized.

One particular area that always affects Recognition is an unusual appearance. If a persona has a strange or remarkable appearance, he will be easier to recognize. For example, a persona who is an Albino would certainly stand out in a crowd. In such a case,

Recognition Modifiers *

<i>Condition/Situation</i>	<i>Difficulty Modifier</i>
Physical Characteristic ex. Coloration, Anomalous Feature, Missing Limb, Extraordinary Height, etc.	-1 to -5
Physical Mannerism ex. Limp, Boisterous Laugh, Sorrowful Expression, Sneer, Cough, etc.	-1 to -3
Identifying Apparel ex. Heraldric Device, Badge of Office/Station, Clothing of a Particular Color/Style, Rare or Unusual Weapon (Visible), etc.	-1 to -5
Persona Verbally Identifies Self	-5
Observer has casually seen/met persona at an earlier date	-1 to -3
Observer has been informed or warned of Persona	-1
Observer is searching for Persona	-3
Observer encounters Persona outside of expected scope	+2
Persona is Disguised	+1 to +5
Persona's Physical Appearance has changed (age, color, false limb)	+1 to +3
Persona not demonstrating identifying mannerism	+1 to +3
Persona not wearing customary identifying apparel	+1 to +3

*Whenever Personas encounter others within the scope of their Renown the Mythguide may decide that a Recognition Trial is in order (see text). The Mythguide must consider the particular situation to interpret which Difficulty Modifiers apply.

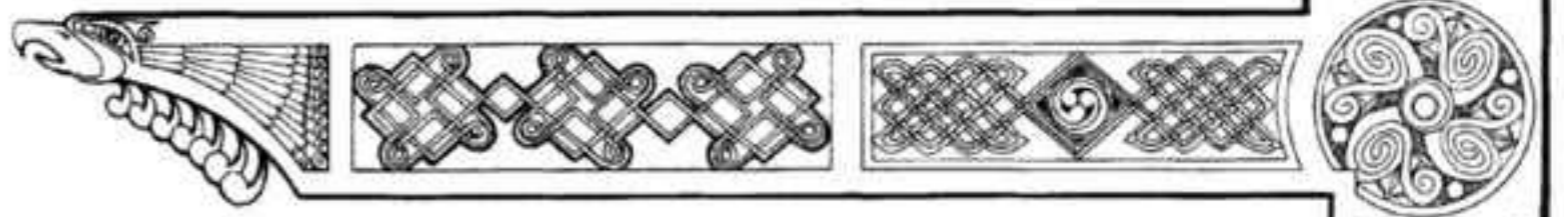
the unusual appearance might become inextricably linked to the persona's reputation. A persona with a high Appearance would be equally recognizable. The Mythguide should determine both the extent of any additional recognition and its nature. Once determined, the unusual appearance serves as a further modifier to the Difficulty of a Recognition Trial. Of course, these additional modifiers apply only if a persona's appearance is generally known.

Recognition can be either good or bad, and the Mythguide should use it to enhance the narrative aspects of a Canticle. A persona might be trying to sneak into a hostile village, or go unnoticed among a neighboring lord's troops. Recognition would quickly prevent both of these objectives. Recognition might also make the persona a target. A persona known as a great teacher could be swamped by prospective students; another persona known for his awesome prowess in battle might have to constantly stave off challenges by younger warriors anxious to prove themselves. The consequences of both Renown and Recognition change from one environment to another.

Firnost Skald**Recognizing Faethelstaed**

Travelling for several months with the famed Skald Andruloc, Faethelstaed initiates a reputation for herself within four of the tribal territories of Firnost Heath. Continually overshadowed by the celebrity of her mentor, Faethelstaed has difficulty in gaining the captive audience she requires to earn a reputation for her talents. Even so, Faethelstaed succeeds in establishing renown (Value 1) in each of the major tribal villages.

Though her Renown is small, her physical appearance makes her easily recognizable to those who have encountered her reputation. Seldom is her name spoken that it is not accompanied by a description of her beautiful visage and remarkable Feyiiian (Fairy-folk) features. Certainly there is not a single child living upon Firnost Heath who has not heard the legends and descriptions of the marvellous fairy kindred. The Mythguide notes that whenever Faethelstaed is encountered undisguised within the scope of her Renown, a general -5 modifier applies to Recognition Trials. At this stage in her development, it is fair to say that it is her features, rather than her talents which have earned her the small Renown she enjoys.



Displaced Recognition

Occasionally, Recognition can occur outside the normal range of a particular reputation. Although this is rare in practice, it can be a useful tool for the Mythguide during play. A persona in a place outside the range of his Renown meets someone from a location where his reputation is known. If such a meeting occurs, a normal Recognition Trial is permitted. For example, a persona is an escaped slave who served in the arena of a far-off empire. In that land, the persona possesses an Expansive reputation throughout the empire for Arena Combat. While traveling in his new homeland, he encounters a merchant from the empire. The merchant is allowed to make a Recognition Trial to see if he recognizes the persona. If the persona's Renown had not encompassed the entirety of the empire, the merchant's home location within the empire would be important. If the persona's old reputation did not include the merchant's home city, a Recognition Trial might not be permitted during an encounter between the two personas. The Mythguide could also require the merchant to have personally seen the persona at some point during his arena career. Trials involving displaced Recognition usually have a slightly higher Difficulty than normal Recognition Trials. After all, such encounters are rarely expected and may be ignored as unlikely coincidence even when they do occur.

Using Renown

If known or recognized in a particular area, a persona's Renown affects how others interact with him. People's reactions are often tailored by the nature of a persona's reputation. Depending on the environment, Renown can act as a modifier to most Trials involving personal interaction. The Mythguide should decide exactly what modifiers apply, and where. For example, if a merchant has a reputation for Fair Dealing, and he is attempting to cheat a customer who knows of his reputation, the Mythguide might award a bonus to the merchant's attempt. The person being cheated will not be expecting the attempt, and will therefore be easier to fool.

When such modifiers apply, a Trial's Difficulty is modified in the appropriate direction by an amount up to the Renown Value. In the previous example, the merchant has a Renown Value of two. If the Mythguide decides that the full Renown modifier is appli-

cable, the Difficulty of the Trial to deceive the customer is reduced by two.

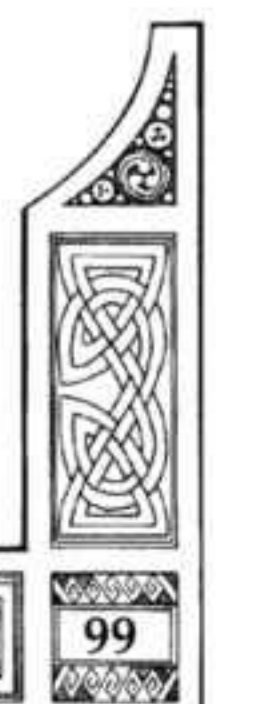
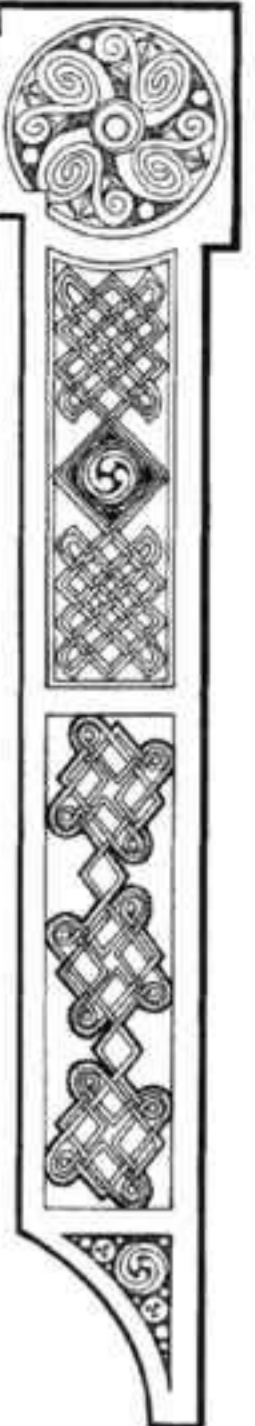
Reputations only affect the areas in which they hold sway. In addition, only those who respect a reputation will be affected by it. For instance, a reputation might have an Aspect that another persona holds in contempt or is able to ignore. Someone might feel they are above recognizing a certain reputation in another persona, whether for reasons of social status or power. Or a persona could be challenged *because* of his reputation, often by someone attempting to gain increased status or notoriety themselves. The Mythguide must consider each situation individually, determining possible modifiers and reactions according to the singular circumstances of each encounter. He may allow Trials (possibly based on Willpower) to determine whether an individual is influenced by a specific reputation.

Finally, new Renown gained at a higher Renown Value supersedes any older reputations in the same Aspect areas. In the previous example, if the merchant's deception were discovered and made common knowledge throughout the immediate area, he would develop a new reputation for Underhandedness or Double Dealing. This would depend on the believability of his accuser and the accuser's ability to disseminate information. If the accuser could convince enough people that the new reputation would be created at a Renown Value of three or higher, the new reputation would supersede the older one. If not, the accuser himself might be discredited.

The interplay of possible reputations depends largely on the Aspects involved and the environment being used. The Mythguide should keep in mind the possible forms of the different reputations involved in any interactive situation. In the previous example, the accuser might be able to convince members of his own social group of the merchant's guilt, thus giving the merchant a poor Limited reputation among members of that group. However, in the larger scheme of things, the merchant retains a more general Expansive reputation that is untouched by the accusations (the repercussions might even discredit the accuser everywhere except in his own social group). Every social encounter must be dealt with on an individual basis. Refer to the Interaction and Conflict chapter for more information on using Renown to affect social interactions.

Improving Renown

Once in place, there are three ways a persona may increase Renown. First, the persona may accomplish



something which is considered an Auspicious Event. Such an Event always raises Renown by at least one level. The Mythguide should determine exactly what constitutes an Auspicious Event in a particular environment, since different societies value different actions and different Heritage groups possess divergent sensibilities. Regardless of the environment being used, an Auspicious Event is always something that occurs on a grand or epic scale. Saving an entire town or preventing the assassination of a great lord would both qualify as Auspicious Events.

Renown can also be increased by performing actions that would yield a new reputation, of the same Aspect or nature, with a higher Renown Value than the previous reputation. The new Renown supersedes the old, even if the Aspects of the two are not quite identical. This is also true if the new reputation is unfavorable and applies to a similar area or Aspect as the older reputation. Obviously, as a persona's Renown grows very high in a particular area, it becomes more difficult to alter.

Finally, Renown can be increased through the accumulation of small actions and events that enhance or illustrate a reputation that is already in place. The Mythguide should determine when enough factors accumulate to raise the Renown Value by one level. This method is particularly appropriate if a reputation is defined by specific Aspects, since it will be easier to tell when a persona's actions directly pertain to their development. If the Mythguide allows gradual increases of this type, it becomes his responsibility to determine exactly what constitutes pertinent actions (and their effects).

Losing Renown

Diminishing or losing Renown is considerably easier than developing it. If the persona acts in a manner contrary to one of his reputations, he will lose Renown Values commensurate with the actions. The Mythguide should decide the nature and extent of the loss based on the situation. Obviously, there must be concrete knowledge or witnesses of such actions for a reputation to be diminished or lost. If the action occurred in a place where no witnesses were present, the reputation may remain unaffected. A persona can also act in such an extreme fashion that the actions create a new contrary Reputation to supersede the old one. If the actions would create a new reputation of a higher Renown Value than the old reputation, the actions themselves institute the new reputation and discard the old one. Personas can reinstitute Renown in areas where it has been lost.

If a player wishes to use a Trial to determine the loss of Renown, a Refined Charisma Trial can be used. If the Trial receives a Complete Success, the reputation remains intact. An Extraordinary Success might indicate some type of backfire, raising Renown another level. An extreme failure could eradicate the Renown entirely (if the action warrants it, of course). The severity of the action causing the Trial and the current Renown of the persona can both modify the Trial's Difficulty.

A Calamitous Event completely eradicates a specific reputation. Calamitous Events are the opposite of Auspicious Events, and have a comparable effect on Renown. They represent extreme events or actions on a grand scale that run contrary to the nature of a particular reputation. Calamitous Events usually establish a significant opposing reputation in place of the one they destroy, although this is not always the case. Any Renown affected by a Calamitous Event is completely lost. Such Events might include murder (even if the persona were framed or defending himself), a large theft, or blatant treachery in the face of danger.

Esteem

Every society or Heritage group elevates certain concepts or qualities to the status of an Ideal. Ideals are often described in terms of Personality Traits or Orientation Aspects (either Philosophical or Heritage), and are accorded a great deal of respect by those who value them. For example, one society might have an Ideal of Personal Honor; another might have an Ideal of Great Intellect. The Mythguide should determine an environment's Ideals based on its Philosophical Orientation, Heritage Orientation, Status Foundations, or Personal Freedoms. An environment's nature and motivations often immediately point to one or more social Ideals.

Renown gained in an area covered by a social Ideal is called Esteem. Esteem is always considered favorable, and in most cases gives a persona more influence in an environment than a corresponding amount of Renown. Esteem is described by a value in exactly the same manner as Renown. Esteem basically gives a persona an added boost when using it as a modifier to appropriate Trials. If a persona uses Esteem to affect an influence-related Trial, the Esteem acts as Renown of one or two values higher than its actual value. This reflects the favorable reaction most individuals will have toward a persona who embodies an Ideal.

Esteem also increases the likelihood of a persona being Recognized (by one or two values, as above). Obviously, these additional Esteem modifiers only hold true in environments that value the appropriate Ideals. Esteem is governed by the same range and Origin guidelines as Renown, and its Aspects usually coincide with an environment's Ideals.

⊗ PERSONALITY TRAITS ⊗

All personas are defined by their own unique psychology, their own emotional orientation toward the world around them. Personas in Aria interact with one another amidst a grand tapestry of motivations, virtues, and emotions. They are not two-dimensional constructs, but are rather living creations who enjoy a full range of desires, loyalties, jealousies, and hatreds. Strong feelings and beliefs form the core of any richly developed persona. A persona's individual moral and emotional orientation is expressed by Personality Traits.

Personality Trait values range from one to ten. Values from one to five simply indicate basic Personality Traits. When a Trait reaches a value of six, it becomes a Motivation. Values of six and seven indicate Motivations and values of eight and nine describe Passions. A value of ten indicates an Obsession. Personality Traits are divided into three distinct categories - Apparent, Suppressed, and Concealed. Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions are always either Apparent or Concealed. They cannot be Suppressed.

Apparent Traits are those which normally manifest themselves in the persona's outward actions and interactions. They dictate, in a general manner, his responses to everyday situations. They represent the demeanor that acquaintances perceive when dealing with the persona. Apparent Traits can be used in two ways. They can serve as indicators which point to the way a persona is expected to act (and the way in which he does act most of time), or they may be used to screen Suppressed or Concealed Traits. No matter what the true nature of an Apparent Trait might be, a creative roleplayer will always keep the other players guessing.

Suppressed Traits are Personality Traits that do not directly manifest themselves in a persona's actions. The persona suppresses them, either consciously or unconsciously. They are often more sinister or amoral, representing a persona's 'dark side'. A persona actively suppresses such Traits, with varying degrees of



success depending on his nature (and Willpower). These Traits are always present in the form chosen, although the persona may be forced to wage a constant battle within himself to keep the Traits from rising to the surface of his conscious personality.

Concealed Traits are those aspects of personality which the persona recognizes, but which he desires to keep hidden from the world at large. Apparent Traits are often employed to conceal or screen a persona's Concealed Traits. Concealed Traits always present aspects of a persona's 'true' personality. They embody a persona's deepest feelings and desires, and they provide the clearest vision of a persona's real outlook and orientation. In important or life-threatening situations, these Traits often rise to the surface.

ACQUIRING PERSONALITY TRAITS

A player may acquire an unlimited number of Personality Traits for his persona. Personality Traits cost nothing to acquire, but once taken, a player should be prepared to roleplay the Traits effectively and cre-

Sample Personality Traits

Optimistic	Pessimistic
Idealistic	Realist/Skeptic
Moral	Amoral
Ethical	Corrupt
Pious	Heathenistic
Hedonistic	Ascetic
Loving	Hateful
Chaste	Lustful
Genuine/Sincere	Conniving/Insincere
Patient	Rash
Charitable/Generous	Craven/Avaricious
Forgiving	Blameful
Compassionate	Callous
Devout	Self-Indulgent
Courageous	Cowardly
Voluntaristic	Self-serving
Sophisticated/Refined	Vulgar/Lewd
Self-righteous	Shameful
Modest	Proud
Superstitious	Cynical
Trusting	Suspicious
Confident	Insecure
Miserly	Squandrous
Wise	Sophomoric
Calm	Irrascible
Curious	Jaded
Hyper-active	Depressed
Garrulous	Quiet
Simple/Superficial	Contemplative/Deep
Tactful	Insulting
Remorseful	Insouciant
Just	Partisan
Loyal	Treacherous
Humorous	Wry/Sour
Outgoing/Extroverted	Reserved/Introspective
Gregarious	Misanthropic
Sadistic	Masochistic
Honorable	Unscrupulous
Dutiful	Rebellious
Ambivalent	Envious
Kind	Caustic
Industrious	Lazy/Idle
Ingenious/Inventive	Unimaginative
Spontaneous	Procrastinating
Individualistic	Conformistic
Traditional	Iconoclastic
Practical	Excessive
Constructive	Destructive
Extravagant	Conservative
Stubborn	Compromising
Fanatical	Indecisive

atively. A player chooses those Traits that he thinks will enhance his persona's Concept. It is recommended that a new persona take a minimum of two Personality Traits. At least one of the Traits should be Apparent. After taking these requisites, the player may develop these Traits further or he may choose other Personality Traits.

Personality Traits can be defined as either affinities or aversions. For example, a persona might have a Personality Trait of Cynical at level three. If the Trait were an affinity, the persona would take a very cynical attitude when dealing and interacting with others. Another persona could have the Cynical Trait as an aversion at the same level. This persona would harbor an intense dislike for cynics and cynicism. The Mythguide should remember that Personality Traits, unlike Aspects, are not Favorable or Unfavorable in themselves. Their natures are significantly more abstract, and the manifestation of these natures differs from one culture or society to another.

Using Personality Traits

Personality Traits are integral aspects of a persona's psyche. They define his identity, and they also define his methods and motives when interacting with the world at large. They flesh out the persona, often detailing the emotional outcomes of events or actions experienced during childhood or adolescence. The player should take care not to purchase so many Personality Traits (especially when Traits conflict with one another) that he cannot effectively roleplay all of them. Another problem that may arise if too many Traits are chosen is that the Traits themselves become the end, and not the means, to which the player's roleplaying is devoted. The player becomes so bogged down staying in character that he overlooks important aspects of the narrative itself. Such an 'actor' will quickly become a hindrance to the Ensemble. The point is that a player should choose only those Traits which relate to or further his conception of his persona. There should be enough Traits to imbue a persona with a rich, three-dimensional personality. There should not be so many that the player suffocates in his own creative energy.

Players should strive to incorporate their Personality into all facets of play. Those who accomplish this will receive a bonus in the form of Myth Points at the end of the narrative. If a player constantly plays his persona contrary to his Personality, he will be penalized by receiving fewer Myth Points for his roleplaying. The Mythguide might eventually rule that



a persona's conflicting actions supplant the original Trait and become new Traits in themselves. The Mythguide should develop his own guidelines for such changes. They should only occur if the player refuses to follow his chosen Traits, or if the player is consciously attempting to change his current Traits through conflicting roleplaying.

Personality Traits can often be used as Difficulty modifiers in social interactions or persuasion-related Trials. For example, a persona using the Influence expertise to persuade a Mythguide persona with a Trait of Honorable (3) to steal something is obviously going to encounter some resistance. In a situation like this, the Trait value is normally used as a Difficulty modifier for the expertise. However, in some cases the Mythguide could decide that a Trait constitutes a larger modifier (even if its value is low). Basically, such modifiers will change from situation to another; the Mythguide should simply determine what is appropriate in a particular situation or encounter.

PERSONALITY TRIALS

Personality Traits occasionally manifest themselves during play whether a player wishes them to or not. If a stressful situation arises which relates to a specific Trait, the Mythguide may require the player to make a Personality Trial for his persona. Note that this only applies to 'real' Traits. If a persona has an Apparent Trait that is a facade for a Concealed Trait, it will not be subject to a Personality Trial. On the other hand, if an unusually stressful situation occurs, a Personality Trial might be required to keep a Concealed or Suppressed Trait in check. If the Trial is unsuccessful, such a Trait could manifest itself.

The manifestation of a Concealed Trait might come as a surprise to a persona's companions. The persona will probably kick himself for allowing the Trait to show, but if the aftermath of the situation is handled properly (through roleplay), he may be able to mask the Trait again. The Mythguide should decide if the display was marked enough or sincere enough that the Concealed Trait becomes an Apparent Trait (at least among those who witnessed the spectacle).

Suppressed Traits are another story. A persona is often entirely unaware of a Suppressed Trait's existence. If the Trait is displayed in a stressful situation, he may not even acknowledge the display. If a Personality Trial dictates the manifestation of a Suppressed Trait, the Mythguide should handle each situation individually. He should allow the player to roleplay the Trait, guiding him if it is not done properly or to the proper extent. Such a display and its ramifications, both for the persona and for his companions, depend on the nature and value of the Suppressed Trait. It also depends on the persona's willingness to recognize the Trait. If the manifestation is serious enough, the Trait could become a Concealed or an Apparent Trait. The Mythguide should allow the player and the other members of the Ensemble to roleplay the particulars themselves.

Alternately, if a player is hesitant about a particular situation, or is not sure how his persona would react to an encounter, he may request a Personality Trial. This only applies if one of his persona's Traits would be relevant in the situation. The Trial is handled in the same way as a mandatory Personality Trial, and reflects the reality of an emotion or desire assuming temporary control of a persona's actions.

Both players and Mythguides can also use Personality Trials to handle conflicts among a persona's Apparent Traits. Players can make such Trials on their own, 'unofficially', to help decide on a particular course of action and then roleplay the results. The Mythguide may occasionally call for this type of Personality Trial if such an emotional conflict arises during play.

MAKING PERSONALITY TRIALS

A Personality Trial is essentially a modified Willpower Trial. The individual Trait that is the subject of the Trial adds its value to the Trial's Difficulty. The Mythguide should apply any additional Difficulty modifiers based on the situation. For example, if a persona has the Trait Brave at level four, and the Mythguide decides the Difficulty of the Trial is two, the adjusted Difficulty of the Trial would be six. If the persona's Willpower is also six, the Trial's Adjusted Trial Chance would be three.

A successful result allows the persona to maintain control of his faculties. He can roleplay the situation through to its conclusion. A failure means the loss of real control, although the Degree of Failure can also affect the result. The persona's actions and reactions are governed by the Trait for the duration of the encounter. If the result is worse than a Complete Fail-

ure, the persona is consumed by the Trait to the point of foolhardiness or recklessness. The Mythguide must determine the ramifications of such an outcome.

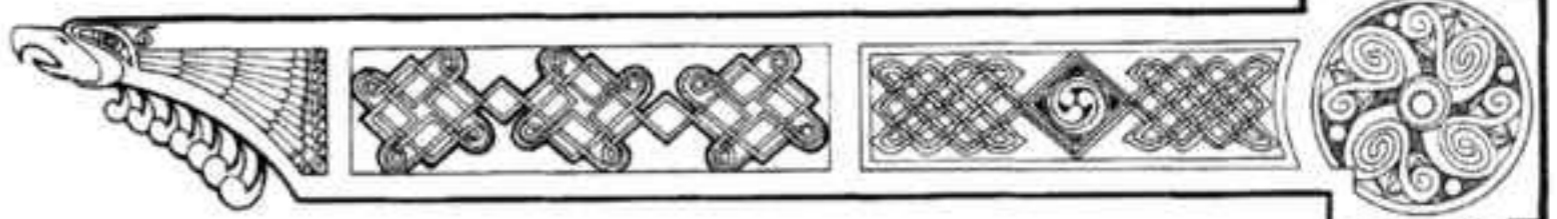
If the continued manifestation of a Trait risks placing the persona in mortal danger, the Mythguide may allow another Trial to resist its effects. This represents an acceptance of the reality of an obviously hopeless situation, and manifests as the persona's Wisdom (or 'common sense'). The player can make a Wisdom Trial at the same Difficulty as the Personality Trial which got him into the whole mess in the first place. If this second Trial is successful, the persona regains control of himself.

Personality Trials should be used sparingly and are not meant to replace true roleplaying. However, they can be useful in certain instances, and can prove very useful when determining the actions of Mythguide personas.

THE FLUID NATURE OF PERSONALITY

By its nature, a persona's Personality is fluid. Specific Traits vary in level over the course the persona's life. Certain Traits may pass away entirely while new ones appear. The Mythguide and player should determine when a particular Trait changes. A Suppressed Trait could become a Concealed or Apparent Trait. If a persona is constantly letting a Concealed Trait surface, the Concealed Trait may eventually become an Apparent Trait. It may even supplant one or more false Apparent Traits that had been hiding it. A failed Personality Trial may affect a Trait in either a negative or positive manner. If a Trait comes to the fore in a situation, and the situation resolves itself in a favorable way, the Trait's level might be raised by one. If the outcome of the situation is disastrous as a result of the persona's foolhardiness, the persona may lose a level of the Trait.

If a Personality Trial is successful, any changes in the Trait's level depend on the player's actions in the situation (since he remains free to roleplay the encounter). Other effects could include interaction with other personas. For example, a persona with a Trait of Cynical (level 3) travels with a persona who has the Trait Optimistic at level four. Over time, the Cynical persona is profoundly affected by Optimist's philosophy. The Mythguide rules that his Cynical Trait has been reduced to level two. When allowing interaction to affect Trait changes, two simple guidelines apply. First, the Trait being affected should be of a lower level than the Trait instituting the change. Second, such a change normally occurs over an extended period of time after considerable interaction. Of course, there are always



exceptions, and it is possible for a particularly extreme demonstration of a Trait to affect the Traits of those observing the situation. The Mythguide might require Trials for changes based on interaction.

⑤ Motivations ⑤

Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions represent those beliefs or ideals that actually shape persona behavior and action. These intense drives or feelings have a firm hold on the persona's psyche, and they will often guide the persona's actions or reactions in appropriate situations. Unlike the weaker Personality Traits, Motivations find their way into almost every aspect of a persona's emotional life. Passions are even more difficult to control, and will often lead the persona down paths of action he would never otherwise have taken. Obsessions are self-explanatory. The persona is consumed by the Object of his Obsession and has trouble thinking of or acting on anything else. Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions should be chosen sparingly, since the Object of such a purchase will occupy a large amount of the persona's time. Depending on the use of these personality elements in a particular Canticle, they can govern a persona's actions to a significant extent. The player must be prepared to roleplay these Traits effectively.

Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions are still Personality Traits, albeit very strong ones. Several standard Motivations are provided later in this chapter in opposing groups. Motivations are Personality Traits with values of six or seven, Passions are Traits with values of eight and nine, and Obsessions are Traits with a value of ten. Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions also have longer and more lasting effects on a situation. If one of these elements conflicts with a similar Personality Trait, the Motivation, Passion, or Obsession always takes precedence. The duration of a particular effect depends on the situation and on the Mythguide's judgment (in some cases, Obsessions might *always* be active).

Most Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions have Objects. Objects are the specific individuals, things, or concepts toward which the Trait is directed. For example, a persona would not have a generic Loyalty Passion. He would have a Loyalty Passion with his lord as its Object. Objects can represent almost anything, and their nature is often be shaped by an individual persona's developmental experiences. Objects should both enhance the persona's Concept and lend further definition to the Trait being chosen. Personality Traits with values from one to five can also have

Objects, but they do not have to. Traits at these lower values are usually considered to be more general.

Using Motivations

The principal difference between lower Personality Traits and Motivations, Passion, and Obsessions is the duration and intensity of the latter's manifestations. Passions and Obsessions are present at all times in a persona, and manifest themselves constantly. Motivations can be held further below the surface, but anything which reminds the persona of the Object of his Motivation can set the Motivation off. In tense or stressful situations that relate to a particular Trait, the Mythguide might require a Personality Trial based on the appropriate Trait. Personality Trials for Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions are made normally.

A Marginal or Complete Failure indicates that a persona has become *consumed* by the Trait. A Superior Failure or worse indicates that the persona has become *maddened* by the Trait. A consumed persona will act rashly in accordance with his Motivation, Passion, or Obsession, but may retain enough sense to pull away in face of grave danger (as represented by a Wisdom Trial). A maddened persona acts in a completely irrational manner, ignoring any danger in the presence of his Trait's Object. Maddened personas are not allowed to make Wisdom Trials to gain control of themselves. If the Mythguide does not feel that a player is portraying his persona's obsessive state properly, he may take control of the maddened persona.

Imberwyn Nobleman

Firian's Passion for Vengeance

Firian's intense lust for Revenge drives most of his plans and actions. His obsession is apparent to his household attendants and causes fearful speculation among his closest subjects. Though impassioned with vengeance, Firian is by no means rash. He constantly devises and plots, but bides his time until an advantageous situation presents itself. This passion is Firian's most pronounced Personality Trait and his controlling player assigns it a value of 8 (Apparent Trait). His vengeance eats at him, and until this dark purpose is resolved, his other Personality Traits remain subordinate.



Personas who are either consumed or maddened also receive a benefit. When a strong Trait is active, it can enhance certain related Attributes or expertises. This reflects the abnormal drive and conviction that an individual Motivation, Passion, or Obsession instills in a persona. For instance, a persona with a Revenge Passion gains bonus points when acting against the Object of his vengeance. The nature of the bonus depends on the situation. The Mythguide could modify the Difficulty of all Trials associated with a particular Trait or he could give the player a number of bonus points that can be used to modify the Difficulty of Trials for the duration of an encounter. Remember that a Trait's effects during a situation are not always helpful, and the Mythguide may require the player to modify certain Trials during the situation accordingly. At the discretion of the Mythguide, maddened personas may receive more of a bonus than personas who are consumed by a Trait.

Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions can also be raised or lowered during play. The guidelines for increasing and decreasing Personality Traits should be used here, although it generally takes significantly more traumatic experiences to affect a Motivation or Passion. Obsessions are only affected by truly staggering experiences. The Mythguide should allow these Traits to be altered during play, although such changes are usually roleplayed.

Sample Motivations

The following section details several recommended Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions, as well as their suggested Objects. The traits are presented in groups of two opposing elements, although only one of the elements will normally be purchased. Mythguides and players are encouraged to develop their own Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions which relate more closely to their own personas or settings. The nature of the Motivations designed should be carefully explained and examined. Mythguides should remember that it is much more difficult to roleplay these traits than it is to play simple Personality Traits, since the emotions are stronger and more demanding. It is not usually wise to choose opposing Traits because of the roleplaying headaches this is apt to create. However, such a purchase might be appropriate in a unique or unusual situation. Players should remember that, once taken, Traits must be roleplayed properly.

HONORABLE/UNSCRUPULOUS

An Honorable persona lives by a strict code of personal morals and ethics, and will not deviate from this code at any cost. This code may be one of his own devising, or it may be one that is common to an individual society or religion. The persona zealously defends his own Honor and the Honor of those around him, and feels no compunction about calling those who display dishonorable qualities to task for their transgressions.

For the Unscrupulous persona, anything goes. Remember, this individual is not simply someone devoid of Honor. He is actually *passionate* about being dishonorable, and acts on this conviction whenever possible. Such a persona will not earn the trust of those around him.

Honorable /Unscrupulous Objects: persona, family, society, culture, agreements, friends, those in power, a code, a philosophy, another species, the innocent, the undeserving

BRAVE/COWARDLY

A Brave persona feels a constant need to demonstrate his exceptional courage to others, and does so at every opportunity (he may even create a few opportunities). Such a persona fears nothing, and never retreats or runs from a fight no matter what the odds. The Brave persona would rather become a martyr remembered for his unshakable valor than have any questions raised about his courage. This quest for admiration and aversion to any situation that might indicate cowardice extends into every aspect of the persona's life. He can make a ridiculous show of completing simple tasks, and often gets himself into trouble by acting rashly.

The Cowardly persona runs from the slightest mention or hint of danger. He doesn't care who is harmed as long as it isn't him, and he often takes precautionary action to ensure his own safety. When all else fails, his credo in the face of danger is simple - run! And preferably push someone else into harm's way instead.

Brave/Cowardly Objects: persona, animals, the supernatural, magic, enemies, superior enemies or numbers, everyday interaction

CONCERNED/APATHETIC

The Concerned persona worries about everyone and everything. He might profess an endless stream

of trivial concerns (the health, comfort, or personal life of his friends), or he could be occupied with greater concerns (the rights of the poor or of criminals). Whatever the nature of the persona's particular type of Concern, it consumes him. If he is vocal enough, it may also get him into quite a bit of trouble. The persona divides his time between voicing his Concern and taking action to help the Object of Concern. This trait can be either amusing or serious depending on how it is played. The player should decide which it is and role-play it properly.

The Apathetic persona cares about very little. In fact, he makes a concerted effort *not* to care. This persona doesn't know the meaning of worry, and takes life as it comes, accepting both the good and the bad. After all, life is the way it is... isn't it?

Concerned/Apathetic Objects: persona, friends, family, society, health, public issues, issues of freedom or persecution, death, religion and spirituality, appearance

Accepting/Contemptuous

The Accepting persona believes in the equality of all, regardless of race, species, nationality, or social position. The concept of equitable relations among all peoples drives the persona, and he works for such relations whenever possible. The Accepting persona scorns inherent prejudices and class distinctions, and fights these narrow sensibilities wherever he sees evidence of them. His sense of right and wrong often causes problems. Most people see inequality as a simple fact of existence, and do not need their own sense of morality broadened by an Accepting crusader.

The Contemptuous persona represents everything the Accepting persona fights against. He is the champion of the rigid social hierarchy and enjoys putting others in their place. He supports prejudices of all kinds and attempts to foster suspicion among peoples whenever possible. This trait usually manifests itself in those of high social standing, although it can also represent a general outlook on life. A Contemptuous persona could also be portrayed as someone who is obsessively self-righteous. Everything and everyone is beneath the Contemptuous persona.

Accepting/Contemptuous Objects: a society or region, a race, a species, a culture, classes of society, religious beliefs, magic, new ideas or philosophies

Chaste/Lustful

The Chaste persona eschews any form of excess, preferring all things in moderation. He is the model



of temperance, taking no more and no less than he truly needs. The destructive habits and wasteful desires of his gluttonous counterpart horrify this persona. In an extreme form, this trait can also indicate one who removes himself entirely from the realm of worldly pleasure. Such a persona often follows a religious vocation and pursues a heightened form of spiritual existence.

The Lustful persona is consumed by his own desires, which are invariably directed toward a particular Object or objects. The persona might feel Lust in the sinful sense of the word (directed at members of the opposite sex or at other people in general), or he might Lust after things or substances. This a good Passion for a persona with the Weakness/Compulsion/Addiction Aspect to use to round out his personality. A Lustful persona pursues experience in all forms, and often finds that true satisfaction is just beyond his reach. His existence is one governed by immediate desire - as soon as one Lust is sated, he turns his attention to the next.

Chaste/Lustful Objects: opposite sex, same sex, food, drink, substances, knowledge, information, gossip, money, possessions, magic

FORGIVING/Vengeful

The Forgiving persona is willing to overlook even the most glaring insults and actions. He is also a master of rationalization ("Well, he probably didn't mean it that way..." or "Maybe it just fell..."), willing to overlook most incidents by treating them as accidents. The Forgiving persona simply has trouble believing in the wicked natures and intentions of others. He thinks there has to be some alternate explanation (and is quite adept at finding one in most situations). Finally, in those rare encounters where someone is actually *sorry* for doing something unfortunate to the persona or his friends, the Forgiving persona is putty in the culprit's hands. As long as the action was not too heinous, Forgiveness on the part of this persona is assured.

The Vengeful persona is driven by an intense desire for revenge. The Object of the revenge may have legitimately acted to harm the persona, or the persona could be trying to avenge a friend or family member. In extreme situations, the need for revenge may exist entirely in the persona's mind. A Vengeful persona often takes the slightest insult (either to himself or to those around him) as a grave personal affront, and may consequently attempt to exact vengeance. Such a persona may also attempt to avenge whole classes of people or strata of society, attacking the perceived oppressors for their past wrongs. In the face of those who have truly wronged him, the Vengeful persona gives no quarter.

Forgiving/Vengeful Objects: personal wrongs or insults, a particular class of society, wrongs against friends or family, foreigners, a particular society or Heritage group, specific individuals

Compassionate/Cruel

The Compassionate persona is a genuinely kind individual, seeking either to help those in pain or to ease their suffering. This persona cannot resist a hard luck case, and goes out of his way to aid those in need. His Compassion is not barred by race, gender, or species, and he always attempts to provide that which the Object of his Compassion most needs. This could mean giving the sufferer money, comfort, food, clothing, or even a few moments of time. The Compassionate persona's problem is that he reaches out to everyone. His sympathy and concern drive him, and often cause others to label the Compassionate persona a busybody.

The Cruel persona, on the other hand, seeks to cause pain in all its forms. This innate Cruelty extends

to all facets of the persona's life. It affects the way the persona interacts with others - it is difficult for a Cruel persona to consciously act in a manner that could help those around him. A truly Cruel persona attempts to cause pain even if he might come to harm himself. The sacrifice would be worth it.

Compassionate/Cruel Objects: family, friends, the poor, the sick, a particular culture or Heritage group, a particular element of society, animals, children

Dutiful/Rebellious

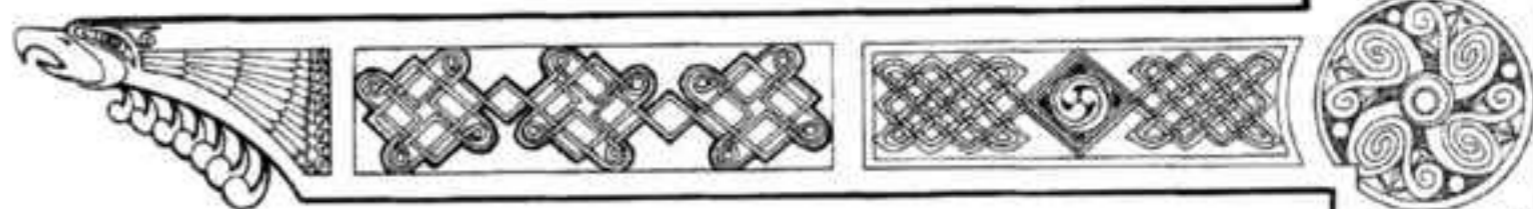
The Dutiful persona is driven by his sense of responsibility. He is distinguished from the Loyal persona in that his loyalty is directed toward a code, an ideal, or a responsibility. The Loyal persona normally gives his loyalty to a specific individual or cause. A Dutiful persona remains true to his promises - his responsibilities are his life, and he honors them no matter what the cost. Others often perceive this outlook as narrow and closed-minded, but the Dutiful persona realizes that such order is necessary. Questions of personal ethics or morality, questions of personal emotional or physical safety (or the safety of others) - all such concerns are secondary in the face of one's Duty. This trait complements any of the various Background Aspects that indicate responsibility.

The Rebellious persona does not know the meaning of the word responsible. He turns his back on ridiculous concepts like authority and loyalty, wishing to simply go his own way. A Rebellious persona is a tempestuous character to play, since he often disagrees with the majority just on principle. It is not that they are wrong - the Rebellious persona cannot grasp the idea of submitting to any sort of order. He is a free spirit, and any attempt to cage or direct him will be met with furious refusals and assertions of independence.

Dutiful/Rebellious Objects: family, friends, society, culture, Heritage group, an organization or business, a code or law, authority, class distinctions

Just/Partisan

The Just persona is driven by his desire for fairness in all things. He never allows his emotions to interfere with a true appraisal of a situation, no matter what is at stake. He never takes sides, shows personal bias, or acts arbitrarily. At times this obsession with fairness can be infuriating for his companions. The Just persona views it as the natural order of things - if someone or something has transgressed, Justice



must be done. And once the transgressor has been fairly judged, the Just persona shows little mercy. This persona is rarely Forgiving as well.

A Partisan persona is always on somebody's side (usually the individual or group in control of a situation). The concept of fairness is completely alien to this persona, as is any notion of real equality. For the Partisan persona the world is divided into two groups - those who have and those who have not. He prefers to side with those who have the most. After all, they have more to offer someone like him. Companions quickly realize that this persona changes allegiances faster than he can ask, "What's in it for me?"

Just/Partisan Objects: the poor or downtrodden, criminals, members of a specific culture or Heritage group, members of a specific society or segment of society, various religions, individual social classes

Generous/Avaricious

The Generous persona desires nothing for himself. Instead, he is driven by the desire to provide for the needs of others, expressing this genuine care and concern by giving gifts to those around him. The form of these gifts depends both on the station of the giver and on the wishes of the recipient. The Generous persona may lavish expensive, frivolous presents on one friend, while only giving his time to another. Basically, he tries to give each Object of his Generosity the thing which is desired most. For a society or movement, this could simply represent the persona's leadership or blessing. The principal motivation of the Generous persona is to bring happiness to those around him.

The Avaricious persona cares only about acquiring more than he has. More wealth, more power, more recognition - he pursues each new acquisition with disturbing vigor. Once he gains the latest Object of his Avarice, he moves on to something else. The Avaricious persona is consumed by a primal greed that cannot be sated, no matter what he eventually manages to attain. He is never satisfied and never pauses to enjoy what he has.

Generous/Avaricious: persona, wealth, family, friends, other people, material possessions, magic, ideas, the poor or sick, society at large, a particular cause or conviction

Ambivalent/Envious

The Ambivalent persona does not have a jealous bone in his body. His philosophy is simple - everyone gets what is coming to them. He envies nothing, pre-



Amilani House Mentor

Verbedys's Misgivings

As a male Adept living in Amilanth, Verbedys has needed to conceal his arcane practices and secret dreams for so long that he fails to place his trust or allegiance with any single individual. Those who support him today may betray him tomorrow. He has learned from his own mother that loyalty and confidence can never be too cautiously placed or too safely withheld. For these reasons, Verbedys has become motivated by a Partisanship which dictates that his personal loyalties shift with his current situation and social environment. However, as a mentor sponsored by the fickle ruling class, Verbedys realizes the danger of reserving loyalty from those he serves. Consequently, he attempts to conceal his partisanship, allowing his most promising sponsors to find him undivided in his loyalties even though he serves within adversarial camps.



ferring to remove himself from such pettiness. To the successful persona he gives congratulations. For the poor individual he feels pity. In neither case does he perceive any sort of injustice or inequity. The Ambivalent persona is eminently content with his own situation and attempts to convey this outlook to those around him. He wants for nothing more than what he can provide for himself, and is at peace with his own capabilities. This can be a good trait for those entering a religious vocation.

The Envious persona thrives on his intense jealousy. He goes through life feeling cheated, knowing he deserves far more than he will ever receive from the unworthy masses around him. His Envy may be directed at a particular Object or person, or at an entire class or group. In rare cases, this persona may find something to envy about every individual with whom he comes into contact. Often the Envy is not so much a desire for acquisition as a wish to see the Object of the Envy hurt, humiliated, or deprived of the thing which caused the jealousy. Envious personas are often angry, short-tempered people who cannot find satisfaction. Even destroying the Object of the Envy may not be enough for such a persona. After all, the true question is one of *worthiness*, isn't it?

Ambivalent/Envious: family, another persona, society, an organization or group, a Heritage group, wealth, power, authority, fame, glory, religion, magic or its practitioners

Amorous/Despising

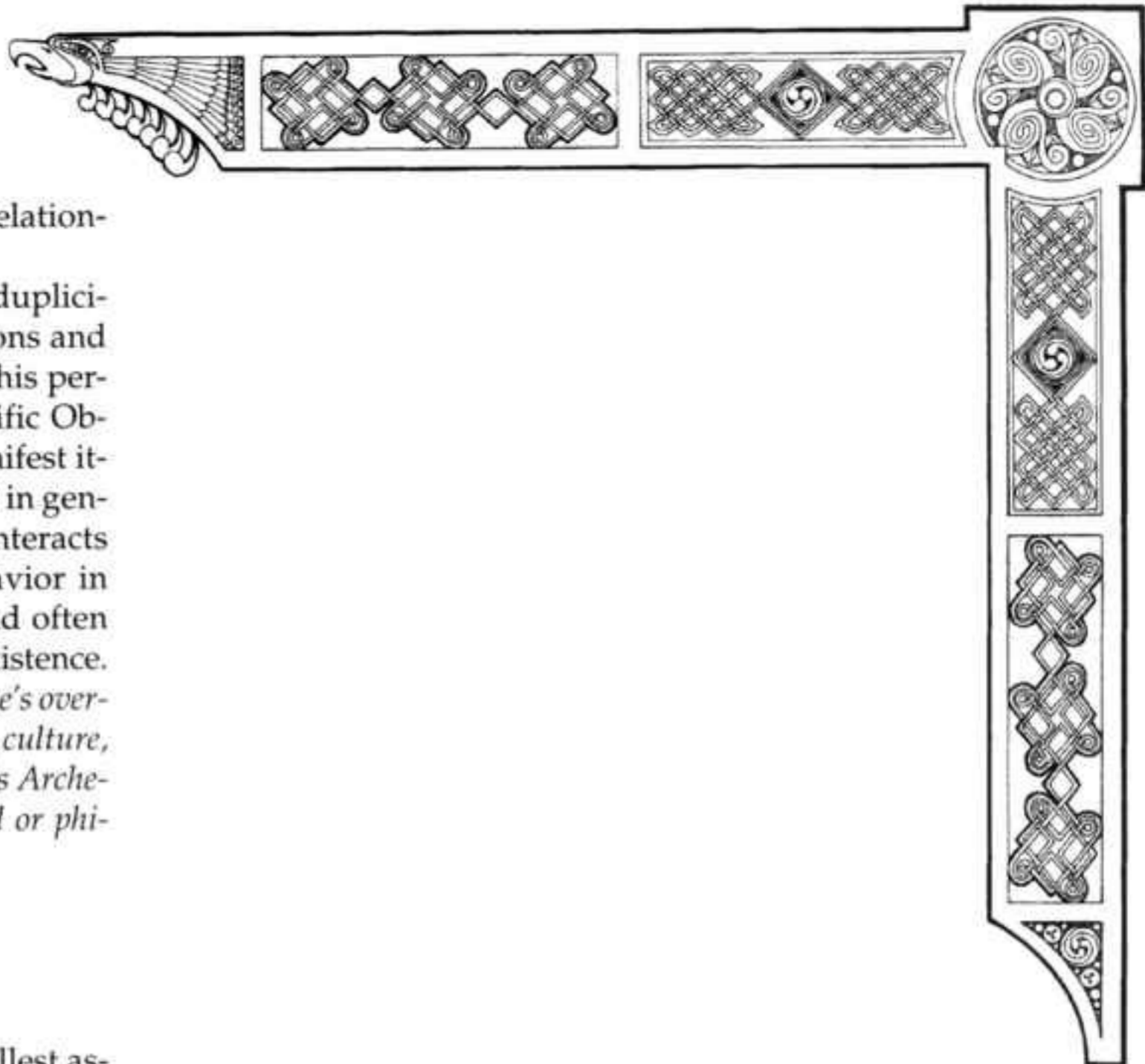
The Amorous persona is consumed by love for a particular individual or individuals. The love represented by this trait is a pure, chivalric love - any lust felt for the Object of the Amorousness is incidental. It is the emotion itself, the concept of being in love, that drives the Amorous persona. Whether or not the persona is acquainted with the Object of his love does not matter. Unrequited longing can be as fulfilling as mutual love for the Amorous persona. After all, it is the idea of love as much as the reality of fulfillment that occupies the persona. This trait largely manifests itself in the persona's mind, since the practical realities of the amorous situation rarely live up to the imagined possibilities. Some Amorous personas realize this truth early and avoid any real contact with the Object of their ardor, preferring instead the mystery of anonymity.

The Despising persona is driven by an intense hatred. This hatred can be directed at a specific persona, thing, group, class, or philosophy. The persona Despises the Object of his hatred with his entire being, and attempts to hurt or destroy it at every opportunity. The Despising persona is consumed by a need to hate, and normally moves on to a new Object of hatred when an old one is exhausted or destroyed. This persona thrives on his anger, and often allows it to control his actions in tense situations.

Amorous/Despising Objects: family members, acquaintances, former lovers or spouses, friends, well-known or successful individuals, specific cultures or religions, Heritage groups, social classes

Loyal/Treacherous

The Loyal persona is completely devoted to an individual, a group, or a cause. Loyalty can also be directed toward a society, culture, or Heritage group. A Loyal persona places his responsibility to the Object of his Loyalty before everything else in his life. He is willing to sacrifice himself in order to protect, preserve, or further this Object. He may also compromise his own sensibilities and ethics for the sake of maintaining his conviction. The unswerving devotion of the Loyal persona might not be understood by those close to him - his responsibility and Loyalty take pre-



cedence over any sort of personal cares or relationships.

The Treacherous persona is a thoroughly duplicitous individual. He has no heartfelt convictions and feels no sense of responsibility or morality. This persona may direct his Treachery toward a specific Object or group, or his disloyal nature could manifest itself as more of a pervasive attitude toward life in general. It affects how the persona deals and interacts with others, and dictates the persona's behavior in stressful situations. Betrayal is a common and often welcome aspect of the Treacherous persona's existence.

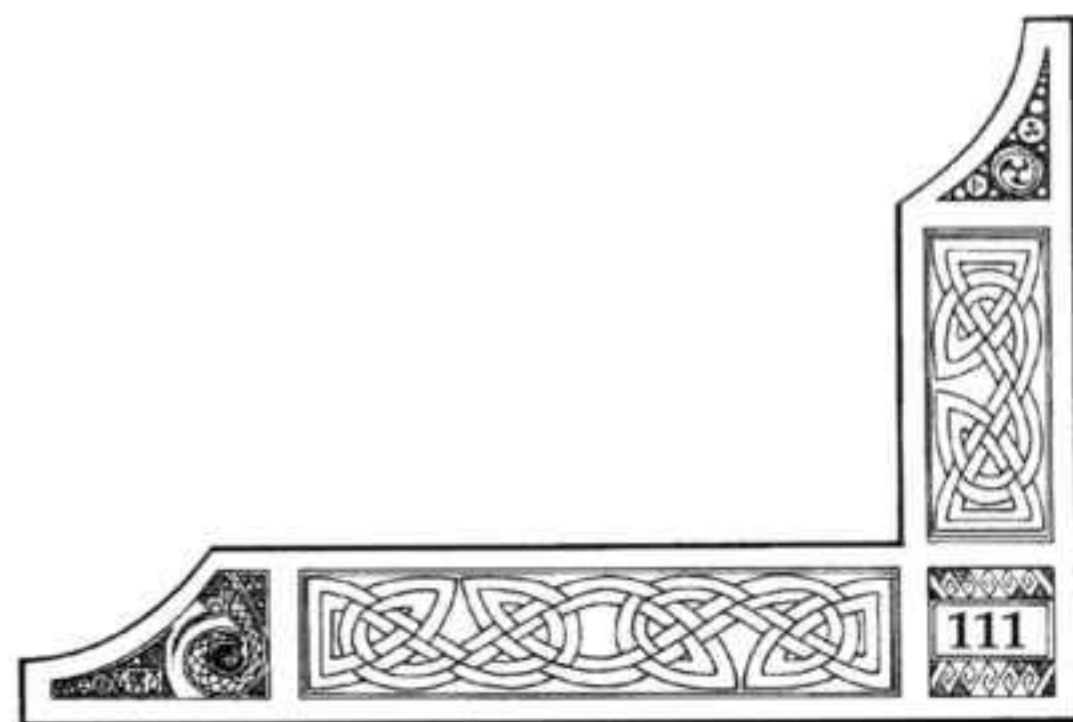
Loyal/Treacherous Objects: friends, family, one's overlord or employer, a group or organization, society, culture, Heritage group, religion or religious order, a Status Archetype or social class, a cause or revolution, an ideal or philosophy

Modest/Proud

The Proud persona takes pride in the smallest aspects of his life, inflating insignificant actions and events beyond conventional reason. When this persona actually performs a noteworthy act, his pride becomes insufferable, often translating itself into outright arrogance or pomposity. A Proud persona's companions are likely to hear the tales of his remarkable prowess time and time again.

The Modest persona eschews Pride in all of its forms. Even when it is completely warranted (the persona has just single-handedly saved the kingdom), this persona shies away from taking credit or acknowledging praise. He will often attempt to pass appropriate credit to others; if one of his companions happens to be very Proud, the arrangement could work just fine. The Modest persona keeps most of his personal history and notable deeds to himself.

Modest/Proud Objects: a persona's deeds or accomplishments, the accomplishments of a group or society to which a persona belongs, a certain relationship or association, a Heritage group or culture, a cause, philosophy, or ideal

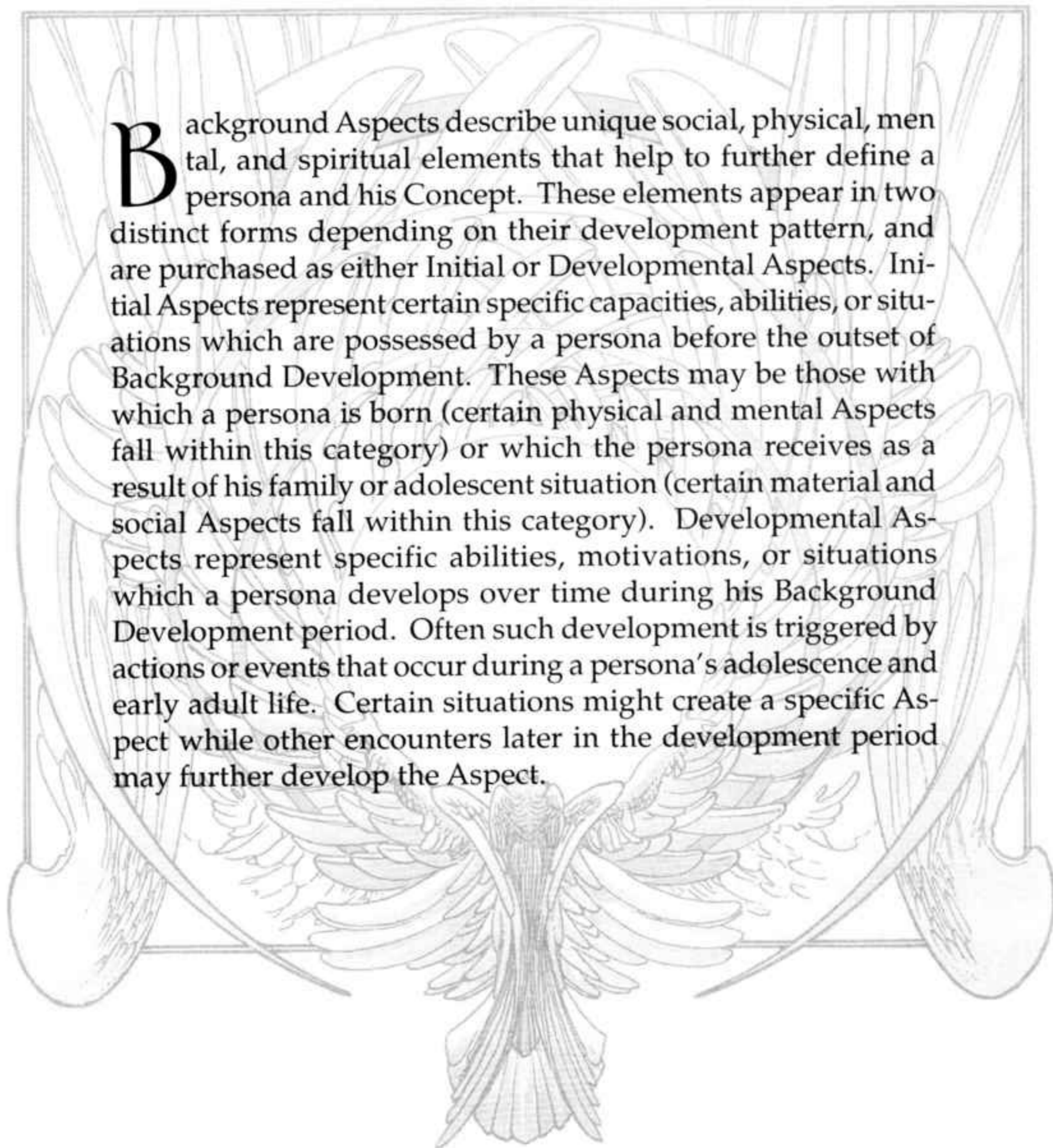




Background Aspects

⊗ Chapter Five ⊗

Background Aspects describe unique social, physical, mental, and spiritual elements that help to further define a persona and his Concept. These elements appear in two distinct forms depending on their development pattern, and are purchased as either Initial or Developmental Aspects. Initial Aspects represent certain specific capacities, abilities, or situations which are possessed by a persona before the outset of Background Development. These Aspects may be those with which a persona is born (certain physical and mental Aspects fall within this category) or which the persona receives as a result of his family or adolescent situation (certain material and social Aspects fall within this category). Developmental Aspects represent specific abilities, motivations, or situations which a persona develops over time during his Background Development period. Often such development is triggered by actions or events that occur during a persona's adolescence and early adult life. Certain situations might create a specific Aspect while other encounters later in the development period may further develop the Aspect.



Background Aspects

All Background Aspects fall within one of two primary classifications - Favorable or Unfavorable. Favorable Aspects are those that benefit a persona in some way, either directly or indirectly, while Unfavorable Aspects are those aspects that hinder a persona in some fashion. Whether Favorable or Unfavorable, Background Aspects represent exceptional qualities in personas, and as such will occur with limited frequency in Mythguide personas. Most normal Mythguide personas, the local innkeeper for example, have only one or two Background Aspects. More important Mythguide personas, such as primary adversaries of the Ensemble, can have more Background Aspects. The most important Mythguide personas can have as many Background Aspects as the players.

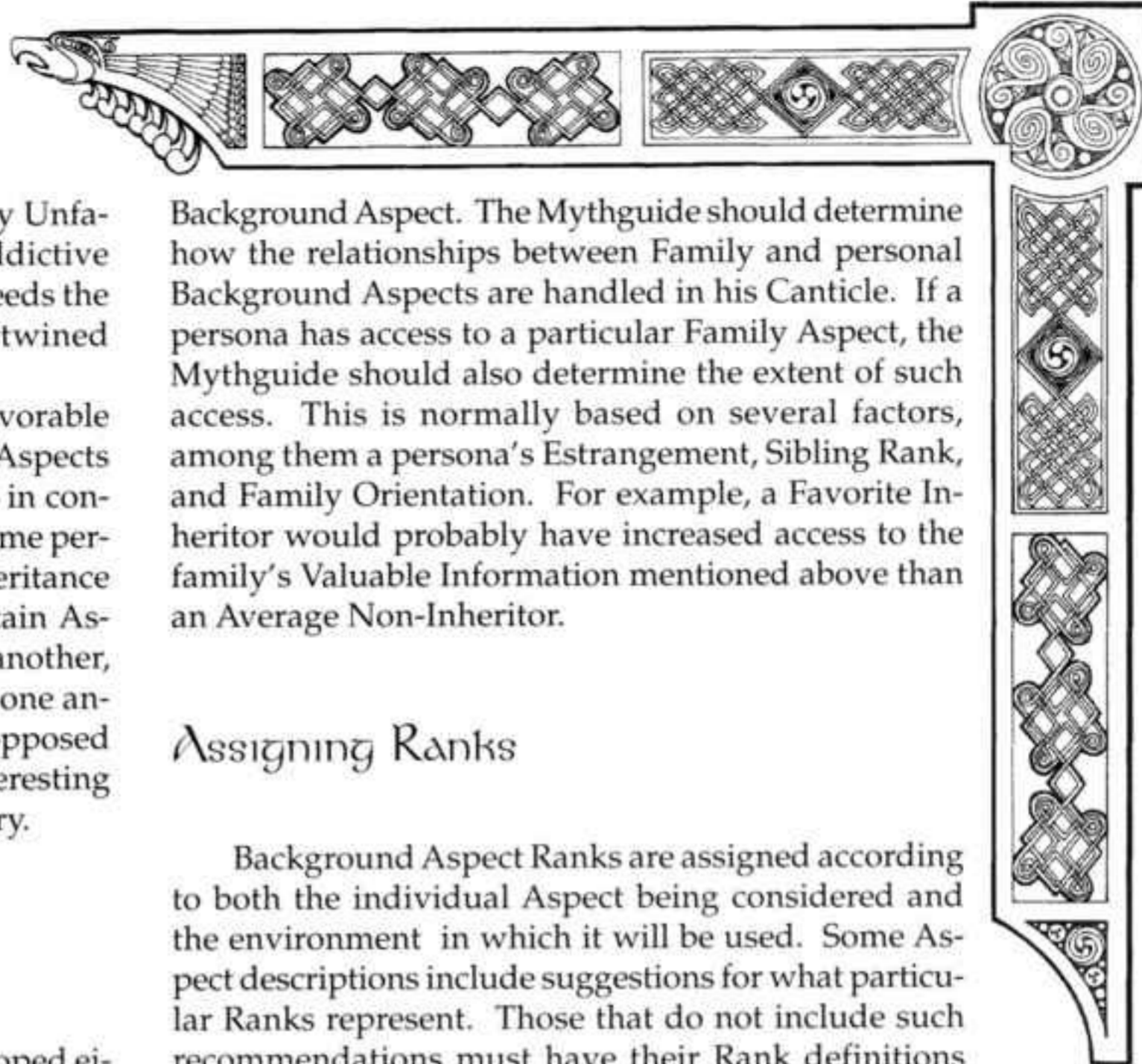
Background Aspects are purchased with Interaction Points, and use the Talents column of the Improvement Table. Favorable Aspects cost the requisite number of Interaction Points while Unfavorable Aspects bestow those points on the persona as an award (because of the hindrances they represent). Background Aspects have Ranks ranging from one to ten (in both positive or negative directions) depending on the strength and effects of a particular Aspect. In most cases, the Mythguide determines what individual Background Aspect Ranks represent.

There is no limit to the number of Background Aspects that can be purchased. However, the Aspects chosen should complement a persona's Concept and enhance persona individuality. They should be used to further define a persona's nature and background. Players are encouraged to develop certain Aspects incrementally, purchasing them as Initial Aspects and continuing their development as Developmental Aspects. Players should not choose more Background Aspects than they are able to properly roleplay.

Background Aspects need to be carefully explained and considered within the context of a specific environment. The Mythguide should not let players get carried away when choosing them. If the Mythguide feels it is necessary, he may even limit the number of Initial or Developmental Aspects a player may choose. Although the origin of an Aspect (Initial or Developmental) does not affect its cost, players should keep track of how and when specific Aspects were developed. Such description helps a player to define a rich and original persona history. It also ensures that one persona's Background Development is never the same as another's.

Some Aspects complement one another quite well. The acquisition of such complementary Aspects is en-





couraged. An example of two complementary Unfavorable Psychological Aspects would be Addictive Personality and Hallucinations. One Aspect feeds the other, and the two become extremely intertwined within the persona's psyche.

Many Background Aspects have both a Favorable and an Unfavorable form. Directly opposed Aspects are mutually exclusive, and cannot be chosen in conjunction with one another. For example, the same persona could not purchase both Favorable Inheritance and Unfavorable Inheritance. However, certain Aspects may be only partially opposed to one another, and these may be chosen in conjunction with one another. Explaining the presence of two partly opposed Aspects in the same persona can add an interesting dimension to the persona's background history.

Heritage and Kinship Aspects

Certain Background Aspects can be developed either at no cost or at an accelerated rate. Most Heritage Templates will have both Inherent and Recommended Aspects. Inherent Aspects are present in every member of a particular Heritage group, and occasionally carry minimum Ranks with them. If a persona's Heritage group has Inherent Aspects, the persona is required to purchase those Aspects at their minimum Ranks. When choosing Inherent Aspects, Interaction Point costs and awards are halved. For example, it would cost only five Interaction Points to purchase such an Aspect at Rank Ten. Recommended Aspects are only suggestions and must be purchased normally.

At the Mythguide's option, every persona can choose one Kinship related Background Aspect at half cost. This is considered an Inherited Aspect, and the Aspect chosen must be based on an Aspect possessed by the persona's mother or father. Depending on the persona's Family Orientation and the importance of lineage in the environment being used, the Mythguide can allow a persona to choose further Inherited Aspects. Every Aspect chosen as an Inherited Aspect must relate in some direct way to the persona's family - a fear instilled in a child by his parents, a series of valuable family contacts, or an inherited physical ability or trait. The origins of each Inherited Aspect should be explained by the player.

Family Background Aspects (see Chapter Five) are often chosen as Inherited Aspects. For example, if the persona's family has a Valuable Information Aspect of its own, the persona may either be able to purchase the Aspect at a reduced cost or gain access to the Family Aspect without purchasing an equivalent personal

Background Aspect. The Mythguide should determine how the relationships between Family and personal Background Aspects are handled in his Canticle. If a persona has access to a particular Family Aspect, the Mythguide should also determine the extent of such access. This is normally based on several factors, among them a persona's Estrangement, Sibling Rank, and Family Orientation. For example, a Favorite Inheritor would probably have increased access to the family's Valuable Information mentioned above than an Average Non-Inheritor.

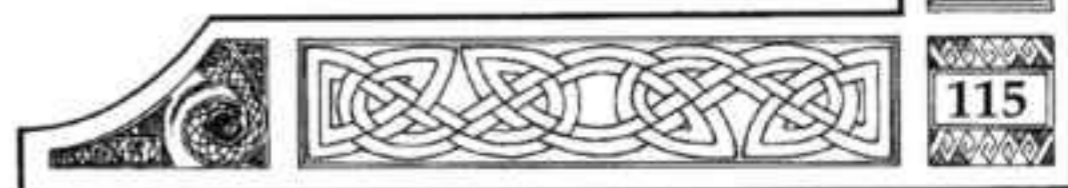
Assigning Ranks

Background Aspect Ranks are assigned according to both the individual Aspect being considered and the environment in which it will be used. Some Aspect descriptions include suggestions for what particular Ranks represent. Those that do not include such recommendations must have their Rank definitions determined by the Mythguide. Any number of meth-

Purchasing Background Aspects

Aspect Rank	Interaction Point Cost*
1	1/-1 IP
2	2/-2 IP
3	3/-3 IP
4	4/-4 IP
5	5/-5 IP
6	6/-6 IP
7	7/-7 IP
8	8/-8 IP
9	9/-9 IP
10	10/-10 IP

* Note: Favorable Aspects cost a number of IP = the Aspect Rank. Unfavorable Aspects yield a number of bonus IP = the Aspect Rank (-IP cost represents the bonus IP award). If Personas are being created Narratively, there is no cost or award associated with purchasing Background Aspects at any Rank. If Windows of Opportunity are being used in the Persona Creation process, a Developmental Window may be spent to purchase a single Aspect at any Rank..



Background Aspect Catalog

Material Aspects (Favorable)

Collection
 Creditor
 Extensive Resources
 Favorable Inheritance
 Good Credit Reputation
 Heirloom
 Holdings
 Savings
 Unique Income

Material Aspects (Unfavorable)

Debt
 Dependent
 Missing Heirloom
 Obligation
 Poor Credit Reputation
 Unfavorable Inheritance
 Uniquely Equipped

Social Aspects (Favorable)

Ally
 Contacts
 Famous Ancestor
 Famous Relation
 Follower
 Honored
 Marriage
 Offspring
 Protector
 Social Creditor
 Social Responsibility
 Sponsor
 Valuable Information

Social Aspects (Unfavorable)

Adversary
 Disgraced
 Hunted
 Infamous Ancestor
 Infamous Relation
 Secret
 Social Debt
 Social Irresponsibility

Psychological Aspects (Favorable)

Acceptance
 Born Leader
 Psychosomatic Resistance
 Trauma Resistance

Psychological Aspects (Unfavorable)

Addictive Personality
 Delusions
 Fear
 Fixation
 Hallucinations
 Hypochondriac
 Insanity
 Narcissism
 Repressed Event
 Repulsion
 Weakness/Compulsion/Addict.

Physical Aspects (Favorable)

Ages Well
 Ambidexterity
 Enhanced Sense
 Ferocity
 Immunity
 Light Sleeper
 Melodious Voice
 Resistance
 Slow Metabolism
 Strong Stomach
 Tolerance of Extremes
 Unrealized Potential
 Weather Sense

Physical Aspects (Unfavorable)

Ages Poorly
 Accelerated Metabolism
 Allergy
 Diminished Sense
 Disease
 Falling Sickness
 Heavy Sleeper
 Injury
 Malformed Digit or Limb
 Mute
 Susceptibility
 Weak Stomach

Mental Aspects (Favorable)

Affinity
 Berserk
 Confidence
 Fast Learner
 Good Memory
 High Pain Threshold
 Ingenuity
 Magical Talent
 Sense of Direction
 Sense of Time
 Superior Concentration

Mental Aspects (Unfavorable)

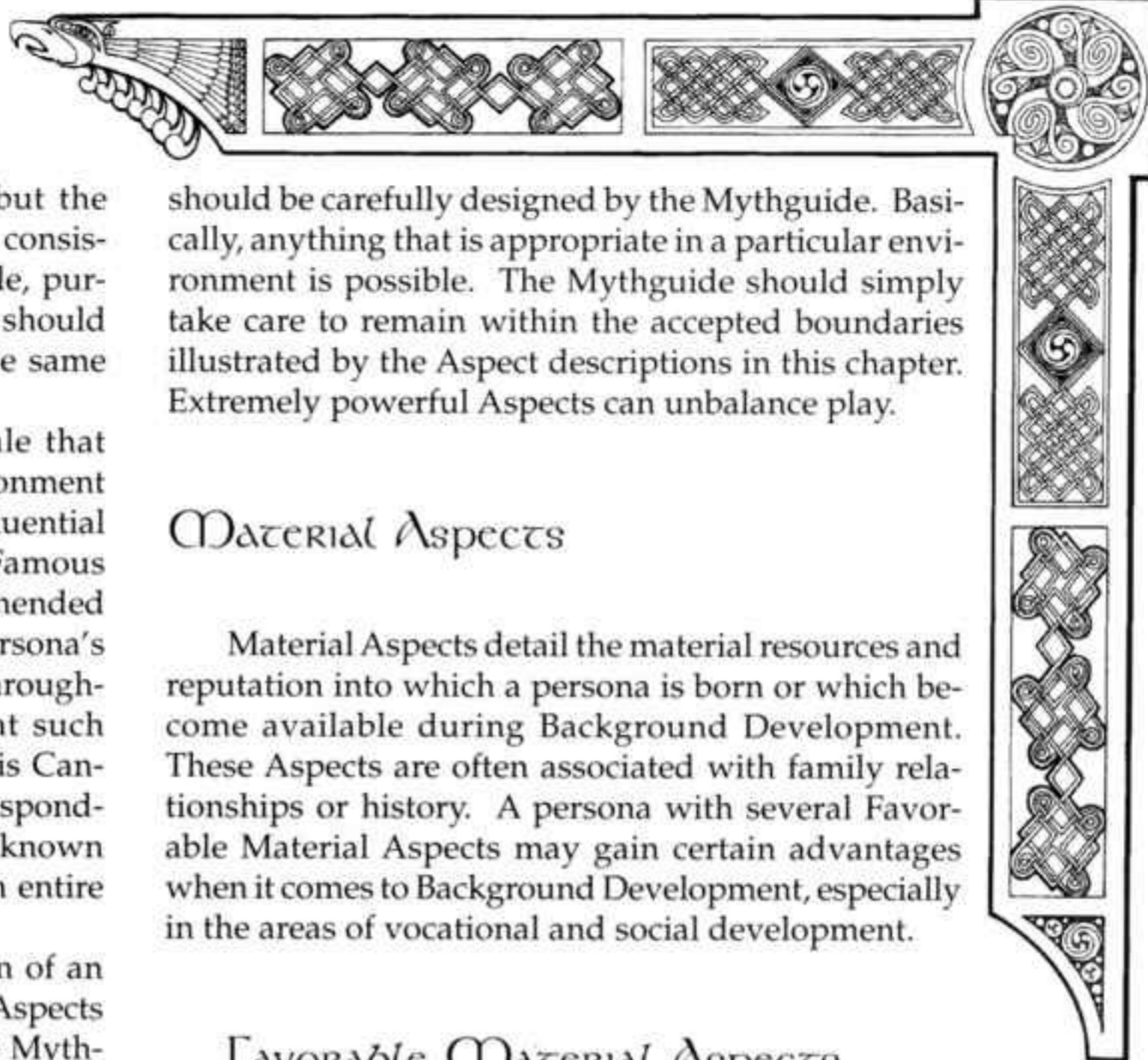
Learning Disability
 Low Confidence
 Poor Memory
 Short Attention Span
 Low Pain Threshold

Spiritual Aspects (Favorable)

Animal Kinship
 Blessed Birth
 Fortunate Destiny
 Fortune
 Gift
 Guardian
 Guide
 Natural Friend
 Prophecy
 Recall
 Sensitivity
 Spiritual Ally
 True Calling

Spiritual Aspects (Unfavorable)

Curse
 Doom
 Doomed Destiny
 Haunted
 Natural Enemy
 Spiritual Foe
 Superstition
 Watcher



ods can be used to figure out these costs, but the method finally decided upon should remain consistent from one Aspect to another. For example, purchasing a Psychological Aspect at Rank four should benefit a persona, in a relative manner, to the same extent as a Physical Aspect at Rank four.

The Mythguide should determine a scale that works for him; a Rank ten Aspect in one environment might be considerably more powerful and influential than in another. For instance, purchasing Famous Ancestor at Rank ten could yield the recommended maximum description for the Aspect - the persona's ancestor is the stuff of legend and is known throughout the world. The Mythguide decides that such sweeping Aspect effects are a bit much for his Canticle, and determines that in his Canticle a corresponding Aspect would yield an ancestor who was known only within a specific nation or region, not an entire world.

By changing the maximum representation of an Aspect, the maximum representations of other Aspects are affected in a relative fashion as well. The Mythguide must finally determine a workable basis and scale for Background Aspects and their effects that fits comfortably into the Narrative Environment being used.

Aspect Descriptions

The following sections describe the Background Aspects used in the game, category by category. Background Aspects fall into six distinct categories - Material, Social, Psychological, Physical, Mental, and Spiritual. Within each Aspect description the Mythguide will find guidelines on both assigning Ranks and on the possible meaning of particular Ranks in an environment. Any special or unique considerations are also included in the individual descriptions.

Unique Aspects

It is possible to design Unique Background Aspects within any of the six Aspect categories. These are Aspects unique to a certain environment or a specific Canticle, and are developed accordingly by the Mythguide. The Aspects should be described just as those in the text are described, and any unusual guidelines or parameters related to the use of the Aspect should be detailed. Recommended effects or scale are especially useful when detailing Unique Aspects, and

should be carefully designed by the Mythguide. Basically, anything that is appropriate in a particular environment is possible. The Mythguide should simply take care to remain within the accepted boundaries illustrated by the Aspect descriptions in this chapter. Extremely powerful Aspects can unbalance play.

Material Aspects

Material Aspects detail the material resources and reputation into which a persona is born or which become available during Background Development. These Aspects are often associated with family relationships or history. A persona with several Favorable Material Aspects may gain certain advantages when it comes to Background Development, especially in the areas of vocational and social development.

Favorable Material Aspects

Collection

The persona has a Collection of some type (art, weapons, etc.). The player might want to develop the Collection piece by piece throughout his Background Development, or he might purchase or be given the Collection in its entirety. The Aspect's Rank dictates the size, value, and importance of the Collection. It might be only an incidental narrative enhancement or it could be an important element of a persona's life, background, or history. The particulars are left to the player and the Mythguide. This Aspect often complements the Unique Income, Savings, or Creditor Aspects.

Creditor

The persona is owed some type of financial or material compensation. This debt can be borne by another family or a single individual. The debtor might partially compensate the Creditor by doing favors or performing services. The exact nature of the debt, its amount, its importance, and the relationship between the Creditor and the debtor depend on both the environment being used and the Aspect's Rank. The Aspect's Rank should be based upon both the burden created for the debtor and the benefit derived by the Creditor - the greater the benefit and the bur-

den, the higher the Rank. This Aspect may complement a Favorable Inheritance.

EXTENSIVE RESOURCES

The persona is unusually well-equipped or well-connected for his vocation, Status, or position in society. This Aspect represents goods, materials, and tools beyond those which a persona would normally be expected to possess (based on his Heritage, Status, and wealth). A Rank one Aspect might represent several of the tools a young apprentice needs for his training, while a Rank ten Aspect could allow the apprentice to build his own shop and stock it for a year. A lower Rank might provide a poor knight with armor or weapons he could not otherwise afford, while a higher Rank could represent a finely trained warhorse or a sword of exceptional (or possibly magical) craftsmanship. The player and Mythguide should determine the precise nature of this Aspect in a particular environment. This Aspect may complement the Favorable Inheritance Aspect.

FAVORABLE INHERITANCE

The persona receives a substantial inheritance. The inheritance will be of a size and value in accordance with the persona's family's position within the society. The Mythguide should determine exactly what the inheritance consists of based on the Aspect's Rank. A Favorable Inheritance represents an inheritance over and above what would otherwise be considered normal for a persona's Social Estate, and the Mythguide must keep this guideline in mind when detailing the form of the inheritance. In some environments the Mythguide may limit this Aspect to only those personas with the Sibling Rank of Inheritor. Such limitations depend on the lineage patterns in the environment being used. The purchase of this Aspect can also be affected by Estrangement, and the importance of a persona's Estrangement and Family Orientation primarily depend on the relative from whom a persona is inheriting. If the relative is himself a Black Sheep, such considerations might mean very little. The nature of the inheritance and its circumstances should be detailed by the Mythguide based on the persona's relationship to his family. This Aspect often complements the Family Heirloom Aspect.

AMILANI MATRIARCH

The Holdings of House Iedan

Since Nayetsha's Persona Concept calls for her to become the Matriarch of one of the most powerful Merchant Houses in Amilanth, she is required to purchase two favorable Material aspects — Favorable Inheritance and Holdings. Because Nayetsha has already spent a great many points acquiring the proper Family Status (Ruling Archetype, Favorable Reaction Orientation, Family Renown) and kin relationships (Inheritor, Good Estrangement, etc.), her inheritance is automatically much more luxuriant than that of a lower class inheritor. Nonetheless, the Mythguide feels that the palatial estate, the ruling council seat, the titular office "Warden of the Port-Harbor Keep, and the vast armada of sailing vessels should cost Nayetsha more than a few additional Interaction Points. Consequently, Nayetsha pays 10 points to receive her Favorable Inheritance and another 5 points to gain the extensive Holdings reserved for her family estate.

GOOD CREDIT REPUTATION

The persona has a favorable credit reputation as a result of family ties or relationships, personal interactions, Renown, or Status Level. Perhaps a persona needs money to pay off a Debt, start a business, refurbish an inherited manor, or finance a masterpiece to enter a guild. A Good Credit Reputation makes it easier for the persona to obtain a loan (whatever its source). It is recommended that a persona make either a Charisma Trial or an Influence Trial when attempting to borrow money. The Rank of this Aspect is subtracted from the Difficulty of the Trial, although the Mythguide should apply whatever other modifiers he deems appropriate. The Aspect's Rank combines with a persona's Status Level and personal wealth to determine the amount which can be borrowed. This Aspect may complement the Unique Cash Flow Aspect.

HEIRLOOM

The persona receives an Heirloom of some sort. The heirloom itself can be anything - a work of art, a weapon, a family or cultural symbol, a piece of jew-

elry. Heirlooms often have significant ties to family histories, cultural events, or particular ancestors. The value, properties, and importance of an Heirloom depend on the Aspect's Rank and a persona's Status. A Rank one Heirloom might represent a simple brooch or ring, of limited material value (but potentially immense sentimental value), which has been in a family for several generations. A Rank nine Heirloom represents an item of great value and importance, perhaps containing some type of enchantment. Such an object could play a prominent role in the folklore of a persona's culture or society. This Aspect often complements the Favorable Inheritance Aspect.

Holdings

The persona has purchased or inherited a home, building, estate, or piece of land. The size, value, and nature of the Holding depend on both the Aspect's Rank and the persona's position (and Status Level) in the environment. A Rank seven Holding for a Laborer might mean a large shop in town, while a Rank seven Holding for a member of the Privileged class could mean a vast country estate. An Inheritor must take this Aspect at a minimum of Rank one (although the Mythguide might require a larger purchase) in order to inherit lands or property. For other personas, this Aspect represents lands or property either acquired during the course of development or inherited in an unconventional fashion. The circumstances under which such property is gained are often unique to each situation. It may be purchased, it may be a gift from a sibling or relative, or it may simply be taken or claimed. This Aspect can complement the Creditor, Unique Income, Savings, and Collection Aspects.

Savings

The persona has either received, inherited, or accumulated some type of Savings. The source, nature, and amount of this savings should be detailed by the player based on the Aspect's Rank. The amount represented by the Aspect's Rank depends on a persona's Status Level when the Rank is purchased. For example, a persona in the Labor Archetype who has a high Rank in Savings will have an unusually large amount of Savings for his archetype. The actual amount involved might be negligible for a member of the Ruling Archetype. This Aspect may complement the Creditor, Unique Income, Holdings, or Collection Aspects.



Unique Income

The persona has a unique or unusual cash flow of some sort. This can be income, a type of stipend, or a regular gift of some sort. The flow of money can conceivably spring from any source, although the Mythguide should provide a rational explanation for its existence. Perhaps a trust was set up for the persona, or maybe an eccentric relative is providing for the persona until the persona reaches a certain age. This Aspect could also be related to a similar Family Aspect if the persona were the Inheritor. Whatever the source of the income, the Mythguide should determine the amount of money the persona receives based upon Rank and Social Estate. For example, a member of the Ruling Archetype who chooses Unique Cash Flow at Rank eight could receive enough each year to fund a small private army, while a member of the Marginal Archetype might only receive enough to eat well for the same period of time. This Aspect often complements the Good Credit Reputation Aspect.

Unfavorable Material Aspects

Debt

The persona has a personal debt that is either inherited or developed during Background Development. This debt can take almost any form, but is always material or financial in nature (as opposed to social or moral - see the Social Debt Aspect). The Debt could be family-related, passed down through several generations with all family members sharing the burden. Alternately it could be inherited, either by several siblings or by a lone Inheritor. Regardless of its source, the nature of the Debt should be detailed by the player. It might be an honorable debt such as business or family loan, or it could be something more illicit (a gambling or drug debt). This Aspect's Rank depends on the nature of the Debt's burden in relation to the persona's ability to pay - the greater the burden, the greater the award. This Aspect often complements the Unfavorable Inheritance Aspect.

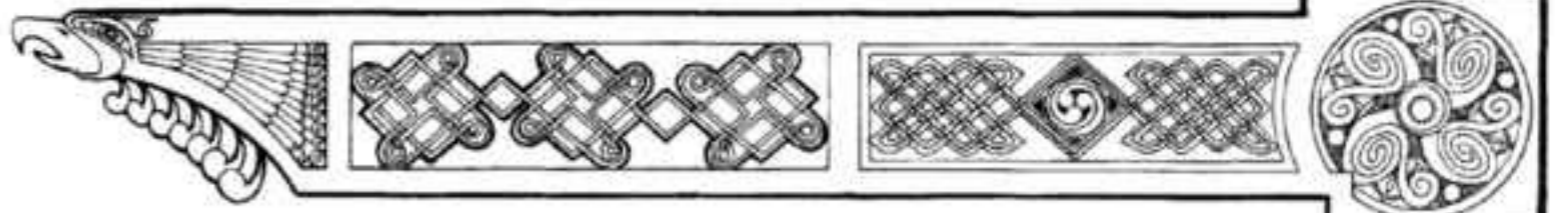
Dependent

The persona has a Dependent as a result of some type of family or personal obligation. The Dependent can be a close relation, a distant relation, or an individual who is not related to the persona. The persona is required to both care and provide for the Dependent. The type of dependent is often a result of the persona's Social Estate. A young Marginal might take care of an even younger street urchin out of friendship or a sense of duty. An orphaned member of the Privileged Archetype might have a younger sibling to watch out for. The age and nature of the dependent will be a result of the Aspect's Rank. A low Rank could represent a Dependent close to the persona's own age who needs minimal care. A high Rank might represent an infant that requires years of care. Higher Ranks can also indicate Dependents who place the persona in some type of danger. The player and the Mythguide should describe both Dependent and the situation surrounding the Dependent's presence in the persona's life.

Missing Heirloom

This Aspect has two possible forms. First, the heirloom itself can be a normal item that has been either





stolen or lost. The persona could be driven by personal or family obligations to seek out the heirloom. The Aspect's Rank dictates the importance and value of the heirloom, as well as the strength of the obligation associated with finding it. Second, the persona is in possession of the heirloom but it is a hindrance of some type. A low Rank might represent a contended heirloom - perhaps another sibling, or even another branch of the family, desires what the persona has received. A higher Rank could represent an item of some power, possibly bearing a curse either against the bearer or the bearer's family. Regardless of which way this Aspect is handled, the properties, value, and importance of the heirloom remain the province of the Mythguide. This Aspect complements the Unfavorable Inheritance Aspect.

Obligation

The persona has some type of unique responsibility or obligation that must be fulfilled. The responsibility can be either family-related or personal, and the player should determine exactly what the responsibility entails. Certain considerations - Status, Renown, and Estrangement among them - can affect the nature and form of this Aspect in a particular environment. The Obligation is always something inconvenient, and its nature depends on the Aspect's Rank. A Rank three Aspect might require the persona to provide for the upkeep of a family house or piece of property while a Rank ten Aspect might require the persona's presence in a particular spot for a predetermined length of time every year, for the performance of a specific service. This Aspect can complement the Unfavorable Inheritance, Debt, or Dependent Aspects.

POOR CREDIT REPUTATION

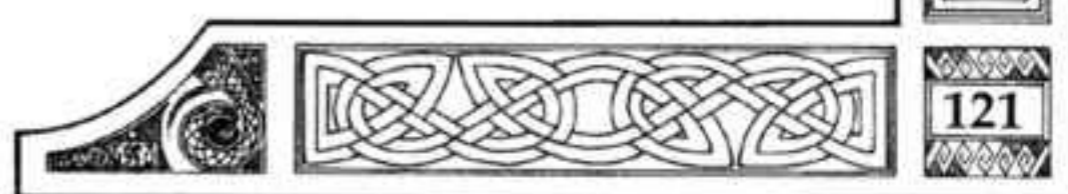
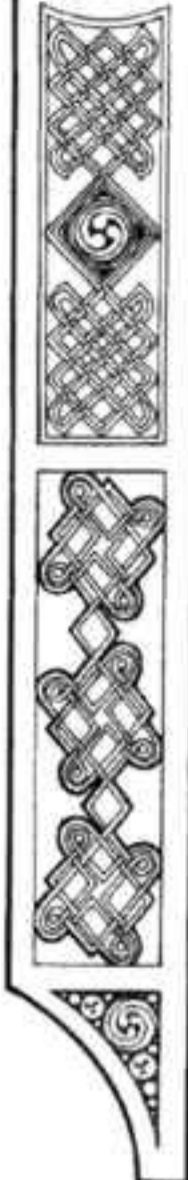
The persona has a poor credit reputation as a result of personal experience or actions, family ties, or business relationships. This reputation may hinder the persona during Background Development, and it will make it difficult for the persona to borrow money. A Charisma or Influence Trial is used to determine the success of a loan request. The Trial's Difficulty is raised one level for each Rank possessed in this Aspect. This Aspect both affects and is modified by a persona's Status, Renown, Family Orientation, and Estrangement. This Aspect often complements the Debt Aspect.

Unfavorable Inheritance

The persona receives a poor inheritance. The inheritance itself may seem superficially large, but there is some type of catch involved. The inheritance is smaller than normal for the persona's Social Estate, and the persona is forced to make some kind of sacrifice or be placed in some type of disadvantageous position to receive it. For instance, the inheritance could be a small holding that the Inheritor finds is sitting on a mountain of debt and sinking fast. It could be a rare collection that turns out to be either fraudulent or stolen. Or it could be a meaningless title or office. Whatever the circumstances, the Unfavorable Inheritance hinders the inheriting persona in some fashion, whether financially, legally, morally, or even magically. Depending on the environment, certain Kinship considerations might affect the inheritance process and limit this Aspect's purchase. This Aspect may complement the Debt, Bad Credit Reputation, or Missing Heirloom Aspects.

Uniquely Equipped

This Aspect is similar to the Favorable Extensive Resources Aspect, except that it has negative connotations. Maybe the persona has acquired a piece of faulty equipment or a cursed item. The extent and nature of such a hindrance depends on the Aspect's Rank. This Aspect may complement the Unfavorable Inheritance Aspect.



Social Aspects

Social Aspects add further color and possibility to a persona's background by associating development with the Narrative Environment. These Aspects can be the result of both family and personal connections and relationships, and will affect many elements of a persona's Background Development. Access to these Aspects changes from one environment to another and from one Canticle to another.

Favorable Social Aspects

Ally

The persona has a valuable ally, contact, or friend. This Ally can either be an individual or a family, and the precise nature of its value to the persona is determined by the Aspect's Rank. The Ally may be of the same Social Estate or of a different one, again depending on the Aspect's Rank. As a general rule, it is recommended that an additional Rank be required for each Status Archetype higher the ally is than the persona. The persona may also purchase a Loyalty Motivation for one half its normal cost if the Motivation is directed toward the Ally. The parameters of this Aspect should be worked out by the Mythguide according to the environment being used, but the Ally should always represent a family or individual that the persona can honestly trust. This Aspect may complement the Social Creditor, Valuable Information, or Social Responsibility Aspects.

Contacts

The persona is one of those people who 'knows everybody', and has acquaintances everywhere. These acquaintances are not Allies (the persona does have a close enough relationship with them), and are not necessarily even friends, but they do know the persona casually. The number and value of these Contacts, as well as their relationship with the persona, depends on the Aspect's Rank. The Mythguide may wish to place the number of Contacts at one or two times the persona's Rank, although some personas may have more. Contacts can be of any Social Estate, Heritage group, or Renown. The persona should make a Trial (with the Aspect's Rank as a modifier) to find a Con-

tact in a particular area. Once found, the persona often has to convince the Contact to provide aid. The Mythguide should decide the nature and effects of the Aspect in the environment being used. This Aspect may complement Social Creditor, Valuable Information, or Social Responsibility Aspects.

Famous Ancestor

The persona has a Famous Ancestor. The Aspect's Rank corresponds to the ancestor's Renown. The Mythguide and the player should detail the ancestor's history (and any Renown Aspects) and any direct relationship to the persona. A Famous Ancestor normally affects Family Status as well (and is often a Family Aspect). A persona's Family Orientation and Estrangement may affect the benefits a persona with this Aspect receives. This Aspect may complement the Famous Relation or Social Responsibility Aspects.

Famous Relation

The persona has a famous living relative. The player and the Mythguide should determine the specifics surrounding this relative depending on both family and environmental considerations. Is it a close relative or a distant one? What is the persona's relationship, if any, with the relative? What is the relative's relationship with the family (perhaps a Black Sheep persona could know the relative because the relative is a loner also)? The Aspect's Rank determines both the relative's Renown and the persona's relationship with the relative. This Aspect may complement the Famous Ancestor, Social Creditor, or Social Responsibility Aspects.

Follower

The persona has acquired one or more Followers during the course of his Background Development. The importance, power, and nature of the Followers depend on the Aspect's Rank. The existence of the Followers may also affect a persona's Renown. The persona should detail the situation or situations that led to the Followers' presence. It is recommended that no more than one Follower per Rank be permitted, although this guideline will vary according to the environment being used. Followers are those retainers who feel an unusual devotion or loyalty toward the persona. In game terms, Followers are considered to have a Loyalty Motivation (or Passion) with the per-

sona as its Object. This Aspect may complement the Honored and Social Responsibility Aspects.

HONORED

The persona has been Honored in some way during his developmental period. The nature and importance of the honor depends on both the Aspect's Rank and the environment being used. The Honor can relate to a particular vocation, it may result from an heroic action, or it could be a type of award. This Aspect is particularly appropriate for those personas following an Official or Titled vocation. The Honored Aspect also affects a persona's Renown. The precise effects should be detailed by the player and Mythguide based on the Rank of the Honor. This Aspect may complement the Social Responsibility Aspect.

MARRIAGE

The persona has Married during Background Development. This Aspect's Rank is based on the benefits gained from the Marriage (for example, a persona marrying into wealth or higher Status). The player should detail both the character and personality of the spouse and the circumstances surrounding the Marriage itself. Depending on the social considerations involved, this Aspect may also affect a persona's Renown. This Aspect may complement the Contacts, Social Responsibility, and Offspring Aspects.

OFFSPRING

The persona has had one or more children during his Background Development period. This does not necessarily imply Marriage, although the two Aspects often complement one another. This Aspect is normally purchased at Rank one, regardless of how many children the persona has. Higher Ranks indicate some type of benefit provided by the presence of the Offspring (perhaps increased Status in certain societies). The player should detail his children's personalities, their ages, and their current and past situations (Does the persona know about them? Did he raise them? Are they with him at the outset of narrative play?). Depending on the prevailing social considerations at work in the environment, this Aspect can affect a persona's Renown. This Aspect may complement the Marriage and Social Responsibility Aspects.



PROTECTOR

The persona enjoys the Protection of a powerful or influential individual, faction, or group. The nature of the relationship and its effects on the persona depend on the Aspect's Rank. A Rank ten Aspect could indicate that the Protector constantly has someone watching the persona, while a Rank one Aspect might represent the Protector occasionally checking on the persona. A persona may or may not know about a Protector, and the origin of the Protection relationship should be detailed by the Mythguide. If this Aspect is related to a similar Family Aspect, the persona's Estrangement and Family Orientation might affect the purchase of this Aspect. This Aspect can complement the Ally, Contacts, Valuable Information, Honored, Social Responsibility, and Social Creditor Aspects.

SOCIAL CREDITOR

The persona is owed some type of favor or social compensation. The debt can be borne by a single individual, another family, or some type of faction or group. The exact form and nature of the favor is determined both by the Aspect's Rank and by the Social Estates of the principal parties involved. At the Mythguide's option, this Aspect can also affect a

persona's Influence Pool. The Rank can represent a one-time addition to the Pool, or the Mythguide can allow incremental additions as partial payment of a debt over time. If this is also a Family Aspect, a persona's Estrangement and Family Orientation may affect its purchase. This Aspect forms a good complement to the Valuable Information Aspect.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The persona has an active or unique sense of Social Responsibility. The type and nature of the responsibility depends largely on the Social Estate of either the persona or his family, and responsibility itself usually has an affect on both Renown and Family Status. The responsibility might involve community or religious service, generosity to the poor, or contributions to municipal or governmental work projects in the surrounding environment. The higher the Rank, the more burden is placed directly on the persona. A Rank of one could indicate minimal contributions or tithing, while a Rank of ten might represent a persona who supports the social conscience of an entire city or region. A persona with this Aspect usually holds the social institutions of the environment in high regard, and often assumes a particular Responsibility to promote these institutions. This Aspect can also complement the Ally Aspect.

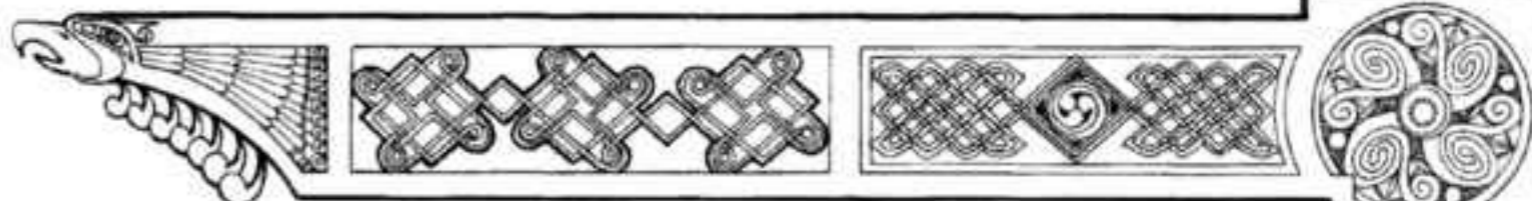
SPONSOR

The persona has a Sponsor of some sort. The Sponsor has taken an interest in the persona's life for some reason, and may provide moral, financial, educational, or emotional support for the persona. A Sponsor could be a persona's lord who take an additional interest in the persona, it could be a master or teacher who has an interest in the persona's career or development paths, or it could be a wealthy family member, acquaintance, or stranger who offers certain opportunities that a persona might not otherwise have available to him. The nature of the Sponsor and the Sponsor's role in the persona's life depend on the Aspect's Rank. In some cases, the persona might actually 'work' for or be supported by the Sponsor (such as an artist-patron relationship, for example). The persona could receive the Sponsor's aid in return for services or work of some kind. The relationship between persona and Sponsor depends on the situation, and should be detailed by the player. If this is also a Family Aspect, the persona's Estrangement and Family Orientation may affect its purchase. This Aspect may complement the Ally, Con-

FIRNOST SKALD

Faethelstaed's SPONSOR

Never feeling quite at home with her surrogate family, Faethelstaed found it a great relief when the minstrel-skald Andrulok presented himself as her personal sponsor. Andrulok, renowned for his perennial travel about the Heath, relieved Faethelstaed from a sedentary, familial life which she felt would never entirely suit her. Under his tutelage and comradeship Faethelstaed learned the trade of the heath skald, one which demands incessant travel and assimilation of many individual tribal customs, tales, and histories. As sponsor, comrade, and mentor Andrulok proved to be the father she never had, one who instilled a love of life and spirit for adventure which is stifled by the mundane necessities of Northman tribal life. The advantages that Faethelstaed receives from her Sponsor merit a 3 point expenditure.



tacts, Valuable Information, Follower, Honored, Social Responsibility, or Social Creditor Aspects.

Valuable Information

The persona is the holder of some Valuable Information. The nature, importance, and extent of this information depends largely on the Aspect's Rank. A one point purchase might indicate some compromising information regarding marital infidelity, while a ten point purchase could represent information that could topple a government or monarch. If the persona has gained the information as a result of family contact (perhaps it is also a Family Aspect), his relationship with the family may be important. The Mythguide might also allow this Aspect to translate directly into Influence or Leverage Pools. Depending on the source and object of the information, one point in the appropriate Pool is gained per Rank. This Aspect may complement the Social Creditor Aspect.

Unfavorable Social Aspects

Adversary

The persona has a notable enemy or adversary. The Adversary can be an individual, a family, or some type of faction or group. The nature and danger of the adversarial relationship determines the Aspect's Rank. A normal Adversarial relationship is with an enemy of the same Social Estate or lower. If the Adversary is of a higher Social Estate, the Aspect's Rank may increase on level for each higher Status Archetype. The persona may also purchase a Hatred Motivation for one half its normal cost if the Motivation is directed toward the Adversary. If this Aspect is tied to a similar Family Aspect, the persona's Estrangement or Family Orientation might affect its handling. This Aspect may complement the Social Debt, Family Secret, or Secret Aspects.

Disgraced

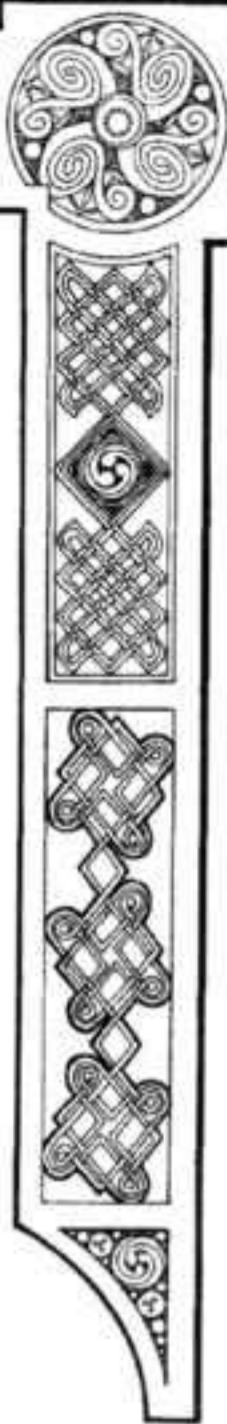
The persona has been Disgraced in some way, either during Background Development or as a result of his birth or Heritage. The nature and extent of the Disgrace depends on the Aspect's Rank. This Aspect will adversely affect a persona's Renown; the degree of such an effect is related to the Aspect's Rank. If this



Aspect relates to a similar Family Aspect, the persona's relationship to his family may be important. The Disgraced Aspect may complement the Social Debt, Social Irresponsibility, or Adversary Aspects.

Hunted

The persona is Hunted by an individual, a family, or by some type of group. The relationship between the hunter and the persona, and the methods and diligence of the hunter, should be detailed by the Mythguide based on the Aspect's Rank. The circumstances surrounding the presence of this Aspect should also be described. Why is the persona being Hunted? By whom? What would the consequences be if the persona were caught? If the persona is placed in extreme danger by this Aspect (as he will be at a high Rank), he may be forced to assume a disguise or go into hiding. Alternately, this Aspect could drive a persona out of his home region or place of birth. If this Aspect is related to a similar Family Aspect, the persona's Estrangement and Family Orientation may affect its purchase. If the persona's family relationships are particularly poor, the persona's own family could be the



agency Hunting him. The Hunted Aspect may complement any Unfavorable Social Aspect.

INFAMOUS ANCESTOR

The persona has an Infamous Ancestor. The history and unsavory details regarding this ancestor's life should be worked out by both player and Mythguide, and the Aspect's Rank determines not only the level of the ancestor's Renown but also the vileness of his deeds. A Rank one Aspect could indicate a disturbing local legend, while a Rank ten Aspect might represent a region-spanning genocidal maniac. This can be a dangerous Aspect for a persona to purchase. Its presence may contribute to both a persona's Renown and a family's Status and Reaction Orientation, coloring either in an unfavorable manner. A persona's Estrangement and Family Orientation can also affect its manifestation. This Aspect often complements the Infamous Relation, Secret, or Social Irresponsibility Aspects.

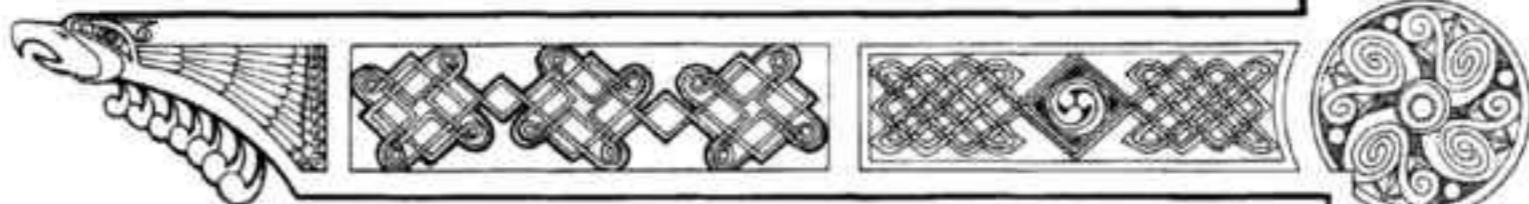
INFAMOUS RELATION

The persona has an Infamous living relative. The nature and level of the relative's Renown, the relative's relationship to the persona's family, and the persona's relationship with the relative should all be determined by the player and the Mythguide. These questions, in addition to the danger created for both family and persona by the existence of the relative, combine to determine the Aspect's Rank. This can be a dangerous Aspect for a persona to purchase at any level, since the persona and his family often become targets for negative sentiment because of the relative's infamous reputation. This Aspect can give a persona unfavorable Renown and a family unfavorable Status and Reaction Orientation. This Aspect may complement the Infamous Ancestor, Family Secret, or Social Irresponsibility Aspects.

SECRET

The persona hides a crucial and potentially damaging secret. The higher the Aspect's Rank, the darker and more potentially disastrous the Secret. A Rank of one might represent a slight indiscretion that could lower Renown by a single increment, while a Rank ten purchase could indicate something deep enough and damning enough to destroy not only the persona but his entire family as well. The nature and impor-





tance of the Secret, the danger in which the persona is placed by the Secret, and the actions necessary on the part of the persona to help keep the Secret safe all combine to determine the Aspect's Rank. If it related to a Family Secret, the persona's Estrangement, Sibling Rank, or Family Orientation might affect its determination. This Aspect may complement the Social Debt Aspect.

Social Debt

The persona has a Social Debt to an individual, a family, or some type of group or organization. The Debt itself can take many forms, but is never strictly financial or material in nature. It always assumes a social form - a favor, a task, a piece of information. As with a material Debt, the Social Debt could be a large one, passed down within the same family from one generation to the next. Each family member could be forced to share a portion of the greater burden, executing small favors along the way to compensate for the non-execution of the larger debt. Alternately, the Social Debt could simply be divided among surviving siblings upon the death of parents or relatives, or inherited by a persona if the persona is the Inheritor. This Aspect's Rank depends primarily on the burden that is placed on the persona. If the Social Debt is related to a Family Aspect, the persona's Estrangement and Family Orientation may also play a role. This Aspect may complement the Secret and Unfavorable Inheritance Aspects.

Social Irresponsibility

The persona has an active disregard for social responsibility. The extent and nature of this irresponsibility depends in large part on the persona's Social Estate. The persona ignores or partially ignores any responsibility normally associated with his station in the society. In extreme cases the persona might go so far as to actively thwart or discourage corresponding responsibility in others. The higher the Aspect's Rank, the more dangerous the irresponsibility is for the persona. These considerations also depend in some part on the nature of the environment. What constitutes flagrant disregard in one society may not amount to anything more than apathy in another. This Aspect will adversely affect a persona's Renown, and if possessed in conjunction with a similar Family Aspect the persona's Estrangement and Family Orientation can affect its implementation. This Aspect can also complement the Secret, Social Debt, or Adversary Aspects.

Psychological Aspects

Psychological Aspects represent specific elements of a persona's emotional and psychological health that are either present at birth or developed during the Early and Background Development periods. The psyche of any persona is always affected by the environments and situations he has experienced, and the Psychological Aspects reflect this simple truth.

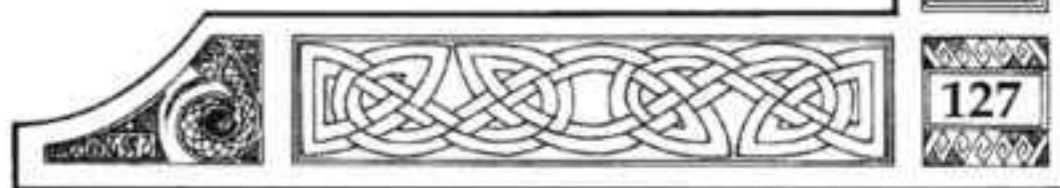
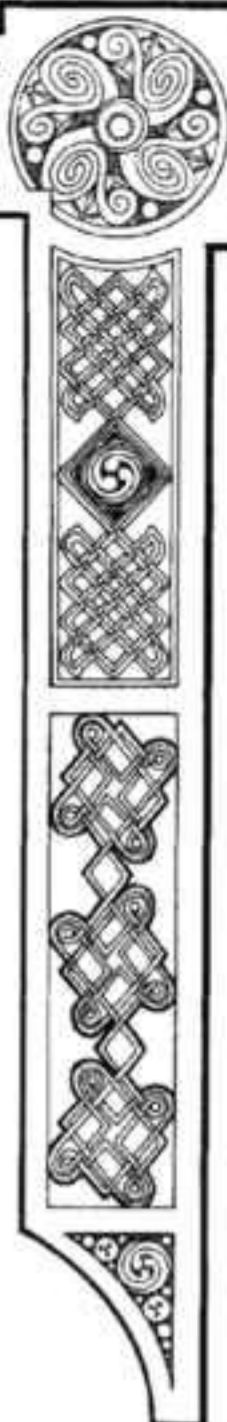
Favorable Psychological Aspects

Acceptance

The persona has an unusually Accepting personality. This Aspect manifests itself in the face of new or shocking ideas, concepts, or people. When faced with a particularly unnerving or offensive situation, the Acceptance Aspect enables a persona to gracefully interact with the subject of the irritation. This Aspect can be very effective for personas engaged in diplomatic or political activities. For instance, a persona exposed to an unusually offensive custom is required to make a Wisdom Trial in order to accept the surprising new ritual. This Aspect's Rank acts as a modifier to the Trial's Difficulty. The Mythguide should determine what type of interactions and encounters are affected by this Aspect. In general, Acceptance indicates a fundamental level of tolerance not often found in the average person. The player may also want to acquire a complementary Personality Trait (such as Adaptable). This Aspect may complement the Born Leader Aspect.

Born Leader

The persona has an innate talent for leadership and command. People respond to this element of the Born Leader's personality, and naturally look to him as a leader. The extent of the leader's presence and ability is dictated by the Aspect's Rank. This Aspect modifies the Difficulty of certain influence-based Trials and Leadership expertise Trials. Such modifiers depend on the individual situation, but will not usually exceed half of this Aspect's Rank. This Aspect may complement the Acceptance Aspect.



Psychosomatic Resistance

The persona has a unique Psychosomatic Resistance to disease or illness. The extent and nature of the Resistance itself determines the Aspect's Rank, and the Mythguide must determine what is allowed in an environment. For each Rank in the Aspect, the Difficulty of the Resistance Trial for a particular illness or disease is reduced by one. This Aspect does not alter any unique or additional Difficulty modifiers. It simply affects a persona's basic level of Resistance. This Aspect may complement the Trauma Resistance Aspect.

Trauma Resistance

The persona is extremely resistant to shocking emotional trauma, no matter how this trauma occurs. In game terms, this resistance is manifested in a heightened ability to withstand the onset of shock. For every two Ranks in the Aspect, the Difficulty of the persona's Shock determination Trial is reduced by one. The advantages of this Aspect should be apparent, and the Mythguide may wish to consider whether a high Rank is justified in the context of the environment being used. This Aspect may complement the Psychosomatic Resistance Aspect.

Firnost Clanhead

Fymn Connor's Innate Leadership

Born the son of a sheperd and family head, Fymn inherited the natural ability to lead from his wise and sympathetic father. At an early age Fymn demonstrated the compassion and intelligence required of a tribal leader, but it was his penetrating ability to recognize the particular needs of individuals which earned him the attention of the tribal shaman. Noting his ability to voice the ideals and desires of his peers, the tribal shaman pronounced young Fymn to be 'called by the raven'. From that point onward Fymn came to be popularly heralded as the voice of his clan — a portentous title for one of such young age. The advantages and privileges conferred by Fymn's Born Leader aspect merit the expenditure of 4 Interaction Points.

Unfavorable Psychological Aspects

Addictive Personality

The persona has an Addictive Personality, and is uniquely susceptible to certain weaknesses and desires. Personalities of this type normally fall into two categories - those who seek thrills and those who seek solace. Such personas are more likely to acquire compulsions or addictions than normal people. A persona with an Addictive Personality must make a Willpower Trial for each year of his Background Development during which he is directly exposed to or partakes of something that could become a Weakness (alcohol, drugs, women, violence, etc.). During play, each time such a stressful exposure occurs a Willpower Trial is required, with the Aspect's Rank acting as a Difficulty modifier. If the persona fails the Trial, he develops a Weakness for the vice in question. Once the persona has a Weakness, the Mythguide may waive further Trials for other vices (or he may not...). This Aspect may complement any other Unfavorable Psychological Aspect.

Delusions

The persona suffers from Delusions, of which there are two distinct types. Delusions of Grandeur affect a persona's opinion of himself and his own abilities, often inflating both beyond all normal conceptions. While in effect, the persona believes completely in the Delusions, and may thus attempt things he would not otherwise even consider (hopeless fights, embarrassing social encounters, etc.). The frequency, potency, and nature of the Delusions depend on the Aspect's Rank. A high Rank can significantly hamper a persona, and a player should realize this before choosing the Aspect. Delusions of Persecution engender an extreme sense of paranoia in the afflicted persona, creating a feeling that others are working against him. A Rank one Aspect might indicate a slight mistrust that pervades most encounters, while a Rank ten Aspect could represent a paranoia so severe that the persona can barely function in the real world. The effects of these Delusions are similar to delusions of grandeur, forcing the persona into awkward, dangerous, inconvenient, and embarrassing situations. Both types of Delusions can temporarily affect a persona's Attributes when they are active. This Aspect complements any other Unfavorable Psychological Aspect.

Fear

The persona has one or more specific Fears or phobias. The object of the fear can be anything, although its severity depends on the Aspect's Rank. A Willpower Trial is normally required to overcome a Fear in a particular situation, with the Aspect's Rank modifying the Trial's Difficulty. If the Trial is successful, the persona may function normally throughout the situation. If the Trial fails, the Aspect's Rank will serve as a general Difficulty modifier to all Attribute or Expertise Trials made during the Fear's hold on the persona. Once the object of the Fear is removed, the persona returns to normal. If the Fear or phobia is unusually acute, the persona may simply freeze or faint when the Fear is activated, remaining so until the object of the Fear is removed. This Aspect may complement the Repressed Event, Repulsion, Hypochondriac, Delusions, Hallucinations, or Insanity Aspects.

Fixation

The persona has a Fixation of some sort. The nature of the Fixation and its effect on the persona depend on the Aspect's Rank. Possible Fixations could include death, killing, individual persons, objects, or materials. When confronted with the object of a Fixation, a persona must make a Willpower Trial (modified by the Rank of the Fixation) in order to resist the Aspect's pull. If the Trial is successful, the persona resists the temptation and is able to continue functioning normally. If the Trial fails, the persona succumbs to his Fixation and reacts accordingly. The Mythguide should determine the extent of any such reaction based on the Aspect's Rank. The persona might not wish to leave the object of his Fixation, or he might become temporarily obsessed with it. This Aspect may complement the Repressed Event, Fear, Repulsion, Weakness/Compulsion/Addiction, Insanity, Hypochondriac, or Narcissism Aspects.

Hallucinations

The persona suffers from some type of audible or visual Hallucinations. While Delusions exist primarily in the persona's mind, Hallucinations can appear to be sensual as well. The player and the Mythguide should determine exactly what the persona's Hallucinations normally constitute. They can be completely audible or visual, or a combination of the two. While Delusions are more or less always present, Hallucina-



Imberwyn Alchemist

Ibidion's Prime Delusion

Ibidion fanatically guards the secret of his eternal youth. Not a single day passes that he does not search his reflection for signs of aging, suddenly feel that others are studying him, and turn stiffly away making a show that it was a misplaced hair, or a bit of food on his lips which inspired this glance. Others have noted his actions and dismissed them as vanity, but Ibidion is certain that they have sniffed him out. At times, when a casual observation or amiable joke is directed toward him, Ibidion succumbs to fitful twitching, uncharacteristic scowling, or vehement muttering. With the passing of each day Ibidion's paranoid delusions increase, driving him to a greater sense of urgency and panic. Since the Mythguide knows that the player who created Ibidion is certain to roleplay these characteristics consistently, he allows Ibidion to gain 5 IP for assuming the disadvantages associated with his Delusions.



tions often come in spells. Whenever a persona is placed under stress or experiences something that might trigger the Hallucinations, the Mythguide might require a Willpower Trial with the Aspect's Rank modifying Difficulty. If the Trial fails, the persona experiences Hallucinations. The effects and duration of the Hallucinations depend on both the Rank and the situation, and can be very severe. Hallucinations often temporarily alter a persona's Attributes, and the persona might be required to make a series of Willpower Trials simply to understand what is occurring in the real world around him. This Aspect can be a dangerous one, and a player should be prepared to roleplay it properly before choosing it. It may complement any of the other Unfavorable Psychological Aspects.

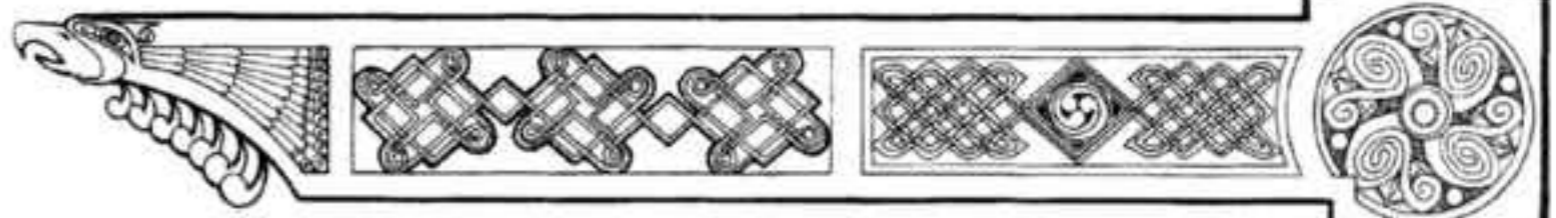
Hypochondriac

The persona is a Hypochondriac. He thinks he is sick all the time, reading any little physical quirk as a symptom of yet another life-threatening disease. The effects and extent of the Aspect depend on its Rank. A Rank one Aspect indicates a persona who constantly thinks he is sick, but who can still function in a rea-

sonably normal fashion. A Rank ten Aspect shows a persona who is nearly incapacitated by his obsession with personal illness. If the Mythguide feels this condition could manifest itself in a particular situation, he can require a Willpower Trial (modified by the Aspect's Rank). If the persona fails the Trial, he will not operate at full capacity for a predetermined period of time (perhaps an hour or two), because he is too preoccupied with his perceived sickness. This preoccupation is represented as temporarily reduced Attributes or increased Difficulty. This Aspect may complement any of the other Unfavorable Psychological Aspects.

Insanity

The persona suffers from some form of Insanity. Several elements or results of Insanity (Delusions, Hallucinations, etc.) are already included among the Background Aspects. In reality, such Aspects represent elements of psychoses or affective disorders that often occur together. They are presented as separate Aspects because it would be taxing for a single player to roleplay them all effectively. This Aspect is for those who wish to explore the interplay among the various elements of a true mental disorder. The type, nature, and effects of the Insanity are determined by the Aspect's Rank and the persona's background. Ranks from one through seven represent Neuroses, while Ranks eight through ten indicate Psychoses. Neuroses are lesser disorders that may impair functioning. They are characterized by feelings of depression or anxiety, and allow the sufferer to distinguish reality from fantasy. A persona suffering from a Neurosis also retains most important aspects of his personality. Psychoses are severe disorders that may be accompanied by delusions, hallucinations, and a disturbed sense of reality and judgment. Truly psychotic people are completely out of touch with objective reality, and may be incapacitated by their illness. Most mental disorders can manifest as either a Neurosis or a Psychosis. Organic disorders include dementia, delirium, amnesia, and personality disorders. Schizophrenia and Paranoia are serious disorders that may cause delusions or hallucinations. A persona with multiple personalities might detail the manifestations of each personality (in terms of Traits). Affective disorders include severe Depression and Mania. Other disorders include Dissociation, Hysteria, passive-aggressive, and adjustment disorders. The precise effects of the persona's condition should be determined by the player and the Mythguide. If a psychosis would evidence both delusions and hallucinations, these conditions should



manifest themselves as the respective Aspects (operating at the same Rank as the Rank of the Insanity Aspect). If a player takes this Aspect, the Mythguide should make sure the player roleplays the resulting persona correctly. This Aspect will complement any Unfavorable Psychological Aspect.

NARCISSISM

This affliction indicates that the persona is unresponsive to the outside world. Depending on the extent of the affliction, the persona may simply lack concentration or perception abilities, or might be almost entirely cut off from the world around him, preferring instead to live somewhere within himself. The Mythguide should take care when allowing a high Rank, for such a completely removed persona can be very difficult to roleplay. Whenever substantial concentration is necessary, the Mythguide can require a Willpower Trial modified by the Aspect's Rank. If the Trial fails, the persona is not able to concentrate properly. This Aspect may slightly affect certain Attributes (such as Intuition and Perception) as well. This Aspect may complement any of the other Unfavorable Psychological Aspects.



Repressed Event

The persona has experienced a traumatic event and repressed it. The persona does not remember the event at the outset of play, although he might be shocked into remembering during play. The player and the Mythguide should detail the event, its nature, and its effects. The persona may remember the event slowly or it might come back all at once. Depending on its Rank, the event can also affect the persona's psyche in subtle ways. The Mythguide can rule that one or more Personality Traits or Motivations are the result of the Repressed Event. If the persona eventually remembers the event and comes to terms with it, the traits based on the Aspect may either disappear or decrease. This Aspect can complement any of the other Unfavorable Psychological Aspects.

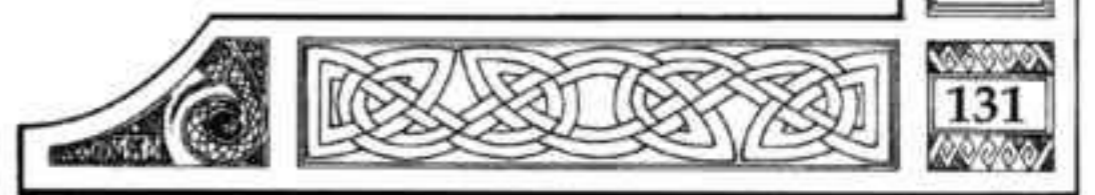
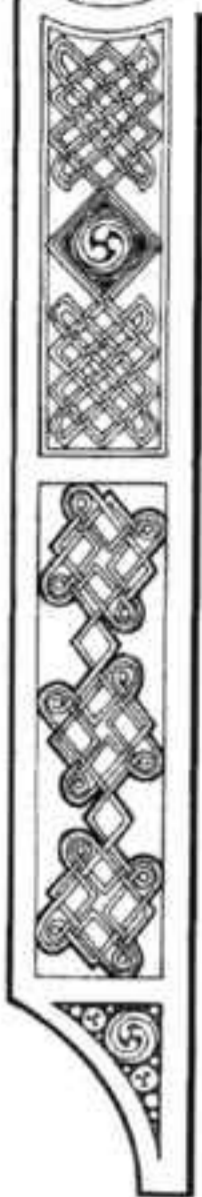
Repulsion

The persona is Repulsed by a particular thing or individual. This Repulsion can also extend to an entire group or class of people, animals, food, or objects. The nature and effects of the Repulsion depend on the Aspect's Rank, as do the persona's reactions to the

object of the Repulsion. For example, a persona who is slightly Repulsed by a particular type of food will probably just avoid it. A persona who is significantly Repulsed might be sick at the sight of it, and may take action to spoil or destroy it. A successful Willpower Trial (using the Rank as a Difficulty modifier) allows the persona to resist the object of a Repulsion. If the Trial fails, the persona is actively Repulsed and the player should roleplay the effects accordingly. The Repulsion Aspect may complement the Repressed Event, Fear, Weakness/Compulsion/Addiction, Insanity, or Narcissism Aspects.

Weakness/Compulsion/Addiction

The persona has a Weakness, a Compulsion, or an Addiction to a particular substance, action, thing, or person. Alcoholism and drug addiction fall under this Aspect, as does an addiction to sex. The Aspect's Rank determines the extent and effects of the Weakness. At Ranks one through five, the persona has a Weakness. The persona desires the object of his Weakness, but is often able to control these desires. Depending on the nature of the Weakness, it has become a regular habit



that either satisfies or titillates. At Ranks six through eight the Weakness becomes a Compulsion. The persona can no longer ignore it as easily, and seeks out the object of his Compulsion whenever the opportunity presents itself. The object of the Compulsion serves as a constant distraction for the persona. Finally, at Ranks nine and ten the Compulsion becomes an Addiction. The persona is Addicted to the object of his Compulsion, and its pursuit consumes him. All of his time is spent thinking about or obtaining the object of his Addiction, while the remainder of his energy is used in actually satiating the Addiction.

A player who designs such a persona should make sure he is willing to roleplay the persona properly. When presented with the object of the Weakness, Compulsion, or Addiction, the persona must make a successful Willpower Trial to resist the temptation, with the Aspect's Rank acting as a Difficulty modifier. If the persona fails the Trial, he succumbs to the temptation. If the result of the Trial is a Superior Success or better, the Aspect's Rank may be reduced by one. If the result is a Superior Failure or worse, its Rank is increased by one. The Mythguide can modify these guidelines according to the environment being used. This Aspect may complement the Repressed Event, Fear, Repulsion, Hypochondriac, Insanity, or Narcissism Aspects.



Physical Aspects

Physical Aspects both affect and represent various unique or unusual physical traits. Since certain Physical Aspects are more set and inflexible than other Aspects, some of the Physical Aspects have a specific recommended cost rather than recommendations for a possible range of costs. Access to Physical Aspects is based primarily on the environment being used.

Favorable Physical Aspects

Ages Well

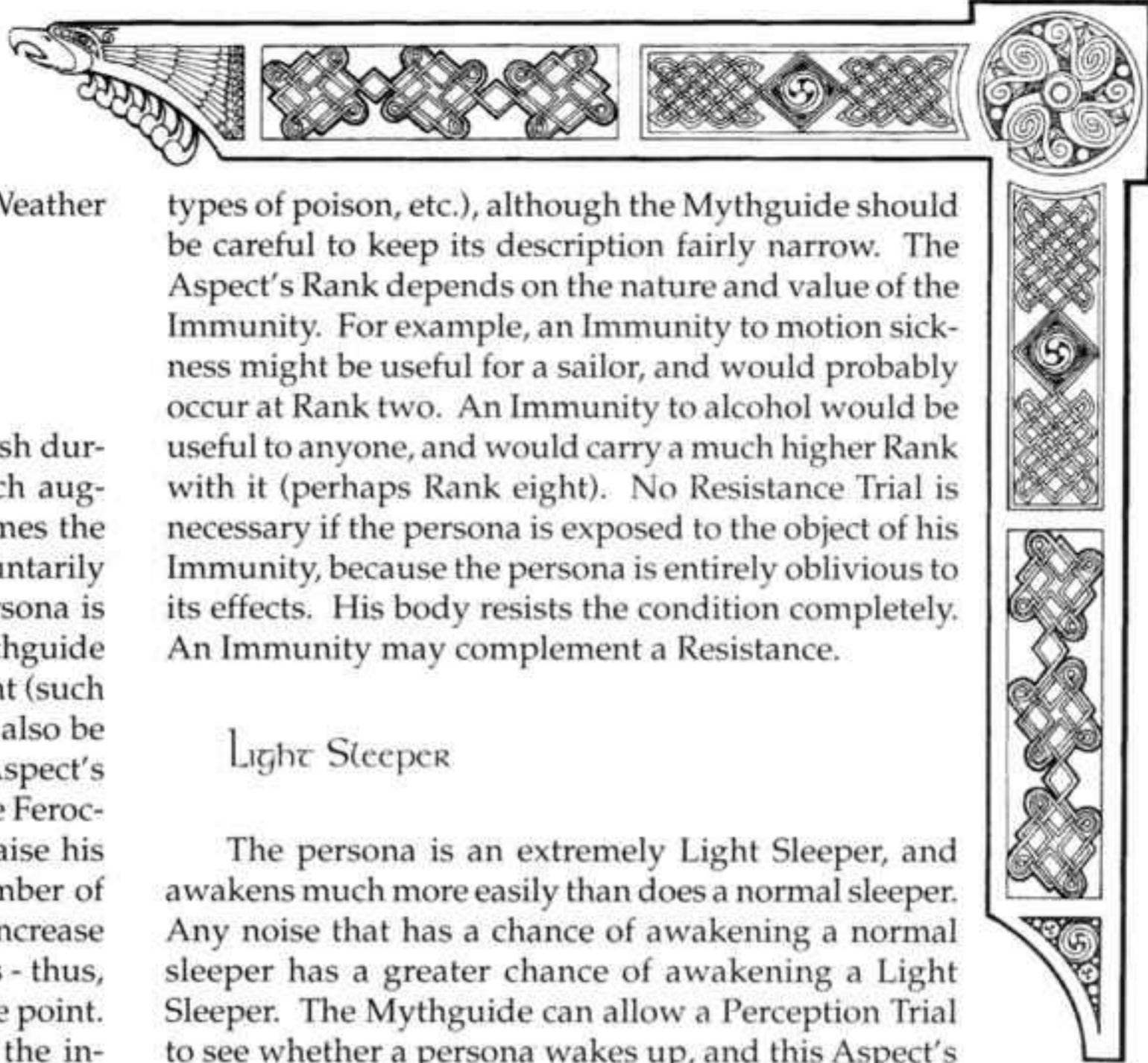
The persona Ages very well for one of his Heritage group. This Aspect's Rank will modify the Difficulty of Aging Trials that are the result of the normal aging process. It does not alter the Difficulty of Trials created by specific physical conditions or injuries. This Aspect may complement the Resistance, Immunity, or Tolerance of Extremes Aspects.

Ambidexterity

The persona is ambidextrous, and can use both hands with equal dexterity. A persona with this Aspect may use either hand with similar ability, whether in combat or for normal everyday activities. Some personas can also use either leg in a similar fashion. The recommended Rank for basic (hand) Ambidexterity is seven, and the recommended Rank for full (hand-leg) Ambidexterity is nine. These costs may change slightly from one environment to the next; such changes should be detailed by the Mythguide based upon considerations in his own Canticle.

Enhanced Sense

The persona has a unique sensory enhancement. The Aspect's Rank depends on the nature and value of the particular enhancement, and on the Aspect's frequency of use. A Rank one Aspect might represent an ability to distinguish certain animal or human scents, while a Rank of six could indicate exceptional night vision. In addition to imparting specific abilities, this Aspect affects appropriate Attribute or sensory Trials by modifying a Trial's Difficulty. This As-



pect may complement the Light Sleeper or Weather Sense Aspects.

Ferocity

The persona experiences an adrenaline rush during either combat or stressful situations which augments his normal abilities. A Ferocity consumes the persona, and it may come involuntarily or voluntarily depending on the player's wishes. If the persona is able to consciously assume the Ferocity, the Mythguide may require certain circumstances to be present (such as anger or violence). A Willpower Trial may also be required to assume the proper state, with the Aspect's Rank modifying the Trial's Difficulty. Once the Ferocity takes hold, the persona can temporarily raise his Strength, Endurance, and Hardiness by a number of points equal to half the Aspect's Rank. This increase must be divided equally among the Attributes - thus, a Rank six Ferocity raises each Attribute by one point. The Mythguide should determine how long the increase lasts (one or two Intervals per Rank is recommended), although the time span often depends on the situation.

If the Ferocity comes on the persona unsummoned, the Mythguide and player should determine the specifics of its appearance. The persona cannot fight the resulting adrenaline rush, and is consumed by the Ferocity whether he wishes it or not. Such a persona shows no mercy and will not withdraw from combat under any circumstances. The difference between this Aspect's summoned and unsummoned forms is that in the unsummoned form the Ferocity must be permitted to run its course. When the persona can summon the Ferocity, he may make another Willpower Trial to break free. When it comes unbidden, he must let it run its course. In extreme cases (such as if the persona is hopelessly outnumbered), the Mythguide might allow a Willpower Trial (using the Aspect's Rank as a Difficulty modifier) to see if the persona can break away. An unsummoned Ferocity gives a persona one extra point per Rank (twice the increase of the summoned version). Ambidexterity, Resistance (shock), or Enhanced Sense might all complement this Aspect.

Immunity

The persona has a specific Immunity to a disease, illness, affliction, or category of afflictions. The Immunity can be to any ailment or physical condition (for example alcohol, certain drugs, a specific disease,

types of poison, etc.), although the Mythguide should be careful to keep its description fairly narrow. The Aspect's Rank depends on the nature and value of the Immunity. For example, an Immunity to motion sickness might be useful for a sailor, and would probably occur at Rank two. An Immunity to alcohol would be useful to anyone, and would carry a much higher Rank with it (perhaps Rank eight). No Resistance Trial is necessary if the persona is exposed to the object of his Immunity, because the persona is entirely oblivious to its effects. His body resists the condition completely. An Immunity may complement a Resistance.

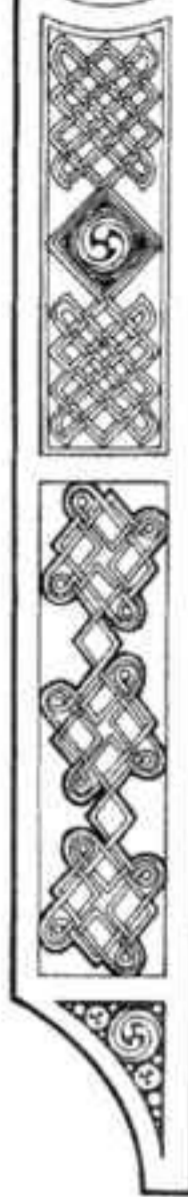
Light Sleeper

The persona is an extremely Light Sleeper, and awakens much more easily than does a normal sleeper. Any noise that has a chance of awakening a normal sleeper has a greater chance of awakening a Light Sleeper. The Mythguide can allow a Perception Trial to see whether a persona wakes up, and this Aspect's Rank will modify the Trial's Difficulty. The Mythguide may also allow Trials in situations that would never awaken a normal persona. The Enhanced Sense Aspect could also modify the Difficulty of such a Trial. This Aspect may complement the Enhanced Sense Aspect.

Amilani Freedom Fighter

Petruchae's Natural Advantage

Petruchae entered the world with the peculiar ability to function equally well using either of his two hands. While his ambidexterity facilitates his performance in the glass factory, Petruchae's advantage serves him best by accelerating his ability to construct and manipulate the fine mechanical traps and devices which he constructs for use by the Order of the Ebon Claw. Additionally, Petruchae's ambidexterity has allowed him to refine his dual-handed fighting technique which has repeatedly served him in close melee encounters. Since his ambidexterity only extends to the use of his hands, this aspect costs Petruchae 7 IP.





Melodious Voice

The persona has an unusually Melodious Voice, and may receive certain reaction and interaction bonuses as a result of his pleasant voice. Depending on the environment being used, this Aspect can affect influence and performance-related Trials and expertises. Up to half the Aspect's Rank can be used to modify the Difficulty of appropriate Trials. The Mythguide should determine the Aspect's precise effects in the Narrative Environment.

Resistance

The persona has specific Resistance to a physical condition, illness, or trauma. The Resistance can be to a specific ailment or condition, as in the Immunity Aspect, or it could be to a slightly broader classification (such as a resistance to infection, allergic reactions, or shock). The Aspect's Rank depends on the value and usefulness of the Resistance to the persona. A Resistance to a minor allergic reaction, such as to dust,

would only have a Rank of one, while a Resistance to infection might indicate a Rank of six or seven. Whatever the specifics surrounding an individual Resistance, the Difficulty of Trials associated with it are modified by the Aspect's Rank. This Aspect may complement the Immunity Aspect.

Slow Metabolism

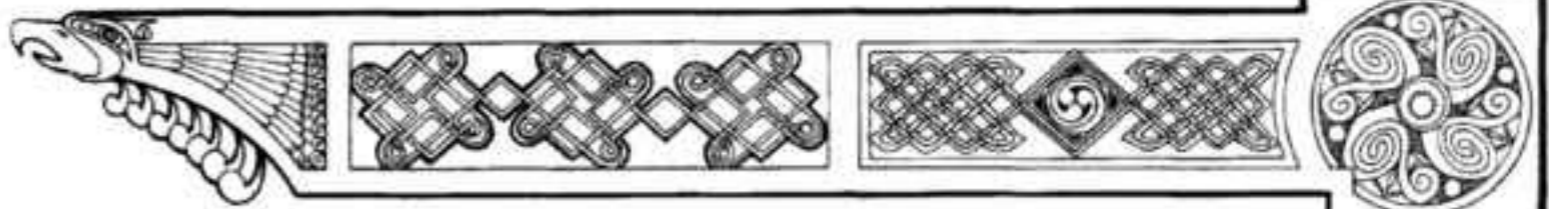
The persona has an unusually Slow Metabolism, and does not have to eat as often as a normal person in order to function at full strength. Each Rank represents a day during which a persona may go without food and still act and operate at full strength. For example, a persona who has this Aspect at Rank five could go for five days without food before suffering any noticeable Attribute disadvantages. This Aspect may complement the Strong Stomach Aspect.

Strong Stomach

The persona has an amazingly Strong Stomach. The necessities of extensive travel and the consequences of inadequate food preservation in primitive societies often cause illness - indigestion at least and death at worst. A persona with this Aspect is extremely resistant to the conditions which might cause such problems. The Aspect's Rank determines the nature and extent of the resistance. A Rank one purchase might indicate the ability to eat extremely hot or spicy foods without being harmed, while a Rank ten purchase could represent the ability to drink acid without being adversely affected. The Difficulty of Trials associated with this Aspect is modified by the Aspect's Rank. This Aspect may complement the Slow Metabolism Aspect.

Tolerance of Extremes

The persona has an exceptional Tolerance of Extremes. The nature of the Tolerance should be detailed by the player based on environment and Heritage group. For example, a persona could have an unusual tolerance of extremely high or low temperatures, or an ability to function at great heights. The effects of such a Tolerance are dictated by the Aspect's Rank, and the Rank serves as a Difficulty modifier to the persona's ability to resist such extremes. This Aspect may complement the Immunity and Ages Well Aspects.



Unrealized Potential

This Aspect can either increase the Potential of an Attribute that is already possessed or open a seventh Attribute at Rank five. Purchasing this Aspect at Rank one opens the new Attribute at Rank five. For every three Aspect Ranks beyond the first, the Potential of the newly opened Attribute increases by one level. At Rank four, the Potential increases by one, at Rank seven by two, and at Rank ten by three. For example, a player purchases this Aspect at Rank ten and opens Agility as a seventh Attribute. Since the new Attribute opens at Rank five and has an initial Potential of seven, this Aspect at Rank ten raises the Potential to ten (initial Potential seven plus three). This Aspect can also raise the Potential of an Attribute already possessed (one level for every three Ranks). In this case, a Rank of nine increases Potential by three levels. The persona can only raise the Potential of a single Attribute through the use of this Aspect. At the Mythguide's option, the player can 'save' this Aspect and activate it sometime after the persona has already begun play. Perhaps a certain event or opportunity activates the latent Potential.

Weather Sense

The persona has an innate Weather Sense, and is able to predict the weather with varying degrees of accuracy. This Aspect is included as a Physical Aspect because the predictions are made according to specific physical signs or feelings. For example, a persona might develop certain aches before a rain, or the same persona's feet might swell before a snowfall. The precise nature of the physical warning should be detailed by the player, while the extent and type of abilities associated with this Aspect should be determined by the Mythguide. The Mythguide should also determine how far in advance the warnings appear. For every two Ranks possessed, the persona may receive a warning about a single type of weather. For example, a Rank four Aspect could warn the persona of thunderstorms and approaching fog (two warnings). This Aspect might complement the Enhanced Sense Aspect.



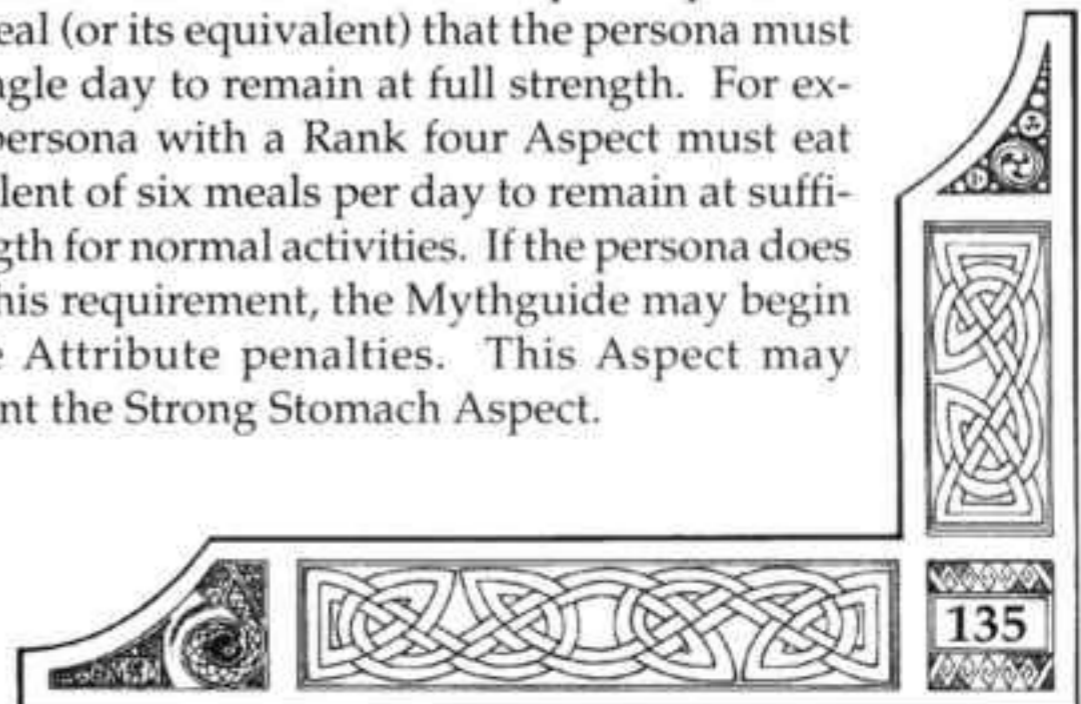
Unfavorable Physical Aspects

Ages Poorly

The persona Ages Poorly for a member of his Heritage group. This Aspect's Rank modifies the Difficulty of Aging Trials which result from the normal aging process. It does not affect the Difficulty of Aging Trials required by specific physical conditions or injuries. There are many possible reasons for accelerated aging, and the player should describe the circumstances which led to the condition in his own persona. This Aspect may complement the Susceptibility, Disease, Injury, and Diminished Sense Aspects.

Accelerated Metabolism

The persona has an unusually Accelerated Metabolism, and must eat more often than a normal person in order to function at full strength. It is assumed that a normal persona must eat two meals, or their equivalent, each day in order to be in full possession of his faculties. Each Rank of this Aspect represents another meal (or its equivalent) that the persona must eat in a single day to remain at full strength. For example, a persona with a Rank four Aspect must eat the equivalent of six meals per day to remain at sufficient strength for normal activities. If the persona does not meet this requirement, the Mythguide may begin to impose Attribute penalties. This Aspect may complement the Strong Stomach Aspect.



Allergy

The persona is Allergic to a certain substance, and undergoes a bodily reaction when either directly or indirectly exposed to the substance. Most Allergies develop during childhood, and their effects depend on the Aspect's Rank. A Rank of one might indicate a mild effect, such as swelling or congestion, while a Rank of ten could indicate a response ending in death if not properly treated. Other effects can include muscle cramping or seizing, headaches, congestion, and swelling. Allergies can be triggered by a combination of factors, including not only the substance to which the persona is allergic but also certain emotional reactions such as anger, fear, worry, resentment, or embarrassment. Whenever the persona is exposed to the subject of the allergy a Resistance Trial must be made (against Hardiness), with any emotional considerations acting as positive modifiers to the Trial's Difficulty. The Aspect's Rank determines the extent of the Allergy's effects after it takes hold of the persona's immune system, although it can also modify the Resistance Trial. The Rank of this Aspect is determined both by the potency of the Allergy (and thus its danger to the persona) and its frequency of manifestation. This Aspect may complement the Susceptibility or Disease Aspects.

Diminished Sense

The persona has a Diminished Sense. This Aspect does not cover the basic sense itself, but rather some aspect of it. For example, a persona might be colorblind, or unable to differentiate certain types of sound, or might be missing an eye (poor perspective vision) or an ear (poor directional sense of sound). Although voice is not technically a sense, speech impediments also fall under this Aspect. The Aspect's Rank depends on the disadvantages associated with the Diminished Sense. Colorblindness might be a Rank three Aspect, while a missing or useless eye could represent a Rank eight Aspect. This Aspect affects the Difficulty of any Trial associated with the Diminished Sense. For instance, lack of perspective vision would be a permanent hindrance in combat. The Mythguide must determine the precise effects of this Aspect in a particular environment.

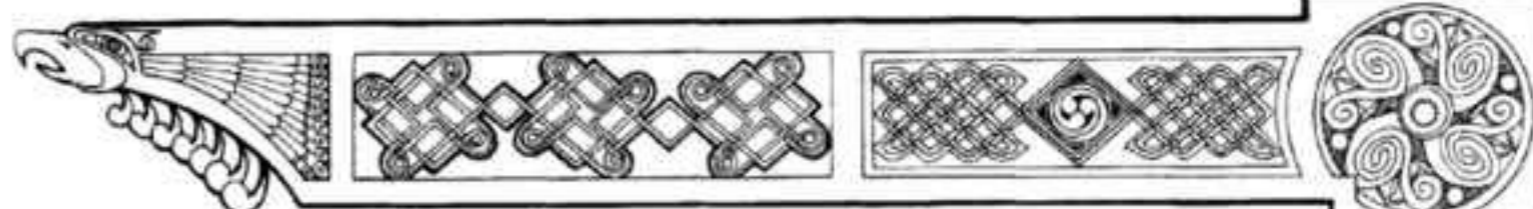
Disease

The persona has a permanent disease of some type. Diseases are divided into two major categories - infectious and non-infectious. Most permanent diseases fall into the latter category. Infectious diseases include those caused by viruses or bacteria, such as Hepatitis and Tuberculosis. Leprosy and recurring forms of Typhus also fall within this category. This Aspect's Rank depends on the effects of the individual disease. Boils would probably be a Rank one Aspect while Hepatitis might be a Rank nine or ten Aspect (after all, the persona will eventually die from this disease unless unique treatment can be found). Most infectious diseases are not of a permanent nature, and these should be handled according to individual instances of exposure. Such diseases may appear during narrative play, but are not covered by this Aspect.

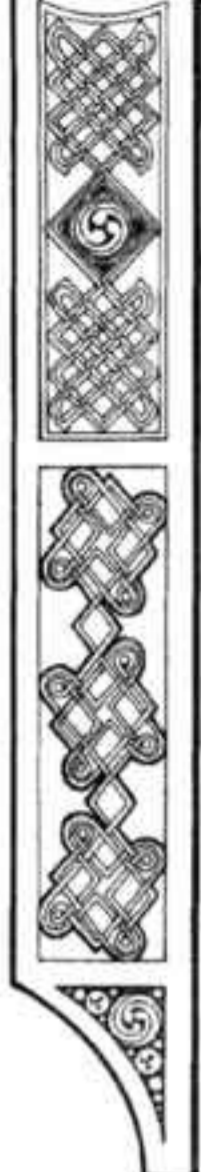
Non-infectious diseases are those not caused by external sources (bacteria or viruses). They are instead caused by the breakdown of bodily tissues and organs, by birth defects, or by poor diet. Many of these diseases are degenerative diseases, such as Arthritis. Certain conditions, such as hemophilia, are inherited. Other conditions, such as emphysema, can be caused by environmental considerations. The Mythguide and player must determine the exact effects of a certain disease in the environment. These effects should depend primarily on the Aspect's Rank, and will usually include physical and mental handicaps (in the form of Attribute reductions). Diseases can also cause incremental reductions over a period of years, and will often accelerate the aging process. This Aspect may complement the Susceptibility or Allergy Aspects.

Falling Sickness

The persona has the Falling Sickness, or Epilepsy. Epilepsy is a disorder of nerve cells in the brain which causes random seizures in those it affects. The seizures are not triggered by any particular action, emotion, or situation. They appear at random intervals in someone who is afflicted with the condition, and their severity depends on the Aspect's Rank. A high Rank causes the persona to lose consciousness and experience a series of violent muscle contractions and convulsions, lasting anywhere from a few seconds to several minutes. During the seizure the persona is completely helpless, and may hurt himself. After the seizure ends, the persona normally wants to sleep deeply for several hours. A Willpower Trial is necessary if the persona attempts to remain awake. A medium



Rank causes a seizure during which the persona loses awareness of his surroundings for a few seconds. The persona is helpless for the duration of the seizure, and may experience disorientation upon its completion. A low Rank causes the persona to behave randomly for a few minutes. The persona remains conscious, but acts withdrawn and behaves oddly, staring at the floor or wandering about for the duration of the attack. The persona often doesn't remember the attack once it passes. During this last type of attack, a successful Willpower Trial (modified by the Aspect's Rank) may bring the persona back to normal consciousness. The Mythguide should randomly determine when a seizure occurs. This Aspect may complement the Disease Aspect.



Heavy Sleeper

The persona is an extremely Heavy Sleeper, and is significantly more difficult to awaken than a normal sleeper. Any noise which has a chance of awakening a normal sleeper has less of a chance of awakening a Heavy Sleeper. The Mythguide should require a Perception Trial (modified by this Aspect's Rank) to see if the persona wakes up. The Diminished Sense Aspect could also modify the Difficulty of a Trial associated with this Aspect. This Aspect may complement the Diminished Sense Aspect.

Injury

The persona has been seriously Injured at some point during his Background Development. The location, nature, and seriousness of the Injury dictate the Aspect's Rank. An Injury normally affects one or more of a persona's Attributes. For each Rank possessed, the persona loses one point from the appropriate Attribute. For example, a persona suffers a severe leg Injury during Background Development (a Rank six Injury). The Mythguide decides the Injury would affect the persona's Agility and Quickness Attributes, and the player lowers both of these Attributes by three points. If more than one Attribute is affected, the penalty should be divided as evenly as possible among them. This Aspect may complement any of the other Unfavorable Physical Aspects.

Deformed Digit or Limb

One of the persona's arms, legs, hands, feet, etc. is deformed to some degree. The deformity may be

slight, or it could be a crippling condition, making the persona lame. This Aspect could also affect the persona's back or spine, creating a hunch-backed appearance. The nature of the affliction and its effects depends on the Aspect's Rank. A Rank of one might represent a slight deformity in the persona's hand, causing a permanent -1 modifier to the persona's Manual Dexterity. A Rank of ten could indicate a crippling condition in the persona's leg, removing five points each from the persona's Agility and Quickness. The Mythguide should decide which Attributes are affected by the afflicted body part, and the level of the effects. A -1 Attribute modifier per Rank is recommended.

Mute

The persona is Mute, and does not possess the physical capacity for speech. This could be a birth defect, the result of disease, or the result of some physical punishment or torture (if the persona's tongue was cut out, for example). Personas who are Mute will not be able to perform certain types of magic, and the vocations that practice those forms of magic will be closed





to them. However, certain religious vocations might be uniquely suited to them (those requiring a vow of silence, for instance). The Mythguide should be sure the player is willing to roleplay this Aspect properly before allowing its purchase. A Mute persona is forced to communicate largely through actions and gestures, and the player might be required to do the same. The recommended award for this Aspect is eight Interaction Points.

Susceptibility

The persona has a unique Susceptibility to a particular physical condition, illness, or trauma. It may be inherited or it can be acquired as a result of exposure or disease. A Susceptibility is the reverse of a Resistance, and can involve a specific condition or a broader classification of conditions. The Aspect's Rank depends both on the danger the Aspect represents for the persona and on the frequency of the Aspect's manifestation. A persona can also be Susceptible to physical capacities such as shock or motion. The Aspect's Rank modifies the Difficulty of any Resistance Trials associated with the Susceptibility. This Aspect may complement the Allergy or Disease Aspects.

Weak Stomach

The persona has an unusually Weak Stomach. A persona with this Aspect is more susceptible to illnesses and conditions caused by poor food preparation or preservation. The Aspect's Rank determines the extent of the weakness. A Rank of one might indicate a susceptibility to spiced foods, while a Rank of ten could represent an inability to eat anything without becoming sick. The Difficulty of a Resistance Trial for a condition associated with ingested foods is modified by this Aspect's Rank. This Aspect may complement the Slow Metabolism Favorable Aspect.

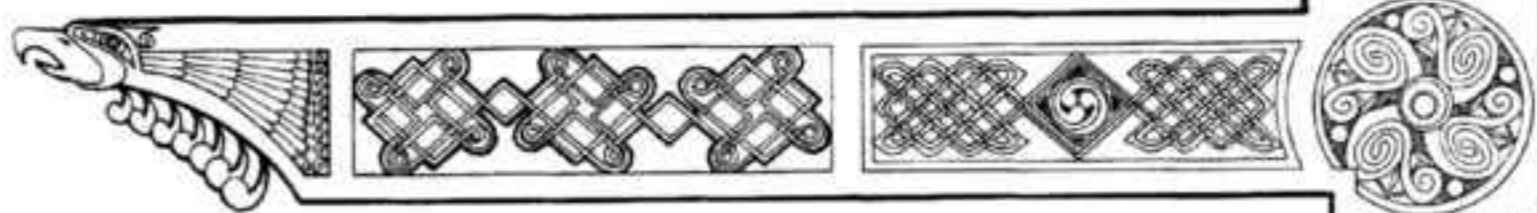
Mental Aspects

Mental Aspects represent certain unique capacities and abilities that relate to the persona's mind or mental state. Access to Mental Aspects is determined by the Mythguide and should be based both on the nature of the environment being used.

Favorable Mental Aspects

Affinity

The persona has a unique Affinity, either for an unusual ability or for an area of knowledge or skill which is not covered by a specific expertise. The persona might be particularly good with mechanical devices, being able to immediately figure out (if not entirely understand) their workings. Or he could be particularly adept at designing such devices. He might be good with numbers, having the ability to calculate certain problems rapidly or instantaneously. He could be unusually creative, open-minded, or artistic, capable of beginning a new style of painting or poetry, or of making a lasting impression in a creative field. The extent and usefulness of the knowledge or ability depends on the Aspect's Rank. For example, a persona who is able to do complex math problems instantaneously might have a Rank seven Affinity. A persona with an Affinity for free-thinking and creativity might have a Rank of three. This Aspect may complement the Good Memory and Superior Concentration Aspects.



BERSERK

The persona has the ability to go Berserk during combat or other stressful situations. The Berserk Aspect is similar to an unsummoned Ferocity (see Physical Aspects). The persona makes a Willpower Trial (modified by the Aspect's Rank) when exposed to an extremely stressful situation. If the Trial is successful, the persona does not go Berserk. If the Trial is unsuccessful, the persona goes Berserk, with the rage lasting until the situation resolves itself (for example, until a battle is over). The persona normally has to let the rage to dissipate on its own, but if the persona's life is in immediate danger the Mythguide may allow a Willpower Trial (still modified by the Aspect's Rank) to see if the persona is able to break away. Berserk personas are usually consumed by the rage and are unable to think clearly or withdraw. When taken by the rage, the persona receives a number of points equal to half the Aspect's Rank. These points can be used to modify the Difficulty of any combat-related Trial attempted by the persona while the rage is in effect (attacks, dodges, parries, etc.). They can be spent in any way the player wishes; if the persona has three points, they can be used to modify the Difficulty of three different Trials by one level, or to modify the Difficulty of one Trial by three levels. This Aspect might complement the Ambidexterity, Resistance (shock), or Enhanced Sense Aspects.

Confidence

The persona is extremely confident and self-assured when it comes to his own abilities. At the Mythguide's option, this self-possession can be either general or specific to certain capabilities. Confidence affects a persona's reactions in stressful situations related to the object of the Confidence. This Aspect should be used only for uniquely stressful or critically important encounters, and not as a catch-all modifier. The Mythguide should decide in what types of situations Confidence plays an important role (this Aspect will probably be used as a modifier on more occasions than most Aspects). When used as a modifier, up to half the Aspect's Rank can be used to affect a Trial's Difficulty. The Mythguide decides when these modifiers may be used. This Aspect may complement any of the other Mental Aspects.

FAST LEARNER

The persona learns very quickly, and his ability to understand and process knowledge in a specific area is above average for his Intelligence. This Aspect also represents the ability to learn from one's mistakes. It is recommended that the accelerated learning capability be limited to a specific knowledge or expertise area. This Aspect gives the persona a general Difficulty modifier (minus one level regardless of the Aspect's Rank) to any Learning Trial. It also reduces the time needed for adequate Training/Instruction or Practice/Study. It reduces Training time by two days per Rank (personas always require at least one full day of Training, no matter how high the Aspect's Rank) and Practice times by four days per Rank. This Aspect may complement the Good Memory, Superior Concentration, Confidence, or Affinity Aspects.

Good Memory

The persona has an unusually Good Memory and excels in the areas of both recall and memorization. Intelligence Trials determine both a persona's ability to remember and the accuracy of the memory. This Aspect's Rank modifies the Difficulty of such memory Trials. The Aspect's Rank is also a gauge of the

Imberwyn Gentlewoman-Thief

DIRDRIAN'S SELF-ASSURANCE

Considering her history and Background Development, it is not surprising that Dirdrian possesses an extraordinary degree of Confidence. The constant changing of occupation and lifestyle, and her personal jubilation in the face of danger all contribute to her sense of self-esteem and personal reliance. Dirdrian faces challenge with a certain glee and her confidence manifests most obviously when she faces mortal danger. In keeping with her history of personal success, Dirdrian merits Confidence at Rank 7 (7 IP cost). The Mythguide allows her to choose 3 specific areas where she may use Confidence to lower Difficulty. Dirdrian chooses Acrobatics, Reaction/Initiative, and Physical (Climbing). Whenever she is called upon to make a Trial in any of these areas, Dirdrian is permitted to lower the Difficulty of the Trial by 3.



Hardiness Trials. This Aspect may complement the Increased Concentration Aspect.

Ingenuity

The persona has an unusual streak of Ingenuity. This allows the persona to develop creative, anachronistic, or mechanical solutions to problems or situations arising during the course of narrative play. The persona is able to think more originally and creatively than most, and is also able to approach tense situations from a fresh (and often strange) perspective. When the persona is in a situation where Ingenuity is a factor, the Mythguide may allow the player to make an Intuition Trial with this Aspect's Rank as a Difficulty modifier. This Aspect may be treated as an ability, with the Mythguide permitting a Trial whenever appropriate, or the Mythguide might require the player to come up with part of the answer or solution to a problem himself, allowing a Trial to be made to push the persona in the right direction. This Aspect may complement the Good Memory and Superior Concentration Aspects.

Magical Talent

The persona has the Talent - the ability to manipulate, understand, and tap into the Reality that governs a particular environment. Depending on the nature of the Reality being used, personas who wish to become Adepts may be required to purchase this Aspect. The cost of this Aspect varies according to the nature, prevalence, and power of the Reality being used. In some environments, a persona can also have Latent Talent, requiring some type of experience, event, or initiation to awaken the Talent. The Mythguide should determine such particulars based on both the environment and Reality being used in his Canticle.

Sense of Direction

The persona has a very accurate Sense of Direction, and is unerringly able to determine in which compass direction he is facing regardless of his current location or situation. The persona does not use landmarks or common knowledge with this Aspect; surroundings and weather are unimportant. This Sense is recognized as more of a feeling by the persona, and as such it does not require any type of extended concentration. A Rank of three in this Aspect allows a persona to sense direction above ground, while a Rank

memory's accuracy. If the persona is concentrating, a Rank of one indicates above average recall while a Rank of ten represents near total recall of a very long memory. At the Mythguide's option, a Rank of nine or ten could indicate an actual photographic or eidetic level of memory. In this case, the persona enjoys complete recall of any material or memory upon which the persona concentrates. The length and extent of the concentration depends on the situation (the environmental conditions, the length of the material, etc.). This Aspect may complement the Superior Concentration Aspect.

High Pain Threshold

The persona has developed a High Pain Threshold. He is able to endure extreme pain for longer than normal, and is better able to resist such pain. The persona receives a Difficulty bonus equal to the Aspect's Rank on any Trial that takes this ability into account. Examples might be Trials to resist the onset of shock during combat or to resist suggestion during torture. Such Trials are usually either Willpower or Willpower/

of five allows a persona to sense direction both above and below ground. The Mythguide may alter these recommended costs depending on the environment. This Aspect may complement the Sense of Time Aspect.

Sense of Time

The persona has a unique Sense of Time, and is usually be able to determine the precise hour of the day or night, as well as estimate the passage of time, with great accuracy. The Sense occurs as more of a feeling, and thus does not require any undue concentration on the part of the persona. This is a simple Aspect, and probably does not require a large range of costs unless the environment being used has a very strange or uneven relationship with time and its passage. If such is the case, the Mythguide may wish to increase the Rank of the Aspect, but the normal recommended Rank is two. This Aspect may complement the Sense of Direction Aspect.

SUPERIOR CONCENTRATION

The persona's capacity to focus his mind and maintain concentration, even under adverse circumstances, is superior. It is easier for the persona to concentrate in the face of distraction, allowing him to complete work or study in a more timely fashion than might otherwise be expected. Whenever a situation occurs where a Willpower Trial becomes necessary to maintain concentration, the Trial's Difficulty is modified by this Aspect's Rank. For instance, a persona might be trying to puzzle out a message in a strange language in the midst of a city crowd. Or the persona might be trying to pick a gate lock in time to avoid the notice of the city guardsmen whom he can hear approaching around the corner. Any situation involving extreme pressure and a chance of detection or distraction, and requiring supreme concentration in the midst of it all, probably calls for a Willpower Trial. The Mythguide should decide when such Trials are necessary. This Aspect can also be very useful for a persona with magical Talent. This Aspect may complement the Good Memory Aspect.



Unfavorable Mental Aspects

Learning Disability

The persona has a Learning Disability of some type, and his ability to assimilate and process specific types of information is impeded. It is recommended that the disability be limited to a specific area, such as language, reading, mathematics, combat, or other physical skills. The extent and effects of the disability dictate the Aspect's Rank. This Aspect gives the persona a blanket Difficulty modifier (plus one) to Learning Trials. It also affects the persona's ability to learn through either Training/Instruction or Practice/Study. It adds two days per Rank to Training times and four days per Rank to Practice and Study times. This Aspect may complement the Poor Memory, Short Attention Span, or Low Confidence Aspects.

Low Confidence

The persona lacks confidence in his own abilities. This Aspect can represent a general lack of self-assurance, or it may be specific to certain areas or capacities. Low Confidence can affect a persona's reactions in stressful situations or encounters related to the area of Low Confidence. For example, if a merchant is not confident of his physical abilities, this Aspect might affect him in combat situations. The Mythguide must determine in what situations confidence plays a role, and handle the results accordingly. When the Aspect applies as a modifier, the affected Trial's Difficulty can be modified by up to half the Aspect's Rank. This Aspect will complement not only all of the Unfavorable Mental Aspects, but also many Aspects from other categories.

Poor Memory

The persona has an unusually Poor Memory, and remembers things at a below average level of recall (when he remembers them at all). The persona may have been born with the condition, or he may have developed it during Background Development. The Aspect's Rank indicates exactly how bad the persona's memory really is, and thus the extent of the hindrance it represents for the persona. Intelligence Trials may be required for both memory recall and memory accuracy, and this Aspect's Rank will modify the Trial's



Difficulty. A similar modifier also applies to a memorization Trial. The Rank acts as a gauge of the persona's accuracy of memory as well. A Rank of one might indicate slight lapses, while a Rank of ten probably represents almost complete non-recall. This Aspect may complement the Short Attention Span or Learning Disability Aspects.

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN

The persona's ability to focus his mind on a specific problem, task, or situation is significantly below average. The persona is not able to effectively shut out distractions or background disturbances, and his attention constantly wavers and shifts from one area to another. Whenever a situation occurs that requires a Willpower Trial to maintain concentration, this Aspect's Rank affects the Trial's Difficulty. At high Ranks, the nature of the Aspect itself might necessitate Willpower Trials even for normal levels of concentration. Anything which requires extended concentration - listening to a plan or a speech, Training or Studying to increase an expertise, standing watch, hiding, sitting in a class - requires a Willpower Trial if the

persona wishes to be able to retain a level of concentration which allows him to benefit from the situation (listening to a lecture, for example). If the Trial is unsuccessful, the persona's attention wanders. This Aspect will be a tremendous hindrance for Talented personas. This Aspect may complement the Poor Memory or Learning Disability Aspects.

LOW PAIN THRESHOLD

The persona has an unusually Low Pain Threshold. The persona receives a positive Difficulty modifier equal to his Aspect's Rank on any Trial requiring the persona to resist pain. Such Trials are usually Willpower or Willpower/Hardiness Trials. This Aspect may complement the Reduced Concentration Aspect.

SPIRITUAL ASPECTS

Spiritual Aspects represent various spiritual and supernatural sensitivities and affinities, in addition to detailing the influence of fate on the birth and early development of a persona. The player should work with the Mythguide to determine a rationale for the existence of one of these Aspects, since Spiritual Aspects tend to be more fantastic and powerful. These Aspects carry with them the potential to make a persona truly unique, but they also offer the greatest opportunities for abuse. These considerations should never be far from a player's mind when assigning or purchasing a Spiritual Aspect.

FAVORABLE SPIRITUAL ASPECTS

Animal Kinship

The persona enjoys a particular kinship with some form of animal species. The Animal Kinship Aspect represents a true spiritual, and quite probably magical or supernatural, relationship. A Rank three Aspect might indicate a kinship with wolves, giving the persona a keen sense of smell and excellent night vision. A Rank of ten could indicate kinship to some mythical beast of the Mythguide's world, and possibly the ability to transform into the beast for short periods of time.

This Aspect does not necessarily impart Natural Friendship with the animal with which the persona

has kinship, although the two Aspects obviously complement each other. The player may wish to purchase both. The Aspect's Rank should be determined by several considerations - how powerful the abilities imparted are, the nature of the kinship, and the general value and utility of the relationship (and resulting abilities). This Aspect often directly affects certain Attributes, and the Mythguide should assign such effects based on Rank. The abilities included under this Aspect sometimes overlap other Aspect areas (for example, a persona with a wolf kinship will have a heightened sense of smell - an ability which overlaps with the Enhanced Sense Aspect). When this occurs, the abilities within the Animal Kinship Aspect supersede any others. The abilities do not have to be purchased twice, although the player should not abuse this allowance. This Aspect may complement the Blessed Birth, Natural Friend, Fortune, Sensitivity, Fortunate Destiny, or Guardian Aspects.

Blessed Birth

The persona's birth has been blessed by some higher power, force, or entity. The birth might fulfill some important prophecy, either cultural or religious, or it might have been foretold as an auspicious event by a seer or diviner. In settings that use astrology as a valid (and truly magical) method of divination, this Aspect often indicates an auspicious or well-pected birth. The precise effects of this Aspect will depend on the religious and spiritual nature of the Reality being used. In a world where the gods take a direct hand in the affairs of men, a high Rank could represent the first hand interest of a particular deity. In a world where very little real spiritual power exists, this Aspect might simply indicate better than average luck.

Blessed Birth should generally be reserved for those environments where spiritual power and magic can have profound effects on a persona and his destiny. The form of this Aspect will change from one environment to another, and the Mythguide should determine appropriate effects. Its effects can be considered to be equivalent to a Fortune Aspect at one Rank lower. This advantage represents the increased luck of one whose birth is truly blessed. Remember that the primary use of this Aspect is as a foundation for an interesting and challenging persona destiny, and it is really meant to be used in conjunction with other Spiritual Aspects. This Aspect may complement any of the Spiritual Aspects.



Fortunate Destiny

The persona has a Fortunate Destiny to look forward to (or not, as the case may be). This Aspect is perhaps the most narrative of all the Spiritual Aspects, and the Mythguide should think carefully before allowing a persona to purchase it. This Aspect affects a persona's destiny, and it assumes the persona has a higher purpose to fulfill during the course of his life. The persona might know of this destiny, or it could remain a mystery to him. He could foresee his own death, possibly for the purpose of saving many lives (remember, this is a fortunate destiny). If fate is strong in the persona, his destiny may save him from death numerous times. After all, he must live to fulfill his specific purpose, and perhaps to fulfill a specific death. The persona's entire life is fated, and the persona is firmly entwined in that fate. The source of the destiny is often a higher force or power, and the Mythguide may wish to consider its source as he lets the destiny unfold.

The Aspect's Rank determines not only the extent and effects of this fate, but also its importance in the Narrative Environment. A Rank of one might indi-



cate several required actions along a variable path, with the outcome affecting things in a small region of the countryside. A Rank ten destiny could represent a reborn hero of prophecy who is cast onto an unshakable path from cradle to grave. The outcome of such a grand destiny could affect the very fabric of the world, and might reshape history both past and future. Obviously, this Aspect works best when the Mythguide has such a Canticle planned. Canticles which play more like novels are especially appropriate for this Aspect - the Mythguide often has a storyline in mind, along with certain necessary events that must occur. Using this Aspect, the Mythguide is able to direct a persona along the desired path to a degree greater than would be possible in a normal narrative. This Aspect may complement any of the other Spiritual Aspects.

FORTUNE

The persona has unusually good Fortune in all areas of his life. This exceptional luck follows the persona and affects many of his actions. The Aspect's Rank can be used to affect Trials during the course of a single narrative. For each Rank possessed, the per-

sona may either re-roll a Trial or modify its Difficulty by a single level. For example, a persona with a Rank of four could re-roll two Trials and modify the Difficulty of another by two levels during the course of a narrative. After all of the Rank points have been used during one narrative, the persona must wait until the beginning of the next narrative, when his points are replenished. This Aspect may complement the Fortunate Destiny Aspect.

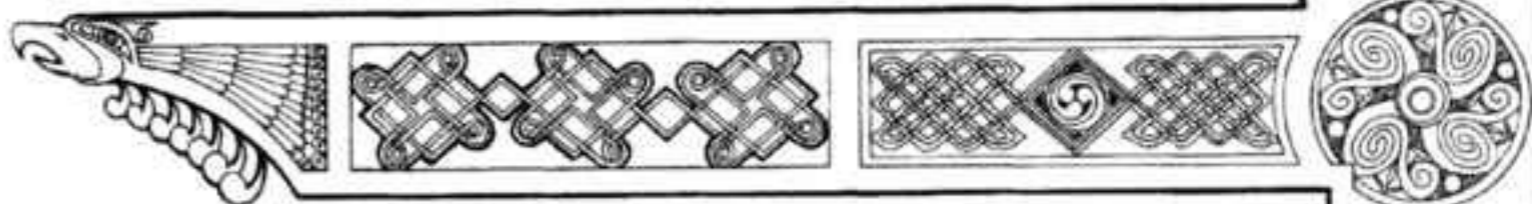
GIFT

The persona has been given a Gift of some kind by a spiritual agency. The Gift can be anything - an item, a service, an ability, etc.. The nature of the Gift, its value to the persona, and its form all depend on the Aspect's Rank. The persona should detail both the Gift and the circumstances of its appearance within the context of his persona's background. This Aspect may complement the Guide, Recall, True Calling, or True Faith Aspects.

GUARDIAN

The persona has a spiritual or physical Guardian. The Guardian has been sent to protect the persona for some reason, and this is its sole purpose for accompanying the persona. This Aspect is very similar to the Spiritual Ally Aspect, with several important differences. First, the Guardian can be either spiritual or physical (an animal or a human). Second, the Guardian is not an overt ally. It does not necessarily reveal itself to the persona, or become friends with him if it does, and it does not provide random aid. It protects the persona from all forms of harm. That is its purpose.

Choosing the Guardian, its abilities, and its relationship to the persona should be handled in a similar fashion as the same considerations in both the Natural Friend and Spiritual Ally Aspects. The rationale behind the Guardian's presence is open to any possibility, and should also be determined in a similar manner as that which underlies the Spiritual Ally Aspect. The nature and power of the Guardian will depend on the Aspect's Rank. This Aspect may complement the Fortune, Sensitivity, Spiritual Ally, and Fortunate Destiny Aspects.



Guide

The persona has a spirit Guide of some type. This Aspect corresponds to the Spiritual Ally Aspect, except that the Guide does not necessarily provide overt aid. Instead, Guides often communicate in cryptic ways or provide clues toward the solution of a greater problem or puzzle. Guides can also be entirely ambivalent, and may only be associated with the persona as a result of higher influence or spiritual circumstances. Guides can also guide a persona along a certain path of knowledge or development, and may serve as masters or teachers. An appropriate analogy might be that a Spiritual Ally acts to protect or aid a persona, while a Guide helps the persona to learn to protect himself. The appearance and power of a Guide depends on the nature of spirits in the Reality being used. The form of the Guide and its relationship to the persona, as well as the circumstances surrounding its appearance, should be detailed by the player based on the Aspect's Rank. This Aspect may complement the Gift, True Calling, or True Faith Aspects.

NATURAL FRIEND

The persona enjoys either a specific friendship or a more general relationship with one or more members of the animal or plant kingdoms. The first method of handling the Aspect is for the persona to have a specific Natural Friend. It might be a dog, or a wolf, or a great oak tree near his place of birth. The abilities and benefits received dictate the Aspect's Rank. For example, if the persona is able to communicate with the Friend (verbally, with gestures, telepathically, etc.), or if the Friend has an unusual power or ability, the Rank will be higher.

The second way to handle this Aspect is for the persona to have an affinity with all animals or plants of a specific species or type (or even more than one species). For example, a persona could have a Rank three affinity for wolves. He can travel among them without being harmed, and some might follow him for time, but he cannot speak to them or control them. If another persona had a similar ability, but with the added capacity to speak with the wolves over distances and to solicit their aid, the Aspect's Rank could rise to a nine or ten. The same can be said about plant Friends. If a persona has a Rank one affinity for trees, he might find increased peace when he is among them. If the same persona could speak with the trees, questioning them and gathering information from them about who has passed among them, the Rank would increase con-

FIRNOST Seer of Flatlake

Enomi's Spiritual Guide

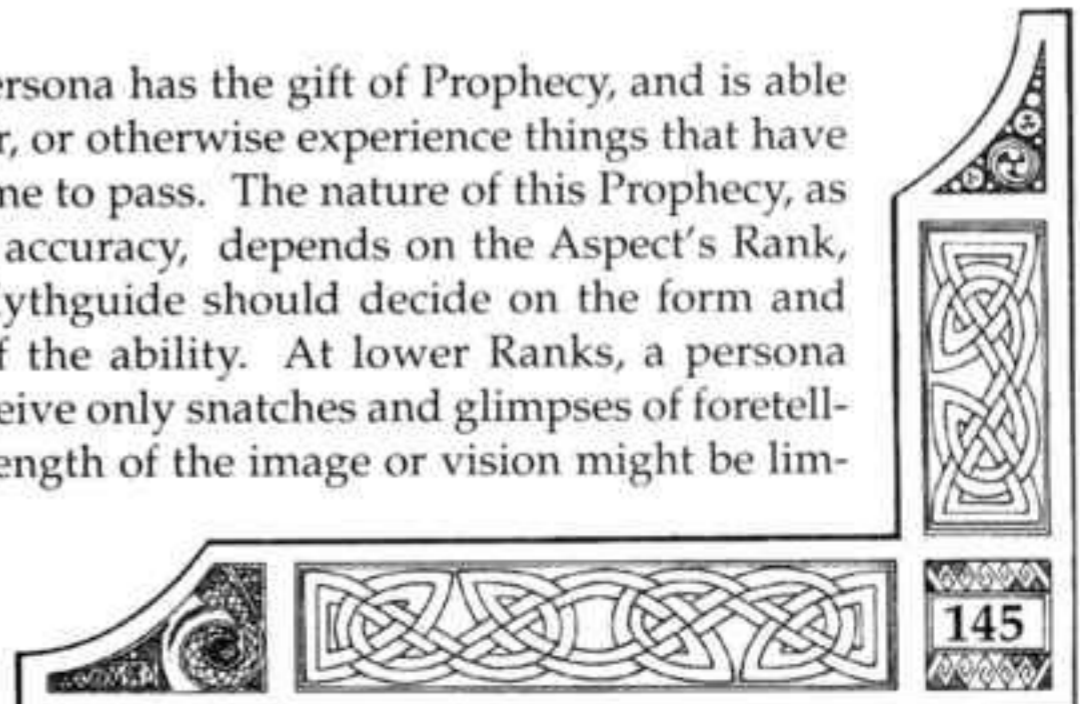
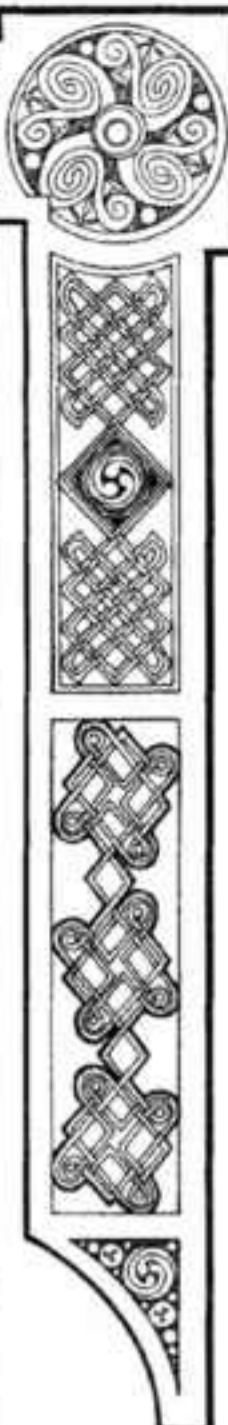
When Enomi was born, she emerged into a world filled with the whisperings of invisible spirits. Orphaned at birth, Enomi was raised by a wisened Shaman who taught her that the voices she heard were the spirits of the night sky, the glittering water, and the moaning winds. As a child she listened to them howl and lament, whispering the fortunes of strangers as if they were lost relatives or loved ones long, long, gone. Frightened by their misery, Enomi consulted the Shaman, who knew many of their stories from tribal legend. Lost heroes and battles, ancient myths and gods, these were the substance of the early voices' tales. Through the Shaman's teachings, meditation and prayer, one voice emerges from the masses. The voice held a kindlier tone and it spoke not of the dead but of those living and those yet to live. It was a voice of hope, a child among the spirit-world or so the Shaman guessed.

Over the years, the spirit foretold many events - rich harvest, comings of leaders, births of new clans. Word spread over the heath plain that Enomi was a great Seer, prophet come to the Northman people. The Northmen culture is magic-poor. Consequently, Enomi's talents are highly regarded on the Heath. Enomi's Spirit Guide Aspect costs 8 IP because of the nature of magic on the Heath. The cost would certainly have been greater except the Spirit only forewarns of the events it deems necessary. Enomi has never been able to use its information to divine her own future.

siderably. This Aspect may complement the Blessed Birth, Sensitivity, or Animal Kinship Aspects.

Prophecy

The persona has the gift of Prophecy, and is able to see, hear, or otherwise experience things that have not yet come to pass. The nature of this Prophecy, as well as its accuracy, depends on the Aspect's Rank, and the Mythguide should decide on the form and potency of the ability. At lower Ranks, a persona should receive only snatches and glimpses of foretelling. The length of the image or vision might be lim-





ited to one or two seconds per Rank. The Mythguide may also require a Trial to determine a vision's accuracy (modified by the Rank of the Prophecy, of course). The Mythguide could impose other limitations on the Prophecy. For instance, at lower Ranks the ability could only be audible or even olfactory (i.e. the persona could 'smell' danger). Actual visions might appear only at higher Ranks or only in the persona's dreams. The potency, effects, and limits of the visions also depend on Rank. For example, a Rank of one might indicate brief glimpses of the unimportant immediate future, while a Rank of ten may represent detailed visions of crucial events (either for the persona or for those around him) far in the future. The Mythguide should define the nature of Prophecy in the environment being used. This Aspect may complement the Fortune, Sensitivity, or Fortunate Destiny Aspects.

Recall

The persona has been gifted with remembrance of a past life experience. Depending on the nature of the Canticle and the Reality being used, this Aspect

can be either valuable or entirely inapplicable. If this Aspect permitted in an environment, its Rank depends on its value and uses for the persona. For example, does the persona remember only shadowy visions or does he remember vivid experiences and situations? Can these memories be applied to his current situation? The Mythguide should be careful when using this Aspect and assigning costs. However, if handled properly this Aspect can significantly enhance a persona's background history. The player should describe the nature of the Recall experience itself and its effects on the persona. This Aspect complements the Guide, True Calling, and True Faith Aspects.

Sensitivity

The persona has a unique spiritual or supernatural Sensitivity. The nature and extent of the Sensitivity depends on the Aspect's Rank. Suggested sensitivities include the ability to sense spirits or the supernatural, the use of magic, the presence of higher powers or beings, or strong emotions and feelings (such as senses of good or evil). This Aspect could also be used to represent clairvoyant or clairaudiant abilities. Personas with these abilities are able to see or hear things going on in other places - either in the real world, the spiritual world, or both - at the time of the sensation.

The range of any Sensitivity depends on the Aspect's Rank. For example, the ability to sense normal magic within a fifty yard radius might have a Rank of five, while a region-spanning clairvoyant ability would certainly be a Rank ten Aspect. The Mythguide must consider the above factors - the strength and usefulness of the ability, its potential for frequent use and aid, its precise effects, and its accuracy and range - when deciding on the Aspect's Rank. The effects of an Aspect in the environment or Reality being used are also a consideration. This Aspect may complement the Blessed Birth, Prophecy, Natural Friend, Animal Kinship, Spiritual Ally, or Guardian Aspects.

Spiritual Ally

The persona has a Spiritual Ally. The reasons for the Ally's presence can be varied, and the persona may or may not know them. Perhaps some higher power has taken notice of the persona, and wishes to keep him alive or give him aid for some reason. Maybe the Ally has been sent by a friend or a member of the persona's family for protection. Or maybe the Ally has simply come of its own accord and is interested in the persona. The Aspect's Rank determines the

persona's relationship to the Ally, as well as the Ally's general level of power.

The power and nature of the Ally also depend on the nature of the spiritual world in the environment being used. The Ally attempts to aid the persona to the best of its ability, especially in times of great need. A Rank one Ally has limited ability to aid and interfere, and it is possible that the persona is not even aware of the spirit, attributing the intervention to simple good luck. A Rank ten Ally is able to intervene on a regular basis, and is definitely known to the persona. In extreme cases, the Ally may even become something of a friend or mentor, depending on the nature of spirits in the environment. This Aspect may complement the Fortune, Sensitivity, Guardian, and Fortunate Destiny Aspects.

TRUE CALLING

The persona has heard the True Calling, and wishes to become a servant of the appropriate religion, deity, power, or Omni. The nature of the Calling and its form depends on both the environment and the Reality being used. The player should be allowed to choose the power who initiates the Calling, although the Calling itself should be described by the Mythguide. A persona who experiences a True Calling feels naturally drawn toward the appropriate religious or magical vocation. Although special circumstances may dictate otherwise, this Aspect is usually restricted to those entering a religious vocation. In some environments, the Mythguide may require the purchase of this Aspect for those wishing to enter an Omnescence-using vocation. Depending on the power level of the environment, the Mythguide should assign a static Rank at which this Aspect must be purchased. This Aspect complements the Guide, Gift, and Recall Aspects.

UNFAVORABLE SPIRITUAL ASPECTS

CURSE

The persona has been Cursed by some higher power or entity, either at birth or during Early or Background Development. The persona's birth might fulfill some dark prophecy or design, or its cursed nature might be the result of a specific animosity directed toward the persona's family or an individual relative (possibly from a spiritual being or other power). In



settings that use astrological influences, this Aspect can indicate an inauspicious or poorly aspected birth. Alternately, a persona may have been Cursed during his development.

The precise nature of this Aspect depends on the religious and spiritual realities of the environment. The nature and potency of the Curse depends on the Aspect's Rank. A Rank of one may represent an inability to speak certain religious words or stand in the presence of certain objects, while a Rank of ten could indicate a slow, inevitable descent into evil and madness.

The Aspect can also be used to indicate an evil or unclean taint on a persona's aura or soul (again depending on the nature of the Reality being used), or as a way to cause some magical or evil disease (Lycanthropy, for example). The origin and effects of the Curse should also be described. Was it inherited from a particular parent? Was it placed by a supernatural agency? By a human agency? Did it occur by wild chance? When did it appear (if it does not solely affect the persona)? How long will it last? Is there anything that can be done to counteract its effects or dispel it? What are its effects?

Any player should think carefully before taking this Aspect at a high Rank, and the Mythguide should guide his choice if he does. This Aspect also gives the

persona the equivalent of a Doom Aspect at Rank one (i.e. poor luck), regardless of the Rank of the Curse. One of the primary uses of this Aspect is as a foundation for unfortunate fates or destinies, and players are encouraged to combine this Aspect with another from this section to create such a condition. This Aspect may complement any of the Unfavorable Spiritual Aspects.

Doom

The persona has unusually bad luck in most areas of his life, and this ill fortune affects many of his actions and decisions during play. As with Fortune, the origin of the Doom can be almost anything - the disfavor of some power, a family curse, or simple poor chance. Doom works in much the same way as Fortune. However, in the case of the Doom Aspect, it is the Mythguide who controls the persona's luck. If the persona succeeds in making a difficult or crucial roll, the Mythguide might choose to have the persona re-roll it. Alternately, the Mythguide may raise the Difficulty of the persona's Trials during the session, to the limits defined by the Aspect. The Mythguide can affect a number of rolls and Difficulty levels equal to this Aspect's Rank during a single narrative. This Aspect may complement the Doomed Destiny Aspect.

Doomed Destiny

The persona has a Doomed Destiny ahead of him. Similar in nature to a Fortunate Destiny, this Aspect predicts the persona's destiny and assumes that the persona has some fated purpose to live for or accomplish. The persona may know of his doom (he may have been told, he could know instinctively, or he could find out over time through snatches of information or dreams) or he may not - the knowledge usually depends on the nature of the supernatural in the Mythguide's world.

If the persona's destiny is a strong one, the persona might live through numerous situations which otherwise would have killed him. After all, the persona is fated to perform certain actions and perish in a predetermined fashion. Personas who have a Doomed Destiny often find their own death at the end of it. Parts of the destiny itself may also be unpleasant - the persona might be forced to betray a friend, or he could be responsible for many innocent deaths. In any case, he is tool for some higher force or power, and has little if any control over the final course or consequences of his actions.

The force, danger, and power of the Destiny primarily depend on the Aspect's Rank. The Rank also dictates the extent of the evil or doom associated with the persona's fate. The ideal situation in which to use this Aspect is one in which the Fortune Aspect might also be used - within intricately planned and interwoven Canticles that require certain paths and directions to be taken by the participants. The Mythguide is thus able to more firmly direct the storyline of the narrative. This Aspect may complement any of the other Spiritual Aspects.

Haunted

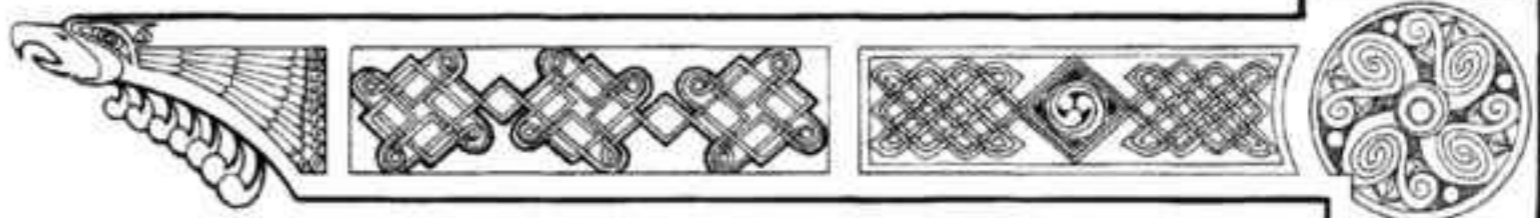
The persona is Haunted by a benevolent or mischievous spirit. The spirit may cause problems for the persona, and play tricks, but does not usually cause the persona any overt harm. The strength of the spirit and the frequency of its appearances depend on the Aspect's Rank and on the nature of the spiritual world in the environment or Reality being used. Most other considerations are similar to those of the Spiritual Foe Aspect. The Haunted Aspect is generally less dangerous than other similar Aspects, and its origin is usually decidedly more innocent (i.e. an errant spirit playing pranks), with high Ranks being rare. This Aspect may complement the Curse, Doom, Spiritual Foe, Watcher, or Doomed Destiny Aspects.

Natural Enemy

The persona enjoys either a specific or a more general animosity with a certain member or species of the natural world (animal or plant). As with the Natural Friend Aspect, this Aspect lends itself to two different interpretations. The Enemy can be either a single member of a species or it can include all members of a species. The Aspect's Rank depends on several considerations - danger, Enemy reactions, species, abilities, and power - in addition to those specific to the Mythguide's own world or environment. The Aspect's Rank also represents the treatment that can be expected when the persona encounters his Enemy or Enemies. Unusually intelligent, powerful, or creative enemies will increase the Rank. This Aspect may complement the Curse Aspect.

Spiritual Foe

The persona has a Spiritual Foe. The general level of the spirit's ability, as well as its nature and the dan-



ger it represents for the persona, are determined by the Aspect's Rank. Both the origins of the spirit's animosity and the persona's relationship with the spirit should be decided by the player. Depending on the Aspect's Rank, possibilities are limited only by the environment and Reality being used. Perhaps the spirit is a powerful one sent to harm the persona by a family enemy. Maybe it is the spirit of a dead relative or adversary who bears the persona's family, or the persona, some type of grudge. A Rank one spirit might only harass the persona, while a Rank ten spirit might attempt to kill the persona whenever the chance presents itself. The abilities of the spirit itself depend on the nature of the spiritual world in the Reality being used. The persona may or may not know the reasons for the Spiritual Foe's presence. This Aspect may complement the Curse, Doom, Watcher, Haunted, or Doomed Destiny Aspects.

SUPERSTITION

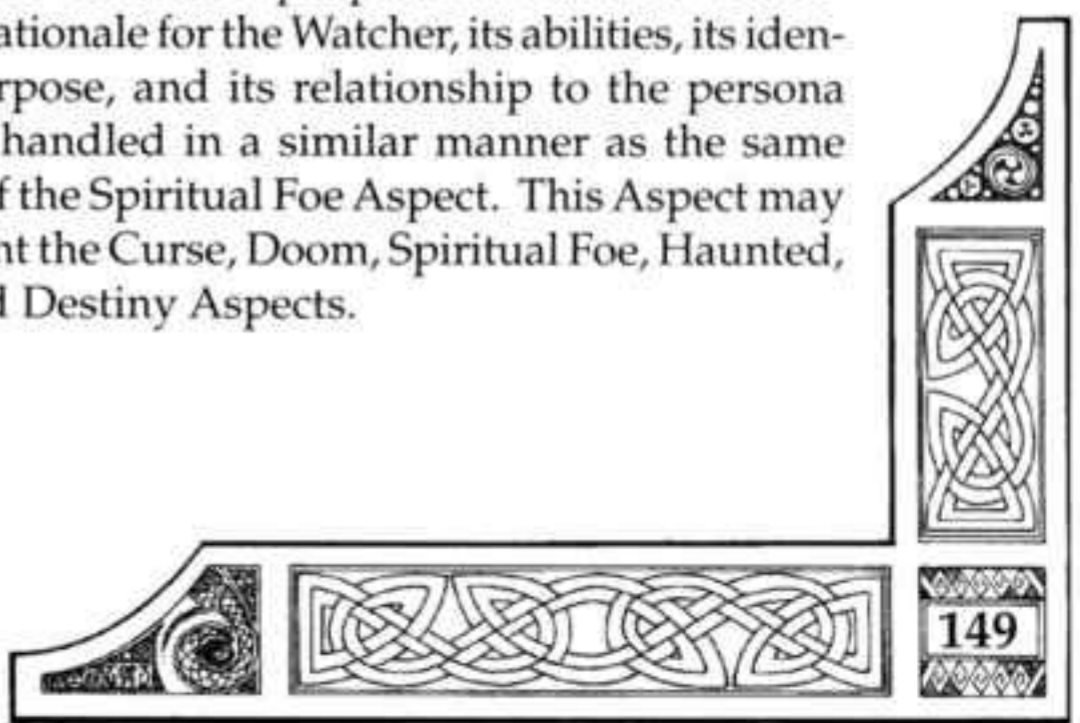
The persona is very superstitious, and is wary of things he does not understand. When confronted by elements of the supernatural, the persona must make a Willpower Trial with this Aspect's Rank serving as a Difficulty modifier. If he makes the Trial, the persona overcomes his fear. If the Trial is unsuccessful, the persona gives in to his fear. If this is the case, the Mythguide should treat the situation like a failed Fear Trial (as if the persona had that Aspect). Refer to the Fear Aspect for reaction guidelines. This Aspect may complement the Curse and Haunted Aspects.

WATCHER

The persona has a spiritual or physical Watcher. The Watcher has been sent to watch the persona, monitor his movements, and perhaps perform some action. Such actions may be indirectly harmful to the persona, but are never directly harmful. The action might simply be to follow the persona for a specified period of time, or until some significant event occurs.

The relationship of the persona to the Watcher, the danger presented by the Watcher, and the rationale behind the Watcher's actions collectively depend on both the Aspect's Rank and the power or agency responsible for dispatching the Watcher. There is also always the possibility of the Watcher acting of its own volition for some reason. Maybe it is simply interested in the persona.

This Aspect is similar to the Spiritual Foe Aspect, with a few important differences. First, the Watcher can be either spiritual or physical. Second, the Watcher is not usually an overt enemy. It will not harm the persona directly. The Watcher may or may not reveal itself to the persona - such an appearance usually depends on the Watcher's purpose and nature. Developing the rationale for the Watcher, its abilities, its identity, its purpose, and its relationship to the persona should be handled in a similar manner as the same elements of the Spiritual Foe Aspect. This Aspect may complement the Curse, Doom, Spiritual Foe, Haunted, or Doomed Destiny Aspects.

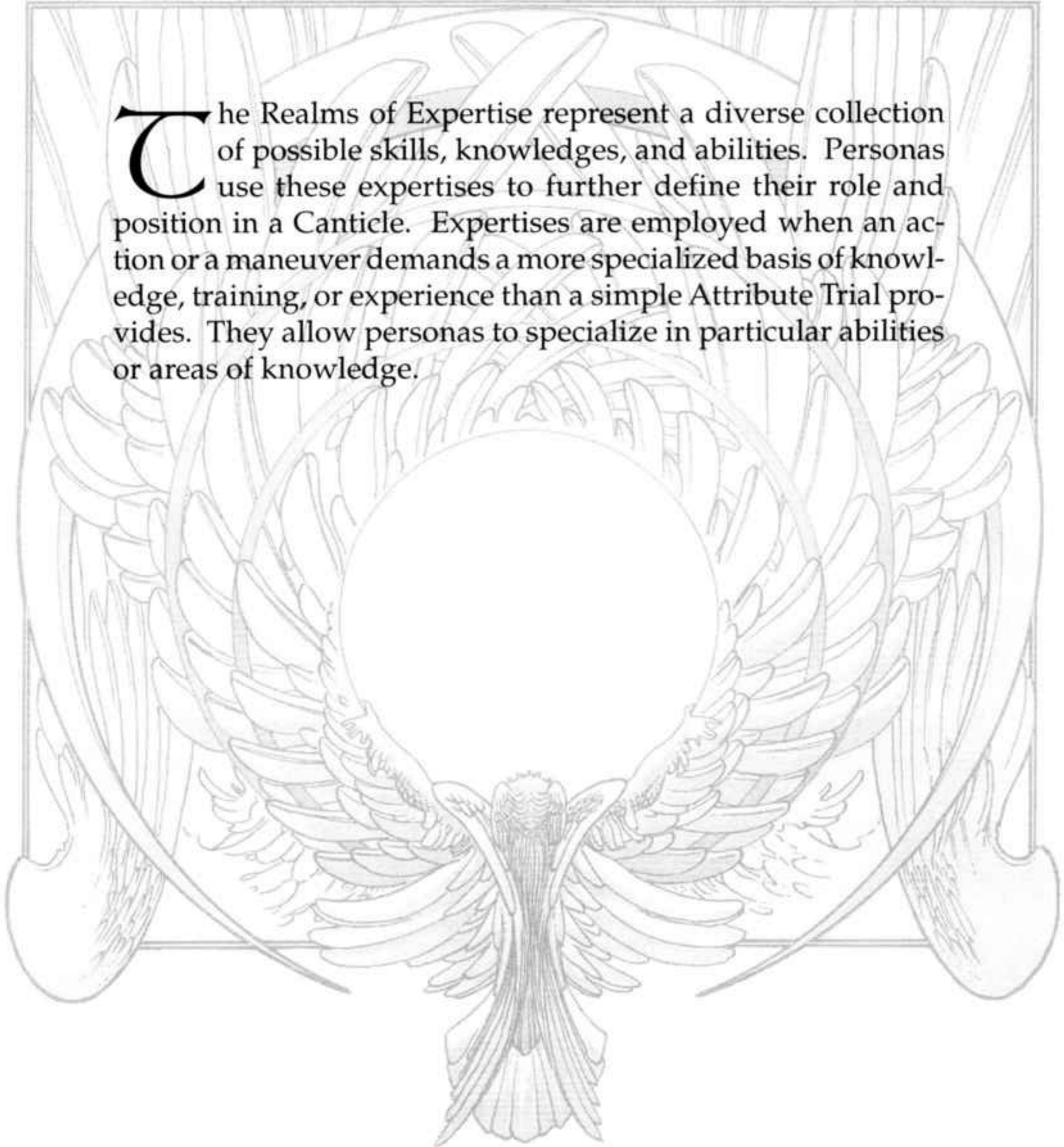




Expertises

⊗ Chapter Six ⊗

The Realms of Expertise represent a diverse collection of possible skills, knowledges, and abilities. Personas use these expertises to further define their role and position in a Canticle. Expertises are employed when an action or a maneuver demands a more specialized basis of knowledge, training, or experience than a simple Attribute Trial provides. They allow personas to specialize in particular abilities or areas of knowledge.



A persona begins to acquire expertises during childhood and continues to develop them throughout the Background Development period. Family Background, Kin Relationships, and experiences within individual Vocational Settings all affect the development and availability of specific expertises. The result is a well-defined and sensible collection of expertises for each persona. The expertises possessed should make sense when considering a persona's overall developmental evolution. Some will be the result of cultural and social interaction, others of vocational development and personal exploration. A well-rounded persona should have the opportunity to develop expertises in an interesting and broad-based fashion. Creative diversity is necessary for a persona to excel among the rigors of any Narrative Environment.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part details initial expertise development and acquisition. This includes expertise development during a persona's Early and Background Development periods. The second part of the chapter contains guidelines for using expertises during play. It also provides rules for further expertise development. The third section provides guidelines for improving expertises during play, and the last part of the chapter individually describes each of the expertises used in Aria.

Expertises

Expertises are divided into three categories - Talents, Aptitudes, Disciplines - based on the primary methods of acquisition. *Talents* are abilities that can be inherently developed by a persona. Their further development relies on practical experience that relates to them. The ability to learn Talents through experience depends on a persona's Wisdom.

Aptitudes are skills which are learned and developed through a combination of training and experience. They are developed during play through further training and experience. Further Aptitude development depends on both a persona's Wisdom and Intelligence.

Disciplines are knowledges and capacities that are learned primarily through study and training. Their continued development depends on further study and is governed by a persona's Intelligence.

Most expertises are further divided into Aspects. Expertise Aspects represent specific areas of proficiency within a particular Talent, Aptitude, or Discipline and often depend on individual Vocational Settings and the environments in which they exist. They can be either loose categories or very specific divisions.

For example, a persona with the Tracking Aptitude has the expertise Aspect of Woodland/Forest. This represents the environment in which the persona developed the Aptitude. If the persona were trying to use the Aptitude in a rocky or icy region, there would be an unfavorable Difficulty modifier.

General Disciplines such as Knowledge and Lore use Aspects to describe entire skill or knowledge areas, and often break Aspects down into individual areas of concentration. A persona could have a Lore with an Aspect of Herbs. This may be enough by itself, or the Mythguide could decide that Herb Lore is too general a division for his environment. Instead, he qualifies the Aspect further by making it Herb Lore (herbs of the northern woodlands). For more information on Expertise Aspects and their use, consult the Using Expertises section later in this chapter.

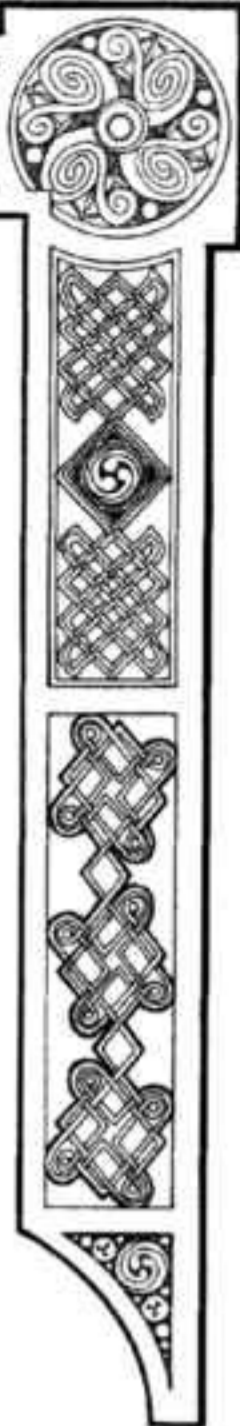
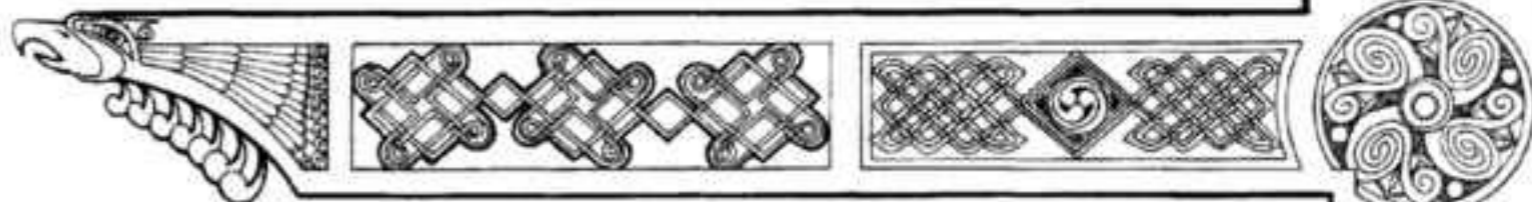
Purchasing Expertises

Expertises are purchased throughout the Early and Background Development periods. Each of the three types of expertise is defined according to its Rank, and all expertises are opened at Rank One. Most can be developed to a maximum Rank of Ten. Ranks measure the level of proficiency a persona has reached in a particular ability. Rank is initially purchased with Interaction Points, and may be developed during narrative play through training, study, or experience.

When purchasing expertises during a persona's Early and Background Development, the player spends Interaction Points. This expenditure works in a manner similar to the purchase of Persona Attributes. It costs one Interaction Point to open an available Talent, Aptitude, or Discipline at Rank one. After an expertise has been opened, the persona may continue to develop it throughout his Background Development (if appropriate training is available). The Expertise Improvement Table provides both point costs for further development and modifiers for later training-based development. Vocational Expertises are handled a bit differently, and are detailed later in this chapter.

Innate Expertises

Every persona in the game possesses a number of Innate Expertises. These expertises are automatically received during Early Development, and consist of the following: Native Language at Rank five, Dodge, Physical, Influence, and Savvy, all at Rank one. A per-



sona can subsequently develop these expertises normally during Background Development.

Inherent Expertises

Certain expertises acquired during Early Development are considered Inherent, and must be purchased at Rank one. Inherent Expertises are usually the result of the Heritage Template or Status Archetype in which a persona is raised. They represent those capabilities or knowledges that every member of a particular culture, society, race, or class possesses to some degree. For example, if a persona is raised among a tribe of plainsmen, he might have Riding (horse) and Plant Lore (plains) as Inherent Expertises. A persona raised in a wealthy family in a large city might have both Intrigue and Etiquette as Inherent Expertises. The Mythguide and player should define a persona's available Inherent Expertises based on the persona's background. Inherent Expertises are developed normally during Background Development.

Expertise Development

Expertise development is divided into three stages - Early, Background, and Interactive. Early development represents a persona's development during childhood and early adolescence, before the start of Background Development. Background Development constitutes all persona development that occurs during the Background Development period. This includes both Vocational development and optional expertise development. Finally, Interactive development represents the development that occurs after a persona enters narrative play. For a master outline of persona expertise development, refer to chapter two.

Early Development

A persona's Early Development consists of the developmental opportunities presented during youth and early adolescence. This stage also includes those expertises which a persona learns from his initial family situation. The length of the Early Development





period varies from one culture or society to the next. In most societies, Background Development (in the form of an apprenticeship, the initiation of organized schooling, the entrance into a religious vocation, etc.) commences at about the age of fourteen. Depending on the nature and sophistication of the society, Early Development can end anywhere from the age of eleven onward.

Adulthood is usually reached earlier in primitive societies (commonly in the form of a rite of passage), and personas developing as Marginals often enter their Background Development period even earlier (since they often have no family and may grow up on their own). The player and the Mythguide should determine the length of a persona's Early development period based on the persona's background, family relationships, and position within society.

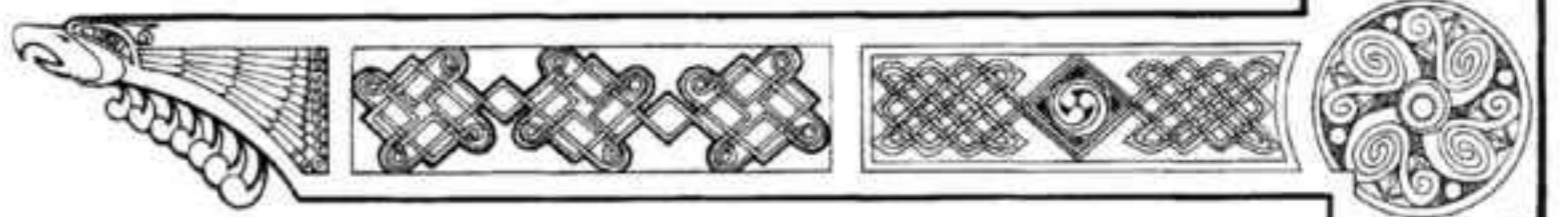
The standard age at which Background Development begins (and Early Development ends) is considered to be fourteen. The Mythguide and player should keep careful track of time during development, since a persona gains Interaction Points on a yearly basis. Personas are able to develop expertises during Early Development based on their situation. This represents the persona's upbringing (and should already be described as part of the persona's Family Concept), and although it usually indicates an initial family atmosphere, unique considerations may require a persona to develop alone (if the persona were Abandoned, for instance).

Regardless of a persona's situation, the Internal and External Potentials during Early Development are both assigned values of one. Personas may develop two expertises per year - one Internal and one External. Personas are also restricted to one half the normal Interaction Point expenditure per year; they can only spend one Interaction Point on each Potential per year. Available Internal expertises are based on the Vocational Cluster of the head of the family (refer to the Vocational Expertise Development table in the Vocations chapter for possible expertises). Available External expertises are based on the Status Archetype of the persona and the Environ Class of the Creation Environment. Consult the Additional Expertise Development table in the Vocations chapter for possibilities. Personas can also buy Universal expertises during External Development. Finally, a persona's Status Archetype during Early Development determines the maximum Rank for any expertise; refer to the Early Development table.

Early Development (Maximum Ranks)

<i>Status Archetype</i>	<i>Maximum Rank</i>
Ruling Class	4
Privileged Class	3
Professional Class	2
Labor Class	1
Marginal Class	3

The Expertises available to Personas during the years of Early Development are determined by their Status Archetype, the Environ Class of their Developmental Setting, and the Vocational Expertise of the Family Head. Persona Heritage may also make certain Expertises available for Early Development.



Background Development

When a persona enters the Background Development period, he begins developing within his first Vocational Setting (and along his first Vocational Path). A persona may move from one Vocational Setting to another during the Background Development period, often changing Vocational Paths as he does so. However, the fundamentals of persona expertise development do not change from one Vocational Path to another (although specific expertise opportunities may change).

In many societies, a persona enters an apprenticeship after he completes his Early Development. The age at which an apprenticeship begins varies from one society or culture to another. An apprenticeship should be considered a normal stage within the overall Background Development process. A persona entering an apprenticeship enters a Vocational Setting and begins training under the tutelage of a master of the particular Vocational Path chosen. Upon the completion of an apprenticeship (which normally lasts from four to seven years, but can last as long as eleven years), the persona has advanced his Vocational Expertise to a level commensurate with a skilled practitioner of the individual craft or trade. The persona might continue in the employ of his former master (as an associate, an employee, or a journeyman), or he might leave to make his own way in the world. Of course, a persona could also leave before his training is complete to seek adventure in other parts of an environment.

In certain environments, a persona must demonstrate a minimum level of skill (often expressed through the creation of a 'masterpiece') to be considered a master. In other environments a persona may be required to be an enfranchised citizen of the society. The Mythguide should determine the opportunities and requirements inherent in the various Creation Environments through which the persona passes during the course of his development. Realizing the limits of a particular region or society enables the player to keep all of the possibilities in mind when steering his persona through the Background Development process.

The terms 'apprenticeship' and 'master' are used very loosely here. This development model can easily be applied to any area of expertise or study. It simply implies the influence of a teacher and a significant period of instruction. The 'teacher' can be a single individual or a group of individuals. Aspiring Adepts can train under individual masters or as members of a school, just as Students or members of reli-

Imberwyn Nobleman

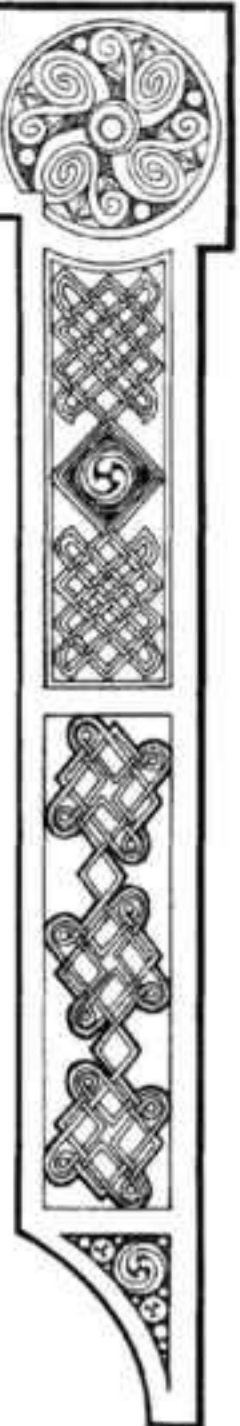
FIRIAN'S PASTIME

Having been raised upon a small manor situated among tracts of forested wilderness, Firian has enjoyed hunting since his childhood forays into the gamelands with his father. Firian begins developing his Wilderness aptitude at an early age.

During the week-long hunts which occurred every summer, the Count's henchmen would tutor Firian, teaching him which plants were edible, how to mask one's scent by traveling downwind, and what timber to choose when building impromptu fires and crude shelters. Having a great deal of leisure time (being the son of a Lord), Firian developed his Wilderness expertise over many years, attaining a Rank of 3 (maximum for the Privileged class) by the age of 14. At this stage, Firian has acquired general knowledge pertaining to Wilderness survival but has not actually specialized in any single aspect of this broad Aptitude.

Though his Background Development occurs primarily within the confines of the manor-house and ostlery, Firian continues to accompany his father during the summer hunts. Over the first 4 years of his Background Development, Firian acquires 2 more ranks in the Wilderness expertise, now specializing in hunting which he learns directly from his father. This is considered part of Firian's External Development, and is available because of the Environ Class in which the manor house is situated.

After his father died, Firian continued the yearly hunt in honor of his father's memory. Assembling his own team of bush-beaters, dog handlers, tracker's and scouts, Firian has turned the hunt into a gala event. Though he performs this ritual in celebration of the man who claimed these lands for the Mensinople family, Firian never feels more estranged than during the yearly Hunt.





gious orders could. It all depends on the nature of the environment being used. Only the Mythguide will know all of the possible developmental tracks and opportunities available in his environment.

VOCATIONAL EXPERTISES

Every Vocational Path has a specific Talent, Aptitude, or Discipline associated with it. This Vocational Expertise differs from one Vocation to another. Certain professions might have professional skills or abilities as their Vocational Expertises. For example, a Stonemason would have Artisan (stoneworking) or Artisan (masonry) as his Vocational Expertise. A Privileged persona who serves as a great lord's steward might have Administration (estate management) as his Vocational Expertise, while the lord himself may have Politics (court) as his Vocational Expertise. Finally, Marginal personas will often have Talents as their Vocational Expertises. Examples could include Improvisation (comedy) or Influence (fast talk). A persona's Vocational Expertise always comes from the list of expertises available for the persona's Vocational Cluster (see the Vocations chapter).

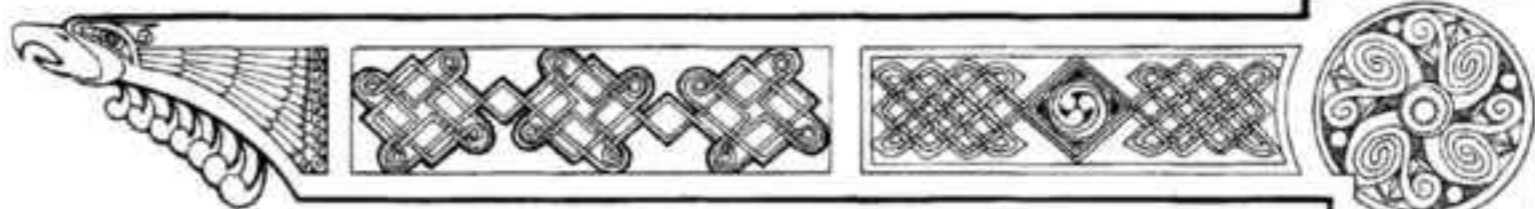
A player should be allowed to choose his persona's Vocational Expertises for each Setting through which the persona passes during Background Development. The choice does not have to be immediately apparent, but it should be supported in some fashion by the persona's Concept. For instance, a young knight would probably not have a music-oriented Aptitude as his Vocational Expertise, but anything is possible. Perhaps the young nobleman shunned his normal upbringing and the obvious Vocational Expertises that would accompany it (Riding, Administration, weapons-related skills). He trained secretly with a court minstrel or bard, or possibly received instruction from a talented musician in the nearby town. In this unusual case, a Vocational Expertise of Performance (play lute) might be appropriate. The expertise represents the persona's principal focus during his time in his initial Setting (perhaps his father's keep in the young knight's case), and illustrates a good narrative developmental track - a persona following a passion rather than a convention.

The Mythguide must also keep Specialization in mind when allowing the player to choose a persona's Vocational Expertise. Available Vocational Expertises depend on both the Specialization and Environ Class of the Creation Environment in which a Setting is found. For example, a persona will probably not be able to learn Performance (opera) anywhere other than in an Urban Environ. On the other hand, Craft (mountaineering) would be rather difficult to learn in the city. If the Mythguide feels a player is making a choice that runs contrary to the general atmosphere of the Canticle, or which would not be possible in a particular environment, he may either suggest a change or require the expenditure of a Window of Opportunity. However, if the player can explain an unusual choice in a narrative manner that supports his persona's Concept, the Mythguide should permit a few exceptions.

The development of a Vocational Expertise proceeds at a slightly faster pace than the development of other expertises during Background Development. Vocational Expertises are developed as the next lower Expertise category on the Expertise Improvement Table. For example, if a persona has the Aptitude of Artisan (stoneworking) as his Vocational Expertise, he may develop it as a Talent during Background Development. Personas with Talents as their Vocational Expertises must develop them normally.

INTERACTIVE EXPERTISES

Interactive expertises represent all of the other expertises (besides Vocational and Inherent) that a per-



Purchasing/Improving Expertises

<i>Expertise Rank</i>	<i>Talents</i>	<i>Aptitudes</i>	<i>Disciplines</i>
1	1	1	1
2	1	1	1
3	1	1	1
4	1	1	2
5	1	1	2
6	1	2	2
7	1	2	2
8	1	2	3
9	1	2	3
10	1	2	3

It costs 1 Interaction Point (IP) to open any Talent, Aptitude, or Discipline at Rank 1. Improving Expertise Ranks requires the expenditure of additional IP = the Rank being obtained. Costs accumulate as Rank increases. ex. Opening a Discipline costs 1 IP. Improving to Rank 2 costs another IP, and another IP to reach Rank 3 (3 IP subtotal). To reach ranks 4 through 7 costs 2 more IP per Rank. To reach Rank 7 costs 8 more IP (11 IP total). Ranks 8 through 10 cost 3 IP per Rank. To Reach Rank 10 in any Discipline costs 20 Interaction Points.

If Persona's are generated using Directed Development, Expertises should be purchased according to Persona Concept. A Maximum of 20 IP may be spent per year of development. If Personas are generated using Environmental Development (Vocational Settings), the purchase of Expertises should accord to the Internal and External Potentials of the Vocational Setting. For each point of Potential (Internal and External) 2 IP may be spent per year. A Persona may not improve or develop more Expertises than the Potential per year. For example, if Internal Potential = 4, a Persona may spend 8 points per year (on Vocational Expertises), but may divide those points among no more than 4 Expertises per year. This represents the idea that improvement results from focused learning rather than expansive dabbling. External Potential follows the same logic. See the Vocations chapter for further details regarding Environmental Development.

Note: If Windows of Opportunity are being used in the Persona Creation Process, one Vocational Window may be used to purchase any Internal (vocation - related) Expertise at any Rank. A Developmental Window may be used to purchase any External (non-vocational) Expertise at any Rank. Narrative Persona Creation does not require the expenditure of Interaction Points or Windows of Opportunity. Expertise Ranks are simply assigned.

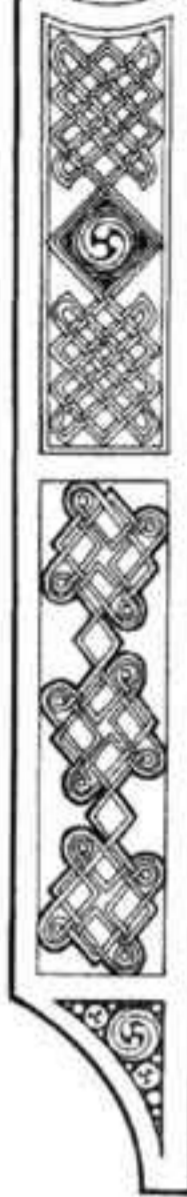
sona acquires during either Background Development or narrative play. They include all of the optional development opportunities within a Setting, and their availability depends on a Setting's Potential.

A Vocational Setting's Potential, both Internal and External, determines the Interactive Expertises available to the persona. The expertises available as a result of a Setting's Internal Potential depend on the Vocational Cluster of the persona's vocation. Refer to the Vocational Expertise Development table in the Vocations chapter for a complete list. Expertises available as a result of External Potential include Universal Expertises and those made available by a Setting's Environ Class, the persona's Status Archetype, or an Itinerant or Official Vocational Path. Specialization determines the maximum allowable Ranks for certain expertises. Refer to the Additional Expertise Development

table and the Effects of Specialization table in the Vocations chapter for possibilities and limits.

A persona can develop a number of Internal expertises each year equal to the Internal Potential of the Vocational Setting, and may spend twice that amount in Interaction Points on Internal Development. The same logic holds true for External Development (one to five expertises developed and two to ten points spent). Expertise Ranks are purchased according to the point costs on the Expertise Improvement table.

Certain questions can help the Mythguide determine expertise availability: What is the Specialization Level of the Creation Environment? What is the Prominence of the individual Vocational Setting? Is the Setting Official? Is it Itinerant? Are there any unique cultural considerations? How does the Setting interact with society at large? Are there certain societal



modifiers which might apply? For example, an Absolute society with a large military structure causes weapons and martial skills to be more accessible. A society with extremely high Scholastic Values has more comprehensive and diverse educational opportunities, while a society with a high level of interaction with surrounding societies may have a broader general expertise base. If the Mythguide already has a coherent world setting for his Canticle, the answers to such questions should be readily apparent. If a detailed environment is not being used, the Mythguide and players should use common sense.

Using Expertises

While the previous section focuses on the initial acquisition of a persona's expertises, this section defines their use and continued development. Expertises define the parameters of a persona's abilities and knowledges. Most important physical actions and maneuvers, as well as many actions requiring knowledge or communication, depend on specific expertises.

An action's success or failure is often determined by an Expertise Trial, which is made according to the standard Trial Resolution guidelines presented in the Prelude. The sum of an expertise's Base and Rank is modified by the Difficulty of the action being attempted. If a roll against this Adjusted Trial Chance is successful, the expertise is employed successfully.

Expertise Trials are necessary during tense or stressful moments, or in any action-oriented situation. They are also necessary when a persona is attempting to access specific knowledge or practice certain social skills. Mundane activities, or simple actions that further the narrative, do not usually require Expertise Trials and may be considered Automatic. Simple actions that do not fall under a particular expertise can be handled by using Attribute Trials. The rule for determining the type of Trial (either Attribute or Expertise) necessary is simple: *If an action is governed by an Expertise, an Expertise Trial should always be used to resolve the action.*

Expertise Base and Rank

Different personas can use the same expertise in different ways. To reflect this, the Attributes which constitute an individual expertise's Base are variable. Each expertise Base consists of three Attributes - a Primary Element and two Facets. The Primary Element

must always be used as one of the three parts of the Base, but a player is normally allowed to choose two Facets from among four possibilities.

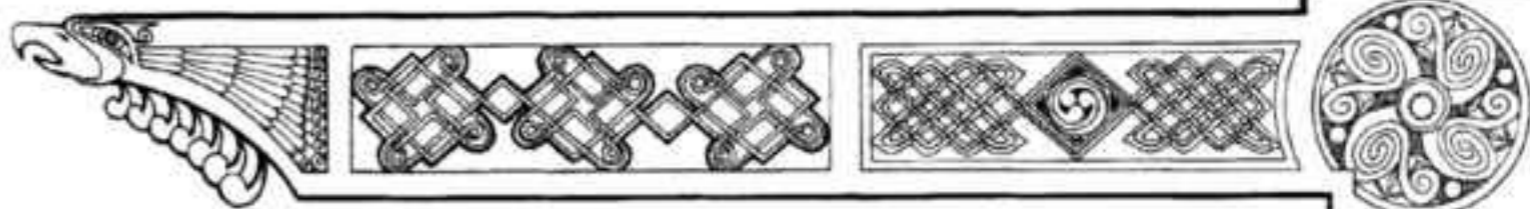
For example, the Awareness Talent uses Intuition as its Primary Element. Its possible Facets are Perception, Empathy, Wisdom, and Intelligence. When calculating the Base, the player chooses to use Intuition, Perception, and Wisdom as its components. Intuition (the Primary Element) is required; the others are chosen because the persona has higher values in those Attributes. The idea behind choosing Facets is that each persona approaches a particular expertise differently and uses his own abilities (the Attributes) to their best natural advantage. To calculate the expertise Base, average the three components of the Base and divide the result by six (round up). The expertise Base for a normal human ranges from one to five.

Expertise Rank measures the overall degree of proficiency reached in a particular expertise. Rank is defined by a number from one to ten, with ten representing the highest level of accomplishment. As a persona improves an expertise during the course of narrative play, he increases his expertise Rank in the ability. When new Ranks are purchased initially, they cost a predetermined number of Interaction Points depending on the type of expertise. Refer to the Improvement Table for exact costs.

Assigning Difficulty

Difficulty is assigned to Expertise Trials according to the circumstances surrounding a particular situation. The Mythguide should take any unusual considerations into account and assign a Difficulty that he deems fair. It is often helpful to base Difficulty on the Standard Difficulty. The Mythguide determines what a similar attempt would represent at Difficulty 2 (Standard), and applies modifiers from there.

For example, a persona with the Transport (canoeing) Aptitude wants to maneuver a laden canoe down a nasty stretch of whitewater. The Mythguide first asks himself what a similar action with a Standard Difficulty (value of two) would represent. He decides that in this case (remembering the fully laden canoe) a Standard Difficulty represents the flow of a swift river. Since the area of whitewater is moving several times faster than that, the Mythguide gives the Trial a base Difficulty of five. However, taking the roughness of the water into account as well (there are numerous haystacks, whirlpools, rocks, etc.), he adds another three levels. The final Difficulty of the Exper-



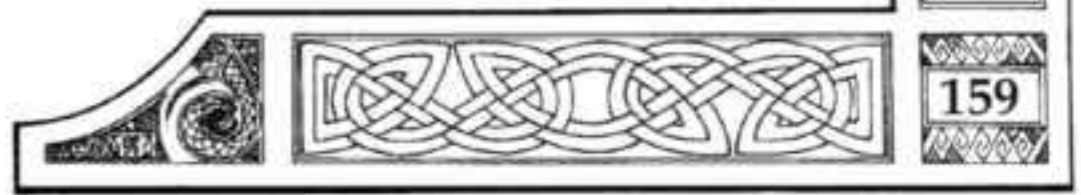
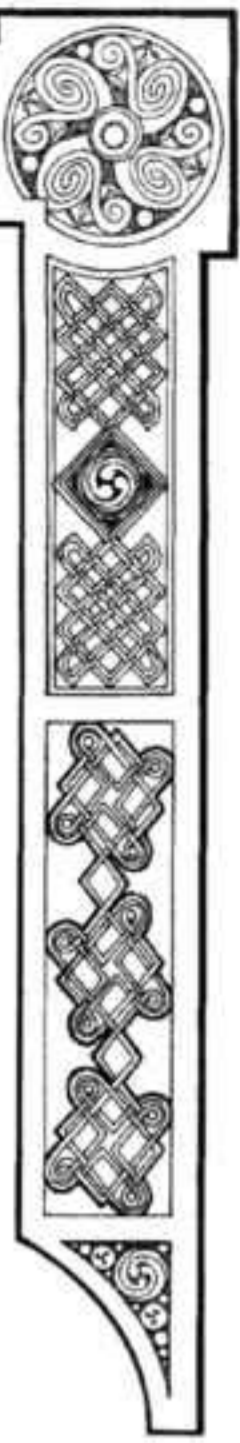
Difficulty Categories (Sample Modifiers)

<i>Modifier Range (to Base Difficulty)</i>	<i>Modifier Category</i>	<i>Example Application</i>
-6 or greater	Significant Benefit (SB)	Social Modifier A Nobleman attempts to Influence a peasant in the presence of onlookers
-4 or -5	Considerable Benefit (CB)	Conditional Modifier A Persona uses alcohol to Bribe a city official with a Compulsion for drink
-2 or -3	Benefit (B)	Environmental Modifier A Persona attempts to Track a trail left in light Snow
-1	Minor Benefit (MB)	Psychological Modifier A Persona uses Elocution discussing a topic for which he has a Passion
+1	Minor Hindrance (MH)	Situational Modifier While Performing on stage, a Persona is distracted by a heckler in the audience
+2 or +3	Hindrance (H)	Environmental Modifier A Persona attempts to climb a wall that is slick from rain
+4 or +5	Considerable Hindrance (CH)	Philosophical Modifier A Persona attempts to Seduce a judge's wife who is renowned for her Chastity
+6 or greater	Severe Hindrance (SH)	Conditional (Physical Penalty) Suffering from a Mortal Wound , a Persona attempts to vault onto his horse

All Difficulty Modifiers fall into one of the following classes:

- Environmental Modifiers - environmental weather, temperature, obstacles, terrain, lighting, noise, etc.
- Situational Modifiers - crowds, observers, strange magical or spiritual effects, random events
- Conditional Modifiers - physical, mental, or spiritual condition of Persona, including injury, fatigue, loss of faith, and relevant Background Aspects
- Psychological Modifiers - Psychological state of one or more of Trials participants, Personality Traits, and Psychological Aspects are common modifiers
- Social Modifiers - social considerations such as Heritage, Status, Renown, Official vocation, Influence, Leverage, and Social Background Aspects
- Philosophical Modifiers - ideals, values, and morals of Trials participants including Heritage Orientation, Family Orientation, Faith, Insight, Personality Traits (related to ideology), and relevant Background Aspects

When assessing the Difficulty of a particular Trial, the Mythguide should consider and assign all relevant Difficulty Modifiers and add them together to determine the Total Difficulty Modifier. This Modifier is applied to the Base Difficulty assigned to a given Trial.





tise Trial is eight. Some Mythguides may find such incremental Difficulty assignments easier to handle.

When conceptualizing Difficulty Modifiers it is useful to think in terms of Benefit or Hindrance. The Difficulty Modifier Categories table lists categories of numerical modifiers determined on the basis of how much a single condition or situation Benefits or Hinders a Persona's ability to execute a particular Talent, Aptitude, or Expertise. Sample applications of Difficulty Categories are provided.

Difficulty modifiers can be divided into five primary areas. The purpose of these considerations is to mirror the true nature of action and stress - no two situations are exactly alike. Each has its own oddities and idiosyncrasies, creating the illusion of vastly different experiences even if most of the surface elements are the same.

Environmental Modifiers: The environment in which a Trial is occurring can affect the Difficulty of the Trial. Environmental Modifiers include distracting or hindering weather, natural hazards and obstacles, and random natural distractions (like thunder or lightning). Terrain also serves as modifier; for ex-

ample, it is easier to hide in a tropical rainforest than on an open beach.

Situational Modifiers: Every situation or encounter has its own unusual elements. These include noises and obstacles generated by the participants, strange actions and reactions of the participants, unusual distractions, and unexpected magical or spiritual effects.

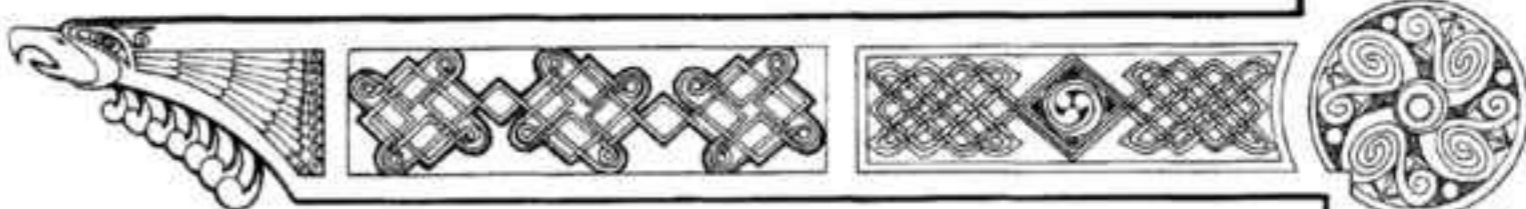
Conditional Modifiers: The physical, mental, or even spiritual condition of the persona attempting a Trial can affect the Difficulty of the Trial. For example, a wounded persona will have a much harder time navigating the laden canoe in the previous example than a healthy persona would. The physical element of this modifier is called the Physical Penalty, and can be found by referring to the accompanying table. The expertise descriptions indicate whether a particular expertise is affected by this Penalty, although the Mythguide should also exercise his own good judgment.

Psychological Modifiers: The psychological condition or motivations of one or more of the parties involved in a Trial can affect its Difficulty. Certain Motivations, Passions, Obsessions, or Personality Traits can allow a persona to perform specific actions either more or less effectively. The mood of a persona or of an entire situation can also affect a Trial's Difficulty.

Social Modifiers: Difficulty can be modified by Social considerations as well. These include both Reputation and Status Level, as well as an individual's position in society. If someone holds an Official position, this position may also modify Difficulty in certain social or influence-based Trials.

Philosophical Modifiers: The philosophical outlooks of a Trial's participants can also affect Difficulty in certain situations. For example, it will be very difficult to Bribe a priest of a sect dedicated to honor. The philosophical nature of the attempt runs contrary to the fundamental nature of the priest. The results of such conflict should be applied as modifiers when appropriate.

The assignment of Difficulty during play is an abstract and fluid process. The Mythguide should not delay action while trying to precisely calculate an action's Difficulty. Sometimes it is better to simply wing it. Two guiding factors are worth remembering at all times when assigning Difficulty - consistency and common sense.



Degree of Success/Failure

To determine the Degree of Success or Failure of a particular Trial, roll 1d10 and consult chart below.

If die result \leq Adjusted Trial Chance, then the trial succeeds to some degree.

If die result $>$ Adjusted Trial Chance, then the trial fails to some degree.

* Note that the 'Rule of One and Ten' may alter the initial die result. See text for further detail.

<i>Result (Die Roll above or below Adjusted Trial Chance)</i>	<i>Degree of Success/Failure</i>
15+ below	Mythic Success
10 - 14 below	Extraordinary Success
5 - 9 below	Superior Success
1 - 4 below	Complete Success
0 below	Marginal Success
1 above	Marginal Failure
2 - 4 above	Complete Failure
5 - 9 above	Serious Failure
10 - 14 above	Miserable Failure
15+ above	Catastrophic Failure

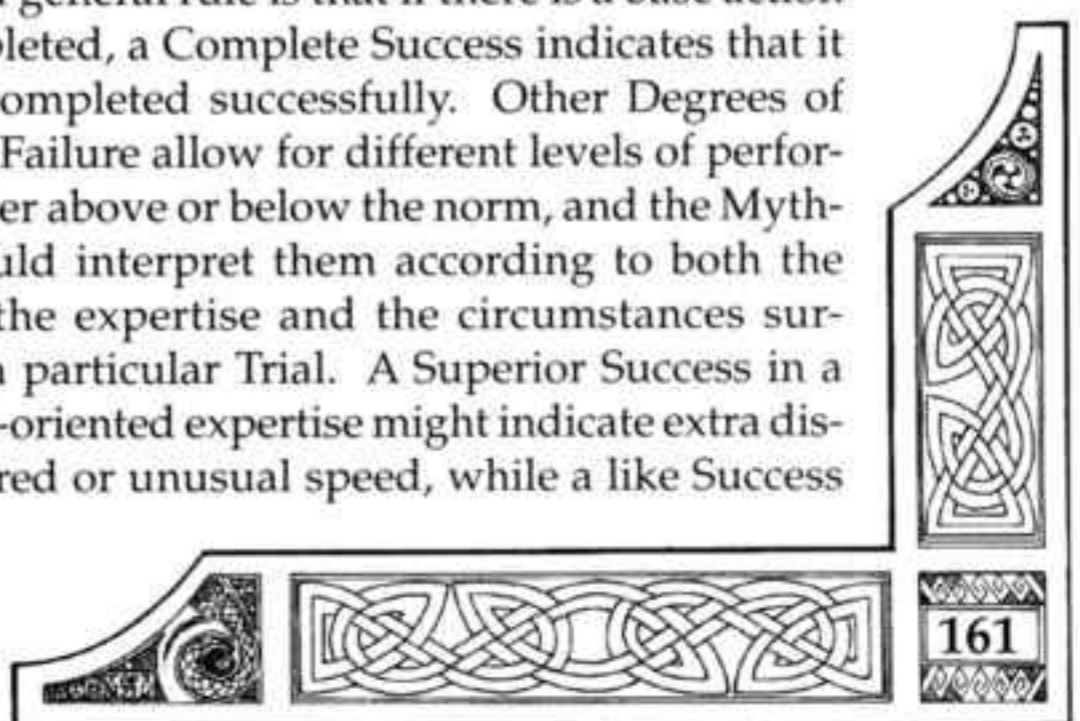
During Challenged Trials, each participant rolls against his own Adjusted Trial Chance. Whichever participant rolls the greatest degree of Success is declared the winner. In the event of a tie (i.e. Complete Success vs. Complete Success), a winner may be chosen according to the actual numerical difference (instead of categorical success) or the Trial may be declared a draw. See text for more details concerning Challenged Trials and Margins of Victory.

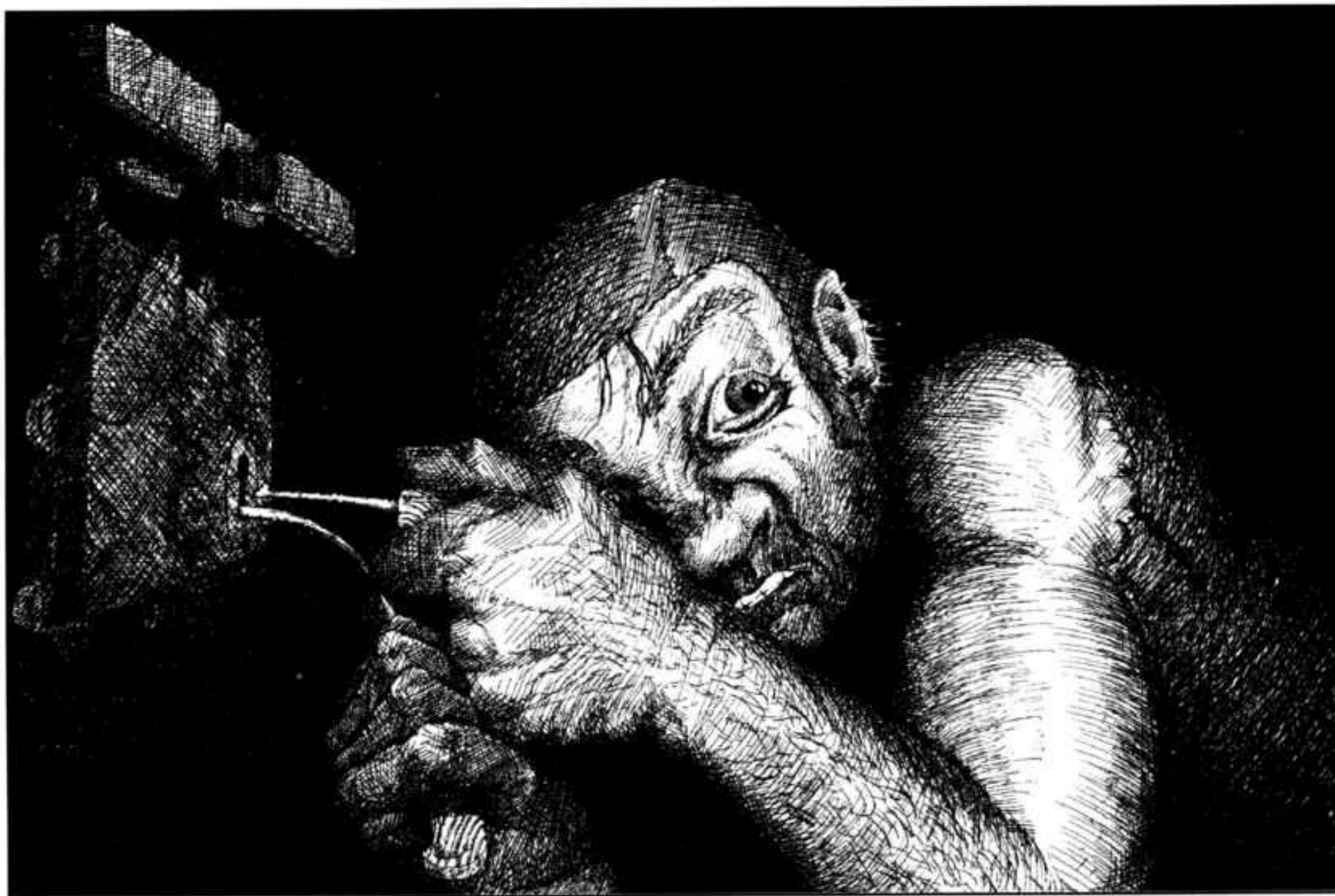
Degrees of Success and Failure

The importance of an Expertise Trial's Degree of Success or Failure varies according to the expertise being used. Even apparently all-or-nothing Trials are affected by the Degree of Success. For example, a persona using the Acrobatics Aptitude to somersault over a stone wall needs a Complete Success to effectively make the leap. A Marginal Success indicates a slight mistake - maybe the persona caught his foot on the way over - that might affect the landing on the other side. A Superior or Extraordinary Success might indicate either a leap of great finesse or a perfect landing (allowing the persona to be immediately up and run-

ning). On the other hand, Degrees of Failure could indicate anything from a poor takeoff to a broken neck (after the persona struck the wall with his head). Obviously, Degrees of Success and Failure become much more subtle when resolving certain Trials (such as the Intrigue and Diplomacy Trials, for instance).

A good general rule is that if there is a base action to be completed, a Complete Success indicates that it has been completed successfully. Other Degrees of Success or Failure allow for different levels of performance either above or below the norm, and the Mythguide should interpret them according to both the nature of the expertise and the circumstances surrounding a particular Trial. A Superior Success in a movement-oriented expertise might indicate extra distance covered or unusual speed, while a like Success





FIRNOST SEER OF FLATLAKE

ENOMI'S OBSERVATIONAL ABILITY

As seer, Enomi enhances her ability to judge the subconscious fears and motives of her patrons. Occasionally, she is called upon by the Shaman of the Flatlake tribe to perform her 'truthsense' to assist the dispensation of justice. Since Enomi has the Aptitude Savvy (rank 5, Base 4) with the expertise aspect 'Body language', she can sense when someone is lying with an Adjusted Trial Chance of 7 (9 - Avg. Diff. 2).

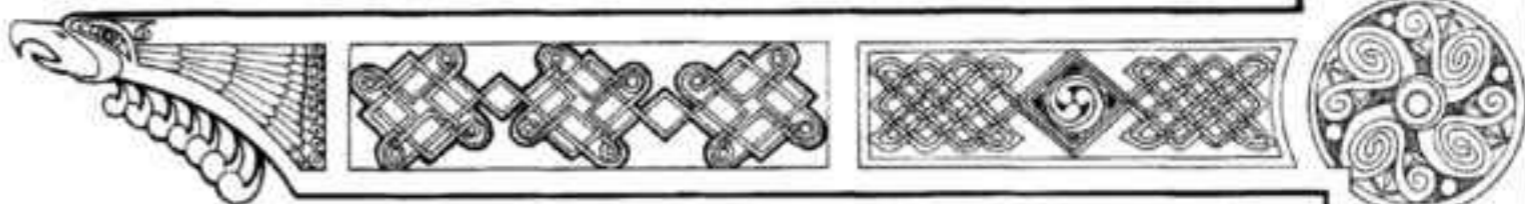
If someone uses Guile attempting to deceive Enomi, a Challenged Trial must be made to determine the success of the attempt. Enomi's Stance (friendly, hostile, suspicious, etc.) modifies the Difficulty of the Guile trial, while the Observational Modifiers (see Observation) modify the difficulty of Enomi's truthsense attempt. After both parties have rolled the dice, the results are compared. Whoever possesses the highest degree of Success is declared the victor, although a tie might indicate that some of the lie was detected while parts of it were taken for truth.

in a Knowledge might indicate the remembrance of a piece of obscure or critically important information.

The Mythguide should carefully consider what a particular Degree of Success or Failure means for a specific expertise. Some expertises have suggested results for different Success and Failure Grades incorporated into their descriptions. Degrees of Success and Failure that are higher or lower than average should be exploited by the Mythguide to add atmosphere to an encounter. A Superior Failure often gives a situation an air of tension while an Extraordinary Success provides a player with a feeling of great accomplishment. Such outcomes (both good and bad) are the stuff of legend, and the Mythguide should stress the larger-than-life quality of such actions through roleplaying.

Challenged Expertise Trials

Challenged Expertise Trials are handled in the normal fashion when each participant in a Trial has the appropriate expertises. Each party of a Contest Trial uses the same expertise, while each party of an Opposed Trial uses a contrary expertise. For example,



Savvy can be used to resist Guile and Stealth can be used to resist Observation. The greater Degree of Success wins both an Opposed Trial and a Contest Trial, and the difference between each party's Success Grade determines the victor's final Success Grade. The Mythguide should decide which expertises can be used to Oppose other expertises.

However, if one party does not possess an appropriate opposing expertise, a Trial can be made at Rank zero. This is the preferred method of handling direct opposition since it reflects the base abilities of each persona involved. The Difficulty of such Trials can be modified by any of the considerations listed in the Difficulty section. For example, a persona with the Honorable Motivation tries to resist a Bribery attempt. Although the persona has to resist the attempt as if he has a Rank zero Bribery Aptitude, the Honorable Motivation will allow a Psychological Difficulty modifier. The Mythguide determines that the modifier is equal to the level of the Motivation, so the persona is able to subtract that number from the Trial's Difficulty (remember that Difficulty is open-ended, and that it may fall below zero in some cases - thereby adding to the overall Trial Chance).

In certain situations - especially social encounters - the Mythguide may allow a persona to use an Attribute, a combination of Attributes, or a Personality Trait (including Motivations, Passions, and Obsessions) to directly Oppose an expertise. For instance, a persona may be able to use Willpower to resist a Guile attempt. Such opportunities depend on the individual situation, and the Mythguide should decide whether non-expertise opposition is appropriate.

If the Mythguide considers expertises to be extremely powerful or effective in his Canticle, an alternative to the previous opposition method allows Rank to modify Difficulty directly. This only applies when an Attribute or Personality Trait is used to resist an expertise. The Rank of the expertise is added to the Difficulty of the non-expertise side of a Challenged Trial. This option makes expertises very powerful in relation to Attributes and Personality Traits, so the Mythguide must be sure that such a relationship is appropriate in his Canticle.

Prospective Mythguides should not feel bewildered by these guidelines. In many cases, situations that might require Challenged Trials are handled through roleplaying. The Mythguide should employ whatever methods and Difficulty modifiers he deems appropriate to further the overall tenor of his Canticle.

Expertise Aspects

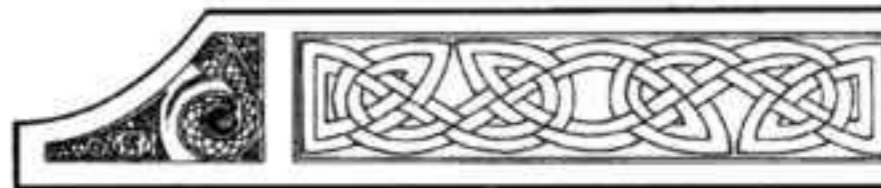
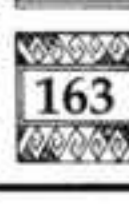
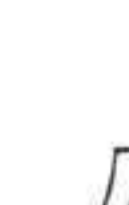
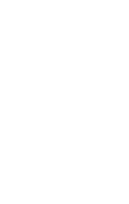
Expertises are further divided into specific proficiencies or specialties. For example, a persona will not have a simple Elocution Aptitude. Instead he has Elocution with an Expertise Aspect of rhetoric (philosophy), indicating that he is particularly adept at philosophical rhetoric and discussion. Expertise Aspects illustrate areas of knowledge or ability within a more general expertise, and the degree of concentration required varies. For example, swimming is a perfectly acceptable Aspect of the Physical Talent, while science would probably be considered too general a division of the Knowledge Discipline. A more appropriate Aspect might be science (botany of the western forests). The Mythguide should determine both the necessary detail and the possible uses of Expertise Aspects in his Canticle.

They can be ignored entirely, with the expertises used by themselves as general abilities and knowledges, or they may form important elements of the more general expertises, acting as 'skills' in themselves. This is the recommended method, since Aspects can be tailored to specific environments or worlds. If Expertise Aspects are being employed in this latter capacity, they will affect the Rank of the governing expertise.

If the Ensemble is allowing Expertise Aspects to affect expertise Ranks, the following guidelines are suggested. If an Expertise Trial within the domain of an Expertise Aspect is called for, the expertise's full Rank is used when determining the expertise's Trial Chance. If the action or attempt lies within the realm of an expertise, but outside the Expertise Aspect possessed by a persona, the Trial Chance is found by treating the expertise's Rank as if it were one or more Ranks lower than it actually is. The Mythguide should decide on an appropriate penalty based on both the expertise and the action in question.

For example, a persona has the Tracking Aptitude at Rank six with an Expertise Aspect of Desert/Wasteland. He is required to Track in a forest, so his effective Rank for the Expertise Trial is modified. The Mythguide reduces the expertise's Rank by one, considering that the unfamiliar terrain will hamper the persona's efforts but that his basic Tracking abilities won't really be affected. The persona is still able to Track; he was simply trained to Track in a different physical environment. The effective Rank for the Trial would be five (instead of six).

Remember that these modifiers have nothing to do with the fundamental Difficulty of a Trial (which is



considered to be static for these purposes). In the previous example, it is more difficult for the persona to Track effectively because of training and experience considerations, not because the Trial itself is more Difficult. The Difficulty of the Trial is Standard whether or not the persona has the appropriate Aspect. Difficulty measures the static challenge of a particular *action*, while Rank represents a persona's effective *ability*. A persona's capability suffers when it is tested under unfamiliar circumstances.

The Mythguide should use his own judgment when assigning Aspect-based penalties. They may not always apply, but occasionally they may be more stringent than a single Rank. The expertises in Aria were intentionally written as general categories, leaving further elaboration to the Aspects. Expertise Aspects illustrate specific types and concentrations of training, and are intended to specifically complement both a persona's background and the environment in which development occurs. Players should keep this in mind and use common sense when designing their personas and assigning their Aspects.

CHOOSING EXPERTISE ASPECTS

The development of specific Aspects depends on the nature of both the Aspect and the environment in which an expertise is being used. All Aspects are classified either as related Aspects or unrelated Aspects; related Aspects are easier to develop than unrelated Aspects. For example, the swimming and climbing Aspects of the Physical Talent are unrelated, as are the writing and artwork Aspects of Forgery. Unrelated Aspects are purchased and developed as entirely separate expertises. A persona is considered to have no expertise in an unrelated Aspect, and therefore must make a Trial dealing with the Aspect at Rank zero (instead of at a one or two Rank penalty). For example, a persona with the Forgery (writing) Aptitude at Rank eight attempts to copy a work of art. Since Forgery (writing) and Forgery (artwork) are unrelated, the persona makes the Trial at Rank zero. He has no effective ability in the Aspect.

Related Aspects include areas where some amount of overlap occurs. The Tracking example given in the previous section illustrates this. The tumbling and balance Aspects of the Acrobatics Aptitude are related, as are the negotiation and bargaining Aspects of Diplomacy. Related aspects allow personas to attempt Trials for Aspects in which they are not directly skilled. A persona with Diplomacy (negotiation) could attempt Diplomacy (bargaining) at a slight disadvantage (probably just a single Rank). The Mythguide should ap-

ply modifiers based on the relationship between the two related Aspects being used. Disciplines will rarely be related since they represent specific knowledge areas.

The Mythguide may wish to make it easier for personas to develop or purchase related Aspects during play. Practical experience also plays a role when attempting to learn a second or third Aspect of the same expertise. *The Mythguide should simply decide how such development and training is handled in the Narrative Environment* (maybe related Aspects are opened at half the existing Aspect's Rank, etc.).

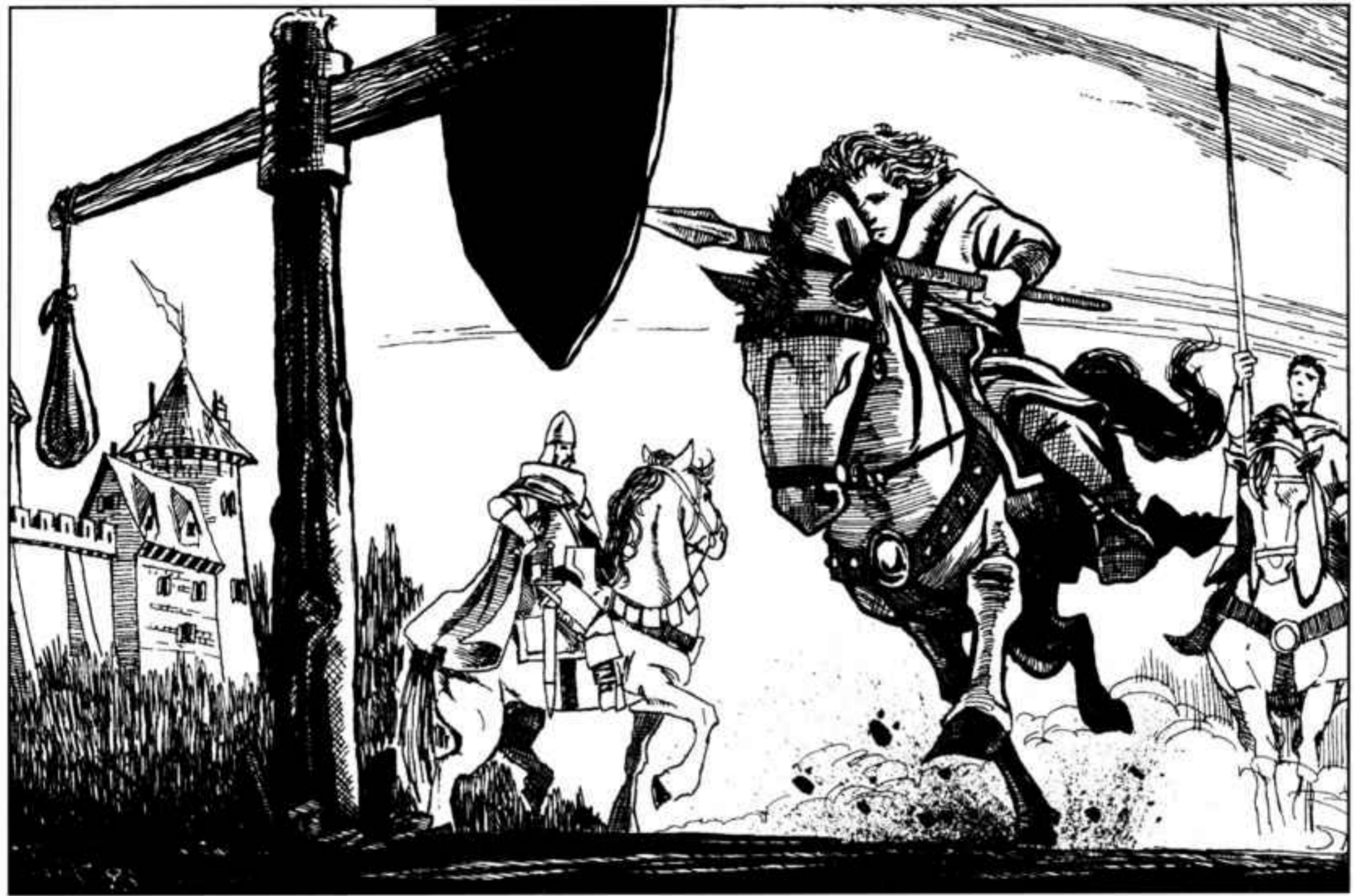
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERTISES

Expertise Aspects are often used to tailor certain expertises to specific environments. Although this is especially effective for Disciplines, original Aspects can be used to describe any expertise in a particular cultural or social context. For example, a persona might have Elocution (Daveren Formal Debate) or Performance (Stringed Zhenth). By employing original and descriptive Aspects that uniquely relate to specific environments or Heritage groups, personas become more closely associated with their environments and develop richer backgrounds and histories.

EVALUATION BASED ON EXPERTISE

Most Aptitudes and Disciplines (especially Knowledges) also impart practical appraisal abilities. Personas are able to evaluate specific items or situations that relate to expertises that they possess. For example, a persona with Lore (mineral) would be able to tell the value of certain metals while a persona with Artisan (armorcraft) would be able to appraise the value of different samples and types of armor.

This ability also extends to physical expertises. A persona with the Physical (swimming) Aptitude will be able to gauge the relative difficulty of an action involving swimming. The player can make a normal Physical Trial to evaluate the difficulty of the proposed swim. The success of such evaluation attempts depends on their Degree of Success. A Complete Success normally represents a fairly accurate guess, while an Extraordinary Success will be right on target.



Improving Expertises

Expertises can be improved during play in several ways. Personas benefit from practical experience (both good and bad), and can develop Talents and Aptitudes by using them successfully. Aptitudes and Disciplines can also be developed through training, practice, study, and instruction. Each of these development methods is discussed in the following sections.

Practical Experience

Both Talents and Aptitudes may be developed through Practical Experience. If a persona has received either a Superior Success (or higher) or a Superior Failure (or lower) with an expertise during the course of a narrative, the persona may be entitled to make a Learning Trial. Learning Trials are usually granted by the Mythguide only if a persona uses an expertise effectively in a stressful, dangerous, or Difficult situation. A persona that scores a Superior Success while using Elocution (oratory) on his own followers does not merit

a Learning Trial. However, if the same persona receives a Superior Success while attempting to calm a hostile and angry crowd, a Learning Trial would be appropriate. Learning Trials based on Failure indicate that a persona has learned from severe mistakes. Several Learning Trials may be granted during the course of a narrative, but a single expertise may only be increased once. Personas acting in Aria Time (such as during an Interactive History) are allowed to make one Learning Trial per year, whether or not they have directly used a particular expertise.

Learning Trials are Attribute Trials made against an appropriate Learning Attribute or Attributes. For Talents, the Learning Attribute is Wisdom. For Aptitudes, the Learning Attributes are Wisdom and Intelligence. Disciplines use Intelligence as their Learning Attribute. The Difficulty of a Learning Trial is equal to half an expertise's current Rank (rounded up) plus the cost of the next Rank on the Improvement Table. A Complete Success indicates an increase of one Rank in the expertise. Talents can be increased all the way to Rank ten through practical experience. Aptitudes, on the other hand, require intermittent training. For every two Ranks advanced through practical experience, one Rank must

be gained through training and instruction. Disciplines cannot be raised through practical experience.

For example, a persona opens the Wilderness Aptitude at Rank one during Background Development and increases it to Rank two through practical experience during his first narrative. He uses the expertise successfully during his second narrative and is allowed to make a Learning Trial. Since his current Rank is two and it would only cost one IP to raise the Aptitude to Rank three according to the Improvement Table, the Difficulty of the Learning Trial is two (half the Rank plus the cost of one). The persona's Wisdom and Intelligence are both five, so the Adjusted Trial Chance becomes six (Base three plus Adjusted Rank five minus Difficulty two). The player rolls a two and scores a Complete Success, increasing his Rank in Wilderness to three. Since his last two increases in the Aptitude were the results of practical experience, his next increase must be based on training, practice, or instruction. Remember that an expertise can be raised through practical experience only once per narrative.

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

Personas can increase both Aptitudes and Disciplines through Training and Instruction. A persona must first find a competent teacher who is willing to instruct the persona. A qualified teacher must have a Rank at least as high as the Rank being taught. For example, the persona in the previous example wishes to train in the Wilderness Aptitude, increasing his Rank from three to four. He must find a teacher with Wilderness of at least Rank four.

Most teachers require some form of payment, although prices differ from one environment to another. For example, silver coins might be an acceptable payment form in one society, while in another they are essentially worthless. Certain environments may exact even higher prices than simple currency (adepts in a magic-rich world could demand a portion of the persona's life force, for example). The Mythguide should allow the persona to work out an appropriate price with the teacher. The final price will depend on a particular environment's conceptions of value and worth. If further guidelines on relative pricing are needed, consult the Appendix of the *Aria Worlds* book.

The actual training and instruction process is handled in a very straightforward manner. A persona must train for a number of weeks equal to the Rank he is trying to attain. At the conclusion of this training and instruction period, he is entitled to make a Learning Trial. Learning Trials based on training and in-

struction also use Willpower as a Learning Attribute. If an Aptitude is being trained, the Adjusted Rank of the Learning Trial is based on Wisdom, Intelligence, and Willpower. If a Discipline is being trained, Willpower and Intelligence are used.

If the persona wishes to ensure greater success with the Learning Trial, he may Train for additional weeks to reduce the Trial's Difficulty. For Aptitudes, each additional two weeks of training reduces the Difficulty of the Learning Trial by one. For Disciplines, each additional month of training reduces the Difficulty of the Learning Trial by one.

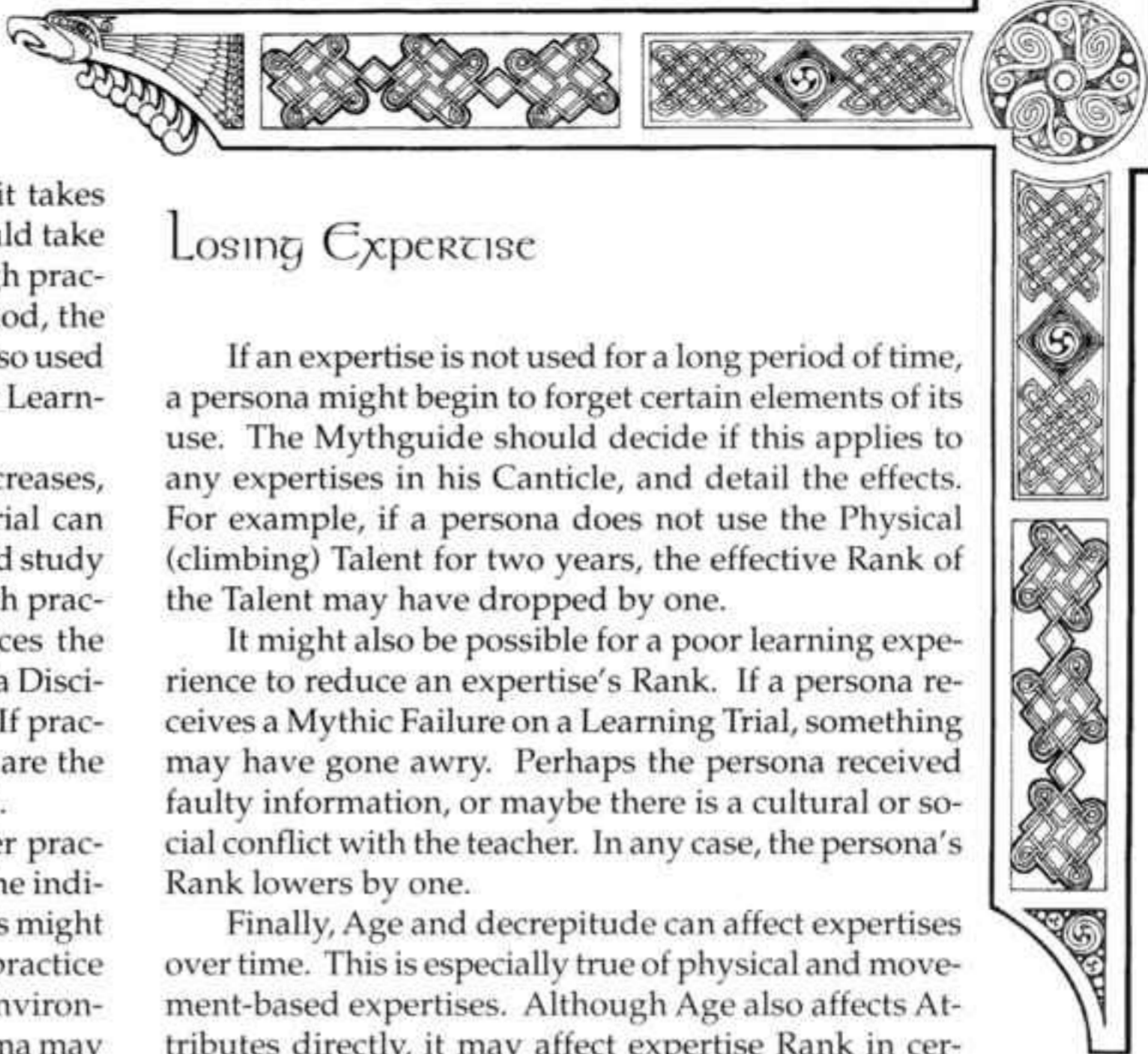
Aptitude training increases must be interspersed with practical experience. A persona can increase an Aptitude two Ranks at a time through training and instruction. After a two Rank increase, the persona must use practical experience (or practice and study, which also qualifies as practical experience) for the next increase in Rank. Disciplines can be increased indefinitely through training and instruction.

The previous numbers assume eight hours of training or instruction per day. This cannot be extended, since personas are already assumed to spend free time either studying or practicing. However, it is possible to interrupt training. For example, a persona might be able to participate in a sedentary narrative (within the walls of a castle, for instance) while he is training. If a persona chooses to interrupt training, each day lost (i.e. on which no training occurs) requires two days to reclaim. For example, if a persona misses an entire week of training, it will cost the persona two weeks of training to make up the loss. If the persona misses more than half of an entire training period at once, he must begin the entire process again. For example, a persona who requires five weeks of training trains for two weeks and then misses three weeks (more than half of the total time required). If the persona wants to resume training, he will have to start over again.

PRACTICE AND STUDY

Aptitudes and Disciplines can also be raised by intensive Practice and Study. Personas who are not able to locate teachers (for any reason - area, financial, etc.) can increase an expertise themselves through a rigorous process of self-tutoring. Practice and Study basically imitate real experience in a controlled setting. Practice and study for Disciplines represents a continued application of the Discipline to gain further knowledge.

Expertise improvement based on practice and study takes three times as long as improvement based



on training and instruction. For example, if it takes three weeks to train for a Rank increase, it would take nine weeks to receive the same increase through practice and study. At the end of this practice period, the persona makes a Learning Trial. Willpower is also used as part of the Adjusted Rank of practice-based Learning Trials.

In a manner similar to training-based increases, the Difficulty of a practice-based Learning Trial can also be reduced by taking additional practice and study time. If an Aptitude is being improved through practice, each additional month of practice reduces the Difficulty of the Learning Trial by one level. If a Discipline, an additional two months are required. If practice and study time is interrupted, the results are the same as training and instruction interruptions.

The Mythguide should determine whether practice and study are appropriate depending on the individual situation. For example, certain expertises might require tools or workshop space for effective practice and study. If the appropriate materials or environmental considerations are not available, a persona may not be able to improve the expertise through practice and study.

Gaining New Expertise

Whenever a persona achieves a Complete Success with an Expertise at Rank zero (one that he does not possess), he can spend a Myth Point to open the expertise at Rank one. The Myth Point must be spent at the conclusion of the narrative during which the expertise was used. After opening the expertise, it may be developed normally.

Alternately, a persona can open a new expertise through normal channels (Training, Study, etc.). The player may be required to make a Trial in order to find an appropriate teacher in a certain area (modified by Specialization, Environ Class, etc.). A player also has the option of using a Myth Point to automatically find an appropriate instructor. A persona trying to learn something on his own might also require appropriate materials. If a persona is opening a new expertise through normal means, it will take the persona three times the normal length of time to develop an expertise to Rank one.



Losing Expertise

If an expertise is not used for a long period of time, a persona might begin to forget certain elements of its use. The Mythguide should decide if this applies to any expertises in his Canticle, and detail the effects. For example, if a persona does not use the Physical (climbing) Talent for two years, the effective Rank of the Talent may have dropped by one.

It might also be possible for a poor learning experience to reduce an expertise's Rank. If a persona receives a Mythic Failure on a Learning Trial, something may have gone awry. Perhaps the persona received faulty information, or maybe there is a cultural or social conflict with the teacher. In any case, the persona's Rank lowers by one.

Finally, Age and decrepitude can affect expertises over time. This is especially true of physical and movement-based expertises. Although Age also affects Attributes directly, it may affect expertise Rank in certain instances. The Mythguide should decide when such modifiers are appropriate.

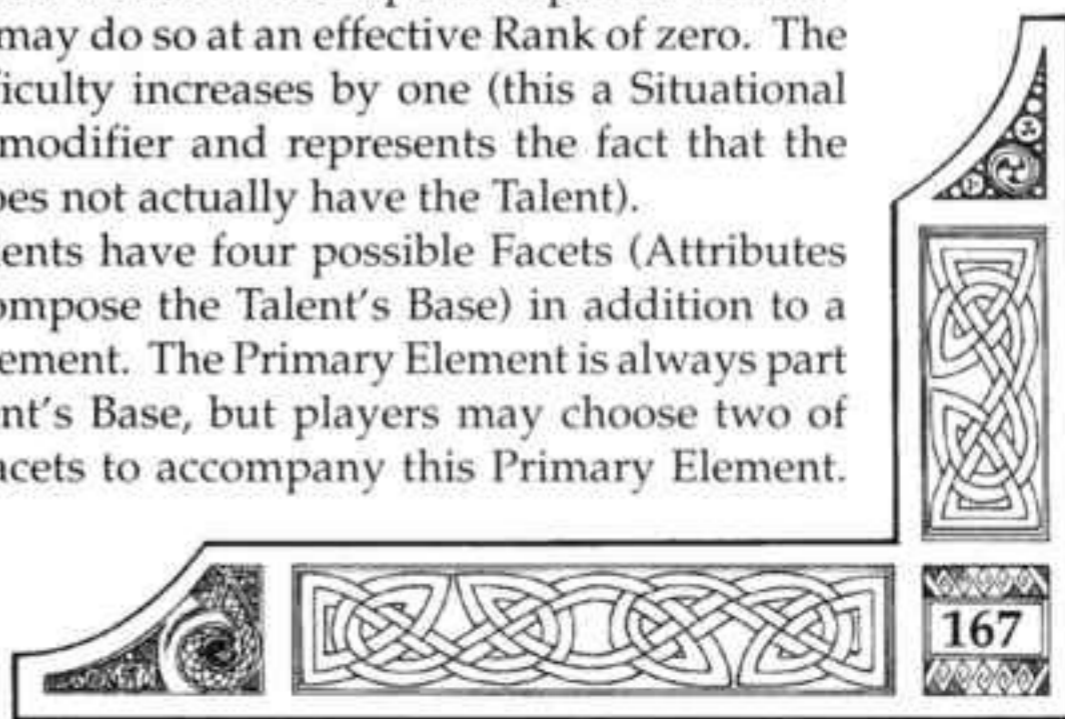
Expertise Descriptions

The following sections define each expertise and its possible Aspects. Talents are detailed first, followed by Aptitudes and Disciplines.

Talents

Talents represent natural, unschooled abilities that are developed almost entirely through practical experience. Most personas will have several Inherent Talents, as well as a few acquired during Background Development. The nature of Talents allows most personas to attempt them, since they represent general capabilities. A persona who does not possess a particular Talent, but wishes to attempt an Expertise Trial related to it, may do so at an effective Rank of zero. The Trial's Difficulty increases by one (this a Situational Difficulty modifier and represents the fact that the persona does not actually have the Talent).

All Talents have four possible Facets (Attributes that can compose the Talent's Base) in addition to a Primary Element. The Primary Element is always part of the Talent's Base, but players may choose two of the four Facets to accompany this Primary Element.



Expertise Catalog (by Category)

Talents

Awareness
 Brawl
 Dodge
 Guile
 Improvisation
 Influence
 Physical
 Physical Adaption
 Savvy
 Social Adaption

Aptitudes

Acrobatics
 Administration
 Animal Handling
 Artisan
 Artistic Expression
 Bribery
 Craft
 Diplomacy
 Disguise
 Elocution
 Favored Weapon
 Forgery
 Healing
 Intrigue
 Leadership
 Manipulation
 Meditation
 Observation
 Performance
 Riding
 Seduction
 Stealth
 Tracking
 Transport
 Unarmed Combat
 Wearing Armor
 Wilderness

Disciplines

Etiquette
 History
 Knowledge
 Language
 Lore
 Military
 Politics
 Research
 Script
 Understand Mechanism

The two chosen Facets and the Primary Element are averaged, and half of the result becomes a Talent's final Base.

AWARENESS

Primary Element: Intuition

Facets: Perception, Empathy, Wisdom, Intelligence

Awareness serves as a kind of sixth sense for a persona. It represents a general rapport with and sensitivity to one's surroundings, and does not require active concentration on the part of a persona. Personas with high levels of Awareness are more alert than normal, and are not as susceptible to surprise.

This Talent applies to both mundane and unusual areas. Several Awareness Aspects are available, although the Talent appears most often in a general form that allows a persona to sense (either through sound or through an abstract 'feeling') impending events or dangers.

Degree of Success determines the function of the Talent. A Marginal Success might allow a persona to detect an ambush seconds before it occurs, while an Extraordinary Success would tell the persona that he was about to be attacked by two armor-clad, medium-sized men.

Possible Aspects: danger, weather sense, direction sense, lip reading, magical or holy auras

BRAWL

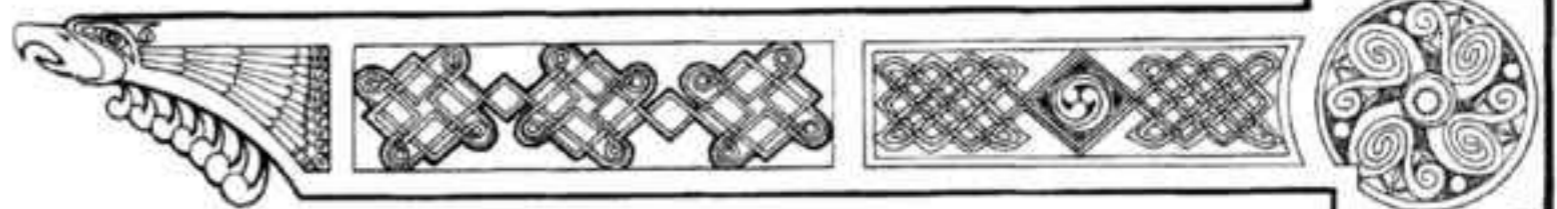
Primary Element: Strength

Facets: Agility, Endurance, Quickness, Intuition

The Brawl Talent represents a persona's untrained, self-taught, unarmed fighting ability. It includes all manner of untutored movement and techniques - kicks, punches, gauges, throws, grabs, butts with the head, etc. It does not include the use of any foreign objects or weapons. Brawling is all-out, rough-and-tumble fighting that is learned through experience. Most experienced fighters (i.e. those with Unarmed Combat Aptitudes) are able to easily overwhelm or subdue a person who only knows how to Brawl. However, there is something to be said for raw strength and speed...

The Physical Penalty applies to this Talent. Refer to the Conflict section for more information on using the Brawl Talent in combat situations.

Possible Aspects: fisticuffs, kicks, wrestling, throws



Dodge

Primary Element: Agility

Facets: Quickness, Intuition, Wisdom, Intelligence

A successful Dodge allows a persona to avoid an incoming attack or blow during combat. It also represents a persona's ability to avoid other obstacles. A persona can attempt to Dodge a falling tree or falling rock; a Dodge can also be used to avoid objects thrown at a persona or placed in his path (during a chase, for example). A Physical Penalty applies to a Dodging persona. Refer to the Conflict section of this book for more information on using Dodges in combat situations.

Possible Aspects: general, specific types of attack



Guile

Primary Element: Charisma

Facets: Intelligence, Appearance, Wisdom, Communication

Guile involves making a convincing argument while simultaneously avoiding the truth. It basically represents the ability to manipulate a situation through cunning and subterfuge, altering facts and peppering lies with bits of truth so that the end result is a convincing and believable ruse. Successful Guile attempts often result in confusion and disorientation for the subject of the Trial.

The Degree of Success determines the overall success of an attempt, as well as a subject's reactions to a persona practicing Guile. A Marginal Success could make a guard question the obvious identity of a freshly murdered city official. A Mythic Success could convince the guard that the body was not there at all. A persona can use Savvy to resist the effects of Guile.

Possible Aspects: friends, enemies, individuals from lower Status Archetypes, individuals from higher Status Archetypes, authority figures, cultural figures

IMPROVISATION

Primary Element: Charisma

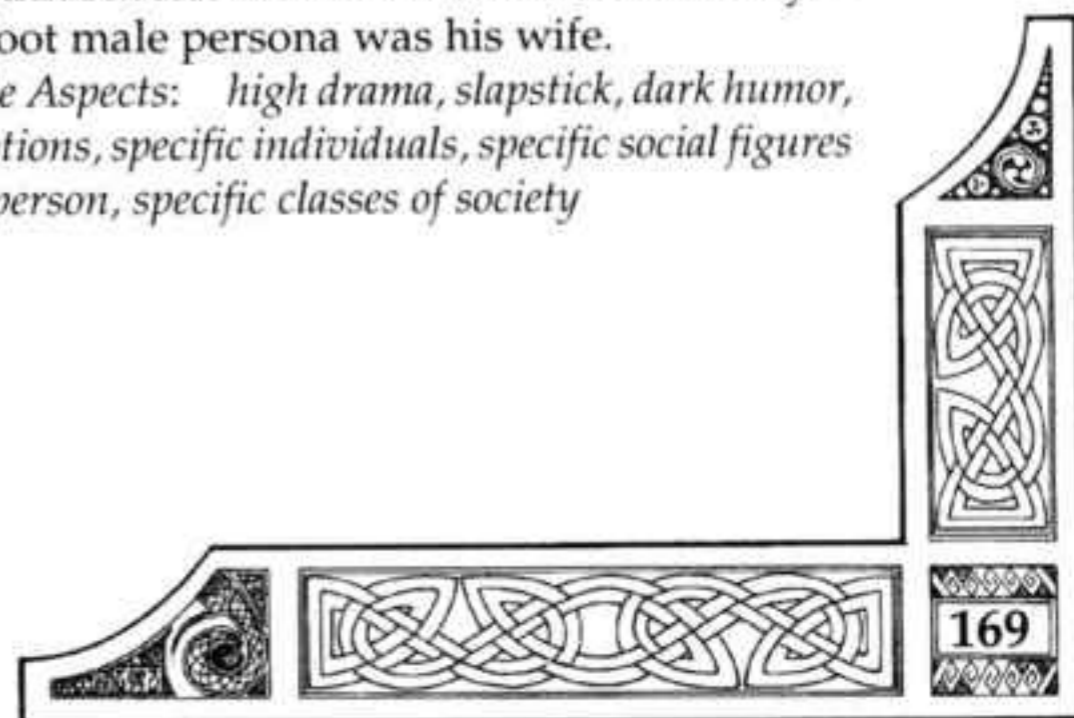
Facets: Intelligence, Perception, Communication, Appearance

Improvisation allows a persona to spontaneously convey emotions that are not genuine. This Talent is

essentially an acting talent, but without preparations or theory. A persona's portrayal of an emotion or another individual is a natural ability that comes from within the persona and is not the result of any sort of dramatic training. Personas with the Improvisation Talent are usually better able to generate off-the-cuff, cold performances than those with the Performance Aptitude.

This Talent allows a persona to mimic speech and gestures appropriate to a particular Improvisation, often with absolutely no preparation time. This Talent is normally used to persuade, convince, or entertain an individual or group of individuals. A Marginal Success might indicate a grudging and suspicious acceptance of a persona as a member of another culture. A Mythic success would convince the local mayor that a six foot male persona was his wife.

Possible Aspects: high drama, slapstick, dark humor, specific emotions, specific individuals, specific social figures or types of person, specific classes of society





Influence

Primary Element: Charisma

Facets: Intelligence, Perception, Wisdom, Communication

Influence represents the ability to sway others, whether consciously or unconsciously, to the persona's way of thinking. A persona with the Influence Talent is adept at using other peoples' strengths, motivations, weaknesses, and fears against them. The methods employed by a persona depend on personal philosophy and are defined by the Talent's Aspects, but they usually involve manipulating a subject's emotions at a fundamental level.

Overt methods include outright intimidation, fast talk, or argument. Covert methods include flirting, charm, flattery, or diversionary conversation. Specific results of an Influence attempt depend on the Aspect being used, but the Degrees of Success do represent a general range. A Marginal Success could make a prospective employer hire a persona, but not the persona's companion (as the persona proposed). A Mythic Success would get the persona and his companion twenty

times the going rate, as well as the employer's country home for the weekend.

Influence is also one of the five expertises that can govern a persona's Leverage Pools.

Possible Aspects: intimidation, torture, fast talk, flirt, charm, flattery, obsequious diversion

Physical

Primary Element: Agility

Facets: Strength, Endurance, Quickness, Manual Dexterity

The Physical Talent includes most specific movement-related abilities, and defines a persona's overall physical competence and coordination. Each ability is represented by a different Aspect, and personas are encouraged to focus on athletic specialties. This Talent does not represent raw physical prowess; a persona's Attributes do that. Rather, the Physical Talent represents the orchestration of several of a persona's innate physical capabilities toward a common end. It allows a persona to excel at complex and coordinated physical activities such as climbing and swimming.

Degree of Success should be interpreted by the Mythguide based on the individual situation, although some guidelines for general physical activity in the Narrative Environment are provided on the accompanying Physical Aspects table. The Physical Penalty applies to this Talent.

Possible Aspects: climbing, swimming, throwing, long distance running, jumping (vertical), leaping (distance), dancing

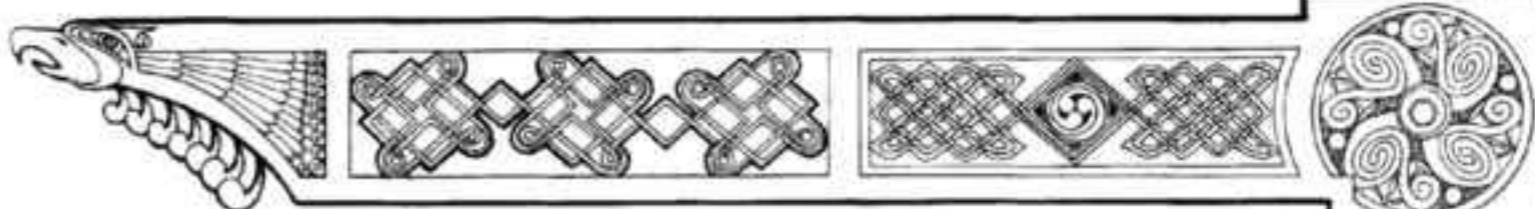
Physical Adaption

Primary Element: Perception

Facets: Agility, Intuition, Quickness, Wisdom

Physical Adaption allows a persona to overcome unusual or handicapping circumstances and still function normally. It represents the ability to adapt physical prowess to a unique situation, and is therefore also a mental and perceptive ability. It includes possibilities such as fighting at night or in complete darkness and moving or fighting atop a shifting surface (as on the deck of a ship or the bed of a wagon).

If a persona has an appropriate Aspect of this Talent, a Complete Success allows the persona to func-



Physical Aspects

Climbing

Ladder	-2
Rope	0
Vertical or uneven w/ numerous holds (a large tree, for example)	1
Vertical surface w/ handholds (a rock wall or crevasse, for example)	2
Vertical surface w/ few handholds	5
Vertical surface, smooth	9

Other modifiers:	Surface is slippery, but not wet (i.e. dirt, sand)	Slight Hindrance
	Surface is wet	Hindrance
	Surface is extremely slick (i.e. oil)	Considerable Hindrance
	Rain/Snow	Hindrance
	Sleet/Ice	Considerable Hindrance
	Visual obstruction (darkness, smoke, fog, etc.)	Considerable or Severe Hindrance
	Persona using appropriate climbing equipment	Benefit or Considerable Benefit
	Physical Penalty	Variable

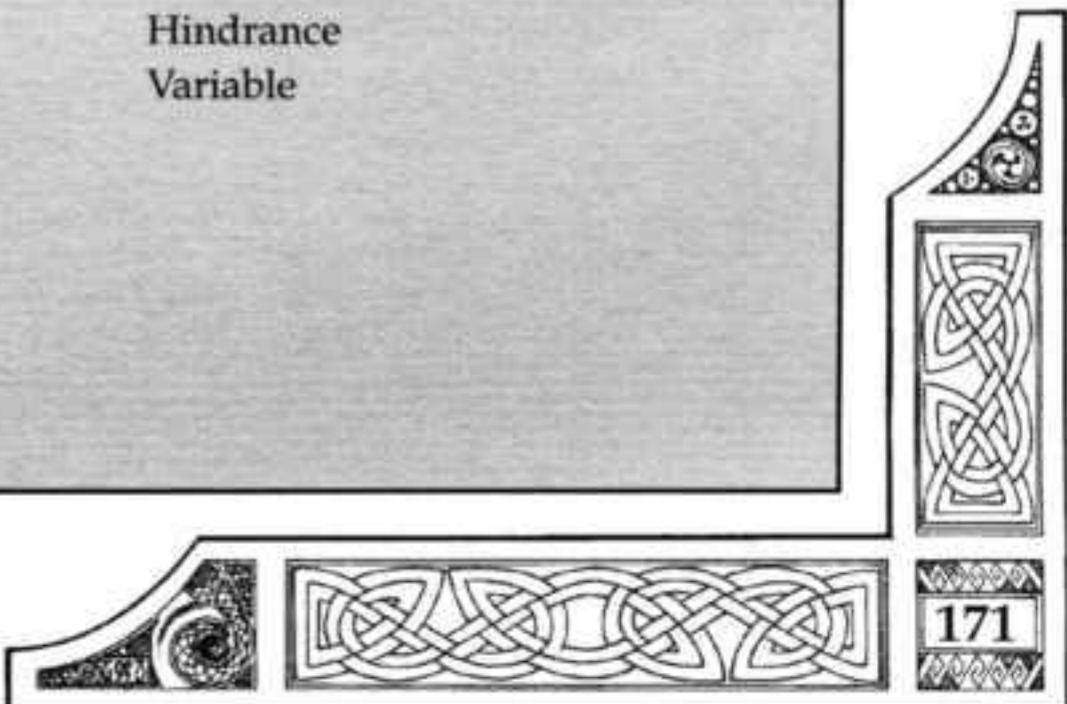
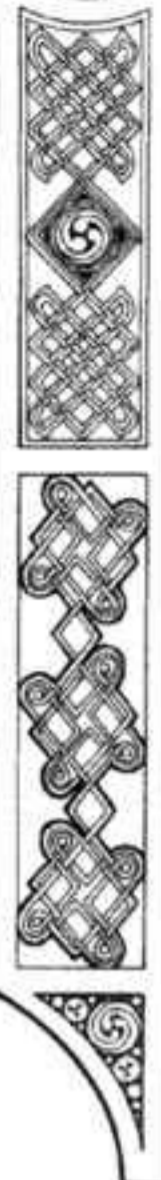
Note: A persona's Climbing rate depends on the Difficulty of the climb. More Difficult surfaces usually take longer to climb. A persona's base rate is one tenth of the persona's Action Movement Rate. The Mythguide should modify this rate according to the situation. For example, a persona climbing a ladder might move two to three times as fast, while a persona climbing in the rain would probably move several times slower.

Jumping

A persona can attempt a Long Jump equal to his own height at a base Difficulty of two, and a High Jump equal to half his height at a base Difficulty of two.

Long Jump equal to persona's Height	2
High Jump equal to half persona's Height	2
For every four inches higher or lower (High Jump)	+/- 1
For every eight inches farther or shorter (Long Jump)	+/- 1

Other Modifiers:	Jumping up an incline	Slight to Considerable Hindrance
	Jumping down an incline	Slight to Considerable Benefit
	Running Start	Benefit
	Difficult terrain (loose dirt, ice, etc.)	Hindrance
	Physical Penalty	Variable



Physical Aspects (continued)

Swimming

Normal water conditions (slight waves)	2
Turbulent Conditions (high waves)	4
Stormy Seas (monstrous waves and wind)	6

Other Modifiers: Fatigue

Fresh	0
Winded	Slight Hindrance
Tired	Hindrance
Weary	Considerable Hindrance
Fatigued	Severe Hindrance
Exhausted	Incapacitation
Physical Penalty	Variable

Note: A persona can swim a number of yards equal to half their walking Movement Rate plus half their Rank in Physical (Swimming). Subtract the number of yards that corresponds to the Difficulty Modifier Category of the persona's Encumbrance (i.e. a Severely Encumbered persona would swim 6 or more less yards per Interval). Swimming long distances requires Fatigue Trials like Double Time movement. The Mythguide may allow a persona to float motionless in order to rest and regain lost Fatigue.

tion at a normal level of ability. A Marginal Success may indicate a slight disadvantage, while higher levels of Success should be interpreted by the Mythguide depending on the situation (perhaps they allow the persona to act for several Intervals without making another Trial). The Physical Penalty applies to this Talent.

Possible Aspects: night fighting, blind fighting, deck fighting and movement, fighting with other sensory handicap (hearing or touch), two-handed fighting

Savvy

Primary Element: Wisdom

Facets: Intuition, Intelligence, Willpower, Presence

This Talent allows a persona to both recognize and resist persuasion and influence attempts. These attempts can take many forms, as is evidenced by the variety of Talents and Aptitudes that deal with them. This Talent may be used as a sort of general social resistance, or its effectiveness can be broken into individual Aspects. Personas may make a Savvy Trial whenever they feel they are being lied to or unduly pressured. This Talent is especially useful when resolving encounters with Mythguide personas (i.e. when a persona attempts to fast talk, intimidate, de-

bate, etc. a Mythguide persona). Players should note that not all persuasion or influence attempts are unfavorable.

This Talent can also be employed in conjunction with most persuasion expertises. If a persona is trying to detect the use of a Talent or Aptitude which they possess themselves, the Difficulty of the Savvy Trial is reduced by one. For example, if a persona is using Savvy to detect the use of Influence, and the persona has the Influence Talent as well, the Difficulty of the Savvy Trial is reduced by one. A Marginal Success with this Talent could alert a persona that something is up, while an Extraordinary Success could reveal the underlying designs and motivations of the individual attempting to persuade the persona.

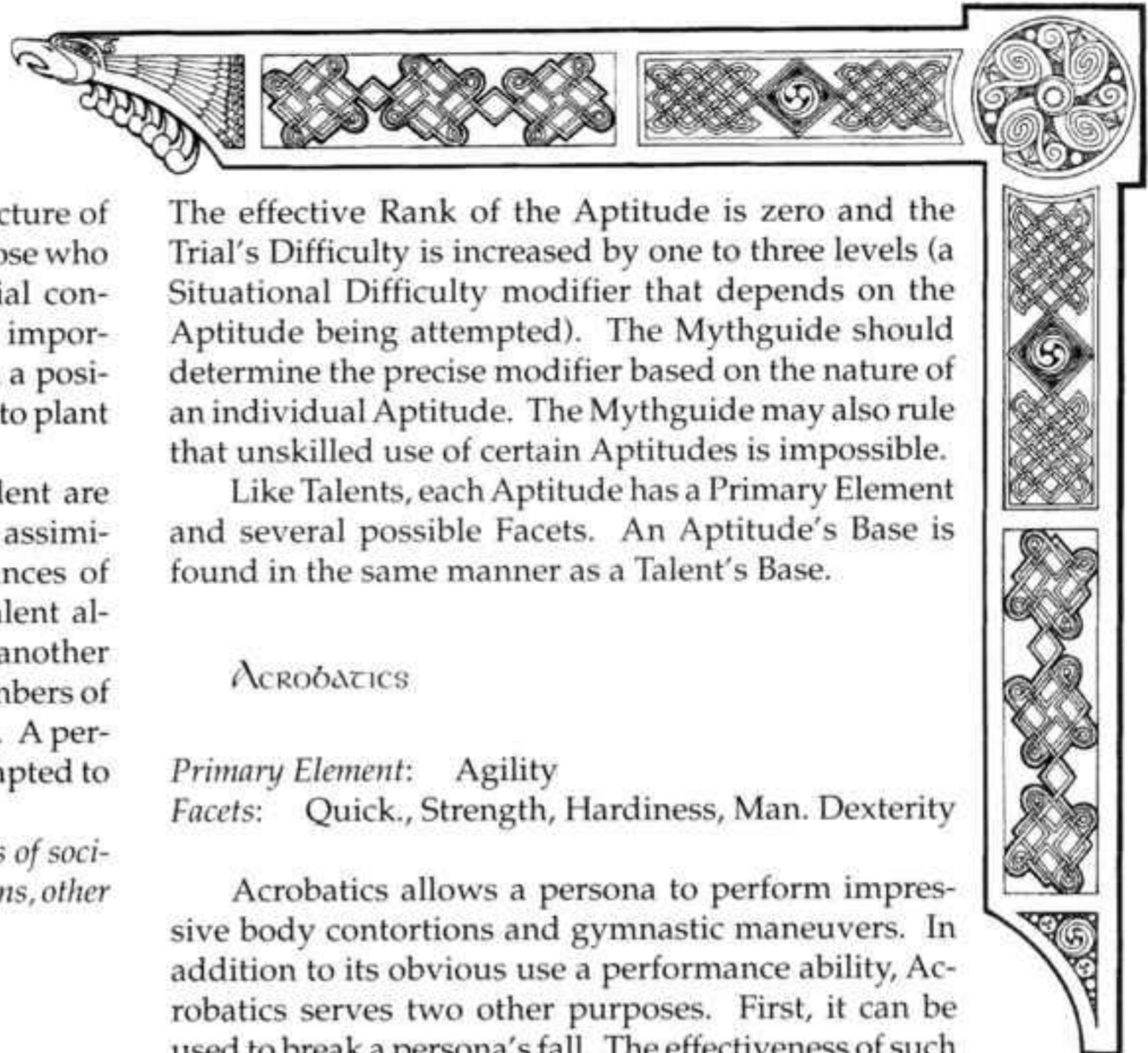
Possible Aspects: flattery, intimidation, cunning, lies, truth, guile, rhetoric, oratory, specific causes, beliefs, or motivations, forgery (documents or artwork)

Social Adaptation

Primary Element: Intuition

Facets: Comm., Perception, Intelligence, Wisdom

Each level of society supports its own standards of behavior and conduct, its own customs and rituals,



its own slang and innuendo, and its own structure of acceptable interaction and communication. Those who know their way around these elaborate social constructs have the opportunity to gain access to important information and gossip. They are also in a position to better distinguish rumor from truth and to plant new rumors in the larger social web.

Individuals with the Social Adaption Talent are able to blend into a particular strata of society, assimilating any unique language patterns or nuances of behavior. A successful application of this Talent allows a persona to function as a member of another social group or element, convincing other members of the group that he or she belongs among them. A persona is always considered to have Socially Adapted to his own segment of the social structure.

Possible Aspects: streetwise, other elements of society by class or Status Archetype, individual vocations, other cultures or races

Unique

Primary Element: variable
Facets: variable

Both players and Mythguides are encouraged to add any Unique Talents they feel are needed. The fundamental concept of Metadesign ensures that one Narrative Environment is never the same as another. Often, special or unique expertises are required to make full use of an original environment's individual qualities. Unique Talents should be developed as they are needed, although such designs should not be allowed to upset the overall balance of play.

Unique Talents are often employed in conjunction with the creation of original magic and religious systems. The type and nature of such Talents depends on the environment being designed. Refer to those sections of this book for more information.

Aptitudes

Aptitudes are abilities and capacities that are developed through a combination of training and experience. The bulk of a persona's expertises are usually Aptitudes, and most Vocational Expertises are Aptitudes as well. Although Aptitudes represent more specific capabilities than Talents, personas who do not possess an Aptitude may still attempt a related Trial.

The effective Rank of the Aptitude is zero and the Trial's Difficulty is increased by one to three levels (a Situational Difficulty modifier that depends on the Aptitude being attempted). The Mythguide should determine the precise modifier based on the nature of an individual Aptitude. The Mythguide may also rule that unskilled use of certain Aptitudes is impossible.

Like Talents, each Aptitude has a Primary Element and several possible Facets. An Aptitude's Base is found in the same manner as a Talent's Base.

ACROBATICS

Primary Element: Agility
Facets: Quick., Strength, Hardiness, Man. Dexterity

Acrobatics allows a persona to perform impressive body contortions and gymnastic maneuvers. In addition to its obvious use a performance ability, Acrobatics serves two other purposes. First, it can be used to break a persona's fall. The effectiveness of such a maneuver depends on both the distance fallen and the Acrobatics Trial's Degree of Success. Refer to the section on Movement in the Narrative Environment later in this book for more information.

Acrobatics can also be used to slightly improve a persona's Dodge ability. For this improvement to be effective, a persona must not only possess both expertises, but Acrobatics must be present at an equal or higher level than Dodge. Refer to the Conflict section of this book for more information.

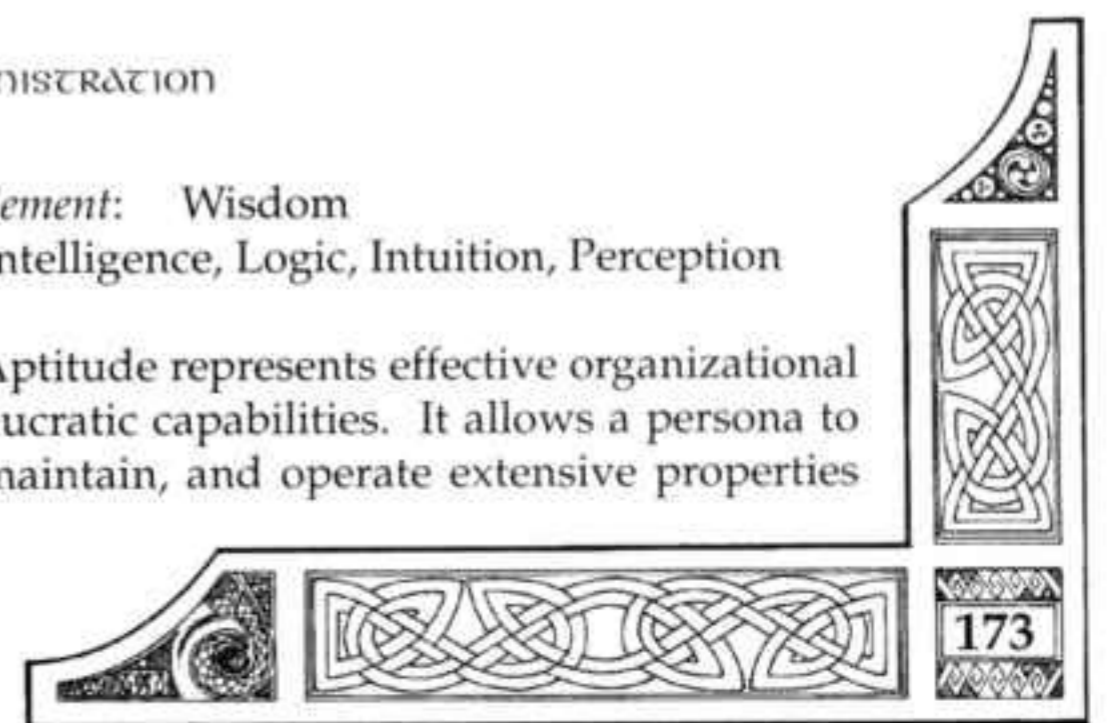
When using this Aptitude by itself, the Degree of Success indicates the result of a specific attempted maneuver. The Mythguide should determine the Difficulty of such attempts based on the persona's Rank and Acrobatics experience. For example, a back hand-spring is a fairly standard maneuver for anyone with this Aptitude, but a series of twisting back somersaults would only be standard for a persona with a high Rank. The Physical Penalty applies to this Aptitude.

Possible Aspects: gymnastics, tumbling, contortions, feats of balance (tightrope walking), some types of dance

ADMINISTRATION

Primary Element: Wisdom
Facets: Intelligence, Logic, Intuition, Perception

This Aptitude represents effective organizational and bureaucratic capabilities. It allows a persona to oversee, maintain, and operate extensive properties



and holdings. It is also the ability to effectively run a government agency or entire bureaucracy. Whether a persona is an inheritor or an appointed or elected official, this expertise embodies the techniques required for successful governance. Administration is also an important Aptitude when creating Interactive Histories.

Possible Aspects: estate, village, town, city, province or demesne, nation, organization

Animal Handling

Primary Element: Willpower

Facets: Wisdom, Intelligence, Empathy, Perception

Animal Handling allows a persona to both control and train various types of animal. A persona can use this Aptitude to handle all types domesticated animals (as long as the required Aspects are chosen); this includes calming excited animals, urging harness teams to move, convincing pack animals to bear burdens, etc. Whenever a persona tries to force an animal into an activity beyond the normal pale of its abilities, an Expertise Trial is required (often made against the animal's Willpower).

This Aptitude also allows a persona to train and domesticate animals. An animal may be taught specific tasks at the discretion of the Mythguide. The difficulty of the task should dictate the Difficulty of the training Trial (although some tasks may simply be unlearnable). Horses may be trained to bite, kick, and rear for war, birds may be trained to deliver messages, and beasts of burden can be trained to obey simple verbal commands. The time requirements for such training depend on the individual situation, the skill of the trainer, and the Degrees of Success of any relevant Trials. General domestication normally takes longer than teaching simple tasks.

Possible Aspects: general handling, herding, and driving specific animals or groups of animals, training and domestication of specific animals or groups of animals, grooming, animal medicine

ARTISAN

Primary Element: variable

Facets: variable

These Aptitudes represent a catch-all category for most professional expertises and abilities. Most are

hands-on craft skills that stress manipulative capabilities and require large amounts of both training and experience to fully master. Many persona Vocational Expertises fall within this Aptitude category.

Note that both the Primary Element and the possible Facets for these Aptitudes are variable. The Mythguide and players should assign appropriate Attributes based on the individual Aspects being chosen, and should make sure that these Attributes make sense in the context of the Narrative Environment. For example, Artisan (blacksmithing) would probably use Strength as its Primary Element while Artisan (gem cutting) would use Manual Dexterity. The Physical Penalty will apply to some Artisan Aspects, but not all of them.

Possible Aspects: metalworking (specific metal), stoneworking, masonry, woodworking (joinery, carpentry, carving, etc.), wheelwright, shipwright, weaponcrafting (swordsmith, cutler, bowyer, fletcher, etc.), armorer (specific materials), weaving, leatherworking (specify area), glassworking, pottery, etc.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

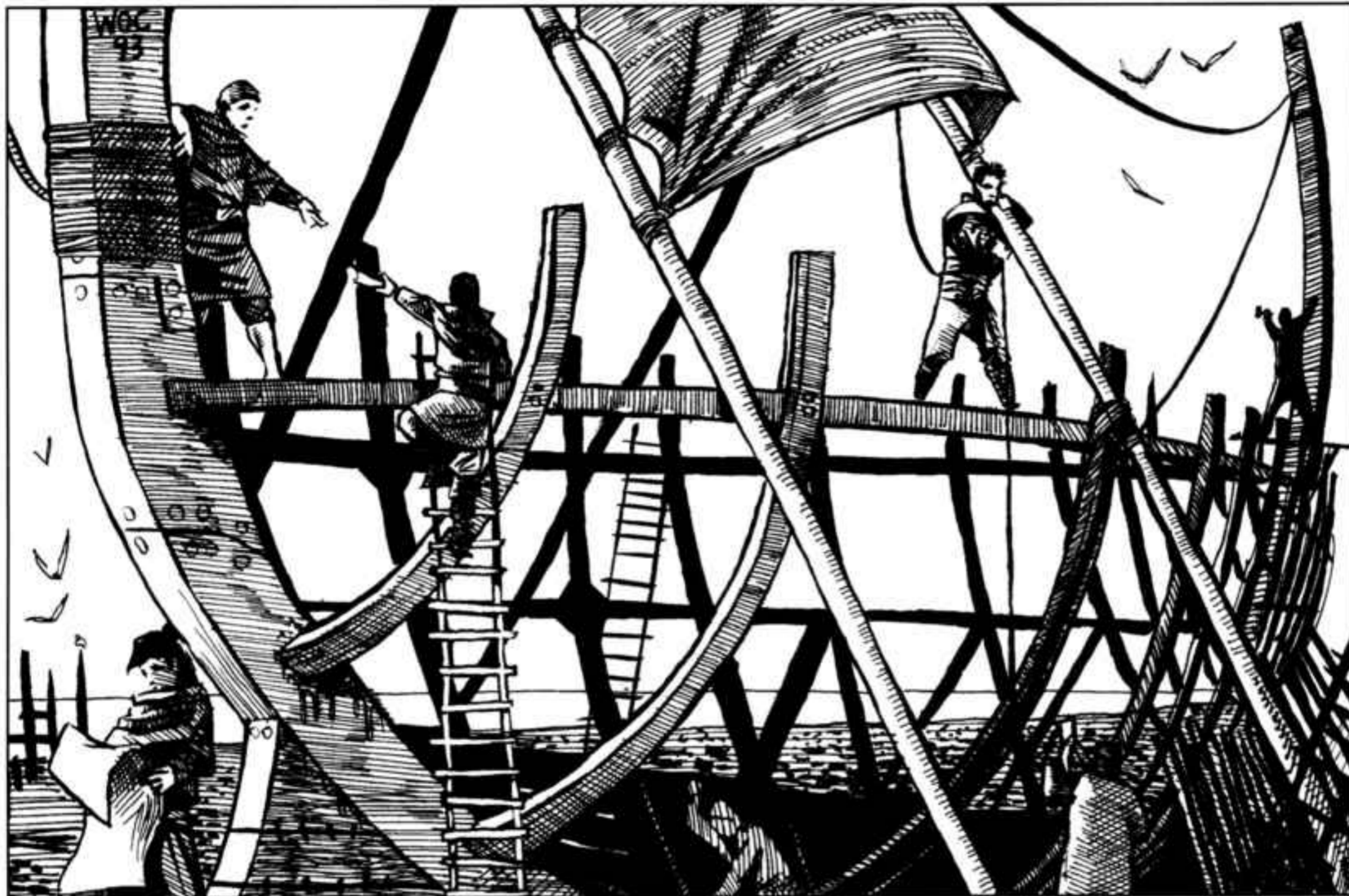
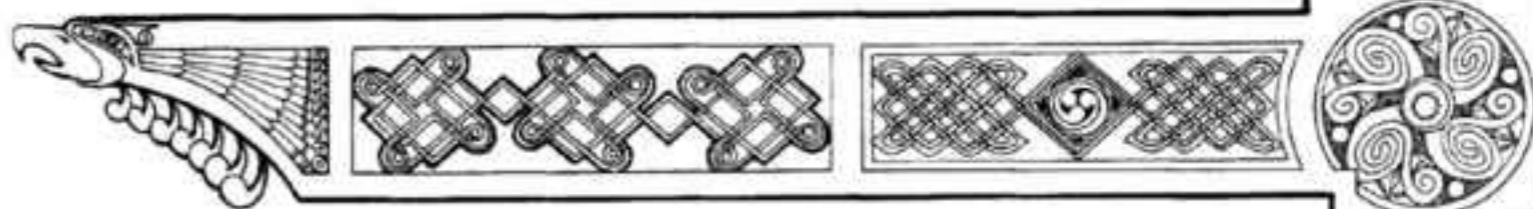
Primary Element: Intuition

Facets: Percept., Empathy, Wisdom, Man. Dexterity

This Aptitude allows a persona to create imaginative and moving works of art, literature, poetry, or musical composition. Artistic Expression represents a combination of natural talent and studied technique. The Degree of Success of an Artistic Expression Trial indicates a work's impact in an abstract sense. A Marginal Success might describe a work that is interesting but unremarkable. A Mythic Success could herald the creation of a work with lasting cultural, social, or stylistic importance.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder (or the mind of the reader, the ear of the listener, etc.), and different individuals react differently to artistic attempts and styles. Such reactions are often simply roleplayed, but reaction Trials can also be used. The Mythguide should decide what expertise or Attribute governs the reaction (i.e. an appropriate Knowledge, the Artistic Expression Aptitude itself, the Perception or Empathy Attributes) and then compare the result of the reaction Trial to the result of the original Trial that created the artwork.

The reaction Trial's Degree of Failure must be at least equal to or worse than the original creation Trial's Degree of Success for an observer to truly dislike a work. For example, if a sculpture is created with a



Superior Success, at least a Superior Failure (or worse) is needed for an observer to dislike the piece. Even a Complete Failure in this example would indicate some level of appreciation. The precise reaction to an individual work or composition still depends on the sensibilities of the individual, and the Mythguide should keep this in mind at all times.

Possible Aspects: painting, drawing, sculpture, carving, writing, poetry, music composition

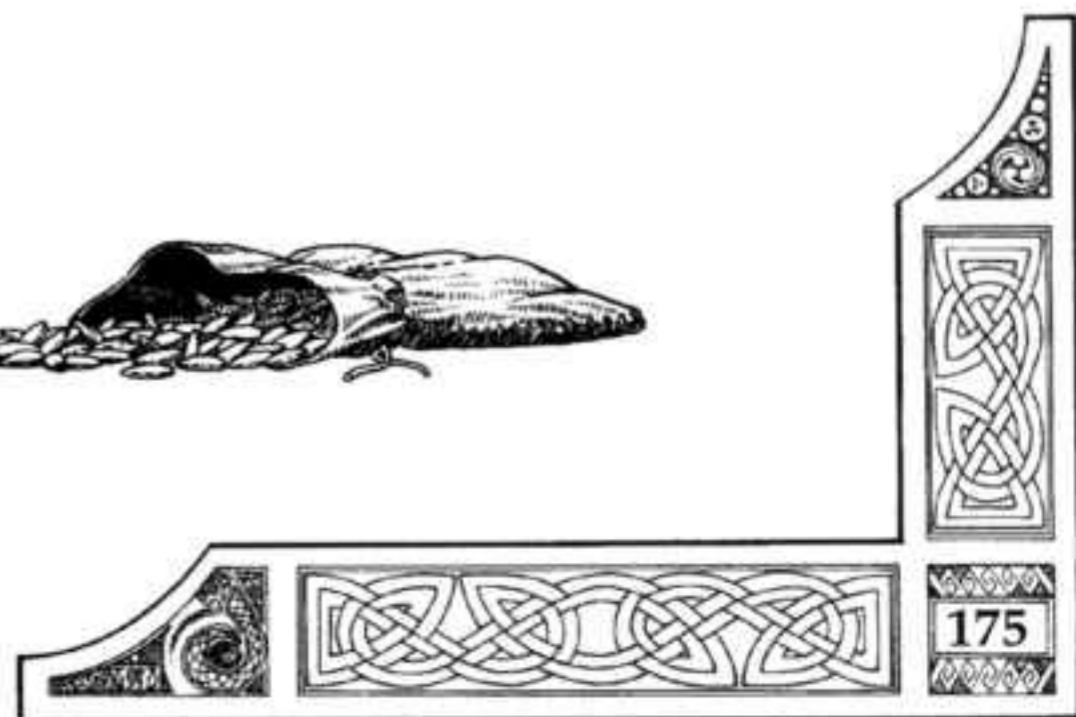
BRIBERY

Primary Element: Charisma
 Facets: Wisdom, Perception, Communication, Logic

The Bribery Aptitude is similar in many ways to the Influence Talent, except that Bribery offers the target something in return for information, action, or favors. Because of its nature, Bribery is often a more delicate enterprise than outright Influence. As with other persuasion expertises, Bribery can be overt or disguised.

The effectiveness of the Bribery attempt depends on several factors. The Difficulty of the Trial is modified by the individual circumstances of the situation, although Difficulty will also be affected by the bribe offered (i.e. is it a fair price for the risk being taken?). The Trial's Degree of Success dictates the ultimate outcome of the attempt. The use of Savvy on the part of the target can also affect the outcome of the Trial. A Marginal Success often indicates tacit agreement but a request for more of whatever is being offered, while an Mythic Success finds that the target of the Bribe really wanted to do what was asked anyway (and requires no payment).

Possible Aspects: authority figures, members of a specific organization or social strata, powerful individuals, servants





CRAFT

Primary Element: variable
Facets: variable

Craft Aspects are specific practical capabilities. Like the Artisan Aptitude, Craft encompasses many different possibilities. While Artisan Aspects are usually manipulative and handicraft oriented, Craft Aspects represent more general areas of knowledge and ability. However, unlike many Knowledge Disciplines, Craft Aptitudes have a definite practical side. They allow personas to put certain knowledges and experiences to physical and practical use, and depend as much on training and experience as on study and intelligence. Examples include navigation, seamanship, gambling, cooking, and timbercraft.

The effectiveness of Craft Trials depends on both the Aspect being tested and a particular Trial's Degree of Success. Since this Aptitude includes a broad range of possibility, the Mythguide should simply use good judgment when resolving such Trials. The Mythguide and the players must also determine the Primary Element and possible Facets for each Craft. For example,

navigation might use Intelligence as its Primary Element while cooking would use Wisdom. Certain Craft Aspects may be subject to the Physical Penalty.

Possible Aspects: navigation (land or specific terrain type, shoreline, open ocean), cooking, brewing, campcraft, timbercraft, rope use, seamanship (rigging, steering, piloting, etc.), skiing, gaming, gambling, mountaineering

Diplomacy

Primary Element: Charisma
Facets: Intelligence, Logic, Wisdom, Communication

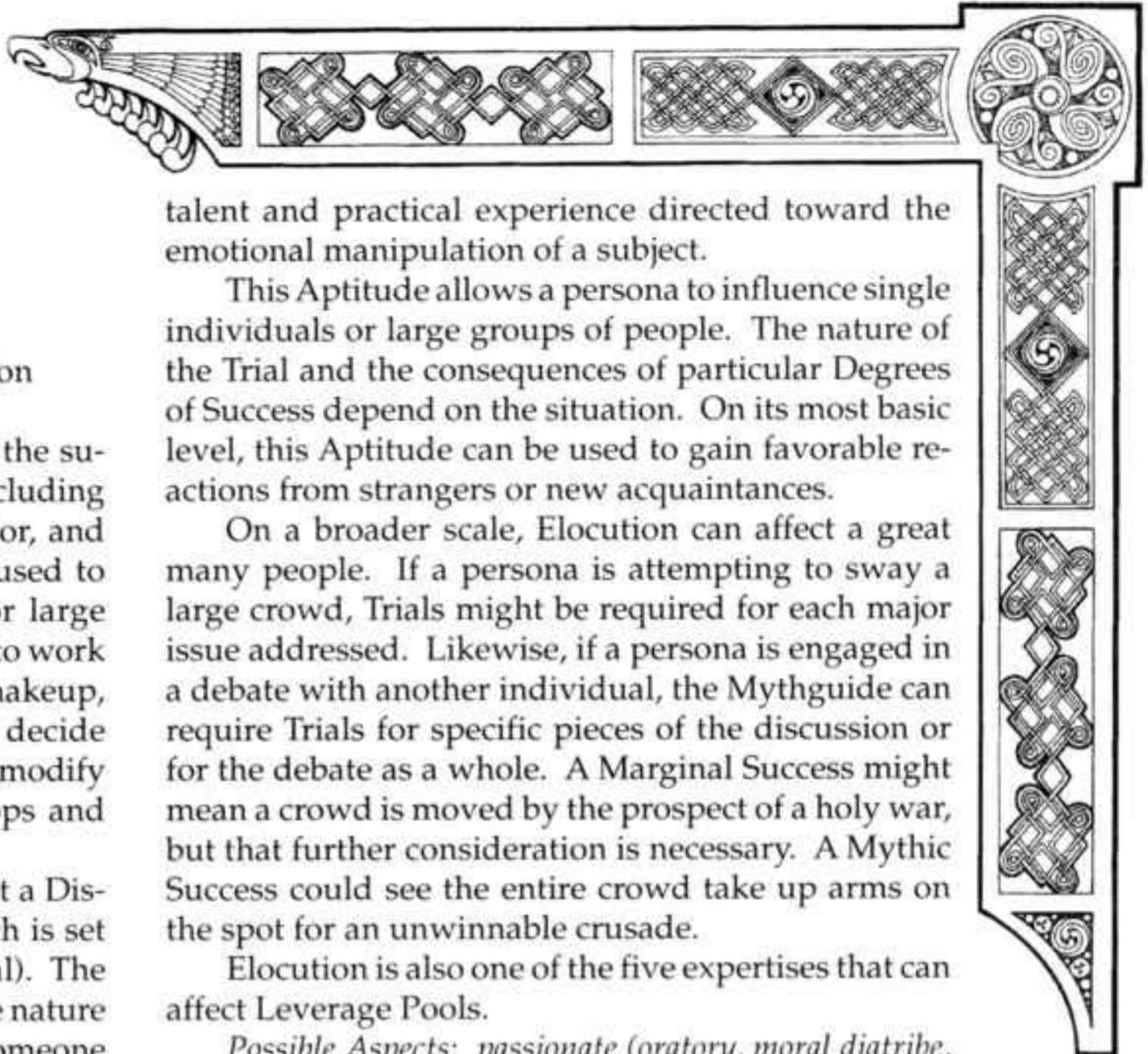
Diplomacy is the art of both intricate negotiation and deliberate compromise. It is a delicate exercise in the practice of give and take, and truly adept negotiators are able to bring an almost serene elegance to situations of outright deception and tense posturing. A skilled diplomat understands the unspoken rules, customs, and etiquette of the negotiating environment.

What distinguishes this Aptitude from other persuasion expertises is its premise of openness. When practicing Diplomacy, most cards are already on the table, and the challenge is to make those cards turn up in one's favor. Negotiation is usually a forthright endeavor, and advantages are often gained from subtle refinements of technique rather than overt attempts at manipulation or intimidation.

Diplomacy is used to negotiate terms, settlements, and relationships, and may be used both on individuals and on small groups. It can also be used to bargain or haggle (in a civilized manner) over a fair price. The nature of an individual Diplomacy Trial and the meaning of the Degree of Success depends on the individual situation. A Complete Success usually means the successful negotiation of a particular term or issue; a Mythic Success might indicate total acquiescence on all important points of discussion.

Diplomacy finds its principal use in sweeping social and political negotiation. This Aptitude plays a significant role in the development of Interactive Histories, and is one of the five expertises that can govern Leverage Pools.

Possible Aspects: negotiation (economic, political, social, or cultural), bargaining, arbitration, reconciliation, aggression



Disguise

Primary Element: Perception

Facets: Comm., Intelligence, Wisdom, Intuition

This Aptitude allows a persona to falsify the superficial elements of physical appearance, including clothing, gait, mannerisms, hair and skin color, and speech patterns. This Aptitude can also be used to remain unnoticed, blending into a crowd or large group of people. For certain types of disguise to work properly, a persona might require unusual makeup, clothing, wigs, etc. The Mythguide should decide whether a particular disguise is possible (and modify the Difficulty accordingly) based on the props and materials available.

Individuals who view or attempt to detect a Disguised persona can make a Savvy Trial (which is set against the Disguise Trial as a Challenged Trial). The Difficulty of Disguise Trial also depends on the nature of the disguise. If a persona is Disguised as someone completely unfamiliar to onlookers, Difficulty is minimal. If a persona is Disguised as close friend of an onlooker, Difficulty is severe. A Marginal Success might indicate suspicious acceptance of a unknown individual, while a Mythic Success would allow a persona to pass as the sheriff's close friend. Of course, roleplaying is also very important in such instances.

Possible Aspects: specific classes or elements of society, specific heritage groups, races, or species, a particular gender or gender group, a specific individual

Elocution

Primary Element: Charisma

Facets: Intelligence, Wisdom, Communication, Logic

The Elocution Aptitude allows a persona to persuade an individual or sway an audience through intelligent discussion or speech. This can take any number of forms and includes careful argument, informed disputation, cogent bargaining, and impassioned oratory. The fundamental distinction between this Aptitude and the Influence Talent is that Elocution represents speaking, discussion, and presentation skills that can be learned and developed at least partly through training and study. Elocution treats public speaking and argument as an elegant science, and plays as much to a subject's intellect as to base emotion. Influence simply represents raw conversational

talent and practical experience directed toward the emotional manipulation of a subject.

This Aptitude allows a persona to influence single individuals or large groups of people. The nature of the Trial and the consequences of particular Degrees of Success depend on the situation. On its most basic level, this Aptitude can be used to gain favorable reactions from strangers or new acquaintances.

On a broader scale, Elocution can affect a great many people. If a persona is attempting to sway a large crowd, Trials might be required for each major issue addressed. Likewise, if a persona is engaged in a debate with another individual, the Mythguide can require Trials for specific pieces of the discussion or for the debate as a whole. A Marginal Success might mean a crowd is moved by the prospect of a holy war, but that further consideration is necessary. A Mythic Success could see the entire crowd take up arms on the spot for an unwinnable crusade.

Elocution is also one of the five expertises that can affect Leverage Pools.

Possible Aspects: passionate (oratory, moral diatribe, rhetoric), rational (sermon, argument, speech), intellectual (debate, disputation)

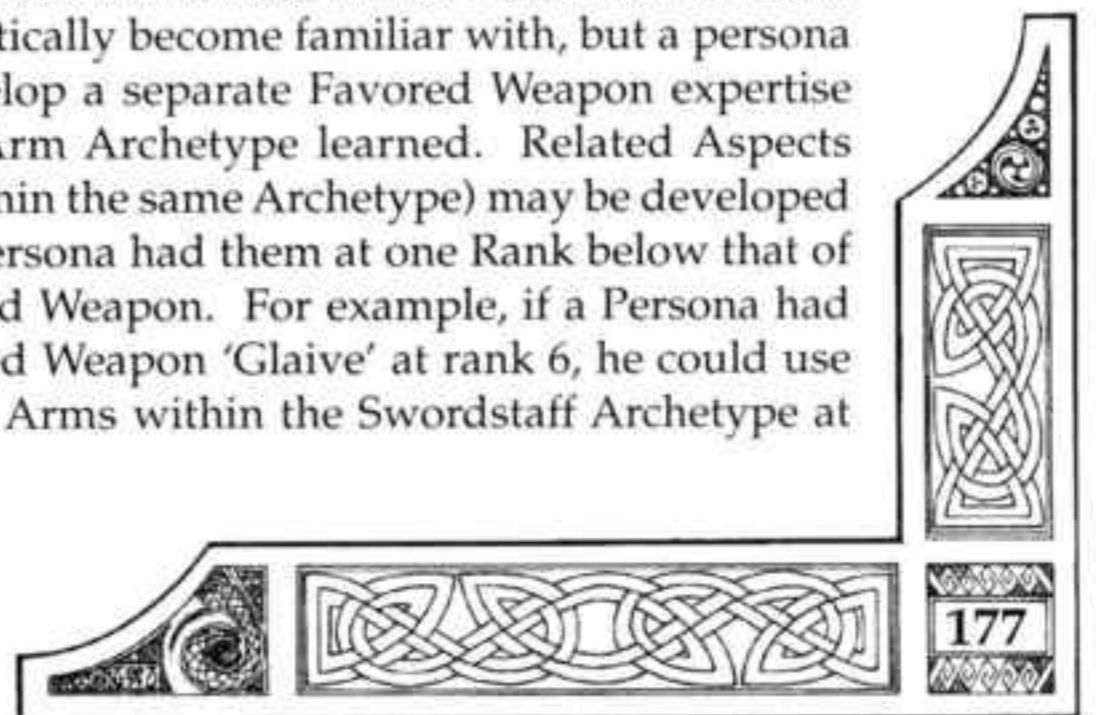
Favored Weapon

Primary Element: Manual Dexterity

Facets: Perception, Intuition, Strength, Agility

The Favored Weapon Aptitude represents a whole class of Arms Expertises which correlate to distinct families of Weapons. Weapons are divided into families called Arms Archetypes. Each Archetype includes a variety of weapons bearing similar, but not identical, traits. For example, the Archetype Swordstaff represents all six to eight foot slash and thrust polearms. The Favored Weapon Expertise 'Swordstaff' might have an aspect such as 'Glaive' or 'Fauchard' allowing a Persona to use that particular Arm at full Rank, while using all related aspects within the Swordstaff Archetype at a -1 penalty.

There is no limit to the number of arms a Persona can theoretically become familiar with, but a persona must develop a separate Favored Weapon expertise for each Arm Archetype learned. Related Aspects (Arms within the same Archetype) may be developed as if the Persona had them at one Rank below that of his Favored Weapon. For example, if a Persona had the Favored Weapon 'Glaive' at rank 6, he could use all related Arms within the Swordstaff Archetype at





Rank 5. The Persona might decide to develop his skill with a Fauchard which falls within the same family. For purposes of development, the persona improves this related Aspect (Fauchard) from Rank 5 onward. Related Aspects may be improved to match the Favored Weapon Rank by expending 1 IP for each additional arm. If a persona wishes to develop an additional Aspect beyond the Rank of the initial Aspect, he may do so but the related Aspect becomes the new primary Aspect for the Favored Archetype.

Returning to the previous example, the Persona develops the related Aspect 'Fauchard' to Rank 6 by spending one Mythpoint. Since the Persona has found that he prefers the Fauchard to the Glaive, he chooses to make the Fauchard his primary Aspect and develop it from Rank 6 to Rank 7 (normal cost for Aptitude = 2 IP). With Fauchard developed to Rank 7, the Persona may now use all other Arms within the Swordstaff Archetype at Rank 6. Training with the Fauchard increases the Persona's innate ability with similar 'thrust and slash' polearmes within the Swordstaff family.

Possible Aspects: a specific Weapon within an Arm Archetype (ex. Claymore within Greatsword Archetype, Halberd within Poleaxe Archetype, Ciqueda Dagger within Dagger Archetype, etc)

FORGERY

Primary Element: Manual Dexterity

Facets: Perception, Intelligence, Wisdom, Logic

Forgery allows a persona to create either duplicates or original imitations of written information or pieces of artwork. This includes letters, seals, documents, administrative records, manuscripts, paintings, and sculpture. Knowledge of the appropriate script or writing style is assumed, although it is not required. It is possible for a persona to simply copy something that is not understood, but the Mythguide should raise the Difficulty of the Forgery Trial accordingly.

Likewise, if a persona is attempting to copy a piece of art, the appropriate Artistic Expression Aspect is required. It is very difficult to produce convincing art forgeries without the appropriate expertise. If a single individual desires skill in both written and artistic Aspects of Forgery, the two areas should be treated as separate expertises.

Forgery can be detected by personas with an appropriate Forgery or Knowledge Aspect (such as bronze sculpture or illuminated manuscripts). Detection is treated as Challenged Trial; the Degree of Success of the detection Trial is compared to the Degree of Success of the original Forgery Trial. In certain situations, Savvy can also be used to detect Forgeries. The Mythguide should determine whether Savvy is relevant; such Trials are usually more Difficult than knowledge-based Trials.

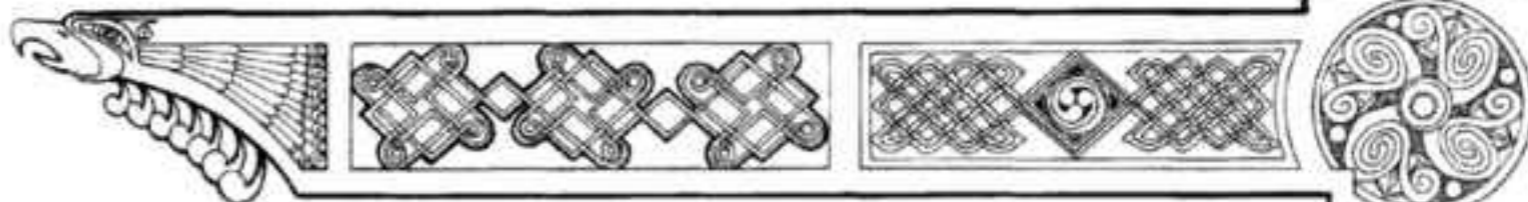
Possible Aspects: writing (calligraphy, handwriting, legal documents and writs, etc.), clay and wax seals, artwork (painting, carving, sculpture, drawing)

HEALING

Primary Element: Wisdom

Facets: Intel., Percept., Intuition, Man. Dexterity

This Aptitude represents a familiarity with the treatment and diagnosis of various illnesses, diseases, and injuries. Diagnosis is the correct identification of a particular condition while treatment indicates the knowledge to effectively heal an injury or affliction. Treatments include such actions as binding and cauterizing wounds, setting bones, and primitive surgery (chirurgery). Treatment also includes the proper administration of medications, herbs, and poultices to



Disguise

<p>Modifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target is familiar with persona wearing Disguise (knows voice, mannerisms, etc.) Target has seen persona out of Disguise (has heard voice, seen movement, etc.) Target is intimate with persona (spouse or friend) Persona Disguised as member of another gender Disguise consists of diverse Physical Characteristics (Coloring, Physique, Height, Frame, etc.) Disguise is a member of different Heritage group Disguise is a member of the same Heritage group Disguise is different Age Category from persona 	<p>Hindrance</p> <p>Slight Hindrance</p> <p>Considerable Hindrance</p> <p>Benefit</p> <p>Slight to Significant Benefit</p> <p>Slight Benefit</p> <p>Slight Hindrance</p> <p>Benefit</p>
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Note: The Mythguide may allow a persona to enhance a Disguise by using the Performance or Improvisation expertises while wearing the Disguise.

Forgery

<p>Modifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persona has the object of Forgery to work from Persona has a copy of original Persona is very familiar with object of Forgery, but does not have object in his possession Persona is familiar with object, but must work from memory Persona is unfamiliar with object, and must work from a description Persona has exceptional resources or tools Persona does not have necessary materials or tools Persona is familiar with style of object (art) or writing (written works) Persona is unfamiliar with style or writing 	<p>Benefit</p> <p>Slight Benefit</p> <p>Hindrance</p> <p>Cons Hindrance</p> <p>Severe Hindrance</p> <p>Benefit</p> <p>Slight to Severe Hindrance</p> <p>Benefit</p> <p>Slight Hindrance</p>
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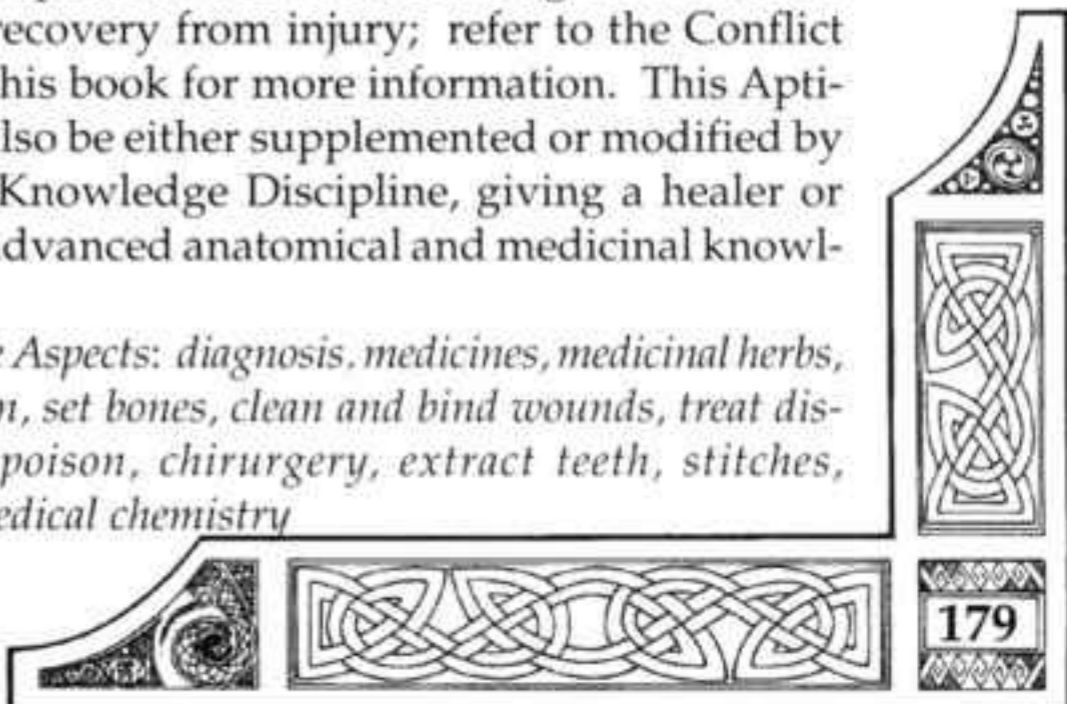
Note: Depending on the nature of the material, the Mythguide might rule that a persona cannot Forge a document or item that the persona is not able to refer to for reference. It is usually easier to work from memory when Forging art objects than when Forging written works.

facilitate the healing and recovery processes. A Marginal Success might cause a serious disease to slow its progress while an Extraordinary Success could totally eradicate both the disease and any damage or side effects it had already caused.

The precise application methods of this Aptitude depend on the Aspects chosen. Obviously, it takes far longer to perform rudimentary surgery than to administer a medicinal tea. Separate diagnosis and treatment Trials may be required, or a single Trial can be used for the entire Healing process. The Mythguide and player should use their own judgment when uti-

lizing this Aptitude, and the Mythguide should assign Difficulty based on the situation and the treatment or diagnosis required. Successful Healing Trials affect a persona's recovery from injury; refer to the Conflict section of this book for more information. This Aptitude may also be either supplemented or modified by a Medical Knowledge Discipline, giving a healer or physician advanced anatomical and medicinal knowledge.

Possible Aspects: diagnosis, medicines, medicinal herbs, cauterization, set bones, clean and bind wounds, treat disease, treat poison, surgery, extract teeth, stitches, anatomy, medical chemistry



Intrigue

Primary Element: Charisma

Facets: Communication, Intelligence, Wisdom, Perception

Intrigue represents the ability to gather important information through subtle pressure, diversionary interaction, or intelligent plotting. It allows personas to separate useful fact from idle gossip and often focuses on a particular region, area, or institution (a royal court, for example). A persona with this Aptitude knows who has access to specific types of information; more importantly, he knows what sort of actions or deals are required to obtain it.

Personal or family contacts, favors, or secret knowledges can affect the outcome of an Intrigue Trial. The Politics and Knowledge Disciplines will also modify an Intrigue Trial if they are relevant. For example, a persona will be able to gather information much more easily if he has a specific Discipline relating to it (such as Knowledge of noble family relationships or a firm grasp of an area's Politics). If the Mythguide decides something is relevant, it can be used as a modifier to the final Trial's Difficulty. The results of a particular Trial and its Degree of Success depend on the individual situation. A Marginal Success usually indicates the acquisition of a peripheral or slightly useful piece of information, while a Mythic Success could yield information that would topple a kingdom.

Intrigue is also one of the five expertises that can govern Leverage Pools.

Possible Aspects: politics, criminal, specific society, culture, city, town, court, or institution, criminal dealings, gossip, a specific Status Archetype in a specific region

Leadership

Primary Element: Charisma

Facets: Communication, Intelligence, Wisdom, Logic

Leadership represents the ability to command respect and delegate authority. This Aptitude should not be confused with Charisma (although Charisma is its Primary Element). Charisma embodies a persona's general magnetism, while Leadership takes this ephemeral quality of fascination and adds to it a foundation of confidence and authority. True Leadership is an amalgamation of natural Charisma, a confident and ordered mind, and practical experience.

Leadership can be used either to persuade others to follow orders or to dissuade them from taking certain courses of action. The Mythguide should interpret a Leadership Trial's Degree of Success based on the individual situation. A Complete Success might allow a persona to lead a group of followers into a breach in an ally's line, while a Mythic Success would allow a persona to lead her followers happily off a cliff.

A successful Leadership Trial also allows a persona to influence certain Personality and Attribute Trials by modifying their Difficulty. For example, a follower is consumed by a Passion for revenge and a persona exercises his Leadership to prevent the follower from running off to act on his Passion. The Degree of Success of the Leadership Trial is subtracted from the Difficulty of the follower's Personality Trial (minus one for a Marginal Success, two for a Complete Success, etc.).

Leadership is also one of the five expertises that can govern Leverage Pools.

Possible Aspects: military, a specific Status Archetype, class, or cultural group, individuals, large groups, organizations, entire states or environments

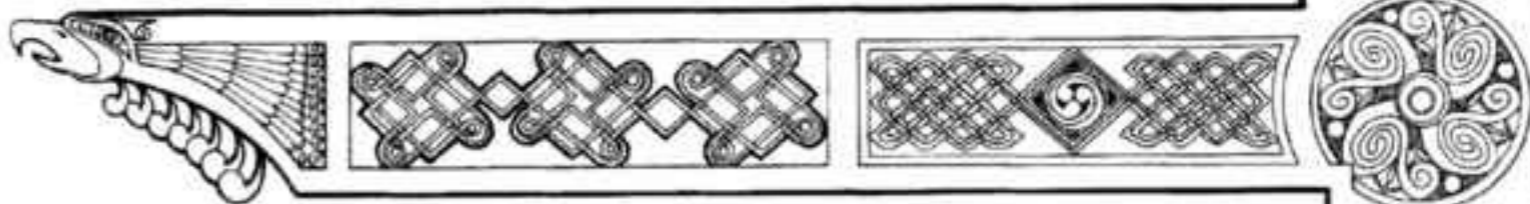
Manipulation

Primary Element: Manual Dexterity

Facets: Quickness, Intelligence, Perception, Intuition

This Aptitude contains all Aspects that involve manual or digital manipulation to some extent. These include sleight of hand and concealment maneuvers (such as making an object 'disappear' or picking someone's pocket) and mechanism handling maneuvers (such as setting and disarming traps, picking locks, or manipulating other types of small mechanisms). In certain instances tools may be required for the effective use of this Aptitude; the Mythguide should modify Difficulty accordingly if the proper implements are unavailable. This Aptitude is affected by the Physical Penalty.

When using this Aptitude to trick the eye or steal something, a Challenged Trial is normally made against the victim's Observation Aptitude or Perception Attribute (although Savvy and Manipulation can further modify the Trial). Obviously the Difficulty of the Trial increases if the object of the Trial is on another person's body (such as a purse hanging from a belt). If this Aptitude is used to work or figure out a mechanism, the Mythguide should assign the mechanism a base Difficulty. Other modifiers could apply



Manipulation

If Target is actively attempting to catch the persona, a Challenged Trial against the Target's Observation or Savvy may resolve the attempt. If the Target is not using expertise to catch the persona, the following modifiers apply to the attempt.

Sleight of Hand/ Concealment Modifiers:

Target aware of attempt
 Target is suspicious of persona
 Target has poor Interaction
 Stance toward persona
 Target has good Interaction
 Stance toward persona
 Condition of clothing (i.e.
 deep pockets, no pockets,
 many folds, a wide belt, etc.)
 Distractions (crowd, noise, etc.)
 Size and complexity of attempt
 (unwieldy object, moving parts, etc.)

Considerable Hindrance
 Hindrance

 Slight Hindrance

 Benefit

 Cons. Hind. to Cons. Benefit
 Slight to Consid. Benefit

 Variable

Disarm/Crack Mechanism Modifiers:

Lock/Trap well-constructed
 Lock/Trap poorly constructed
 Persona has appropriate tools
 Persona familiar with type
 of mechanism
 Persona has experience with
 identical mechanism

Slight to Severe Hindrance
 Slight to Significant Benefit
 Benefit

 Slight to Consid. Benefit

 Benefit to Significant Benefit

as well, but this form of Manipulation Trial is treated as a Refined Trial.

Possible Aspects: sleight of hand, legerdemain, petty theft, concealment (on person), pick pockets, set mechanism (lock, trap, other), disarm/crack mechanism (lock, trap, other)

A persona's current level of health or injury affects the Difficulty of a Meditation Trial.

Possible Aspects: relaxation, centering and concentration, devotion or prayer, psychological control (resist pain, control fear, etc.), physical recovery

Meditation

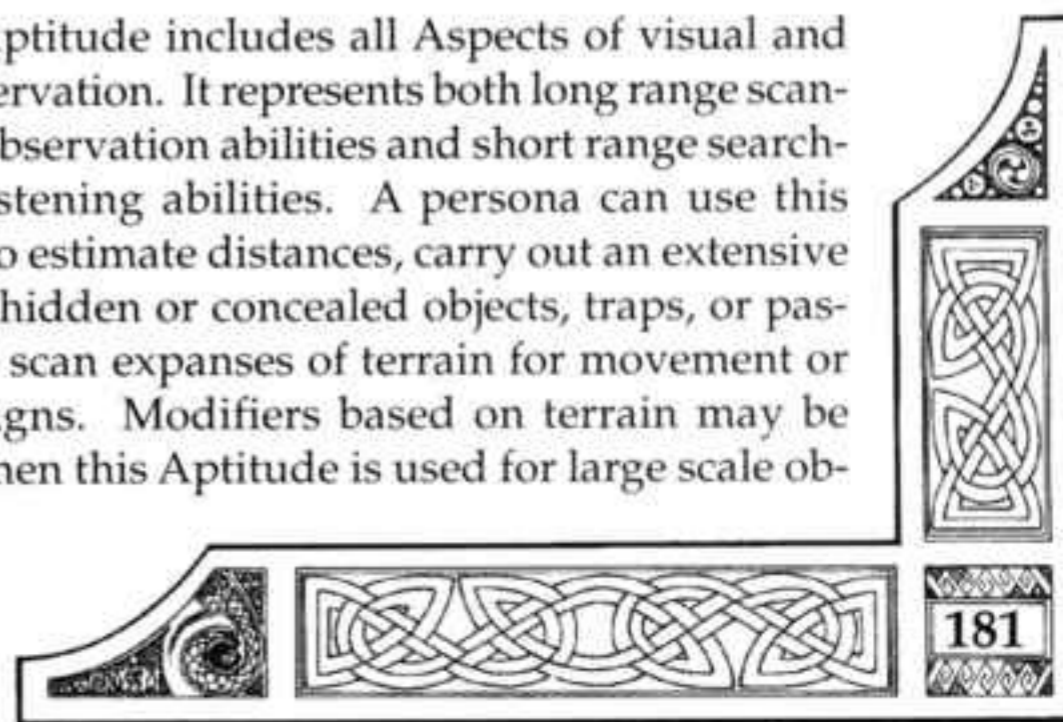
Primary Element: Willpower
Facets: Empathy, Wisdom, Intelligence, Intuition

This Aptitude allows a persona to focus the mind inward, drawing quiet strength and rejuvenation from a process of mental centering and total relaxation. A persona deep in Meditation can ignore most peripheral outside sounds and distractions. This Aptitude is useful when trying to resist pain or recover from Fatigue. It can also be used to affect Concentration, and is therefore valuable for individuals who use magic.

Observation

Primary Element: Perception
Facets: Wisdom, Intelligence, Logic, Intuition

This Aptitude includes all Aspects of visual and audial observation. It represents both long range scanning and observation abilities and short range searching and listening abilities. A persona can use this Aptitude to estimate distances, carry out an extensive search for hidden or concealed objects, traps, or passages, and scan expanses of terrain for movement or unusual signs. Modifiers based on terrain may be applied when this Aptitude is used for large scale ob-



Observation

Notice Obvious Change or Clue in Surroundings	2
Notice Subtle Change or Clue in Surroundings	6
Notice Miniscule Change or Clue in Surroundings	10
Notice Hidden (person, item, or structure)	Challenged Trial based on Success with which item or individual is Hidden
Estimate Distance	2
Recognize/Interpret Sound	2

Other Modifiers:

General

Active Observation use normal modifiers
Passive Observation Slight Hindrance

Observation

Limited Visibility
Darkness Severe Hindrance
Smoke/Fog/Mist Considerable Hindrance
Heavy Rain/Snow Considerable Hindrance
Light Rain Hindrance
Partial or half light Hindrance
Surroundings/Terrain completely unfamiliar Hindrance
Surroundings/Terrain somewhat familiar Slight Benefit
Surroundings/Terrain completely familiar Benefit
Target clashes with Surroundings (bright color, etc.) Benefit
Target blends with Surroundings Hindrance to Consid. Hind.
Target partly concealed Hindrance
Target fully concealed Cons. or Severe Hindrance
Target a familiar thing or individual Slight Benefit
Target is completely unfamiliar Slight Hindrance
Any appropriate Enhanced or Diminished
Sense Background Aspects Variable

Listening

Target sound is the only sound Benefit
Target sound heard amidst slight noise Slight Hindrance
Target sound heard amidst normal noise
(light conversation among several normal voices) Hindrance
Target sound heard amidst loud noise Considerable Hindrance
Target sound heard amidst a large and loud crowd Severe Hindrance
Target sound familiar or easily recognizable Benefit
Target sound unfamiliar Slight Hindrance
Target sound similar to other common sounds Hindrance
Sound is heard through light barrier (curtain) Slight Hindrance
Sound is heard through medium barrier (wood door) Hindrance
Sound heard through heavy barrier (stone) Cons. to Severe Hindrance
Target sound is at high volume Slight to Significant Benefit
Target sound is at very low volume Slight to Severe Hindrance
Any appropriate Enhanced or Diminished
Sense Background Aspects Variable

Smell/Taste

Smell/Taste is common Benefit to Significant Benefit
Smell/Taste is rare Hind to Severe Hindrance
Persona attempting to sense amidst other
Smells/Tastes Hindrance to Cons Hind.
Any appropriate Enhanced or Diminished
Sense Background Aspects Variable

servation. Finally, Observation can also be used to listen intently for, interpret, and separate individual sounds or groups of sounds. It is also used to passively recognize sounds when not actively listening for them. A Marginal Success could alert a persona to the imminent approach of a group of individuals while an Extraordinary Success would alert a persona to the movement of a mouse behind a wall.

This Aptitude affects and is affected by several other expertises. Observation can be used to detect both Manipulation and Stealth attempts. In both cases, Challenged Trials are used (although outside modifiers can be applied to each side of the Trial). The circumstances surrounding a particular situation will dictate any additional modifiers. The amount of time spent on an Observation action also serves as modifier; a one minute scan tends to be more accurate than a five second scan.

Possible Aspects: search (specific terrain type, traps, concealed, hidden, etc.), scan (specific terrain type), estimate distance, scout (terrain, climate, etc.), listen, interpret sound (specific type or category)

PERFORMANCE

Primary Element: Charisma

Facets: Comm., Intelligence, Wisdom, Man. Dexterity

This Aptitude includes any art form that is performed before an audience. Examples of such art forms are singing, acting, juggling, and playing musical instruments. A player should detail a persona's specific talents in the form of appropriate Aspects. For example, an Acting Aspect allows a persona to assume a fictitious role or imitate an actual person, portraying either in a believable fashion. Actors can also control their emotions and mimic certain accents or mannerisms. Musicians are able to play one or more instruments, developing an extensive repertoire as their skill increases. Each Performance area should be represented by an individual Aspect.

The quality of a Performance and the enjoyment derived by an audience both depend on the Degree of Success of the Performance. In most general cases, a simple Refined Trial is sufficient. However, if a persona is trying to convince someone of something (that she is another person, for instance), or if a single Performance is unusually important, a Challenged Trial might be appropriate. The Mythguide should decide what Attribute or expertise (Savvy, Perception, etc.) is used by the target of a Challenged Trial. At the



Mythguide's option, a method similar to that used for Artistic Expression reactions could also be used.

Possible Aspects: acting (comedy, tragedy, monologue, etc.), juggling, narration, recitation, mime, ventriloquism, singing, play instrument (specific instrument, instrument family), music improvisation

Riding

Primary Element: Agility

Facets: Strength, Empathy, Willpower, Man. Dexterity

This Aptitude covers all Aspects of riding and mounted action. It allows a persona to either maintain or reestablish control of an animal under difficult or stressful circumstances. It also permits an individual to coax an animal into unusual or untrained maneuvers. The ability to ride each breed or species of mount is normally purchased as a separate Aspect. A Marginal Success represents tenuous control in a dangerous situation while an Extraordinary Success would allow a persona to jump his horse through a

ring of flame. This Aptitude may be affected by the Physical Penalty.

The relationship that develops between a rider and mount is often close; when a persona begins riding a new mount, the persona's effective Riding Rank is reduced by one for a period of several weeks (the precise amount of adaption time is left to the discretion of the Mythguide).

Possible Aspects: combat maneuvering, riding (specific type or breed of mount), trick riding, precision or coordinated riding

Seduction

Primary Element: Charisma

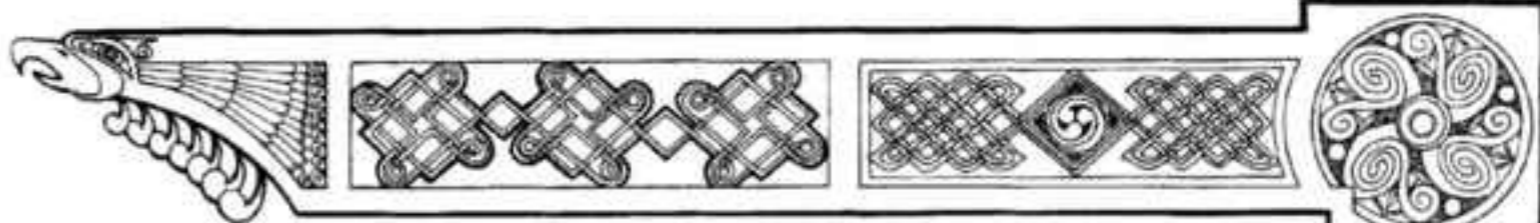
Facets: Appearance, Percept., Wisdom, Empathy

Seduction is used to make a chosen individual romantically vulnerable and susceptible to further advances. This Aptitude is often used to persuade or influence the object of the Seduction; it plays on the raw emotions and base attractions of the parties involved. The principal difference between this and other persuasion Talents and Aptitudes is one of technique. All Seduction attempts are romantically based, and are thus both more personal and more familiar. If this Aptitude is being used to convince or gather information, it is usually effective because the subject truly wants to cooperate. After all, love is blind and a successful Seduction creates a romantic connection (either lasting or short term) between the parties.

The Mythguide may allow a single Seduction Trial to resolve an entire encounter or situation, or the Seduction process can be divided into several stages. Each Trial should be resolved as a Challenged Trial, with the target's Savvy or Seduction used as the resisting expertise. Other Attributes (Wisdom or Intuition, for example) can also be used to resist Seduction advances. If the Seduction is ultimately successful, the final Degree of Success will determine the nature of the success. A Marginal Success indicates suspicious receptivity while an Extraordinary Success might mean the subject has fallen completely in love with the persona.

Possible Aspects: specific type of individual, flatterer, good listener, specific social class or personality type, forceful, sensitive





Stealth

Primary Element: Agility

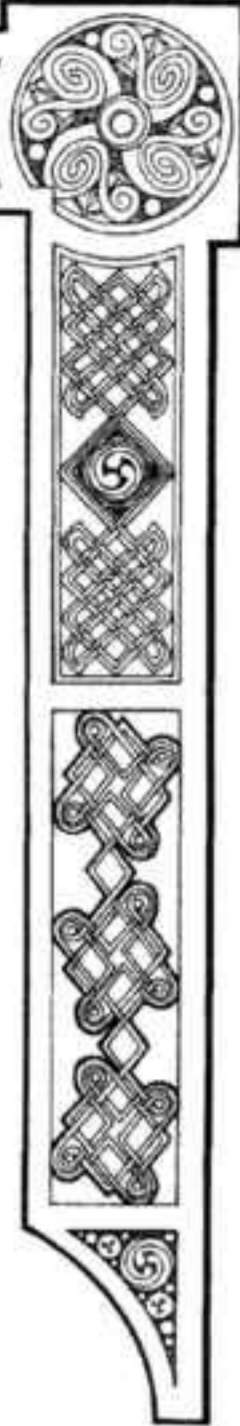
Facets: Quickness, Perception, Wisdom, Intuition

This Aptitude describes a persona's ability to avoid detection by both moving silently and hiding from possible observers. Surroundings and terrain always affect this Aptitude; it is easier to sneak across a lush carpet than along a trail of dried brush, just as it is easier to hide amidst heavy foliage than in an open field. The Mythguide should modify a Stealth Trial based on any relevant environmental considerations. This Aptitude can also be used to secretly follow or shadow another individual. This does not impart an ability to track; a target must remain more or less in sight to be successfully shadowed.

If a persona practicing Stealth is not being actively sought, a simple Refined Trial indicates the success of a Stealth attempt. If a persona is being specifically sought, or if a general area search might uncover his hiding place, a Challenged Trial (based on the searcher's Observation Aptitude) is necessary. A persona trying to move while remaining hidden will have several levels added to his Stealth Trial's Difficulty (in addition to any environment modifiers).

A persona attempting to follow someone must make a Refined Trial to determine success. If the persona being shadowed suspects a pursuer and tries to lose him, a Challenged Trial becomes necessary. Hindrances such as large weapons or metal armor may also affect the Difficulty of a Stealth Trial. This Aptitude may be subject to the Physical Penalty.

Possible Aspects: hiding (specific environment or terrain type), moving silently (specific environment or terrain type), sneak (in presence of others), stalk (in particular environment or surroundings), shadow (in crowds)



the quarry, or the Mythguide might require separate Trials for different legs of the pursuit. Environmental conditions also serve as a primary modifier to Tracking Trials.

This Aptitude can also be used to cover tracks or obscure passage. If a persona is trying to track someone who is obscuring their trail, it is handled as a Challenged Trial. The amount of time spent studying a trail can also serve as a modifier to a subsequent Tracking Trial.

Possible Aspects: specific creature or vehicle, specific environment (forest, plains, mountains, city streets, etc.), specific climate or weather conditions

Tracking

Primary Element: Perception

Facets: Wisdom, Intuition, Intelligence, Logic

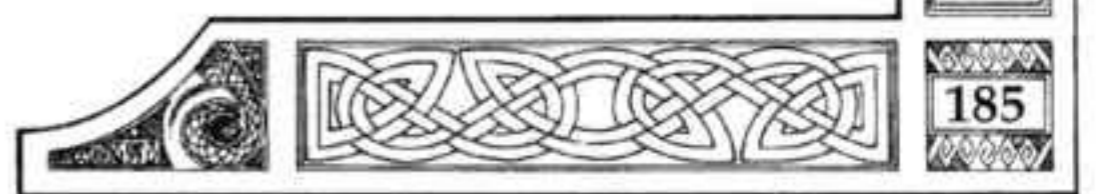
This Aptitude allows a persona to read and identify recognizable signs and trails. A persona with the Tracking Aptitude is able to follow such physical evidence of passage (left by any creature, human or otherwise), although the Difficulty of the Trial may be modified by the type of creature being followed, its size, and its intelligence (i.e. can it cover its trail?). A single Trial might be enough to allow a persona to find

Transport

Primary Element: Agility

Facets: Strength, Man. Dexterity, Endurance, Wisdom

This Aptitude allows a persona to effectively handle and operate a specified mode of Transport. Transport Trials are modified by both environmental and situational considerations, and are usually neces-



Stealth

Stealth attempts are resolved as Challenged Trials against a possible observer's Observation expertise. The following Difficulty modifiers may be applied.

Modifiers:	Hiding/Sneaking	
	Limited Visibility	
	Darkness	Significant Benefit
	Smoke/Fog/Mist	Considerable Benefit
	Heavy Rain/Snow	Considerable Benefit
	Light Rain	Benefit
	Partial or half light	Benefit
	Bright light (sunny day)	Hindrance
	Crowd	Benefit to Cons. Benefit
	Distractions (other movement, fighting, etc.)	Slight to Cons. Benefit
	Cover	
	None (open ground)	Considerable Hindrance
	Slight (light foliage/ground cover)	Slight Hindrance
	Minimal (small trees/brush)	Slight Benefit
	Appreciable (light forest)	Benefit
	Heavy (jungle)	Considerable Benefit
	Move Silently	
	Background Noise	
	None	Slight Hindrance
	Slight	Slight Benefit
	Normal	Benefit
	Loud (crowd, etc.)	Cons. to Sig Benefit
	Good Terrain (moss, grass, etc.)	Benefit
	Poor Terrain (dry twigs, gravel, etc.)	Hindrance
	Stalk/Shadow	reverse modifiers for Hide/Sneak (i.e. Benefit becomes Hindrance)

Tracking

The base Difficulty for any Tracking attempt is two. Apply the following modifiers to arrive at a final Difficulty. If a Target is attempting to cover its trail, the Tracking Attempt is made as Challenged Trial against the level of Success achieved by the quarry (usually in the Stealth expertise). Difficulty modifiers still apply.

Modifiers:	Trail is brand new (within the day)	Slight Benefit
	Trail is less than two days old	Slight Hindrance
	Trail is less than a week old	Hindrance
	Trail is more than a week old	Considerable to Severe Hind
	Conditions of Trail	
	Trail is untouched	Slight Benefit
	Trail has been disturbed	Slight to Cons Hindrance
	Each day of rain	Slight Hind (cumulative)
	Tracking with Limited Visibility (darkness, fog, rain, etc.)	Hindrance to Severe Hindrance
	Surface in which Trail is found	
	Hard and Unyielding (road)	Considerable to Severe Hindrance
	Average ground (dirt, foliage)	Slight Hindrance to Slight Benefit
	Yielding surface (mud, snow)	Benefit
	Amorphous surface (swamp)	Considerable to Severe Hindrance

sary only for stressful maneuvers or attempts whose outcome might be in question.

Possible Aspects: watercraft (boating, sailing, rowing, canoeing), land-based (wagons, carriages, sleds and sledges)

UNARMED COMBAT

Primary Element: variable

Facets: variable

This Aptitude represents ability in formal or trained Unarmed Combat techniques. Such techniques include wrestling, boxing, and martial arts. The uses of this expertise and the abilities imparted depend on the nature of the particular form of Unarmed Combat known. Each Narrative Environment supports different traditions of formal combat, both armed and unarmed. The Mythguide should detail the types and uses of Unarmed Combat in the environment being used. Refer to the Conflict section of this book for more information.

Possible Aspects: specific types, traditions, or forms depending on the culture or environment being used (i.e. a certain kind of martial art)

WEARING ARMOR

Primary Element: Agility

Facets: Strength, Endurance, Quickness, Wisdom

A persona with this Aptitude has extensive training and experience with a particular form or style of body armor. The persona is able to move and fight competently in the armor and understands both upkeep and simple repair. Personas without this Aptitude suffer certain disadvantages when acting in particular armor types.

The possession of this expertise lessens fatigue and encumbrance. For every Rank possessed, the total encumbrance of an armor form is reduced by 5 Encumbrance Grades. For example, at Rank 6 (Chainmail) encumbrance is reduced by 30 EG. The Wearing Armor aptitude provides greater mobility and allows a persona to get into and out of his armor in stressful or pressing situations. For more information on armor, its uses, and how this expertise relates to them, refer to the Conflict chapter of this book.

Possible Aspects: a specific construction style (Rigid, Semi-Rigid, or Soft), a particular form or type of armor



Wilderness

Primary Element: Perception
Facets: Intelligence, Wisdom, Intuition, Agility

The Wilderness Aptitude includes most wilderness and survival-related abilities and knowledges. It allows a persona to find edible plants and herbs in the wild, to light fires and construct shelters with naturally available materials, and to locate supplies of drinkable water. It can also represent the knowledge of hunting, fishing, and trapping techniques.

The Mythguide should assign appropriate modifiers based on environmental conditions and specific Aspects. A Marginal Success might indicate the discovery of a single nourishing plant while a Mythic Success could allow a persona to prepare an eight course meal with the results of a successful forage.

Possible Aspects: hunting (specific terrain type), fishing (stream, river, ocean, boat, drift net), trapping (snares, large traps), foraging (specific terrain, plants, herbs, roots, berries and nuts), survival (specific terrain, shelter, fire building), dowsing

Unique

Primary Element: variable
Facets: variable

Both players and Mythguides should add any Aptitudes they feel are necessary. Every Narrative Environment in the game is different, and most will require certain unusual or original Aptitudes. Unique Aptitudes are often created in conjunction with original magic and religious systems. The type and nature of the Aptitudes depend on the individual environment.

Disciplines

Disciplines are knowledges and abilities that are developed primarily through intense study, schooling, and training. Most Disciplines are actually Knowledges of one type or another, but several divisions are included to facilitate specific areas of play. For instance, although Politics is essentially a branch of the Knowledge Discipline, it is treated as a separate Discipline because of its importance to the development and understanding of Interactive Histories and their general theme of social interaction.

Unlike Talents and certain Aptitudes, a persona may not attempt to use a Discipline that he or she does not possess. Either someone has an appropriate knowledge base or they don't. A Discipline's base is found in the same manner as the bases of both Talents and Aptitudes, with one notable exception. Intelligence is the Primary Element of all Disciplines, but it can also be a Facet. Therefore a player can choose to use it twice when calculating a Discipline's Base. For example, the Base of a particular social Knowledge might use Intelligence twice and Wisdom once.

Wilderness

Inherent Resources in Environment	
Plentiful (lush forest, lake shore)	0
Average (river valleys, forests)	2
Barren (steppes, wastes)	5
Scarce (deserts, tundra)	8

Other Modifiers: Environment Conditions	
Normal	None
Better than normal (good weather, etc.)	Slight Benefit
Worse than normal (poor weather/climate)	Slight Hind.

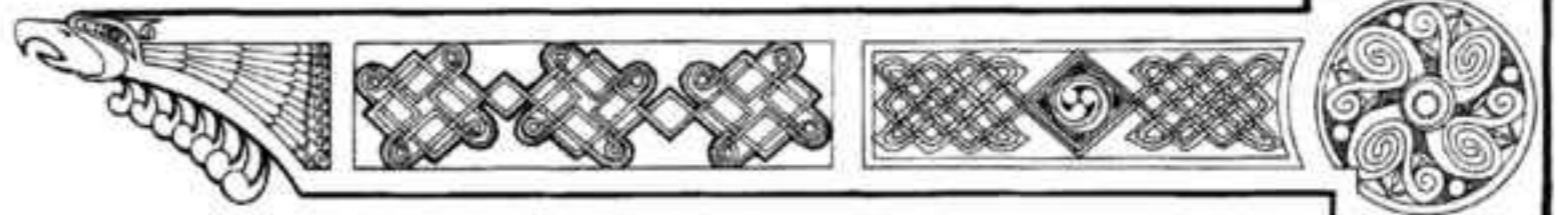
Persona Considerations	
Home Environment	Cons. Benefit
Familiar Environment	Benefit
Unfamiliar Environment	Hindrance
Persona averse to conditions (i.e. a desert dweller trying to survive at the ice cap)	
	Cons. to Severe Hindrance



Etiquette

Primary Element: Intelligence
Facets: Wisdom, Intuition, Comm., Intelligence

Etiquette is the knowledge of acceptable, proper, or formal behavior in a certain social environment. This Discipline allows a persona to interact correctly and without causing offense in most situations. Etiquette can be very important in the realm of diplomacy; delicate political negotiations often hinge on a



fundamental mutual understanding of custom and tradition.

The Difficulty of an Etiquette Trial depends on a persona's familiarity with a specific Aspect of Etiquette. Complete familiarity with one element of a culture might bestow peripheral familiarity with another segment of the culture. A Marginal Success might indicate a slight social misstep while an Extraordinary Success might allow a persona's impeccable manners to favorably influence those around him. High Degrees of Success can also affect other social Trials (such as Influence, Elocution, or Seduction Trials) made during the same event, situation, or encounter. The precise modifiers should be determined by the Mythguide.

Possible Aspects: a particular society, culture, race, or species, a particular class of society or status archetype, a specific order or organization, trivia or unique customs



HISTORY

Primary Element: Intelligence

Facets: Intelligence, Logic, Wisdom, Intuition

This Discipline represents either general or specific history, and is described by individual Aspects. History includes knowledge of timelines, crucial developments and innovation, major figures and events, and social relationships and theory. History Trials are made to recall specific facts or general concepts, with the Difficulty of such Trials depending on the nature and obscurity of the knowledge desired.

Possible Aspects: native, social or cultural, technological, specific race or species, legal, specific environment (city, town, region, county, etc.), political, religious (specify religion), magic (theory, order, college, etc.)

Knowledge

Primary Element: Intelligence

Facets: Intelligence, Wisdom, Logic, Intuition

This Discipline represents more of a large range of possibility than anything concrete. Certain Knowledges have been separated out for the purposes of the game (Politics, History, Lore); everything else belongs under this Discipline. Knowledge Disciplines include many diverse fields of study, science, and learning, and often depend on the environment in which they operate. For example, persona is not sim-

ply conversant in astronomy; he has knowledge of astronomy in a particular world or environment, and possibly of the stars in only a single hemisphere (assuming a round world) or region. The degree of a Discipline's concentration is left to the Mythguide. It should be neither too focused nor too broad, but it should always be unique to a persona's environment.

Knowledges serve to round out a persona's knowledge and familiarity with his world, society, race, or culture. Since the players do not actually live in the persona's world, Knowledges become a gauge of what a persona would know or recall in a certain situation. A Knowledge Trial is made when a persona needs to make a decision based on what he might know about a particular subject. The obscurity of the knowledge in relation to the persona's Aspect determines the Trial's Difficulty. A Marginal Success might indicate the memory of a fact closely related to the actual knowledge sought while an Extraordinary Success could indicate recall of many important associated facts.

Possible Aspects: science (astronomy, mathematics, medicine), heraldry, humanities (fine arts, specific artistic styles or periods), bureaucracy, religion (specify faith and knowledge areas), magic (theory, specific types or orders), agriculture and husbandry (specific terrain, animals, or techniques, viticulture), customs (race, culture, society), car-



Language Expertise (Fluency)

Rank	Description
1	Rudimentary ability. The persona understands only basic words and concepts. 'Where place?' (makes fighting gestures)
2	Basic ability. The persona can verbalize entire thoughts and has developed a simple vocabulary. 'Where is fight place?'
3	Adequate ability. The persona is able to speak in full sentences and employ basic grammar. 'Where is the building with the fights?'
4	Assured Communication. The persona understands most essential grammar and has developed a reasonable vocabulary. 'Where is the arena?'
5	Near Fluency. The persona understands most aspects of the spoken language. 'Could you please direct me to the arena. Thanks.' This is the ability of most native speakers.
6	Fluent. The persona has the facility of a average native speaker, but may still have an accent if not a native. 'Excuse me, but would you happen to know where the arena is? Thank you. Have a nice afternoon.'
7	Advanced Fluency. The persona understands advanced grammar and enjoys a good vocabulary. 'Excuse me, sir, but I would be grateful if you could direct me to the arena. Thank you so much.' This is the facility of most educated natives.
8	Extensive Knowledge. The persona has an extensive grasp of the spoken language and commands an impressive vocabulary. 'I don't wish to bother you, friend, but I would be in your eternal debt if you could provide directions to this city's fabled arena.' A foreign persona who achieves this level of Fluency has little or no accent.
9	Scholarly Ability. The persona has the faculties of a true scholar, and enjoys an exhaustive grasp of the language's finer nuances. A persona with this level of ability can always pass for a native (no Trial).
10	Mastery. This is the language of the true grammarian. Few possess such ability.

tography, law (specific area), astrology, mythology and folklore (specify), occult, a specific region or area (countryside, town, etc.)

Language

Primary Element: Intelligence

Facets: Logic, Wisdom, Intuition, Intelligence

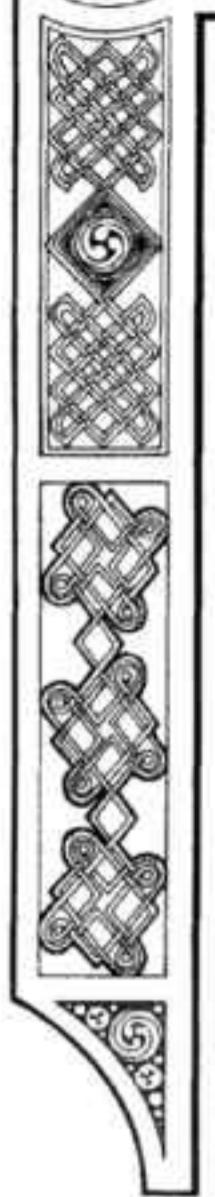
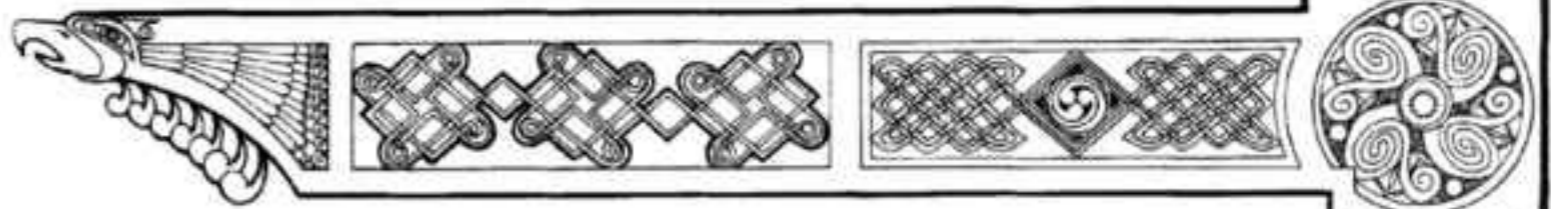
This Discipline represents the ability to speak a particular language. The accompanying table details the various levels Fluency and the meaning of each expertise Rank in game terms. The Language Rank itself serves as a general indicator of a persona's ability to communicate without misspeaking or reaching for the proper words. A persona's Elocution Aptitude Rank can never exceed the Language Rank of the language being used.

If two individuals possess at least Assured Communication (Rank 4) in a language, they are normally able to communicate without the need for any Trials. A Trial can become necessary if someone tries to articulate a complex or elaborate idea, or if they enter a situation that places undue stress on their Language facility (such as certain communication oriented Talents and Aptitudes).

However, if one party of a conversation has a Rank 3 or less in a Language, the Mythguide may want to require periodic Trials to check for misunderstandings or miscommunication between the parties. If the unskilled individual receives any Degree of Failure, the other person may fail to understand them altogether. On the other hand, each Success Grade above Complete allows a persona to sound as if he were speaking at the next highest level of Fluency. For example, if a persona has a Rank 6 Language Discipline and receives an Extraordinary Success, listeners perceive a Rank 8 speaker. The persona may simply have gotten lucky and known most of the necessary grammar and vocabulary.

Languages can also be organized into larger families that use culturally similar roots. Personas automatically have a family Rank four levels below the Rank of a specific Language. A persona can attempt to understand other languages that are part of the same family at the family's Rank. A persona always speaks his Native Language at Rank 6 or higher.

Possible Aspects: particular dialects (based on class, status, region, etc.), fast speech, impressive vocabulary, colorful phraseology, grammarian



Lore

Primary Element: Intelligence

Facets: Intelligence, Wisdom, Intuition, Empathy

Lore Disciplines are knowledges that concentrate on natural topic areas. They represent knowledge and familiarity of such areas, and allow a persona to identify various natural phenomena and their effects. For instance, a persona with Herb Lore can identify specific herbs and their uses for cooking, medicine, or ritual. The Discipline also imparts knowledge regarding proper growing conditions, reproduction methods, and ideal habitats for these useful plants. Mineral Lore gives a persona geological knowledge, allowing him to search in appropriate areas for specific lodes, veins, or outcroppings. It also gives him the ability to identify specific minerals and their uses. The Mythguide should determine the precise areas of knowledge covered by an individual Lore. Lore Trials are made in the same manner and under the same circumstances as Knowledge Trials.

Possible Aspects: Plant, Herb, Mineral, Animal, Weather, Poison, Magic, Mythic Beasts, Ocean, a particular climate, region, or terrain for any Lore

Military

Primary Element: Intelligence

Facets: Intelligence, Wisdom, Logic, Intuition

This Discipline includes all aspects of practical Military knowledge. It allows a persona to effectively

plan, organize, and direct a large scale battle or campaign. A Tactics Aspect represents a specific knowledge of battle and coordinated unit action (unit maneuvers and formations, reserve and support movement, etc.). It allows a battlefield commander to analyze troop position and morale, and to make the best tactical decisions possible based on available information. This Discipline is very effective when combined with the Leadership Aptitude, and can be used to affect large scale battles during Interactive Histories.

A Strategy Aspect allows a persona to plan and execute entire campaigns. It includes contingency planning in areas such as long term supply, observation and reconnaissance, and travel and engagement strategy. An army requires a well-defined strategy to survive an extended campaigning season on foreign soil. This Aspect can affect certain long term actions during the development of an Interactive History.

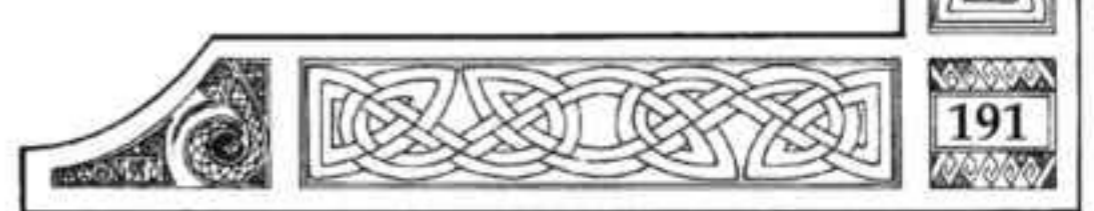
Possible Aspects: tactics (field, unit, specific terrain, formations), strategy (supply and logistics, reconnaissance, engagement entrance strategies, reserve and baggage)

Politics

Primary Element: Intelligence

Facets: Intelligence, Wisdom, Logic, Intuition

This Discipline represents a specific knowledge of the politics of a particular region, state, or society. Politics includes familiarity with both an area's political history and its current political state of affairs. This Discipline can be very useful when combined with practical political expertises such as Diplomacy, Intrigue, Influence, and Elocution. In situations where





political knowledge is very important, it can serve as a modifier to the Difficulty of a particular social or persuasion based Expertise Trial. Politics Trials are made in the same manner as Knowledge Trials. This Discipline also comes into play when developing Interactive Histories.

Possible Aspects: a particular area, region, state, culture, or race, a specific segment or class of society, a specific organization, history, current affairs, rumor

Research

Primary Element: Intelligence
Facets: Intelligence, Wisdom, Logic, Intuition

This Discipline allows a persona to locate specific information through a variety of methods and sources. Library use and study are the most common methods, but a persona can also investigate in other ways. Depending on the nature of the Research, the persona might want to see something in person (a particular architectural style, for example) or interview selected

individuals. Regardless of the methods employed, the goal remains the acquisition of information.

A Research Trial's Degree of Success defines the amount and relevance of the information found. A Complete Success normally yields what the persona is looking for (but little more). An Extraordinary Success might also provide some obscure related information that turns out to be crucially important. The Trial's Difficulty should be modified by the nature and accessibility of the original information sought. This Discipline can be useful for practitioners of the magical or esoteric arts.

Possible Aspects: library use, investigation, practical (interviews and mundane writings)

Script

Primary Element: Intelligence
Facets: Intelligence, Wisdom, Intuition, Logic

This Discipline indicates literacy and allows a persona to read and write a specific alphabet or language. The ability to read and write a particular language is often developed independently of the ability to speak the language. The result is that some people are able to speak a language without being literate in the language's associated Script. The reverse can also be true (i.e. a persona who can write and read well but not speak). The two Disciplines are not connected in Aria, and must be developed separately.

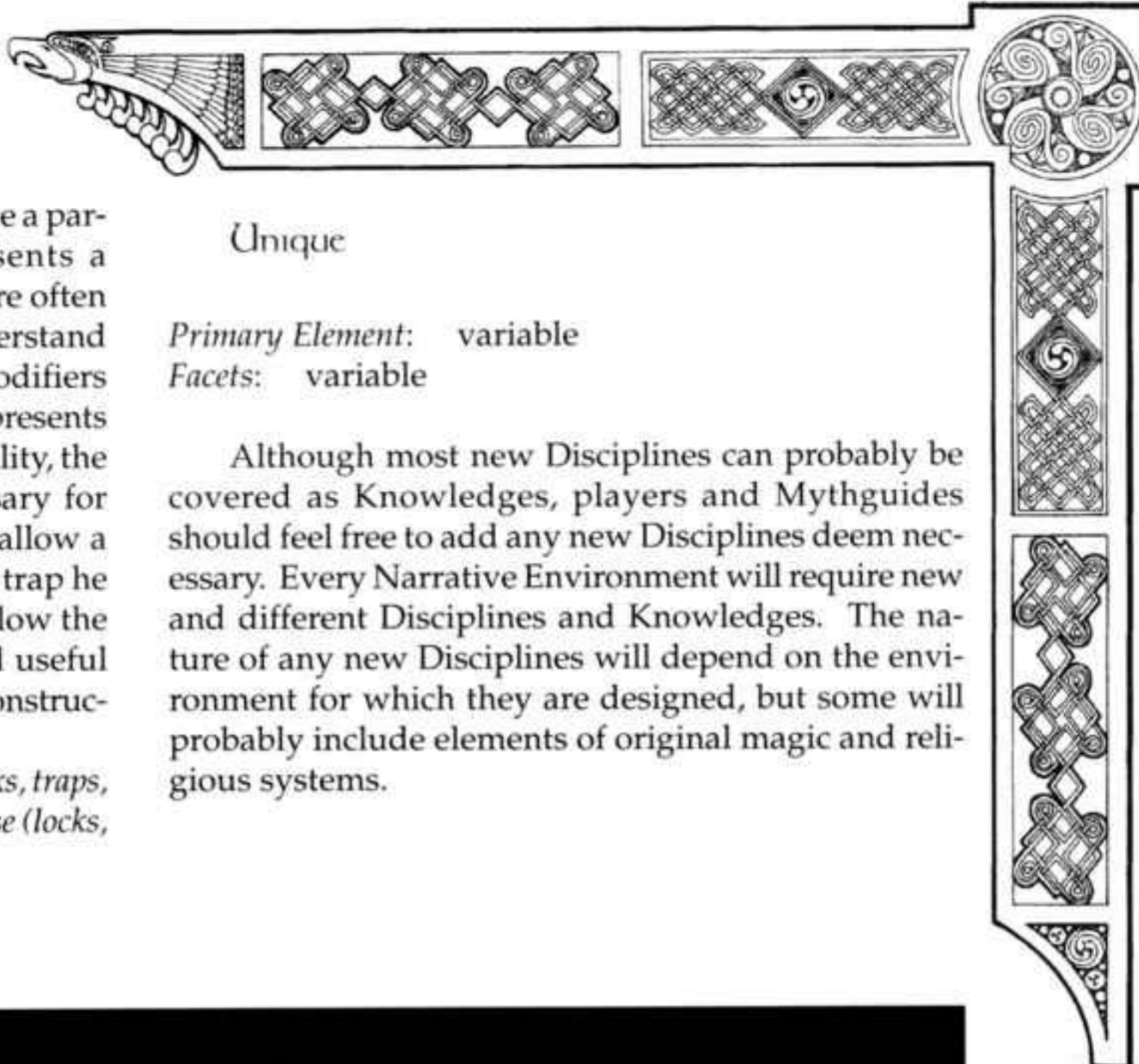
A persona must develop the Script Discipline for each Language he wishes to read or write. Languages that use a common alphabet must be learned separately. Languages in the same family impart a slight benefit; a persona can read and write a similar language at a Rank five levels below his Rank in a specific Language. A persona is not necessarily able to read and write his Native Language.

Possible Aspects: native, specific Language, very neat, calligraphy or special scripts, unspoken or ancient scripts

Understand Mechanism

Primary Element: Intelligence
Facets: Perception, Intuition, Wisdom, Logic

This Discipline allows a persona to understand, design, and construct intricate mechanisms. It assumes an innate knowledge of such devices and is further described by specific Aspects. Understand Mechanism



represents the knowledge to alter or manipulate a particular mechanism; Manipulation represents a persona's practical ability to do so. The two are often used in conjunction with each other, and Understand Mechanism can impart positive Difficulty modifiers to Manipulation Trials. Since this Discipline represents knowledge and information more than real ability, the possession of appropriate tools is not necessary for successful Trials. A Complete Success might allow a persona to build a working replica of a certain trap he had seen. An Extraordinary Success would allow the same persona to make several innovative and useful improvements to the trap's design during the construction process.

Possible Aspects: understand or assemble (locks, traps, snares, gear or wheel based mechanisms, etc.), devise (locks, traps, new configurations)

Unique

Primary Element: variable

Facets: variable

Although most new Disciplines can probably be covered as Knowledges, players and Mythguides should feel free to add any new Disciplines deem necessary. Every Narrative Environment will require new and different Disciplines and Knowledges. The nature of any new Disciplines will depend on the environment for which they are designed, but some will probably include elements of original magic and religious systems.





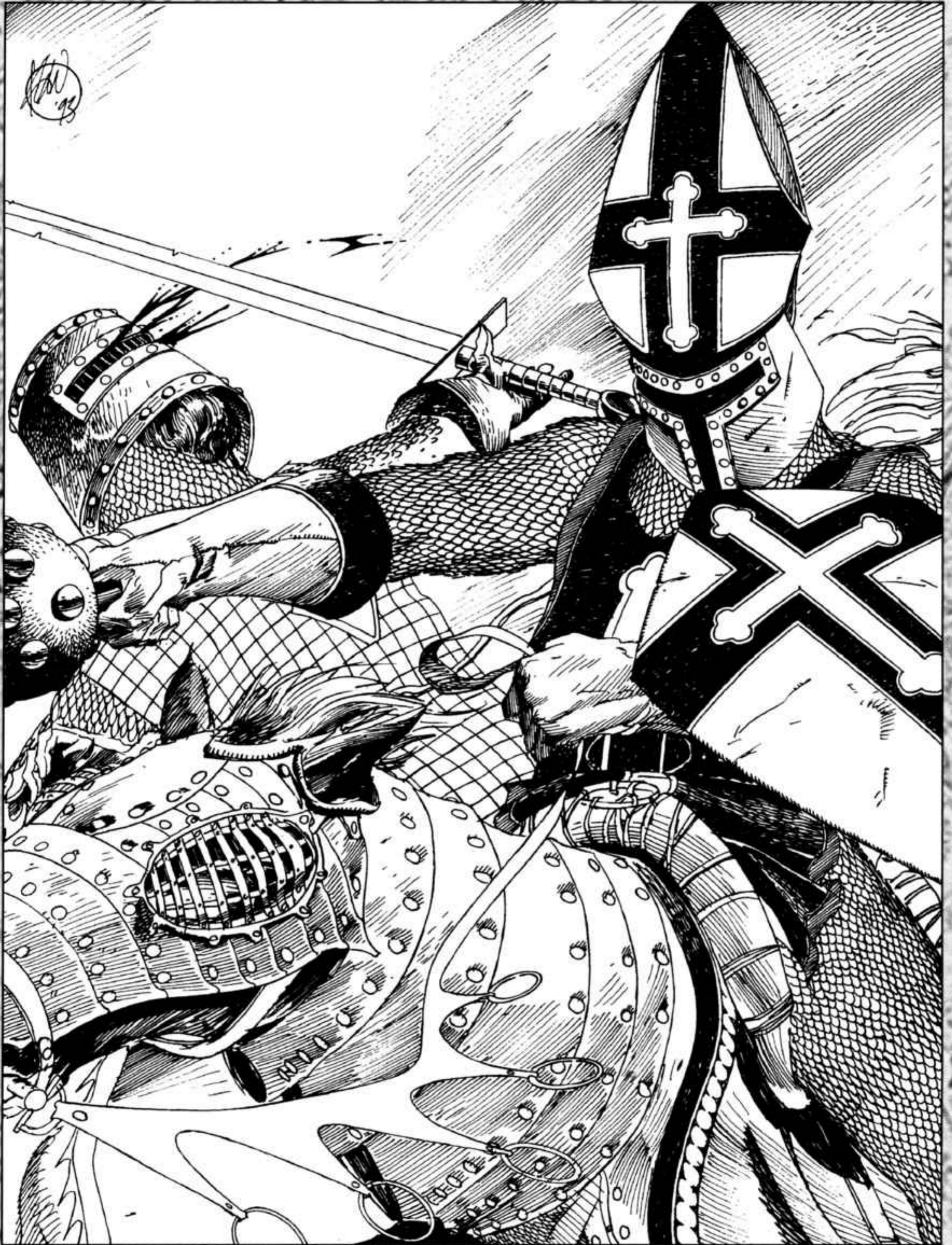


Myth Creation

☯ Book Two ☯

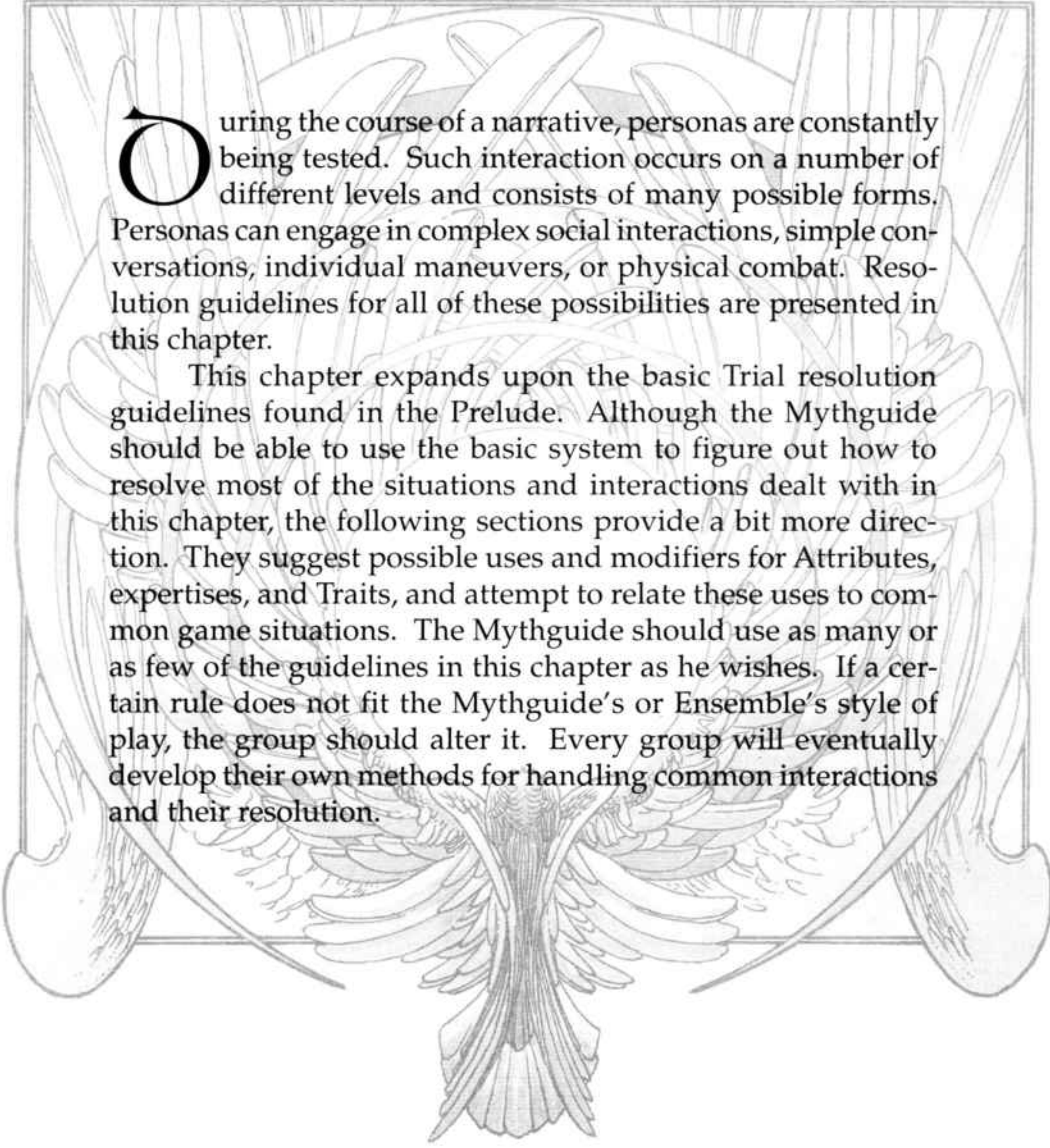
And God stands winding His lonely horn,
And time and the world are ever in flight.

- W. B. Yeats



Conflict

⊗ Chapter One ⊗



During the course of a narrative, personas are constantly being tested. Such interaction occurs on a number of different levels and consists of many possible forms. Personas can engage in complex social interactions, simple conversations, individual maneuvers, or physical combat. Resolution guidelines for all of these possibilities are presented in this chapter.

This chapter expands upon the basic Trial resolution guidelines found in the Prelude. Although the Mythguide should be able to use the basic system to figure out how to resolve most of the situations and interactions dealt with in this chapter, the following sections provide a bit more direction. They suggest possible uses and modifiers for Attributes, expertises, and Traits, and attempt to relate these uses to common game situations. The Mythguide should use as many or as few of the guidelines in this chapter as he wishes. If a certain rule does not fit the Mythguide's or Ensemble's style of play, the group should alter it. Every group will eventually develop their own methods for handling common interactions and their resolution.

⊗ Social Interactions ⊗

The following section details a number of possible social interactions and accompanying resolution modifiers. Depending on the nature of the Canticle and the preferences of the Ensemble, many of these interactions can be resolved through roleplaying (and often should be). However, sometimes a faster resolution system is needed, and the Mythguide should decide on the best combination of systems for his Canticle. There are three basic types of Social Interaction - Persuasion, Coercion, and Proposition. These basic types can also appear in different forms depending on the expertise used to accomplish the interaction.

Social Interactions can occur on both personal and social levels. The following resolution systems can be used for large-scale influences as easily as for personal influences. For example, if a persona attempts a political influence on behalf of his family during an Interactive History, the Persuasion tables in this chapter can be used to determine the result of his request. The Mythguide assigns an Interaction Stance directed at the persona's entire family, and uses this Stance to resolve the interaction. The Mythguide should keep such large-scale possibilities in mind when designing and running his Canticle.

Finally, the results of a particular Social Interaction should be interpreted according to the expertise used and the situation. Numerous modifiers appear on the tables in this section, and these should be used to enhance the result interpretation. For example, a persona who does not know proper Etiquette is trying to Influence an individual who is suspicious of the persona. The player achieves a Complete Failure, and the Persuasion attempt does not succeed. Because of the modifiers, the player and Mythguide will be able to describe *why* it did not succeed.

Interaction Stances

Social interactions are probably the most common form of interaction in the Aria game. Attempting to bribe the regional governor, persuading the provost to give a persona access to the great library, trying to seduce a political adversary - each of these actions and many more can be described by a particular social interaction. Most social interactions involve some sort of persuasion or manipulation. Obviously, some attempts are going to be inherently easier than others. For example, convincing a corrupt palace official to look the other way while the personas escape into the

night is considerably easier than convincing the king to do the same. Every social interaction is made from an initial *Interaction Stance*. The Interaction Stance indicates the starting point for the interaction, and serves as a general gauge of the Difficulty of a particular attempt.

There are seven different Interaction Stances: *Devoted*, *Ardent*, *Friendly*, *Neutral*, *Unfriendly*, *Hostile*, and *Enemy*. These descriptions illustrate the general relationship between a persona and the target of a social interaction. The Mythguide should determine the initial Interaction Stance during a confrontation. The Stance represents the susceptibility of a Mythguide persona to an interaction attempted by a player persona. It can represent either a reaction or a relationship already in place. For example, a Mythguide persona who is loyal to the persona would have at least a Stance of Ardent.

Reactions can either be directed toward the persona or the current situation. For example, if a Mythguide persona thinks that a persona has killed his brother, his Interaction Stance toward the persona will be poor. The Mythguide persona is reacting to his knowledge of the persona. Reactions to situations work in much the same way. For example, a persona who attempts to persuade a Mythguide persona to leave a burning building will likely succeed. It is always easier to convince someone to do something they want to do anyway.

Initial Interaction Stances can be altered through further social interaction. For example, a persona attempts to convince a city guardsman that he is not the criminal being sought by the lord mayor. The guardsman's initial Stance toward the persona is Unfriendly. However, the persona achieves an Extraordinary Success on his Persuasion attempt, and the guardsman's Stance becomes Ardent. The guard believes the persona's story completely and even gives him directions to the nearest city gate. The seven Interaction Stances are described briefly in the following section.

Devoted individuals will go out of their way to aid a persona, and will risk their own safety to do so. A Devoted Mythguide persona may even give his life for a persona. If a persona has a long-standing relationship with the Devoted individual, the persona is often the Object of an appropriate Motivation or Passion. If the Mythguide persona is Devoted because of a reaction to a particular situation, the individual probably wanted to do what is being asked of him anyway.

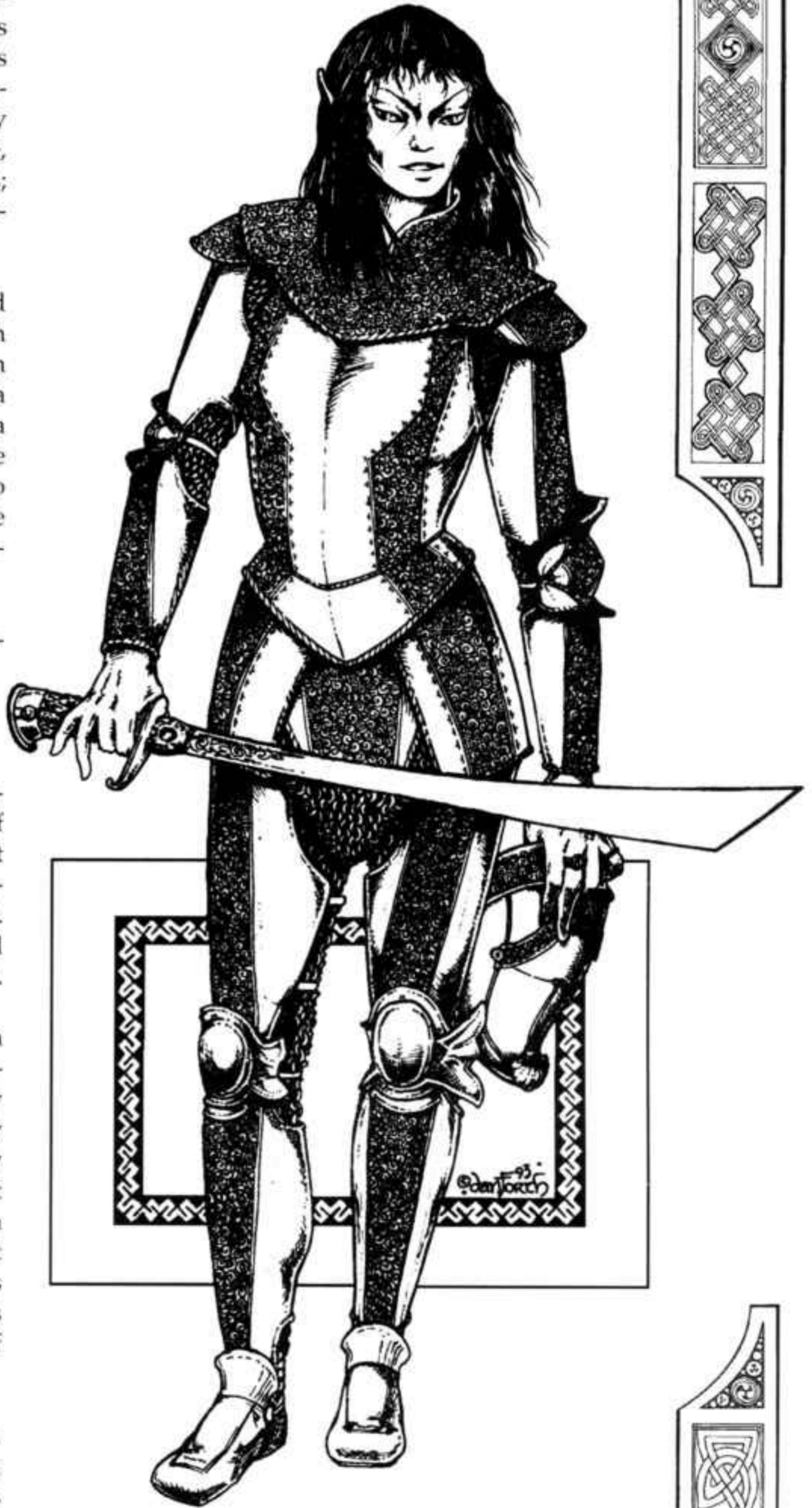
Ardent Mythguide personas will go to great lengths to aid a persona, but will not do so in the blind manner of the Devoted individual. An Ardent persona believes in either the persona or the cause he is dealing with. He considers the consequences of his actions where the Devoted persona does not. A persona may be the Object of a Motivation or Personality Trait if the Ardent individual knows him. Otherwise, the Ardent persona will act according to his beliefs; he may already have been inclined to do what is being asked of him.

Friendly individuals respect a persona and hold him in esteem, although they will consider a situation carefully before incurring any grave personal risks on behalf of the persona. A Friendly persona might be a long-time acquaintance of a persona, or he might be a new contact with whom the persona feels a unique kinship. A Friendly persona will do what he can to aid a persona or grant a request; if doing so places the individual in danger, he might require a more convincing argument.

Neutral Mythguide personas approach player personas in a non-biased manner. They often have no solid opinion of the persona, favorable or unfavorable, and have decided to reserve judgment until one can be formed. A Neutral individual will act according to his own set of values. If he sees a persona who needs help, he won't aid the persona out of any personal obligation; rather, he will attempt to right a perceived wrong. A Neutral persona will act on behalf of a persona if the request piques his sensibilities. Otherwise, the individual will need to be convinced (especially if the request involves any sort of danger).

Unfriendly individuals are predisposed against a persona for some reason. They may have had unfavorable dealings with the persona in the past, they may be part of some type of hostile organization, or they may simply be a mean-spirited person. Unfriendly personas can be overtly Unfriendly or they can present a false front, perhaps intending to betray the persona later. Unfriendly individuals dislike the persona, but they will not go out of their way or place themselves in danger to harm the persona. Unfriendly personas may eventually come around to a persona's way of thinking, but it will take a lot of persuasion.

Hostile individuals will go out of their way to harm a persona. A Hostile Mythguide persona harbors an active dislike or resentment for the persona, either as a result of a long-standing relationship or an initial reaction. Hostility is generally more obvious and overt



than Unfriendliness, although Hostile individuals may fake tolerance in order to further their own ends. A persona may become the Object of a Hostile individual's Motivation or Passion if the two know each other. It will be very difficult to convince or persuade a Hostile persona.

Enemies have an active desire to see the persona harmed or killed, and often feel an intense hatred for the persona. An Enemy is normally very open about his hatred, and may have a Motivation or Passion with the persona as its Object. It is almost impossible to convince or persuade an Enemy. After all, he is probably busy attacking you.

PERSUASION

Persuasion is the most basic of the three types of Social Interaction, and usually includes simple interactive debate, rhetoric, and speaking abilities. Personas employ different Persuasion techniques throughout every narrative, and different personas will approach the influence process in various ways. However, the desired end is always the same - the persona is attempting to get another individual to act on his behalf. Depending on the individual's Interaction Stance, this may be an easy task or it might require a great deal of convincing.

Persuasion attempts include such things as making a speech to calm an agitated populace, trying to convince one's lord to provide additional aid during the coming rainy season, or attempting to sway the views of a hostile jailer. Several forms of Persuasion are possible, each of which uses one or more expertises. Persuasion Trials are almost always Challenged Trials, and all Persuasion attempts may be resisted. Refer to the accompanying tables for precise modifiers.

The Mythguide should determine the length of a Persuasion attempt. Most attempts last at least a few minutes, and as such may require Expanded Trials. The Mythguide determines the frequency of the Trials, and also what a number of Successes represents. Perhaps a specific number of Complete Successes is required for the ultimate success of a Persuasion attempt. Alternately, each individual success indicates another step on the way to completing the whole attempt. Maybe each incremental success alters the Interaction Stance of the target by a single degree. Persuasion attempts include Elocution, Influence, Diplomacy, Leadership, Performance, and Improvisation. Consult the individual expertise descriptions for more information.

COERCION

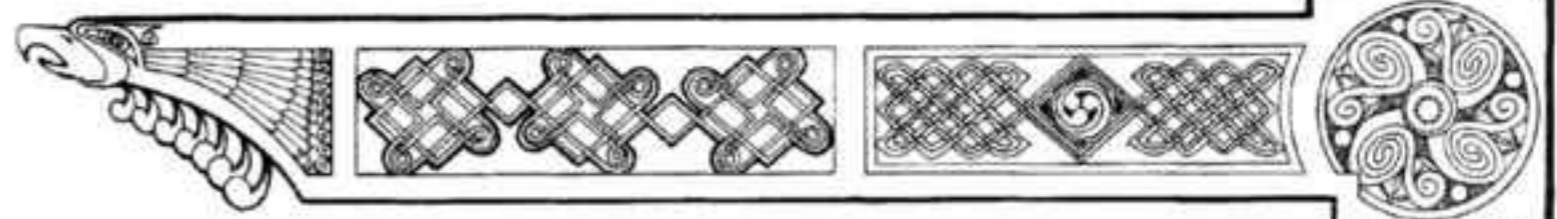
Coercion is a more roundabout method of Social Interaction. This type of persuasion includes such things as strong arm tactics, deceit, and intimidation. A persona trying to coerce a Mythguide persona will often attempt to pressure the individual into a certain course of action. Coercion is also employed during interrogations, and can be used to pry information from the unwilling. While Persuasion attempts influence individuals through intelligent arguments, presentations, or debates, Coercion attempts force a target along a certain path of action. Coercion Trials are always Challenged Trials, and all Coercion attempts may be resisted. Refer to the accompanying table for exact modifiers.

Most Coercion attempts require Expanded Trials, and the Mythguide should determine the length of an attempt based on the expertise being used. The Mythguide must decide on the frequency and nature of the Trials. Expertises that can be used for Coercion include Guile, Influence (with appropriate Aspect, such as Intimidation or Torture), and Intrigue. Consult the individual expertise descriptions for more information.

PROPOSITION

A Proposition represents some type of request or manipulation. It includes attempts at charm or seduction, as well as simple requests and favors. Propositions are always one-way interactions. Although they are still resolved as Challenged Trials, the target of a Proposition does not so much resist a request as react to it. The accompanying table provides suggested modifiers for Propositions.

Propositions can be either Refined or Expanded Trials. A persona making a Request to his liege lord on behalf of his family can probably expect a concise answer, while a persona attempting to Charm a Mythguide persona might have to ply the individual with conversation and flattery for several hours (and would probably have to resolve the extended interaction as an Expanded Trial). The Mythguide should determine the length of a Proposition based on both the nature of the attempt and the expertise being used. Expertises that can be used to make Propositions include Seduction, Influence, Elocution, and Bribery.



All Social Interactions (Base Difficulty & Modifiers)

<i>Interaction Stance</i>	<i>Base Difficulty</i>
Devoted	-5
Ardent	-2
Friendly	0
Neutral	2
Unfriendly	4
Hostile	7
Enemy	10

Other Modifiers:

Effect on Target

Persona's objective in accordance with Target's wishes	Considerable Benefit
Target will indirectly benefit from objective	Slight Benefit to Benefit
Objective will have no appreciable effect on Target	no modifier
Persona's objective will harm Target in some way	Slight to Severe Hindrance
Persona offers gift to Target (not a Bribe attempt)	Slight to Sig. Benefit
Objective requires Target to make a sacrifice on behalf of persona	Slight to Severe Hindrance
Target has already rebuffed an attempt during same encounter	Slight Hindrance for each Degree of Failure

Personality

Objective or persona actions conflict with a Personality Trait, Motivation, Passion, or Obsession of Target	Hindrance equal to half the Trait Value
Objective or persona actions complement a Personality Trait of Target	Benefit equal to half the Trait value

Persona Role in Society

These modifiers apply only when appropriate. See notes under each individual expertise for details.

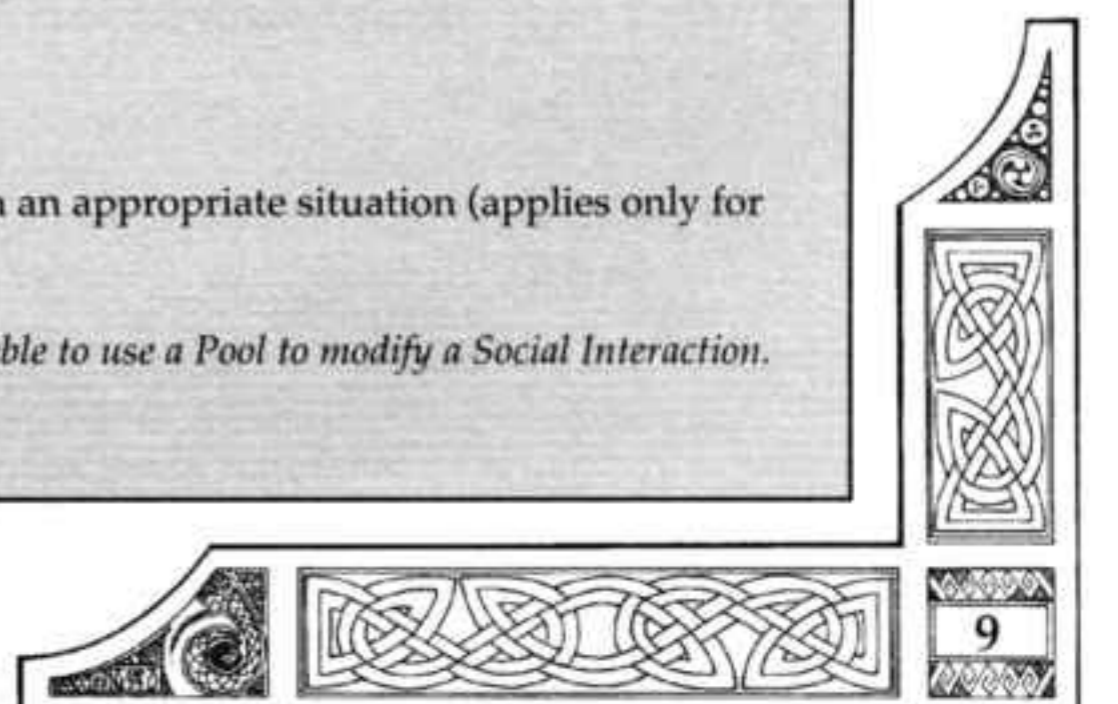
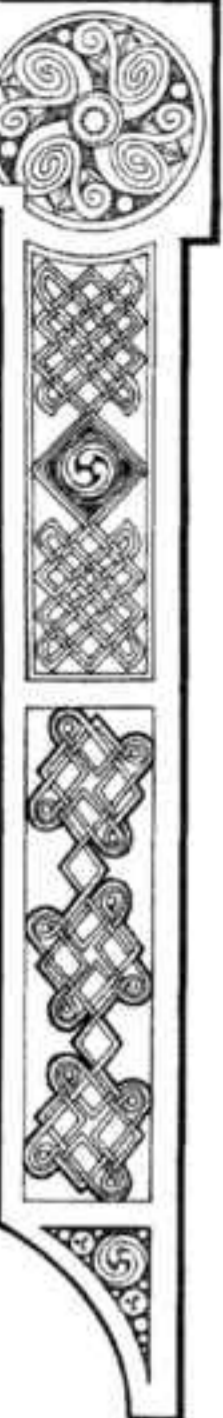
Persona has Renown that is recognized by Target	Hindrance or Benefit (equals half Renown)
Persona has Esteem that is recognized by Target	Benefit equal to half Renown Value plus one
Persona has higher Status Level than Target	Benefit equals half the difference in Status Levels
Persona has lower Status Level than Target	Hindrance equals half the difference in Status Levels
Persona unusually polite / rude for Status	Benefit to Hindrance
Incorrect or inappropriate attire for situation	Hindrance
Persona has powerful Sponsor, Protector, or Ally	Slight to Sig Benefit depending position of patron
Persona in / out of favor in circles of power	Benefit to Hindrance
Persona is a foreigner	Slight to Severe Hindrance depending on Phil. Orient
Persona is a member of a different Heritage group	Slight to Severe Hindrance dep. on Heritage Orient

Note: An environment's Custom will dictate the maximum possible modifier as a result of Status.

Influence and Leverage Pools

Influence Pool	Slight Benefit for each point spent
Leverage Pools	Slight Benefit for each point spent in an appropriate situation (applies only for large-scale Social Interactions)

Note: A persona must have Influence or Leverage in an appropriate area to be able to use a Pool to modify a Social Interaction.



Social Interaction (Other Modifiers cont.)

Situational Modifiers

Target is suspicious of attempt	Hindrance
Persona has intimate knowledge of the Target	Benefit
Persona is acquainted with Target	Slight Benefit
Persona has never seen Target before	Slight Hindrance
Persona is Target's vocational superior	Slight Benefit
Persona is Target's inferior	Slight Hindrance
A Friend of the Target has vouched for the persona	Slight Benefit
Persona knows proper Etiquette	Slight Benefit to Benefit
Persona fails Etiquette Trial during Influence attempt	Slight Hindrance for each Degree of Failure
Target has a Debt or Obligation to the persona	Slight Benefit for every two Ranks of Aspect
Persona has a Debt or Obligation to Target	Slight Hindrance for every two Ranks of Aspect
Persona knows Secret harmful to Target	Slight Benefit for every two Ranks of Aspect

Note: The superiors/inferior modifiers above apply to vocational relationships, not status relationships

Additional Modifiers by Expertise

Influence used for Persuasion (in situations of fast talk, simple debate, and argument)

Use modifiers provided above depending on environment

Influence used for Coercion (in situations of interrogation, intimidation, or torture)

Use appropriate normal modifiers

Other Modifiers

Hollow Threats	Slight Hindrance
Substantiated Threats	Slight to Cons Benefit depending on Target's knowledge of persona
Light Torture	Slight Benefit
Heavy Torture	Benefit to Sig Benefit

Influence used for Proposition (when a persona makes a request or asks a favor)

Use appropriate normal modifiers

Guile used for Coercion (in situations of deceit and double talk)

Use appropriate normal modifiers

Other Modifiers

Target trusts persona	Slight Benefit
Target has been deceived by persona before	Hindrance
Target does not trust persona	Hindrance
Target is distracted	Slight Benefit
Improvisation Trial	Slight Benefit or Slight Hindrance for each Degree of Success or Failure

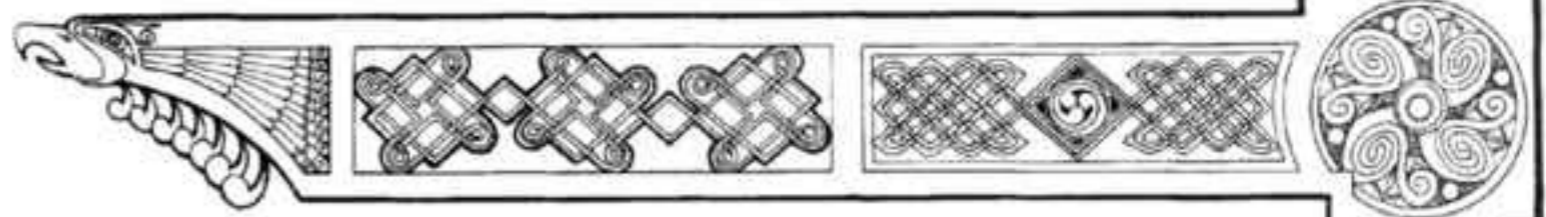
Note: The Mythguide may require an Improvisation Trial or the player might request one.

Elocution used for Persuasion (when attempting oratory, rhetoric, or debate)

Use appropriate normal modifiers

Other Modifiers

Audience knowledgeable on subject addressed	Slight Benefit
Audience ignorant of subject addressed	Slight Hindrance
Complex ideas or concepts addressed	Slight to Cons Hindrance
Persona consumed by Motivation, Passion, or Obsession	Benefit



Social Interactions (Expertise Modifiers cont.)

Diplomacy used for Persuasion (when attempting to bargain or negotiate)

Use appropriate normal modifiers

Other Modifiers

Persona is asking above average price for a good or service

Slight to Severe Hindrance

Persona is asking below average price for a good or service

Slight to Significant Benefit

Note: The Mythguide should base the modifier on the percentage of the average price, as found based on Scarcity and demand (see Appendix A).

If applicable, a successful **Politics** or **History** Trial Slight Benefit or Hindrance for each Degree of Success or Failure

Leadership used for Persuasion (when giving orders or assuming command)

Use appropriate normal modifiers

Other Modifiers

Persona is superior officer of Target

Cons to Severe Benefit

Target is superior officer of persona

Cons to Severe Hindrance

Target is used to following orders

Slight Benefit

Persona has the Born Leader Background Aspect

Slight Benefit for every two Ranks

Intrigue used for Coercion (when attempting to gain valuable information through subtle pressure)

Use appropriate normal modifiers

Other Modifiers

Incidental information (legal and non-threatening)

Benefit

Somewhat valuable information (possibly damaging)

Slight Benefit

Valuable information (damaging to family or individual)

Slight Hindrance

Extremely valuable information (damaging to many people or highly placed officials)

Hindrance

Devastating information (could topple a family or government, would cause death of provider if caught)

Cons Hindrance

Subject of information does not know provider has the information

Slight Benefit

Subject of information knows provider has access to information

Slight Hindrance

Subject of information knows provider has the specific information desired by the persona

Hindrance

Provider is being followed / watched (and knows it)

Slight to Cons Hindrance

Environment has strict legal codes

Slight Benefit

Environment has very loose legal codes

Slight Hindrance

Persona makes successful Politics Trial (if appropriate)

Slight Benefit to Benefit

Persona makes appropriate Knowledge Trial (such as knowledge of certain family or official relations)

Slight Benefit to Benefit

Performance/Improvisation used for Persuasion (when attempting to influence an audience)

Use appropriate normal modifiers

Other Modifiers

Piece performed is a crowd favorite

Benefit

Good physical set-up (stage, lighting, props, etc.)

Slight to Cons Benefit

Piece performed disliked in environment

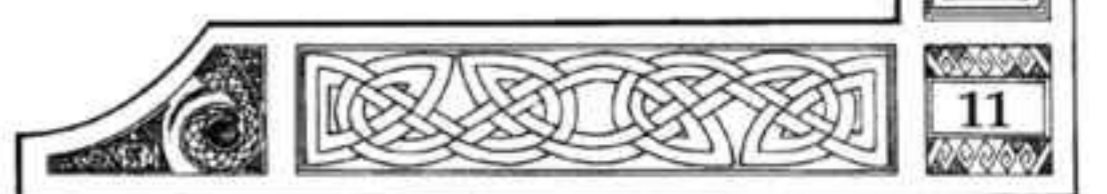
Hindrance

Crowd loud or obnoxious

Slight to Cons Hindrance

Other distractions

Slight to Cons Hindrance



Social Interaction Modifiers (Expertise Modifiers cont.)

Bribery used for Proposition (when attempting to compensate for information or action)

Use appropriate normal modifiers

Other Modifiers

Insulting Bribe

Low Bribe

Average Bribe

Above Average Bribe

High Bribe

Ridiculous Bribe

Target is extremely comfortable

Target in need of money / resources

Target is desperate

Severe Hindrance

Hindrance to Cons Hindrance normal

Slight Benefit to Benefit

Benefit to Cons Benefit

Significant Benefit

Slight Hindrance to Hindrance

Slight to Cons Benefit

Cons to Sig Benefit

Note: The Mythguide will have to determine the categories of Bribe for every individual based on Status Level and personal resources. For example, an Insulting Bribe for a nobleman might be a thousand times higher than an Average Bribe for a common Laborer. The nature of Bribes will also change from one environment to the next.

Seduction used for Proposition (when attempting to charm, seduce, or make an impression)

Use appropriate normal modifiers

Other Modifiers

Persona's Appearance is higher than Appearance of Target

Persona's Appearance is lower than Appearance of Target

Persona has unusual or inhibiting Physical Characteristic

Persona has odious personal habits

Persona has incompatible personality (from standpoint of Target - perhaps Traits clash)

Persona has compatible personality (from standpoint of Target - Traits mesh)

Slight Benefit for every two points higher

Slight Hindrance for every two points lower

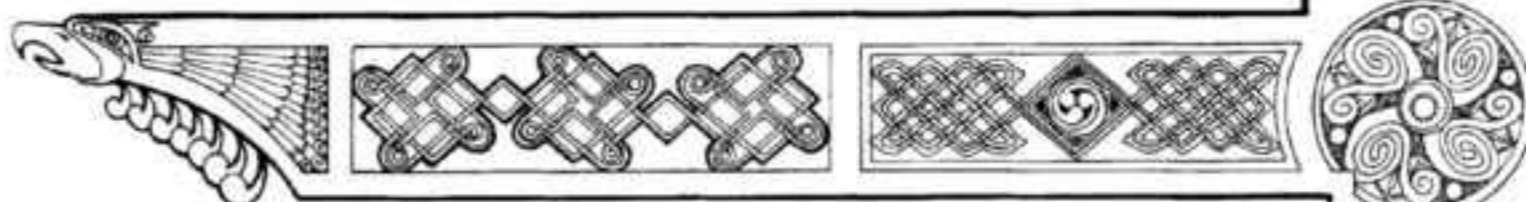
Slight to Cons Hindrance

Hindrance

Slight to Severe Hindrance

Slight to Significant Benefit





Social Interaction Results

Persuasion

Expertises that may be used for Persuasion attempts: Influence, Elocution, Diplomacy, Leadership, Performance, and Improvisation

Result

Description

Mythic Success	Persuasion attempt is a miraculous success. An oration turns the tide of a war or incites a revolution, an intricate and prolonged negotiation ends with all terms realized, a performance entrances an audience. Target's Interaction Stance is favorably altered by up to four degrees.
Extraordinary Success	Persuasion attempt achieves a stunning success. A commercial transaction ends in significant gain, a performance is hailed as a masterwork. Target's Interaction Stance is favorably altered by up to three degrees.
Superior Success	Persuasion attempt is highly successful. A speech is unusually engaging, a negotiation is handled very smoothly, a personal argument is innovative and impressive. Target's Interaction Stance is favorably altered by up to two degrees.
Complete Success	Persuasion attempt succeeds. The persona gives a successful performance, a practiced speech, or resolves an encouraging round of negotiation. Target's Interaction Stance is favorably altered by one degree.
Marginal Success	Persuasion attempt is partly successful. The Target might be willing to meet the persona half way, or the attempt could be stalemated. Perhaps a further success during an Expanded Trial will push the attempt in the right direction. Target's Interaction Stance remains unchanged, but the persona gains a Slight Benefit on the next Trial if the interaction continues.
Marginal Failure	Persuasion attempt partially fails. The Target gains a slight advantage, but may be willing to continue the Interaction. If the interaction continues, the persona gains a Slight Hindrance on his next Trial. Target's Interaction Stance remains the same.
Complete Failure	Persuasion attempt fails. The persona's attempt at oratory, negotiation, or performance is not received well for some reason. Target's Interaction Stance is unfavorably altered by one degree.
Serious Failure	Persuasion attempt is a significant failure. The persona made a serious error, misstep, or miscalculation during the attempt. Target's Interaction Stance decreases by up to two degrees.
Miserable Failure	Persuasion attempt is a crippling failure. The persona has made a fundamental error during the interaction, and the attempt may have backfired. An orator could anger a crowd, a performer could be heckled off the stage, or a diplomat could ruin a negotiation (and relations). Target's Interaction Stance decreases by up to three degrees.
Catastrophic Failure	Persuasion attempt is an absolute disaster. The attempt has gone horribly awry, and the persona has seriously undermined any kind of bargaining position. An orator might incite a riot while asking for peace or an actor could offend a crowd to the point of violence. Target's Interaction Stance decreases by up to four degrees.

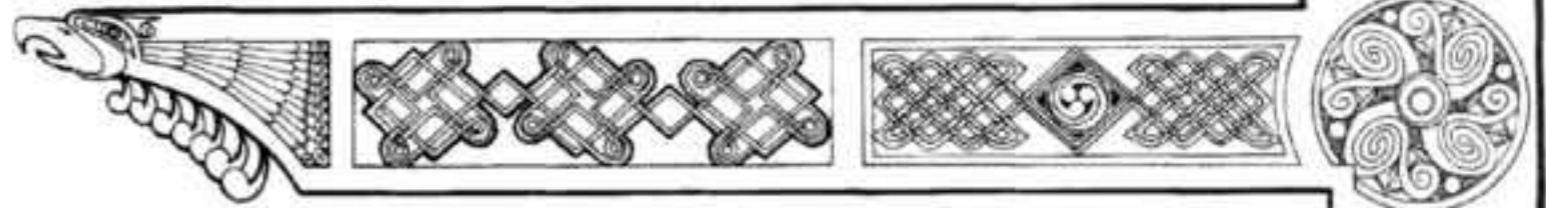


Social Interaction Results (Coercion Trials)

Expertises that may be used for Coercion attempts: Influence, Guile, Intrigue

<i>Result</i>	<i>Description</i>
Mythic Success	Coercion is an incredible success. The persona deceives Target into believing an apparent lie, convinces an informant to divulge extremely dangerous information, or obtains a crucial fact through interrogation. Interaction Stance increases or decreases up to three degrees (depending on the expertise being used).
Extraordinary Success	Coercion is an impressive success. The persona intimidates a Target into revealing crucial information or manipulates someone into agreeing to a certain course of action. Interaction Stance can increase or decrease up to two degrees (depending on the expertise used).
Superior Success	Coercion is highly successful. An interrogation goes better than expected, an Intrigue attempt yields considerable information. Interaction Stance can increase or decrease one degree (depending on the expertise used).
Complete Success	Coercion is a success. The persona obtains the desired result of the Coercion attempt. Interaction Stance can increase or decrease one degree (depending on the expertise used).
Marginal Success	Coercion is a partial success. The persona only obtains part of the desired result, or the attempt ends in a stalemate. If the Coercion attempt continues, the persona is at a Slight Benefit for the next Trial. Interaction Stance is unchanged.
Marginal Failure	Coercion is a partial failure. The persona is placed at a slight disadvantage in relation to the Target, but the attempt is not a complete failure. If the Coercion attempt continues, the persona is at a Slight Hindrance for the next Trial. Interaction Stance is unchanged.
Complete Failure	Coercion attempt is a failure. The persona obtains no valuable information or is discovered in his deceit attempt. Interaction Stance decreases one degree.
Serious Failure	Coercion is a significant failure. The persona obtains no pertinent information at all, and may be given false information. Interaction Stance decreases by up to two degrees.
Miserable Failure	Coercion is a critical failure. The persona gains nothing useful from the interaction, and the experience may backfire. The Target might lead the persona down a false path or provide false but dangerous information. Interaction Stance decreases by up to three degrees.
Catastrophic Failure	Coercion is a disaster. The persona gains nothing from the experience, and may lose quite a bit. The Target might give deadly information. Interaction Stance decreases by up to four degrees.

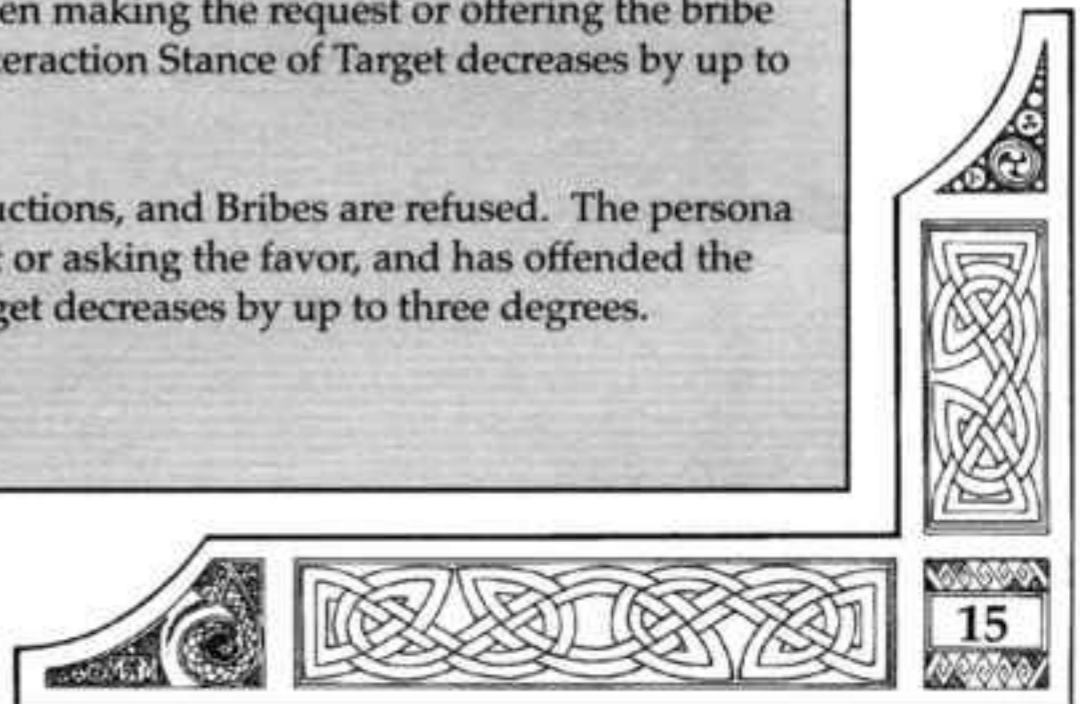
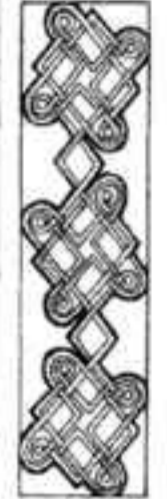
Note: The Mythguide should determine the nature, direction, and degree of an Interaction Stance increase or decrease. For example, torture will always decrease the Interaction Stance the full amount. Guile might initially increase the Stance, but the Target's Stance could decrease by double the initial amount if the Target learns of the deception. Intrigue attempts might leave Interaction Stance unaffected.



Social Interaction Results (Proposition Trials)

Expertises that may be used for Proposition attempts: Influence, Bribery, Seduction

<i>Result</i>	<i>Description</i>
Mythic Success	Proposition is an amazing success. Request or favor is freely granted, and may be accompanied by extra benefits. Target of a Seduction or charm attempt is in the palm of the persona's hand. Interaction Stance of Target increases by up to three degrees.
Extraordinary Success	Proposition is a considerable success. Request or favor is granted in full, and may be accompanied by some extra benefits. Target of a Seduction attempt is infatuated with persona. Interaction Stance of Target increases by up to two degrees.
Superior Success	Proposition is highly successful. Request or favor is granted in full. A Seduction attempt is successful, and a bribe yields a greater result than expected. Interaction Stance of Target increases by one degree.
Complete Success	Proposition succeeds. Request or favor is freely granted, but the Target may ask for something in return. Seduction and Bribery attempts both achieve average levels of success. Interaction Stance of Target increases by one degree.
Marginal Success	Proposition is partially successful. Request or favor is partly granted, but will carry certain reciprocal demands with it. Perhaps the Target will grant the remainder of the request after the persona meets the demands. The Target of a Seduction or Bribe might not grant a request, but remains open to further offers. If the interaction continues, the persona receives a Slight Benefit to next Trial. Interaction Stance of Target remains unchanged.
Marginal Failure	Proposition is partially unsuccessful. Request or favor is not granted, but the Target remains open to further proposals. The same holds true for Seduction and Bribery attempts. If the interaction continues, the persona receives a Slight Hindrance for his next Trial. Interaction Stance of Target remains unchanged.
Complete Failure	Proposition is not successful. Request or favor is not granted, but the Target might be open to further proposals. Seduction and Bribery attempts are rebuffed as well, and the Targets may be offended. Interaction Stance of Target decreases by one degree.
Serious Failure	Proposition is a considerable failure. Request or favor is refused, and may offend the Target. The persona might have to wait to make another request. Seduction and Bribery attempts may offend as well. Interaction Stance of Target decreases by one degree.
Miserable Failure	Proposition is a severe failure. All requests, Seductions, and Bribes are rebuffed. The persona made a significant miscalculation when making the request or offering the bribe or gift, and may have offended the Target. Interaction Stance of Target decreases by up to two degrees.
Catastrophic Failure	Proposition is a disaster. All requests, Seductions, and Bribes are refused. The persona made a severe error when offering the request or asking the favor, and has offended the Target in some way. Interaction Stance of Target decreases by up to three degrees.



RESISTING SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

The Mythguide should determine whether a particular interaction can be resisted. Resistance is normally accomplished in one of three ways. First, the persona can use his Savvy expertise to make a Challenged Trial against expertise being employed in the Social Interaction. Apply any appropriate modifiers from this chapter.

Second, the persona can counter the expertise being used with the same expertise. For example, a persona is attempting to Persuade someone with the Elocution expertise. The Target could resist the attempt by using his own Elocution expertise to make a Challenged Trial. Apply any relevant modifiers.

Finally, a Target can make a Willpower Trial (usually at a penalty) to resist a Social Interaction. The Mythguide should assign a penalty to the Trial based on the situation. The Mythguide should also decide whether he wishes to place any restrictions on these resistance methods. For example, personas may not be able to use straight Willpower to resist Social Interactions in some Canticles.

SECRET DETERMINATION

The Mythguide should keep most results and die rolls secret from the players. The reason for this is

simple - it will keep the players on their toes. For example, a persona who trying to learn some valuable information from a Mythguide persona scores a Miserable Failure (although the player does not know the precise result). Instead of acting offended, the Target pretends to give the persona important information. In reality, the Target is providing false information, but the persona might not realize this until later in the narrative. Keeping important rolls secret can enhance many narrative avenues.

Knowledges

Personas are often called upon to use their Knowledges during play. In this context, Knowledges include almost all of the available Disciplines and any relevant Aspects. If a persona requires information about a subject in which he has expertise, the player makes a Trial based on the Difficulty of knowing the necessary information. If a persona needs to find a piece of information in an area where he has no expertise, the Mythguide can allow him to use the Research Discipline to locate the knowledge. Refer to the accompanying table for appropriate modifiers.

Knowledges

Knowledge expertises allow personas to draw on their individual knowledge to answer questions and access information. Degree of Success indicates the accuracy and amount of information obtained or remembered.

Basic Fact	-2
General Fact	2
Specific Fact	5
Precise Fact	8

Other Modifiers:	Archaic information
	Cutting Edge information
	Strange or unnotable information
	Related area of knowledge
	Common information (current event, important historical event, etc.)

Hindrance
Slight to Cons Hindrance (depending on Environ Class)
Hindrance to Cons Hindrance
Hindrance to Severe Hindrance
Benefit

Physical Action

While Social Interactions play an important role in the game, most narratives contain their share of physical action and combat as well. This section details Time and Movement in the game environment, as well as the effects of Encumbrance and Fatigue.

Time

All actions and interactions, whether social or physical, take time to perform and resolve. Sometimes such resolution is very important, while at other times it is not. For example, an unhindered persona traveling alone wishes to climb over a low stone wall. Since nobody is around and the persona is not in a hurry, time becomes an incidental consideration. However, if the same persona were trying to rush to the aid of his comrades, who were outnumbered by highwaymen on the other side of the wall, time becomes crucial.

The four basic Time Scales were outlined in the Prelude to this book. Aria Time and Mythic Time are used for long-term resolution, and are further described in the Interactive History and Mythmaking chapters. Narrative Time and Action Time are used for short-term resolution, and are the scales that will be considered in this chapter.

The Mythguide decides which Time Scale is appropriate for a particular situation. If a lone persona is unhurriedly trying to climb a wall, the attempt is made in Narrative Time. If the persona were rushing to the aid of his friends, the attempt would be made during an Action Interval. In the Narrative Time Scale, Intervals are always flexible; the Mythguide should assign limits based on the needs of an individual situation or encounter. In Action Time, Intervals normally last five seconds, although the Mythguide might wish to modify this slightly depending on the situation. For a discussion of the actions and maneuvers available during an Action Interval, refer to the Physical Combat section later in this chapter.

Movement

Persona movement is handled differently depending on the Time Scale being used. For example, if an





Ensemble is traveling through the countryside, movement is resolved quickly in Narrative Time. The Mythguide might simply state: "After an uneventful journey of three weeks, you arrive in Corsira." If encounters or interactions occur during the journey, forays into Action Time might be appropriate.

Movement during an Action Interval can be a very important consideration. Players need to know how long an attack lasts or how long a particular maneuver takes to perform. The Mythguide may wish to use miniature figures to represent personas on a playing surface. Such a physical representation allows players better to visualize an interaction or combat, since the figures can be moved and placed in relation to one another.

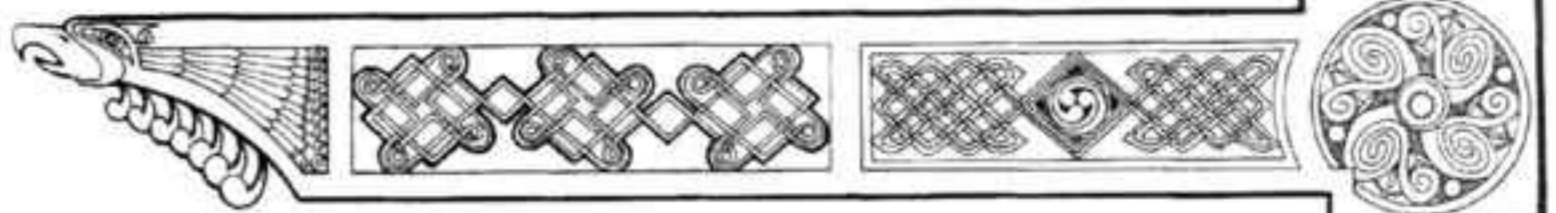
Movement during an Action Interval should only be as precise as is necessary for the actions being performed. For example, movement is often divided into exact increments during combat situations, while in other cases players need to resolve a more general action (such as leaping over a table or slamming a door). Players spend Option Points to move and maneuver during Action Interval. Refer to the Combat section of this chapter for effects and costs.

ACTION MOVEMENT

A persona's base Action Movement Rate is seven yards per Interval. This base rate is modified by a persona's Quickness and represents the number of yards a persona can move in an Interval while Unencumbered. A persona can move more quickly by increasing his Pace. Refer to the accompanying table for different Paces and their effects on movement. The Mythguide decides whether or not a persona may increase his Action Movement Rate during an Interval; if action is occurring in close quarters, the persona's movement might be restricted. Pace affects the rate at which Fatigue sets in and the Difficulty of performing maneuvers. When declaring actions within an Action Interval, a persona receives a number of Option Points equal to his Action Movement Rate.

NARRATIVE MOVEMENT

A persona's basic Narrative Movement Rate equals fifteen plus his Endurance and Height Value in



Movement Rate (Action and Narrative Movement)

Action Movement Rate

Base Movement Rate = 7 yards per Action Interval

Modifiers:	Quickness 10	+5	Quickness 5	none
	Quickness 9	+4	Quickness 4	none
	Quickness 8	+3	Quickness 3	-1
	Quickness 7	+2	Quickness 2	-2
	Quickness 6	+1	Quickness 1	-3

Pace (Movement Rate and Movement Restrictions)

Walk	Action Movement Rate	Fatigue Trial once every two hours
March	1.5 X Base	Fatigue Trial once every half hour
Double Time	2X Base	Fatigue Trial once every ten minutes
Run	3X Base	Fatigue Trial once every minute
Sprint	4X Base	Fatigue Trial once every two Intervals
Dash	5X Base	Fatigue Trial once every Interval

Pace Action Restrictions

Walk	Maneuvers/ Actions made normally
March	Maneuvers/ Actions made normally
Double Time	Maneuvers/ Actions suffer Slight Hindrance if attempted while moving
	Maneuvers/ Actions suffer Hindrance if attempted while moving
Sprint	Maneuvers/ Actions suffer Hindrance if attempted while moving
Dash	Maneuvers/ Actions suffer Considerable Hindrance if attempted while moving

Narrative Movement

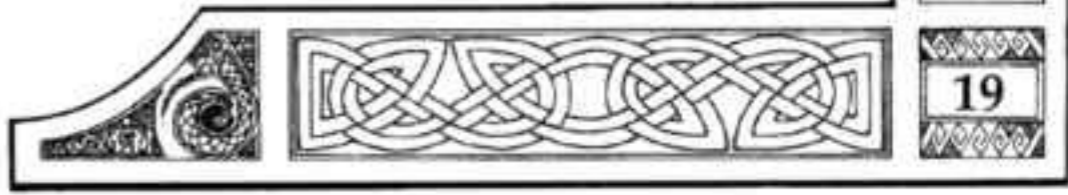
Base Hiking Pace = 15 + Endurance + Height Value in miles

Other Paces:	Leisurely Walk	7 + Endurance + Height Value in miles
	Forced March	23 + Endurance + Height Value in miles
	Base Movement on Horseback	30 miles
	Forced Movement on Horseback	60 miles
	Basic Transport Movement (wagon, cart)	15 miles

Note: All of the Narrative Movement Rates given above assume ten hours of travel time per day, including necessary rests. For Fatigue Trial purposes, a Forced March is equivalent to Double Time movement.

Terrain/Weather Modifiers:	Paved Road	+7 miles	Flat	normal
	Unpaved Road	+5 miles	Hills	2/3 normal
	Trail	+2 miles	Mountains	1/3 normal
	Pasture/Meadow	normal	Clear Skies	normal
	Heath/Scrub	3/4 normal	Light Rain	3/4 normal
	Light Forest	3/4 normal	Heavy Rain	1/2 normal
	Heavy Forest	1/2 normal	Blizzard/Sleet	1/4 normal
	Swamp/Marsh	1/3 normal	Snow/Ice field	1/4 normal
	Rocky	3/4 normal		
	Sand	2/3 normal		

Note: Roads and Trails may discount certain obstructive terrain modifiers (such as forest), but do not affect incline modifiers (hills, etc.). All modifiers are cumulative.





miles each day. This represents a brisk hiking pace. Narrative Movement is often used to simply transport a persona from one region or area to another. Weeks of travel can be dispensed with in moments of actual game time. The Mythguide should use a persona's Narrative Movement Rate (coupled with any Pace or Terrain modifiers) to determine the base travel time between two points. The overall movement rate of an Ensemble is the slowest Narrative Movement Rate from among its members.

The Mythguide can modify travel times according to terrain conditions and Pace. Refer to the accompanying table for suggested modifiers and rates. The Mythguide should also consider direction and bearings when an Ensemble is traveling in the wilderness. If personas do not know where they are, and do not possess a map, the Mythguide may require an Intuition, Tracking, or Wilderness Trial to see if the group becomes lost. Personas who are lost may move at a significantly slower rate than normal.

Encumbrance

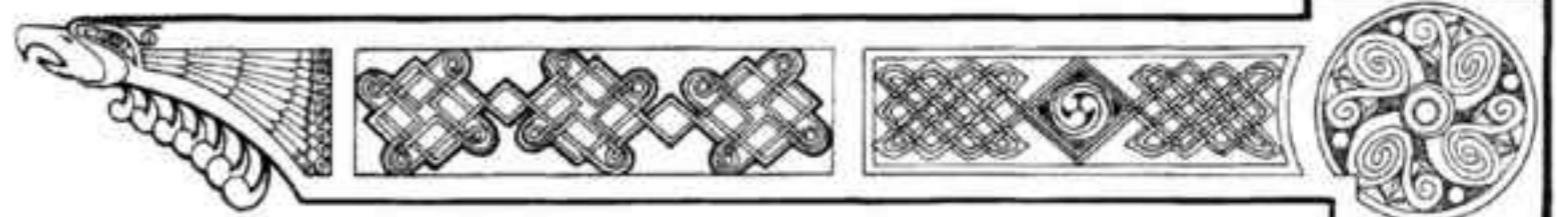
If a persona carries a large amount of dead weight, he may become Encumbered. All items carried are considered in terms of their Encumbrance Grades. To find an item's Encumbrance Grade, multiply the item's weight in pounds by a multiplier from one to five. The Mythguide should assign the multiplier based on the size and unwieldiness of the object. For example, a belt pouch would have a multiplier of one, while a backpack might have a multiplier of two. A large asymmetrical sack would probably have a multiplier of three or four.

Several levels of Encumbrance are possible, and these levels are based on a persona's Carrying Capacity. Encumbrance affects both a persona's Movement Rates and his Physical Penalty when using certain expertises. It also serves as a modifier to Fatigue Trials. Consult the accompanying table to calculate Encumbrance and its modifiers.

Fatigue

Movement and action can cause Fatigue when performed for extended periods of time without rest. Every persona progresses through several categories of Fatigue on his way toward total Exhaustion. Certain actions call for Fatigue Trials to see if a persona has become Fatigued. A Fatigue Trial is made as an Endurance Trial, and its Difficulty is modified by the persona's current level of Fatigue. If the persona fails the Trial, the persona drops to the next lower Fatigue category. Refer to the Fatigue table for a description of Fatigue Categories and their effects, as well as a list of situations that require Fatigue Trials.

A persona must rest in order to recover from Fatigue. Total Rest indicates immobility and a complete lack of physical activity. Sleep constitutes total rest. A persona recovers one Fatigue level for every fifteen minutes of Total Rest. Persona may also recover Fatigue while engaging in Partial Rest. Partial Rest allows limited activity, but nothing that would cause further Fatigue or be considered strenuous. Limited movement and action are permitted. A persona regains one Fatigue level for every thirty minutes of Partial Rest. If a persona has lost Fatigue as a result of sleep deprivation, the persona must sleep (Total Rest) to regain the Fatigue levels. If a persona is Fatigued as a result of malnutrition, the persona must eat before the Fatigue is regained.



Encumbrance

Unencumbered	less than 1/4 of Carrying Capacity	No Effect
Slight Encumbrance	1/4 to 1/2 of Carrying Capacity	Slight Hindrance
Medium Encumbrance	1/2 to 3/4 of Carrying Capacity	Hindrance
Heavy Encumbrance	3/4 to full Carrying Capacity	Considerable Hindrance
Severe Encumbrance	Carrying Capacity and higher	Severe Hindrance (Mythguide determines precise modifier based on lbs. over CC)

Note: Hindrances resulting from Encumbrance become part of the Physical Penalty. Encumbrance affects Movement, physical expertises, and maneuvers. Encumbrance is always measured in Encumbrance Grades, not straight pounds.

Encumbrance	Pace Restrictions	Action Movement
Unencumbered	All Paces permitted	Normal Movement
Slight Encumbrance	Dash Pace is not allowed	Slight Hindrance
Medium Encumbrance	Dash and Sprint Paces not allowed	Hindrance
Heavy Encumbrance	Dash, Sprint, and Run Paces not allowed	Considerable Hindrance
Severe Encumbrance	Dash, Sprint, Run, and Jog Paces not allowed	(-6 or more to Move)

Fatigue

Fresh	No Adverse Effects	No Movement restrictions
Winded	Slight Hindrance	Persona cannot move at a Dash Pace
Tired	Hindrance	Persona cannot move at a Dash Pace
Weary	Considerable Hindrance	Persona cannot move at Dash or Sprint Paces
Fatigued	Severe Hindrance	Persona cannot move at Dash, Sprint, or Run Paces
Exhausted	Incapacitated/Unconscious	Persona cannot move

Note: Fatigue Trials are made as Refined Endurance Trials. The effects of Fatigue also apply to the Difficulty of further Fatigue Trials. For example, a persona who is currently Weary has a Considerable Hindrance when making his next Fatigue Trial. It is more difficult to resist Fatigue as a persona becomes more Fatigued.

Fatigue Trials

Fatigue Trials are always modified by a persona's Physical Penalty (normally the total of his Encumbrance and Injury penalties).

Movement - Refer to the Pace Table for Fatigue Trial increments.

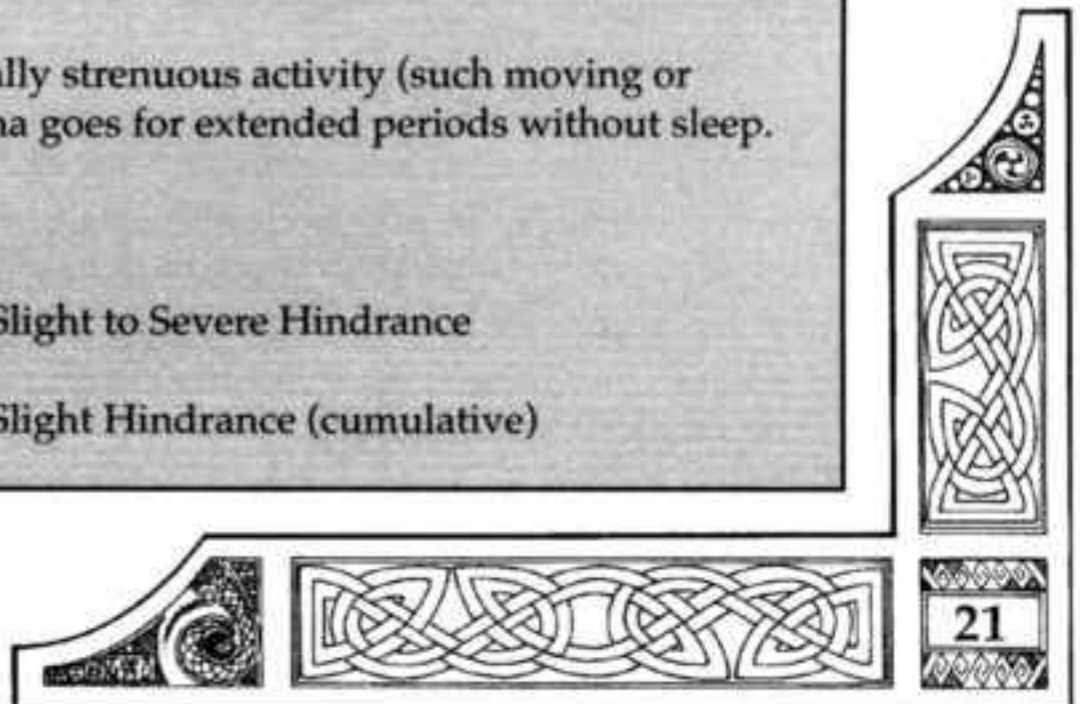
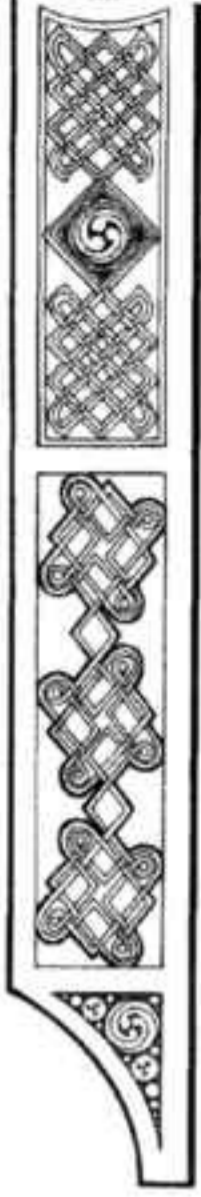
Physical Combat - For every five Intervals of strenuous melee, make a Fatigue Trial. For every ten Intervals of semi-strenuous combat action (missile fire), make a Fatigue Trial.

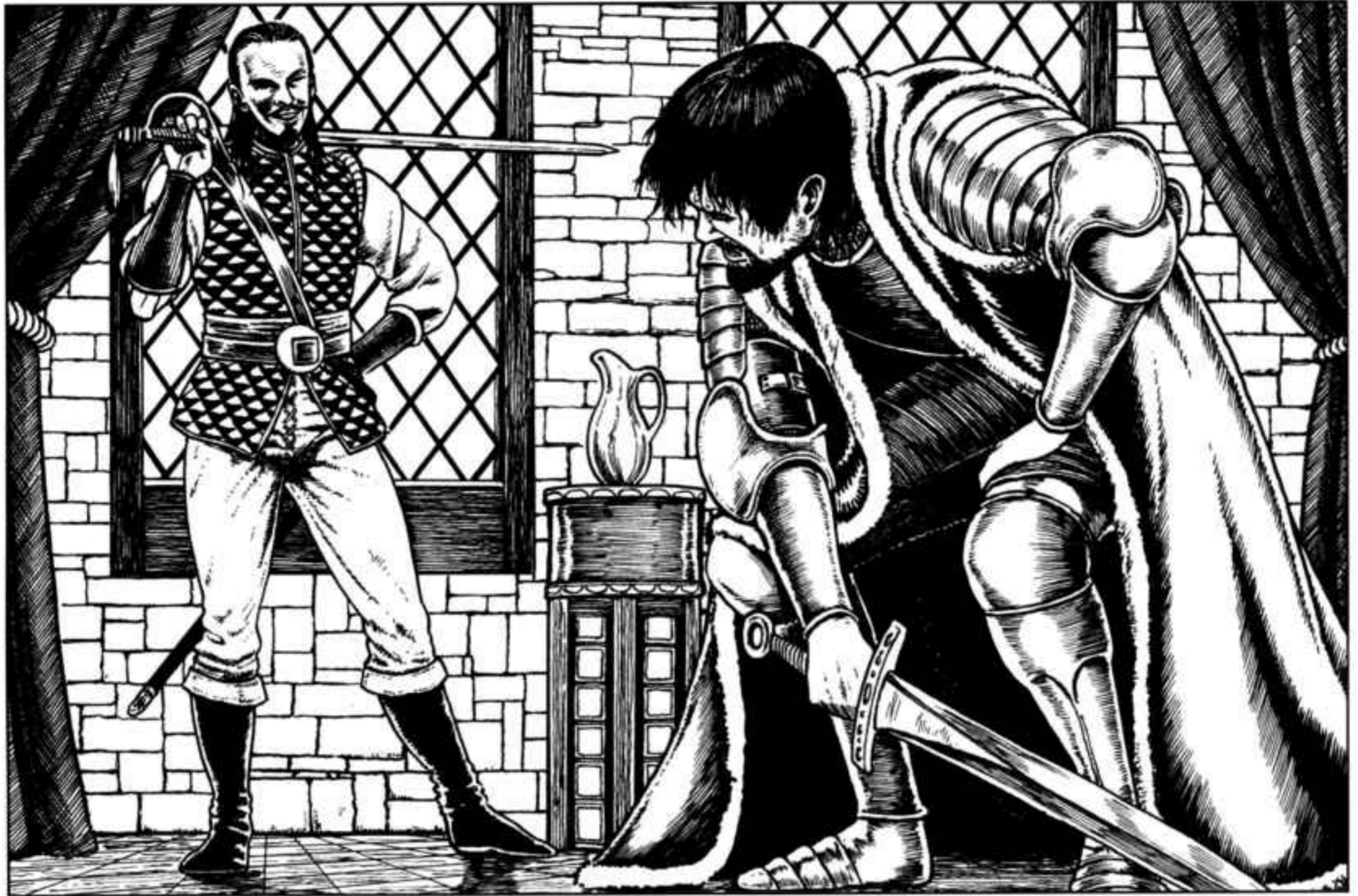
Note: Fatigue Trials during combat are completely optional. The Mythguide can discount such Trials or wait until the combat is over. If a single Trial is made at the conclusion of the combat, the Mythguide might wish to apply an additional modifier based on the length of the combat. For every increment that could require a Trial (either five or ten Intervals), the Mythguide could increase the Difficulty of the Trial at the conclusion of the melee.

Overexertion - Make a Fatigue Trial when the persona finishes an unusually strenuous activity (such moving or lifting heavy objects). Make a Fatigue Trial when a persona goes for extended periods without sleep.

Omnescence Use - Refer to the Reality Chapter for more information

Other Fatigue Trial Modifiers:	Extreme Temperatures	Slight to Severe Hindrance
	For every six hours without sleep beyond twelve hours	Slight Hindrance (cumulative)





⊕ Physical Combat ⊕

Personas will sometimes encounter situations that cannot be resolved through words alone. In such instances, the parties often resort to physical conflict to resolve their differences. The Aria combat system is designed to be both playable and flexible. If the Mythguide wishes to downplay combat in his Canticle, he need only employ the basics of the system (simple Strike and Parry resolution). If his Ensemble desires a bit more realism, the system offers a number of additional tactical possibilities, from advanced Actions to Fumbles, weapon Breakage, and Fatigue. Use only those pieces of the system which best fit your style of play.

All physical combat occurs in a succession of Action Intervals, and the Mythguide should drop play into Action Intervals as soon as he feels the precise measurement of time is necessary. Each Action Interval lasts for approximately five seconds, during which time personas take Actions and attempt maneuvers.

The Action Interval

During a single Action Interval, personas may perform Actions according to the number of Option Points they possess. A persona can use a number of Option Points equal to his Action Movement Rate in a single Interval. This base number is modified by a persona's Encumbrance and level of Injury. Most combat-related Actions are executed by Engaged individuals, although Non-engaged personas also have several Actions available to them. A list of possible Actions is provided in the sections that follow.

The first action in the Interval is performed by the persona who gains Initiative, and is followed by the other participants in succession according to their Initiative values. The first persona may be able to act again if he has Option Points remaining after all of the participants have already acted. Each persona can perform Actions as long as he has Option Points left in the Interval. Personas are able to react to the Actions of others even when it is not their turn to act (Parries are an example of such a reaction). In some cases, a persona may be able to perform an action after all of

his Option Points are gone at an increased level of Difficulty. A persona can act more than once in an Interval if he has the Option Points.

Every Action Interval is composed of several Phases, which allow action to progress in an orderly manner. These Phases are:

INITIATIVE PHASE

The participants in a combat determine Initiative, which shows the order of action. Refer to the section on Initiative for a list of relevant modifiers and a discussion of the determination process.

DECLARATION PHASE

Each player should determine the number of Option Points his persona has available (taking any Encumbrance or Injury penalties into account) and give a basic description of their persona's intentions for the coming Action Interval. Some Actions - Parry, Counterstrike, Dodge, Incidental - are reactions, and can be initiated in response to an opponent's Declared Actions during the Resolution Phase of an Interval. Other Actions should be declared during the Declaration Phase (although the Mythguide can always permit exceptions to this rule). A persona cannot declare more Actions than he has Option Points to perform. Because Declared Actions are not resolved until a persona's turn to act, they may be changed by paying the cost of the new action plus an additional Option Point penalty of -2.

ACTION RESOLUTION PHASE

All declared Actions and reactions are resolved in order of Initiative results. Since all attacks and defenses are presented as Actions, all combat resolution occurs during this Phase. Resolution should proceed in order of successive Initiative values, from highest to lowest, until all participants have either expended all of their Option Points or waived any further action during the Interval. Several rounds (moving from one participant to another in order of Initiative) are often necessary before all of the participants expend their available Option Points. For each round of action (declaration-resolution) within an Interval, allow personas to Declare and then Resolve Actions. Repeat these two Phases in succession until all personas have finished their Actions for the Interval.

Option Points

Base # Option Points = Action Movement Rate.
Subtract Encumbrance Penalty from Base #.

Slight Encumbrance	-1
Medium Encumbrance	-2
Heavy Encumbrance	-3
Severe Encumbrance	-4

CARRYOVER PHASE

Any Carryover Actions should be declared during this Phase. Carryover Actions are Actions begun in one Phase and completed in the next, and can affect Initiative determination. When declaring a Carryover action, the player must also declare the number of Option Points needed to complete the action.

INITIATIVE

The question of who goes first during an Action Interval is important. The persona taking the first action often has an initial advantage over his adversaries. There are two ways to determine Initiative in an Action Interval.

When using the first method, the player adds his persona's Option Points (adjusted for Encumbrance) to the Reach of the weapon being used and the Rank of the Favored Weapon expertise. A persona using any type of power or magic adds his Insight or Faith (whichever is applicable) to the Rank of the power or class of powers being used. If a persona is carrying an action over into another Interval (see Carryover Actions), the number of Option Points already spent on the action may be added to the persona's Initiative. Surprise can also affect Initiative; the Mythguide should determine the precise effects depending on the nature of the surprise (ambush, accidental, etc.) and its Degree of Success. Surprise will always add to the Initiative value.

After adding all of the relevant modifiers, the highest number acts first, the next highest second, etc. If two personas have the same number of points, roll a single die and compare the results. The higher roll goes first. Alternately, a persona can expend a point from his Myth Pool to automatically gain Initiative during an Action Interval. A prepared missile weapon

Actions Catalog

Common Actions

Engage
 Closed Move/Disengage
 Defend (Reaction - not Declared)
 Incidental
 Mount/Dismount
 Occupied
 Open
 Open Move
 Pass
 Posture
 Prepare
 Rest
 Rise
 Strike

Attack Actions

Strike (specific Attack Mode)
 Additional Strike
 Fleche to Unbalance
 Great Blow
 Prepared Blow
 Pulled Blow
 Riposte
 Set
 Shock Attack
 Unhorse

Defense Actions

Dodge
 Normal Dodge
 Evade
 Parry
 Block Parry
 Shield Block
 Divert Parry
 Disarm
 Counterstrike
 Fend

Unarmed Combat

Fisticuffs
 Grappling
 Grab
 Hold
 Wrench
 Manipulate
 Escape

Ranged Combat

Ranged Strike
 Aimed Strike
 Quick Shot

is considered to have a Reach of eight for purposes of calculating Initiative.

The second method incorporates a random element. The player adds the Option Points to the Reach and Rank of the weapon and then rolls a ten-sided die, adding half the result to the initial number. The persona with the highest resulting total acts first, the second highest acts second, etc. If the Mythguide thinks an element of chance should enter the Initiative process, he should use this method. If he thinks a persona's abilities should speak for themselves, he should use the first method.

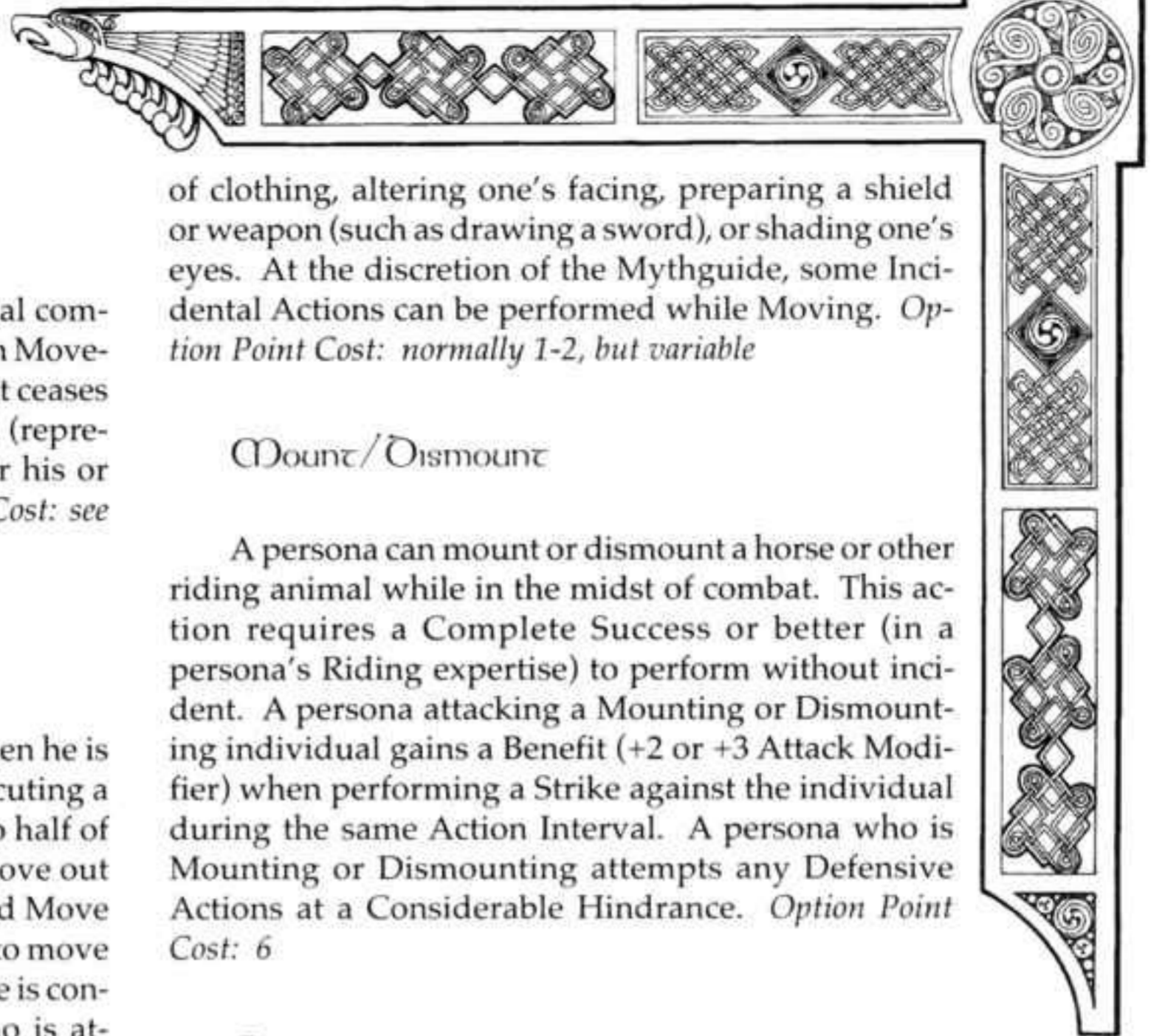
Engagement

Engagement is required for melee combat to occur, and is normally represented by the greatest Reach of weapons involved. Engaged Actions are those Actions which may be performed by a persona who is Engaged with an enemy. If appropriate conditions exist, magic can be attempted by Engaged individuals; missile combat between Engaged individuals is normally impossible. Actions which can be performed by Engaged individuals include: Closed Move, Defend, Incidental, Mount/Dismount, Occupied, Open, Pass, Posture, Prepare, Rest, Rise, Strike. Note that while all of these Actions are possible, some are not very probable (such as Resting while Engaged).

Non-Engaged Actions are those Actions which may be performed by personas who are not Engaged with an enemy. Engagement indicates a situation where one persona may attack another, and normally represents the Reach of the longest weapon among a group of combatants. Individuals who are able to fight each other must be Engaged. Both missile and magical conflict can be attempted by Non-Engaged individuals. Possible Non-Engaged Actions include: Engage, Incidental, Mount/Dismount, Occupied, Open, Open Move, Pass, Posture, Prepare, Rest, Rise, Strike (with missile weapon or magic).

ACTIONS

Personas use Option Points to execute Actions during the course of an Action Interval. Different Actions require different point expenditures to perform, and some Actions are restricted either to Engaged or Non-Engaged personas. The following sections provide descriptions of the possible Actions and recommended Option Point costs.



Engage

The persona Engages an enemy in physical combat. A persona can move up to half of his Action Movement Rate to Engage the enemy. All movement ceases as soon as the persona moves within Reach (represented by the longer weapon's Reach - either his or his opponent's) of an enemy. *Option Point Cost: see Open Move*

Closed Move/Disengage

A persona can attempt a Closed Move when he is currently Engaged with an enemy. When executing a Closed Move, a persona may only move up to half of his Action Movement Rate. If he wishes to move out of Engagement, the persona must use a Closed Move to perform a Disengage. If the persona is able to move beyond the Reach of his opponent's weapon, he is considered to have Disengaged. A persona who is attempting to Disengage may not Parry an incoming attack, but he may Dodge. A Dodge must be successful for a persona to successfully Disengage. An unsuccessful Dodge ends all Closed Movement for the Interval. A persona who has the Option Points may take a Strike action in the same turn as a Closed Move. *Option Point Cost: 2 per yard forward, 4 per yard sideways and backwards*

Defend

This action is more of a *reaction* than an action. If a persona has at least one Option Point, he can always Defend against a Strike during an Action Interval. Several different Defenses are possible, and these are detailed later in this chapter. Defend Actions are not declared like normal Actions; they are declared in reaction to attacks directed at a persona. When a player announces his intention to actively Defend against an attack, he must also state the type of Defense that will be used.

Incidental

Incidental Actions include most simple activities during an Interval. They usually cost a single Option Point, but may cost more at the Mythguide's discretion. Incidental Actions include such mundane activities as putting something down (a backpack, for example), picking up an item, adjusting gear or a piece

of clothing, altering one's facing, preparing a shield or weapon (such as drawing a sword), or shading one's eyes. At the discretion of the Mythguide, some Incidental Actions can be performed while Moving. *Option Point Cost: normally 1-2, but variable*

Mount/Dismount

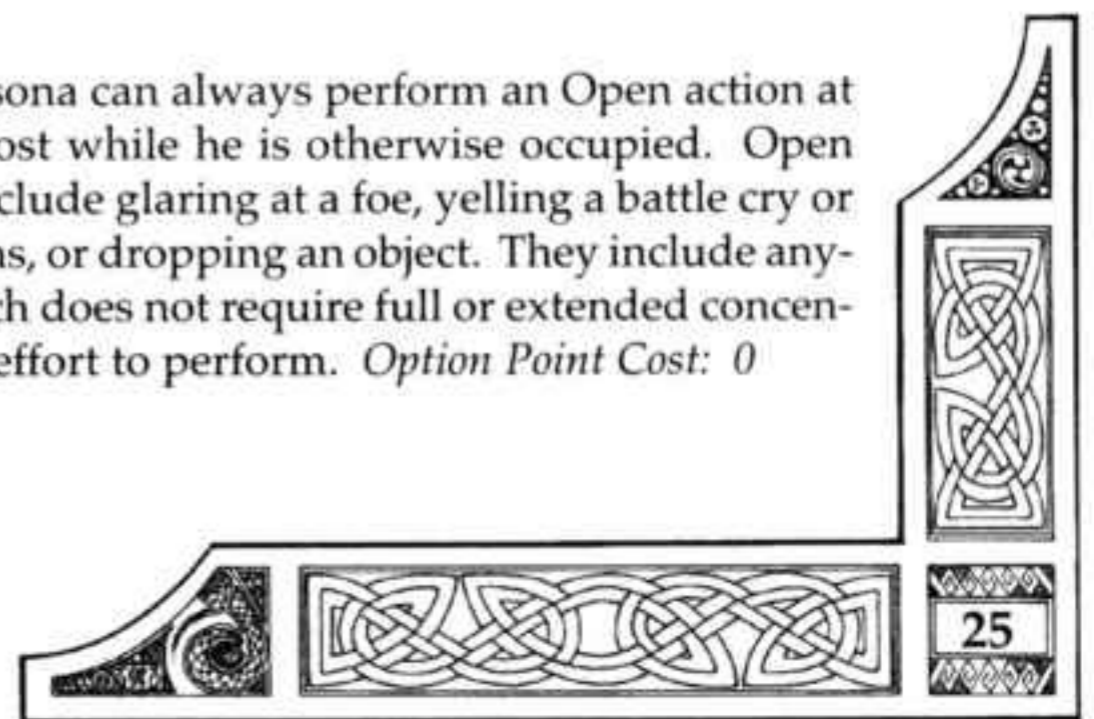
A persona can mount or dismount a horse or other riding animal while in the midst of combat. This action requires a Complete Success or better (in a persona's Riding expertise) to perform without incident. A persona attacking a Mounting or Dismounting individual gains a Benefit (+2 or +3 Attack Modifier) when performing a Strike against the individual during the same Action Interval. A persona who is Mounting or Dismounting attempts any Defensive Actions at a Considerable Hindrance. *Option Point Cost: 6*

Occupied

A persona engaged in an extended or protracted action (i.e. one that is going to last longer than a single Action Interval) chooses this action while executing the prolonged action. This represents not so much an action as a declaration. For example, a persona attempting to reason with one individual while his compatriots are engaged in physical combat should choose this action during each Action Interval he is trying to Persuade his target until the Persuasion attempt is finished. This action normally takes all of a persona's Option Points during an Interval. However, if the persona is attacked while Occupied, he can abort his longer action and defend himself (at a Difficulty penalty equal to the cost of the defensive action being attempted). A persona in the midst of a Healing attempt chooses this option while performing a Treatment. A persona who is Concentrating on a magical effect is also considered to be Occupied. *Option Point Cost: All*

Open

A persona can always perform an Open action at no extra cost while he is otherwise occupied. Open Actions include glaring at a foe, yelling a battle cry or instructions, or dropping an object. They include anything which does not require full or extended concentration or effort to perform. *Option Point Cost: 0*



Open Move

The persona can Move a distance up to his entire Action Movement Rate (adjusted for Encumbrance, Physical Penalty, etc.) at a cost of one Option Point per yard. A persona using this Action must begin the Interval Disengaged, and is not able to Engage an enemy persona during the Move. If he does so, the persona is required to use an Engage action. A Moving persona may be able to perform incidental Actions during the Move (drawing a sword, putting on a helmet, opening a door, etc.). Lateral or obstructed movement costs more, as does rearward movement. The Mythguide should impose penalties (usually one to three additional Option Points per yard) for obstructions encountered during movement. Some obstructions may simply be impassable. *Option Point Cost: 1 per yard forward, 2 per yard sideways or backwards*

Pass

A persona can reserve an action for later in the Action Interval by choosing a Pass action. When the player's turn comes as a result of Initiative, he declares his intention to Pass. When his turn comes around again, he may take action normally as long as he has Option Points remaining. The Mythguide may decide that a Pass action costs Option Points (since waiting represents an increment of time). A persona taking a Pass action can defend himself without paying the Option Point penalty that results from altering a Declared Action. A persona may Declare only one Pass Action each Interval. *Option Point Cost: variable*

Posture

A persona can alter his physical position in some fundamental way. This action allows a persona to kneel, drop prone, return to his feet from a kneeling position, brandish or present a weapon, or assume an unusual fighting stance. A persona cannot use this action to rise to his feet from a prone position; he has to use a Rise action instead. *Option Point Cost: 2*

Prepare

Certain weapons need to be Prepared before they can be used to Strike. Several missile weapons fall into this category. Melee weapons already have Preparation times factored in to their Speed values. Refer to

the accompanying table for weapons and their Preparation times. *Option Point Cost: variable by weapon*

Rest

The persona remains stationary and takes no Incidental Actions. A persona who is Resting may recover Fatigue or Omnescence. The player should declare whether his persona is engaging in Total Rest or Partial Rest. In the latter case, the persona may still be able to observe his situation and perform limited action. Refer to the Fatigue guidelines earlier in this chapter for more information. *Option Point Cost: All*

Rise

A persona uses this action to resume a standing Posture after falling or being knocked prone. Certain circumstances may make a Rise action more difficult (if a persona is being held down or if he is seriously injured, for example). If extenuating circumstances are present, the Mythguide may require an Agility Trial or a Physical Trial to allow the persona to successfully Rise. *Option Point Cost: 4*

Strike

This is the standard attack action. It allows a persona to attack an opponent with a Prepared weapon or with his hands or feet (when engaging in Unarmed Combat). Refer to sections on the various types of attack later in this chapter for options and point costs.

CARRYOVER ACTIONS

Personas can begin an action during one Interval and complete it in the next Interval. Such Actions are called Carryover Actions, and must be declared in both the Carryover Phase and in the first Declaration Phase of the next Interval. Carryover Actions allow a persona to divide their Option Point cost into two separate expenditures. For example, a persona who has two Option Points remaining in an Interval declares a Rise action (he has been knocked down) which costs four Option Points. The player spends his persona's two remaining points and declares a Carryover Action. When the persona is able to act during the next Interval, he must spend two Option Points to complete the action.



Carryover Actions also give a persona a slight benefit when determining Initiative. The number of Option Points spent in the first Interval may be added to the persona's Initiative determination for the Interval during which the action will be finished. In the previous example, since two Option Points were used in the Interval when the Carryover was declared, two points can be added to the persona's Initiative for the next Interval. This represents the fact that the action is already begun, and the persona gains a slight advantage as a result.

☯ Melee Resolution ☯

Simple melee resolution follows a number of guidelines which are detailed in the following sections, and can be affected by certain other modifiers and considerations. Many of these considerations are optional (since they necessitate additional Trials and time), and their use depends on the Mythguide's needs and wishes for the Canticle.

Melee Exchange

Each exchange of blows (Strike - Defend) yields a final level of success for the attacker, ranging from a killing blow to a disastrous Fumble. An exchange always occurs in the same order: Attacker declares his attack, Strike Location is determined (if this option is being used), Defender chooses a Defense action and makes an appropriate Trial, Attacker makes a Trial based on his Strike Chance and on the Attack action being used.

The exchange is finally resolved using any applicable modifiers and Trial methods. Some Defenses call for Refined Trials on the part of the attacker while others require Challenged Trials. The Mythguide determines the form of the Trial and interprets its final results. Final results are always described in terms of a final Degree of Success or Failure. Results can also include Injuries, Shock Trials, Fumble Trials, Breakage Trials, and Knockdowns. Players should consult the various Defense results tables for effects.

Attack Trials (Resolution Guidelines)

Attack Trial (Challenged or Refined)

Trial Base = Favored Weapon Base

Trial Rank = Favored Weapon Rank

Strike Modifier = Modifier corresponds to the Attack Mode being engaged (ex. Chop)

Base Difficulty = Depends on the posture of the Target

- 0 Target unconscious / asleep
- 1 Target awake but unaware of Attack, or Target is kneeling or attempting to rise
- 2 Target assuming normal Defensive posture

Common Difficulty Modifiers

- Static Defense (Armor Defensive Modifiers)
- Defensive Maneuver (performed by Defender)
- Physical Penalty (from Injury, Fatigue, etc.)
- Mental Penalty (from Shock)

Results: If Defender attempts a Parry, consult appropriate Parry Table for possible Attack Results. If Attack is Successful, see the table below for General Injury Results

Injury Results (By Modified Degree of Success)

Degree of Success	Injury Results
Marginal Success	Light Wound - Bruises, Superficial Cuts, & Scratches. Physical Penalty (MH, +1) Shock Trial (Avg. Difficulty)
Complete Success	Wound - Fractured Bones, Cuts, and Punctures Physical Penalty (H, +2 or +3) Shock Trial (+ 2 Difficulty)
Superior Success	Major Wound - Broken Bones, Deep Cuts, and Severe Punctures (Muscle & Organs) - Permanent Physical Penalty (CH, +4 or +5) Shock Trial (+ 4 Difficulty)
Extraordinary Success	Mortal Wound - Destroyed Vitals Target dies in 1d10+ Trauma Resistance Minutes Physical Penalty (SH, + 6 to +8) Shock Trial (+ 6 Difficulty)
Mythic Success	Instant Death

The Attack

Personas who have declared a Strike action during an Action Interval can perform several types of attack depending on their position and Engagement status. Remember that Defense Actions are resolved first during an exchange, since the results of an attack depend on the success of the opponent's Defense. Every attack has several common elements which form a modified Strike Chance.

Weapon Expertise The Rank and Base (in the appropriate Favored Weapon expertise) form the basic Strike Chance for an attack.

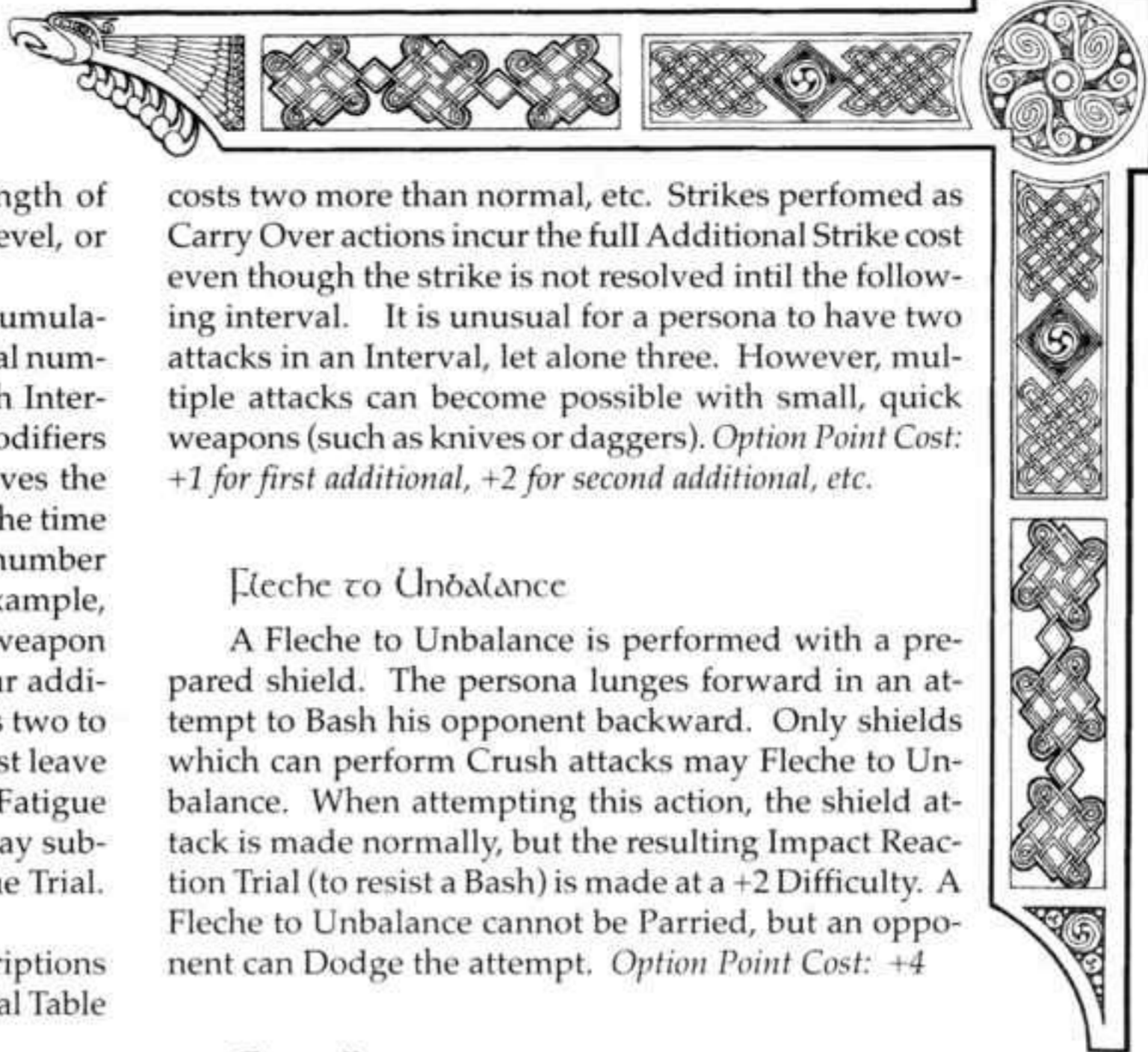
Attack Mode Each weapon has one or more possible Attack Modes. When making an attack, the player must declare the Attack Mode being used. Refer to the Arms Profile for a list of possible Attack Modes. Attack Mode affects the type and degree of injury inflicted.

Attack Modifier Each Attack Mode for a particular weapon has an Attack Modifier, which represents the weapon's capacity to inflict physical harm and injury. This number is added to the Strike Chance of the weapon.

Speed Each Attack Mode also has a Speed associated with it. Speed represents the number of Option Points a persona must spend to attack with the weapon (i.e. higher Speed values indicate slower attacks). Weapons typically have different Speeds in different Attack Modes. Speed can never drop below a value of one as a Result of modification from Strength.

Minimum Strength Every weapon has a recommended minimum Strength requirement for its effective use. If a persona has a higher or lower Strength than is needed, the Speed and Attack Modifier of the weapon can be affected. For every Rank of Strength below the minimum, the persona adds a value to the weapon's Speed and subtracts a value from its Attack Modifier.

For every Rank of Strength above the minimum, the persona may either add one value to the Attack Modifier or subtract one value from Speed, up to a maximum of two values in each category. *Note that reducing a Weapon's Speed does not decrease its Option Point Cost.* For example, if a weapon has a Minimum Strength of five and a persona has a Strength of ten, the persona could add two values to the weapon's Attack Modifier and subtract two values from the



weapon's Speed. If the persona had a Strength of seven, he could affect each category by one level, or one category by two values.

Additional Strength can also affect the accumulation of Fatigue. The persona must leave an equal number of additional Strength values unused each Interval as he uses to improve Speed or Attack Modifiers (up to a maximum of three values). If he leaves the same number each Interval for five Intervals (the time between Fatigue Trials), he can subtract that number from the Difficulty of the Fatigue Trial. For example, a persona with a Strength of eight is using a weapon with a Minimum Strength of four. He has four additional Strength values each Interval. If he uses two to improve the weapon's Attack Modifier, he must leave the other two unused if he wishes to receive a Fatigue benefit. If he does this for five Intervals, he may subtract two from the Difficulty of his next Fatigue Trial.

The possible attack types and their descriptions appear in following sections. See the Attack Trial Table for Attack Resolution.

Strike

A Strike is the 'normal' attack form during physical combat. A persona can Strike with a prepared weapon using one of the weapon's available Attack Modes. The success of a persona's attack is based on his *Strike Chance*, which is made as an expertise Trial. Strike Chance is determined by the Favored Weapon Rank of the prepared weapon and the Attack Modifier for the Attack Mode that the persona is using. The persona may also be able to apply a Strength bonus to the attack. For example, a persona with expertise in Favored Weapon (Heavy Mace) at Rank seven has a Strength of nine. The persona has a Base of four in the expertise (found by averaging Manual Dexterity, Intuition, and Agility). The weapon's Attack Modifier is added to the Rank and Base of the Favored Weapon expertise to find the persona's Strike Chance (in this case a value of 15). The player has the option of applying his Strength Bonus to either his weapon's Attack Modifier or its Speed (or he can save the values to apply to a Fatigue bonus). *Option Point Cost: equal to Unmodified Speed of weapon*

Additional Strikes

If a persona has the Option Points to do so, he may initiate more than one attack per Interval. Successive attacks cost additional Option Points per Strike to perform. The second attack in an Action Interval costs one more Option Point than normal, the third attack

costs two more than normal, etc. Strikes performed as Carry Over actions incur the full Additional Strike cost even though the strike is not resolved until the following interval. It is unusual for a persona to have two attacks in an Interval, let alone three. However, multiple attacks can become possible with small, quick weapons (such as knives or daggers). *Option Point Cost: +1 for first additional, +2 for second additional, etc.*

Fleche to Unbalance

A Fleche to Unbalance is performed with a prepared shield. The persona lunges forward in an attempt to Bash his opponent backward. Only shields which can perform Crush attacks may Fleche to Unbalance. When attempting this action, the shield attack is made normally, but the resulting Impact Reaction Trial (to resist a Bash) is made at a +2 Difficulty. A Fleche to Unbalance cannot be Parried, but an opponent can Dodge the attempt. *Option Point Cost: +4*

Great Blow

A persona can spend three additional Option Points to execute a Great Blow. A Great Blow represents a total commitment of all of a persona's strength and physical resources, and increases a weapon's Attack Modifier by half again (round up). For example, an Attack Modifier of 5 would become an 8 (five plus half of five rounded up). A persona who performs a Great Blow loses any Fatigue Trial benefits he might have been saving up as a result of additional Strength. A Great Blow requires a Breakage Trial at Difficulty 0 for any Degree of Success. Each Degree of Failure adds one level of Difficulty to the Trial (i.e. a Complete Failure would call for a Breakage Trial at Difficulty 2). *Option Point Cost: +3*

Prepared Blow

If the Strike Location guidelines are being used, a persona can attempt a Prepared Blow. A Prepared Blow costs one extra Option Point to use, and it allows a persona to direct his attack toward a specific Strike Location. Refer to the optional Strike Location guidelines later in this chapter for more information. *Option Point Cost: +1*

Dulled Blow

A persona can pull a Strike if he does not want to use the full impact potential of his weapon. Pulling a Blow decreases a weapon's Attack Modifier by half (round up). If a weapon has an Attack Modifier of

five, a Pulled Blow with the weapon would have an Attack Modifier of three. *Option Point Cost: 0*

Riposte

A Riposte is a fluid reaction attack that follows on the heels of a successful Divert parry. If a persona achieves a Superior Success or higher with a Divert parry, he may immediately Riposte with an Option Point benefit. A Riposte attack always costs at least one Option Point, and the Option Point penalty for an Additional Strike is applied *after* the Riposte benefit of two Option Points. For example, if a persona were able to Riposte as a second attack, and the Riposte Option Point benefit took the normal attack cost to one point, a one point penalty for the additional attack would still be assessed. The Riposte would cost two Option Points total. *Option Point Cost: -2*

Set

A Disengaged persona may attempt to Set his weapon against an oncoming attacker. This form of attack can be particularly effective against a charging or mounted opponent. A weapon must have at least a Reach of four in order to be effectively Set. Although spears and polearms are normally employed, the Mythguide might allow other weapons to be Set. A persona can attack the first opponent who moves into Engagement range, and receives an Attack Modifier based on the opponent's Pace. An opponent moving at a Walk yields no bonus, while an opponent moving at a March grants a +1 Attack Modifier. Each successive Pace yields an additional +1 modifier until the maximum +5 is reached at a Dash Pace. A horse moving at a gallop is considered to be moving at a Dash Pace. An opponent can attempt to avoid the Set weapon if he can see it coming. The Mythguide may allow an Agility or Riding Trial to see if the opponent can slow his movement. For every Degree of Success achieved, the persona can slow his movement by one Pace. *Option Point Cost: 2 to Set, plus the time spent waiting for an opponent to reach the Set weapon*

Shock Attack

A Shock attack occurs as the culmination of movement. A persona charging an opponent, whether mounted or on foot, performs a Shock attack at the end of or during the charge. Shock attacks include full-on charges with lances and wide sweeps from horseback with curved swords. A persona must be moving at the Double Time Pace or higher to execute

a Shock attack. Shock attacks occur in one of two forms: Full Impact or Partial Impact.

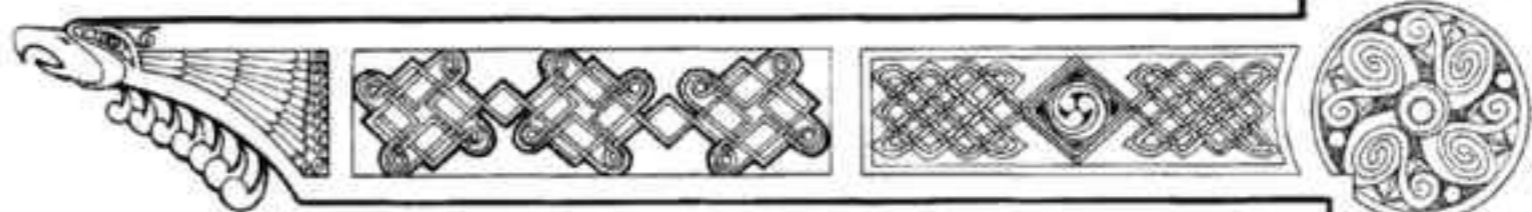
Full Impact The persona applies the full impact of his movement to his attack, making the attempt a kind of 'all or nothing' enterprise. A Full Impact Shock Attack gains an Attack Modifier based on the Pace of the attacking persona. An attacker moving at Double Time gains a +1 bonus, while an attacker moving at a Dash gains a +4 bonus. The attacker and defender must each make an Impact Reaction Trial. Both attacker and defender suffer Difficulty penalties based on Pace when making their Impact Reaction Trials (from +1 to +4). An additional Difficulty modifier is applied based on the difference in the participants' weights as represented by Trauma Resistance. For every level of difference in Trauma Resistance values, the larger combatant receives a -1 Difficulty bonus while the smaller combatant receives a +1 Difficulty penalty. If a Mounted persona is attempting a Shock Attack, use the Trauma Resistance of the Mount when modifying the defender's Impact Reaction Trial. Depending on the situation, the Mythguide may also call for Shock Trials (with appropriate modifiers based on the result of the impact) from each combatant.

If the attacker succeeds, he may move through the defender. Unless the target gets out of the way, a persona performing a Full Impact attack moves into his target regardless of whether his weapon attack is successful. The Mythguide may wish to allow a mounted persona a slight benefit when making his Impact Reaction Trial (the presence of stirrups and war saddle may provide additional benefits. *Option Point Cost: +2*

Partial Impact The persona applies a part of his move's impact to an attack, which often takes the form of a sort of sideswipe or sideslip. A Partial Impact Shock Attack gains an Attack Modifier equal to half the bonus (round up) that would be applied to a Full Impact Attack. The Difficulty penalties for the resulting Impact Reaction Trials are also halved, although the Trauma Resistance modifier remains the same. The Mythguide may rule that a Partial Impact attack misses a target entirely, thus removing the need for any Shock or Impact Reaction Trials. *Option Point Cost: +1*

Unhorse

Poleaxes and swordstaves can be used to Unhorse an opponent. This Attack has its own Speed and Attack Modifier, and is made as a normal Strike. Refer to the Arms Profile tables for Speeds and modifiers for each weapon. *Option Point Cost: normal (Unhorse is a special type of Strike)*



The Defense

When an attack is directed at a persona, he may declare a Defend action. Although Defend Actions cost Option Points, they are not declared as normal Actions during the Declaration Phase of an Action Interval. Rather, personas declare them as *reactions* to attacks directed against them.

A persona can perform several types of Defense depending on their position and Engagement status. When an exchange (attack - defense) occurs, the active Defense is always resolved first. The reason for this is simple - defense results often modify an attacker's Strike Chance, so they must be determined first.

There are two principal types of Defense Actions - Parries and Dodges. Static Defenses do not require Actions in order to manifest themselves; they include a persona's armor, shield, and Trauma Resistance. Each of the different types of Defense are discussed in the following sections. The unmodified Difficulty of any Defense action is always Standard (Difficulty of 2), although the effective Difficulty of a Parry attempt depends on difference in Speed between the attacking and parrying weapons.

Dodge

A persona may use his Dodge expertise to attempt to avoid an incoming attack, although Acrobatics can be substituted for the Dodge expertise at a -1 Rank penalty. Two different Dodging Actions are possible.

Dodge

The standard Dodge action is performed as a reaction to a specific attack, and is resolved as part of a larger Challenged Trial which includes the attacker's Strike Chance. The initial Dodge each Interval costs two Option Points, and each successive Dodge costs an additional Option Point (i.e. the third Dodge of an Interval would cost four Option Points). These costs represent Dodges made at normal Difficulty. Refer to the Dodge table for resolution modifiers.

A persona can theoretically Dodge many times during an Interval, and can willingly suffer Difficulty penalties to reduce the Option Point costs of a Dodge. To reduce the Option Point cost of a Dodge by one point, the Difficulty of the Dodge attempt increases by one. The second reduction (whether to the same attempt or a different one) during an Interval raises Difficulty by two, the third by three, etc. For example, if a Dodge would cost four Option Points to perform, the player can reduce its cost to one Option Point by

increasing Difficulty by six. *Option Point Cost: 2 (3 for second in Interval, 4 for third, etc.)*

Evade

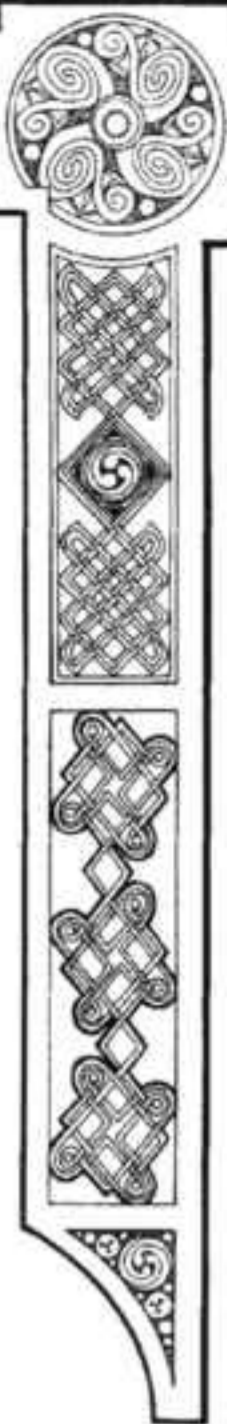
A persona can also use his Dodge (or Acrobatics) expertise to Evade during combat. The Evade action is useful when a persona is being attacked by several individuals at once. The persona must make a successful Dodge Trial at the beginning of an Interval. If this Trial is successful, all attacks against the persona are made at a heightened Difficulty. This Difficulty penalty depends on the Degree of Success of the Evade; a Marginal Success yields a +1 Difficulty, a Complete Success +2, a Superior Success +3, an Extraordinary Success +4, and a Mythic Success +5. These modifiers are applied to all incoming attacks for the duration of the Interval. *Option Point Cost: 6*

Parry

A persona can attempt to Parry an incoming attack with an appropriate weapon or shield. There are three different types of parry - Block, Divert, and Disarm - and most weapons are not able to perform all three types. The Arms Profile lists the possible Parry Modes for each weapon. Weapons also have Speeds and Defense Modifiers listed for each Parry Mode. These values are used in the same fashion as their Attack counterparts (Speed and Attack Modifier).

A persona's ability to Parry with a particular weapon equals his *Parry Chance*. Parry Chance is found in the same manner as Strike Chance. Add the Rank and Base of the Favored Weapon expertise for the weapon being used to the weapon's Defense Modifier. The result is the weapon's Parry Chance. Strength benefits can be applied to Block and Divert Parries, but not to Disarm Parries. The base Difficulty (normally 2) of a Parry attempt is modified by the difference in weapon Speeds between the attacking and Parrying weapons. A faster Parrying weapon receives a -1 Difficulty bonus for each Speed value lower than the attacking weapon, while a slower Parrying weapon suffers a +1 Difficulty penalty for each Speed value higher than the attacking weapon. A persona may parry more than once in a single Action Interval, but he must have the Option Points to do so. For each additional parry attempt in an Interval, increase the Option Point cost by one.

If a persona has an unusually low number of Option Points, he may still parry at least once in an Interval. This assumes the persona takes no other Defense Action during the course of the Interval and performs only a single Strike action. If this is the case, the per-



Dodge Results (Degrees of Success vs. Degree of Success)

Attack

Defense

	Myth. Succ.	Extra. Succ.	Super. Succ.	Comp. Succ.	Marg. Succ.	Marg. Failure	Comp. Failure	Ser. Failure	Miser. Failure	Catastr. Failure
Myth. Success	D	MgS	CS	SS	ES	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Extra. Success	D	D	MgS	CS	SS	ES	ES	ES	ES	ES
Super. Success	D	D	D	MgS	CS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS
Comp. Success	D	D	D	D	MgS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS
Marg. Success	D	D	D	D	D	MgS	MgS	MgS	MgS	MgS
Marg. Failure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	K2	K3	K5
Comp. Failure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	K2	K3	K5
Serious Failure	AF	AF	AF	AF	AF	-	-	K2	K3	K5
Miser. Failure	AF3	AF3	AF3	AF3	AF3	-	-	K2	K3	K5
Catastr. Failure	AF5	AF5	AF5	AF5	AF5	-	-	K2	K3	K5

KEY

- MS Mythic Success (Defender Killed)
- ES Extraordinary Success (Mortal Wound)
- SS Superior Success (Major Wound)
- CS Complete Success (Wound)
- MgS Marginal Success (Light Wound)
- D Attack Dodged
- Miss (Attacker misses Defender, Dodge performed without misfortune)
- AF Attack Failed/Fumbled (Attacker makes Fumble Trial vs. Standard Difficulty 2)
- AF# Attack Failed/Fumbled (Attacker makes Fumble Trial vs. Difficulty # listed)
- K# Dodge Failure results in possible Knockback (Knockback Trial vs. Difficulty # listed)

Option Pt. Reduction A Defender may reduce Option Pt. costs by adding Difficulty to a Dodge attempt.
Difficulty Increase

1	+1
2	+3
3	+6
4	+10

sona may parry at a Difficulty penalty equal to the number of remaining Option Points needed. For example, a persona who wishes to execute a parry that costs three Option Points only has one point left. He may still attempt the parry at a +2 Difficulty penalty. A persona must always have at least one Option Point in order to parry.

Block

A Block Parry attempts to stop an incoming attack by catching and halting the motion of the attacking weapon before it can cause injury. Block Parries are only effective against melee weapons. A Block Parry is made as a Challenged Trial with an opponent's Strike Chance. The final Degree of Success or Failure indicates the result. Refer to the appropriate table for result interpretations. A persona's Strength bonus can be applied to both the Speed and Defense Modifier of a Block Parry (up to two values in each). *Option Point Cost: varies by weapon*

Shield Block

A Shield Block works exactly like a normal Block Parry, except that Shield Blocks can parry missile attacks. A shield must be prepared in order to effectively Block an attack. *Option Point Cost: varies by shield type*

Divert

A Divert Parry attempts to use the inertia of an attack in the defender's favor, changing the path of an incoming weapon but not Blocking it outright. Divert Parries are only effective against both melee weapons and thrown missile weapons, and are usually quicker and more elegant than a simple Block. A Divert Parry affects the Difficulty of the attack it tries to prevent. The effectiveness of the attempt depends on the Degree of Success. Refer to the appropriate table for results. A persona's Strength bonus can only be used to affect the Speed of a Divert Parry, not its Defense Modifier. *Option Point Cost: varies by weapon type*

Disarm

A Disarm Parry attempts to force an attacking weapon from the hands of its wielder. Disarm Parries are only effective against melee weapons, and constitute a kind of attack against the weapon itself. A successful Disarm Parry requires the attacker to make a Fumble Trial. If this Trial fails, the attacker cannot retain his hold on the weapon. If the Trial succeeds, the attacker maintains his grip but cannot continue the attack. Refer to the appropriate table for results. Strength bonuses do not apply when resolving a Disarm Parry. *Option Point Costs: varies by weapon type*

Parry Trials (Resolution Guidelines)

Block Parry (Challenged Trial)

Trial Base = Favored Weapon Base
 Trial Rank = Favored Weapon Rank
 Parry Modifier = Block Parry Defensive Modifier of the Parrying Weapon
 Base Difficulty = 2

Common Difficulty Modifiers

Difference in Weapon Speeds (+ or -)
 Physical Penalty (from Injury, Fatigue, etc.)
 Mental Penalty (from Shock)

Results: see Block Parry Results table. Compare Degree of Success (Parry) to the Degree of Success (Attack) for precise Result.

Divert Parry (Refined Trial)

Trial Base = Favored Weapon Base
 Trial Rank = Favored Weapon Rank
 Parry Modifier = Divert Parry Defensive Modifier of the Parrying Weapon
 Base Difficulty = 2

Common Difficulty Modifiers

Difference in Weapon Speeds (+ or -)
 Physical Penalty (from Injury, Fatigue, etc.)
 Mental Penalty (from Shock)

Results: see Divert Parry Results table. Apply resulting Difficulty Modifiers to Attack Roll.

Disarm Parry (Challenged Trial)

Trial Base = Favored Weapon Base
 Trial Rank = Favored Weapon Rank
 Parry Modifier = Disarm Parry Defensive Modifier of the Parrying Weapon
 Base Difficulty = 2

Common Difficulty Modifiers

Difference in Weapon Speeds (+ or -)
 Physical Penalty (from Injury, Fatigue, etc.)
 Mental Penalty (from Shock)

Results: see Disarm Parry Results table. Compare Degree of Success (Parry) to the Degree of Success (Attack) for precise Result.

Block Parry Results (Degrees of Success vs. Degree of Success)

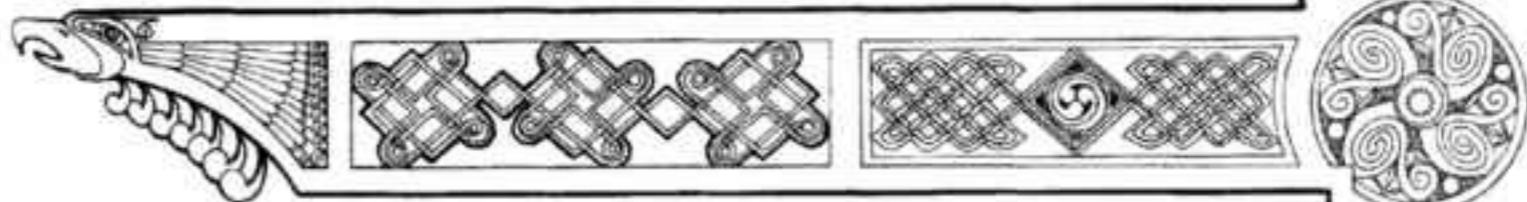
Attack

Defense

	Myth. Succ.	Extra. Succ.	Sup. Succ.	Comp. Succ.	Marg. Succ.	Marg. Failure	Comp. Failure	Ser. Failure	Miser. Failure	Catast. Failure
Myth. Success	P	MgS DF	CS DF3	SS DF5	ES DB	MS	MS	MS	MS	MS
Extra. Success	P	P	MgS DF	CS DF3	SS DF5	ES	ES	ES	ES	ES
Super. Success	P	P	P	MgS DF	CS DF3	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS
Comp. Success	P	P	P	P	MgS DF	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS
Marg. Success	P	P	P	P	P	MgS	MgS	MgS	MgS	MgS
Marg. Failure	AF	-	-	-	-	-	-	DF	DF3	DB
Comp. Failure	AF3	AF	-	-	-	-	-	-	DF	DF3
Serious Failure	AB	AF3	AF	-	-	-	-	-	-	DF
Miser. Failure	AB3	AB	AF3	AF	-	-	-	-	-	-
Catastr. Failure	AB5	AB3	AB	AF3	AF	-	-	-	-	-

KEY

- MS Mythic Success (Defender Killed),
- ES Extraordinary Success (Mortal Wound). If defense successful, Defender's weapon knocked away (see DF).
- SS Superior Success (Major Wound). If defense successful, Defender's weapon knocked away (see DF).
- CS Complete Success (Wound). If defense successful, Defender's weapon knocked away (see DF).
- MgS Marginal Success (Light Wound). If defense successful, Defender's weapon knocked away (see DB & DF).
- P Attack Parried Successfully
- Miss (Attacker's and Defender's Weapons fail to meet)
- AF Attack Parried/Fumble (Attacker makes Fumble Trial vs. Standard Difficulty)
- AF3 Attack Parried/Fumble (Attacker makes Fumble Trial vs. Difficulty 3)
- AB Attack Parried/Break (Attacker makes Breakage Trial vs. Standard Difficulty)
- AB3 Attack Parried/Break (Attacker makes Breakage Trial vs. Difficulty 3)
- AB5 Attack Parried/Break (Attacker makes Breakage Trial vs. Difficulty 5)
- DF Defender Fumble (Defender makes Fumble Trial vs. Standard Difficulty)
- DF3 Defender Fumble (Defender makes Fumble Trial vs. Difficulty 3)
- DF5 Defender Fumble (Defender makes Fumble Trial vs. Difficulty 5)
- DB Defender Breaks Weapon (Defender makes Breakage Trial vs. Standard Difficulty)



Disarm Parry Results (Degrees of Success vs. Degree of Success)

<i>Attack</i>	<i>Defense</i>									
	Myth Succ.	Extra Succ.	Super. Succ.	Comp. Succ.	Marg. Succ.	Marg. Failure	Comp. Failure	Ser. Failure	Miser. Failure	Catast. Failure
Myth. Success	<i>P</i>	<i>MgS</i>	<i>CS</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>MS</i>
Extra. Success	<i>AF</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>MgS</i>	<i>CS</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>ES</i>
Super. Success	<i>AF3</i>	<i>AF</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>MgS</i>	<i>CS</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>SS</i>
Comp. Success	<i>AF5</i>	<i>AF3</i>	<i>AF</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>MgS</i>	<i>CS</i>	<i>CS</i>	<i>CS</i>	<i>CS</i>	<i>CS</i>
Marg. Success	<i>AF7</i>	<i>AF5</i>	<i>AF3</i>	<i>AF</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>MgS</i>	<i>MgS</i>	<i>MgS</i>	<i>MgS</i>	<i>MgS</i>
Marg. Failure	<i>AF9</i>	<i>AF7</i>	<i>AF5</i>	<i>AF2</i>	<i>AF</i>	-	-	<i>DF</i>	<i>DF3</i>	<i>DB</i>
Comp. Failure	<i>AB</i>	<i>AF9</i>	<i>AF7</i>	<i>AF4</i>	<i>AF1</i>	-	-	-	<i>DF</i>	<i>DF3</i>
Serious Failure	<i>AB3</i>	<i>AB</i>	<i>AF9</i>	<i>AF6</i>	<i>AF2</i>	-	-	-	-	<i>DF</i>
Miser. Failure	<i>AB5</i>	<i>AB3</i>	<i>AB</i>	<i>AF8</i>	<i>AF3</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Catastr. Failure	<i>AB7</i>	<i>AB5</i>	<i>AB3</i>	<i>AB</i>	<i>AF4</i>	-	-	-	-	-

KEY

- MS* Mythic Success (Defender Killed)
- ES* Extraordinary Success (Mortal Wound)
- SS* Superior Success (Major Wound)
- CS* Complete Success (Wound)
- MgS* Marginal Success (Light Wound)
- P* Attack Parried
- Miss (Attacker's and Defender's Weapons fail to meet)
- AF* Attack Parried/Fumble (Attacker makes Fumble Trial vs. Standard Difficulty)
- AF#* Attack Parried/Fumble (Attacker makes Fumble Trial vs. Difficulty # listed)
- AB* Attack Parried/Breakage (Attacker makes Breakage Trial vs. Standard Difficulty)
- AB#* Attack Parried/Breakage (Attacker makes Breakage Trial vs. Difficulty # listed)
- DF* Defender Fumble (Defender makes Fumble Trial vs. Standard Difficulty)
- DF3* Defender Fumble (Defender makes Fumble Trial vs. Difficulty 3)
- DB* Defender Breaks Weapon (Defender makes Breakage Trial vs. Standard Difficulty)



Divert Parry Results (Refined Trial)

Trial Result	Effects*
Successes	All Successful Divert Parries push the Attacking Weapon off course to some degree
Myth. Success	Attack suffers + 6 Difficulty
Extra. Success	Attack suffers + 5 Difficulty
Super. Success	Attack suffers + 4 Difficulty
Comp. Success	Attack suffers + 2 Difficulty
Marg. Success	Attack suffers + 1 Difficulty
Failures	Depending on degree, Failures may benefit Attack by guiding Weapon toward a vulnerable spot on the defender's body
Marg. Failure	Attacker's and Defender's Weapons fail to meet (+ 0 Difficulty)
Comp. Failure	
Serious Failure	
Extra. Failure	Attack gains -1 Difficulty modifier
Catas. Failure	Attack gains -3 Difficulty modifier

Static Defenses

Static Defense include those elements which do not have to be actively maintained - they are just *there*. Normal Static Defenses include personal armor, shields, and Trauma Resistance. All armor types have Defense Modifiers just like Parries. Refer to the Profile tables for armor Defense Modifiers. This Modifier is added to the Difficulty of an attacker's Strike Chance. Note that most types of armor will add significantly to a persona's Encumbrance, although the Wearing Armor expertise can minimize these penalties.

Shields also affect the Difficulty of an incoming attack. At the Mythguide's option, their effects can depend on the shield's placement (i.e. is it slung on a persona's back, where is it being held, etc.). Their effects are always partly based on their size.

Trauma Resistance represents a persona's inherent ability to resist physical injury and trauma. It is based primarily on an individual's weight, although Hardiness plays a small role as well. A defender's Trauma Resistance can add Difficulty to an attacker's Strike Chance. The difference between a weapon's Attack Modifier and a defender's Trauma Resistance

creates a Difficulty modifier. If Trauma Resistance is lower than the Attack Modifier, the difference between the two is applied as a Difficulty bonus to the attack. If Trauma Resistance is higher than the Attack Modifier, the difference between the two values is applied as a Difficulty penalty to the attack.

Other Defense Options

Counterstrike

A persona may declare a Counterstrike as his Defense instead of a Parry or Dodge. Essentially, the persona initiates his own attack as soon as he sees his opponent beginning an attack. When a persona attempts a Counterstrike, only his Static Defenses will help him if he is struck. A Counterstrike is resolved by making a Challenged Trial between the Strike Chances of each combatant.

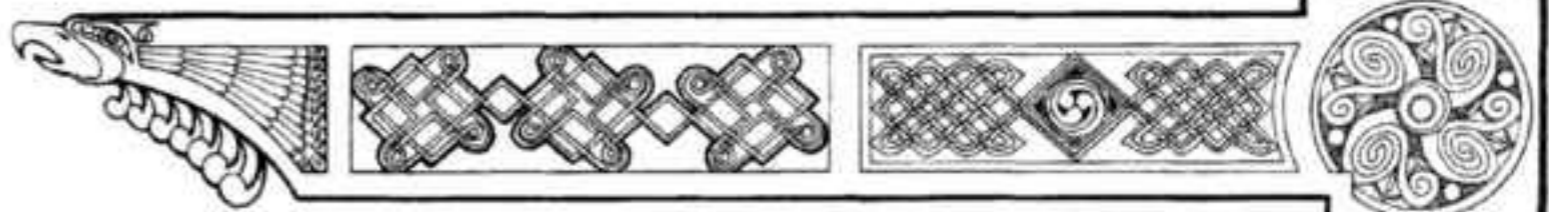
A Counterstrike is made at a Difficulty penalty equal to the Speed of the Attack Mode being used (Strength bonuses do not apply). All Counterstrikes also suffer a -1 to their Attack Modifier (unless the Attack Modifier is already a 1). A Counterstrike costs one Option Point more than a normal attack would cost, and counts as a Strike for the purposes of computing the costs of Additional Strikes. *Option Point Cost: +1*

Fend

A persona who declares a Fend action may not attack during the Interval in which he chooses this action. A Fend represents a completely defensive posture from which a persona is better able to react to incoming attacks. A persona who declares this action can do nothing except perform Dodges and Parries for the entire Interval. This action lowers the Difficulty of every Dodge by one and increases the Defense Modifier of every Parry by one for the duration of the Interval. A Fend can be used in conjunction with a Closed Move to perform a Fending Retreat. *Option Point Cost: 0*

Strike Location

If the Mythguide wishes, he may use these optional guidelines for Strike Location to determine the precise part of the body which is hit during melee. When using Strike Location, the attacker declares the location for which he is aiming and then rolls 2d10. The result of this roll can be adjusted by up to five values depending on the persona's Expertise Rank



with the weapon he is using. The final Strike Location yields a modifier to the persona's overall Strike Chance. If the attack is successful, the location will be struck. A persona may have specific pieces of armor covering certain areas. In some cases, individual areas may have higher Defense Modifiers than the average for the entire body. A persona wearing a quilted doublet and an iron helmet is an example of this situation; if the persona is struck in the head, he will enjoy much greater protection. Refer to the accompanying tables for Strike Locations and Accuracy modifiers. Strike Location also affects injury determination.

Fumbles

Exchanges during melee occur at a furious rate, and it is often a chore to simply hold on to one's weapon. Certain combat results (an unsuccessful Block Parry, for example) require a persona to make a Fumble Trial in order to see if his weapon has been dropped or knocked free. In unusual circumstances, the Mythguide may call for a Fumble Trial when a persona is attempting something requiring digital control in the midst of a stressful or strenuous situation (certain Incidental Actions might qualify).

A Fumble Trial is made as a Refined Manual Dexterity Trial. The Difficulty of the Trial depends on the conditions which initiate the Fumble. When Fumble Trials are required as consequences of an Attack or Parry attempt, the Difficulty of the Trial is provided on the appropriate Attack or Defense tables. If the Mythguide imposes a Fumble Trial for another reason, he should apply any modifiers he deems appropriate. Conditional modifiers could include rain or darkness, a Physical Penalty, or an item held in both hands, while Situational modifiers might include extreme Fear or an active Passion. Consult the Fumble table for specific results.

Impact Reactions

Combatants may be subject to Impact Reactions during combat. A Bash can occur when a persona is struck successfully. A Knockdown can result from a successful Bash, and represents a loss of footing. The persona must make a successful Reaction Trial to prevent being Bashed backward two yards. The Reaction Trial is a Refined Trial made against a persona's Strength and Agility (if a persona has a high Physical Adaption expertise, this may be used instead). The

Hit Locations (Optional)

Attacker rolls Hit Location before Strike Roll. If used to determine the result of a Prepared Blow, the Attacker may modify the Hit Location roll according to his Favored Weapon Expertise Rank.

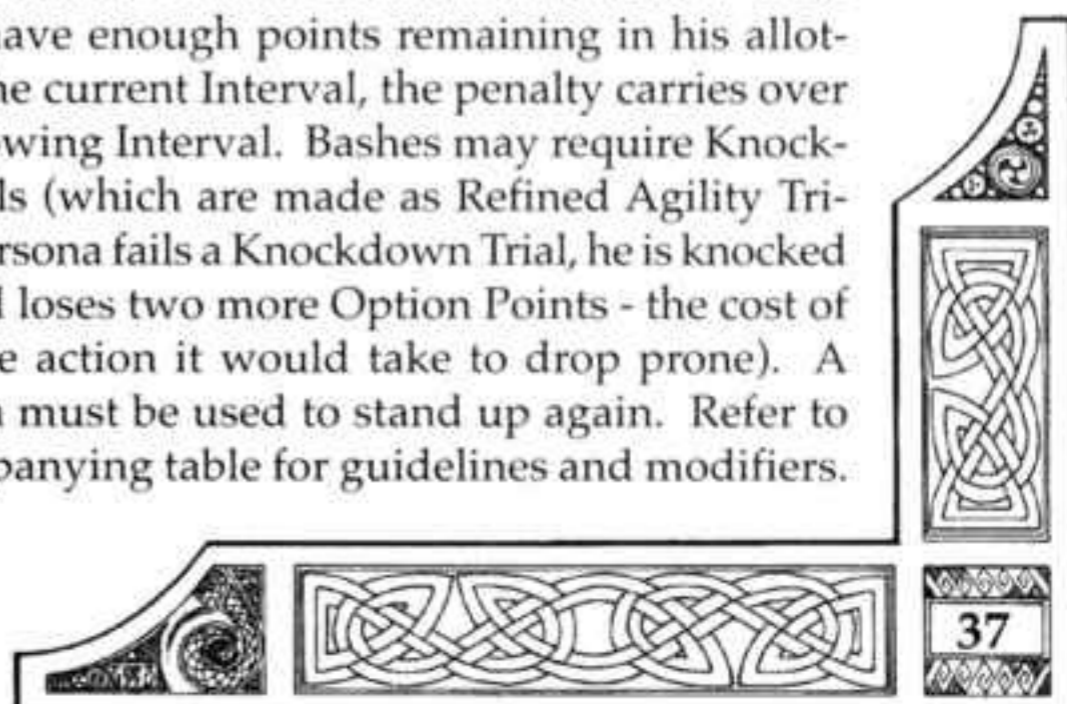
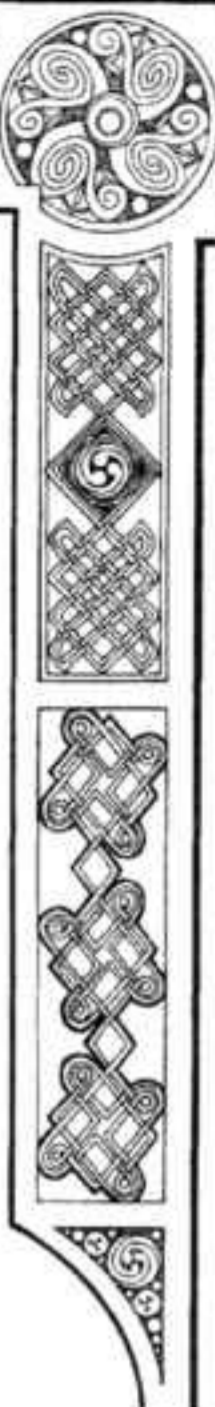
Rank	Accuracy Modifier (+ or -)
1 - 2	1
3 - 5	2
6 - 8	3
9	4
10	5

Die Roll (2d10)	Location Hit	Attack Modifier*
1	Face	+3
2	Skull	+4
3	Neck	+3
4 - 5	Presented Arm	+0
6	Presented Hand	+0
7	Refused Arm	-1
8 - 12	Torso	+2
13 - 15	Abdomen	+2
16	Groin	+1
17 - 18	Presented Leg	+0
19	Refused Leg	+0
20	Foot	-1

* The Attack Modifier is added to the Strike Attack for which the Hit Location is determined. The Mythguide must interpret the precise consequences of the Strike depending on Degree of Success and the Location hit.

base Difficulty of the Trial is equal to half the weight of the attacking weapon, plus a modifier for the attack's final Degree of Success, plus a modifier for Attack Mode.

If a persona is Bashed backward, he loses the number of Option Points it would have cost him to move the same distance with a Closed Move action. If he does not have enough points remaining in his allotment for the current Interval, the penalty carries over to the following Interval. Bashes may require Knockdown Trials (which are made as Refined Agility Trials); if a persona fails a Knockdown Trial, he is knocked prone (and loses two more Option Points - the cost of the Posture action it would take to drop prone). A Rise action must be used to stand up again. Refer to the accompanying table for guidelines and modifiers.



Fumbles (Arms)

Trial Base = 3

Trial Rank = Manual Dexterity

Base Difficulty (Standard Difficulty = 2, certain Attack/Parry Results establish Base Difficulty for the Trial.

<i>Trial Result</i>	<i>Effects*</i>
All Successes	No Fumble
Marg. Failure	Grip Loosened (1 Opt. Pt. to reaffirm grip)
Comp. Failure	Weapon drops to ground (at feet)
Serious Failure	Weapon flies 1d10 feet from user
Extra. Failure	Weapon flies 1d10 yds. from user (Breakage Trial vs. Diff. 0)
Catas. Failure	Weapon flies 1d10 yds. from user (Breakage Trial vs. Diff. 3)

Fumble Modifiers

Physical Penalty - By category of Hindrance
 Wet Grip (caused by water/perspiration) +1
 Slippery Grip (caused by blood or oil) +3
 Injured Hand - see Physical Penalty (Injuries)
 User Fatigued - see Physical Penalty (Fatigue)
 Attack Success - Attack Success alters Base Difficulty of the Trial (see Parry Results tables for more info.)

* Note: Certain Arms (such as Hafted Arms and Shields) possess straps which prevent them from falling beyond immediate reach. If the Trial Result indicates a Fumble, the user need only expend 2 Option Points to regain control of the Arm. If the Fumble Result calls for a Breakage Trial (and the Breakage Trial Fails) the strap breaks and the arm falls or flies the appropriate distance from the user.

At the Mythguide's option, Serious, Extraordinary, and Catastrophic Failures can indicate Injury to the Persona who fumbles or to his comrades. If desired, the Mythguide can make an attack Trial against the user with a Base difficulty equalling 5, 3, or 1. The Base of the Trial = 2 and the Rank = the Attack Modifier of the Arm Fumbled.

Weapon Length

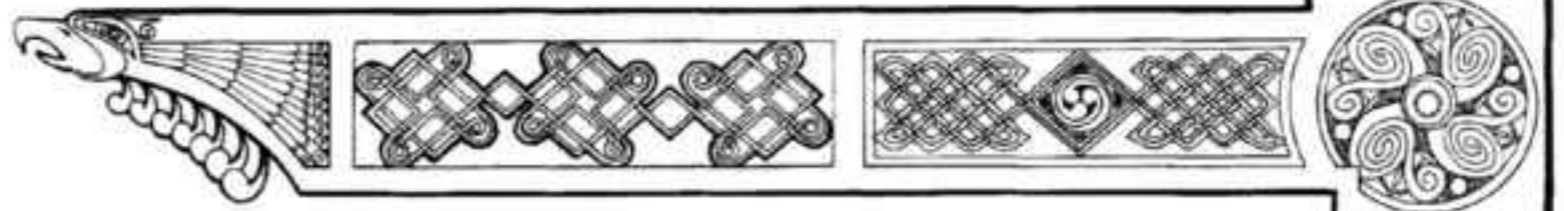
Although Reach primarily affects Initiative determination, the Mythguide may allow a persona to move inside the guard of a much longer weapon. A persona with a weapon that has a Reach of 4 or less may use a Closed Move in order to move inside the effective guard of a weapon with a Reach of 5 or more. The persona moving can only Dodge or attempt a Divert Parry while moving (with either being made at a Difficulty penalty of +2). A successful attack against the moving persona thwarts the attempt, as does any Defense other than Dodge or Divert. If the Closed Move is completed successfully, the persona has slipped inside the Reach of the defender's weapon. As long as the attacker remains inside the Reach of a prepared weapon, he can attack freely. The defender can only use Block Parries at a Difficulty penalty of +4 and cannot attack. The defender must execute a Closed Move to Disengage in order to re-establish a proper distance. Alternately, the defender may drop his longer weapon and either draw a shorter one or attempt to Grab his opponent.

MATERIALS BREAKAGE

Weapons and armor may become damaged by excessive use or stress in combat situations. Results tables may call for Breakage Trials to insure the structural integrity of a weapon or shield. Armor requires a Breakage Trial whenever a persona suffers a Superior Success or higher against an area that is protected by armor.

As a weapon or piece of armor takes structural damage, its overall quality deteriorates. There are five Quality Grades: Exceptional, Good, Average, Substandard, and Poor. When an item fails a Breakage Trial, its Quality is reduced by a number of levels based on the Degree of Failure. An item that is reduced beyond the Poor Quality Grade is rendered useless.

If unusual circumstances warrant such a test, the Mythguide may call for a Breakage Trial whenever he deems it necessary. For example, a sword dropped several stories onto paving stones would have a decent chance of breaking. Difficulty for the Trial is dictated by its circumstances. Refer to the Breakage table for more information.



Impact Reactions

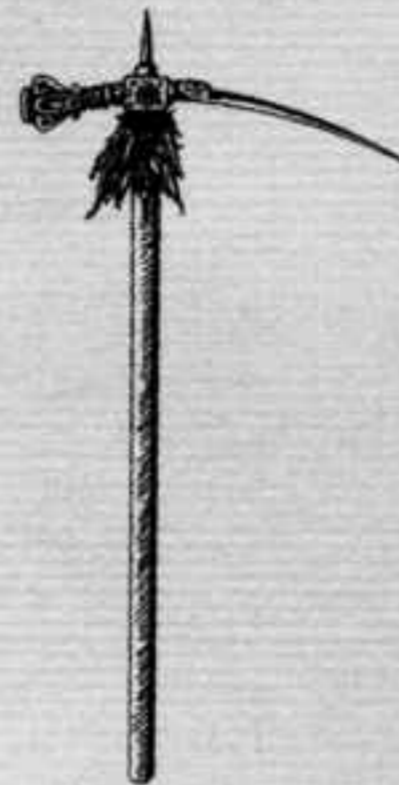
Difficulty of Reaction Trial: Base Difficulty = half the weight of attacking weapon

Difficulty Modifiers



Heavy Crossbow
(Arbalest)

Success of Attack*		
Mythic	+6	
Extraordinary	+4	
Superior	+2	
Complete	+1	
Marginal	+0	
Attack Mode		
Crush	+2	
Chop	+1	
Slash	-1	
Thrust	+0	
Pierce	-2	
Strike Location		
Head	+2	
Face	+1	
Neck	+0	
Torso	+1	
All Other	-1	
Physical Penalty	variable	



Great Hammer
of War



Poleax (Scorpion)

Condition of Battleground (i.e. clutter, slippery surface, etc.) Minor to Severe Hindrance

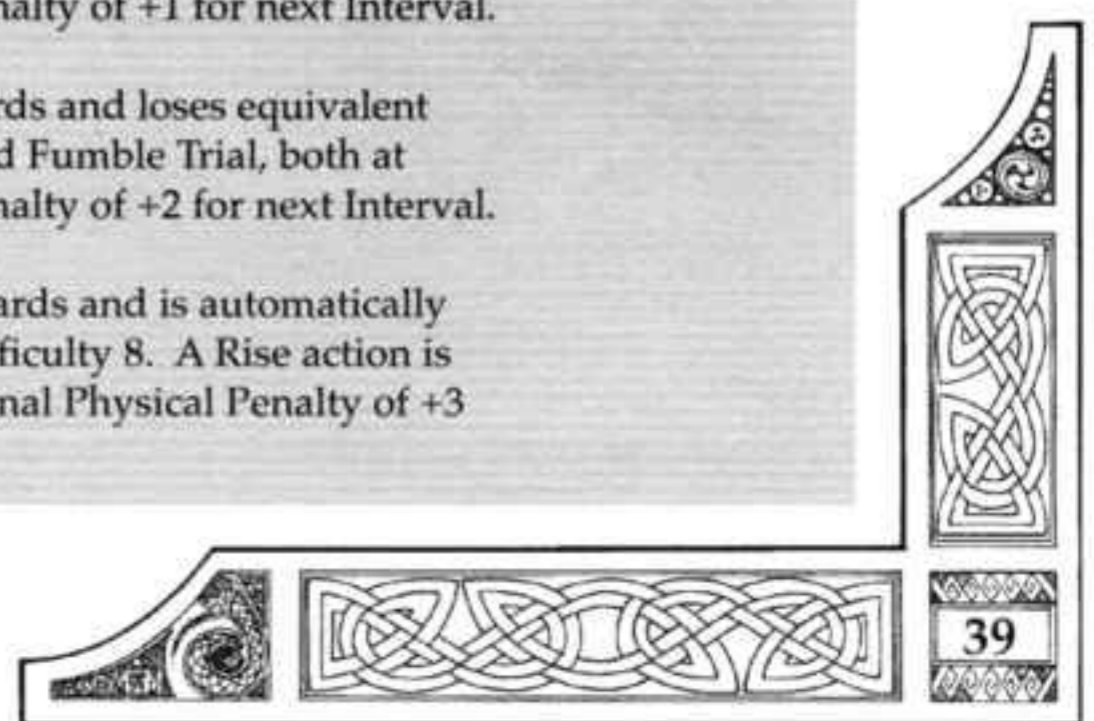
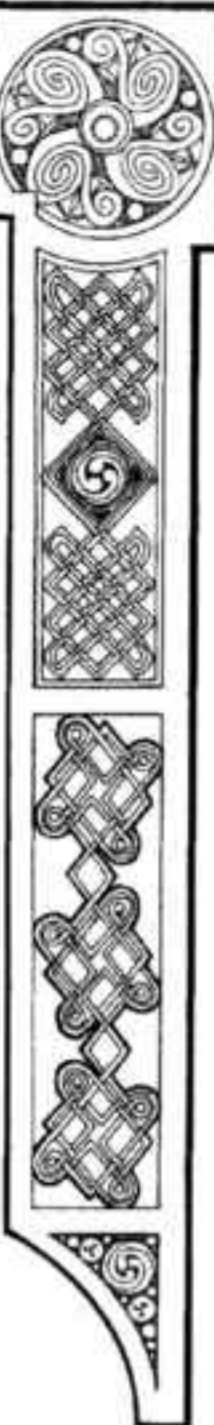
* The Success of the Attack indicates the Rolled Success (before being modified by Parry Results). In cases where the Attack is Dodged with some degree of Success, the Final Degree of Success for the Attack should be used for calculating the Impact Reaction Difficulty Modifiers.

Results

Success of Reaction Trial

Description

All Successes	Persona keeps his footing
Marginal Failure	Persona is Bashed backward one yard and loses equivalent Option Points.
Complete Failure	Persona is Bashed backward two yards and loses equivalent Option Points. Knockdown Trial and Fumble Trial, both at Difficulty 2.
Serious Failure	Persona is Bashed backward two yards and loses equivalent Option Points. Knockdown Trial and Fumble Trial, both at Difficulty 5. Additional Physical Penalty of +1 for next Interval.
Miserable Failure	Persona is Bashed backward two yards and loses equivalent Option Points. Knockdown Trial and Fumble Trial, both at Difficulty 8. Additional Physical Penalty of +2 for next Interval.
Catastrophic Failure	Persona is Bashed backward three yards and is automatically Knocked Down. Fumble Trial at Difficulty 8. A Rise action is necessary to regain footing. Additional Physical Penalty of +3 for next two Intervals.



Breakage Resolution Guidelines (Arms and Armor)

Arms Breakage

Trial Base: Weapon Modifier (Attack/Parry Mode used)
 Trial Rank: 1/2 Favored Weapon Rank (of user)
 Base Difficulty: Std. Diff. = 2, Base Diff. assigned on the basis of Parry Result or Mythguide discretion

Difficulty Modifiers:

Extreme Temperature: +1 to +3
 Situation (extreme force, improper use, etc.): +1 to +3

Results: Roll Breakage Result whenever indicated by Parry Result tables or Mythguide

Trial Roll	Breakage Result
All Successes	No Damage
Marginal Failure	Minor Damage (broken strap, crossguard, pommel, etc.)
Complete Failure	Damage (-1 Quality Grade)
Serious Failure	Major Damage (-2 Quality Grades)
Extra. Failure	Severe Damage (-3 Quality Grades)
Mythic Failure	Weapon Ruined

All Breakage Results are cumulative and permanent. Minor Damage can be repaired by a qualified Armsmith. Ordinary Damage can be repaired only if certain parts (such as hafts and shield coverings) are replaced. Major and Severe Damage can be repaired only for Shields. Ruined Arms must be replaced with new ones.

For each Quality Grade reduced by Breakage Results, 5 points must be subtracted from the damaged Arm's Profile. If an Arm's overall Quality falls below Poor, it is considered to be Ruined (and useless).

ex. Greatsword suffers Major Damage (-2 Qual. Grades)
 Original Quality Rating: Good
 New Quality Rating: Substandard (loss of 10 points)
 Block Parry Modifier: 5 (-3) = 2
 Chop Attack Modifier: 7 (-2) = 5
 Thrust Attack Modifier: 4 (-3) = 1
 Divert Parry Modifier: 3 (-1) = 1
 Speed (Chop Attack): 5 (+1) = 6

ex. Buckler suffers Severe Damage (-3 Quality Grades)
 Original Quality Rating: Average
 New Quality Rating: 1 less than Poor (Buckler Ruined)

Armor Damage

Trial Base: Defense Mode of Armor
 Trial Rank: 1/2 Wearing Armor Rank (of Wearer)
 Base Difficulty: 2 (Standard)

Difficulty Modifiers: by Attack Mode

Crush +1	Thrust -1
Chop +2	Pierce -2
Slash +2	Degree of Success (+1/Degree)

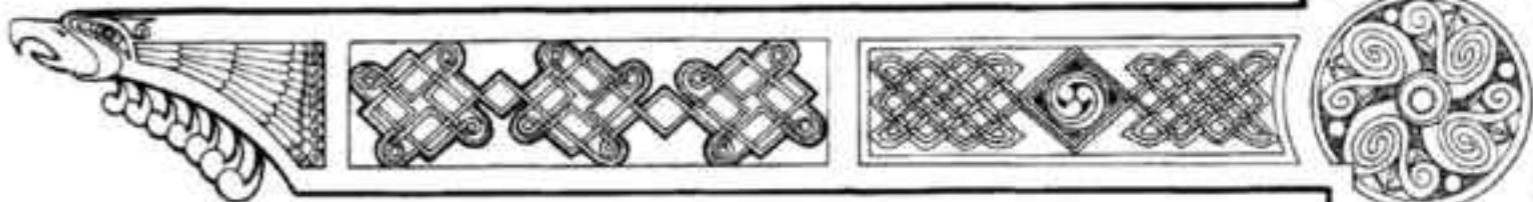
Results: Roll Breakage whenever Attack scores a Superior Success or better against Armor protection.

Trial Roll	Breakage Result
All Successes	No Damage
Marginal Failure	Minor Damage (broken strap, rivet, link, hinge, etc.)
Complete Failure	Damage (-1 Quality Grade)
Serious Failure	Major Damage (-2 Quality Grades)
Extra. Failure	Severe Damage (-3 Quality Grades)
Mythic Failure	Armor (piece or suit) Ruined

All Damage Results are cumulative and permanent. Minor Damage can be repaired by a qualified Armorer or Persona who makes successful Wearing Armor Skill (Persona must have necessary tools and materials). Minor Damage can be repaired by a Journeyman Armorer (5 to 20% of original cost). Ordinary and Major Damage can be repaired by an accomplished Armorer (20 to 30% of original cost). Severe Damage requires the replacement of several component pieces (50%+ of original cost). Ruined Armor must be replaced in whole or in part.

For each Quality Grade reduced by Damage Results, 3 points must be subtracted from the damaged Armor's Profile. If an Armor's overall Quality falls below Poor, it is considered to be Ruined (and useless).

ex. Chainmail suffers Major Damage (-2 Qual. Grades)
 Original Quality Rating: Good
 New Quality Rating: Substandard (loss of 6 points)
 Crush Defense Modifier: 2 (-1) = 1
 Chop Defense Modifier: 4 (-2) = 2
 Slash Defense Modifier: 6 (-1) = 5
 Thrust Defense Modifier: 4 (-1) = 3
 Pierce Defense Modifier: 3 (-1) = 2



Unarmed Combat

Personas may also engage in fisticuffs or hand to hand combat without weapons. The Mythguide can choose to handle Unarmed Combat very simply (by using Challenged Strength or Unarmed Combat Trials) or with more complexity (by using specific Actions). Unarmed Combat can occur in two basic forms - Fisticuffs and Grappling. There are a number of Unarmed Actions available to a persona.

Fisticuffs

The roughest and most common form of Unarmed Combat is Fisticuffs. Personas attack and defend themselves with their hands and feet. Strikes are handled by making Brawl Trials; Defenses include both Block and Divert Parries (made with fists or feet), as well as Dodges. Strikes made with the Brawl expertise can take one of four forms - Strike, Great Blow, Pulled Blow, or Prepared Blow.

If a persona uses some form of trained Unarmed Combat or martial art, the Mythguide should allow him to use the Unarmed Combat expertise instead of Brawl. The Mythguide may also allow the persona to increase his Attack and Defense modifiers based on the nature and extent of his training. Perhaps each Rank in the martial art gives the persona an additional unique maneuver.

Grappling

A Grappling combat is basically a wrestling match, with the combatants pitting both strength and wits against one another. Grapple Actions use the Unarmed Combat expertise for resolution purposes. Note that all Grapple Actions assume the use of two hands; if one hand is used, halve all appropriate modifiers (including Strength). The following Actions are possible.

Grab

This is the basic Grapple action. The persona Grabs at a specific part of a defender's body or at the defender's weapon. If the persona is using two hands, he makes a normal Unarmed Combat Trial. If he is using only one hand, his Rank is halved for the Trial. The defender can choose any available Defense action. The Grab attempt is resolved as normal attack; if the attack is successful, the attacker has obtained a Hold on the defender or the defender's weapon. As long as

the attacker maintains a Hold on the defender's weapon, attacks with the weapon are made at a Difficulty penalty equal to half the Grappler's Strength. If the Grab is unsuccessful and the attacker obtains a Breakage Trial result, the individual attempting the Grab may be harmed. Treat it as an attack made against the attacker with an Attack Modifier of -2. This attack is also treated as a Constrained attack. *Option Point Cost: 2*

Hold

The attacker maintains his Hold on the defender. Unless the defender tries to break the Hold, it can be maintained automatically. *Option Point Cost: variable*

Hold and Strike

This action can be attempted after the persona has already established a Hold. The persona attempts to Strike his opponent using his hands, feet, or a weapon held in a free hand. The persona must release one of his hands in order to Strike; if the defender attempts to break the Hold, the attacker makes the necessary Challenged Trial at half Strength. The Strike itself is made as if the persona were Constrained (any appropriate penalties apply). *Option Point Cost: based on the type of Strike being attempted +1*

Wrench

This action can be used if the persona has established a Hold on a weapon or object. The persona may attempt to Wrench the item out of the defender's hands. The two individuals make a Challenged Trial based on Strength and Manual Dexterity. The persona must achieve at least a Complete Success in order to pry the item free. *Option Point Cost: 4*

Manipulate

This action allows a persona to Manipulate a Hold that has already been established. The persona can attempt to force his opponent to the ground, or he might attempt to strangle the defender in an effort to render him unconscious. In the first case, the attacker attempts a *Take Down* by initiating a Challenged Trial based on each combatant's Unarmed Combat expertise. A Marginal Success indicates an advantage; the persona gains a -1 Difficulty bonus on his next Grapple action. A Complete Success or better indicates a *Take Down*, and both combatants fall prone (although the attacker maintains his Hold). For each Degree of Failure on the part of the attacker, the defender gains a -1 Difficulty modifier to any Escape action attempted in the same Interval.

An attacker can also attempt to *Harm* the defender by strangling him or banging his head against the



ground. In order to Harm a defender, a persona must have a Hold on the defender's head or neck. When declaring a Manipulate action, a Challenged Trial (based on Unarmed Combat) is made. If the attacker scores a complete success, he obtains a strangling hold on the defender. During each succeeding Interval, a Challenged Strength Trial is required to maintain the hold. The defender is required to make a Hardiness Trial each Interval to stay conscious. The Trial is made at a Difficulty 1 the first Interval, Difficulty 2 during the second Interval, etc. If the attacker loses his strangling hold and then regains it, the defender's Hardiness Trial Difficulty decreases by two for every Interval free from the strangling hold. If the defender fails a Hardiness Trial, he loses consciousness.

If the attacker instead chooses to cause harm by striking the defender's head against the ground, treat the strikes as Crush attacks. The defender has no Defense Modifier unless he is wearing some type of head protection. The attacker uses his Unarmed Combat expertise to make the attack at a Speed of two. The Attack Modifier for the attack equals half of the difference between the Strengths of each individual. *Option Point Cost: 4 for Take Down, 2 to obtain strangle hold, variable for striking attack*

Escape

This action can be used to break a Hold. The two combatants make a Challenged Trial based on their Unarmed Combat Ranks. If the defender achieves at least a Complete Success, he manages to break the Hold. If the defender achieves a Marginal Success, the attacker receives a +1 Difficulty modifier on his next Grapple action. The attacker may always release a Hold voluntarily. *Option Point Cost: 2*

Ranged Combat

Ranged Combat includes all attacks made by missile weapons or thrown objects. All ranged weapons have range modifiers included in their descriptions on the appropriate tables. Range modifiers modify the Difficulty of a Ranged Strike. Several other modifiers can also apply to Ranged attacks. Consult the accompanying table for guidelines. Random thrown items (such as rocks) use the expertise Physical (Throw) as the attack expertise. The Mythguide should assign Attack Modifiers to mundane thrown objects or objects not meant to be thrown (such modifiers will usually be negative numbers). Strength bonuses do not apply to missile weapon attacks, but they do apply to thrown weapon attacks.

Ranged Strike

This is the normal Ranged weapon attack. A Ranged Strike is made in the same way as a normal Strike, except that a Range modifier (to the attack's Difficulty) must be considered. Most missile weapons also have Preparation times (i.e. nocking an arrow and drawing a bow) listed with their descriptions. The weapon must be prepared in order to strike. At the Mythguide's option, Fumbles or severe Failures with Ranged weapons may strike things or people close to either the attacker or his intended target (the Mythguide should compare the Degree of Failure with the missile's trajectory). *Option Point Cost: variable*

Aimed Strike

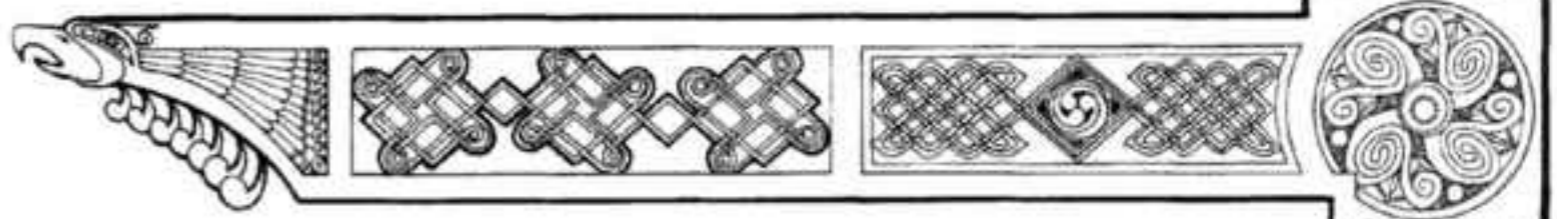
An Aimed Strike decreases the Difficulty of a shot. For every two Option Points spent to Aim a weapon, the Difficulty of the attack is reduced by one. A persona can only reduce Difficulty a number of values equal to half of the persona's Rank in the Ranged weapon. The points spent for an Aimed Strike are considered in addition to those spent for normal weapon Preparation. *Option Point Cost: +2 per Difficulty benefit*

Quick Shot

A Quick Shot increases the Difficulty of a shot, but allows a persona to rush the Preparation time required by the weapon. For every Option Point removed from the Preparation time, the Difficulty of the attack increases by one. When attempting a Quick Shot with a bow, the required preparation time can never be reduced to less than half of the original time. When using a crossbow, the time cannot be reduced to less than three quarters of the original time. Quick Shots do not apply to thrown weapons. *Option Point Cost: none (Difficulty increases by one for every Option Point removed from Preparation)*

Defense

A target who knows a missile attack is coming may attempt to defend himself from the attack by selecting either an Evade or a Shield Block. A persona can also use a normal Divert Parry to deflect thrown missile weapons (although the Mythguide may wish to apply a modifier to the Parry chance). A target who is



completely oblivious to an incoming attack may not declare an active defense. *Option Point Cost: variable*

Mounted Combat

Personas are sometimes required to fight while mounted. Although fighting while mounted is fundamentally similar to fighting on foot, there are some additional considerations.

The Mount

The Mount being ridden is a principal consideration when engaging in Mounted Combat. Mounts are either Trained or Untrained for battle. For game purposes, all Mounts are considered to be Untrained unless otherwise specified. Mounts that are Trained for combat are often quite rare, although their availability may depend on the environment. Warhorses are considered Trained for battle.

Mounts receive Physical Penalties just like personas. If a persona is going to use a Mount in combat, the player should calculate the Mount's Carrying Capacity, its Encumbrance, and Trauma Resistance. If a Mount is unusually Encumbered, its movement may be affected. When resolving Mounted combat, a Mount's Encumbrance affects a persona's Option Points as long as the persona stays mounted.

Control

A persona must maintain Control of a Mount in order to act effectively while riding. Control Trials determine whether or not a persona maintains control of his Mount, and are made as Refined Trials against the persona's Riding expertise. An Untrained Mount requires a Control Trial every Interval during which it is Engaged. If the Mount is forced into a strenuous action (such as attacking), a Control Trial is made with a +4 Difficulty modifier. A Trained Mount requires a Control Trial only when directed to perform strenuous combat Actions. Such Control Trials are made with no Difficulty penalty. If a Control Trial fails, the Mount begins moving away from the engagement until the persona can re-establish Control. Re-establishing Control takes an entire Interval; the persona should choose an Occupied Action while attempting to recover Control. If the Control Trial receives a high Degree of Failure, the persona might be thrown or harmed in some way. Control Trials are also required

when a Mount is injured in any way; the degree of injury modifies the Difficulty of the Trial.

A persona who does not have the Riding expertise may not control a Mount in a combat situation. If the persona insists on trying to do so, all action attempts are made at a Severe Hindrance. The persona is also more susceptible to being knocked from the Mount; all such Trials are made with -2 Difficulty modifiers.

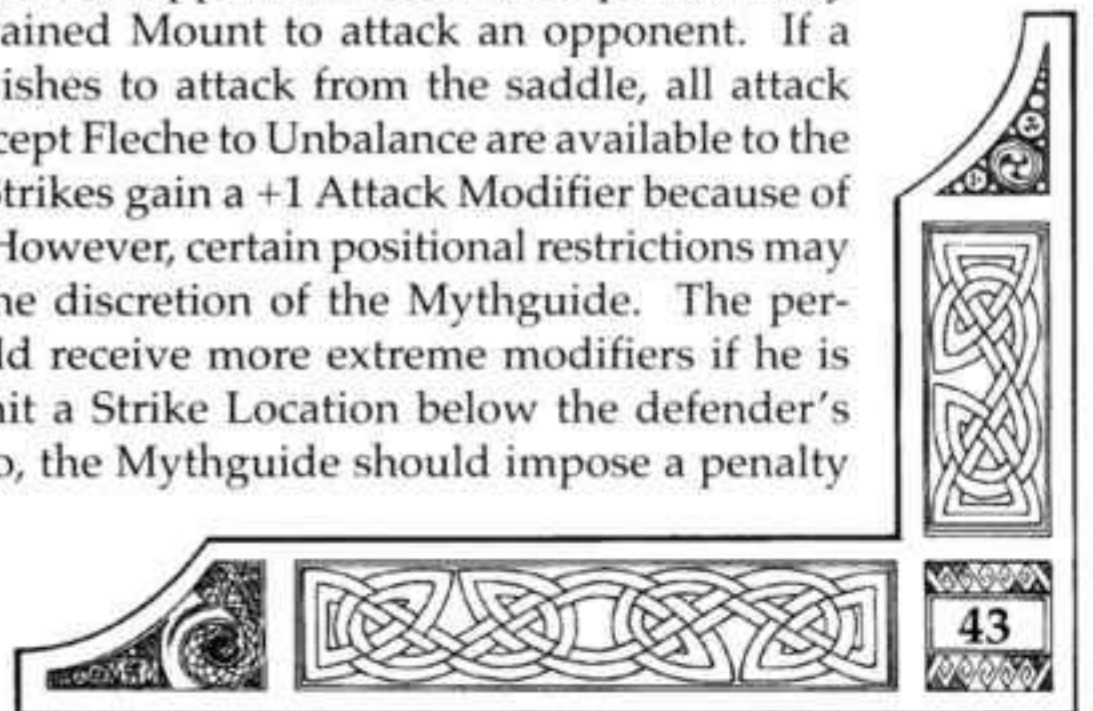
Initiative and Actions

When a persona engages in combat while mounted, he retains the same number of Option Points he would have on foot. If the Mount has an Encumbrance penalty, this penalty is applied to the persona's Option Point total. A Mount can also affect Initiative determination. If a Mount is Trained, the persona can add three to his Initiative value. If the Mount is Untrained, the persona subtracts three from his Initiative value. When a Mount and rider are Engaged, they act according to the persona's available Option Points. The Mythguide may require the Mount to make an Agility Trial at any time during an engagement (if it fails, it might lose its footing).

When the Mount is beyond engagement range, its Action Movement Rate applies. The Mythguide should determine a Mount's movement rate and Pace multipliers depending on the breed and type of Mount. Most normal horses have a base Action Movement Rate of ten yards. Warhorses can have base rates of twelve to fourteen yards. Quickness bonuses apply to Mounts as well, as do the normal Pace modifiers. Horses require Fatigue Trials one third as often as humans for the same Pace. Most movement Actions are available for Mounts (the Mythguide should determine any restrictions based on the situation).

Mounted Attacks

Two different types of attack are possible from a mounted persona. First, the persona himself may attempt to Strike an opponent. Second, the persona may direct a Trained Mount to attack an opponent. If a persona wishes to attack from the saddle, all attack options except Fleche to Unbalance are available to the persona. Strikes gain a +1 Attack Modifier because of leverage. However, certain positional restrictions may apply at the discretion of the Mythguide. The persona should receive more extreme modifiers if he is trying to hit a Strike Location below the defender's torso. Also, the Mythguide should impose a penalty



Conflict Modifiers (Penalties)

Physical Penalties

Physical Penalties arise from Injury, Fatigue, Illness, and Intoxication. Physical Penalties impair a Persona's ability to function normally during strenuous, physical activities. The following tasks are affected by Physical Penalties.

- Striking (Physical Attacks including Missile Fire)
- Defense (Parries, and Dodges)
- Fumble Trials
- Hit Location Trials (subtract from Accuracy Modifier only during Prepared Blows)
- Movement Trials
- Encumbrance Trials (Carrying & Lifting Capacities)
- Physical Attribute Trials (Strength, Endurance, Agility, Manual Dexterity, Quickness, etc.)
- Physical Expertises

Mental Penalties

Mental Penalties arise from Shock, Fatigue (Mental Exertion), Illness, and Intoxication. Mental Penalties impair a Persona's ability to function normally while performing strenuous, mental exercises. The following tasks are inhibited by Mental Penalties.

- Spell Casting (esp. Concentration)
- Mental/Logic-based Expertise Trials (Diplomacy, Understand Mechanism, Elocution, Research, etc.)
- Mental/Knowledge-based Expertise Trials (Savvy, Script, History, etc.)
- Willpower Trials
- Healing Trials (performing First Aid, Surgery, etc.)

A Trained Mount can be directed to attack on its own; the Mythguide should determine whether a Trained Mount has also been trained to attack. Horses can trample or bite an opponent, and the defender may attempt any defense to react to the attack (although some will be more successful than others). Such Strikes are resolved as normal melee attacks. Trample attacks are treated as crushes at Speed 2 with an Attack Modifier of 3. Bites are treated as slashes at Speed 2 with an Attack Modifier of 1. The Strike Chance is based on the persona's Riding expertise. If the Mount's attack is Parried successfully and requires a Fumble Trial, the Mount should make an Agility Trial instead to see if it stumbles. If it does, the Mount may fall (if the Degree of Failure is high) or simply lose its footing slightly (in which case the persona should make a Riding Trial to stay in the saddle).

Mounted Defenses

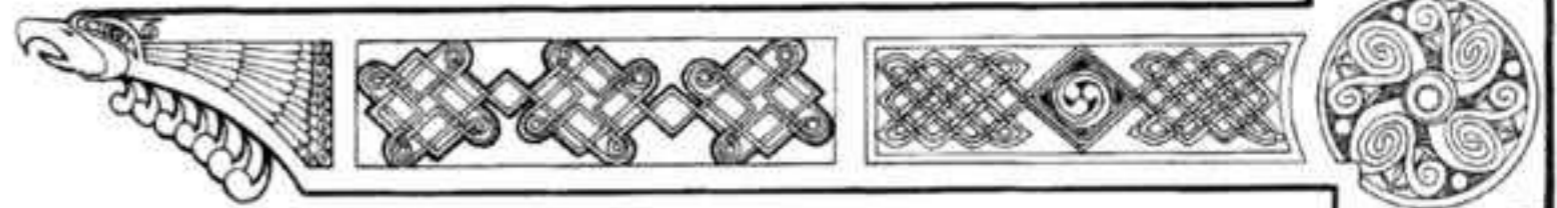
A persona can choose most Defenses when in the saddle, with some restrictions. All Defenses made to the side of the Mount opposite the persona's weapon or shield arm (depending on the type of Defense) receive a -1 Defense Modifier. Defenses directed at an attacker on foot receive an additional -1 Defense Modifier. When in the saddle, a persona cannot Evade and all Dodges are made at one half their normal Rank.

Falling Off

If a mounted persona is Bashed or Knocked Down, or fails a Riding Trial made to stay in the saddle, the persona is unhorsed. A persona may be injured further by a fall from the saddle. Refer to the falling damage guidelines in the Injury section of this chapter for possible results.

if he is attempting to Strike across the saddle at a defender. A rider can charge an opponent in hopes of doing additional impact damage. Such Strikes are resolved as Shock Attacks.





Melee Combat Modifiers

Base Difficulty

- 0 for Unconscious / Asleep / Prone Target
- 1 for Kneeling or Rising Target
- 2 for Standing Target assuming normal Defensive posture

Difficulty Modifiers

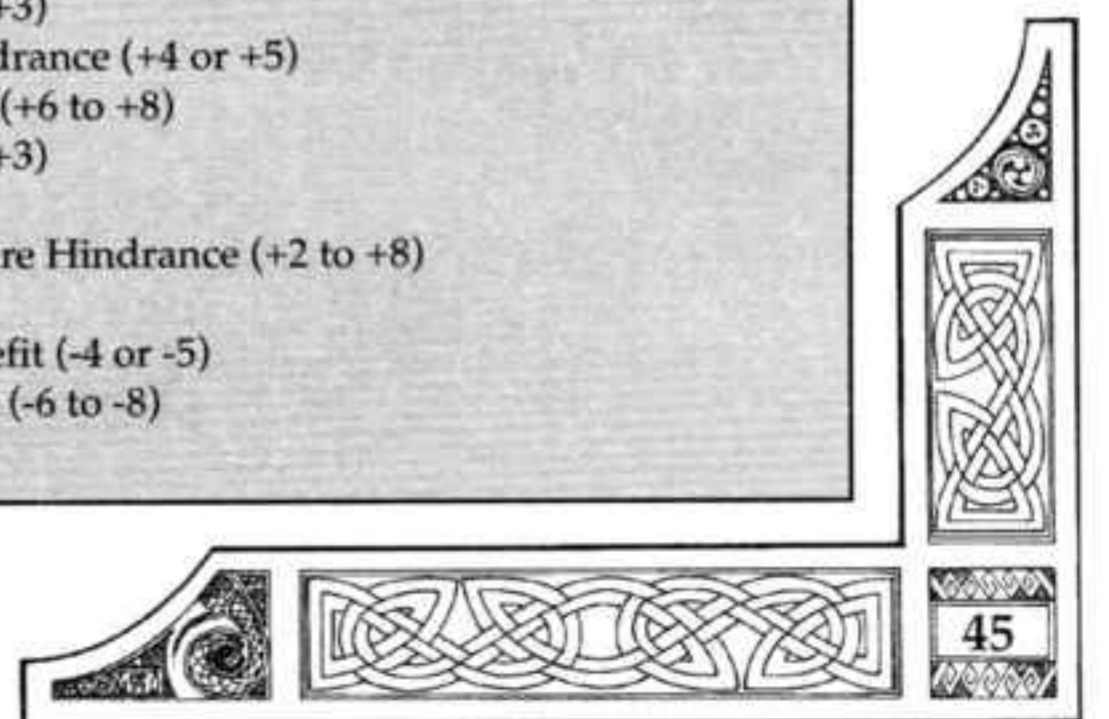
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|---|--|
| Treacherous footing | Minor to Severe Hindrance (+1 to +6) |
| Limited visibility | |
| Mist or light Fog | Minor Hindrance (+2 or +3) |
| Smoke or Heavy Fog | Hindrance (+2 or +3) |
| Moonlit Night | Hindrance to Considerable Hindrance |
| Total Darkness (including blindness and invisibility) | Severe Hindrance (+6 to +8) |
| Attacker in elevated position | Minor Benefit to Benefit (depending on weapon Reach, -1 to -3) |
| Defender in elevated position | Minor Hindrance to Hindrance (based on Reach, +1 to +3) |
| Attacker surprised | Minor Hindrance(+1) |
| Defender surprised | Minor Benefit (-1) |
| Attacker to rear of Defender | Benefit (-2 or -3) |
| Attacker to rear flank of Defender | Minor Benefit (-1) |
| Attacker is Kneeling | Hindrance (+2 or +3) |
| Attacker is Constrained (close quarters, long weapon in cramped passageway, etc.) | Minor to Severe Hindrance (+1 to +6) |

Missile Combat Modifiers

Base Difficulty = 2 (assumes a Standing, immobile Target)

Difficulty Modifiers

- | | |
|--|--|
| Range | see the Arms Profile (Missile Arms) |
| Target Pace | |
| Walk/March | Minor Hindrance (+1) |
| Double Time/Run | Hindrance (+2 or +3) |
| Sprint/Dash | Considerable Hindrance (+4 or +5) |
| Limited Visibility | see Limited Visibility under Melee Combat above |
| Attacker's line of sight is blocked | Hindrance (+2 or +3) |
| Attacker Pace | |
| Walk/March | Minor Hindrance (+1) |
| Double Time/Run | Hindrance (+2 or +3) |
| Sprint/Dash | Considerable Hindrance (+4 or +5) |
| Attacker is Mounted | Minor Hindrance (cumulative with Mount's Pace, +1) |
| Protective Cover | |
| Defender up to 25% Concealed | Minor Hindrance(+1) |
| Defender 25 - 50% Concealed | Hindrance (+2 or +3) |
| Defender 50 - 75% Concealed | Considerable Hindrance (+4 or +5) |
| Defender 75% or more Concealed | Severe Hindrance (+6 to +8) |
| Attacker's range of motion is restricted | Hindrance (+2 or +3) |
| Size of Target | |
| Less than 1/2 man-sized | Hindrance to Severe Hindrance (+2 to +8) |
| Twice man-sized | Benefit (-2 or -3) |
| Four times man-sized | Considerable Benefit (-4 or -5) |
| Eight times man-sized | Significant Benefit (-6 to -8) |





Wounds depending on their Category and Location (if Strike Locations are being used).

Light Wound

Light Wounds represent minor Injuries and require minimal attention. Crushing attacks create slight tissue damage or heavy bruises, Thrusts and Pierces cause shallow punctures, and Slashes and Chops cause superficial cuts that bleed lightly. A successful Healing Trial at Difficulty zero must be made in order to clean the Wound and bandage it to prevent infection or aggravation. The Wound does not require an immediate Healing Trial; the persona can wait until the end of an encounter. For every five minutes the Wound remains untended, the Difficulty of the Trial increases by one. If this Trial is successful, Recovery occurs naturally and completely in 7-Hardiness-Healing Trial Degree of Success days. If the Trial is unsuccessful, the Wound may become susceptible to infection and may leave a scar or a miscellaneous Physical Characteristic. If infection does not occur, the Wound still heals in 7-half Hardiness days. A Shock Trial at Standard Difficulty (2) is required. For each additional Light Wound, the Difficulty of the Shock Trial increases by two.

Wound

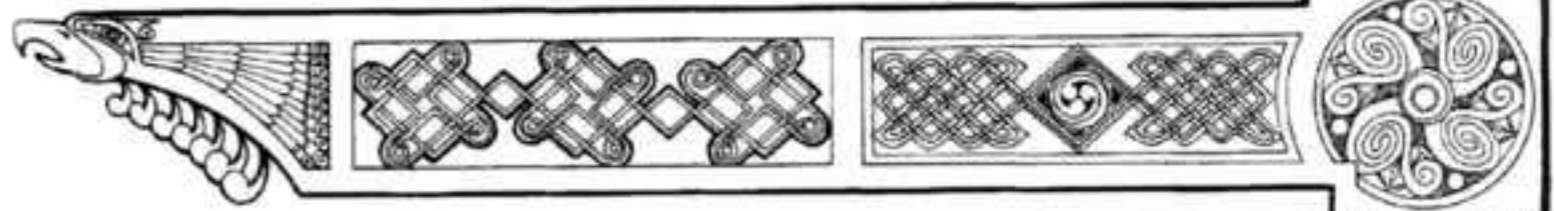
Wounds represent considerable Injuries that cannot be ignored. Crushing strikes may cause fractures, Thrusts and Pierces can cause muscle or organ damage, and Chops and Slashes can open gaping cuts that bleed considerably. A successful Healing Trial at Difficulty 2 must be made in order to clean the wound and bandage it to prevent infection or aggravation. This Trial should be made immediately; for every twelve Intervals (one minute) the Wound remains untended, the Difficulty of the Healing Trial increases by one. Depending on the location and nature of the Wound, a further Healing Trial may be necessary to stitch a large cut or set a broken bone. The Mythguide determines the Difficulty of this Trial based on the type of Wound and the delay between the receipt of the Wound and the administration of expert aid. If the Trial is unsuccessful (or if further aid is not available), the persona may receive a permanent Injury or Diminished Sense (see the Background Aspect chapter) at a Rank equal to the Degree of Failure (this includes disfiguring injuries). If the initial Healing Trial is successful, Recovery occurs naturally in 21-Hardiness-Healing Trial Degree of Success days. If the Trial is

⊗ Injury ⊗

Physical combat often results in Injuries and Wounds. When an attacker obtains a final Degree of Success with a Strike, he causes some type of physical Injury to the defender. There are four basic Injury Categories - Light Wound, Wound, Major Wound, and Mortal Wound - which result from specific Degrees of Success. The Attack Results/Injury Categories table details the basic effects of each type of Wound. These effects always include two areas - Physical Penalty and Shock. All Wounds give personas a cumulative Physical Penalty and require Shock Trials.

Recovery and Treatment

Personas use the Recovery rates listed on the Attack Results/Injury Categories table if the Injury is initially treated properly. The effects and treatment for different Injuries depend on their nature and severity. Aria does not provide detailed critical tables; instead, the Mythguide is encouraged to interpret

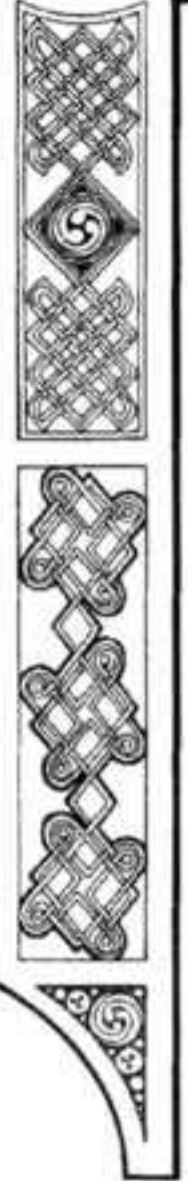


Attack Results/Injury Categories

<i>Degree of Success</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Result</i>
Mythic Success	Death	Death is immediate. The physical manifestation of the injury varies according to Attack Mode. The attacker invariably destroys a vital area of the victim. At Mythguide option, a successful Shock Trial (Diff. 10) indicates a Mortal Injury instead of immediate death.
Extraordinary Success	Mortal Injury	Injury consists of irreparable damage that results in protracted death. Shock Trial (Difficulty 8). Physical Penalty (Severe Hindrance, +6 to +8). The injury involves the destruction of a vital region of the body. Heavy Bleeding (internal or external) is likely. First Aid may prolong life, but Surgery or Healing Magic is required to save the victim's life. Death results in 1d10 (x Trauma Resistance) minutes. Successful First Aid prolongs life for 1d10 (x Trauma Resistance) hours. If victim survives First Aid and Shock, the wound will heal from Surgery in # of months = (12 - Hardiness). Magic Healing speeds the process.
Superior Success	Major Wound	Injury is devastating but not innately lethal. Shock Trial (Difficulty 6). Physical Penalty (Considerable Hindrance, + 4 or +5). Damage might consist of dismemberment, broken or dislocated bones, severe concussion, cut ligaments, injured organ, or heavy bleeding. Immediate First Aid is required. Victim needs to check vs. Shock each round (Diff. increases by one) until successful aid has been applied or body enters shock. Body will heal naturally in time, but permanent physical disability will result unless victim is administered by a Surgeon or Healer. Healing time =(16 - Hardiness) weeks.
Complete Success	Wound	Injury is serious, and needs medical attention. Shock Trial (Difficulty 4). Physical Penalty (Hindrance, +2 or +3). Damage consists of Fractured Bone, injured muscle, and wounded flesh. Bleeding may be considerable. Victim must make a Shock Trial (Diff. 4) every 3 intervals until successful aid has been applied or shock sets in. Wound will heal from successful First Aid. Healing time = (21 - Hardiness) days.
Marginal Success	Light Wound	Injury is minor and does not require immediate medical attention. Shock Trial (Difficulty 2). Physical Penalty (Minor Hindrance, +1). Damage consists of bruises and superficial cuts. Bleeding is light. Injury heals naturally. Healing time = (7 - Hardiness) days.

Note: The exact nature of an Injury should be described by the Mythguide. When handling multiple Injuries, the Mythguide should keep track of the number and type of wounds for purposes of determining Injury progression. The Physical Penalties are cumulative. Mythguides may want to account for multiple Injuries by simply adding the Physical Penalties and requiring new Shock rolls with each additional wound (Note that Shock Trial Difficulty is always modified by current Degree of Shock). Alternately, the Mythguide may want to group Wound categories so that so many Light Wounds equal a Wound, so many Wounds equal a Major Wound, etc..

For purposes of handling First Aid and Healing, use the guidelines for the most serious degree of Injury. If a higher level of Injury is reached, use the guidelines within that category. Once a persona has recieved a Mortal Wound, all Difficulty Modifiers from additional Injuries may be neglected. The Persona is marked for death, the Mythguide should allow his last moments to be heroic ones.



Shock Categories and Effects

Trial Guidelines

Shock Trials are made whenever a Persona or Mythguide Persona experiences Trauma or Injury from Weapon Strikes or hazardous situations and events such as Falling, Fire, Psychological Shock/Fear, and Hypothermia.

There are 10 Degrees of Shock through which Personas advance as a result of accumulated Trauma. Failing a Shock Trial increases Shock, while Succeeding at a Shock Trial reduces the accumulated degree of Shock. Advancing past Degree 10 indicates that the Persona has died from the Trauma of Shock.

Shock Trial Base: Trauma Resistance

Shock Trial Rank: Hardiness

Base Difficulty: Base Difficulty is determined by Injury Result or Mythguide discretion.

Common Modifiers

Current Level of Shock (+1 for each degree of Shock)

Conditional (Illness, Intoxication, Exhaustion)

Extreme Environmental Temperatures

Psychological (Weakness, Fear, Hypochondria)

Trial Result

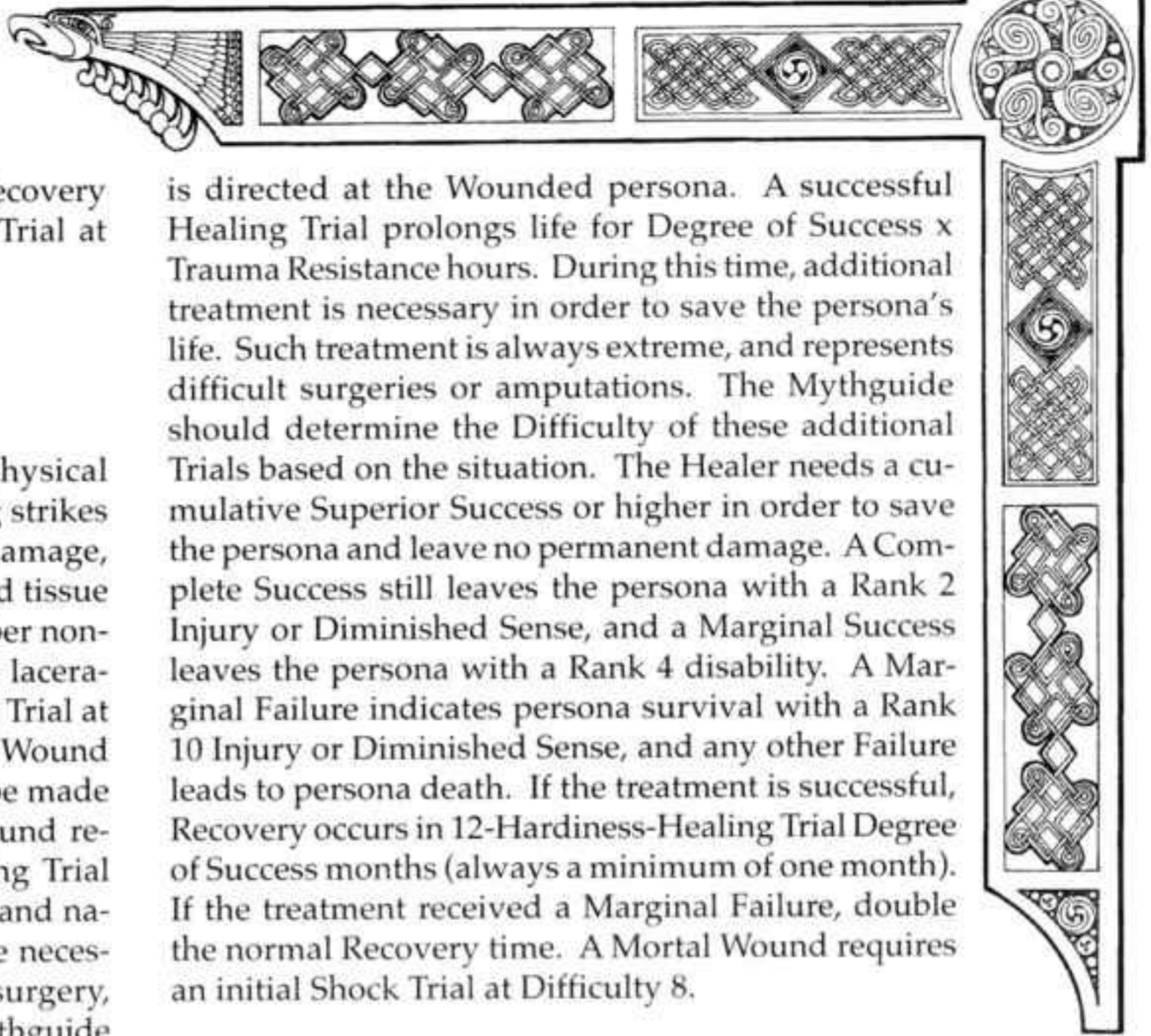
Effect on Degree of Shock

Mythic Success	5 Degree Decrease
Extra. Success	4 Degree Decrease
Superior Success	2 Degree Decrease
Complete Success	1 Degree Decrease
Marginal Success	No Effect
Marginal Failure	1 Degree Increase
Complete Failure	2 Degree Increase
Serious Failure	3 Degree Increase
Miserable Failure	5 Degree Increase
Catast. Failure	7 Degree Increase

Degrees of Shock

Effects/Description

0	Normal - Normal physiological state (no Shock)
1	Minor Disorientation - Persona cannot Dash
2	Disorientation - Perception-based Trials (+1), Persona can not Sprint
3	Daze - Mental Penalty (+1), Perception-based Trials (+2), Persona can not Run
4	Minor Delirium - Mental Penalty (+2), Perception-based Trials (+3), Persona must make a Willpower Trial (Diff. 2) to engage in strenuous activity. Persona can only Walk
5	Delirium- Mental Penalty (+3), Perception-based Trials (+4), Persona must make a Willpower Trial (Diff. 3) to engage in strenuous activity. Persona can only Walk (Stumble)
6	Stun - Mental Penalty (+4), Perception-based Trials (+5), Persona must make a Willpower Trial (Diff. 4) to engage in deliberate mental or physical activity. Persona can only Crawl
7	Incapacitation - Mental Penalty (+5), Perception-based Trials (+7), Persona must make a Willpower Trial (Diff. 6) to maintain Consciousness
8	Unconscious - Persona falls Unconscious, Willpower Trial (Diff. 8) to regain Consciousness without the benefit of medical assistance (First Aid, Healing, Herbs, etc.)
9	Coma - Persona remains Unconscious until given medical assistance or until Death
10	Death - Persona's condition worsens dramatically. Death comes quickly and quietly



unsuccessful but infection does not set in, Recovery occurs in 21-half Hardiness days. A Shock Trial at Difficulty 4 is required.

Major Wound

Major Wounds represent devastating physical damage that is not inherently fatal. Crushing strikes may cause massive fractures and internal damage, Thrusts and Pierces can cause major organ and tissue damage, and Chops and Slashes can dismember non-vital limbs (hands and feet) or open massive lacerations that bleed heavily. A successful Healing Trial at Difficulty 5 must be made in order to clean the Wound and bandage it properly. This Trial needs to be made immediately; for every six Intervals the Wound remains untended, the Difficulty of the Healing Trial increases by one. Depending on the location and nature of Wound, further Healing Trials may be necessary. Such Trials will represent necessary surgery, stitches, amputation, or cauterization. The Mythguide should determine the nature and Difficulty of these further Trials based on the location and severity of the Wound. If these additional Trials fail to heal the Wound properly (or if further aid is not available), the persona receives a permanent Injury or Diminished Sense in the appropriate area (at a Rank equal to twice the cumulative Degree of Failure). If the initial Healing Trial is successful, Recovery occurs naturally in 16-Hardiness-Healing Trial Degree of Success weeks. If the initial Trial is not successful, and the persona remains free of infection, Recovery occurs in 16-half Hardiness weeks. A Shock Trial at Difficulty 6 is required.

Mortal Wound

Mortal Wounds represent fatal injuries that will cause death unless some type of specialized treatment is available. Crushing strikes might cause skull fractures or massive internal bleeding, Thrusts and Pierces can indicate the violation of vital organs, and Chops and Slashes can cause the dismemberment of major limbs (arms and legs) or open huge gashes and lacerations. An initial Healing Trial at Difficulty 8 is required just to get control of the Wound (massive bleeding is likely). This Trial must be made immediately; for every three Intervals the Wound remains untended, increase the Difficulty of the Trial by one. This initial Healing Trial must succeed before additional Treatment is possible. Death will result in $1d10 \times$ Trauma Resistance minutes unless a successful Healing Trial

is directed at the Wounded persona. A successful Healing Trial prolongs life for Degree of Success \times Trauma Resistance hours. During this time, additional treatment is necessary in order to save the persona's life. Such treatment is always extreme, and represents difficult surgeries or amputations. The Mythguide should determine the Difficulty of these additional Trials based on the situation. The Healer needs a cumulative Superior Success or higher in order to save the persona and leave no permanent damage. A Complete Success still leaves the persona with a Rank 2 Injury or Diminished Sense, and a Marginal Success leaves the persona with a Rank 4 disability. A Marginal Failure indicates persona survival with a Rank 10 Injury or Diminished Sense, and any other Failure leads to persona death. If the treatment is successful, Recovery occurs in 12-Hardiness-Healing Trial Degree of Success months (always a minimum of one month). If the treatment received a Marginal Failure, double the normal Recovery time. A Mortal Wound requires an initial Shock Trial at Difficulty 8.

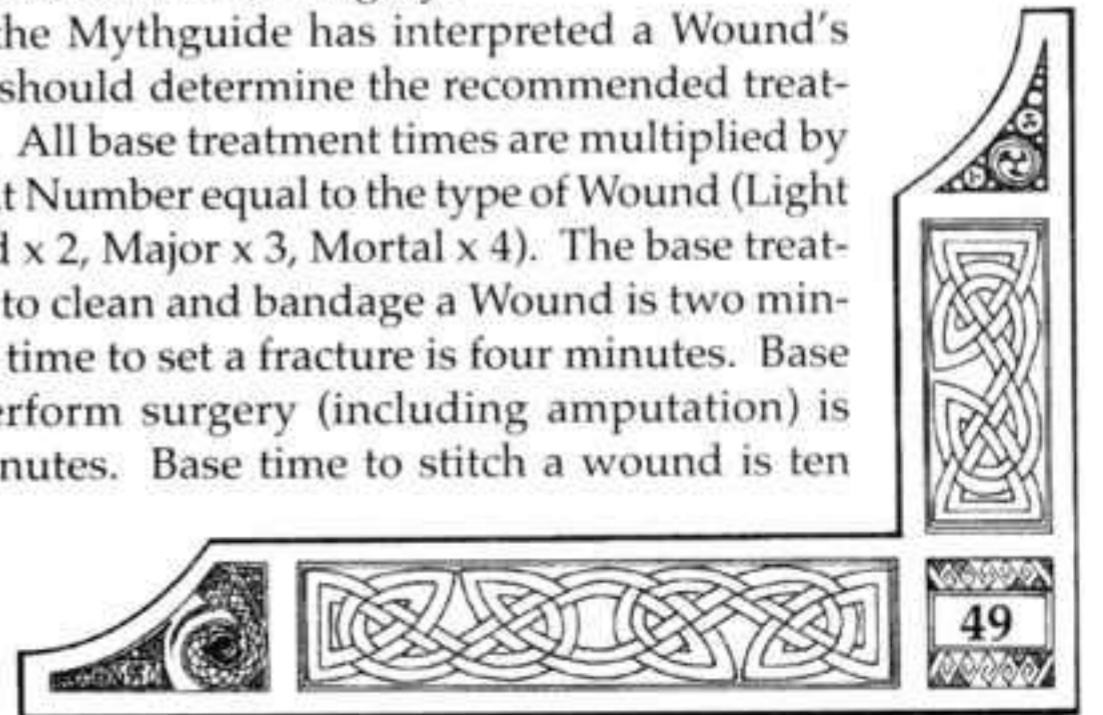
Death

The persona suffers grievous injury which leads to immediate death. Perhaps his skull is crushed, or his head severed, or his heart run through. At the option of the Mythguide, a successful Shock Trial made at Difficulty 10 indicates a Mortal Wound instead.

Treatment Times

Treatment times will vary according to the situation and the materials available. The Mythguide should determine required treatments based on the descriptions found in the previous sections. Attack Mode and Strike Location contribute to this interpretation. For example, a Wound caused by a Crush to the arm will probably cause a fracture (and require the bone to be set). A Major Wound caused by a Slash to the leg has probably opened quite a gash, and will require stitches or minor surgery.

After the Mythguide has interpreted a Wound's effects, he should determine the recommended treatment time. All base treatment times are multiplied by a Treatment Number equal to the type of Wound (Light \times 1, Wound \times 2, Major \times 3, Mortal \times 4). The base treatment time to clean and bandage a Wound is two minutes. Base time to set a fracture is four minutes. Base time to perform surgery (including amputation) is twenty minutes. Base time to stitch a wound is ten



minutes. Base time to cauterize a wound is one minute (after tools are properly heated).

The Mythguide can apply any modifiers he feels are appropriate when making Healing Trials for treatment. A successful Knowledge (medicine) Expertise Trial will modify the Difficulty of a Healing Trial by its Degree of Success. Other modifiers (the environment, appropriate tools, adequate water supply, cleanliness of Healer and implements, etc.) will also become factors. Magical healing and herbs often represent special cases, and should be dealt with on an individual basis.

Certain types of treatment require Shock Trials at base Difficulties as follows: Surgery (6), Surgery w/ amputation (7), cauterization (3), setting a major fracture (2), setting a minor fracture (1). If a persona enters Shock during treatment, the Shock must be treated before other treatment can continue.

RECOVERY TIMES

The Mythguide should determine recovery rates depending on a Wound's total recovery time. For example, if the total recovery time for a Wound is twelve days, the persona will regain the Wound's Physical Penalty in increments. Because the Wound caused a slight fracture, the Mythguide imposed a Physical Penalty of +3. Since recovery is incremental, the persona reduces the penalty by one point after four days, by a second point after eight days, and achieves complete recovery after twelve days. If a Wound becomes Infected, all recovery comes to a halt until the Infection is cured.

At the Mythguide's option, many Wounds require periods of Rest in order to heal properly. If a persona continues to act during the recovery period, the Mythguide may extend the recovery time indefinitely (or simply apply a multiplier to the total time). Alternately, the Mythguide may call for Hardiness Trials when a persona who needs complete Rest engages in strenuous activity. If the persona fails a Hardiness Trial, the Wound may become Aggravated and must be treated all over again. Once this second (or third, etc.) treatment is successful, recovery begins as if the Wound were fresh.

SHOCK

Shock represents reduced mental and physical capabilities resulting from concussion or impact stress, excessive bloodloss, or psychological trauma, and is

an important consideration in the Aria combat system. The effects of Shock range from minimal disorientation to unconsciousness and even death. Shock Trials are normal results of all types of Wound; refer to the Shock Categories and Effects table for guidelines on dealing with the onset of Shock. The Mythguide can also impose Shock Trials whenever he deems such checks appropriate. Extreme stress, fear, or sudden changes in temperature can all lead to Shock.

Shock is expressed in terms of Degrees, and its current level slides up and down a ten level scale. For example, a persona who is already Dazed (level 3) takes another Wound and achieves a Marginal Failure on his Shock Trial (a 1 Degree increase). His new level of Shock is Minor Delirium (level 4). Shock is a fluid condition, and a Success on a Shock Trial may reduce Shock that is already present.

Recovery from Shock occurs quickly after successful treatment. Once the stress which caused the Shock is removed (i.e. combat ends, bleeding is stopped, etc.), a successful Healing Trial alleviates a number of Shock levels equal to the Trial's Degree of Success. All such Healing Trials are made at Standard Difficulty, although the Mythguide may apply additional modifiers (poor conditions, loud noise, etc.). After a successful Healing Trial, a persona regains another level of Shock every half hour until he reaches zero (Normal). If Shock is not treated, a persona must make an additional Shock Trial each hour until he either returns to Normal, loses consciousness, or receives first aid. For each of these Trials that are successful, the persona may apply an additional (and cumulative) -1 Difficulty modifier to his next Shock Trial. For example, a persona who makes a successful Trial applies a -1 bonus to his next Trial; if that Trial is also successful, a -2 Difficulty bonus can be applied to the following Trial, and so on.

INFECTION

Wounds that have not been properly cleaned (or Wounds that were subject to initial failed Healing Trials) may become infected. The Mythguide should require Infection Trials for wounds that are susceptible to Infections. Infection Trials are made as Refined Hardiness Trials. The base Difficulty of an Infection Trial depends on the type of Wound received: Light Wound (Difficulty 0), Wound (Difficulty 2), Major Wound (Difficulty 4), Mortal Wound (Difficulty 6). The Mythguide should also require Infection Trials during surgery or other complex medical procedures. Additional modifiers based on climate, temperature,

available tools, and cleanliness may apply, and the Mythguide should assign them accordingly.

If a persona develops an Infection, treat it as a Disease with a Severity Factor of five. If an Infection is permitted to run its course, it can cause permanent damage or even death. The Mythguide should determine effects based on the situation. Advanced Infections in a persona's limbs may necessitate amputation. The Mythguide might allow a successful Healing Trial to halt the progress of an Infection, although the Difficulty of such an attempt increases as an Infection grows worse. Historically, the majority of battle deaths were the result of progressive infection.

Additional Sources of Injury

Any game world is a hazardous place, and personas often have more to worry about in the environment at large than they do from opponents in physical combat. This section provides guidelines for several mundane sources of injury.

Falling

Whenever a persona falls from a height, he may be injured by the fall. Armor does not alleviate any injury received from a fall. A persona must make an Acrobatics or Physical Trial in an attempt to resist being hurt (an Agility Trial made at +4 Difficulty can also be used). The Difficulty of the Trial is based on the distance fallen. A Difficulty of zero represents a fall of one to five feet. A Difficulty of one represents a fall of five to ten feet. Difficulty progresses upward in five foot increments from there. If the Trial fails, the Degree of Failure corresponds directly to a Crushing injury (i.e. a Serious Failure yields a Major Wound).

Drowning

A swimming persona who becomes Exhausted may no longer be able to remain afloat. Drowning begins during the Interval after exhaustion sets in. The persona makes a Hardiness Trial each Interval, starting at a Difficulty of zero in the first Interval and progressing to higher Difficulty in each succeeding Interval (Difficulty 1 in the second, Difficulty 2 in the third, etc.). When the persona first fails one of these Trials, he loses consciousness. However, the persona continues making Trials until he achieves a Death result (a Catastrophic Failure). If the persona is rescued before



this occurs, he may be revived with a successful Healing Trial. Depending on how long the persona was unconscious, he may have suffered permanent injury. The Mythguide might require a minimum Degree of Success in order to resist such injury, which often takes the form of reduced Hardiness, Endurance, or Intelligence (brain damage). Cloth Armor and other items of clothing cause a Hindrance when calculating the Difficulty of the Hardiness Trial. Leather armors cause either a Considerable or a Severe Hindrance. It is impossible to swim in metal armors.

FIRE

When a persona is exposed to fire, he must make a Hardiness Trial in order to resist being hurt by the flames. The Difficulty of the Trial depends on three primary factors - size, intensity, and time exposed. The base Difficulty is determined by the size of the fire; exposure to a candle flame yields a Difficulty of zero, while exposure to a huge conflagration yields a Difficulty of ten. For each second spent exposed to the flame, add one to the Trial's Difficulty. Unusual intensity can also add Difficulty; a normal fire does not give a modifier, but the white heat of a furnace could act as a Severe Hindrance (+6 or more) to a successful Trial. Magical fire or the heat from molten stone (lava) would also cause Hindrances.

Armor gains its full Defensive Modifier (as for the Slash attack mode) against flame for the first Interval of exposure. For every Interval beyond the first, the armor's Defensive Modifier is reduced by two. When the Defensive Modifier reaches zero, the armor no longer gives any benefit (at the Mythguide's option, metal armors may even transmit heat faster, adding to the Difficulty of subsequent Hardiness Trials). The Mythguide should require one Hardiness Trial per Interval of exposure. If the Trial is successful, the persona is able to resist the effects of the fire. If the Trial fails, the Degree of Failure should be applied to the Attack Results/Injury Categories table to determine the nature of the injury.

DISEASE

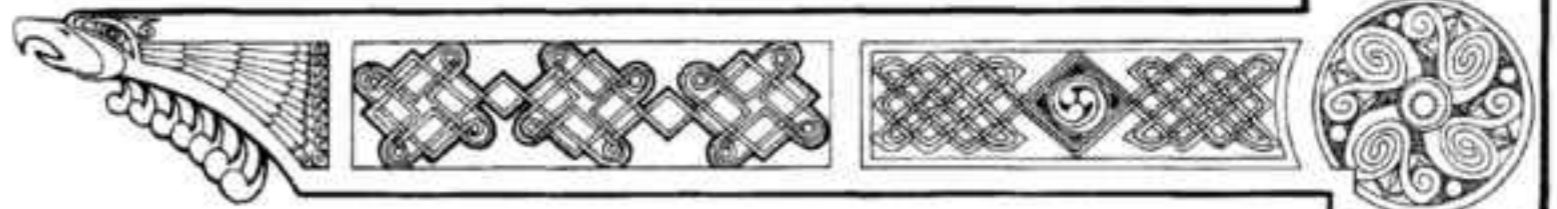
During the course of play, personas may become exposed to a variety of illnesses and diseases. Diseases generally appear in two forms - Infectious and Non-Infectious. Infectious diseases are caused by bacteria or viruses (Typhus and Leprosy), while Non-Infectious diseases are caused by a breakdown of bodily tissue or resistance (Arthritis is an example). When-

ever the Mythguide rules that a persona has been exposed to a particular type of disease, the persona must make a Hardiness Trial to resist contracting the illness. The Mythguide should assign a disease a Contagion Factor from one to ten, which represents the communicability of the disease. This Factor serves as the Difficulty of the resistance Trial. The Mythguide should apply any other modifiers he deems appropriate (physical contact, temperature, cleanliness, etc.).

If a persona contracts a disease, the Mythguide should determine its effects. Some diseases act quickly while others progress slowly over many years. Infectious diseases can often be treated, while Non-Infectious diseases may not be treatable. The Mythguide should determine the disease's final effects if left untreated, and assign the disease a Severity Factor from zero to ten (with a zero representing a common cold and a ten representing the plague). The persona makes a Hardiness Trial using the Severity Factor as the base Difficulty. This Trial is made after the disease has run its course (whether that course takes a day, a year, or ten years). The results of the Trial are interpreted on the Attack Results table. For example, a disease serious enough to yield a Major Wound causes severe internal or tissue damage. If the persona does not receive medical aid, the disease may leave permanent scars or cause permanent injury. Degenerative diseases (such as Arthritis) can manifest themselves over a period of many years. Although the persona knows the final result of the disease, the persona will suffer only partial results until the disease fully manifests itself. Healing Trials may speed the recovery process for illness and disease; the Mythguide should decide whether such Trials are appropriate based on the nature of an illness. He should also determine their results. If the Mythguide wishes to simplify things, the Healing guidelines for Wounds can be applied to disease and illness.

TOXINS

Poisons, chemicals, and narcotics, both natural and artificial, can also cause damage to personas. Every toxin is described in terms of its Toxicity, its Effects, and its Transmission. Toxicity is represented by a value from one to ten, which indicates the lethality of a substance. Transmission represents the method of introduction for a substance. Transmission methods include injection, inhalation, contact, and ingestion. Poisons can have variable Effects; some act very quickly while others take hold over an extended period of time. Some poisons must be administered incrementally until a toxic dose has been reached. The



persona is required to make a Hardiness Trial in order to resist a toxin; the base Difficulty of this Trial equals the Toxicity of the poison. The Mythguide can apply any other modifiers he feels are appropriate. If the resistance Trial fails, the persona succumbs to the Effects of the toxin. The results should be interpreted by

the Mythguide based on the suggested Effects, the speed of the Effects, and the Trial's Degree of Failure. The Attack Results/Injury Categories table can be used to guide the Mythguide in this interpretation. Healing Trials may or may not apply depending on the nature of the toxin.

Arms Glossary

Blade Arms

The family of weapons known as Blade Arms includes all varieties of Knives and Swords. Since it is the length of the blade which distinguishes one Blade Arm from the next, all Weapons are measured in terms of 'Blade Length'. Hilts and pommels typically add another 6 to 8 inches (if single-handed) or 8 to 12 inches (if double-handed). Blade Arms are used primarily for Thrusting and Slashing during combat, but the heaviest Sword Archetypes are best used for performing heavy Chopping, rather than quicker Slashing, attacks.

Knife

Blade Length: 6 to 10 inches Weight: less than .5 lb.

The Knife Archetype represents any small cutting implement which may be used for Thrusting and Slashing. Knives are single-edged and do not have cross guards. The Knife Archetype includes butcher knives, carving knives, hunting knives, scalpels, etc. .

Dagger

Blade Length: 12 to 24 inches Weight: 1 to 2 lbs.

Specimens belonging to the Dagger Archetype have single or double-edged blades designed specifically for Thrusting and Slashing. Daggers frequently have small cross guards, or quillons, with which to catch opposing arms. Daggers such as the Main Gauche are often used in the non-dominant hand for parrying incoming blows. The Dagger Archetype includes Cinquedaggers, Ballock knives, Main Gauches, Scramasax, etc. .

Poignard

Blade Length: 12 to 18 inches Weight: 1 to 2 lbs.

Poignards resemble long, thin Daggers designed primarily (or exclusively) for Thrusting. They often have diamond or square cross-sections (providing a stronger, unsharpened blade) with which they punch through armor or between armored plates. They rarely possess quillons or large cross guards. Sample Poignards include Dirks and Kidney daggers.

Shortsword

Blade Length: 24 - 30 inches Weight: 1.5 to 2.5 lbs.

Shortswords resemble long sturdy Daggers, and are used for both Thrusting and Slashing. It is the Sword Archetype most commonly employed by professional soldiers serving in large standing armies. Shortswords may have straight or slightly curved blades, possessing either a single or double-edged blade and small cross guard. The Roman Gladius, the Gallo-Greek sword, and the medieval Falchion exemplify the Shortsword Archetype.

Straightsword

Blade Length: 30 to 36 inches Weight: 3 to 4 lbs.

Also called the Viking sword or the Knightly sword, the Straightsword Archetype is a favorite arm of late iron age and early medieval warriors. Its blade is frequently double-edged and terminates in an obtuse point. The Straightsword works well for either Slashing or Thrusting depending upon its particular design. Straightswords often have sturdy cross guards composed of straight quillons.

Curved Sword

Blade Length: 30 to 36 inches Weight: 3 to 4 lbs.

Favored in the middle-east, the Curved Sword Archetype represents all forms of Scimitar, Cutlass, and Saber. Curved swords invariably possess long, arching, single-edged blades which provide for faster, more efficient, Slashing attacks. While they are nearly useless for Thrusting, those that possess sharpened 'false edges' on the back edge of the blade's tip may be used for 'arc thrusts' during combat. Curved Swords evince a variety of cross guards some of which completely enclose the hand in 'bell' fashion.

Arming Sword

Blade length: 30 to 38 inches Weight: 2 to 3 lbs.

The Arming Sword possesses a long straight blade which terminates in a sharp point. Being light and quick, the Arming sword is favored for dueling and for finding the cracks in an opponent's armor. The slim but sturdy blade is highly efficient for Thrusting and Parrying, but its lightness hinders its performance during Slashing attacks. Cross guards, including bell hilts, are commonly elaborate. Rapiers, Smallswords, and Estocs are common versions of the Arming Sword.

Longsword

Blade Length: 36 to 42 inches Weight: 3.5 to 4.5 lbs.

The Longsword Archetype represents all forms of the Bastard or Hand-and-a-Half sword. Its blade is long and straight, often ending in an obtuse or rounded point. The Longsword is remarkable in the fact that may be held with one or two hands. Its grip is short enough to allow its wielder to bear the arm with one hand, while being long enough to permit an addition three fingers from the other hand to add weight to the blow. Though heavier than its shorter cousin the Straightsword, the Longsword remains a Slashing (rather than Chopping) arm.

Greatsword

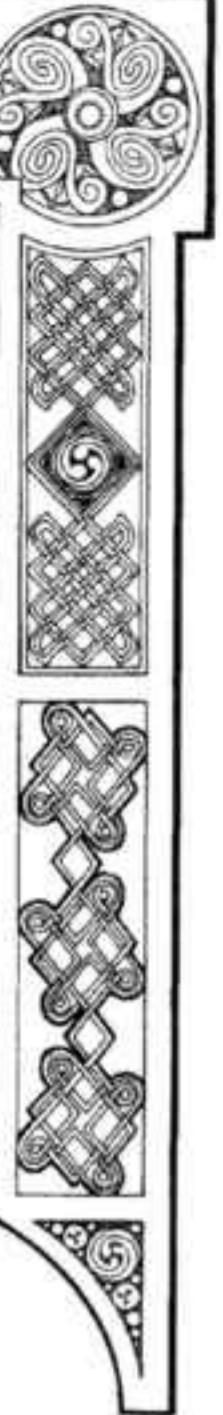
Blade Length: 42 to 48 inches Weight: 5 to 9 lbs.

The Greatsword represents any long-bladed, two-handed Chopping sword. Greatswords typically have straight, double-edged blades that terminate in blunt or obtuse points. They frequently possess large cross guards, with either simple or ornate quillon configurations. The length of the Greatsword's blade makes it cumbersome for Slashing or Thrusting attacks, and its weight makes it cumbersome for performing even the simplest Blocking parries. But if a sword must be used to dispatch a heavily armored opponent, the Greatsword is the way to go. The Claymore, Flamberge, and Zweihander represent typical Greatsword features.

Hafted Arms

Hafted Arms represent all Meleé weapons which are constructed of some type of damage-inflicting head attached to a sturdy wooden, bone, or metal haft (or grip). Axes, Maces, Clubs, Hammers, and Flails are all members of the Hafted Arms family. In addition to the features which complement their primary Attack Mode, most Hafted Arms possess terminal spikes or blades atop their heads so that they may be used for Thrusting in a pinch.

Unlike Blade Arms which are balanced in their weight distribution, Hafted Arms tend to be top-heavy with the bulk of the weight lying in the head. While this makes for powerful Crushing and Chopping blows, their weight distribution tends to make



Hafted Arms slower, and consequently much less efficient, for parrying. Hafted Arms are restricted to performing only Block parries, which are executed by putting either the head or haft in the direct line of the incoming attack. Hafted Arms are measured in terms of total Length, from the top of the head to the end of the haft.

Hand Ax

Length: 18 to 24 inches Weight: 1.5 to 2.5 lbs.

The Hand Ax is the smallest of the Ax Archetypes and commonly possesses a single 'pean' or cutting edge. Most Hand Axes are considered utility weapons and consequently show little or no ornamentation. While none possess top-spikes, some demonstrate blunted 'backs' which may be used for Crushing Attacks.

Battle Axe

Length: 24 to 30 inches Weight: 2.5 to 3 lbs. (Horseman's Ax)
Length: 36 to 48 inches Weight: 3.5 to 5 lbs. (Footman's Ax)

The Battle Axe appears in two distinct Archetypes which are identified by length of haft and mode of use. The smaller, single-handed Battle Axe commonly possesses a broad single pean or edge, backed by a flat hammer surface or rear spike. Though somewhat short, the Horseman's Axe is long enough to reach heads and shoulders when attacking from horseback, or light enough to wield single-handed while carrying a shield. In certain designs, the Horseman's Axe is topped by a straight, dagger-like blade. The Viking Fransisca is one example of a single-handed Battle Axe (this particular variety could also be thrown in combat).

The Footman's Axe bears a longer haft so that it may be employed by infantry to combat mounted opponents. Its longer haft and heavier head require the bearer to use both hands, but the damage inflicted by its Chop is capable of breaching heavier armor types. The Footman's Axe is occasionally double-peaned, but rarely bears a terminal end-spike for thrusting (this is corrected in the Poleax Archetype). The medieval Bearded Axe (which possessed a single, heavy chopping pean) is one example of a two-handed Battle Axe.

Military Pick

Length: 36 to 42 inches Weight: 3 to 4 lbs.

The Military Pick resembles the mining implement of the same name. Consisting of two opposing long, pointed spikes, the head of the Military Pick is intended to punch through even the heaviest of Armor styles. Because it requires the use of both hands, the Military Pick is slow, but sure of purpose. Military Picks may be fitted with top spikes for slow, cumbersome Thrusting attacks.

Mace

Length: 18 - 24 inches Weight: 3 to 4 lbs. (Light Mace)
Length: 24 - 42 inches Weight: 4 to 6 lbs. (Heavy Mace)

All maces are characterized by a heavy metal head attached soundly to the end of a metal or wooden haft. Mace heads assume a variety of shapes and features — some are round and smooth, while others are spikes or flanged. Regardless of shape, Maces rely upon their cumbersome weight to Crush the bones and split the flesh of the enemy. Some Mace heads are equipped with a long knife-like spike useful for performing slow, weighty Thrusting Attacks.

Light Maces are the shorter of the two Archetypes. They are wielded in one hand, and consequently have short grips at the end of the haft. Many Light Maces have flanged heads which are capable of cutting flesh during a powerful stroke.

Heavy maces have larger, heavier heads positioned at the end of a longer, sturdier shaft. They are brandished with two hands and are capable of knocking a man from horseback or a standing man to the ground. Many Heavy Maces, like the Holy Water Sprinkle, possess spiked heads for breaching mail or punching through solid armor forms.

Cudgel/Truncheon

Length: 18 to 24 inches Weight: 1.5 to 2.5 lbs.

The Cudgel/Truncheon Archetype represents all forms of simple Club, from crude tree trunks to glorified engraved batons. Cudgels represent the most primitive variety, commonly exemplified by natural items such as thick tree branches or large animal bones. Cudgels rarely possess more than a crude workmanship (if any at all) and little or no ornamentation. Truncheons, on the other hand, include all forms of polished batons the likes of which may be carried by policing guards or bureaucratic officials. Truncheons often display fine craftsmanship including silver end-butts and ornate engraving or lacquering. All Cudgels and Truncheons are wielded in a single hand.

Hercules Club

Length: 36 to 48 inches Weight: 2.5 to 4 lbs.

The Hercules Club Archetype includes all types of grossly huge, menacing clubs. Some have nails or spikes driven through the heads, while others are dotted with studs or ringed with spiked metal bands. In any case, they're nasty to behold. Hercules Clubs are slow and heavy, and require the use of both hands.

Staff

Length: 4 to 6 feet Weight: 1.5 to 3 lbs.

Often underestimated for its apparent lack of peril, the Staff is perhaps one of the most versatile Arms Archetypes available to Personas. Useful for Crushing and all forms of Parrying defense, Staves are fast and reliable (although they may break if used to Block Parry a heavy Chopping or Crushing attack). Some Staves are end-weighted with metal caps to increase their damage potential and to protect their ends from splintering. Both the Quarter-staff and the eastern Bo-staff exemplify the Staff Archetype.

Flail

Length: 24 to 36 inches Weight: 2 to 3 lbs. (Horseman's Flail)
Length: 36 to 48 inches Weight: 3 to 4 lbs. (Footman's Flail)

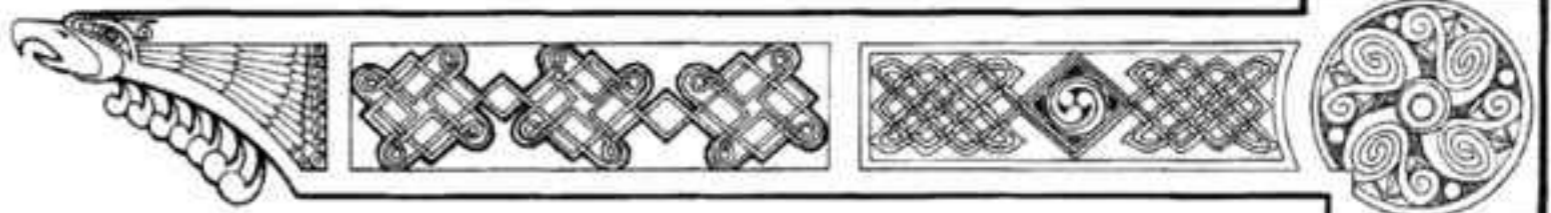
Flails resemble Maces or Clubs which are broken and reattached (by hinge-link or short chain) between the head and the haft. Lighter than Maces, Flails depend upon the whip-like velocity (generated by a quick swing) inherent in their design to create tremendous impact upon the foe. Like Mace heads, Flail heads may be augmented with spikes or studs to increase the damage potential of the strike. In addition to increasing damage, the hinged construction of Flails makes them difficult weapons to Parry (+2 Difficulty to all Parry attempts, except shields).

Horseman's Flails are short and light enough to be held in one hand, but long enough to reach the head and shoulders of unmounted opponents from horseback. The Footman's Flail is longer and heavier, requiring two hands to wield. Most Flails are constructed of wood, possessing metal hinges (or chains) and metal reinforced heads.

Morningstar

Length: 12 to 24 inches (Haft) + 24 to 36 inches (chain and head)
Weight: 2 to 3 lbs.

Technically speaking, the Morningstar Archetype is a variety of Flail. Having a long wooden haft (suitable for a single or double-handed grip) and an extremely long metal chain, the Morningstar relies upon extreme velocity to deliver a crushing blow to opponents. Though the head is smaller than a common Flail's, it travels at much greater speed. The Morningstar is consequently the most difficult weapon to parry (+1 penalty for shields, +4 for all other Arms). Its long chain can entangle parrying weapons (Superior Success or better attack) but can also twist or rebound to strike the user. A Catastrophic failure means that defender has inflicted a Complete Injury to himself, while an Extraordinary Failure indicates that he has injured himself Lightly.



Warhammer

Length: 24 to 30 inches Weight: 3 to 4 lbs.

The Warhammer resembles a Horseman's Battle Ax in most respects excepting the blunted pean which is designed for Crushing instead of Chopping. Warhammers require but a single hand to use, and they may be fitted with a top spike for Thrusting or a back spike for Chopping.

Great Hammer

Length: 42 to 48 inches Weight: 5 to 6 lbs.

Designed to defeat Plate Armor, the Great Hammer is perhaps the greatest of all military meleé arms. The Great Hammer resembles a large Military Pick except that one of the two long stout peans is widened and blunted to perform Crushing, rather than Chopping, Attacks. Of course, the other spiked pean is equally devastating when used for Chopping. Additionally, the Great Hammer is frequently equipped with a short Thrusting spike surmounted atop the head. Overall, the Great Hammer is an awesome Military Arm, but its cumbrous bulk and heavy weight make it highly inefficient against all who are faster than the average Plate armored opponent.

Polearmes

Polearmes represent several Arms Archetypes which are all designed to extend the reach of the user beyond the range afforded by normal meleé weapons. Except for members of the Spear family, all Polearmes are intended for large-scale military deployment. Employed by a single individual, a Polearme is useful for a single first attack, but its slow speed and long effective range make it inefficient for personal defense or prolonged meleé engagement (except when used against a single mounted opponent). It is when used collectively by a company of soldiers, that Polearmes prove invaluable to infantry defense. All Polearmes (except the Light Spear and Lance) require the use of both hands.

Polearme heads are typically constructed of iron or steel and mounted upon a 4 to 5 foot wooden haft (or pole). Polearme heads evince a variety of shapes designed for many diverse offensive and defensive maneuvers. The Archetypes presented here attempt to group Polearmes by their most obvious features and purposes. Historical groupings may differ. The Mythguide should carefully tailor a particular weapon's Attack and Defense modes and values according to the specific features possessed by the arm in his environment.

Poleax

Length: 6 to 7 feet Weight: 4 to 5 lbs.

The Poleax Archetype represents all long-hafted arms fitted with a wide, tall blade intended for primarily for Chopping Attacks. Because the weight distribution makes such attacks slow and awkward, Poleax heads are fitted with long Thrusting spikes, backed hooks, and reversed tines to diversify the weapon's utility. Attack values are highest when the arm is used for Chopping, second highest when used for Thrusting. Thrusting attacks are decidedly faster than Chopping attacks. Halberds, Voulges, Bardiches, Lochaber Axes, Scorpions, and Bills exhibit traditional Poleax features.

Swordstaff

Length: 7 to 9 feet Weight: 3 to 4 lbs.

The Swordstaff Archetype includes all Polearmes which possess long (straight or curved) sword-like blades mounted upon the end of a long wooden staff. Swordstaves are generally designed for Thrusting and Slashing attacks with the primary purpose depending largely upon the features of a specific weapon type. Many Swordstaves reveal a sharp spike or downward curving hook protruding from the back of the sword blade. Such hooks and spikes serve two useful functions. First, they provide a defensive edge upon which incoming Slashing attacks may be

stopped. Secondly, the spikes and hooks can be used to catch an opponent's clothing or gear, making him susceptible to being pulled from horseback or dragged to the ground. In some cases, hooks are modified to catch and trap opposing weapons, permitting them to be jerked from an opponent's grasp. Glaives, Guisarmes, Korsekes, Fauchards, and Military Scythes are all weapons which fall within the Swordstaff Archetype.

Spear

Length: 6 to 8 feet Weight: 2 to 3 lbs. (4 lbs for a Heavy Spear)

Spears are the oldest and simplest member of the Polearme family. They have small (knife-sized) points which reveal a wide variety of shapes and materials (from the first flint and bone points to bronze, iron, and steel). Spears are designed for Thrusting, but those with broader, edged tips may also be used for light Slashing attacks.

Light Spears have shorter hafts (5 to 6 feet) and are often wielded in conjunction with a shield. All Spears designed for Throwing fall within the Light Spear Archetype. Heavy Spears are longer, and have thicker shafts. They typically possess broader blades useful for cutting as well as Thrusting. If Pikes and Lances (on foot) are used in the Mythguide's setting, the Heavy Spear Archetype may be used as a base from which new Attack Values may be derived. All Heavy Spears require the use of two free hands.

Lance (at Charge)

Length: 10 to 14 feet Weight: 3 lbs. +

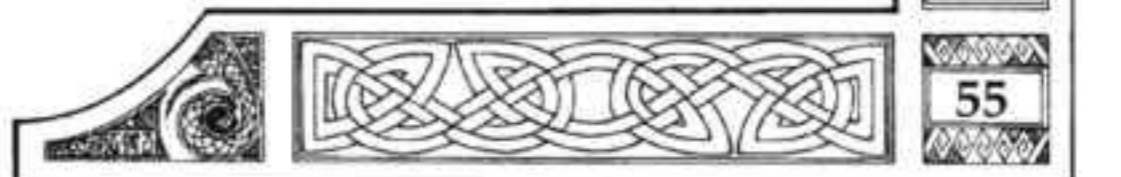
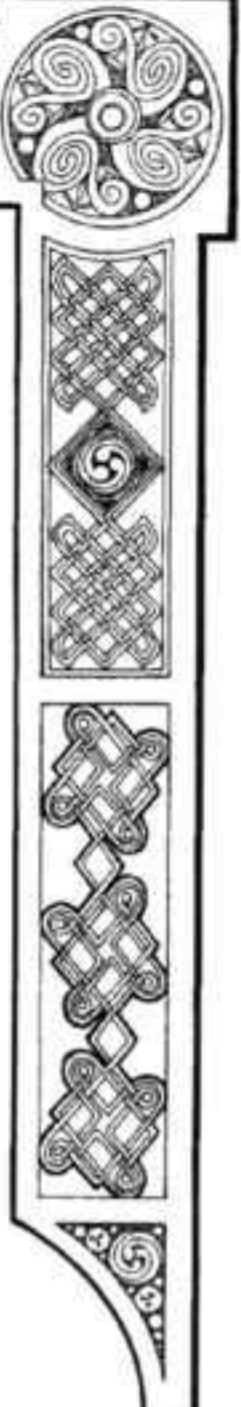
During the age of chivalry, Lances earned a reputation for the roles they play in the Jousting tourney. As technology progresses lances become longer and thicker, some having truncheons (shafts) which reach an astounding 5 inches in diameter near the vamplate (hand guard). Later in the age, Lances are braced by the breastplate via a 'lance rest' which is bolted to the breastplate and extends to the grip behind the large vamplate. All said, a charging knight puts not only the Lance's mass and the speed of his charge into the penetrating potential of the Lance, but by means of the lance-rest he puts his entire body mass (including armor) behind the force of the shock. Each Mythguide must determine the damaging potential of his Lances based upon these factors. The Arms Profile offers a suggested range.

Shields

Regardless of their size, shape, or construction materials all shields are classified according to their construction style and usage mode. Construction styles include Frame-shields and Board-shields.

Frame-shields are constructed from a rigid frame which is covered with a hard, material which provides a glancing surface for defense. Because the frame forms the perimeter of the shield, both the shape of the shield and the strength of its rim are provided by the frame. The surface of the shield consists of the covering material which, because it tends to be weaker, relies on the frame for central support. Cover materials frequently include boiled leather, but wicker and beaten metal are also used. Frame shield surfaces are often rounded to both strengthen the surface and allow weapons to slide or rebound away. Frame shields tend to be light because their construction features enable lighter materials to provide adequate defense.

Board-shields are constructed from a solid material which forms both the perimeter shape and body surface of the shield. Wooden planks most often form the bulk of the Board-shield. Wooden board shields are often bound by a metal perimeter rim covered with a cured leather surface. Solid metal shields would also fall into the category of Board-shields although their weight would make them cumbersome to wield. Board shields are often flat because the strength of the body (and the difficulty of working wooden planks into curves) makes curved surfaces both unnecessary and inconvenient.



Usage Mode depends upon the type of grip with which a shield is fitted. Buckler grips consist of a central grip which enables the shield to be held at arms length. Being the most maneuverable form of grip, Buckler grips enable a shield to be used for performing Divert Parry defenses. Target grips consist of a single off-center grip and an accompanying strap which fits over the forearm of the wielder. Target grips are more stable, and enable the user to bear more weight upon his arm. They are less maneuverable, however, and Target-shields may only be used for performing Block parries. All Shields are designed for non-dominant hand use: they do not suffer from positive Difficulty (non-dominant hand penalties) when used for Parrying.

Buckler

Size: 12 inches diameter

Weight: 1 to 2 lbs.

Named for its grip, the buckler shield is small and usually round. It is often constructed from a concave 'board' consisting of beaten bronze or iron although frame construction is possible. Because they are the most maneuverable of shields, bucklers are often fitted with a central boss-spike which resembles the blade of a small dagger which protrudes from the middle of the shield's surface. The spike may be used as a Dagger for performing punching Thrust Attacks. Assuming the Buckler is held in the non-dominant hand, Difficulty modifiers apply to such Attacks.

Medium Shield (Frame Target)

Size: 30 to 36 inches diameter Weight: 2 to 3 lbs.

The Medium Frame Target may be round, oval, rectangular, hexagonal, or triangular(kite) in shape. It is most often constructed from a wooden or metal frame and a hardened leather glancing surface.

Medium Shield (Board Target)

Size: 30 to 36 inches diameter Weight: 3 to 5 lbs.

The Medium Board Target represents the shield most commonly used to defend against heavy arm offensives. They may be of any shape although round shields and kite shields are by far the most common.

Large Shield (Frame Target)

Size: 42 to 48 inches

Weight: 3 to 5 lbs.

Large Frame Targets represent larger versions of the Medium Fram Target shield. They are constructed in similar fashions although they often have reinforcing bosses or spines swelling outward from the surface. Oblong shapes are most common, although a very tall bearer might employ a round variety.

Large Shield (Board Target)

Size: 48 to 60 inches

Weight: 4 to 8 lbs.

Large Board Targets are the most cumbersome of all shields. Made in a fashion similar to the Medium Board Target, their size and bulk enable them to withstand heavy blows. Tower Shields represent the largest of the shields in this Archetype. Tower Shields are often fitted with a large bottom spike or twin pullout arms which enable the bearer to prop the shield upright on the ground. Once set-up Tower shields stand freely and do not require the Bearer to expend Option Points to gain coverage from the Shield. Towers are favored by archers for their ability to provide defense while the archer engages in missile fire. Tower shields which are set may not be used to actively Parry incoming blows. They must be held to perform active Parry maneuvers.

Missile Weapons

All missile weapons are used to attack opponents who stand at a distance beyond physical reach. Missile weapons may be thrown or launched at a distant foe. Generally speaking, missile weapons are only useful for attacking from a distance. If personas use them in a pinch to assault foes *melée* fashion, or to parry incoming blows, the Mythguide must determine their effectiveness. If, for example, a persona were to use his crossbow to Parry

an incoming blow, the Mythguide might rule that the action constitutes a Block Parry with a Defensive Modifier of 0 or -1. It is recommended that all parries performed with launching devices (bows, crossbows, staffslings, etc) be considered Block Parries (the persona will need to roll breakage against the Defensive Modifier + half the Favored Weapon Rank - Difficulty afforded by the Attack Mode and Degree of Success of the attack).

Thrown Arms

Thrown Arms represent the entire class of arms which are designed to be hurled at opponents in combat. Throwing Knives, Daggers, Hand axes, Truncheons, and Light Spears are the most common Melee Archetypes which may also be thrown effectively at varying ranges. For purposes of determining the Range, Speed, and Attack modifiers of these arms consult the Missile Arms Table.

Launched Arms

Launched Arms represent all missiles which are propelled by means of a device other than the bare hand. Spear Throwers, Slings, Bows, and Crossbows all fall within the family of Launched Arms. Attack Modifiers are given for the Launching device rather than the actual missile which is projected. If the Mythguide wishes to differentiate the different Attack modifiers for different arrow types (hunting, target, stone-tipped, flaming, etc) he may assign his own Attack Values. With regard to arrows, differently weighted heads may also affect the Range assignments.

Spear Launcher

A Spear Launcher is a short wooden or bone arm fitted with a hook or nob on the end. Small spears or javelins rest upon the arm with their notched butts nestled around the Launching Arm's end hook. When the user throws his arm (in a manner similar to throwing a spear), he holds the Launching arm firmly in hand and allows the spear to rise and launch, gaining momentum from the increased length provided by the Launcher. Spear Launchers throw small (approximately 3' long) spears at high velocity with dependable accuracy.

Sling

A Sling consists of a small leather or cloth pocket situated in the center of a narrow strip of cloth or cord. A Sling is prepared by holding the ends of the strip in a single hand and placing a small rounded stone or lead ball (bullet) in the central pocket. Launching the sling stone (or bullet) means twirling the sling in a circular motion and releasing one end of the cord once the proper momentum has been achieved by twirling. The stone or bullet flies with great speed and surprising accuracy.

Slingstaff

A Slingstaff is basically a Sling attached to the end of a 4 foot wooden pole. The missile is released by a special release technique performed by an experienced user.

Self Bow

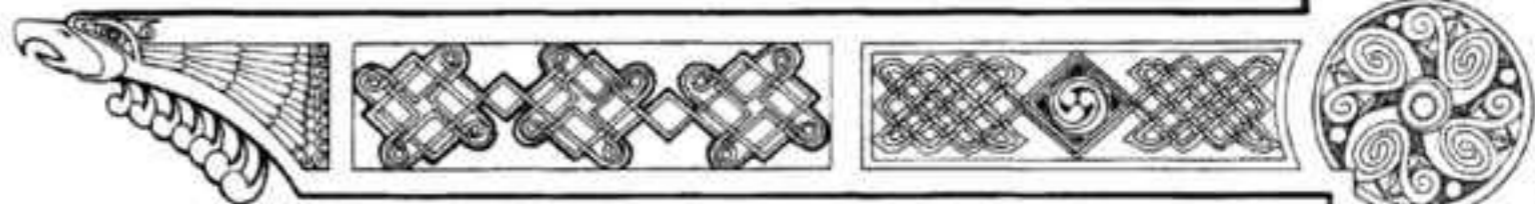
Selfbows are made from a single piece of flexible wood. The English Longbow is the most celebrated form of Selfbow, and was constructed of Yew, when available, or Witch-Hazel, Ash, or Elm.

Built Bow

Built Bows are made from layers of different wood which are bound together with natural resins and circlets of hemp or cane. They are found most often in societies which have high technology, but poor resources for constructing large numbers of Self Bows.

Backed Bow

Backed Bows are made from one or more pieces of wood which are bound together and reinforced by long strips which



are wrapped around the bowstaff and heated until taut. It is the sinew, rather than the wood, which lends strength and flexibility to the bowstaff. Backed bows are often recurved bows. Because the sinew stretched out when wet, the bow is greatly weakened when saturated. If a Backed bow is used when wet it can easily be ruined.

Composite Bow

The Composite Bow resembles the Backed Bow but supercedes it in quality and performance. Composite Bows reveal semi-rigid bone positioned in the limbs to reinforce the bowstaff, causing greater tension when the bow is drawn. Composite Bows are also covered with leather preventing rain and atmospheric humidity from softening the taut sinew wrappings which give the Composite Bow much of its strength.

Light Crossbow (Latch)

The Light Crossbow Archetype includes all crossbows which can be spanned (drawn) by means of a foot stirrup (mounted on the nose of the Crossbow stock) and spanning hooks (mounted on the belt). When the wearer places his foot in the stirrup, kneels to rest the string in the spanning hooks, and stands up, the crossbow is drawn. A crossbow bolt is placed in a groove on the top of the tiller and the crossbow is ready to fire by pulling the latch (trigger mechanism).

Medium Crossbow (Windlass)

The Medium Crossbow Archetype is a heavier version of the Light Crossbow. The stiffness of the bow limbs require that a windlass crank be used to span the bow. Though more powerful, the Medium Crossbow takes longer to prepare for firing.

Heavy Crossbow (Crannequin/Arbalest)

The Heavy Crossbow has monstrously powerful bow limbs which require the use of a heavy crannequin (crank mechanism) for spanning.

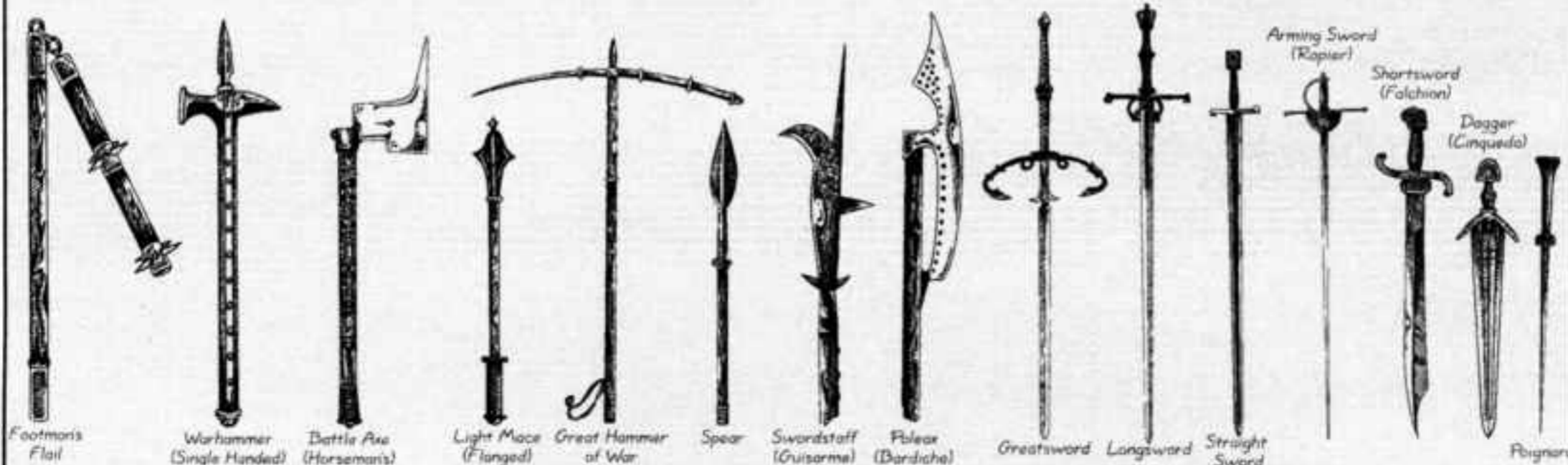
Quality (Arms & Armor)

All Arms and Armor can be distinguished in terms of Quality. There are 5 Quality Grades that apply to Arms and Armor. Arms and Armor of Good and Excellent Quality receive bonus points which are disbursed at creation by the owner among the Arm's or Armor's numerical values (for the purposes of increasing Attack Modifiers, increasing Defense Modifiers, or decreasing Speed and Encumbrance).

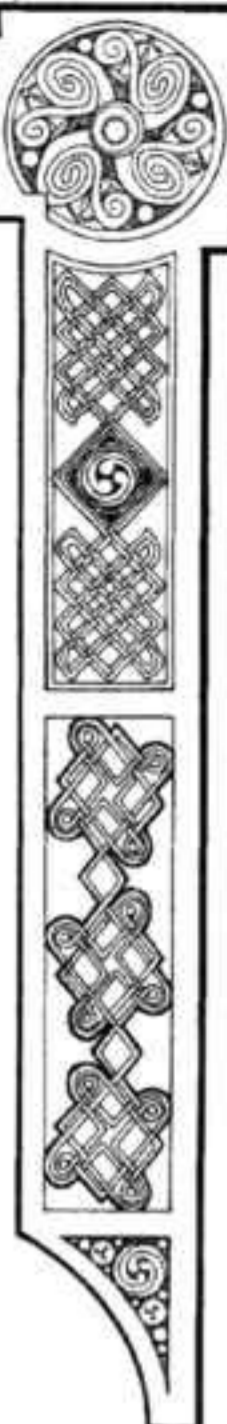
All Arms and Armor Archetypes listed on the Profile Tabs are assumed to be of Average Quality. When Arms and Armor receive damage during Breakage Trials, they decrease in overall Quality Grade and their numerical values must be lowered appropriately (Player chooses which values to lower).

Quality Grade	Effects
Poor	-6
Substandard	-4
Average	+0
Good	+3
Excellent	+7

Example: Excellent Longsword (+7 pts. total bonus)
 +2 Slash Attack Modifier
 -1 Slash Attack Speed
 +2 Block Parry Modifier
 -1 Block Parry Speed
 +1 Thrust Attack Modifier



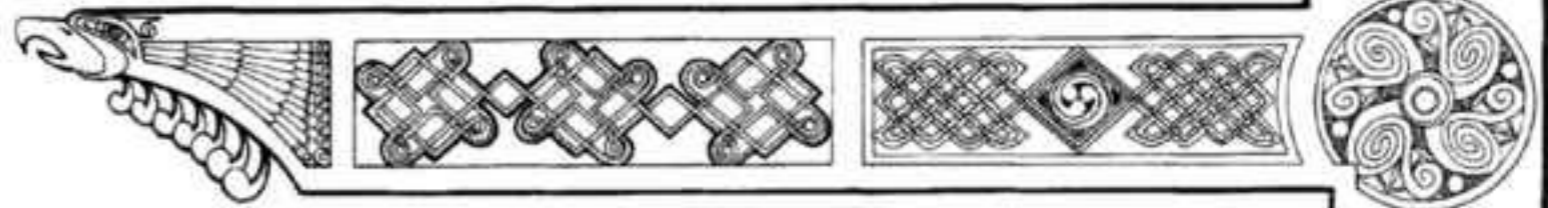
The Arm Archetypes shown above are not illustrated to scale.



Arms Profile (Blade Arms)

KEY: SH - indicates Single Handed usage. DH - indicates Double Handed usage. Arms listing both SH and DH are capable of being used with either one or two hands. Min. Strength varies by number of hands used.

Arm Archetype	Reach	Attack/Defense Modes	Attack/Defense Modifier	Attack/Defense Speed	Min. Strength
Knife	0	Stab	1	1	3 SH
		Slash	0	1	
Dagger	1	Stab	1	1	3 SH
		Slash	1	1	
		Divert	-1	1	
		Block	-1	1	
Poignard	1	Thrust	2	1	3 SH
		Slash	0	1	
		Divert	0	1	
Shortsword	2	Thrust	2	2	3 SH
		Slash	2	3	
		Divert	1	2	
		Block	1	2	
Sword	3	Slash	3	3	4 SH
		Thrust	3	3	
		Divert	1	3	
		Block	2	3	
		Disarm	1	4	
Curved Sword	3	Slash	4	3	4 SH
		Thrust	0	3	
		Divert	2	3	
		Block	2	3	
		Disarm	0	4	
Arming Sword	3	Thrust	2	2	3 SH
		Slash	0	3	
		Divert	3	2	
		Block	1	2	
		Disarm	3	3	
Longsword	4	Slash	4	4	7 SH
		Thrust	3	3	4 DH
		Block	4	3	
		Disarm	2	4	
Greatsword	5	Chop	5	5	5 DH
		Thrust	2	3	
		Block	4	3	
		Disarm	2	5	



Arms Profile (Hafted Arms)

KEY: SH - indicates Single Handed usage, DH indicates Double Handed usage. Arms listing both SH and DH are capable of being used with either one or two hands. Minimum Strength varies by number of Hands used.

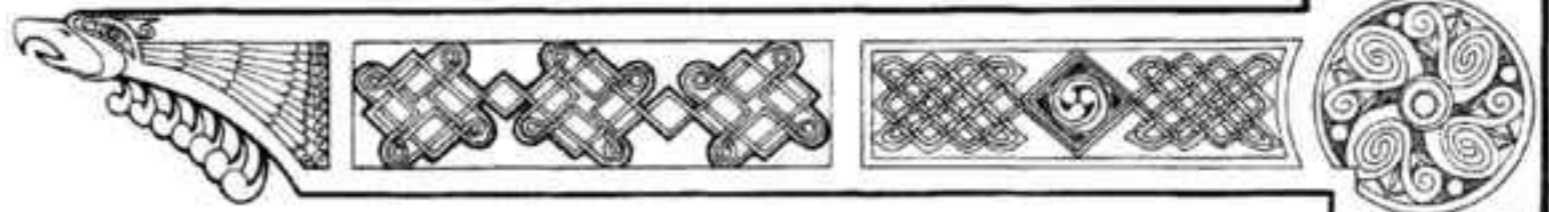
Arm Archetype	Reach	Attack/Defense Modes	Attack/Defense Modifier	Attack/Defense Speed	Minimum Strength
Hand Ax	1	Chop Slash	2 1	2 2	3 SH
Battle Ax (Horseman's Ax)	2	Chop Thrust Crush Block	4 2 3 2	3 3 3 3	4 SH
Battle Ax (Footman's Ax)	3	Chop Crush Block	5 4 3	5 5 4	5 DH
Military Pick	2	Chop Block	6 3	5 4	5 DH
Light Mace	1	Crush Block	3 2	3 3	4 SH
Heavy Mace	2	Crush Block	4 3	5 4	5 DH
Cudgel/Truncheon	1	Crush Block	2 1	3 3	3 SH
Hercules Club	3	Crush Block	3 3	4 3	4 SH 8 DH
Staff	3	Crush Divert Block Disarm	2 2 3 3	3 2 2 2	4 DH
Military Flail (Horseman's Flail)	2	Crush Disarm	3 2	2 2	4 SH
Military Flail (Footman's Flail)	3	Crush Disarm	4 3	3 3	5 DH
Morningstar	4	Crush Disarm	5 3	3 3	6 SH 4 DH
Warhammer	1	Crush Thrust Block	3 2 2	3 3 3	4 SH
Great Hammer	2	Chop Crush Block	6 5 4	5 5 4	5 DH



Arms Profile (Polearmes, Shields, & Natural Weapons)

KEY: SH - indicates Single Handed usage. DH - indicates Double Handed usage. Arms listing both SH and DH are capable of being used in either one or two hands. Min. Strength varies by number of hands used.

Arm Archetype	Reach	Attack/Defense Modes	Attack/Defense Modifier	Attack/Defense Speed	Min. Strength
Poleaxe (Bardiche, Halberd, Bill, Lochaber Axe, etc.)	3 - 4	Slash	4	4	5 DH
		Chop	6	6	
		Thrust	3	4	
		Special (hook)	2	4	
		Block	3	4	
Swordstaff (Glaive, Guisarme, Korseke, Fauchard, etc.)	4 - 5	Thrust	4	4	4 DH
		Slash	3	3	
		Special (hook)	3	4	
		Block	3	3	
		Disarm	3	4	
Light Spear	3	Thrust	3	2	4 SH 3 DH
		Slash	0	3	
		Block	2	3	
		Divert	1	3	
Heavy Spear (Boarspear, Lance, Pike, etc.)	4 - 8	Thrust	4	3	4 DH
		Block	3	4	
Buckler (Small Shield)	0	Thrust	1	2	3 SH
		Block	2	2	
		Divert	3	3	
Medium Shield (Frame & Hide)	0	Crush	1	3	4 SH
		Block	3	3	
Medium Shield (Board & Rim)	0	Crush	2	4	4 SH
		Block	4	3	
Large Shield (Frame & Hide)	0	Crush	1	4	4 SH
		Block	4	3	
Large Shield (Board and Rim)	0	Crush	2	5	5 SH
		Block	5	3	
Tower Shield	0	Block	6	3	6 SH
		Standing Block	4	0	
Fist(Punch, Jab, etc.)	0	Crush	-1	1	4 SH
Foot (Kick)	1	Crush	0	1	4



Arms Profile (Missile Arms)

Arm Archetype	Attack Modes	Attack Modifier	Range S/M/L/XL	Speed Fire/Preparation
Throwing Knife	Pierce	1	5/10/20/30	2/4
Throwing Axe	Chop	2	5/10/15/20	3/5
Thrown Hammer	Crush	2	5/10/15/20	3/5
Throwing Club	Crush	1	5/10/15/20	3/5
Spear/Javelin	Pierce	2	10/40/80/160	3/6
Launched Spear	Pierce	2	20/60/120/180	3/6
Thrown Net	Special (Snare)	0	5/10/15/20	3/9
Thrown Stone	Crush	-3	10/20/60/100	2/4
Sling (stone)	Crush	0	25/50/100/150	4/5
(bullet)	Pierce	1	30/60/120/180	4/5
Staffsling (stone)	Crush	0	50/100/150/225	4/5
(bullet)	Pierce	1	60/120/180/240	4/5
Selfbow (short)	Pierce	2	30/60/120/240	2/8
Selfbow (long)	Pierce	4	50/100/200/400	2/8
Built Bow (short)	Pierce	2	35/70/140/280	2/8
Built Bow (long)	Pierce	3	60/120/240/480	2/8
Backed Bow (short)	Pierce	2	35/70/140/280	2/8
Backed Bow (long)	Pierce	3	60/120/240/480	2/8
Composite Bow (short)	Pierce	2	50/100/200/400	2/8
Composite Bow (long)	Pierce	4	80/160/320/640	2/8
Light Crossbow	Pierce	2	50/100/200/400	1/12
Medium Crossbow	Pierce	4	60/120/240/480	1/24
Heavy Crossbow	Pierce	7	70/140/280/560	1/36

Range is expressed in terms of yards and establishes the Base Difficulty of a Missile Strike Trial.

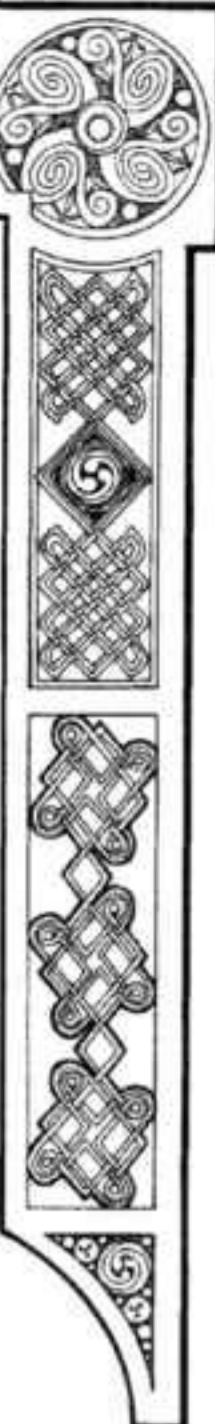
Short Range: Base Difficulty = 2

Medium Range: Base Difficulty = 4

Long Range: Base Difficulty = 6

Extra-Long Range: Base Difficulty = 8

Firing Speed represents the # of Option Points required to fire the Weapon once it is Prepared.



ARMOR GLOSSARY

Armor appears in numerous styles and is tailored to cover various parts of the body. An armor's Construction Type refers to its material composition, while its Design Style refers to its general shape which corresponds to the areas of the body that it is designed to protect.

Construction Type

There are ten Archetypal Construction Types by which most armor may be classified - *Cloth, Stiffened Linen, Cured Leather, Boiled Leather, Bezainted Leather, Jazeraint, Brigandine, Ringmail, Chainmail, and Plate*. Each is discussed in the following section.

Cloth

Construction Class: Flexible

Cloth refers to all Quilted and Padded Armor styles. Like clothing, cloth armor is cut into Doublets, Breeches, Coats, and Arming Caps. Quilted cloth (also called Pourpoint) consists of thin padding stitched between layers of canvas, linen, or heavy cotton cloth. Occasionally, it is over-stitched with circular 'eyelets' which resembles the stitching found around button holes. 'Eyelet Pourpoint' is better able to resist the cut and thrust attacks particular to dueling and should protect against most Thrusts and Slashes. Padded armor is the heaviest variety of cloth armor. It consists of many layers of heavy felt padding sandwiched between a canvas cover and soft cloth lining, measuring up to 4 inches thick. The padding is much thinner over the body's joints, allowing the flexibility required for combat maneuvers.

All cloth armor is lightweight and easily fitted to the body. The Fit Tolerance for Cloth armor is Low. See the Armor Defense table for more information.

Leather

Construction Class: Flexible

Leather refers to soft, cured leather which is approximately one quarter inch thick. Like Cloth, Leather can be tailored to fit the body closely, but areas around joints and sockets must be oversized to allow room for movement. Leather serves as the base material for most Semi-Rigid Construction Styles, such as Bezainted Leather, Jazeraint, and Brigandine. Leather armor offers the advantage of being light and flexible, but it breathes poorly (unless well ventilated) and is hot to wear. Leather is fashioned in nearly all Design Styles and has a Medium Fit Tolerance.

Chainmail

Construction Class: Flexible

Chainmail refers to metal 'fabric' which is constructed from numerous interwoven wire links, which are riveted together in overlapping clusters of five rings (four adjoining rings pass through each ring). Like Cloth and Leather, Chainmail is flexible and often covers jointed areas of the body; but its weight and composition prohibit armorers from achieving the close fit found in the other flexible construction types. Consequently, Chainmail is often fashioned into loose fitting garments such as Coifs, Haubergeons, Hauberks, Faulds (Skirts), Vests, Mitten Gauntlets, and Breeches. Because Chainmail is tailored for a relatively loose fit, most Chainmail pieces have a High Fit Tolerance.

Bezainted Leather

Construction Class: Semi-Rigid

Bezainted armor consists of a Leather base to which circular metal discs (bezaints) have been stitched. Also called Studded Leather, Bezainted Leather is more rigid due to the numerous solid discs which cover most of its surface area. Bezainted armor is fitted loosely to the body having a Fit Tolerance of High.

Jazeraint

Construction Class: Semi-Rigid

Commonly called 'Scale Mail', Jazeraint armor is constructed with a Leather base upon which many overlapping metal plates are riveted or stitched. Because the plates overlap, Jazeraint armor tends to be quite heavy. Jazeraint is rarely used to form sleeves or leggings but is styled into long skirts 'Faulds' or draping shoulder 'Pauldrons' instead. Jazeraint has a Medium Fit Tolerance.

Ring Mail

Construction Class: Semi-Rigid

Ring Mail appears as a modified version of Bezainted Leather. Instead of solid Bezaints, Ring mail employs circular rings which sustain the principle behind Bezainted Leather while eliminating some of the unnecessary weight. Ring Mail is employed to fashion the same Design Styles as Bezainted Leather.

Brigandine

Construction Class: Semi-Rigid

Brigandine construction reveals countless small overlapping plates which are riveted to the inside of a Leather covering and lined with a softer, lightly padded lining. The number of small plates makes Brigandine nearly as flexible as Leather armor and it is not uncommon to find sleeved Design Styles such as Doublets and Coats made in Brigandine construction. Overall, Brigandine is an excellent Construction Type, superceded only by Plate in the protection it affords and fit it guarantees. Brigandine has a Low Fit Tolerance.

Stiffened Linen

Construction Class: Rigid

Stiffened Linen construction refers to many layers of linen which have been stitched together, soaked in thick resin, and dried to form a stiff, yet somewhat pliant, material. It is very light of weight and can be fashioned into any Design Style compatible with Rigid armor Types. The Corselet with Pteruge skirt worn by the Greeks and early Romans is the best example of the Stiffened Linen Construction Type.

Cuirbouille (Boiled Leather)

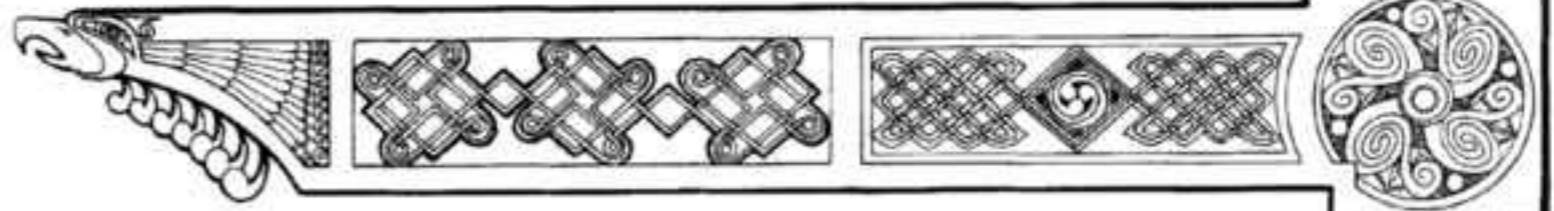
Construction Class: Rigid

Cuirbouille refers to leather which has been boiled in oil or wax, molded into shape, and allowed to dry into a rigid plate form. Cuirbouille can be shaped in close likeness to the wearer's body, and achieved a fit only paralleled by Cloth or perfectly crafted metal Plate Construction Types. Cuirbouille is often painted and laquered to protect it from the elements, and is a popular armor among the social classes that can afford it. Though Cuirbouille makes for a close fit, it is not overly flexible and is not usually crafted in the small segments required to cover body joints. Design Styles employing Cuirbouille frequently include Corsets and Breastplates (Cuirasses), Pate Caps, and Pteruge Skirts.

Plate

Construction Class: Rigid

Plate armor consists of beaten and polished metal plates which are meticulously honed to fit the wearer's body curvature. Though heavier than either Stiffened Linen or Cuirbouille, carefully crafted Plate armor offers the best fit of all Rigid Construction Types. Because it is constructed of tempered metal, Plate holds its shape and does not crack around connecting rivets. Like the other Rigid Types, Plate will not bend and must be fashioned into overlapping segments to protect bodily joints. For this reason, it is common for less technologically advanced armorers to employ Chainmail or leather to cover the joints of the body.



Armor (Construction Type Defensive Modifiers - Static)

Construction Type	Defense Modifiers Crush/Chop/Slash/Thrust/Pierce	Fit Tolerance*	Weight Multiplier**	Encumbrance Multiplier***
Cloth				
Pourpoint (Quilted)	3/2/4/3/2	Low	.75	1
Padded	4/3/5/3/3	Average	1	1.5
Leather	3/4/5/4/3	Average	1.25	1.5
Chainmail	3/5/7/5/5	Average	2.75	1.5
Bezainted Leather	3/4/5/4/3	High	2.25	1.5
Jazeraint	4/5/6/5/4	Average	2.75	1.5
Ring Mail	4/5/6/4/3	High	2	1.5
Brigandine	5/6/7/6/5	Average	2.5	1.25
Stiffened Linen	3/4/5/4/3	Average	1	1.5
Cuirbouille	4/4/6/5/4	Low	1.5	1.25
Plate	6/7/8/7/6	Low	3	1.25

* Fit Tolerance indicates the physical variation (one wearer to the next) permitted by a particular suit of armor.
 Low Tolerance - 0 Height Difference, 1 Frame Difference or 1 Physique Difference
 Average Tolerance - 1 Height Difference, 1 Frame Difference, & 1 Physique Difference
 High Tolerance - 1 Height Difference, up to 3 Difference split between Frame and Physique

** Weight Multiplier is used to determine the total Weight of a "Full Suit" of the appropriate Armor Type. To determine the total Armor Weight, add Persona Height Value, Frame Value, and Physique Value. Multiply the sum by the Weight Multiplier to find Armor Weight. Piece Armor should be calculated or estimated as a portion of the total Weight. Ex. 6 foot (HV 8) male persona, medium Frame (FV 7) with medium physique (PV5) = base value 20. Persona wears Plate Cuirass (breast & back plate, Weight Mult. 3 = 60 lbs. full suit). Cuirass weighs approx. 20 lbs.

*** Encumbrance Multiplier is used to determine the total Encumbrance of a piece or suit of Armor. Multiply total Weight (for piece or suit) by Encumbrance Multiplier to determine the total number of Encumbrance Grades (EG). For each Rank of Wearing Armor expertise possessed by the Persona deduct 5 EG from this total. Once all Persona Armor has been evaluated (in terms of EG modified by Wearing Armor Expertise), check the total versus the Persona's Carrying Capacity to determine the Persona's average level of Encumbrance and the Physical Penalties which result from the degree of Encumbrance.

If Hit Locations are being used then Armor Type includes Design Style (Vest, Hauberk, Skirt, Breastplate etc) as well as Construction Type. Design Style indicates which parts of the body are protected by the Armor's Defense Modifiers. Some common Design Styles and the areas they cover are listed below.

- Complet (full suit) - All of body except Neck, Face, and Skull.
- Corselet/Corset/Cuirass - Torso, Abdomen
- Hauberk - Torso, Abdomen, Groin, Upper Arms, and Upper Legs
- Doublet - Torso, Abdomen, Arms
- Fauld/Skirt (often attached to Corselet) - Groin and upper Legs
- Gorget - Neck and collar region of Torso
- Coif (Hood) - Skull and Neck (Only Flexible Construction Types)
- Helm - Head (Half Helms only cover Skull, Full Helms protect Face and Skull). Helms are often worn over Coifs.



Example of Physical Conflict

TUSZARENNE FACES A HANNASIAN FREEBOOTER

Sent upon an ecclesiastical investigation in the northern region of the City-State of Laernusley, Tuszarenne received word that Hannasian freebooters had been raiding many small towns along the coast. Once Tuszarenne had concluded her official duties, she remained at the rural Abbey of Ärtée to lend her military expertise to the fortification efforts that had been ongoing during her residency there. Before the defenses were finished, however, three longships full of Hannasian raiders were sighted and the hired guards scrambled to raise arms in defense of the Abbey.

Leading six able guardsmen, Tuszarenne waded into the fray in search of the freebooter commanders. The following account describes her encounter with one captain and recounts the first two Intervals of melee.

Summary of Combatants

Tuszarenne: Strength 5, Quickness 6 (Base Option Points 8), Manual Dexterity 5, Hardiness 5, Weight 137 lbs. (Trauma Resistance 3). She wields an Amilani Longsword (Base 4, Rank 6, Reach 4, Min. Strength 4) and wears a full suit of Plate armor (overall Encumbrance = Hindrance, -2 Option Points and +2 Physical Penalty). Her Initiative base number is 16 (mod. Option Pts. 6 + Longsword Reach 4 + Longsword Rank 6).

Hannasian Captain: Strength 6, Quickness 5 (Base Option Points 7), Manual Dexterity 5, Hardiness 6, Weight 175 lbs. (Trauma Resistance 4). He wields a single-handed Battle Ax (Base 3, Rank 7, Reach 3, Min. Strength 4) and carries a medium Board Shield (Base 3, Rank 4, Reach 0, Min. Strength 4). He wears a Bezainted Leather tunic which effectively protects his Torso, Abdomen, and Groin (overall Encumbrance = Minor Hindrance, -1 Option Point and +1 Physical Penalty), and an iron reinforced Cuirbouille Half-helm that protects his Skull. His Initiative base number is also 16 (mod. Option pts. 6 + Battle Ax Reach 3 + Battle Ax Rank 7).

INTERVAL I

Tuszarenne encounters the captain in the midst of an ongoing fracas. Since both figures meet within the chaos of melee, the Mythguide determines that both are within Engagement range. The Mythguide decides to have both opponents roll initiative throughout the combat to reflect the unexpected jostling from other combatants.

Initiative Phase

Tuszarenne wins Initiative in the first Interval by rolling a 5 compared to the Captain's 3.

Declaration Phase

Tuszarenne declares that she is going to perform an ordinary Strike by Slashing with her Longsword. The Cap-

tain decides to perform a Chopping Strike with his Battle Axe.

Resolution Phase

The Mythguide asks Tuszarenne to roll Hit Location so he can determine if the Captain's Armor protects against the Strike. She rolls 2d10 and gets a 5 (Presented Arm). Though the Hit location does not add to her Strike Chance, the Captain's armor fails to add its Defensive Modifier to the Difficulty of her Strike Trial.

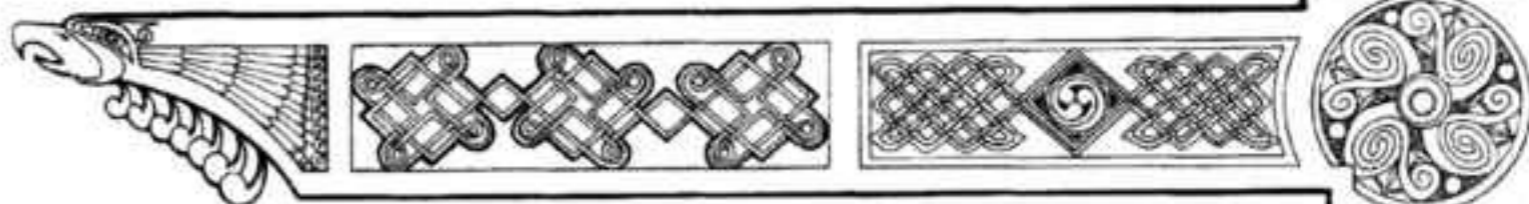
In Striking, Tuszarenne decides to add her strength bonus to the Attack Modifier, giving her a Base Strike Chance of 15 (Base 4 + Rank 6 + Longsword Attack Modifier 4 + 1 Strength bonus). Difficulty is 4 (Standard Difficulty 2 + 2 Physical penalty for Encumbrance), and her overall Strike Chance is therefore 11 (15 - 4 Difficulty). She rolls a 1 which is 10 less than her target number of 11 (so far an Extraordinary Success) and gets to roll again (Rule of 1 and 10). Unfortunately, she rolls a 10 on her second roll and does not increase her degree of Success (even though she needed to roll an 11 or lower, the 10 stops the rolling and is considered a failure for adding to her overall degree of success). The Strike cost Tuszarenne 4 Option Points (Slash Speed for Longsword without strength bonus applied)

The Captain reacts by performing a Block Parry with his medium Board shield (Base 3, Rank 4, Defense Modifier 4, and Speed 3). He adds one point of his 2 pt. strength bonus to its Defense modifier (bringing it to 5) and one to its Speed (lowering it to 2). His Parry Chance is 12 (Base 3 + Rank 4 + Defense Modifier 5) and Difficulty is 1 (Standard 2 + 1 Physical penalty for Encumbrance -2 for his shield parry being 2 pts. faster than Tuszarenne's Longsword Slash). Overall, his Parry Chance is 11 (12 - 1 Difficulty), and he rolls a 3, giving him a Superior Success. The Parry action costs the Captain 3 Option Points to perform.

To determine the result of Tuszarenne's strike and the Captain's parry, the Mythguide consults the Block Parry resolution table and cross-indexes their Degrees of Success. The table indicates that Tuszarenne scores a Marginal success despite the Captain's parry, and it also calls for a Fumble Trial (at Standard Difficulty 2) on behalf of the Captain.

The Mythguide interprets the resulting Light Wound as a long superficial cut beginning above the elbow and terminating near the wrist. He also notes that as the combat continues, the blood flow may make the Axe handle slippery causing positive difficulty modifiers to future Fumble Trials. For the time being, the Light Wound indicates that the Captain suffers a Physical Penalty (+1) for the remainder of the combat, and must make a Shock Trial vs. a Difficulty 2. The Captain's chance to avoid Shock is 8 (Trauma Resistance 4 + Hardiness 6 - Difficulty 2). The Captain rolls a 3 and scores a Superior Success. His light wound fails to cause Shock.

The Captain now rolls his Fumble trial. His Adjusted Trial Chance is 4 (Base 3 + Manual Dexterity 5 - Standard Difficulty 2 - 2 pts. Physical penalty, 1 from the Encumbrance and 1 from the wound). The captain rolls a 2 (Complete Success) and maintains a firm grasp on his Battle Ax.



It is now the Captain's turn to strike. Although Tuszarenne wears full body Plate armor, she is not wearing a helmet. The Mythguide allows the Captain to make a Hit Location roll to determine if he hits her head or neck. But since the Captain did not declare a Prepared Blow, he cannot employ his Weapon skill to modify the Hit Location roll. The Captain rolls 2d10 and gets a 10, indicating a strike to the Torso. The Captain gains a +2 Attack Modifier for striking at the Torso but suffers difficulty because he must chop through Tuszarenne's armor to inflict damage. The Captain's Adjusted Trial Chance is 7 (Base 3 + Rank 7 + Attack Modifier 4 + 2 Strength bonus +2 Hit Location - Standard Difficulty 2 - 2 pts. Physical penalty - 7 pts. Armor defense vs. Chop). He rolls a 5, scoring a Complete Success. The attack costs 3 Option Points and the Captain now has 0 points remaining.

Tuszarenne reacts by attempting to Block Parry the Captain's chop. Though she does not have enough Option Points remaining, she is permitted to Parry at a Difficulty penalty equal to the number of Option Points that she lacks for the attempt. In this case, she lacks 2 Option pts. and therefore suffers a +2 Difficulty penalty. Her Adjusted Trial Chance is 8 (Base 4 + Rank 6 + Defense Modifier 4 + Strength Bonus 1 - Standard Difficulty 2 - Physical Penalty from Encumbrance 2 - Option Point penalty 2 - Slower weapon speed 1). Tuszarenne rolls a 6 and scores a Complete Success. The Parry attempt costs both of Tuszarenne's remaining Option Points.

The Mythguide returns to the Block Parry Resolution table and notes that Tuszarenne successfully blocks the Captain's chop. Between her skill at arms and the extraordinary armor she wears, Tuszarenne manages to deflect the entire force of the Captain's skillful Chop.

Carryover Phase

Since neither combatant has any Option Points remaining, the Mythguide skips the Carryover Phase and proceeds to the Initiative Phase of the second Interval.

Interval 2

Initiative Phase

Tuszarenne wins Initiative by rolling a 6 which beats the Captain's 9.

Declaration Phase

Knowing that she has gained first strike, Tuszarenne declares a Prepared Blow, relying on her Longsword expertise to direct the Slash toward a vital, unarmored area of the Captain's body. The Captain declares that he intends to perform a Great Blow with his Axe, focusing all of his strength into an attack which may breach Tuszarenne's armor.

Resolution Phase

The Mythguide asks Tuszarenne to roll Hit Location. Because her Longsword Rank is 6, she could normally modify the roll by 3 values toward a Location of her

choosing. Since she suffers from a Physical Penalty of 2, however, Tuszarenne can only modify the Hit Location roll by one value. Tuszarenne rolls a 3 and a 1 (total value 4 = Presented Arm), but lowers her roll by 1 for striking the undefended Neck of the Captain.

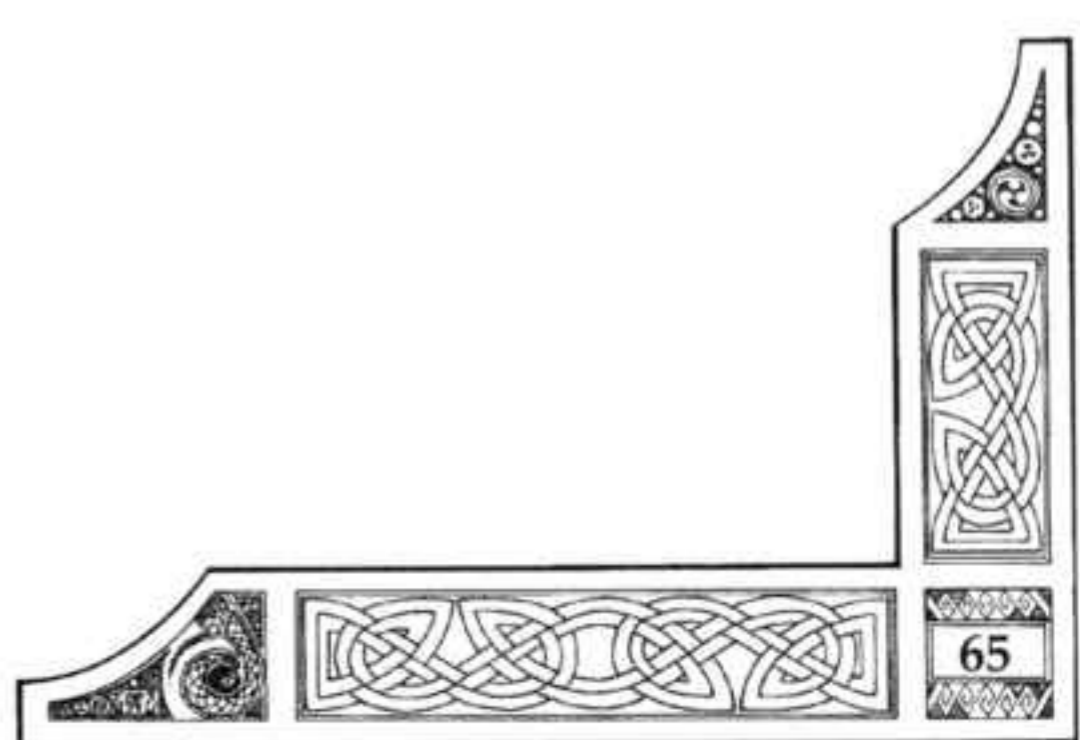
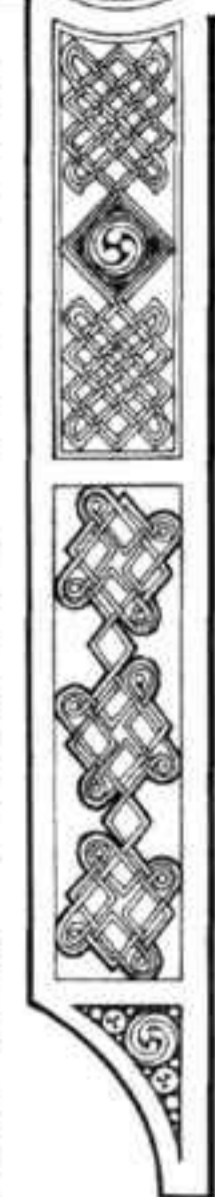
Tuszarenne uses her Strength bonus to increase her Attack Modifier, achieving a Strike Chance of 14 (Base 4 + Rank 6 + Attack Modifier 5 + Hit Location Modifier 3 - Std. Diff. 2 - Physical Penalty 2). She rolls a 4, scoring an Extraordinary Success.

The Captain reacts by performing a Shield Block Parry even though spending the Option Points to do so precludes his ability to perform his Declared strike action. The Captain puts his full Strength Bonus toward increasing his Shield's Defense Modifier, attaining a Parry Chance of 10 (Base 3 + Rank 4 + Defense Modifier 6 - Std. Diff. 2 - Physical Penalty 2 + 1 Difference in Weapon Speeds). He rolls a 6, obtaining a Complete Success.

The Mythguide compares the Degrees of Success on the Block Parry Resolution Table and finds that Tuszarenne scores a Complete Success, inflicting a Wound upon the Captain's neck. The Mythguide interprets the wound as a nasty gash which gouts a great deal of blood. He assigns the Captain an additional 3 points of Physical Penalty and requires him to make an immediate Shock Trial vs. Difficulty 4. The Captain's Shock Trial Chance is 5 (Trauma Resistance 4 + Hardiness 5 - Difficulty 4). He rolls a 7, scoring a Complete Failure and becoming Disoriented.

The Captain must also make a Fumble Trial vs. Difficulty 3. His Fumble Trial Chance is 0 (Base 3 + Manual Dexterity 5 - Difficulty 3 - Physical Penalty 5). The Captain rolls a 6 and scores a Serious Failure. His Axe flies 7 feet from his position.

It is now the Captain's turn to act. Considering the bleeding Wound on his neck (which requires further Shock Trials every 3 Intervals until properly treated), the Light Wound on his arm, the accruing Physical Penalties and Shock, and the fact that he has lost his axe, the Captain decides it is best to surrender and place himself at Tuszarenne's mercy. Tuszarenne wins the conflict unscathed.

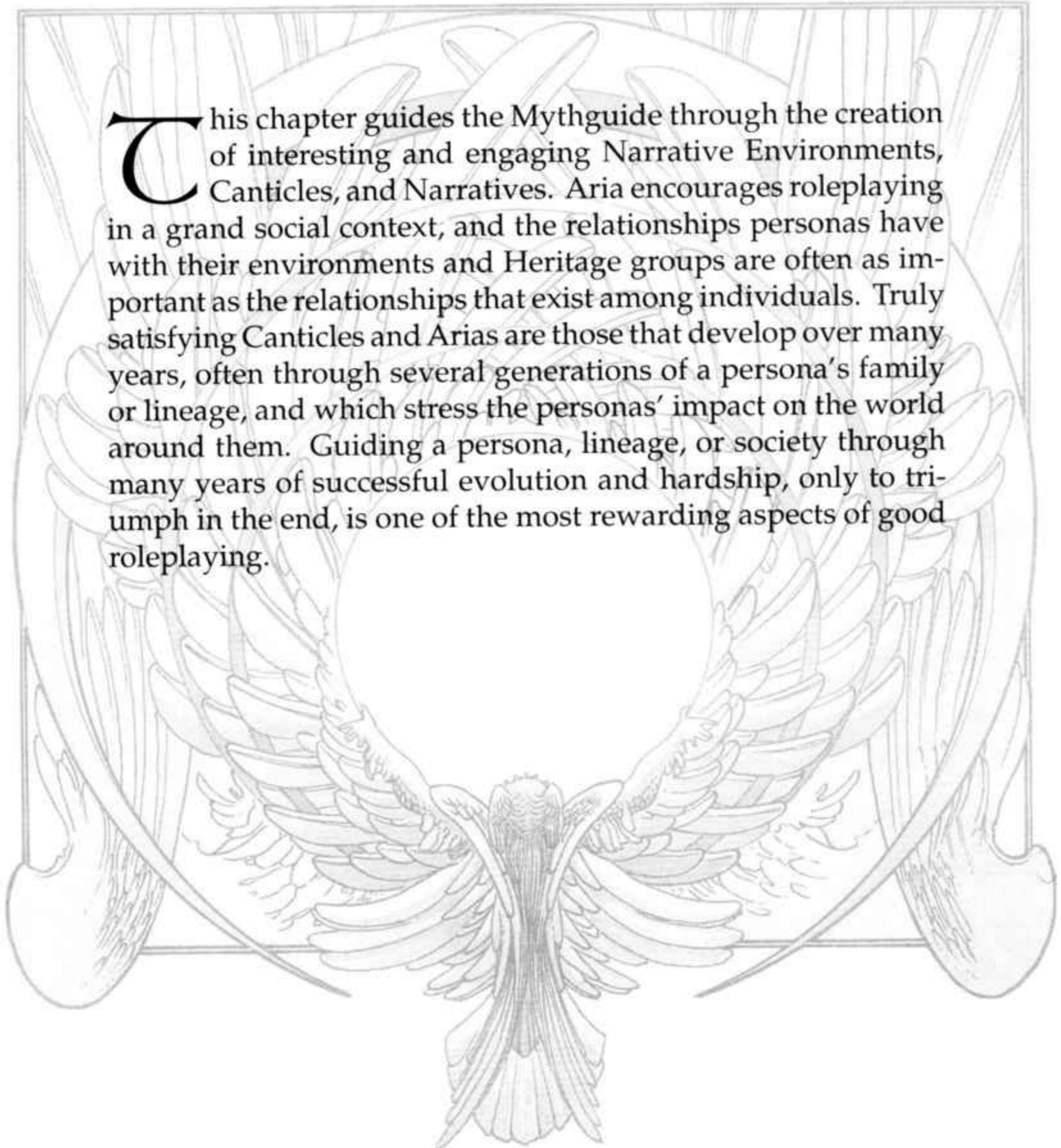




Mythmaking

☉ Chapter Two ☉

This chapter guides the Mythguide through the creation of interesting and engaging Narrative Environments, Canticles, and Narratives. Aria encourages roleplaying in a grand social context, and the relationships personas have with their environments and Heritage groups are often as important as the relationships that exist among individuals. Truly satisfying Canticles and Arias are those that develop over many years, often through several generations of a persona's family or lineage, and which stress the personas' impact on the world around them. Guiding a persona, lineage, or society through many years of successful evolution and hardship, only to triumph in the end, is one of the most rewarding aspects of good roleplaying.





The concept of the Interactive History furthers this atmosphere of epic interaction. Players are actually able to step out of their personas for a time and into the societies in which their personas are acting. The judicious use of Interactive Histories during a Canticle or Aria can really make the players feel that they are a part of something big. During the course of a single evening of play, the players could guide their personas through a difficult espionage mission in a foreign society, drop into Aria Time for several years to determine the long-term consequences of their foray, and finally reenter Narrative Time to lead an important diplomatic mission intended to finish what their personas had begun many years earlier.

Although some of the importance is removed from the individual persona (and transferred to the family, lineage, or society), the satisfaction and challenges of large-scale historical development are often more fulfilling in the long run. This is especially true for Ensembles that are building and developing their own worlds or environments. Of course, if the Ensemble would rather stick to more conventional roleplaying forms (and their attendant emphasis on the single persona), these guidelines can still be used to imbue traditional Canticles and narratives with an additional dimension. Players become more aware of the environments and societies through which their personas travel, and pay more attention to the consequences of misused power or rash action.

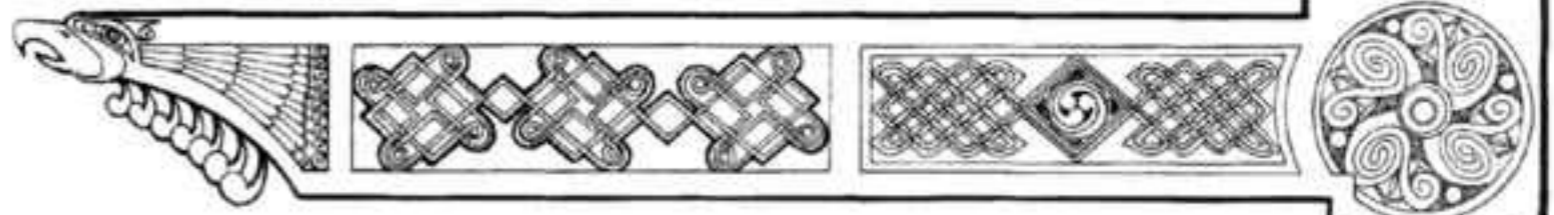
The Game World

All narratives and Canticles occur within the confines of one or more Narrative Environments. A Narrative Environment represents a state or region of any size that contains a fair representation of the most basic social elements. It might indicate a small village, a large city, or an entire kingdom. The Mythguide might wish to start play in one or two limited environments and expand into others as a Canticle gains momentum. Entire worlds are usually composed of many Narrative Environments.

The nature and size of the world depends on the wishes and needs of the Ensemble. If a detailed world structure is desired, the Mythguide will probably want to design a number of intricate and fully realized environments. If the emphasis of a group's roleplaying normally rests in persona interaction, or if development is usually confined to a single society or Heritage group, only the basics of a single environment need to be designed initially. The following sections provide further information on the design of both worlds and their component Narrative Environments.

Subcreation

When designing a game world, the Mythguide becomes a Subcreator in the fullest sense of the word. He is the architect of an entire world; he raises its



Narrative Environment Creation

Step One

Keeping the World Concept in mind, what is the Environment's Scope? Draw a map showing the geographic placement and layout of the Environment, and place any major settlements or areas of interest. Detail the Environment's population and its distribution by Heritage group.

Step Two

What face does the Environment present to its neighbors? Is it bent on Conquest? Is it Peaceful? Define the Philosophical Orientation and Orientation Aspects of the Environment. Technology is an important indicator of an Environment's capabilities. Determine the level of technological innovation present in the Environment. How does the technological progress of an Environment affect its relationships and interactions with other Environments?

Step Three

What is the state of the Humanities in the Environment? Determine the general levels of Tolerance, Prevalence, and Diversity for each of the major Humanities. How do these levels affect relations with other Environments? Does the Environment restrict the practice of any Humanity? Do its views clash with those of its closest neighbors? If the Mythguide has designed specific Omnis for the Environment (religions, magical orders, etc.), they should be described in relation to the climate of Tolerance in the Environment.

Step Four

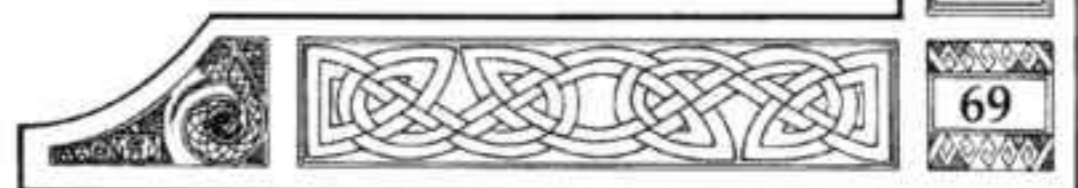
What type of economy exists in the Environment? Are there any restrictions placed on internal or external trade? What sort of markets are present and what form does commerce take? Determine the general levels of Resources, Exploitation, and Trade in the Environment. Detail the Environment's primary trade partners and chart any important trade routes. Finally, outline the Environment's long-term economic plans and goals in its region.

Step Five

Define the nature of the Ruling Agency and its policies. Is it a single individual or a group of individuals? Does it place checks on its own Power or respect checks imposed by society? Does it abuse its position? Detail the current political situation in the environment and define the resulting levels of Power, Authority, and Consent. How do Power and Authority manifest in the Environment (legal codes, etc.)? Do Custom and Status affect the personal freedoms of an Environment's population? Describe any Key Elements and their relationships to the current power structure. Does internal factionalism affect external relationships?

Step Six

Describe the Environment's position in relation to any surrounding Environments. Who are its neighbors and what are their goals and intentions? Does the Environment have a good reputation among its peers? Does it have any allies? Any enemies? Detail the current and past relationships among the various Environments in the region. Describe any important foreign Key Elements or factions. Describe the Environment's principal goals and motivations regarding its future in the region, and outline any plans for attaining that future.



mountains and hollows its canyons. He fills its oceans and shapes its forests. Cities appear where he places them and his hand guides the migrations of entire cultures and species. The world is *his* creation from top to bottom, and it is this inherent familiarity which lends a unique richness to Aria Canticles, Arias, and Interactive Histories.

Concept

The first step in creating a game world is the establishment of a general Concept for the world. This Concept is analogous to a Persona Concept and functions in the same manner. It provides the Mythguide and Ensemble with a sense of direction both for the world and its component environments. Concepts provide direction for additional design and form the basis for consistency among all of a world's diverse elements.

Possible Concepts include common enemies (all of the Northern Vales have united against the Chaos incursions to the south), relationships among Heritage groups (an ongoing economic war between the human and dwarven city-states), strange or unusual geographic occurrences or phenomena (island kingdoms, cities on volcanic plains or beneath waterfalls), and fundamental conflicts or struggles (a world in the throes of a vast religious or philosophical dispute). Concepts can also center around questions of magic (reflected in the design of original Realities), religion (the interaction of individual Omnis or hierarchies), or social systems (the development of diverse Status and Freedom models).

Once a general direction for world design is established, the Mythguide can begin creating individual regions or societies. Perhaps the best place to begin is with the creation of the Narrative Environment (or environments) that will serve as the initial setting for play. Basic details of other areas can be described, but the Mythguide may wish to postpone additional development until such information is needed during play. Enough general detail should be generated to give the world its own 'feel'. For example, personas don't purchase swords made of 'good steel'. They purchase blades 'of Tharashite-temper, forged in the Far Mountains of Anderia'. Simple descriptions like this go a long way toward giving a world its own ambiance.

Another important aspect of world design is originality. Although the world itself should have a pervasive 'feel' and style, individual elements of the world should exhibit remarkable diversity. For example, dif-

ferent cultures within the same race often exhibit very different Heritage Orientations and Motivations. By stressing such difference as persona travel from place to place, players will always remain on their toes. Players should feel as though every new culture or society were a fresh adventure. If they all begin to look alike, players will soon grow bored. Diversity and originality are the keys to interesting and stimulating world creation.

☯ Narrative Environments ☯

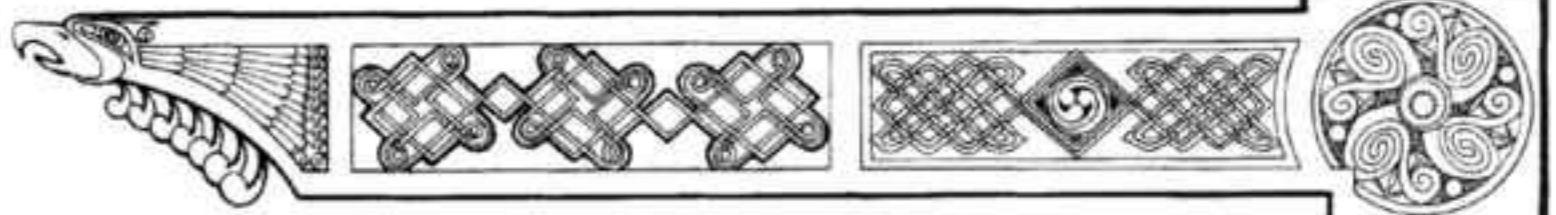
Narrative Environments are the components of every fantasy world. They can be of any size (from a small village and its environs to an entire continent), and their design can be as detailed or as general as the Mythguide wishes. If an intricately realized environment is needed, the Mythguide might wish to use the *Aria Worlds* book, which includes comprehensive guidelines for environment design. If that book is not being employed, the following guidelines provide a more general and abstract look at the necessary elements of a Narrative Environment. A single world normally contains many diverse Narrative Environments.

Scope

The size and layout of a Narrative Environment should be detailed first. Does the environment represent a city, a region, or a political state? How big is it? What does its geographic layout look like? How many people live there? When designing a world, Narrative Environments usually represent whole nations, states, or regions. A simple map often helps the Mythguide visualize an environment's different elements; a map also facilitates the placement of cultures, settlements, and geographic features.

Geography

The Mythguide should use a map to detail an environment's geography, initially placing important features such as rivers, mountains, and large forests. Mountains are usually found in ranges that run parallel to a seacoast (even if the coast is a long way off). Older mountain ranges are generally lower and more weather-beaten than younger ranges. The placement of mountain ranges will also have an effect on the



weather patterns of a region. The windward side (named because of a region's prevailing wind patterns) of a mountain range generally has a high degree of rainfall and may support extensive forest areas in the foothills. The protected, or lee, side of the range is often very arid, consisting of dry plains or steppes.

In very dry areas, deserts appear adjacent to mountain ranges (the mountains block moisture and frontal activity) and remain arid for most of the year. Rivers flow from mountainous regions (with runoff, streams, or lakes as their source) to the sea, and often meander through lowlands. Swamps occur in low-lying areas or in river deltas. The type and nature of forested regions depends on climate and rainfall (lush jungle canopies in tropical areas and sparse pine woodlands in cool northern regions). The Mythguide should detail an environment's calendar of seasons. For example, when does the rainy season begin in the southlands? When is worst time for sandstorms in the desert? How long will the summer campaigning season last? Such information can be very important when resolving large-scale Canticle considerations (such as a war or Interactive History).

The Mythguide should initially detail only those geographic elements that are important to the beginning Narrative Environment. Other regions and environments will acquire further detail as play expands beyond the initial area. If a large amount of geographic detail is needed, the Mythguide should consult a good encyclopedia. Finally, the Mythguide should remember that natural laws do not necessarily apply to the design of fantasy worlds. Magic can play a unique role, as can the presence of gods or other supernatural beings. The nature of a world's Reality may also affect the shape of the world itself. Enchanted forests, frozen lakes in the midst of deserts - anything is fair game in a fantasy environment.

Heritage

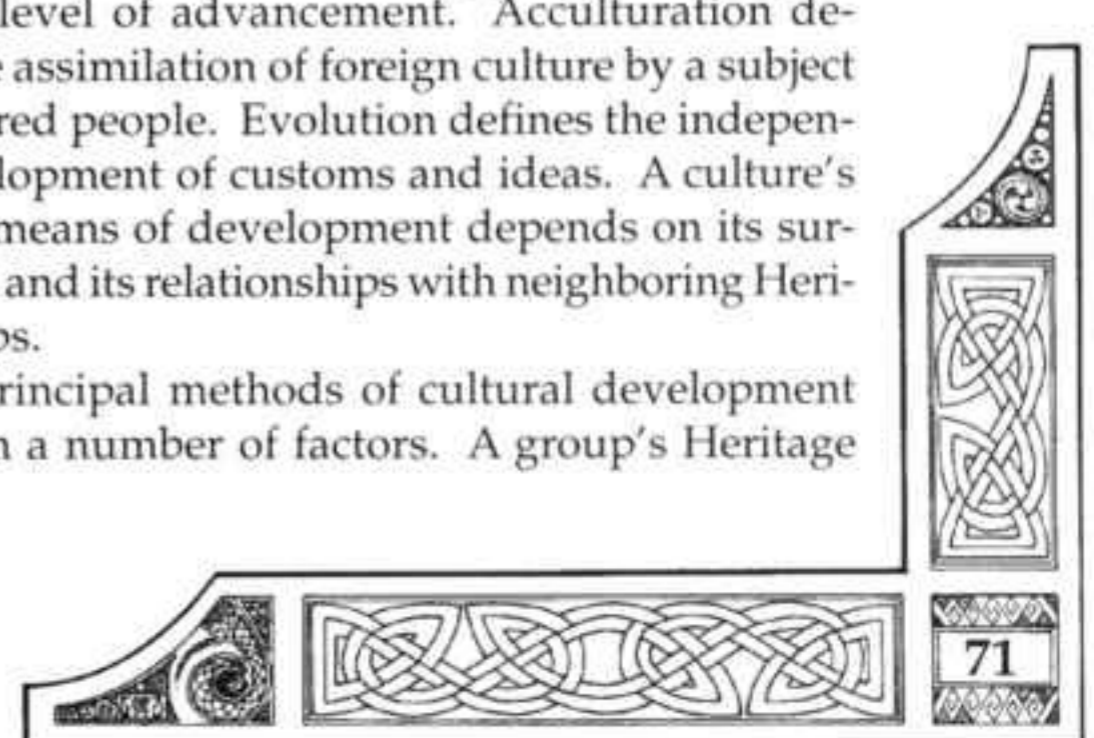
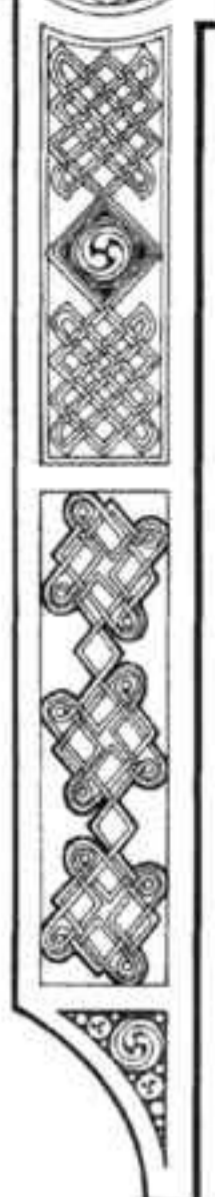
The Mythguide should also detail an environment's demographics. How many people live in the environment? To what Heritage groups do they belong? How and in what form are the various Heritage groups represented? Where are the environment's major population centers? Large cities and important towns almost always rest on a body of water of some type, because most major trade requires waterborne transport. River mouths and forks are common locations, as are natural deep water harbors, bays, and lakes. Bodies of water also commonly serve as boundaries between different political entities.



Population and population centers indicate a number of things about an environment. Specialization and vocational opportunities result from urbanization and population concentration. Population is a good indicator of an environment's general level of power and military ability, although such considerations can also be affected by the environment's overall Philosophical Orientation (the general demeanor of the people).

After the Mythguide has determined the Heritage groups present in an environment, he should detail their origins and patterns of migration. Culture spreads in three primary ways: through *diffusion*, *acculturation*, and *evolution*. Diffusion represents the exchange of ideas and customs among peoples of roughly the same level of advancement. Acculturation describes the assimilation of foreign culture by a subject or conquered people. Evolution defines the independent development of customs and ideas. A culture's principal means of development depends on its surroundings and its relationships with neighboring Heritage groups.

The principal methods of cultural development depend on a number of factors. A group's Heritage



Elements of a Narrative Environment

Major Element	Sub-Elements
Scope	Geographic Size Socio-political Composition
Geography	Geographic Composition Climate Topography
Heritage	Demographic Composition of Species, Race, and Culture
Environmental Parameters	Environment Isolation Society Interaction Philosophical Orientation Orientation Posture & Aspects Humanities (Arts, Scholastics, Religion, & Magic) Technological Innovation
Economic Parameters	Economic Markets Natural Resources Exploitation (Domestic) Trade (Internal/External) Economic Exchange System
Political Parameters	Political Framework Political Advancement Consent, Power, & Authority Key Elements Legal Complexity/Laws Status Divisions Custom & Rigidity of Status Military Forces (Size and Type)
History	Society Age Timeline of Major Events

to describe many of the group's current motivations and prejudices.

If a Heritage group has been transplanted during its history, the Mythguide should describe the migrations of the group. Such descriptions can also serve to explain the existence of other, younger groups which spring up along the migratory path of the elder group. Why is a certain race so tall and fair, when most of the indigenous peoples are short and dark? Climatic considerations are largely responsible for a race's Coloring, Height, and Frame. The Mythguide should take such information into account when determining the origins of a particular race, species, or culture. Cultures which at first seem out of place often turn out to have interesting and colorful histories.

Social Determinants

All Narrative Environments are also described by a set of abstract economic, political, and environmental parameters. These parameters are called Social Determinants, and are described more fully in both the *Aria Worlds* book and the Interactive History chapter of this book. Interactive Histories also illustrate the uses of the Social Determinants in the larger context of extended social development and evolution. Consult the Interactive History chapter for guidelines that relate Social Determinants to one another in a concrete manner. This section details these parameters in a very general way, relating their use to an environment's place in the larger world around it.

Environmental Parameters

An environment's Philosophical Orientation is an important aspect of its description. Philosophical Orientation represents an environment's general outlook and approach toward other environments and the world at large. It serves as a gauge of an environment's reactions and an indicator of possible future actions. A society Oriented toward War will probably leave the negotiating table long before an environment Oriented toward Peace. Possible Philosophical Orientations include Survival, War, Conquest, Equilibrium, Peace, and Knowledge/Thought. Orientations are further coupled with descriptive Aspects which provide specific direction for the more general Orientation. Aspects include Acquisition, Conviction, Prevention, Tradition, Stagnation, and Revolution, and are often qualified by short environment-specific descriptions.

Orientation (and Orientation Aspects) is an important consideration, as is the physical isolation of the culture. The interaction and trade practiced by the Heritage group are also important. Finally, the relationships between the group and its neighbors or surroundings can affect development. Is the group sedentary or nomadic? Was the group forced to migrate from its region of origin for some reason? If so, what were the circumstances of its departure? The origins of a particular Heritage group or culture can be used



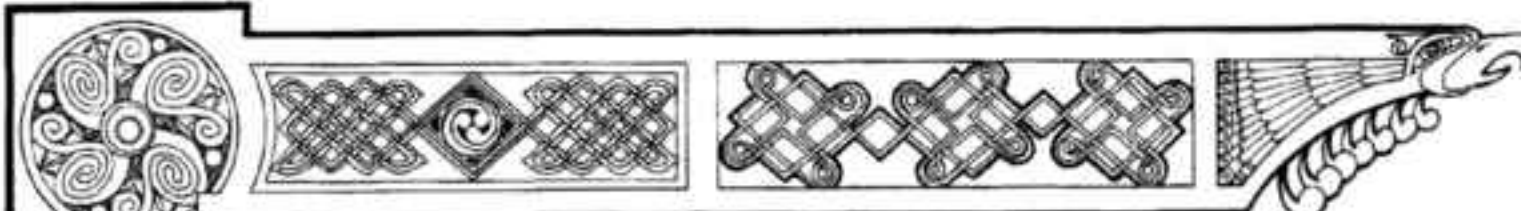
The Mythguide can use Orientations and Orientation Aspects as convenient general descriptives to give his environments at-a-glance character and personality. For example, a young primitive society struggling through the birthing pains of its first governmental organization might have an Orientation of Survival with an Aspect of Conviction (belief in authority). An aging Autocracy with a senile dictator and a grasping privileged class could have an Orientation of Equilibrium with an Aspect of Stagnation (internal corruption). A small nation defending its sovereignty has an Orientation of War with an Aspect of Prevention (protection of political interests).

The presence and practice of the various Humanities are also important aspects of an environment's description. Religion, the Arts, Scholastics, and Magic are all defined by varying levels of Prevalence, Tolerance, and Diversity. Prevalence indicates the amount of a particular Humanity in the environment, Tolerance the reactions of the population toward the Humanity, and Diversity the variation among types and manifestations of a Humanity.

Religion can be one of the most important considerations in any fantasy environment. Religious beliefs and concepts are usually motivated by cultural fac-

tors, and the Mythguide should consider the nature and forms of the primary religions in the environment. These forms can then be further described in the Heritage Templates of the races or cultures which populate the environment. Fantasy environments are unique in that religions are often presided over by real deities. The power of these gods and their manifestations in an environment should be detailed along with the Reality which governs the world. Mundane religious organizations often have a large amount of secular power. Priests serve as advisors to rulers in many environments, and in some the societies the Theocratic Ideal is embodied in an ecclesiastical government.

High Prevalence and Diversity among the Arts and Scholastics often depends on a society's degree of technological advancement. Higher levels of technology indicate more advanced techniques as well as more defined areas of Specialization among different Arts and sciences. Specific styles, forms, and techniques are usually the result of cultural influences, and are detailed in Heritage Templates. Religious and educational Prevalence and Diversity depend on a society's open-mindedness. The security of a society's rulers can also affect the treatment of Humanities; an established, secure ruling council will probably feel less



threatened by broad religious Diversity than would a young provisional government. Unless Magic serves a specific purpose in an environment (and is extremely Prevalent), its use is often regarded with suspicion or outright distrust.

Tolerance is usually the result of political or philosophical considerations. Specific events or beliefs can lead to the suppression of certain practices or the persecution of entire segments of an environment (all artists or all priests of a certain religion, for example). People are generally more Tolerant of what they know and can accept. For this reason, practitioners of Magic are persecuted in many otherwise enlightened societies. Magic couched in religious trappings usually enjoys higher Tolerance levels; after all, the unseen power of the gods is somehow more comforting than the same power wielded by mere humans.

Finally, an environment's level of technological innovation and progress serves as important indicator for many other social elements. Does the society have the technology to forge iron weapons, or must it import them? Does it have knowledge of open ocean navigation methods, or must its ships remain close to the shoreline for reference? Technology indicates the possibility of urbanization and centralized government. As an environment progresses technologically, its political and governmental structures grow as well. Sedentary lifestyles and fully agricultural subsistence methods allow a large segment of the population to pursue Specialized vocations and professions. Large towns and cities begin to spring up, and social institutions become more sophisticated.

The Mythguide should detail the general level of technology attained by an environment, since this information will affect a society's relationships and interactions with other societies. The environment may have to trade for certain items, or it might produce goods or raw materials which in high demand elsewhere. Technological innovations can have a major effect on political motivations and intentions in any world system. A simple scale representing technological development can be found in the Interactive Histories chapter.

Economic Parameters



An environment's general economic indicators tell the Mythguide a great deal about the motivations behind many of the society's interactions. The economic health of an environment depends on several factors, all of which combine to paint a complete picture of a society's resources and economic situation. These considerations include Markets, Resources, Exploitation,

and Trade. For more information on how these Determinants work in the context of overall social development, refer to the Interactive History chapter.

The Mythguide should determine the type and form of the environment's Markets. This determination often depends on the environment's technology and political structure. Primitive environments normally employ some type of Barter system; finished goods or raw materials are traded for other goods or products. More advanced environments often use a standardized medium of exchange such as currency, although the idea of a standardized currency develops initially as a money of account (its denominations only exist on paper). The circulation of currency usually expands steadily after its introduction; the portability of hard currency is appealing. The concept of credit appears only in very advanced societies, and usually involves long term promissory notes or letters of credit. Mythguides interested in designing realistic markets should consult the appendix to this volume.

An environment's political structure often affects the type of economy present. For example, the economy of a Dictatorship may be entirely state controlled while the economy of a Democracy supports a completely free market. The Mythguide should describe the level of freedom enjoyed by merchants in a society based on the economic controls imposed by a society's government. Considerations of technology and politics unite to define the form and sophistication of a society's economy.

The Mythguide should also detail the level of economic activity in an environment. Such activity is described primarily by the respective levels of Resources, Exploitation, and Trade in an environment. Resources indicates the amount of resources, both natural and manufactured, to which a society has access. Exploitation represents the uses to which those resources are put, and Trade represents the amount and frequency of commercial interaction with other environments. Other considerations, such as social conditions and price controls, affect the uses and distribution of an environment's resources. Scarcity affects demand and relates abstract resources to an environment's markets. It also helps the Mythguide to determine base prices for most common resources and finished goods.

Finally, the Mythguide should take some time to develop economic and trade relationships among different environments in the same region. Such relationships are especially useful if Interactive Histories are being used to further develop an area or region. The Mythguide should define the major trade routes and the caravan and shipping companies that ply

them. Any government involvement in the commercial arena should also be mentioned, as should any dangerous or treacherous roads or seaways. A society's Resources level defines the products imported and exported by the environment; the amount and rate of commerce is described by a society's level of Trade.

POLITICAL PARAMETERS

While a society's environmental parameters define the fundamental nature of an environment and its economic parameters detail its practical abilities in a world's markets, the political parameters outline the internal power structure of the environment and the resulting motivations of its people and its leaders. The level of an environment's political advancement is at least partly dependent on the society's level of technological progress. Advanced societies tend to have more centralized governmental structures; they are also capable of supporting far-reaching authority and bureaucratic machines. As a result, advanced societies are almost always larger than their more primitive counterparts.

All societies, whether advanced or primitive, support complex internal social and political frameworks. The Mythguide should define the form of the environment's government. Is it an Absolute system, ruled by a single autocrat or dictator? Is it a divided system, ruled by a king and a council of barons or a group of powerful aristocratic houses? The individuals or group of individuals who directly rule are called the Ruling Agency. The nature of the Ruling Agency and its relationship with the people determines the overall political health of an environment.

The Mythguide should also detail the most important of an environment's Key Elements; Key Elements can include both individuals and factions, and the relationships among these elements serve as important indicators of an environment's general political atmosphere. In a stable society, a healthy (but benevolent) political rivalry might exist among several different political groups (including the Ruling Agency). Perhaps a series of fundamental philosophical differences are constantly bandied about. In a more tenuous atmosphere, several hostile and outspoken factions might directly threaten the Ruling Agency. This could be the case amidst the nobles in a weak monarchy or among the opposition factions in a failing despotat. In environments where internal political conflict is rife, the Ruling Agency often tries to impose restrictions on the personal freedoms of the society's inhabitants. If the Ruling Agency is placed



in a dangerous position, the Mythguide may want to have it institute such tactics.

When outlining an environment's Key Elements and political relationships, the Mythguide should keep a single fundamental concept in mind: the interplay among Power, Consent, and Authority. Power represents the basic ability to get things done in an environment, and often indicates the use of strong arm tactics or coercion. Authority represents the vested right to act in the interests of a particular group. For example, in most non-Absolute environments the Ruling Agency is given the responsibility of acting in the best interests of the population.

The uses and abuses of these two concepts lead to a general popular Consent for the government (or other powerful social institutions) in place. In the best of cases, the two elements balance each other in a kind of equilibrium. If too much naked Power is used in the absence of true Authority, the people will not be happy and Consent will decrease. If Authority exists in the nearly complete absence of Power, the Ruling Agency will not be able to act forcefully or support its own edicts. The first instance leads to popular suppression, the second to a popular malaise. A delicate balance must be struck to maintain a solid and stable

Possible Historical Elements

Origins

Describe any important Origins in the Environment. Such events include the establishment or founding of the Environment, the institution of the current Ruling Agency, the beginning of any important rivalries or alliances among different factions or groups, and the initiation of any current foreign policies or interactions.

Events

Describe the pivotal Events that have shaped the Environment over the course of its history. Events might include important wars or battles, civil strife, the passage and institution of specific laws or policies, and critical diplomatic interactions with other environments in the same region. Events can also include natural disasters of all kinds.

People

Detail some of the major personalities who contributed to the Environment's evolution and development. These may include major military leaders, political figures, or the heads of important noble or aristocratic families. The placement and relationships among an Environment's resident species, races, and cultures should also be described.



government which retains the full Consent of the people. As a society changes over time, the Mythguide should keep this basic relationship in mind. Refer to the chapter on Interactive Histories for a more concrete method of tracking these considerations.

The Mythguide should also consider the manifestations of Power and Authority in an environment. How does excessive Power use manifest in the society? Does a great deal of covert activity go on? Do all powerful nobles maintain personal retinues or military forces? Such manifestations often depend on an environment's Philosophical Orientation. Authority is often preserved through expansive legal codes or systems. The people know what they can and cannot do, and they accept standardized punishments for transgressions. Generally, high levels of Authority indicate fair laws and treatment (even if those laws are particularly harsh), while lower levels indicate a more arbitrary treatment of a population. The Mythguide must also decide how such codes are enforced.

Questions of status and freedom affect the interplay among Power and Authority at every level of society. The Mythguide should consider the nature of status and class divisions within an environment, and the effect these divisions have on the society's political climate. Depending on the role of Status in the Canticle, the Mythguide may have already detailed a specific Hierarchy of Social Estates (either for the environment or for a particular Heritage Template). If he has not, use the guidelines presented in the Status chapter to determine the effects of class. Custom serves as the primary indicator; in an environment with high Custom, members of the lower classes often have no rights at all in relation to higher Status Archetypes. Societies with lower Custom values usually have more relaxed standards of interaction among classes. In some environments, Rigidity plays an important role as well.

Finally, a general discussion of an environment's strategic position rounds out the basic creation process. The descriptions of the social, economic, and political elements of the environment lay the groundwork for a more complete picture of the society's place in the larger world. Where does the environment fit geographically in the Mythguide's world? What international or intercultural friendships does it foster? What enemies does it have? How is it viewed by its neighbors? Is it perceived as a strong regional presence or a weak and incidental nuisance? What are its fundamental goals and motivations? The answers to such questions will help the Mythguide define a unique niche for each environment, and allow every society to assume an interactive importance based on its own strengths and abilities.

HISTORY

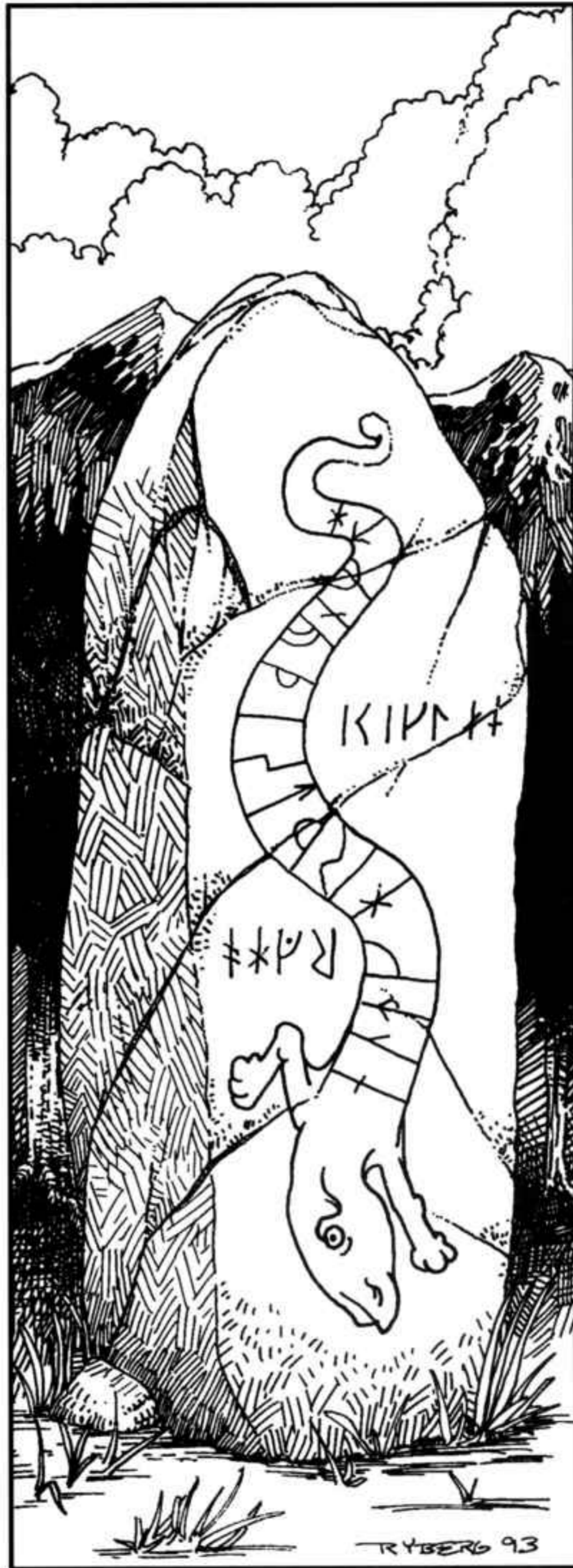
A comprehensive world history can serve a number of functions. It provides a rich backdrop for extended Canticles and Arias, allowing the Mythguide to easily incorporate events and background details into narratives. It explains any unusual relationships or situations, either among factions or individuals. For example, it is well known in an Environment that the Aranya tribe is the mortal enemy of the Seekers of the Way. However, most inhabitants do not know that the current relationship is the result of a schism which occurred over five hundred years ago. As personas interact with their environment, they often receive information that suddenly clarifies the previously obscure. The players will get a sense that they are learning valuable facts about an environment as its history unfolds before them.

Rich histories allow a Mythguide to evoke a sense of progression and advancement with little difficulty. Players will care less about material advancement and more about their personas' relationships to the current environment. The Mythguide should incorporate elements of an Environment's history as useful and necessary facets of narratives; after a while, players will seek out new historical tidbits on their own. An Environment's history, in any form, should form an engaging story in itself.

The Mythguide need not go overboard when describing an Environment's history. Volumes of information could easily be written about any detailed society; only the highlights and relevant historical junctures should initially be detailed. An easy way to do this is to place important historical events in a chronology or along a timeline. The Mythguide may even wish to do two concurrent timelines - one for internal development and events and one for external events. Comprehensive histories may contain a number of standard topics; consult the accompanying table for suggestions.

INTERACTIVE HISTORIES

Although variation contributes to the development of rich historical backgrounds, the Mythguide should be sure to keep historical details consistent among societies and environments in the same region. After all, even if separate Narrative Environments are being described one by one, the environments are all part of the same collective whole. They are governed



INTERACTIVE HISTORIES ARE Useful . . .

. . . when the Mythguide introduces a new Society into the World Environment. Interactive Histories ease the introduction of new Societies by relating the History of the new society to the established history of the World environment. The use of Interactive Histories prevents new societies from appearing 'out of thin air'.

. . . when the Mythguide introduces the social, political, economic, or historical context of a new Narrative or Canticle. Interactive Histories can 'brief' the Ensemble, setting the tone for Narratives and Canticles. They provide pertinent information and elevate the perceived importance by establishing the larger environmental or historical context to the Ensemble.

. . . when the Mythguide or Ensemble wish to explore the protracted consequences which stem from the resolution of a Narrative or Canticle. Interactive Histories can be used to 'debrief' the Ensemble, relating the resolved plot and theme of a Narrative or Canticle to the larger Narrative Environment. The short term success or failure of a Narrative or Canticle can prove to have a different or opposite long term effect upon the Narrative Environment. Apparent successes may go awry while perceived failures may prove ultimately beneficial.

. . . when the Mythguide or Ensemble wishes to institute a major change in the composition or time-frame of the Narrative Environment. Interactive Histories provide the means for ridding a Narrative Environment of unwanted elements without deleting them in an irrational manner. Things don't just suddenly vanish, but they do fade away over time.

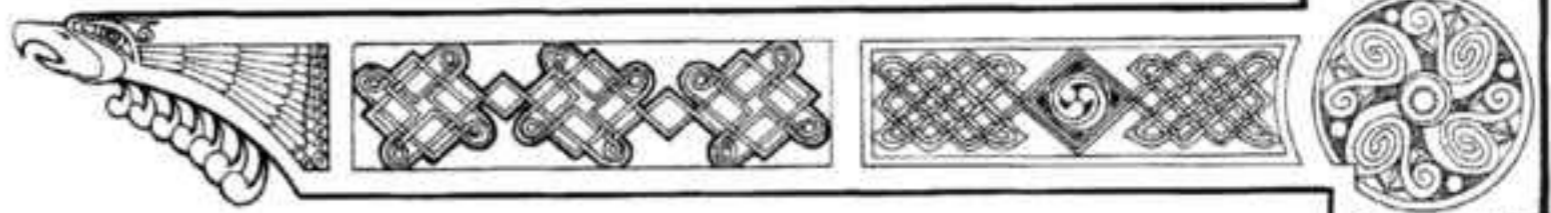
. . . whenever a new Mythguide assumes the administration of a pre-existing Narrative Environment. A new Mythguide can implement Interactive Histories to make changes in the Narrative Environment in order to separate the communal Narrative Environment into two or more distinct 'Ages'. Play may switch back and forth between ages, allowing each Mythguide complete independence. Changes instituted by one Mythguide will not contradict or complicate the plans of the other. This is a good alternate to creating new Environments everytime a new Mythguide assumes power. One world can be more fully detailed instead of splitting development between two or more separate worlds.

. . . when differences of opinion arise during communal world design. Interactive Histories can be used by the Mythguide to fairly arbitrate differences of opinion which surface during the creation or alteration of the Narrative Environment. Different theories and hypotheses may be resolved by testing rather than argued without conclusion.

. . . when the Mythguide needs an off-the-cuff Narrative starter. Interactive Histories usually unearth some interesting Narrative possibilities.

. . . when the Mythguide wants to initiate a high-powered military, political, or economic Canticle. If players are to assume the roles of Personas who serve as key elements of a Society, the use of an introductory Interactive History can stress the power of the individual Personas and emphasize the consequences of misdirected or flippant deeds. This use of Interactive Histories is often useful for demonstrating the results of abused power to young or inexperienced players. To teach the most poignant lesson, the Mythguide should allow abusive power-mongers to destroy a world of their own creating.

. . . when Mythguide and Ensemble are anticipating the creation of a new addition to the previous Narrative Environment. New countries can emerge from broken Empires. Natural disasters can change geography. Plagues or warfare can eradicate select Heritage groups. Technological progression can bring previously unreachable or unexplored lands within range for contact. Interactive Histories make unusual changes *rational*. They create smooth, explainable transitions in world creation or modification.



by the same natural laws and the same Reality (except in extremely fantastic cases), and keeping such facets consistent lends an aura of realism to the world design process.

Most important historical events should also be accompanied by specific causes and effects. Why did the Emreli Exodus occur? What set off the Wheat Rebellion? If the answers to such questions are "Well... they just happened", there is something wrong. Entire cultures do not simply get up and move, and entire populations do not just rise up against their rulers. In each case, the events are the results of complex motivations and years of social reaction. By creating broad-based, interesting, and complete Environment descriptions, the causes and effects of most events will present themselves. The Mythguide comes to know an Environment so well that he begins simply to interpret events as they occur, explaining their appearances and resolution from a standpoint of absolute familiarity.

Interactive Histories can be used to great effect when following an Environment's social and historical development. Instead of describing them, causes and effects are roleplayed. Players are able to track a society or environment through some of the most important and pivotal events in its history. If the Mythguide does not have a definite direction in mind for an environment's history, an Interactive History can establish an interesting chronology. By choosing society Actions, roleplaying their effects based on a familiarity with the environment, and interpreting the results, a consistent and engaging history evolves. The accompanying table presents several other recommended uses for Interactive Histories.

☉ Playing the Game ☉

An Aria game session is only as good as the Mythguide running the game. Rules in a roleplaying game are guidelines which facilitate interaction both among members of the Ensemble and between the players and the Mythguide. They help the Mythguide set parameters and give the players an idea of what their personas might be able to do. However, the real enjoyment derived from any roleplaying session stems from the quality of the narrative or Canticle being played. If the Mythguide creates a lackluster narrative, even the most experienced and talented players will quickly grow bored. The remainder of this chapter presents some hints and suggestions for creating and running interesting and engaging narratives, Canticles, and Arias.

BASIC Mythguide Concepts

The following general concepts serve as a basic set of guidelines for the Mythguide. They are not hard and fast rules, but are rather a collection of tips and hints for the aspiring Mythguide. They will allow the Mythguide to run challenging, consistent, and engaging sessions of Aria.

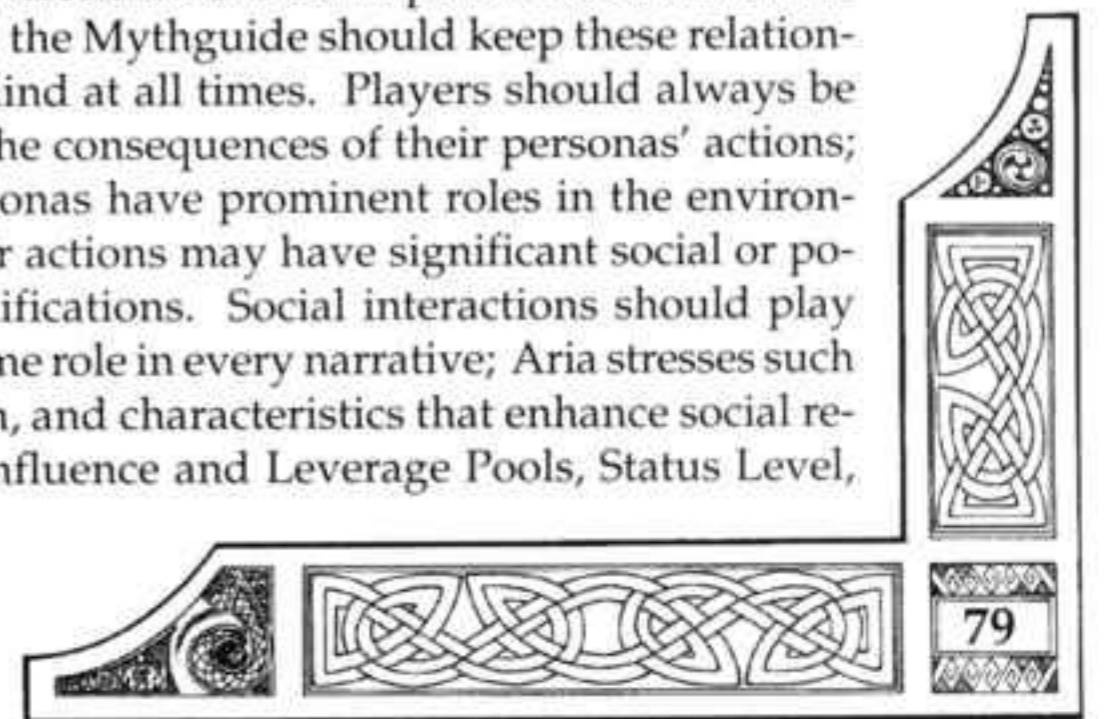
Keep Things Consistent

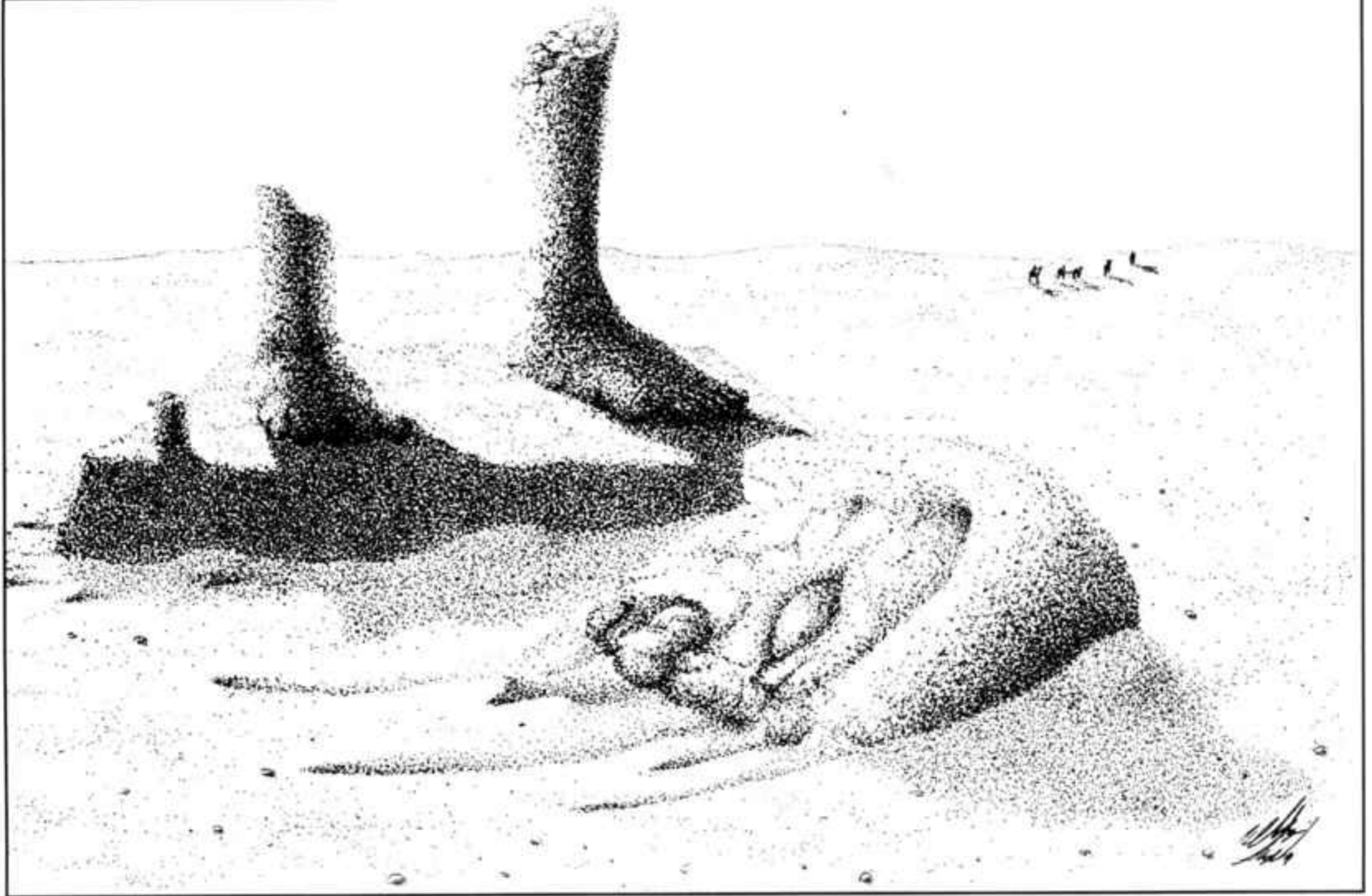
Playing Aria is by nature an interpretive exercise. Many of the systems in Aria have been left intentionally open-ended to facilitate the idea of Metadesign, and all require some amount of creativity and innovation on the part of the Mythguide and Ensemble. Because of this relaxed form, there is room for a great deal of interpretation. The Mythguide should establish precedents as he goes and stick by them; if he lets a player intimidate him into changing a decision, or favors one player over the others episode after episode, his actions begin to undermine his authority. A good Mythguide is both fair and consistent.

The Mythguide should not be afraid to improvise. After all, Aria encourages an enhanced familiarity with the environments and settings being used in play. No one knows the laws that govern those settings better than the Mythguide. This inherent familiarity should be used during play to keep things moving. If you don't remember how a rule works, or how a particular Trial is made, improvise. If you find out later on that you made a mistake, remember not to make it again. In the short term it is usually better to keep a good story moving along than to access every last bit of information regarding a certain decision.

Think Big

Aria is meant to be played on a larger scale than most roleplaying games. The personas' relationship to their environments is an important element of the game, and the Mythguide should keep these relationships in mind at all times. Players should always be aware of the consequences of their personas' actions; if the personas have prominent roles in the environment, their actions may have significant social or political ramifications. Social interactions should play at least some role in every narrative; Aria stresses such interaction, and characteristics that enhance social relations - Influence and Leverage Pools, Status Level,





Renown - take on an importance not found in most roleplaying games. The Mythguide may wish to use Interactive Histories to determine long term social, political, or economic effects.

Keep the Game Engaging

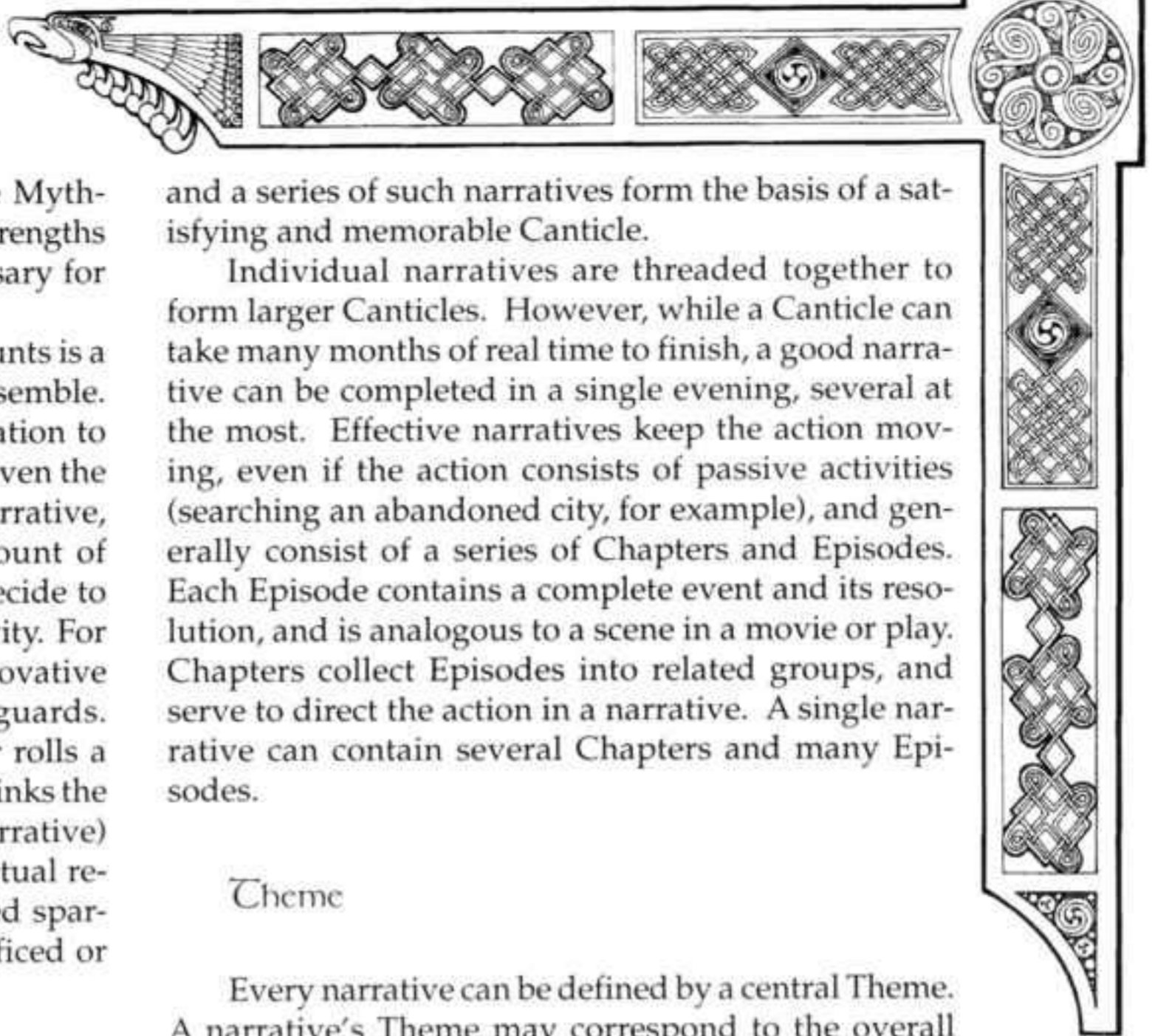
People play roleplaying games for different reasons, and experienced players quickly develop their own signature styles of play. Although different players might approach the game from diametrically opposed positions, their motives are ultimately the same - to have fun and to be entertained. It is the Mythguide's job to keep the game moving. As a long game progresses, it invariably runs the risk of stagnating; plots begin to feel the same, Mythguide personas start to look familiar. The Mythguide should constantly strive to challenge and stimulate his players. Take the game in unexpected directions. Experiment with new story forms and roleplaying techniques. Shake things up a bit and try something new. Your players will thank you for it.

If the epic scale of the game seems to be getting to the players (after all, they don't have to change the

world every day), create some narratives that stress interpersonal roleplaying. Let them go after something small. On the other hand, if the players enjoy being integral members of the larger social fabric, the Mythguide can take his Canticles to a higher level. Let the players control rival political factions or social groups, roleplaying all of the nitty-gritty political maneuverings in high style. Basically, the Mythguide should cater to the needs and wishes of his Ensemble. Good narratives should challenge the players' strengths, not force them to re-examine personal weaknesses. By getting continuous feedback from the Ensemble, the Mythguide quickly learns which narratives will be well-received and which won't.

STRESS CREATIVITY, NOT COMPETITION

Although Aria is a game, there are no clear-cut winners or losers. The principal source of enjoyment in roleplaying is the development and completion of challenging narratives and stories. Good adventures totally engage an Ensemble, stretching the limits and testing the creativity of its members. A well-designed narrative stimulates a group's collective problem solv-



ing abilities and promotes cooperation. The Mythguide should design narratives which test the strengths of each persona; teamwork should be necessary for successful resolution.

The key to enjoyable roleplaying on all counts is a solid relationship between Mythguide and Ensemble. The Mythguide must remain impartial in relation to individual players. Each persona should be given the opportunity to shine at least once during a narrative, and each player should be given a fair amount of roleplaying time. The Mythguide can also decide to reward instances of true inspiration and creativity. For example, a persona comes up with a truly innovative method for diverting the attention of two guards. When making an associated Trial, the player rolls a Miserable Failure. However, the Mythguide thinks the idea is so good (and it really enhances the narrative) that he declares a success regardless of the actual result. Such arbitrary resolution should be used sparingly, but a good story should never be sacrificed or cut short because of a poor die roll.

Think Ahead and Be Prepared

A good Mythguide needs to be prepared for any eventuality. The best laid plans often go astray, and players are notorious for ignoring even the most obvious hints and warnings. On the other side of the coin, if the players find a brilliant way to bypass several carefully laid traps, the Mythguide should reward them for their ingenuity, not penalize them by transplanting the traps. The players should never become the Mythguide's adversaries, and a good Mythguide enjoys being outsmarted by a talented Ensemble.

The Mythguide needs to be a quick thinker; although he may be able to anticipate most player actions, he cannot hope to account for every conceivable possibility. He should plan for the obvious reactions while maintaining several angles of possible narrative evolution for the continuing story. His familiarity with the environment allows him to describe reactions and develop subplots or story twists spontaneously.

CREATING NARRATIVES

A good roleplaying narrative is like a good novel. It has a beginning, plot development, a climax, and a resolution. The participants are challenged along the way and forced to think on their feet. A well-played adventure or scenario is the staple of good roleplaying,

and a series of such narratives form the basis of a satisfying and memorable Canticle.

Individual narratives are threaded together to form larger Canticles. However, while a Canticle can take many months of real time to finish, a good narrative can be completed in a single evening, several at the most. Effective narratives keep the action moving, even if the action consists of passive activities (searching an abandoned city, for example), and generally consist of a series of Chapters and Episodes. Each Episode contains a complete event and its resolution, and is analogous to a scene in a movie or play. Chapters collect Episodes into related groups, and serve to direct the action in a narrative. A single narrative can contain several Chapters and many Episodes.

Theme

Every narrative can be defined by a central Theme. A narrative's Theme may correspond to the overall theme of a Canticle, or it can represent an isolated story or situation. A Theme helps the Mythguide relate a narrative's encounters and interactions to one another. In the context of a single story, most situations and conflicts become threads radiating from the central fabric of the narrative's Theme. Themes can be spontaneous and natural or carefully planned and subtle. The nature of a particular Theme depends on the importance of the narrative.

Themes are often related to specific personal or social Motivations and goals. A persona bent on Vengeance may be given the opportunity to accomplish his revenge. A society bent on vengeance might hire a group of personas to exact revenge on behalf of one of its Key Elements. The number of possible narrative Themes is endless; the following suggestions only scratch the surface.

Quest: The personas embark on some type of search or quest. The object of the quest might be a specific object or person, an important artifact, or a piece of crucial information. A quest may be undertaken as a result of rumor or legend, or as a result of a charge from a particular group or individual.

Conflict: The personas are embroiled in some type of personal, social, or political conflict. The conflict may have begun as a result of persona actions, or the personas may become involved in a larger conflict. The conflict can be military or political, and its resolution can be either covert (handled through espionage or intrigue) or overt (personas lead forces into direct con-

flict). Conflict is often the result of philosophical differences or opposed motivations.

Journey: The personas must undertake an important journey. The journey may be an exploration mission into unknown lands, or it can have a specific purpose or end. Perhaps the personas have been hired to deliver an important diplomatic pouch or other documents. Maybe they have been charged with transporting a particular item or relic from one city to another. Or they could serve as an escort, protecting an important lord or political figure from harm while making a treacherous journey through the wilderness.

Mystery: The personas become involved in a mysterious series of events, and are called upon to solve the mystery. There may have been a disappearance, an unsolved crime, or a murder. Alternately, the mystery could take the form of a riddle. Once the mystery is solved, the personas stand to gain some type of reward.

Capture/Rescue: The personas must either locate or liberate a specific individual. They may be hired to capture a known criminal, or they may act as bounty hunters, trailing a group of bandits throughout the countryside. Perhaps they are hired to rescue someone important from the clutches of a criminal or resistance group (a prominent political leader, for example). Alternately, the personas themselves may have been captured. They must find a way to escape if they wish to exact vengeance on their captors.

Interaction: The personas have come into contact with a strange or unknown culture or Heritage group. They may have discovered the group during their travels, or they may have been sent as an embassy from another society or culture. The personas need to make first contact with the new culture and interact with it. Will their overtures be successful?

Plot Elements

Once the narrative's Theme is established, it should guide the Mythguide through the development of the accompanying plot elements. All narratives contain a number of standard plot elements. These elements are described individually in the following section.

Hook: Most narratives begin with some type of Hook. Hooks represent intriguing events or circumstances that get the persona involved in the narrative;

they are the personas' Call to Adventure. Depending on the personas' relationship to and position in an Environment, a Hook can be obvious (a Mythguide persona approaches the personas with a 'job') or subtle (the personas hear of the oppressive local lord while passing through a country inn). The Hook also serves as the narrative's introduction. The players receive any necessary information and prepare themselves for the opening stages of the narrative's plot. A good Hook appeals to the personas' own needs and Motivations; personas should find it difficult to refuse.

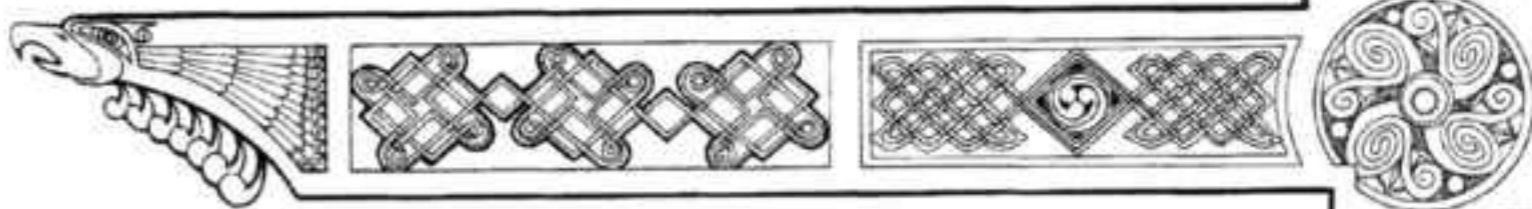
Episode: Every narrative consists of several Episodes during which the personas actively move toward their goals. They learn more about the information provided in the Hook, and undergo a series of challenges and tests. Such trials should test all aspects of the personas' skills. Although physical combat is a common element in roleplaying games, it should not become a default solution to every complication or problem. Some encounters should be heavily weighted against the personas, forcing them to use their wits to avoid violence.

Climax: The Climax provides an engaging resolution to a narrative and determines the success or failure of the personas' goals. A quest is achieved, an enemy is defeated, the plot reaches a conclusion. A final chase sequence or battle often resolves a narrative, but resolution can also appear in more subtle forms. A tense battle of wits or a climactic political confrontation can be as satisfying as an active physical resolution.

Transition: If the narrative is a part of a larger Canticle, the Mythguide might want to provide the personas with some type of Transition into the next narrative. If the narrative is not a part of a larger adventure, the Mythguide might want to give the players a final briefing regarding the narrative's outcome. Did the personas receive any rewards? Did their actions have a lasting effect on the environment? In a Canticle, the answers to such questions should always be a part of the Transition into the next segment of the epic.

Running the Narrative

Once a basic Theme is chosen for the narrative, the Mythguide should outline the course of the narrative according to its plot elements. The narrative's Theme ensures a common thread for most encounters



and interactions. However, it is the Mythguide's job to keep the story interesting. If all of the encounters are the same, the players will quickly grow bored. Variety is the key; if several encounters seem the same, cut one or two of them out and concentrate on the others. Change some of the fundamental elements and take the interaction in a different direction.

A narrative outline should progress at a brisk rate; play should never get bogged down in a single Episode. The Mythguide should intersperse fast-moving Episodes with slower ones. The first and last Episodes are always action-packed; the Hook draws players in and the Climax finishes the narrative with a bang.

Setting

Setting is an important consideration in a narrative. While Canticles can be set in entire regions or environments, the setting of a single narrative is often more confined. The Mythguide should choose an area appropriate to the Theme of the narrative. If travel is involved, the setting might be very large. If the narrative's plot is concentrated, the setting might be very small.

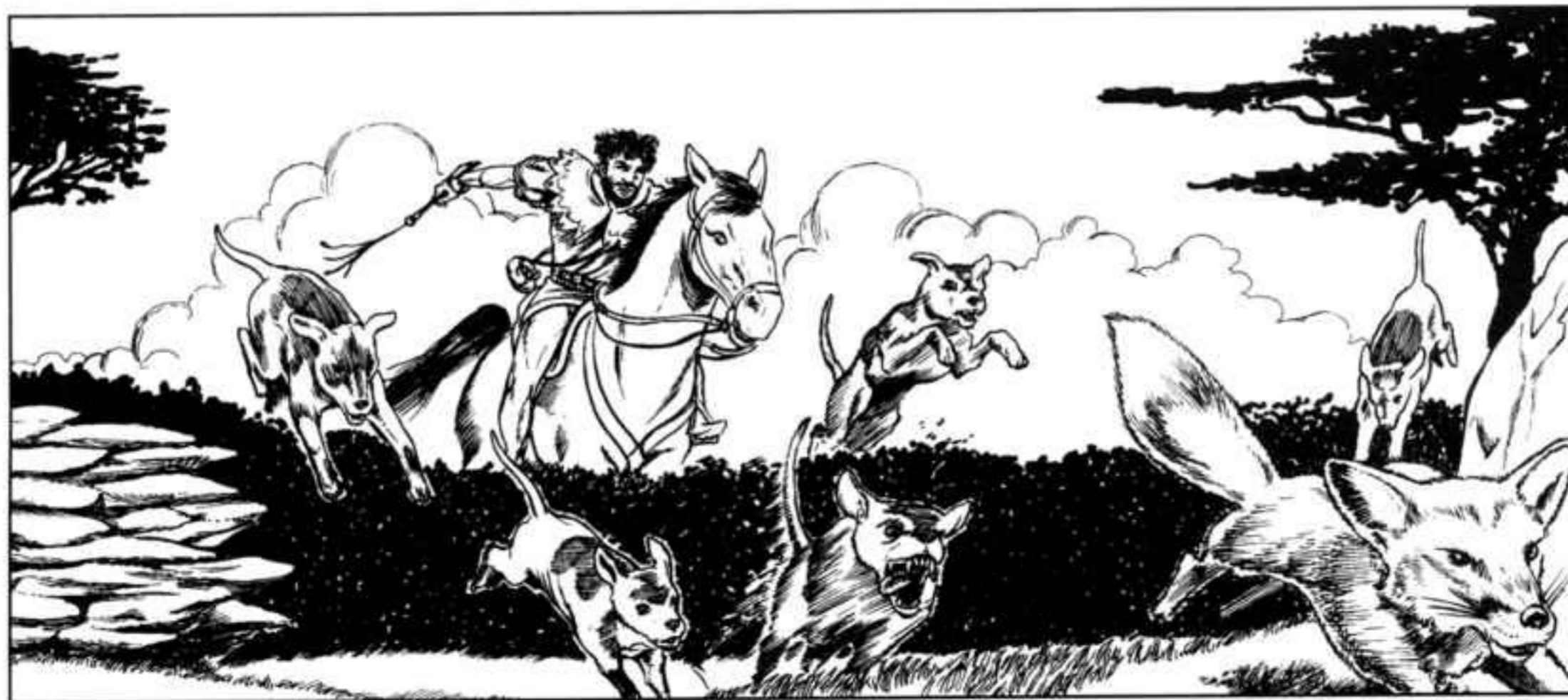
Familiarity with the setting is the key to effective narrative design. Since the Mythguide already has one or more Narrative Environments completed, a narrative should be placed within an existing environment. This allows the Mythguide to relate the narrative's Theme directly to the Environment's history and Social Determinants, and makes for richer plots and scenario descriptions. For example, the personas won't be called upon to escort a local lord from one city to another. They would be asked to escort the Lord of

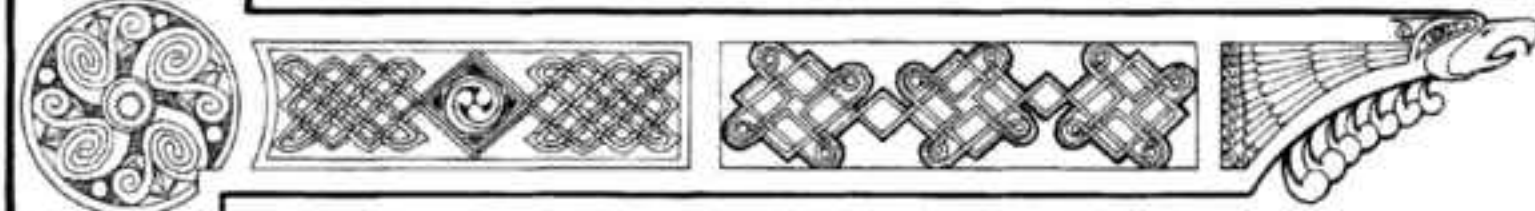
Embrea to Parliament in the capital city. The escort is necessary because of the lord's personal history within the environment, and the personas will be on the lookout for thugs hired by the lord's enemies both in Parliament and among the people. A detailed setting allows the Mythguide to spontaneously develop plot elements and colorful outlines. The Ensemble's familiarity with the setting provides an inherent part of a narrative's Hook.

Plot

The Mythguide should outline the major plot elements before beginning a narrative. A detailed setting will help him make the narrative's Theme come to life. However, even the best Mythguides cannot plan for every eventuality during play. Novice Mythguides often fall into this trap, with the result being a contrived adventure. The Mythguide unconsciously forces the personas along a pre-determined path or storyline. The Mythguide should make a conscious effort to avoid such manipulation at all times; his familiarity with the setting should allow him to spontaneously react to unusual or unexpected persona actions and plot twists.

There are two points throughout the course of a narrative where a little prodding is appropriate - the Hook and the Climax. Some players, especially those who are new to a particular group, may require a more obvious call to adventure. The Mythguide may need to make the Hook clearer or more direct; after all, if the personas don't know where to go next, there isn't going to be a narrative.





The Climax is the most important element of any narrative and the Mythguide should treat it as such. A good Mythguide spends as much time devising a challenging and exciting Climax as he does on the rest of the narrative combined. Because of the nature of a grand Climax, the Mythguide might have to direct the personas' actions to some extent. In the case of a narrative's conclusion, a little intervention is OK. If certain plot threads are not being carried forward (as they might be in a Canticle), they should be resolved to the satisfaction of the players. Whether they succeed or fail in a narrative, the players should always feel that playing was worthwhile. Players leave a well-run narrative with a profound sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, regardless of the narrative's final outcome.

If a narrative is a part of a larger Canticle, the Mythguide may wish to reserve certain resolutions for a later time. He might distribute important information over several narratives, or a persona might not resolve certain interactions until the end of the entire Canticle. The Mythguide can also tie narrative Climaxes into the larger fabric of the Canticle, allowing them to conclude chapters of the greater story.

Supporting Cast

As the personas move through a narrative's Episodes, they will encounter many Mythguide personas, both important and incidental. The Mythguide should describe the most important of the Mythguide personas in his outline for the narrative. Where do they appear? Will they help or hinder the personas? What are their motivations and how do they relate to the narrative as a whole?

The Mythguide should strive to make all Mythguide personas different from one another. Although it may seem like a small thing, nothing enhances a narrative's flavor and originality like a variety of three-dimensional supporting players. A single unusual or interesting Personality Trait or Motivation is often enough to capture the unique spirit of a Mythguide persona. For example, players will remember the suicidal minstrel or the Generous assassin far longer than their more standard and wooden counterparts.

The Mythguide need only define those Characteristics and Traits which are necessary for a Mythguide persona to fulfill his role. If the Mythguide persona exists only to provide an important tidbit of information, a single defining Personality Trait or Background Aspect is enough description. Mythguide personas who serve only as sparring partners (guards, bandits, thugs, etc.) may only need a few physical characteris-

tics. However, a Mythguide persona who travels with the personas probably needs to be fleshed out more (since he may have to engage in combat, maneuvers, etc.), since he or she will become a continuing presence in the narrative or Canticle.

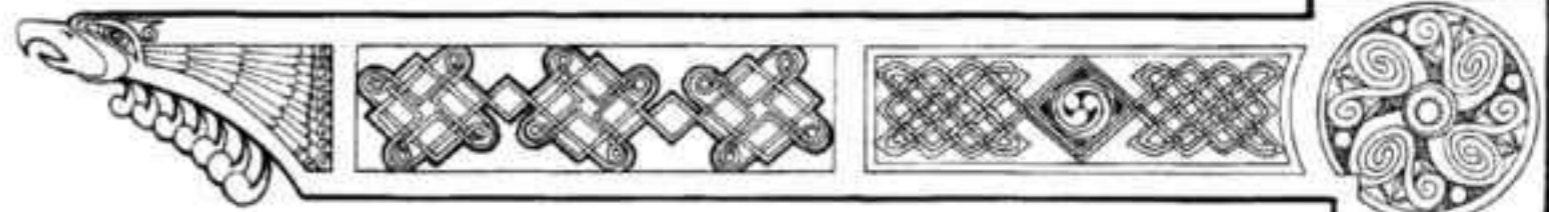
Major villains or participants in a narrative or Canticle should be fully defined personalities. This is especially true if the Mythguide persona is going to serve as a recurring presence or influence (either good or bad) in the personas' lives. The descriptions of such individuals should also include notes on alliances, friendships, and factions. The individual's power and political relationships in the Narrative Environment may also be important.

Mythical Beasts

Mythical Beasts and legendary monsters form another common convention of the fantasy genre. Since *Aria* is designed primarily to be a game of social conflict and interaction, we have consciously omitted such creatures from this book. However, the judicious use of Mythical Beasts can be an appropriate complement to many types of narrative. The Mythguide should consider the Tone of the Canticle when including such creatures. For example, a Canticle with a Swords and Sorcery feel might support a world with numerous monstrous races dwelling within it. A Canticle with a realistic feel might have such beasts only in legend. The personas could spend an entire Canticle in search of one and never find it. Or perhaps many narratives could be spent searching, with a final climactic meeting serving as the conclusion to the Canticle.

If Mythical Beasts are being used, the Mythguide should take care to make them as real as the personas. The Mythguide can develop Heritage Templates for monstrous and legendary species, describing any important cultural considerations. Mythical Beasts and other creatures will have their own Motivations and their own Heritage Orientations. In many cases, their intentions may be more unified than the personas'. The Mythguide should give every creature met by the personas a unique personality and demeanor. The players should never be able to bet on a certain type of creature acting in a certain manner 'because they all act that way.' Even beasts are individuals.

The Mythguide can either create original creatures for his Canticle or borrow creatures from the pages of fantasy literature. Mythical Beasts can be designed like personas, with attendant Personality Traits and Background Aspects. Beasts can be described by the same Attributes, although physical Attributes in many



creatures may exceed a Rank of ten. For example, a large troll might have a Strength of 19. Since Frame and Height are on sliding scales, these Characteristics are easy to determine. Trauma Resistance is determined by the creature's Weight. The Mythguide should simply detail any special attack forms or natural weapons (claws, bite, venom, etc.) and the damage they inflict. He should also detail any natural armor or protection possessed by the beast. Such Characteristics will allow personas to physically interact with the Mythical Beasts they meet. However, when designing such creatures, the cultural and social questions associated with their development should always take precedence.

wars begin, disasters occur - an environment's history continues.

The Mythguide should use the passage of time as an evocative aspect of the game; personas don't just sit around waiting for the next narrative to begin. They are important members of their environments. The Mythguide should narratively describe the personas' downtime (or play out the period as an Interactive History), evoking the epic and continuous nature of the game through colorful descriptions of actions and events which occur outside the bounds of planned narratives.

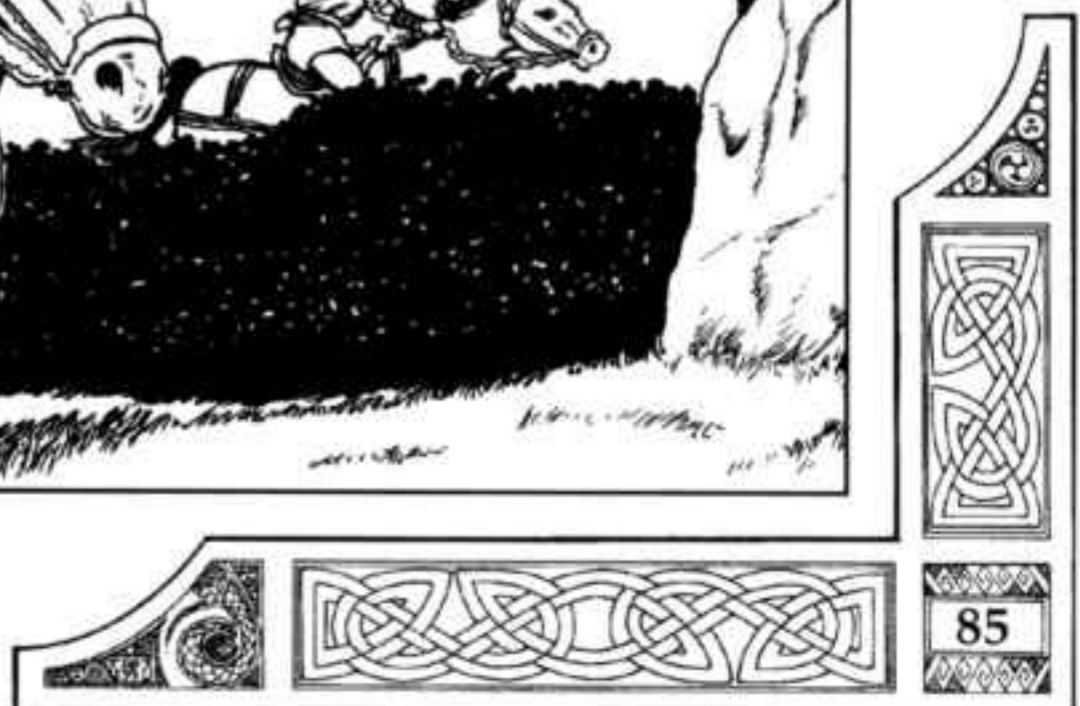
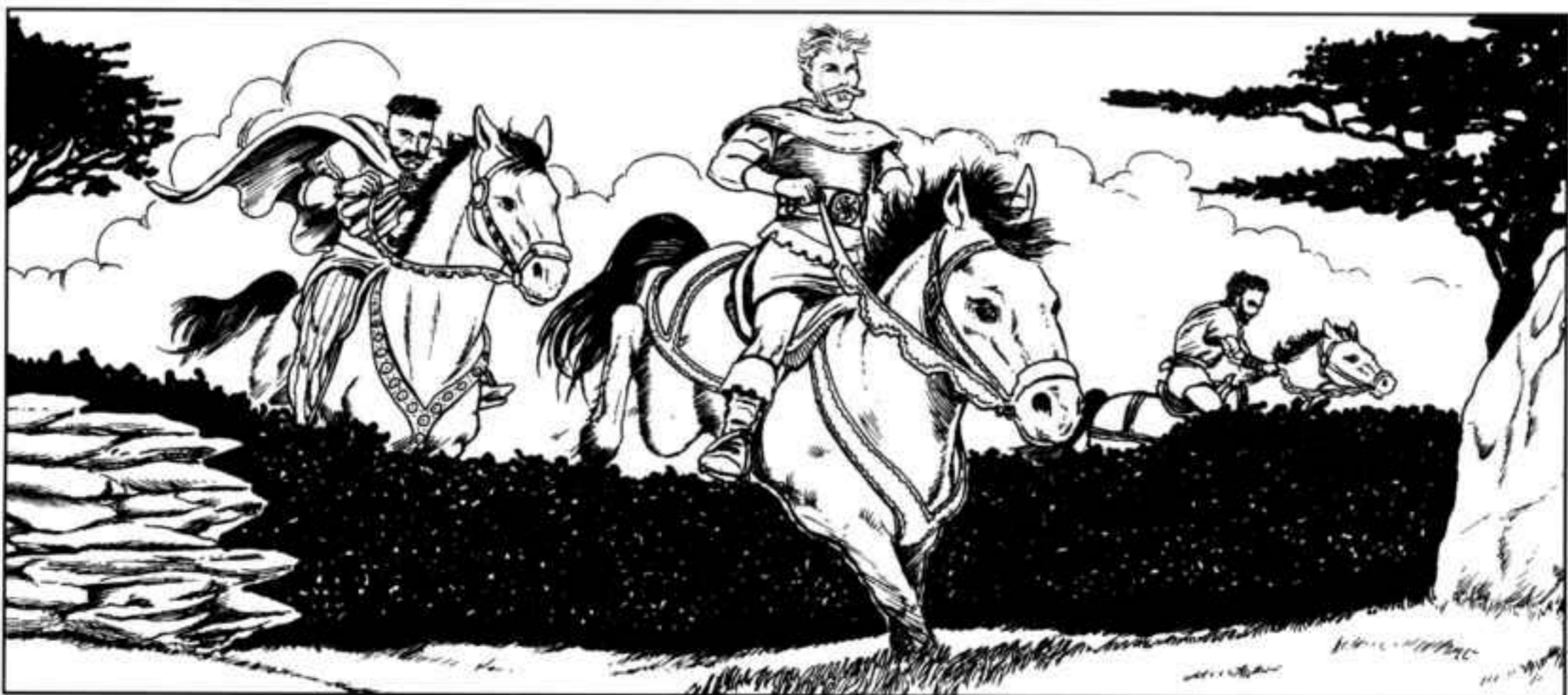
The Canticle

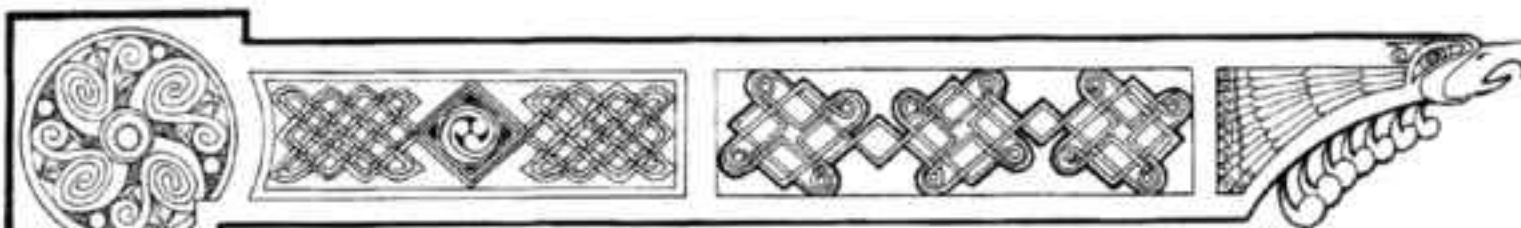
A Canticle is a collection of narratives united by a common theme or story thread. Canticles are the vehicles that allow personas to grow and develop amidst living societies and environments. Personas become a part of the ongoing history of their environment, and can in fact have an intimate effect on the course of that history. Perhaps more importantly, the Canticle gives a persona the opportunity to evolve individually over an extended period of time.

Designing the Canticle

The average Canticle lasts for many years and spans several generations. This translates into many gaming sessions in the real world, and as such requires that all players agree on the nature, tone, and form of the Canticle. The Mythguide and Ensemble have already created the basics of a world, either in the form of a single Narrative Environment or several of them. A new Canticle will be set somewhere within the confines of this environment, and should have some form of collective goal or motivation as its foundation. The following sections outline the basic elements of a successful Canticle.

Canticles are often defined by a sense of time and its passage. This can be especially true if Aria Time (and Interactive Histories) is employed at some point during the Canticle. Many years can pass between narratives. Personas age and develop in the interim, and the Environment evolves. Nations rise and fall,





Name

The Mythguide names the Canticle. This step is not absolutely necessary, but it does lend more of a literary feel to the process. Players can archive past Canticles and speak of them by title - "Remember 'The Conspiracy of Syradur'?" Titles are also useful if multiple Canticles are being strung together as a larger Aria since it makes it easier to tell which were part of the same sequence or series. A good name evokes the theme and tone of a Canticle.

Setting

Although the Setting is in many ways the most important element of a Canticle, its development in Aria is simple. Aria revolves around the creation and description of original worlds and environments, and the first step in running an Aria game is the design of such an environment. The Mythguide and Ensemble should decide on the Narrative Environment in which play will begin and place the Canticle there.

The Mythguide may initially wish to concentrate on a smaller environment and expand the region's scope in later Canticles. This facilitates both persona creation and setting development. It is easier to detail a single town or city than an entire continent. However, by starting play in the smaller setting, the larger will begin to take shape over the course of extended play.

One of the principal advantages of a Canticle over a narrative is the opportunity the Canticle affords for extensive world and environment development. Each narrative shapes the world a little more, defining elements that had until their development been part of the rich background fabric of the environment. As a Canticle progresses, new Heritage groups and races are introduced, new places and lands described, and important political relationships explored. Major events sweep across environments and continents, and the political face of the world evolves. Interactive Histories serve as a convenient method for the Mythguide to describe a setting's ongoing development and history.

Theme

The Theme of a Canticle serves as a unifying concept or motif which appears again and again. A good Theme serves to connect individual narratives and enhance the motivations and goals of the personas. A

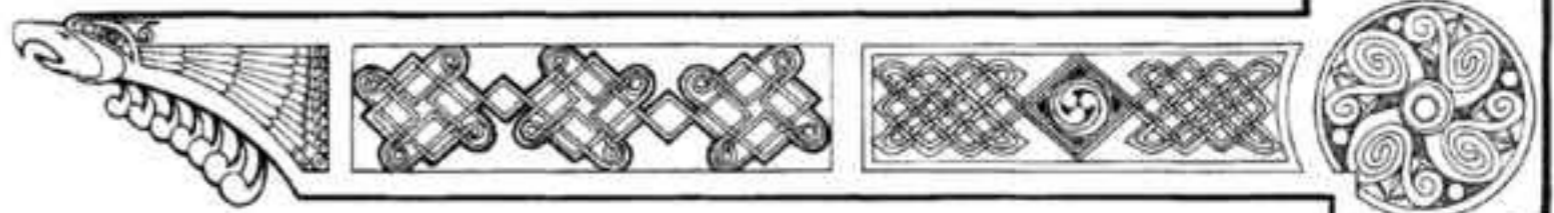
Theme can be anything as long it accomplishes the task of directing the Mythguide's thoughts regarding the Canticle. A strong Theme provides even the most general Canticle with a coherent orientation and mood. Aspects of the Theme should manifest themselves at some point during every narrative. The following Themes only begin to explore the range of possibilities.

Rebuilding: A environment, society, or Heritage group has been damaged or displaced by a natural disaster or conflict. The group is about to embark on the long road of restoration (and possibly revenge) and requires leadership. Alternately, the group could be an Omni of some kind (perhaps a religion that had been heavily persecuted), and needs leadership to return to its state of past glory.

Intrigue: The Canticle concentrates on the political maneuverings of a specific area or group. The setting might be an entire nation, a city, or the headquarters of a particular group or Omni. The Canticle might chronicle the rise and fall of an important noble house or political faction, or it could follow the development of a powerful sect within a large cathedral complex or religious university. Canticles based on Intrigue are often open-ended; there is no inevitable conclusion. The posturing and politics can go on forever, and the Mythguide might want to use an Intrigue Theme to continue a Perpetual Genealogy.

Conflict: The Canticle takes place amidst a large conflict or struggle of some kind. This can take the form of an overt war or revolution, or it could represent a large-scale secret war, perhaps among a society's ruling houses or powerful merchants. In the former case, the grandiose consequences of the struggle will be apparent throughout the setting of the Canticle. Refugees will abound and supplies and resources will be in short supply. In the latter case, everything on the surface might appear normal, but the personas could discover an intensely violent war being waged just below an environment's surface.

Preservation: An imminent danger threatens an environment or society. The danger can take any form, from a large barbarian nation massing on the northern frontier to an innocuous-looking water plant which spreads a deadly plague. The danger must often be dealt with over a long period of time, and the personas involved in the Canticle will have to find a way to protect those who are threatened by the menace.



Quest: The Canticle hinges on an epic quest or search. Perhaps a certain artifact or piece of information is necessary for the continued survival of an environment or Heritage group. Maybe such an item has been stolen or lost, and a political or spiritual leader has issued a call to arms for the faithful to begin a search. A quest on this scale will probably last many years and consist of a number of small accomplishments or victories; perhaps clues can be found or the item can be pieced together incrementally (especially if it is some type of information or document).

Improvement: The Canticle concentrates on social and environmental development. Such development includes all types of social, political, and economic improvements and often takes on the mantle of a crusade. Perhaps the personas are trying to clean up a city rife with corruption, or maybe they are attempting to open new trade routes with a nation's wealthy neighbors. Any sort of positive environmental effects qualify as Improvements; the Mythguide should use an environment and its relationships creatively. The results of specific narratives within the Canticle can be resolved by periodically dropping into Aria Time and playing an Interactive History for an Interval or two.

Destruction: The Canticle centers on the destruction of an environment, movement, faction, Heritage group, or Omni. The reason for the desired destruction depends on the motivations and relationships involved. A people Renowned for their sense of honor and justice might become obsessed with destroying their demon-worshipping neighbors. A corrupt bishop might desire the destruction of a renegade monastery whose abbot refuses to be browbeaten by the diocesan administration. The nature of the Theme will be determined by the Philosophical Orientations and goals of the parties involved. Interactive Histories can be used to interpret long-term effects.

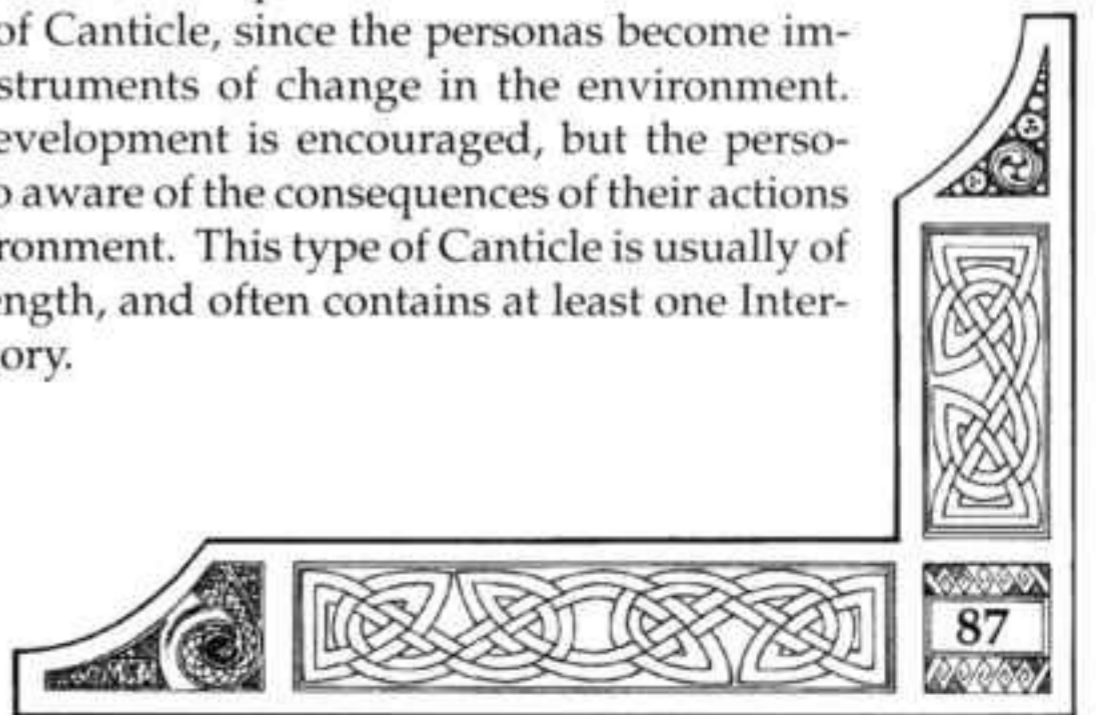
Unknown: The Canticle centers on a profound or fundamental mystery. The enigma can be an important part of Heritage group's symbolism or an Omni's view of Reality. It could represent the origins of a particular race or species, or certain lost elements of a society's history. The Canticle involves the ongoing search for the true nature of mystery. Perhaps an environment or group requires someone with the courage to face the past, to travel in search of answers. This Theme is also useful when describing a Canticle which deals with general exploration and discovery journeys.



Emphasis

The Mythguide should determine the degree and area of primary Emphasis in the Canticle. Emphasis is described by one of three major categories: Ensemble, Equal, or Environment. If the Ensemble receives Emphasis, the Canticle revolves around the actions of the personas. Although social and environmental is important, it takes second place to Ensemble action and development. This type of Canticle is often the shortest of the three forms, since Emphasis is placed on the individuals. The Canticle rarely exceeds the lifespan of a single persona.

If Emphasis is placed equally, the Ensemble and Environment share Emphasis. This is the most common type of Canticle, since the personas become important instruments of change in the environment. Persona development is encouraged, but the personas are also aware of the consequences of their actions in the environment. This type of Canticle is usually of medium length, and often contains at least one Interactive History.





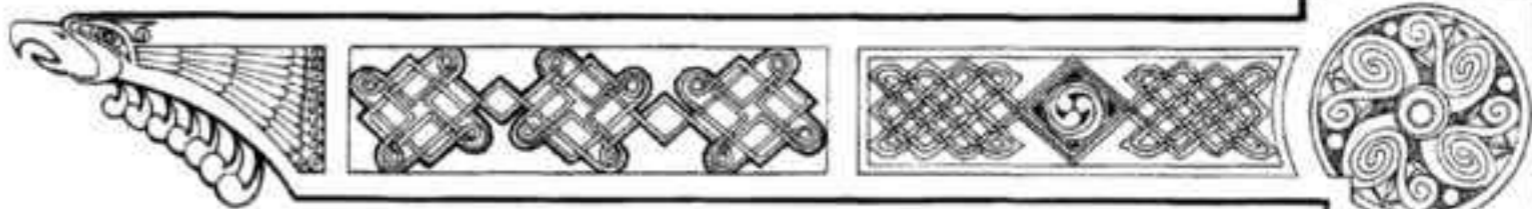
Finally, Emphasis can be placed on the Environment. In this type of Canticle, the development and concerns of the environment are paramount. The lives of individual personas are less important than the history of their world, and most narratives will center on environmental Themes. This type of Canticle can be very long, lasting through several generations of personas, and always contains a number of Interactive History sequences.

Tone

After a general Theme, Setting, and Emphasis have been established for the Canticle, the Mythguide should consider the Canticle's Tone. Tone describes the pervasive atmosphere of the Canticle, the 'feel' that players in the Canticle take away with them. Tone describes the normal attitudes the personas will encounter as they move from one narrative to the next. A Canticle's Tone can be described as 'brooding and oppressive realism' or 'light-hearted romantic fantasy'. Human Personality Traits often serve as good adjectives to describe Tone. The Mythguide should convey the Canticle's Tone to the players before play begins, since it may affect their persona choices.

Tone should also be used to describe the level of realism in the Canticle. Players should know what expect regarding realism before play begins; such knowledge often dictates persona action in dangerous situations. For example, in a Canticle with a Tone of High Fantasy a persona may be able to laugh at the villain who has captured him, knowing he will get a chance to escape at some later point. In a Canticle with a Tone of Realistic Dark Fantasy, the same persona might do better to beg for his life (because it probably isn't going to last much longer). The Mythguide should ask the Ensemble what Tone they prefer and consider their wishes when designing the Canticle. The following section presents a few common possibilities.

High Fantasy: This type of Canticle creates an atmosphere of bold deeds and pure intentions. The villains are big and the heroes are bigger; conflict often occurs on a grand or epic scale, with quests to save the world being the order of the day. It is not difficult to tell the good from the bad, because their actions make it (painfully) obvious. Magic is prominent but balanced. Realism is often suspended in favor of a grand moral climax or confrontation. Equal Emphasis is common, as are Quest, Improvement, and Unknown Themes.



Dark Fantasy: This Canticle exists amidst an atmosphere of incredible power and darkly fantastic creatures. Magic is often wild, and wizards have the power to level cities. Sentient castles and lava seas are not unusual. Demons and creatures of the netherworld abound, and personas are as likely to enlist their aid as to fight them. Notions of morality and concepts like good and evil are left to the perceptions of the individual; most people are too busy watching their backs to bother with such incidental philosophy. Themes of Intrigue, Conflict, and Destruction are common.

Medieval: This type of Canticle attempts to recreate the atmosphere and conditions associated with the period of the Middle Ages. The Tone of such a Canticle is often oppressive and dark, and Themes of Preservation, Conflict, or Rebuilding are common. Conventional morality is a morass of grays, and motivations are generally self-serving. Magic is either very weak or nonexistent, and mages are rare and misunderstood.

Continuity

The Mythguide should also think about the Continuity of the Canticle. Are the narratives simply chapters in one great story? Do the narratives represent separate stories which are only tied together by a common Theme or motivation? Or are the narratives barely related at all, being connected only by a common setting or a common villain? The nature of the Canticle's Continuity is often an important question determining Theme and Tone.

Continuity is often the result of Emphasis. A Canticle that Emphasizes the Ensemble may de-emphasize Continuity; the development of the individual personas is the important aspect of the Canticle. A Canticle that Emphasizes Equality can support any level of Continuity, although totally separate narratives will be rare. A Canticle that Emphasizes the Environment normally uses Continuity to track social development over a period of many years or narratives. Such Canticles almost always show a high level of Continuity. The Mythguide should decide on a general level of Continuity based on the Emphasis, Theme, and Tone of the Canticle.

Persona Goals

The goals and motivations of the personas should be a final consideration when designing a Canticle. Are

the goals of the personas similar enough that they can all be incorporated to some extent into the larger fabric of a single Canticle? Will the Mythguide have to run individual narratives concentrating on each persona during the Canticle, or can some degree of commonality be found?

Different personas will have significantly different motivations for adventuring. The idealistic young knight might want to change the world. The jaded merchant might be in it for a profit. And the bitter, disfigured minstrel might be in it for revenge. It is the Mythguide's responsibility to take all of the personas' goals into account when creating narratives and Canticles. Otherwise, from the personas' perspectives, what's the point of adventuring at all?

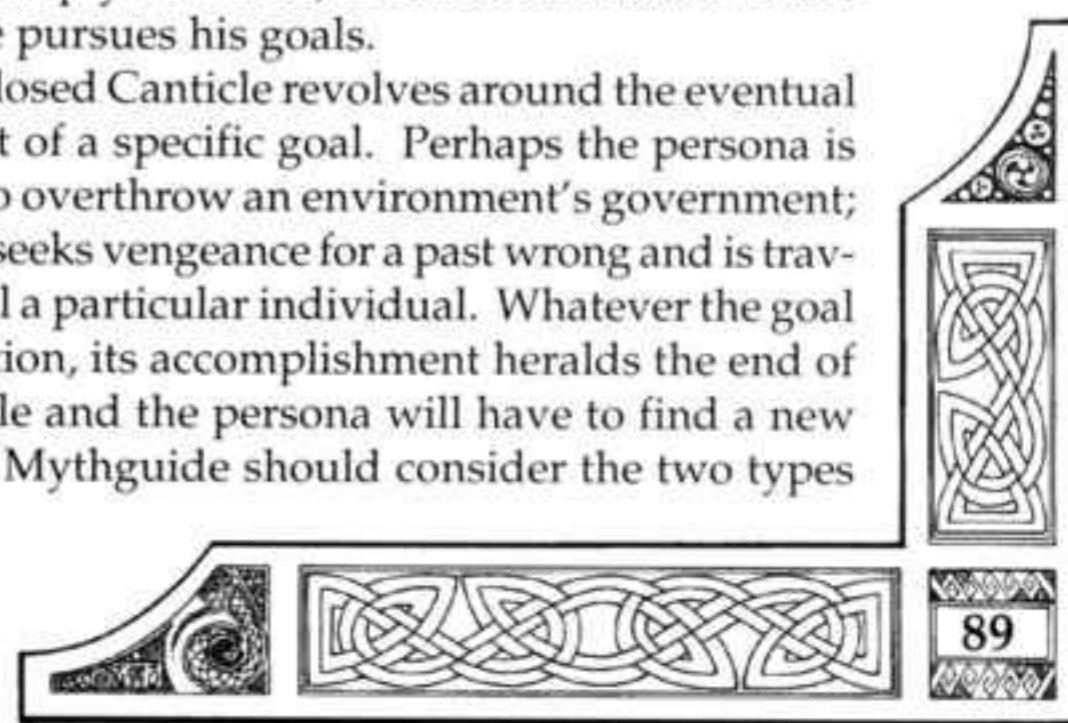
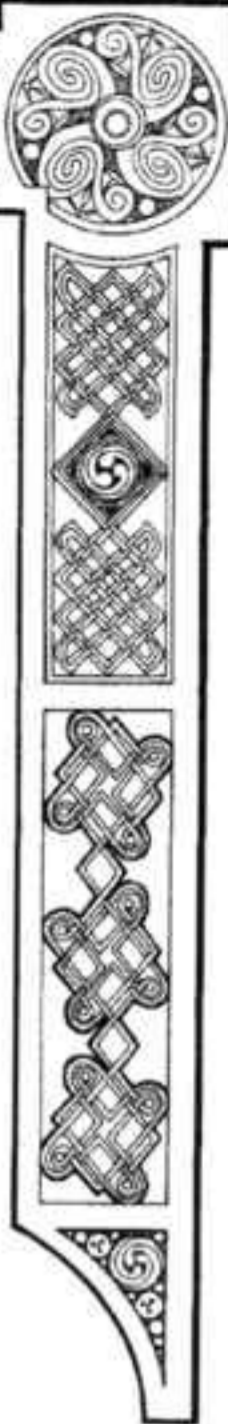
The Mythguide should shape the Canticle around the personas' motivations to an extent, but he should not go overboard. The personas should reach junctures where decisions are necessary; Riella wants to pursue her former captors into the forest, while Gidren wants to continue on to the city to claim his birthright before it is too late. The players need to decide on a course of action among themselves.

Alternately, the Mythguide can allow a Canticle's Theme to become a kind of collective goal. For example, if all of the personas are from a small coastal nation trying to resist an invasion by the savage nomads to the east, a common motivation might already exist. The Theme of the Canticle becomes the Preservation of their homeland, and all of the personas are willing to work toward this objective.

Open and Closed Canticles

Finally, the nature of the goals should be considered. Persona goals and motivations generally divide Canticles into two types: Open and Closed. Open Canticles are often easier for the Mythguide to design. Persona goals in an Open Canticle consist of general motivations. For example, a persona might be bent on the acquisition of wealth, or on the improvement of society, or on the dispensation of justice. His goal does not represent any kind of 'end' in itself. The Canticle will simply continue, from one narrative to the next, as he pursues his goals.

The Closed Canticle revolves around the eventual attainment of a specific goal. Perhaps the persona is working to overthrow an environment's government; maybe he seeks vengeance for a past wrong and is traveling to kill a particular individual. Whatever the goal or motivation, its accomplishment heralds the end of the Canticle and the persona will have to find a new goal. The Mythguide should consider the two types





of Canticles when choosing a Theme and Tone for the Canticle, and also when allowing players to determine their personas motivations. While Open Canticles are usually easier to run, Closed Canticles are often more satisfying to play (when run properly).

RESTRICTIONS

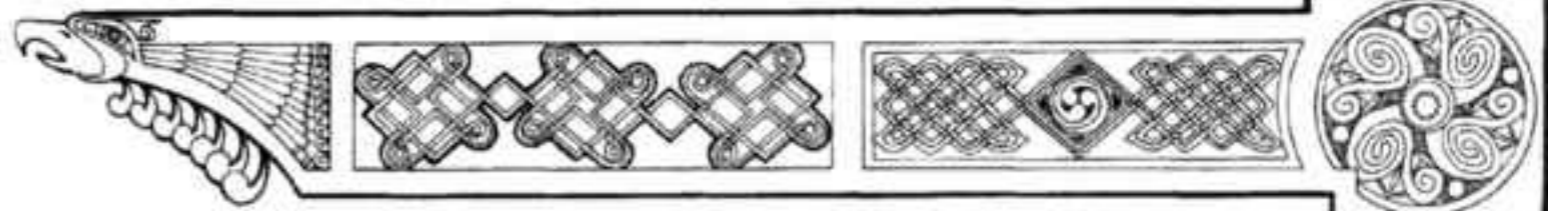
Finally, the Mythguide should detail any unusual Restrictions that accompany a particular Canticle. Such Restrictions can include Background Aspects, Expertises, or vocational development. Perhaps the Mythguide does not wish any persona in his Canticle to choose the Doomed Destiny Background Aspect (its purchase will disrupt his plans for the Canticle). Or maybe there is an initial limitation on the Ranks of weapons-related expertises. Restrictions are primarily environment-oriented; the Mythguide should determine any appropriate Restrictions based on his knowledge of and familiarity with the Narrative Environment.

PERSONA MORTALITY

Every Mythguide must decide how persona death will be handled in his Canticles. The death of a long-lived and well-played persona can be a traumatic experience for a player, and the Mythguide should attempt to ease the sense of loss. Persona death should not be portrayed as an end, but rather as a glorious conclusion to a story of epic proportions. The Mythguide may allow a player to sacrifice his persona to save the rest of the Ensemble, or to further a noble cause. The player should feel as if the persona's death had a profound effect on the environment. Regardless of how persona mortality is handled in the Canticle, the Mythguide should decide on a consistent method and stick to it.

The Mythguide should never allow a simple roll of the dice to dictate a persona's fate if the result seems out of place or unfair. This is especially true if the persona is an active participant in a narrative that has not yet reached its conclusion. This is not to say that the Mythguide should intervene in every instance of persona death or failure, but in certain cases such intervention might be appropriate.

Because of the nature of the Aria game, persona death is inevitable. Depending on the Emphasis and Tone of the Canticle, a single persona's life can be greatly accelerated by Interactive Histories and development in Aria Time. A good Mythguide should communicate this simple fact to his players. Persona death



is not an end in a long Canticle; it is a transition. Perpetual Genealogies allow players to continue their persona's lineage and play descendents of the initial persona. In this way, players can take part in every aspect of an environment's history across several generations.

Rewards

Although the satisfaction of a narrative well-played is often reward enough for the players, the Mythguide will occasionally want to give the personas something more tangible for their efforts. Such rewards might come in the form of material wealth, currency, awards of Status or Esteem, enchanted artifacts, or ambient Omnesence. The Mythguide can also award Myth Points, which allow personas to improve abilities or affect the outcomes of Interactive Histories.

MATERIAL REWARDS

Treasure and other material rewards are common conventions of the fantasy genre. Most players are familiar with stories involving dragon hoards or faerie gold, and the search for such wealth serves as the primary goal in many roleplaying games. Although such rewards do have a place in the Aria game, they should not become the players' major goal in one Canticle after another. In some Canticles, the personas might not even want material wealth; they may desire more abstract rewards (such as Status or Influence).

The Mythguide should design material rewards according to what the personas find valuable. A scholar might place more value in an ancient set of maps or a lost illuminated manuscript than in a pile of coins. A warrior would treasure a legendary sword more than a pouch full of gems, and a priest might consider the conversion of a village's inhabitants reward enough. The Mythguide should use the economic guidelines in the Appendix to determine the relative value of metals and currency in an environment. An environment in which gold deposits are found in every stream probably places a reduced value on the metal, while on an arid world water itself could have a value which exceeds any mineral.

Items of magical or religious power follow the same guidelines; if the Narrative Environment is extremely magic-rich, the personas may happen upon many magical artifacts during the course of their travels, while such items in magic-poor worlds are nor-

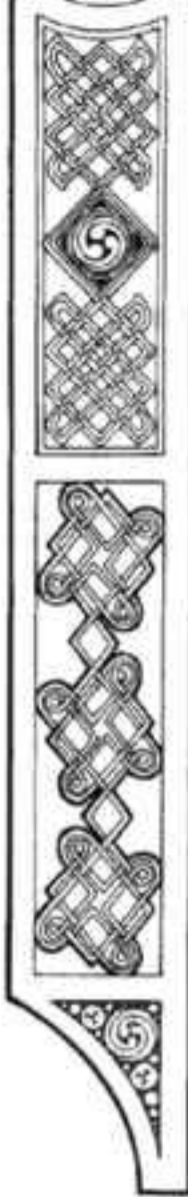
SAMPLE REWARDS FOR FIRNOST HEATH

Because there is no standardized currency traded within the boundaries of Firnost Heath, material rewards never appear in the form of coinage. Natural deposits of rare metals could be chanced upon, but most rewards take the form of tradeable goods. Bison hides, steel weapons, rare herbs, these are all appropriate rewards for Personas who venture within the bounds of Firnost Heath.

To offset the mundane nature of such rewards, the Mythguide should bestow material rewards with individual histories, making each item socially relevant and culturally unique. The iron sword used by Hisratheyne the Terrible, an ancient banner from the lost clan Cyrkufor, a clay tablet containing the writings of Luganne Norfeyne of Flatlake (recorder of the third Seer's visions) — such items would be valued highly by any of the Northmen Tribes. Recovery of such items could earn Personas increased Status, Renown, or social debts should they be donated or returned to powerful tribes. Of course if personas wanted material wealth, such items might be traded for hides, food, weapons, or tribal lands and privileges.

In addition to material rewards, Personas might win favors or privileges from powerful or influential tribesmen. Perhaps the Tribal leader agrees to arrange a marriage between a Persona and his heir. A Shaman might agree to teach a Persona magic. Or a tribe might award a group of personal guards or lend a small force to be commanded as the Persona wills. For the Persona native to the Heath, such rewards could be far more valuable and interesting than material treasures.

Magical rewards are very rare upon the Heath. The Northmen of Firnost live in a magic-poor world. Magical items are always spiritual in nature. They possess slight dweomers and always have cultural or religious significance. While possession of such items confers subtle magical benefits, it usually carries with it some form of obligation to the tribe. Those who own magical items but dismiss or neglect their complementary obligations will be socially ostracized or hunted outright by the pious Northmen. Foreigners are not permitted to retain magical artifacts and will be persecuted and killed if caught trying to abscond with them beyond the borders of the Heath. All artifacts are shrouded in legend and their cultural significance to Northman culture should never be neglected by the Mythguide.



Sample Rewards for Amilanth

In the City-State of Amilanth, coinage is the standard reward for deeds well done. Life can be luxuriant for the wealthy, and money often translates directly into power. For Personas operating inside Amilanth, money can become a primary motivation. Wealth is traded for the favors and privileges which sustain life and liberty. Because the Amilani markets contain a vast array of goods and services, most Personas find money to be an indirect means of achieving personal goals and desires. Monetary rewards are easily administered in Amilanth, because bribes and enterprise quickly deplete personal wealth. Personas learn that the more wealth one has in Amilanth, the more demanding are the costs of existence.

The Mythguide should award monetary treasure conservatively, but allow astute players to stretch their wealth through careful administration and investment. Players should quickly learn the double nature of material wealth. Wise players find that money is best employed as a social implement, both a motivator and a pacifier for alleviating social and political difficulties. Naive players will doubtless spend their money as quickly as they can earn it, but material goods are only as good as the uses to which they are put. A hired spy or bodyguard is useful, but the money to bribe the spies and bodyguards of adversaries is even more useful. In Amilanth, money leases loyalty, but the increasing greed of the loyal ensures opportunity.

The Mythguide should remember that Amilani men are denied many privileges which money cannot procure - at least not legally. Male Personas residing in Amilanth may find that social favors, illegal goods, and secure alliances are more desirable than wealth. Though many illegal goods can be purchased on the Black market, finding illicit vendors is not easy and the goods they sell are not cheap. Legal punishments for possessing black market goods are also prohibitively severe.

Inventive Mythguides will enjoy granting rewards in Amilanth. Many new goods are traded and smuggled into the City-State daily. Ancient relics, foreign contraptions, false artifacts, and tarnished treasures should keep the Personas guessing as to the value or social implications of possessing newfound rewards. Favors, bribes, and hired services are never reliable until proven so by deed. Players should enjoy the suspense, but the reasonable Mythguide is one who stops short of tormenting the players with 'gift horse' rewards.

mally few and far between. The Mythguide should use the nature and description of an environment's Reality as a guide when creating and placing items of power. For instance, in some environments magic items may only be usable by Adepts, while in others it might be impossible to store Omnescence in objects at all. Every environment has its own unique conventions and laws which govern the use and creation of such items.

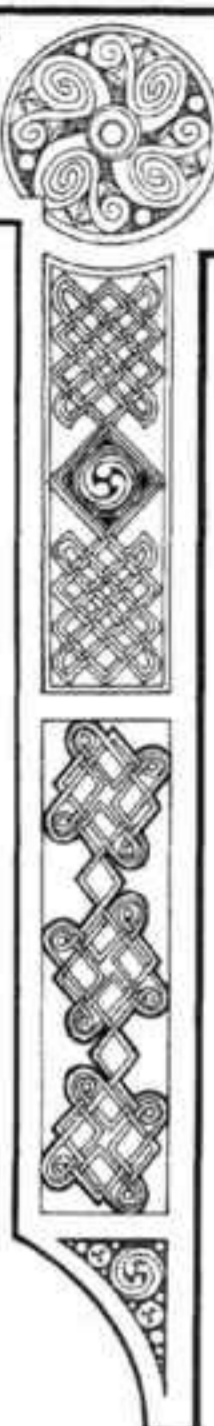
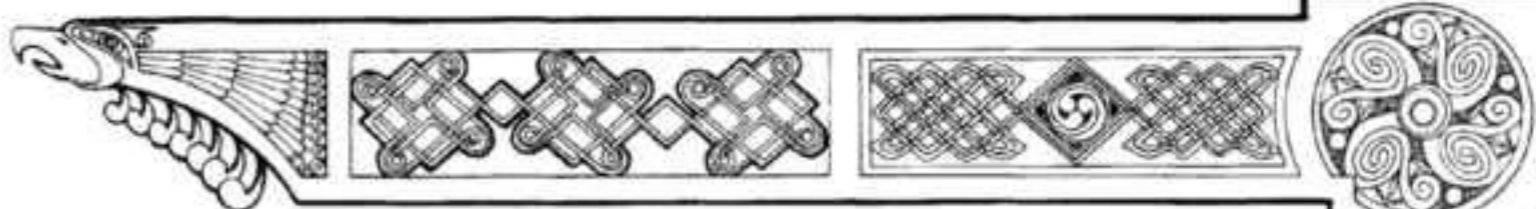
Every Canticle evolves differently, and every Mythguide has a different philosophy regarding the distribution of rewards. Mythguides should be careful not to allow such rewards to unbalance a Canticle in the long term. What may seem an appropriate reward for a single narrative often returns to haunt an over-generous Mythguide in subsequent narratives. The Mythguide should consider the following four guidelines when distributing rewards.

Reward Conservatively

This is probably the most important rule when distributing material rewards. If, as Mythguide, you feel you are being too generous, you probably are. Personas should never receive rewards so large that they cease to want for anything. Of course, this is a matter of degree. A poor mercenary might consider a good month's pay an exorbitant sum; however, he knows the money will soon run out. A great lord might consider the yearly salary for five thousand mercenaries a small sum; however, he knows the money will never cover the costs of repairing his estates which were damaged in the rebellion. A completely secure financial position makes for uninteresting roleplaying; the Mythguide should always inject a bit of tension into the personas' monetary situation, no matter what that situation might be.

The Mythguide should consider the acquisition of magical rewards even more carefully. He needs to be aware of the ramifications a particular item will initiate in the Canticle. For example, before giving a warrior a magical sword the Mythguide had better be certain he wants the warrior to have the sword throughout the remainder of the Canticle (and possibly give the sword to his offspring for use in future Canticles). If the slightest hesitation occurs when asking such questions, it might be better to give the persona a less powerful item. Magical rewards should never unbalance an environment's Reality.

If the Mythguide does give the personas too much in the way of material rewards, he can always allow them to incur random costs or fines. Perhaps they learn that a family member is being ransomed. Maybe a



highly placed official needs to be bribed, or maybe the rightful owner of an item of power returns to claim it. Perhaps the persona wishes to give an extravagant gift during the course of an Interactive History. In a vital and dynamic environment, there is never any shortage of possible costs, expenses, and equalizers. The Mythguide should exploit these possibilities to keep the personas on their toes, but should not make a habit out of giving and then taking away. Better never to give in the first place.

Reward Intelligently

The Mythguide should not dole out treasure or magic indiscriminately. Personalized rewards are often appreciated more than simple quantity. For example, an aristocrat interested in history and archaeology might appreciate the discovery of a series of ancient writings more than a chest full of gold. A sea captain would appreciate a set of accurate navigational charts more than a handful of valuable jewels. The Mythguide should attempt to give rewards that mean something to the personas, rewards that complement the interests and knowledges of the personas.

Of course, the argument can be made that a persona with money would be able to purchase anything he might want or need. The point of giving intelligent rewards is to prevent this mentality. In the previous example, perhaps navigational charts are difficult to find, or maybe they are unavailable in the persona's homeland. They are valuable because only a small maritime nation across the ocean has the technology to draw them. They are even more valuable because they are not easy to obtain through normal channels. The Mythguide should play on the idea of personal value when giving rewards. As this concept sinks in, players will no longer feel as if everything is for sale. They will begin to pursue other avenues of acquisition, and the resulting gains will carry much more value with them.

The Mythguide may also wish to prepare for future encounters or situations in a Canticle by giving rewards. An object might appear innocuous at first, but it could serve an important purpose later in the Canticle. By placing such rewards intelligently, the Mythguide can prepare for or foreshadow future events and interactions.



Reward Descriptively

Rewards seem much more important and evocative if they have histories of their own. The Mythguide should take the time to describe things in detail. For instance, simply telling the personas that they have stumbled upon a large hoard of lost treasure is not very descriptive. Instead, the Mythguide might let one of the personas realize that the hoard is one of three legendary caches that the bandit chieftain Gideon the Black hid before disappearing at sea. The persona may even be able to recognize certain famous items in the hoard - the cup that Gideon used to toast the alliance with Prince of Idiria, the blade that the chieftain used to kill his own nephew, etc.. By imbuing treasure and other material wealth with interesting histories, the players will gain a new respect and fascination for even the most mundane objects.

Items of power should always be given intricate descriptions and histories. It often helps if the Mythguide treats magical items like personas, complete with motivations and a personality. Most items of power will be very old, and as such will have long and involved histories. In most environments, where such items are rare, individual items assume the mantle of legend. For example, a powerful sword in the possession of an important noble house is famous throughout the kingdom. Its distinguished history as a weapon of war is widely known, as is its divine origin. Members of the environment in which the kingdom rests are all familiar with the blade. Personas may also be able to recognize items of legend that have been lost, allowing them some initial knowledge regarding a strange item. Snippets of such knowledge often motivate a persona to seek further information; a bit of research and sleuthing might eventually turn up the entire history of a legendary item.

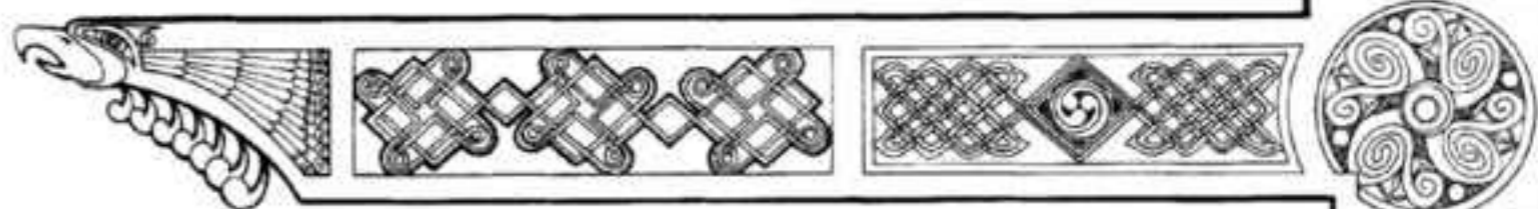
The Mythguide should establish such elaborate description as the norm in his Canticle. Players will become much more curious as a result, collecting and searching for the backgrounds of all rewards, whether magical or not. Gathering treasure becomes an exercise in a world's history, and players may learn more by examining their personas' gains than by studying ancient texts. Detailing such rewards also allows the Mythguide to define elements of the world's history that might not otherwise have been detailed, and to explore the continuity between an environment's history and its current situation.



Reward Suspensefully

Rewards never leap out at personas during a narrative. The personas should always have to work to obtain them. The Mythguide should lead personas into reward acquisition slowly, building a feeling of suspense over a period of time. Personas will cherish even small rewards if they feel as though the fight to gain the prize was difficult.

The Mythguide may also want to instill a sense of mystery when describing an item. Perhaps a statue is sitting on a pedestal surrounded by an eerie glow. Maybe an item of power gives a persona a 'bad feeling'. An aura of uncertainty adds to the suspense. Is the item cursed? Is it valuable? When the personas eventually determine the true nature of an item, the remembrance of the initial suspense and uncertainty will add to the final sense of achievement and satisfaction.



The Shroud of Melcraëlf

The Shroud of Melcraëlf is the perhaps the greatest artifact noted in Northman legend. The Oral History recounts that Melcraëlf Guldswlf (God-son) was mortally wounded in the Battle of Gleil-undasch (the sun-dering of the Giants) where he aided the clan of the Wind Giant chief Ayraedh. So that he should not die so far from his lands, Ayraedh's sister gave him a shroud of her own weaving which confined his exhausted spirit for the duration of his long journey homeward. Draping the Shroud about his crippled frame, Melcraëlf returned on foot to the barrow of Great Chieftains which rests in the foothills of Dun-maith.

There, Melcraëlf and the Shroud remained until removed by Serulok during the time of the Tribal Wars. Unfurling the Shroud during the Massacre at Shlelenrach Fort, Serulok rallied his father's fleeing army which fought beneath the newly summoned faery-winds. Though they stood united under the great billowing Shroud, the day of victory turned into a defeat by seige. It is said that when the last starving man died, the winds were stilled beneath a mournful sky. The Shroud is presumed to have been stolen or destroyed when the hillfort was sacked by enemies and razed by flame.

Firnost tradition describes the Shroud as a voluminous gossamer wrap, embroidered with silver thread, pearl beads, and emblazoned with golden holly leaves. It is rumored that Melcraëlf's blood never dried on the Shroud, but instead became tiny ruby droplets that assumed snaking patterns within the weave.

The Oral History suggests that if the Shroud survived it remains the sacred property of the Windlords and should be kept safe until the time of their return. Among the magical properties associated with the Shroud, its ability to prolong life and its tendency to command powerful winds are most widely observed in tribal folklore. Other, less reliable sources, suggest the Shroud confers the ability to walk upon the winds where Father Time is more hospitable to those of mortal heritage.

Should the Mythguide ever choose to place the Shroud of Melcraëlf within a Narrative, its magical properties and social implications need to be defined. One Mythguide describes its properties as follows:

Spiritual Entrapment: The Shroud ensnares the spirit, confining it within its physical vessel until the shroud is removed. Once removed, the spirit makes its flight to the nether region. In this way, the shroud prolongs the life of an individual by delaying the lethal effects of Shock and Bloodloss. Though the body slowly dies, the spirit (and consciousness) remain until the shroud is removed.

The physical effects of bloodloss and bodily decomposition occur at a normal rate. If a body remains sedentary for more than a few hours, the stiffness associated with rigor mortis begins to set in. Regardless of the manner of death, the body will cease to respond to a Persona's will within 3 days (even though the spirit may be confined indefinitely).

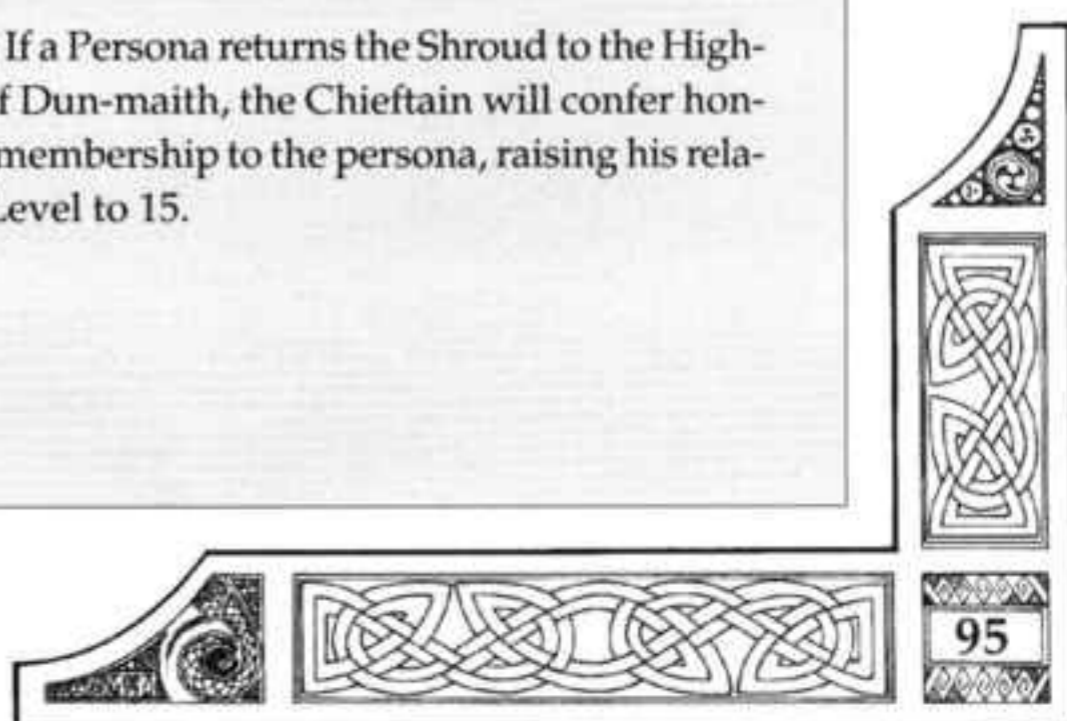
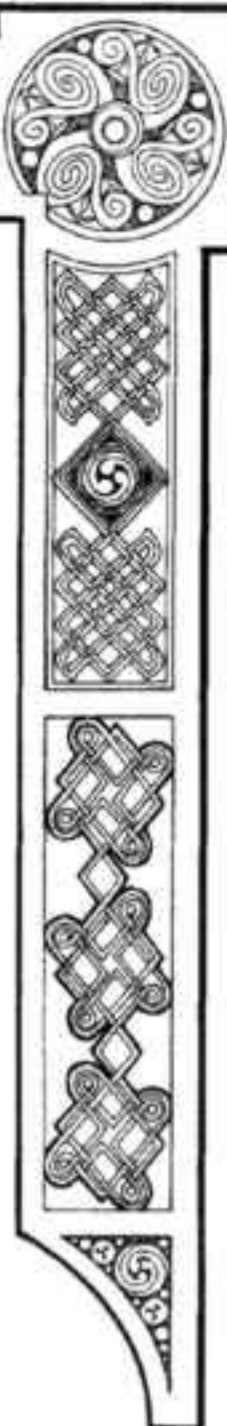
Aside from prolonging Persona life, the Shroud could be used to ensnare spritual entities such as ghosts or spectres. Supernatural beings ensnared by the shroud temporarily lose their ability to physically effect the material world (though they may still be able to employ magic).

Summon Winds: Personas who employ elemental magic gain increased ability to summon a witch-wind.

Windwalking: The Shroud enables its wearer to cross vast distances in one fourth the normal time required so long as the wearer travels beneath an open sky. Persona's must have Faith (Element/Air Magic) of 3 or higher to use this power. Windwalking Personas appear to glide during motion, and do not require solid ground to walk upon (ie. they may cross water). This power only works as long as the body is capable of self-propulsion.

Renown: If a Persona should find the Shroud and display it within Northman society, the reputation of the item will raise his or her Renown. To determine how much a Persona's Renown increases, consider the Shroud to confer Renown as if it had a Renown of 8. See Conferring Renown in the Family Chapter for more detail.

Status: If a Persona returns the Shroud to the Highland Tribe of Dun-maith, the Chieftain will confer honorary tribal membership to the persona, raising his relative Status Level to 15.



Sample Myth Point Awards

<i>Event Description</i>	<i>Point Award</i>
Persona participates in a successful narrative	1
Persona leads a successful narrative	1 - 3
Persona participates in a successful canticle	1 - 3
Persona leads a successful canticle	2 - 5
Persona makes a great sacrifice contributing to the completion of a successful narrative or canticle	1 - 3
Persona contributes to a world-shaping event/canticle resolution	1 - 3
Persona single-handedly effects a world-shaping event	3 - 5
Persona achieves short-term goals/objectives	1
Persona achieves long-term goal/objective	1 - 3
Persona survives and learns from a failed narrative/canticle	1
Persona overcomes a major obstacle with a unique/innovative solution	1 - 2
Persona is role-played with near perfection during a narrative	1
Persona is role-played with near perfection throughout the course of a canticle	2 - 3
Persona cheats death with an amazingly lucky roll of the dice	1
Persona develops during Historic Interval	2/year

Mythguides should award conservatively. Remember that Personas may develop Attributes, Traits, Renown, and Expertises Interactively.

Myth Points

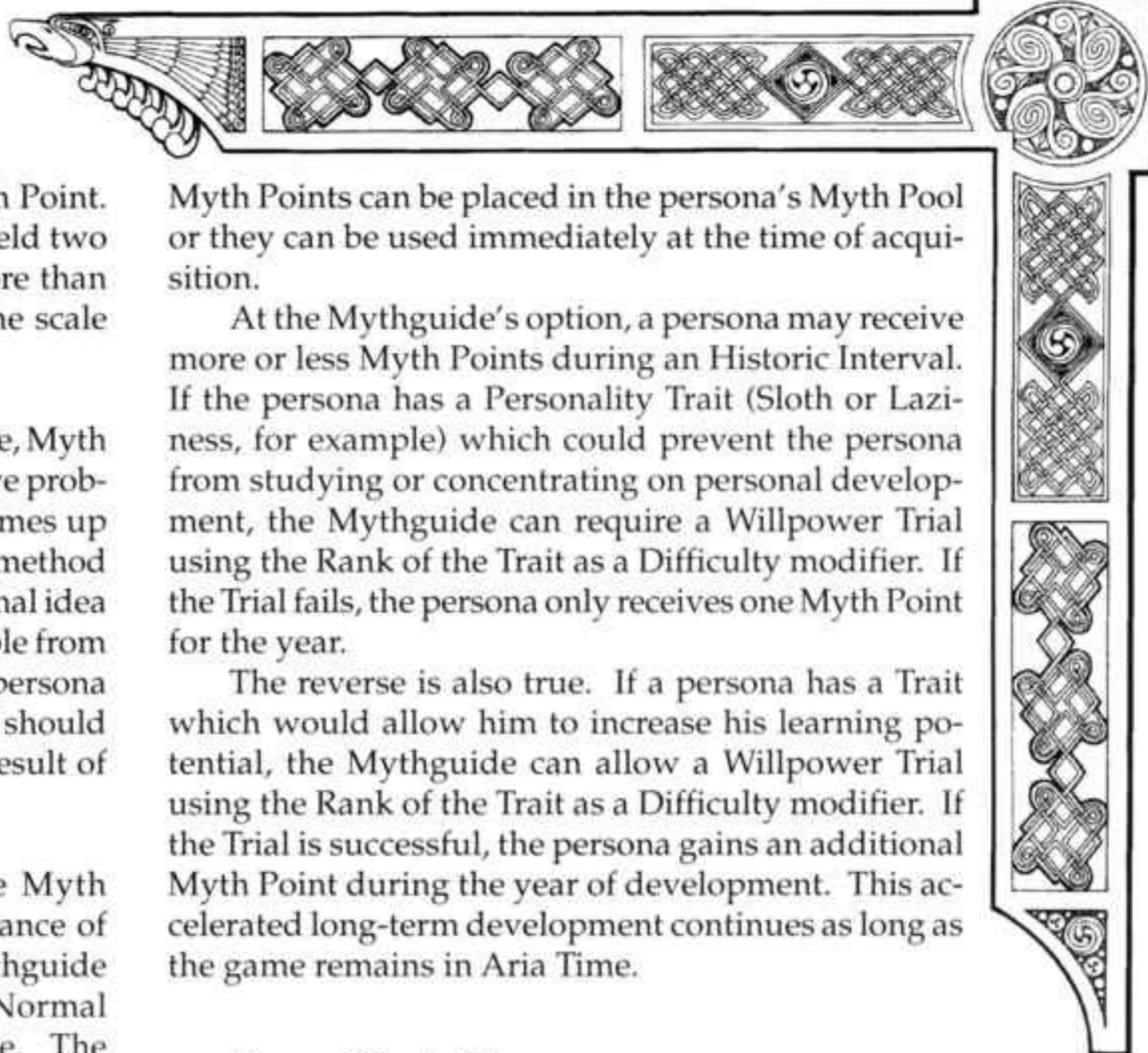
Myth Points are the principal form of persona reward, and can be used to improve most Characteristics and Traits. Personas do not cease their development when Background Development ends. They continue to learn and evolve as a result of individual experience, and Myth Points reflect this continuing development. Myth Points are received for social interactions, good roleplaying, original ideas, and innovative solutions to problems. The following sections describe the assignment and uses of Myth Points.

Acquiring Myth Points

Myth Points are awarded at the conclusion of every narrative based on a number of factors. The number of points awarded depends on both the performance of a persona in a narrative and on the nature of the Canticle. The Mythguide considers the events of a narrative and rewards persona accordingly. In a Canticle with a standard Tone of balanced fantasy, between three and six Myth Points constitutes an average award. If the Tone of the Canticle is much more realistic or much more fantastic, the Mythguide may wish to modify the suggested point awards for each category. Personas in realistic Canticles often advance slower than those in Canticles with Tones of High Fantasy. This section provides several categories for the Mythguide to consider when awarding Myth Points.

Success: Did the personas successfully resolve the narrative? Did they accomplish their short-term goals? Myth Points should be awarded on the basis of successful roleplaying and interaction. For successfully completing a narrative, a persona should receive one Myth Point. For achieving any short-term goals personas should receive a base of one Myth Point. Depending on the Scope of the narrative, additional Myth Points may be acquired. See the next category. Alternately, if the personas fail to successfully complete a narrative, but learn from their mistakes, the Mythguide can still award a single Myth Point for their efforts. If their actions are unusually idiotic, they may receive no Myth Points.

Scope: Additional Myth Points should be awarded for the successful realization of large-scale goals during a narrative. Such narratives are often epic tales whose outcomes can shape the futures of entire regions or nations. A narrative which affects a large



city might give a persona one additional Myth Point. A narrative affecting a small country might yield two additional points. Scope will rarely yield more than three additional Myth Points, regardless of the scale of the narrative.

Innovation: At the option of the Mythguide, Myth Points can be awarded for innovative or creative problem solving during a narrative. If a player comes up with a unique solution to a difficult problem, a method of escape where none was apparent, or an original idea that saves one or more members of the Ensemble from physical harm, the Mythguide can reward the persona with a Myth Point. As a general rule, a persona should not receive more than two Myth Points as a result of Innovation during a single narrative.

Roleplaying: Personas should receive Myth Points based on the roleplaying and performance of the player. For normal roleplaying, the Mythguide should give the persona one Myth Point. Normal roleplaying indicates competent performance. The player remains true to most of his persona's Personality Traits and Motivations; he interacts well and appropriately with the other players, and makes valuable contributions to the overall roleplaying experience. If the Mythguide feels that a certain player acted particularly well during a narrative, he may award that player's persona an extra Myth Point. This might constitute a series of dramatic actions that complement the persona's role. The Mythguide might decide to set up such a reward as the prize in an overall contest. He can make it known ahead of time that the best roleplayer during a narrative will receive an additional Myth Point. This sets up a bit of good-natured competition and enhances the roleplaying performances.

Players who do not roleplay their personas properly or effectively can be penalized by not receiving any Myth Points for roleplaying. Although this should not occur often, players who ignore their personas' Traits should not receive awards. For example, a persona with a Passion for Cruelty who insists that everyone get along and be nice to one another is not playing his role properly. The Mythguide must decide when such penalties need to be applied.

ACQUIRING LONG-TERM MYTH POINTS

Personas do not sit idle during the course of an Interactive History or an extended period of inactivity. They continue to evolve and develop even though they are not being directly controlled. Personas gain two Myth Points per year of such development. These

Myth Points can be placed in the persona's Myth Pool or they can be used immediately at the time of acquisition.

At the Mythguide's option, a persona may receive more or less Myth Points during an Historic Interval. If the persona has a Personality Trait (Sloth or Laziness, for example) which could prevent the persona from studying or concentrating on personal development, the Mythguide can require a Willpower Trial using the Rank of the Trait as a Difficulty modifier. If the Trial fails, the persona only receives one Myth Point for the year.

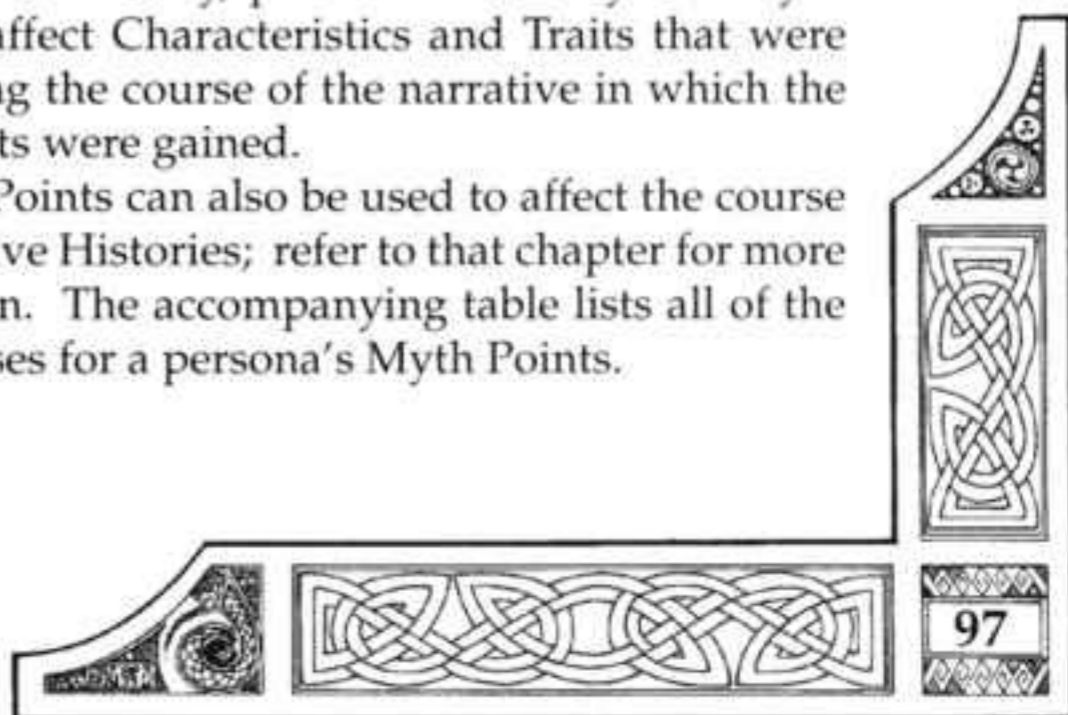
The reverse is also true. If a persona has a Trait which would allow him to increase his learning potential, the Mythguide can allow a Willpower Trial using the Rank of the Trait as a Difficulty modifier. If the Trial is successful, the persona gains an additional Myth Point during the year of development. This accelerated long-term development continues as long as the game remains in Aria Time.

Using Myth Points

Players may initially do one of two things with their Myth Points: use them to increase Characteristics, Traits, and social elements, or place them in their persona's Myth Pool. Basically, Myth Points are equivalent to Interaction Points when improving a persona's abilities and characteristics. Any development which is possible using Interaction Points is possible using Myth Points. For example, if a player wishes to raise his persona's Wisdom from Rank six to Rank seven, the increase would cost two Myth Points (since the same increase would have cost two Interaction Points).

Players may partially raise certain elements with Myth Points as well. For example, if it costs a persona three Myth Points to increase a Discipline from Rank eight to Rank nine, the increase can occur incrementally. The player could spend two Myth Points at the end of one narrative and one additional Myth Point at the end of a second narrative. Players must keep track of those Characteristics and Traits that have been partially raised. Finally, personas can only use Myth Points to affect Characteristics and Traits that were used during the course of the narrative in which the Myth Points were gained.

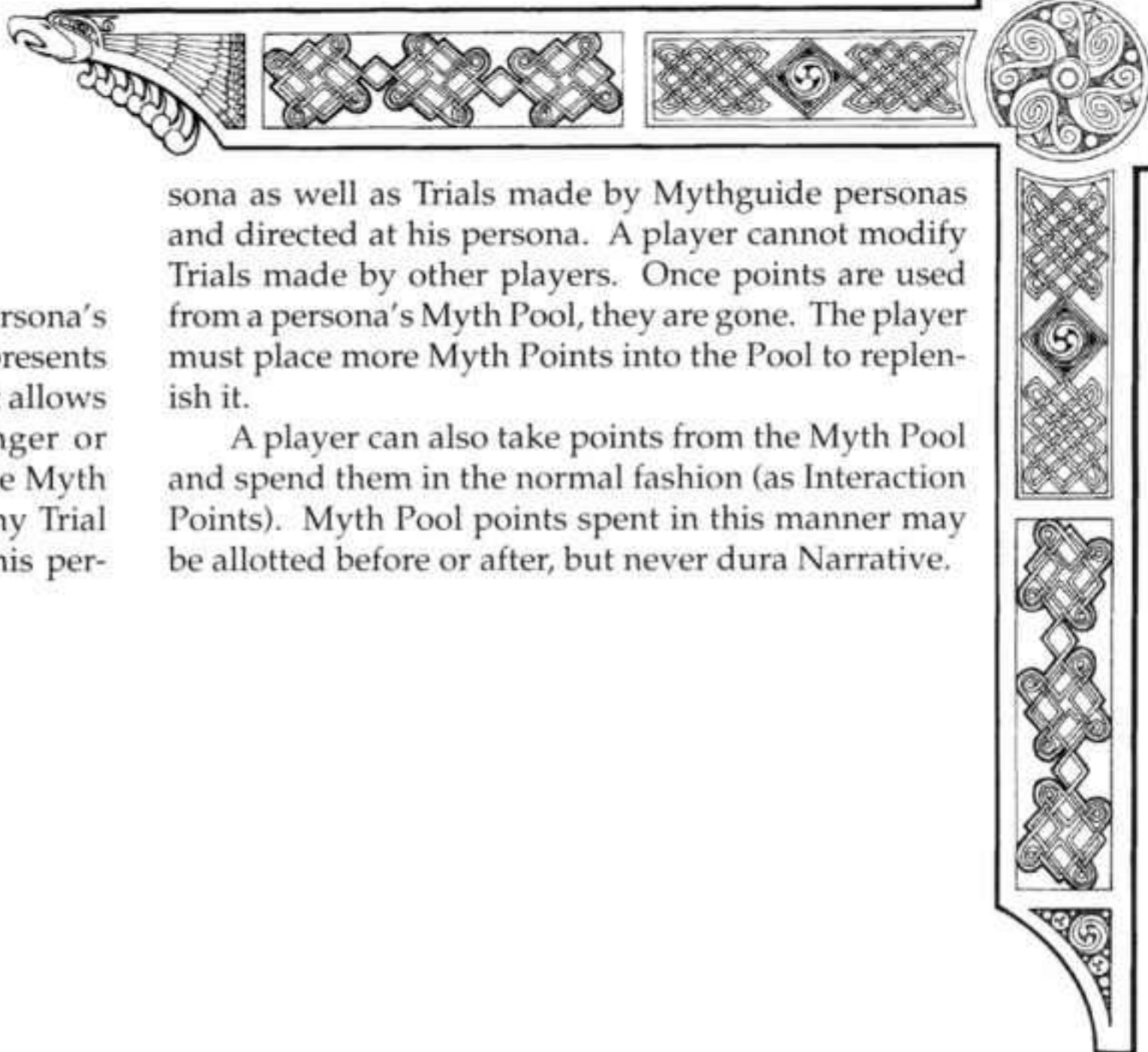
Myth Points can also be used to affect the course of Interactive Histories; refer to that chapter for more information. The accompanying table lists all of the possible uses for a persona's Myth Points.



Persona Uses for Myth Points

Personas may spend accumulated Mythpoints to develop or improve any of the following areas.

Area of Improvement	Guidelines and Restrictions
Status Level	Cost = (# of Mythpoints = Rigidity of Status per Status level ascended)
Family Relationships	Personas may change Sibling Rank (toward Inheritor), Estrangement, or activate Inheritance by expending a # of Mythpoints = IP cost on Family Table. Changes should be explained rationally. ex. Family has a change of heart so Estrangement improves. Elder Sibling dies so Persona moves up in line of Inheritance. Family Head dies so offspring gains due inheritance.
Influence & Leverage	Cost = 1 Mythpoint per point increased in a single Influence or Leverage Pool
Family Renown	Cost = IP cost for improving Persona Renown. New Family Renown may confer to Persona.
Attributes	Cost = IP cost for improving Attributes. Attributes may only be improved to maximum Potential.
Faith	Cost = IP cost for improving Faith
Insight	Cost =(Average Omnescence Power Value per Insight Rank ascended)
Renown	Cost = IP cost for improving Renown. New Persona Renown may be conferred to Family.
Enter a new Vocational Setting	If Mythguide allows Personas to enter new Vocational Settings and develop during Historic Intervals, Persona may substitute Mypoints for IP to enter a new Vocational Setting. For each year of the Historic Interval spent in Setting, Persona recieves # of IP = Initial Development allotment
Expertises	Cost = IP cost for improving Expertise Ranks. Personas may use Mythpoints only to develop Expertises used during a Narrative or Canticle
New Expertises	Cost = IP cost for Improving Expertise Ranks (1 point to open Expertise to Rank 1). If a Persona is required to make a Trial for an Expertise that he doesn't possess (Rank 0), and he scores a Complete Success or better, he may open that Expertise by expending Mythpoints at the end of the Narrative or Canticle.
Aspects	Cost = IP cost for Aspects. Mythguides may allow Personas to open or improve Aspects between Narratives or Canticles. More often, however, Mythguides may allow Personas to spend Mythpoints to reduce Unfavorable Aspects. In this case, reduction costs are paid per level reduced.
Interactive Histories	Mythguides may allow Personas to use Mythpoints to direct the Historical Development of the Persona's family or home society. Each Mythguide must determine Mythpoint expenditures and their effects upon the Narrative Environment.
Persona Myth Pool	Personas can reserve and collect Mythpoints by placing them in a Myth Pool. Myth Pool points may be spent during a Narrative to lower the difficulty of Trials. For every 2 points spent, the Difficulty of the Trial decreases by 1 level. Mythpoints spent in this manner are gone forever, but a Persona can replenish the Myth Pool with future Myth Point gains.

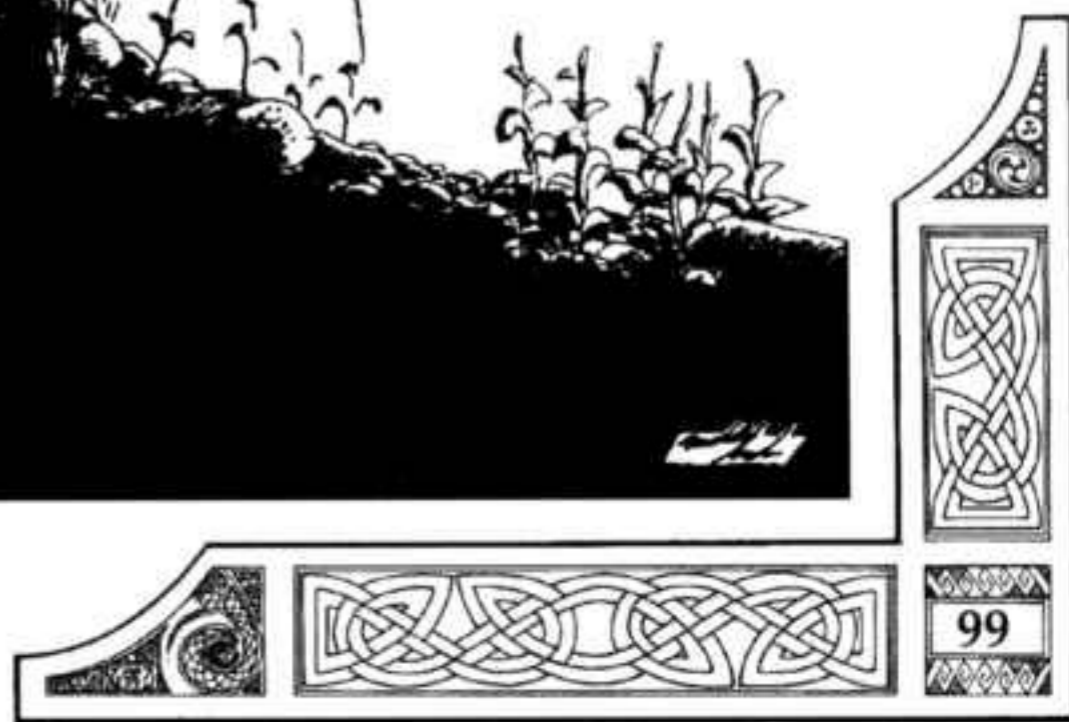


The Myth Pool

Players have the option of placing their persona's Myth Points into a Myth Pool. This Pool represents the unique luck that most personas possess. It allows personas to cheat fate in face of great danger or unwinnable odds. For every two points in the Myth Pool, a player can modify the Difficulty of any Trial by one level. This includes Trials made by his per-

sona as well as Trials made by Mythguide personas and directed at his persona. A player cannot modify Trials made by other players. Once points are used from a persona's Myth Pool, they are gone. The player must place more Myth Points into the Pool to replenish it.

A player can also take points from the Myth Pool and spend them in the normal fashion (as Interaction Points). Myth Pool points spent in this manner may be allotted before or after, but never dura Narrative.



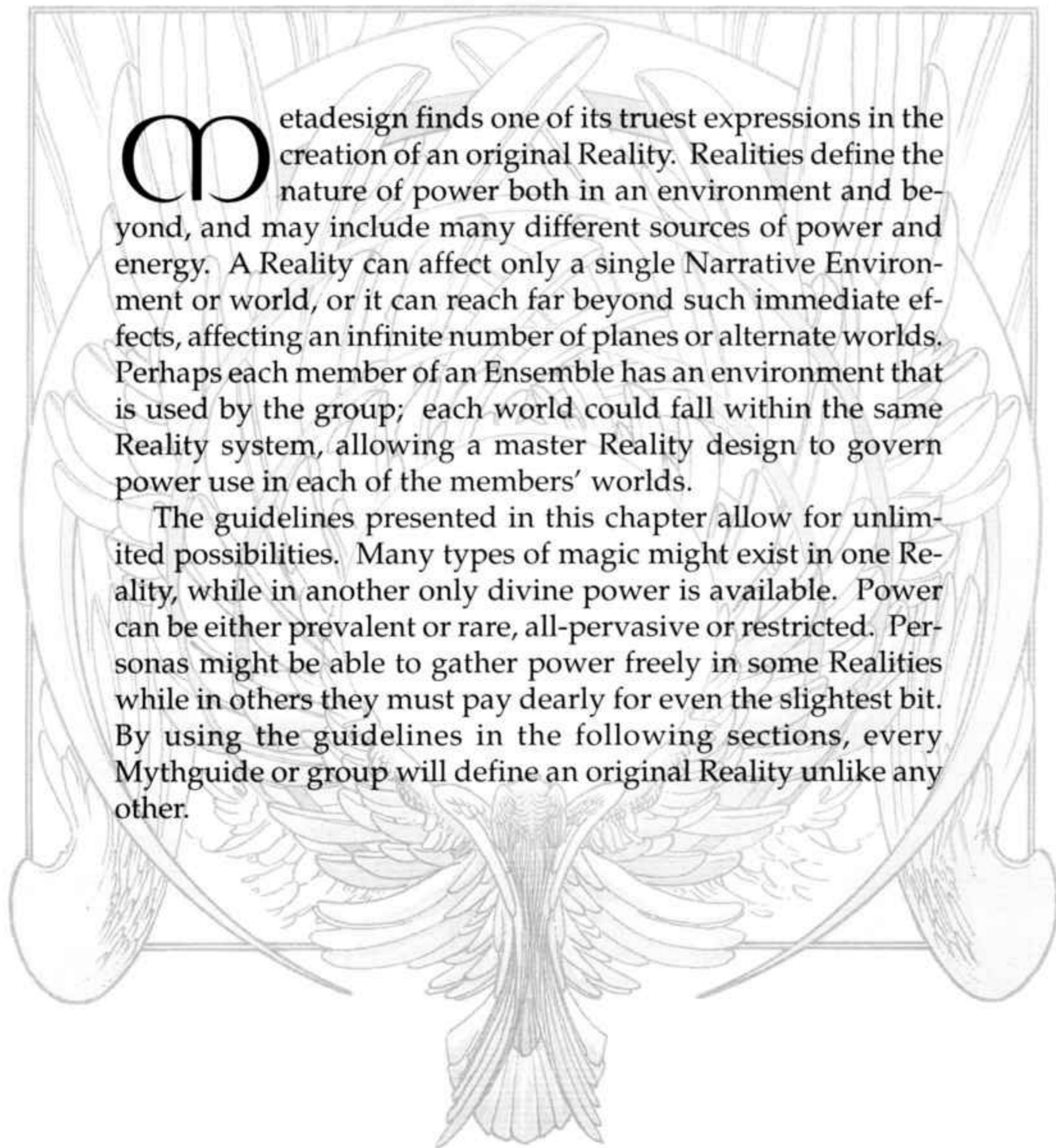


Reality & Magic

☉ Chapter Three ☉

Metadesign finds one of its truest expressions in the creation of an original Reality. Realities define the nature of power both in an environment and beyond, and may include many different sources of power and energy. A Reality can affect only a single Narrative Environment or world, or it can reach far beyond such immediate effects, affecting an infinite number of planes or alternate worlds. Perhaps each member of an Ensemble has an environment that is used by the group; each world could fall within the same Reality system, allowing a master Reality design to govern power use in each of the members' worlds.

The guidelines presented in this chapter allow for unlimited possibilities. Many types of magic might exist in one Reality, while in another only divine power is available. Power can be either prevalent or rare, all-pervasive or restricted. Personas might be able to gather power freely in some Realities while in others they must pay dearly for even the slightest bit. By using the guidelines in the following sections, every Mythguide or group will define an original Reality unlike any other.



Because of the nature of the Reality creation elements, the use of power in Aria becomes a very intuitive process. The purpose behind the creation rules is to allow the Mythguide and Ensemble to immerse themselves in the uniqueness and 'feel' of their own Reality system. Mechanics and hard rules are secondary to this principal goal. Many final decisions regarding Effects and Costs will have to be made 'on the fly'. However, the depth provided by the creation guidelines should facilitate such resolution. Mythguides who are familiar with the structure and nature of a Reality should be able to intuitively interpret appropriate effects.

Consistency

Consistency should be the cardinal rule during any Reality creation session. Because of the open-ended nature of these guidelines, numerous Reality-specific decisions are required on the part of the Mythguide. The nature of a Reality and its Origins usually present answers to the most basic questions. It is the Mythguide's job to keep such guidelines consistent among Archetypes and Dominions. Omnescence use should not normally be allowed to unbalance game play, although Realities may occasionally be designed for this purpose (if players are not permitted to use magic, for example).

Balance

The concept of Balance forms a corollary to the rule of Consistency. The Mythguide should carefully consider both the nature of his game world and the esoteric needs of the Narrative Environment being used for play. Esoteric power relationships should always form a workable Balance with secular and mundane power relationships. For example, if mages are relatively few and far between in an environment, they may have large amounts of individual power. Even collectively, they would not be much of a threat against concerted political pressure. However, a state religion with many powerful priests would probably shift Balance in the environment in an uncomfortable direction. The Mythguide should weigh such concerns when designing a world's Reality. If every Adept encountered is an unstoppable magical arsenal, it takes a bit of the fun out of things.

Of course, there are certain exceptions to the previous guidelines. In some cases, the Mythguide may want to purposely unbalance power relationships if such an atmosphere will enhance a Canticle. In the

previous example, if the powerful church hierarchy also ruled the nation as a theocratic council and served as the major villain of the Canticle, it might be appropriate to unbalance things in favor of the church. It will give the players a difficult and concerted goal for which their personas (and possibly their descendants) can strive. It also makes the personas' eventual victory all the sweeter.

Designing a Reality

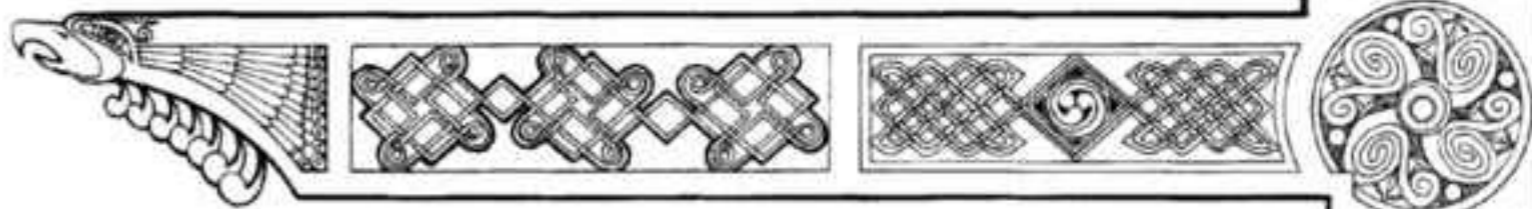
Realities serve as the master templates that organize power and define its uses. Several important concepts must be understood before Reality creation can begin. Omnescence forms the 'stuff' of any Reality, and represents power in raw form. Omnescence can be described on an environmental level; in one Reality, it might be Manna or Quintessence. In another it could represent the power of belief. All facets of Omnescence and its use - amount, availability, persona access, cost - are unique to an individual Reality, and are governed by the creation rules in this chapter.

Omnescence in a particular Reality comes from specific sources called Origins. There may be only a single Origin or there could be several. Origins can be Sentient entities (such as gods) or Non-Sentient sources of power (such as essence flows). Origins are further broken down into Archetypes and Dominions. Archetypes define what Omnescence does and Dominions detail its effects. There are six possible Archetypes and six possible Dominions. Some, all, or none of these might be present in a Reality. An Archetype and a Dominion combine to create an actual Paradigm, which in turn can activate Effects in a Reality. In some Realities, Paradigms might be called spells.

Aspects also play a large role in the Reality creation process. Like in the persona creation process, Aspects serve to further define or describe larger elements. For example, a Mythguide wants a possible source of power to be a semi-Aware, roiling sea of Chaos. He gives the Origin a Partially Sentient Nature with a descriptive Aspect of Chaos. Aspects should be used to add environment or Reality-specific considerations to many elements of Reality and Origin creation.

FOUR QUESTIONS

There are four principal questions which must be addressed when designing a Reality: Where does Omnescence come from? How does one obtain it?



Reality Lexicon

Adept:	the common term for any individual who engages in the manipulation of Omnesence by means of casting Paradigms.
Affinity:	the susceptibility or vulnerability of an object, item, creature, or individual to the effects of manipulated Omnesence.
Apotheosis:	the elevation or ascension from humanity to divinity, often represented in the attainment of immortality, pure spirituality, or godliness.
Aspect:	any description which elaborates on the nature of a particular facet of Reality
Aura:	a persona's innate life force, spirituality, or power. Aura equals a persona's Empathy Attribute.
Capacity:	the ease and ability of temporarily or permanently storing Omnesence derived from a particular Origin.
Configuration:	the combination of a single Omnesence Archetype and a single Omnesence Dominion (i.e. Conjunction/Spirit, Destruction/Organic, or Transformation/Energy).
Insight:	a Persona Trait representing the Persona's intimate comprehension of Reality (and the fundamental principles which govern it). Insight indicates the degree of absolute understanding possessed by a Persona rather than indicating his familiarity with common <i>Perceptions</i> and misconceptions of how the Reality works.
Faith:	a Persona Trait representing the sheer Belief that a Persona holds for the workings of a Reality or specific Origin. Faith is often the Primary Trait in Sentient Origins.
Might:	the maximum amount of Omnesence which can be spent upon a Paradigm existing within a particular Configuration (Might = Archetype Power + Dominion Facility).
Omnesence:	power or energy used to alter the fabric of reality in an environment.
Omnesence Archetype:	a categorical assessment which defines the basic function of Omnesence derived from a particular Origin (Conjunction, Creation, Destruction, Divination, Manipulation, and Transformation).
Omnesence Dominion:	a categorical assessment which defines the generic realm of influence of Omnesence derived from a particular Origin (Energy, Organic, Physical, Reality, Spirit, and Will).
Omnesence Expertises:	each Archetype and each Dominion is governed by a separate Expertise. Adepts cannot use Effects whose Might exceeds their average Expertise Rank.



Omnescence Fundamental:	a numerical and descriptive summary Template which details the forms, uses, and capabilities of Omnescence derived from a particular Origin.
Omnescence Province:	a numerical evaluation of the ability of Omnescence to be manipulated into different Configurations. Omnescence Province is defined by a summary of the Power values of all Omnescence Archetypes and the Facility of all Omnescence Dominions pertaining to a specific Origin.
Omni:	a Society, Order, or Group of Omnescence users joined by a similar Philosophical or erudite perspective concerning the nature of Omnescence and the purposed for which it should be manipulated by Omni members.
Origin:	a source of pure Omnescence, or magical power.
Paradigm:	a standardized, established, or regulated method for manipulating Omnescence to achieve desired effects. Paradigms consist of a Configuration, a base Cost, a Method, a Preparation element, Time and Distance Elements, and an Effects element. Paradigms are frequently termed <i>Spells</i> .
Participation:	indicates whether or not Omnescence usage is an individual activity within an Origin (i.e. can several Adepts pull their resources?).
Preparation:	the procedural steps required to focus or direct Omnescence once it has been Accessed.
Primary Trait:	the persona Trait (Aura, Faith, or Insight) which governs Omnescence use within the parameters defined by a particular Origin.
Reality:	the primal forces and mystical principles which govern the forms and states of things in existence and determine the possibility of all occurrences and events.
Resistance:	the ability to withstand or resist the Effects of Omnescence. Passive Resistance depends on Affinity, while Active Resistance results from a combination of variable elements (such as Omnescence Expertises, Insight, and Willpower).
Storage:	the ability to temporarily or permanently preserve Accessed Omnescence within a prepared Vessel. Storage Vessels assume a variety of forms ranging from the body of the Adept to magically enchanted containers or items of power (magical staves, gems, etc.).
Tempering a Form:	the active manipulation of Paradigm elements to either lower its Cost or alter its Effects. Temper Aspects describe the ways in which Paradigms can be manipulated and recommend additional Omnescence Costs to be added to the Base Cost.



What can it do? And Who can use it? If the Mythguide is able to give each of these fundamental questions solid and consistent answers, he has probably designed a workable and playable Reality.

This chapter is divided into several parts. The first part attempts to provide a structure for the first question, detailing general Reality creation and the design of individual Origins and their natures. The second part details Omnescence use in the Reality, describing both its Access and its Availability, as well as the preparation and activation of Paradigms. The third part details any restrictions or requirements placed upon individuals who are able to use Omnescence in a Reality. The final section of the chapter discusses the creation and function of Omnis in the Narrative Environment and contains several extensive examples.

☉ Reality Concept ☉

The first step in the Reality creation process is the definition of a general Reality Concept. A Concept can be defined in a single sentence or it might require a short paragraph. The Mythguide can be as specific as he likes. Perhaps the Concept defines a concrete visualization of the multiverse governed by the Reality; it could mention the possible 'levels of existence' or governing powers, or it might attempt to narratively describe the shape or size of the Reality.

The Concept should always detail the Origins that exist in the Reality. If an Origin is Omnificent (a universal Creator), it should be described here. The Genesis of non-Creator Origins is described as one of the elements of an Origin's description. The following possibilities can describe a Reality's Nature: *Single* (only one Origin exists in the Reality), *Dual* (Two Origins exist in the Reality), *Multiple* (three or more Origins exist, but the total number is finite), and *Infinite* (an unlimited number of Origins are present).

☉ Origin ☉

It is important to define the forms and natures of the Origins in a Reality, since Origins represent the actual sources of Omnescence. The laws and models that govern a particular Origin dictate the possible uses of power in a Reality. Origins can be defined individually or as groups of related power sources. For example, individual deities might represent individual Origins in one Reality, while in another an entire pantheon could represent a single Origin. The Mythguide should detail the Origins appearing in the Reality by

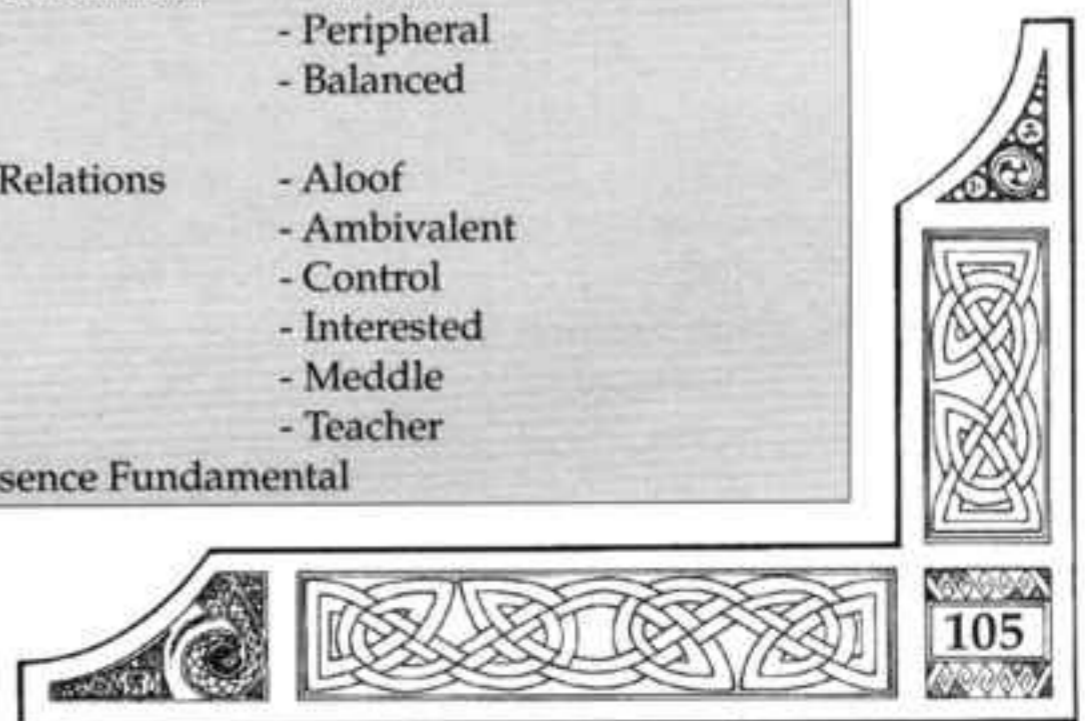
creating Templates for them. Origin Templates define the Nature, Form, Connections, and Orientation of individual Origins.

Origin Template

The Mythguide should design a general Concept and description of the Origin. The Mythguide or group may also wish to name the Origin. The following parameters define several of the most important elements of any Origin; they also attempt to relate sources of power within the same Reality to each other. By comparing different Origin Templates to one another within a Reality, the Mythguide obtains a coherent overview of the cosmology of the Reality. The Origin Parameters are also meant to serve as a guide when designing the various elements of an Origin's Omnescence Fundamental. For example, a Sentient Origin will rarely distribute Freely Accessible Omnescence, just as an Avaricious Origin does not usually dole out power in the form of Grants. The parameters in the following sections attempt to provide the Mythguide with some direction during the creation process.

Elements of the Origin Template

Origin Nature	- Sentient - Partially Sentient - Non-Sentient - Fluctuating
Origin Form	- Entity - Essence - Spontaneous
Origin Genesis	- Inherent - Created
Origin Connections	- Totality - Separate - Related
Origin Orientation	- Visceral - Peripheral - Balanced
Origin Relations	- Aloof - Ambivalent - Control - Interested - Meddle - Teacher
Omnescence Fundamental	



Origin Nature



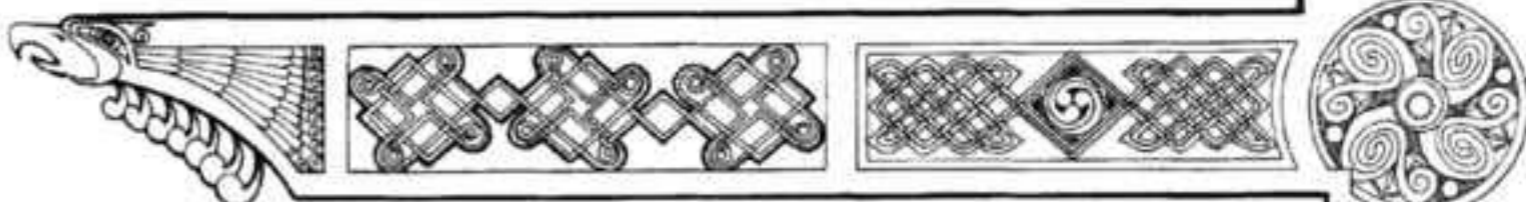
The Nature of the Origin defines its level of Awareness, and affects certain Aspects and limitations that require independent thought or will. Four Natures are possible.

A *Sentient* Nature describes an Origin that is Aware of its existence and purpose. Sentient Origins often have Motivations and personalities, and these personalities can affect those who depend on the Origin for Omnescence or power. Sentient Origins do not necessarily have to be 'beings'. Forces and energies may be Sentient.

A *Partially Sentient* Nature describes an Origin that is only marginally Aware of its existence or position in a Reality. Partially Sentient Origins can have personalities, but such personalities are often strange or incomplete. For example, a Partially Sentient being might behave like a child, or its psyche might be represented by a single isolated Trait. Its ability to sense or understand emotions and intentions may be limited.

A *Non-Sentient* Nature is completely non-Aware. Non-Sentient Origins often represent primal or universal stores of power or energy. They will not have personalities or motivations. An abstract Unified Field might represent a Non-Sentient Origin that is everywhere, in everything.

A *Fluctuating* Nature undergoes some type of change. This change could be either intermittent or final. Perhaps an Origin is a force which moves from a Sentient to a Partially Sentient state and back again every aeon. Maybe an energy source pulsates on a more regular basis. Finally, the Fluctuation could be directional or one-way. For example, an Origin could be created as a Non-Sentient force and begin a slow journey toward Sentience. Perhaps a persona could contribute to the Origin's ultimate transformation. The Mythguide should define any unusual or important consequences of a Fluctuation.



Aspects can provide additional specific definition to an Origin's Nature. They can describe personality and psychological elements, motivations, and intentions. Aspects can also be used to detail a Fluctuation or the level of Awareness of a Partially Sentient Origin. Possible Aspects include Pure, Tainted, Corrupt, Insane, and Diseased. In some Realities, practitioners who use Omnescence obtained from a particular Origin can feel residual effects based on these Aspects. Personas could be required to make Willpower Trials in order to resist gaining Ranks in related Background Aspects or Personality Traits. See the section on Omnescence Incidentals later in this chapter for elaboration.

ORIGIN FORM

An Origin's Form describes the vehicle from which Omnescence springs in a particular Reality. It can also define an Origin's place and location in the larger Reality, and its relationship to the environment in which the players are operating. There are four possible Forms.

An *Entity* describes a being, creature, or higher power that has some degree of Awareness. Entities include such things as gods, spirits, and divine minions. Entities normally have Sentient Natures, but other Natures are possible.

An *Essence* describes a primal force, power, or energy. Essences are normally Non-Sentient, but such energies can appear in any of the four Natures.

An Origin can be *Internal*, formed from an individual's own psyche or mental energy. The individual creates Omnescence within his own mind. Internal Origins are usually Sentient since they describe the individual using the Omnescence.

A *Spontaneous* Origin only exists when it is activated. In a Spontaneous Origin, Omnescence is spontaneously created. For example, words or symbols might create Omnescence in some Realities when they are inscribed on certain materials. The symbols and the inscription together could represent a Spontaneous Origin.

Form can also be further defined by Aspects; Aspects can indicate location or placement within the Reality. For instance, if a Reality is composed of various planes or levels of existence, the Origin's place among them might be defined. The perceptions of the Origin, from the perspective of the mundane environment, can also be defined as a part of an Origin's Form.

ORIGIN GENESIS

The Genesis of the Origin should be described in relation to the Reality. How was the Origin created? Who created it? Defining the parameters of each Origin's creation will help determine the interactions and relationships among the different forces and powers at work in a Reality. Several types of Genesis are possible.

An Origin can be *Inherent*. Both the Reality and the Origin are Eternal, and both have always existed in more or less the same forms.

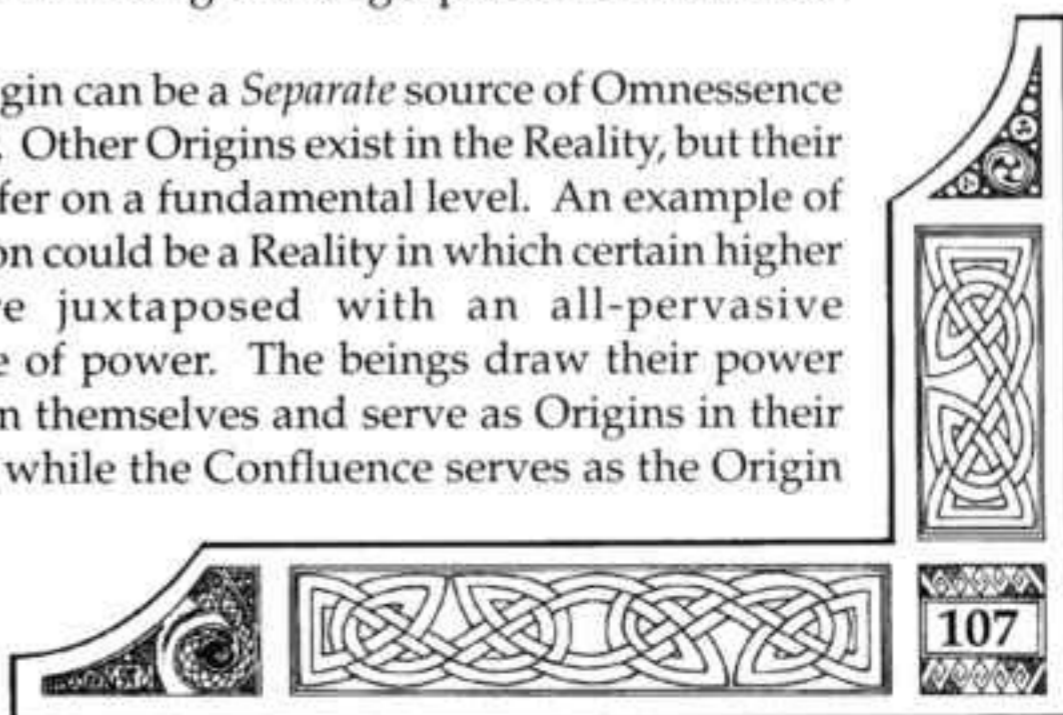
An Origin can be *Created*. The Origin's creator should be described by an Aspect. A lesser Origin could be created by another Origin (or by a group of Origins). If this is the case, the relationship between the two Origins may be very important to the overall Reality. An Origin could be created by raw Omnescence, although the amounts required will prevent this from being a normal occurrence in any Reality. Origins may also be created by some type of collective will, belief, or aura. This Creation method normally applies to Origins that are revered or worshipped in some manner (the Origin feeds off the energy of the belief or emotion). Finally, an Origin could be created by an action or event. For example, if a Non-Sentient Origin is created Spontaneously, a single word of power could cause the power source to spring into being.

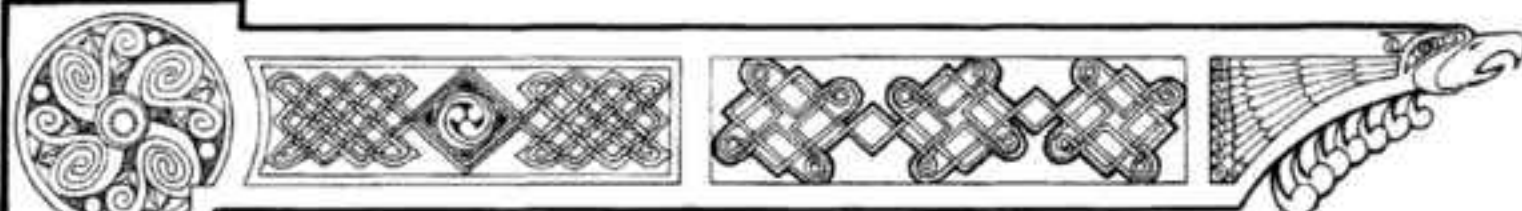
ORIGIN CONNECTIONS

The Mythguide should detail the Origin's Connections with other Origins in the Reality. This element defines the nature of the power sources in a Reality, especially as they relate both to one another and to those who rely on them as ultimate sources of Omnescence. Connections among a Reality's Origins can be described by four different possibilities.

An Origin can be the *Totality* of power in a Reality. If this is the case, the Origin represents a single nebulous source of Omnescence. Examples might include a single Creator being or a single pool of fundamental energy.

An Origin can be a *Separate* source of Omnescence in a Reality. Other Origins exist in the Reality, but their natures differ on a fundamental level. An example of this situation could be a Reality in which certain higher beings are juxtaposed with an all-pervasive Confluence of power. The beings draw their power from within themselves and serve as Origins in their own right, while the Confluence serves as the Origin



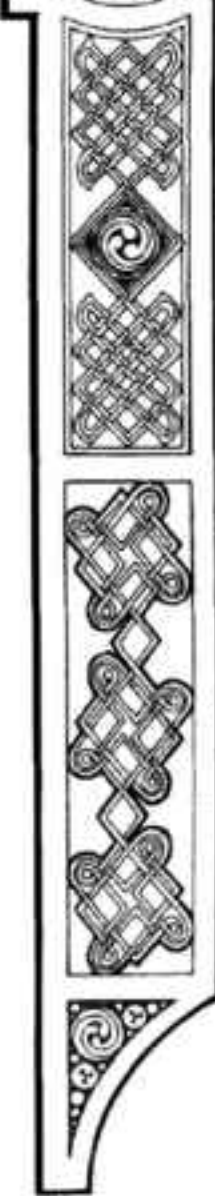


of a different sort of Omnescence. The two types of Origin are Separate and unrelated.

An Origin can be *Related* to other Origins or sources of power in the Reality. The Origin either overlaps, complements, or depends on other elements of the Reality. For example, a single ultimate energy source might provide several Origins with Omnescence. Adepts may be able to access this energy directly while priests might have to obtain Omnescence secondhand through their patrons (who in turn get *their* power from this ultimate source). If the Nature of the energy were anything other Non-Sentient, this arrangement could make for some very interesting situations.

Aspects should be used to describe the precise Connections and their forms. The Mythguide might wish to determine whether or not any type of Control exists. An Origin may be Free, Partly Controlled, or Controlled. In the previous example, if the ultimate power source had a limited degree of sentience, the beings who rely on the Origin might be Partly Controlled. The Mythguide must determine the affects of Control in a particular Reality. Perhaps the Controlled Origins are restricted in certain ways, or maybe they too are required to purchase or bargain for their power. The sky is the limit when designing creative and interesting relationships among the Origins of a Reality.

ORIGIN ORIENTATION



While Origin Connections describe an Origin's power relationships, the Origin Orientation describes an Origin's outlook and feelings toward the other Origins in a Reality (if other Origins exist). This element corresponds to a culture's Heritage Orientation, and defines an Origin's general approach toward others of its kind. Orientation serves as a principal consideration when determining an Origin's Motivations and intentions in a Reality. As such, Origin Orientation can also have an effect on those who serve or benefit from the Origin's power. This may include Adepts, priests, worshipers, etc. For example, if two deities hate one another, this conflict could translate into one of the mundane environments governed by the Origins. The animosity could manifest as a perennial conflict among the deities' mortal followers. Of course, such effects will depend on the amount of contact that exists between the Origins and their followers. Three primary Orientations are possible.

A *Visceral* Orientation defines an Origin that is constantly looking inward. It may be suspicious of its brethren, or afraid of them. Alternately, the Origin might simply have a reclusive nature. Whatever the

reason, the Origin occupies itself primarily with its own sphere. Its concerns extend beyond its own power and surroundings, including its followers and servants as well. The nature of this Orientation depends on the motivations and philosophy of the Origin. For example, a Visceral Orientation with an Aspect of Prevention might represent a timid Entity wishing to preserve itself in the face of more powerful brethren. It might be willing to do anything to accomplish this. A Visceral Orientation with an Aspect of Revolution might institute a violent internal Inquisition among its followers.

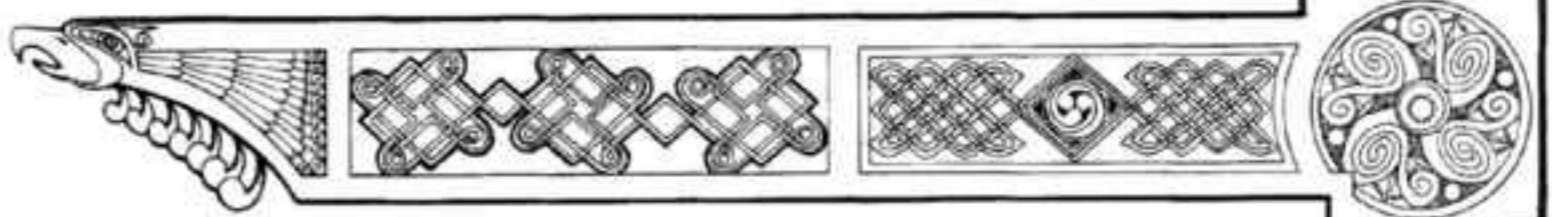
A *Peripheral* Orientation defines an Origin that is concerned more with external matters than internal. Origins with Peripheral Orientations are constantly prying into the affairs of their brethren, and often attempt to learn or interfere with the agendas of other Origins. This Orientation can manifest in a number of different ways depending on the Aspects employed. For example, an Aspect of Acquisition might target another specific Origin for theft. An Aspect of Conviction might target another Origin as an Entity who requires benevolent aid. Such Aspects affect followers as well; an Acquisitive Origin might use its followers as cannon fodder, sending them to destroy the followers of the Origin whose power is being targeted.

A *Balanced* Orientation defines an Origin that balances its concerns and interests. It watches its own followers and monitors its power structure and minions, but it also keeps an eye on the actions of other Origins in the Reality. Aspects can further describe the manifestation of this Orientation. Origins with Non-Sentient Natures always have Balanced Orientations.

All Origin Orientations are further described by Orientation Aspects. These Aspects correspond to the Aspects used to describe Heritage Orientations.

ORIGIN RELATIONS

This element describes an Origin's Relations with the mundane world, especially with its own followers and adherents. Such Relations can be an important consideration when designing an Omnescence Fundamental, since they define the basic position of an Origin in relation to those who depend upon its power. The importance of Origin Relations depends entirely on an Origin's Nature. For example, a Non-Sentient Essence is probably not Aware of its own existence, and will therefore have no Relations with those who use its power except as a source. On the other hand, a malignant trickster deity might place great stock in its Relations with worshipers. Such Relations will affect



the ultimate forms and restrictions present in the deity's Omnescence Fundamental. Several different Relations Aspects are possible.

An Origin can be *Aloof*, looking upon its followers and its domains with haughty amusement or curiosity at best, contempt at worst. Such Origins normally occur in two forms: those who are conservative in their grants of power and those who allow access to their Omnescence because they are simply too removed to care. Origins of the first sort will often require that Omnescence be Purchased or Granted, and may place unreasonable Philosophical Restrictions on its acquisition. Many gods and celestial powers fall into this category.

Many Origins are simply *Ambivalent*, taking a dispassionate and detached interest in their followers but rarely intervening directly in their affairs. Ambivalent Origins are often gods who are more interested in the divine realms and in the politics of their own kind than in the affairs of mortals. Such Origins can also be Sentient or Partly Sentient Essences with concerns beyond the pale of normal intellect or comprehension. Omnescence can often be Freely Gathered from Ambivalent sources.

An Origin may attempt to *Control* its adherents. Such Origins usually care little for their followers, using them instead as a convenient army of slaves. Controlling Origins rarely show real concern for their followers' well-being, instead being more interested in how these individuals can be employed to further the ultimate agenda of the Origin. Of course, exceptions do exist (such as a god of absolute Law), but they are rare. Access to Omnescence invariably has many Restrictions (Guarded, Purchased, etc.) within a Controlling Origin.

Origins can be *Interested* in their adherents, practitioners, and worshipers. Such Origins take a genuine Interest in the welfare of their followers (whatever their motivations), and assume a degree of honest responsibility for their particular sphere of influence. Although they tend to prefer indirect involvement (visions, signs, messengers, etc.) to direct intervention, Interested Origins will personally intervene in mundane affairs if they feel such action is warranted. All Omnescence Access methods are possible with Interested sources; the particular Aspects and Restrictions placed on such Access depends on the personality and motivations of the Origin.

Origins in some Realities *Meddle* in mundane affairs as a matter of course. Such Origins not only take a direct interest in their followers and their power base, but they often live and walk among them. Adherents never know when a Meddling Origin might show up



or make its presence known; these beings will occasionally dwell exclusively among mortals (the court mage who advises an entire lineage of kings, etc.). Different Origins Meddle in the lives of mortals for different reasons, and as such often place many unique restrictions on Omnescence Access. The Mythguide should determine such limitations based on the nature and personality of the Origin.

Finally, an Origin can assume the role of a *Teacher*. This Aspect overlaps with the Meddling Aspect to some degree. Origins who are Teachers attempt to convey knowledge (crucial, important, or otherwise) to their followers. Such Origins might give mortals the secret of fire, the knowledge of script, writing, or runes, or the knowledge necessary to harness Omnescence and shape its power. Access to Omnescence from a Teaching Origin often takes the form of Grants or Gifts.

Each Relation Aspect can be further defined by imbuing an Origin with individual Personality Traits and describing the motives and goals of the Origin (much of this information might have already been detailed in previous elements of the Origin Template). Such description provides the Mythguide with direction when handling Origin-persona Relations, as well as guiding the Mythguide when creating the Origin's Omnescence Fundamental.

Apotheosis

The question of Apotheosis, or ascension, lies at the heart of many Origin philosophies and myth structures. Apotheosis serves as a symbol of ultimate possibility, of the pinnacle of devotion and service to a particular Origin. The nature and form of Apotheosis within an Origin is left to the Mythguide. Since it is such a loose and abstract concept, the Mythguide should feel free to develop the mechanism of Apotheosis in a way that will best complement and enhance his Canticle.

If the Mythguide decides that Apotheosis is possible within an Origin, he must detail the circumstances, form, mechanism, and results of the experience. The most important question regarding such ascension should be answered first: Is it possible for personas to achieve Apotheosis? If it is, the Mythguide should base the process on the Origin involved. For example, perhaps a warrior dedicated to a dark, chaotic god must sacrifice a predetermined (and very large) number of vanquished foes to his deity. A solitary Adept who follows a form of contemplative philosophy might have to achieve a level of heightened Insight or awareness. In Realities that are more power-

rich, in which Origins interact with the mundane on a regular basis, personas might only have to give and oath or vow in order to rise to a higher state of consciousness.

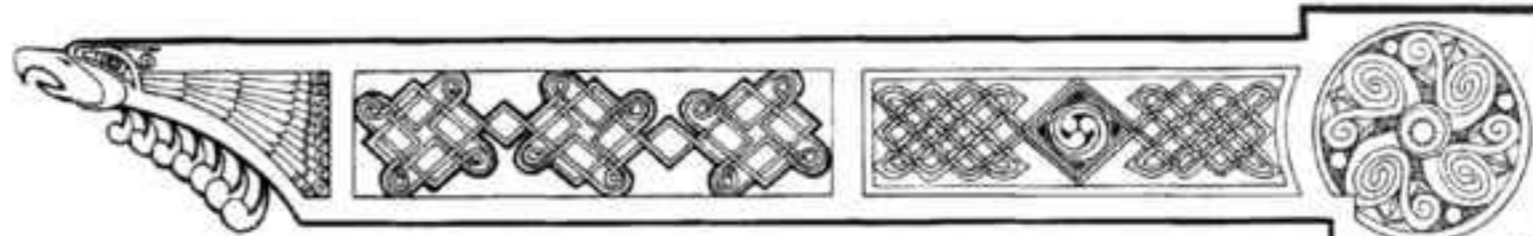
After the Mythguide knows how Apotheosis is achieved, he must determine its form. Do individuals ascend to serve as commanders on some mammoth spiritual battlefield? Do they become minions of a benevolent power or entity, returning to the mundane realms to administer aid or watch over the faithful? The nature of Apotheosis within an Origin will depend on the concerns, outlook, and Relations of the Origin. If an Origin takes an active interest in the development of its followers, or if it regularly employs the aid of diverse minions and servants, Apotheosis becomes a sacred advancement, the first step on a journey toward a higher state of existence. However, if an Origin places little stock in the mundane world or its inhabitants, Apotheosis might not exist at all.

The Mythguide must also develop the mechanics of Apotheosis within an Origin. He might require a succession of difficult Trials (once the requirements for Apotheosis are determined), or he might require a certain number of accumulated Myth Points (perhaps five hundred or so). Maybe a specific situation or encounter could lead to an eventual Apotheosis. Again, the nature and form of the ascension will depend on the Origin itself. The Mythguide should ensure that Apotheosis is never easy; such events often become integral facets of an Origin's mythology, and players should accord them their deserved reverence.

Omnesence Fundamental

The second part of the Origin Template is the Omnescence Fundamental. This section of the Template details the forms, uses, and capabilities of Omnescence within the Origin. It illustrates what an Origin's practitioners and initiates are able to do with their power. Power is used to shape and cast individual Paradigms, or alterations of an environment's Reality, and the Omnescence Fundamental details the possibilities inherent in such Paradigms and their accompanying restrictions and limitations.

Individual Paradigms are usually spoken of in terms of their Effects, which are 'purchased' with available Omnescence. Shaping the parameters and Effects of a Paradigm is called Tempering a Form. Before players or Mythguides begin designing Paradigms within a particular Reality, a number of fundamental elements must be defined. The following sections describe these



elements and attempt to lead the Mythguide through the creation of original Omnesence Fundamentals.

Element Restrictions

Omnesence Fundamentals normally represent the use of power through all of the different Archetypes and Dominions governed by a particular Origin. However, if the Mythguide is running a magic-heavy Canticle, or the Ensemble desires comprehensive and diverse magic rules, restrictions can be placed on elements of a Fundamental. For example, perhaps Access to Omnesence is handled differently when the Omnesence is used for Creation Effects than when it is used for Conjunction Effects. Any specific element of a Fundamental can be restricted by applying descriptive Aspects; for instance, Access to Omnesence that is being used for Creation magic might be given freely by an Origin, while Access to Omnesence that is going to be used for Destructive purposes might be restricted in some way. Perhaps the Mythguide decides that Omnesence occurs in distinctive 'types' in a Reality (i.e. Destructive Omnesence, Creative Omnesence, Elemental Omnesence, etc.). Each type can be defined by its own Fundamental, or by specific Aspects within a larger Fundamental. Guidelines appear in the following sections.

Conventions

The Mythguide must decide on a number of basic Conventions when determining Omnesence elements in any Origin. There are also several Traits which are important for a persona who intends to follow an Omnesence-using Vocation.

Primary Trait

The Mythguide chooses a Primary Trait which governs Omnesence use within the Origin. For traditional magic-based Origins, Aura is normally used. For traditional divine Origins (gods and religions), Faith is normally employed. In certain cases (especially when dealing with philosophical or lawful Origins), Insight can be used as the Primary Trait. Since the Primary Trait will affect both Access and Storage of Omnesence, it should be chosen at the outset of the Fundamental design process.

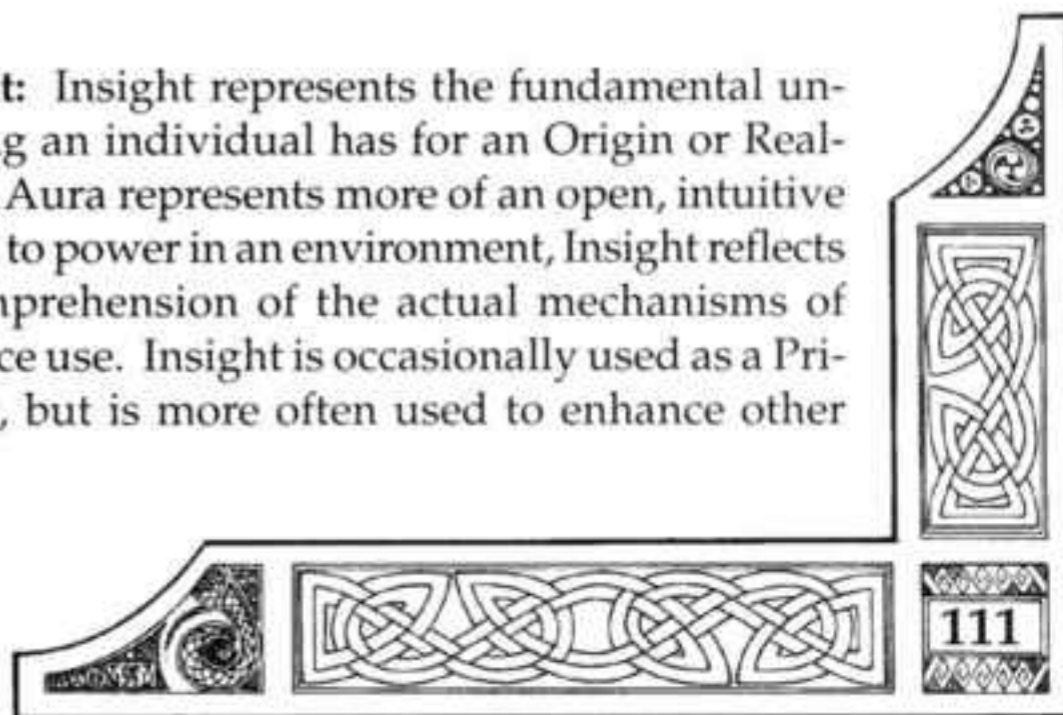
Omnesence Fundamental

Conventions	- Primary Trait - Other Traits - Affinity
Province	- Possible Archetypes - Possible Dominions - Possible Aspects
Availability	- Category - Manifestations - Availability Levels
Amount	- Category - Aspects - Amount Levels
Access	- Category - Aspects - Possible Methods - Ease of Access - Access Time - Access Facility
Storage	- Category - Capacity - Aspects

Aura: A persona's Aura is initially equal to his Empathy Characteristic, and represents an individual's esoteric sensitivity, his life force. After Aura is initially established, it can be increased in much the same way as Insight (through successful usage of Omnesence and further mental training). The Mythguide should use the guidelines presented for Expertise increases as a general model for handling Aura increases. In some environments, persona might be able to increase their Aura beyond a value of ten (either naturally or artificially). Such advancement is entirely the province of the Mythguide.

Faith: Some Origins use Faith as their Primary Trait. Faith is discussed more fully in the Traits chapter.

Insight: Insight represents the fundamental understanding an individual has for an Origin or Reality. Where Aura represents more of an open, intuitive connection to power in an environment, Insight reflects a true comprehension of the actual mechanisms of Omnesence use. Insight is occasionally used as a Primary Trait, but is more often used to enhance other





aspects of Omnescence use (such as the ability to sense power from a distance or the ability to limit wasted power while using Paradigms). The Mythguide should feel free to interpret Insight to fit his own conceptions of Omnescence usage.

Affinity

Affinity represents the susceptibility of an object, item, creature, or individual to Omnescence usage. It details how well a subject will respond to power used against it. For example, in some Realities everything might be sensitive to Omnescence use, while in others it might be very difficult to affect non-sentient or inorganic objects. Sentient beings have an Affinity equal to $10 - \text{Primary Trait}$. For example, a mage with an Aura of eight would have an Affinity of $10 - 8 = 2$. A priest with a Faith of five would have an Affinity of five. Insight is rarely used to determine Affinity, although in certain Realities it might be appropriate. Even if Insight is considered the Primary Trait in an environment, the Mythguide may still decide that Aura

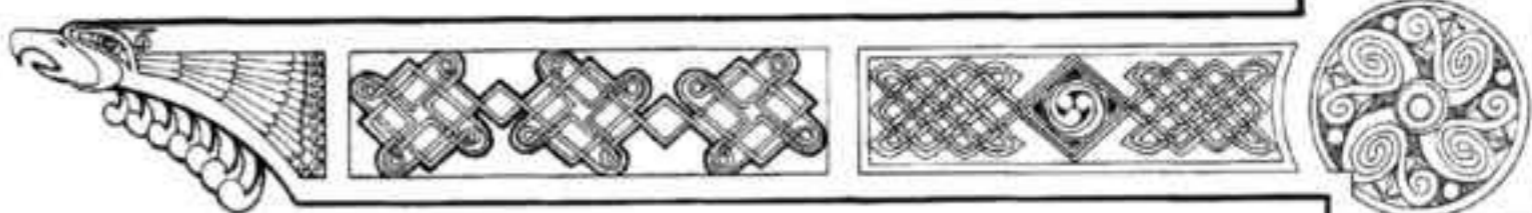
dictates Affinity (representing an Adept's sensitivity to power itself). If Faith defines Affinity, the Mythguide might place specific Aspect restrictions on its performance. For example, if a target's Faith is described by a similar Aspect as the caster's, the target's effective Affinity would be normal. However, if a target's Faith had a substantially different Aspect than the caster's, the Mythguide could decide that the target's effective Affinity were three levels higher than it otherwise would be. The Mythguide should apply such modifiers based on the difference among various types of Faith in his Reality.

The Mythguide should detail the Affinities of random objects in his world. Perhaps all inanimate matter has an Affinity of 10 (very resistant to Omnescence), or maybe a certain type of stone is extremely susceptible to power (and therefore serves as a convenient Vessel for power Storage). At the Mythguide's option, the same object might have different Affinities for different types of power (highly resistant to Destructive energies and highly susceptible to Manipulative energies). Basically, Affinities should be assigned according to the Mythguide's general Concept for the Reality. In many Realities, materials must be enchanted to Affinity zero before they can be used to Store Omnescence (although the minds of Adepts might be an exception).

Province of Omnescence

The Mythguide must define the Province of Omnescence for the Origin. An Origin's Province dictates the possible Effects of Paradigms created within the Origin. It details what can and cannot be done with Omnescence from a particular source. For example, a benevolent Origin (perhaps a deity) does not allow priests to use Omnescence for Destructive purposes. In this case the Destruction Archetype is not included in the Origin's Province, and follower may not attempt to construct Paradigms based on that Archetype.

The Province of an Origin consists of the Power values of each possible Archetype and the Facility values of each possible Dominion. Both Power and Facility values range from one to five. For example, the Omnescence Province for a malevolent Origin might read like this: Archetypes - Destruction (4), Transformation (3), Manipulation (2) and Dominions - Mind (4), Spirit (3), Organic (3), Physical (4), Knowledge (3), Energy (4). For more information regarding Archetypes and Dominions, see the sections on Creating Paradigms later in this chapter.



Province Aspects

An Origin's Archetypes and Dominions can also be described by specific Province Aspects. Such Aspects further restrict Omnescence use within the Origin, directing power use toward the motivations and purposes of the Origin. Any restrictions are possible; for example, a God of War might allow followers to use Destructive Omnescence only in situations of direct conflict or in the midst of battle. The Destruction Archetype would have a Province Aspect of Usable only in Battle. Or perhaps adherents of a fire god are restricted by Province Aspect of Only Fire Effects (within the Energy Dominion). Province Aspects help the Mythguide to develop further the individuality of an Origin.

Availability of Omnescence

Omnescence Availability is an important consideration when creating the Omnescence structure for any Origin. The Mythguide should think carefully about the role of the Origin in the Reality, as well as the relative power of personas who draw their abilities from the Origin. Perhaps magic is extremely powerful in a certain environment, but its use is limited because Omnescence is very hard to find. Or maybe Omnescence is everywhere, in everything, but persona Access is severely Restricted. Perhaps the Mythguide wants to restrict the magic use of a certain order or organization that wields a great deal of political power, while allowing a smaller, more secret order greater freedom. He might do this by placing specific restrictive Aspects on Omnescence Availability. The Mythguide should consider each of the elements of the Omnescence Fundamental when determining Omnescence Availability in an environment.

Availability Categories

Omnescence Availability falls into one of two major categories. *Pervasive* Omnescence is everywhere, in everything. It permeates every individual, every plant, every animal. An environment in which Omnescence is Pervasive may feel alive with power; such environments are often described with living symbolism (i.e. everything is part of the Goddess, every creature is part of great spiritual organism, etc.). Sensitive individuals are able to draw on the Omnescence wherever they are.

Limited Omnescence is restricted in some manner. Omnescence granted by powerful beings or gods is considered Limited, as is Omnescence which occurs in Objects, Nodes, Flows, or one's mind. Personas are often not able to draw on Limited Omnescence wherever they are; individual Manifestations normally place restrictions on the Availability of Limited Omnescence.

Manifestations

All Omnescence, whether Pervasive or Limited, is described by one or more *Manifestations*. A Manifestation describes the nature, source, and type of a particular source of Availability in a Reality. Sample Manifestations include Storms, Flows, Ambient Energy, Pools, Collective Aura, Collective Unconscious, and Spontaneous Creation (through certain sounds or language, etc.). The Mythguide should describe the Manifestations present and relate them to the overall Reality.

A Manifestation can either be *Coherent* or described by one or more *Variations*. A Coherent Manifestation represents a uniform appearance of Omnescence in an environment. For example, if Omnescence occurs in localized Pools, the Availability of Omnescence in every Pool remains constant. However, if Omnescence takes the form of an Etheric Confluence, it may be subject to Etheric Tides, Cataracts, and Eddies. Each Variation might have its own level of Availability (with Tides being average, Cataracts being strong, and Eddies being weak). Perhaps the Eddies are even Tainted in some manner. Although different Variations might evidence individual Availability Levels, the larger Origin retains a single static Availability Level. Unusual or unconventional Manifestations can create interesting distractions for Talented personas, and can even serve as foci for entire Canticles.

Places of magical or spiritual significance often appear close to or within strong Manifestations in an environment. These sites can be revered as sacred, and often serve as locations for worship or esoteric activities. Examples could include wilderness spirit shrines, faerie rings or mounds, and deep forest druid groves. Analogs to these examples will appear in every Reality, and the Mythguide is encouraged to design sites which complement individual Origins and their tenets.

Availability Levels

Omnescence Availability is quantified by an Availability Level from one to ten, with low levels repre-





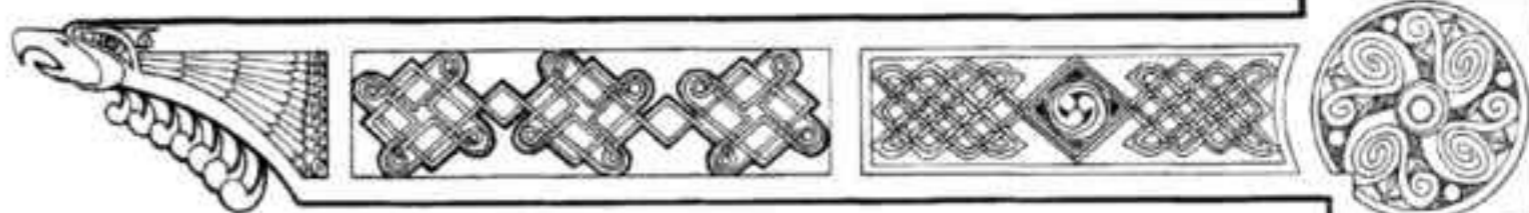
senting little Availability and high levels representing great Availability. A Pervasive environment with an Availability Level of one would represent a slight trickle of Omnescence running through everything, while an Etheric Tide with an Availability Level of ten would represent an almost blindingly strong flow of power.

A persona can draw up to his **Primary Trait + Access Facility + Availability Level** in Omnescence per Access Interval from a single Origin, Manifestation, or Variation. Individual Manifestations and Variations often have different Availability Levels. The Mythguide should determine such Variations based on the Manifestation and its relationship to the overall Availability Level of the Origin. An Availability Level of ten always allows infinite Availability (although single personas will rarely be able to access that much power).

The Mythguide must also determine the appearance and frequency of Manifestations in a Reality based on an Origin's Availability Level. Power which appears in Coherent Ley Lines with Availability Levels of seven is very prevalent; individual Lines will not be difficult to locate (perhaps no more than an hour's journey in any direction) and their levels of power will be uniform. Another environment might exhibit a number of Variations of ambient flux with an overall Availability Level of three. Omnescence will be somewhat more difficult to find in this environment (perhaps the flows are spread wide apart, or maybe they move from place to place). However, once found, the ambient energy may exist as Variations of higher or lower Availability. Access to Available Manifestations is critically important for any Adept, and the Mythguide should consider this when placing sources of power.

Amount of Omnescence

Not all Origins are able to provide an unlimited amount of Omnescence. The Mythguide may wish to place certain restrictions or limitations on the overall Amounts of Omnescence which are accessible from a single Origin. A creative explanation for such limitations can add a fascinating dimension to any Canticle. Perhaps a God of Law can only grant Omnescence recycled from the stuff of Chaos, and can therefore grant only a finite amount to his adherents each year (a priest must make a good case, or else be forced to wait for a grant). Maybe the Flows of Essence in an ancient Reality are nearly depleted, and a small order of magicians is dedicated to preserving the limited



Omnescence which remains. Limiting the actual Amounts of Omnescence in a Reality will cause personas who are able to use the power to respect it more than they might otherwise, and will accord power and its effects a renewed importance.

Omnescence in an Origin can be either *Infinite* or *Finite*. Infinite Omnescence is common in most Realities, and is present in limitless abundance. Omniscient deities or unbounded Unified Fields are examples of sources which yield Infinite amounts of power. In such Origins, the Amount of Omnescence becomes a negligible concern.

Finite Omnescence does not occur in unlimited quantity, and its nature and current Amounts should be described by the Mythguide. Finite Omnescence can be described by several Aspects. The Omnescence may be *Recyclable*. Recyclable Omnescence exists in limited quantities and must undergo some form of change or treatment after its use to prepare it for future use. This Aspect has the potential to place some interesting restrictions on personas. Perhaps each Adept must collect his 'used' Omnescence and recycle it through some type of ritual. Maybe the practitioner is Watched by some sentient power to make sure the Recycling process is conducted properly. In another Reality, Origins might have specific minions who are responsible for recycling Omnescence. If these minions are less than trustworthy, personas might be forced to wait random periods of time before being granted access to the recycled power. Recyclable Omnescence often creates unusual Access forms and uncertain Natures (see following sections).

Another, more common, manifestation of Finite Omnescence indicates some level of *Depletion*. Levels of Depletion can range from Plentiful (Omnescence is Finite but exists in profusion, and will not run out for many millennia) down the scale to Crisis Levels (Omnescence is dangerously close to running out, and may do so in a matter of days, months, or years). At the extreme end of the spectrum is an Origin whose Omnescence has been totally depleted. Even such desolate environments can provide opportunity for adventure; perhaps several members of an ancient magical order have been charged with restoring the power, and go in search of way to do this.

Amounts of Omnescence do not usually affect personas on an individual basis; no single individual could hope to access an amount of power that would make a significant difference on a Reality-wide scale. Rather, Finite Omnescence can become an important consideration for Omnis or magical orders. An order is concerned for more than the welfare of its collective membership; it is concerned with the future and its place within that future.

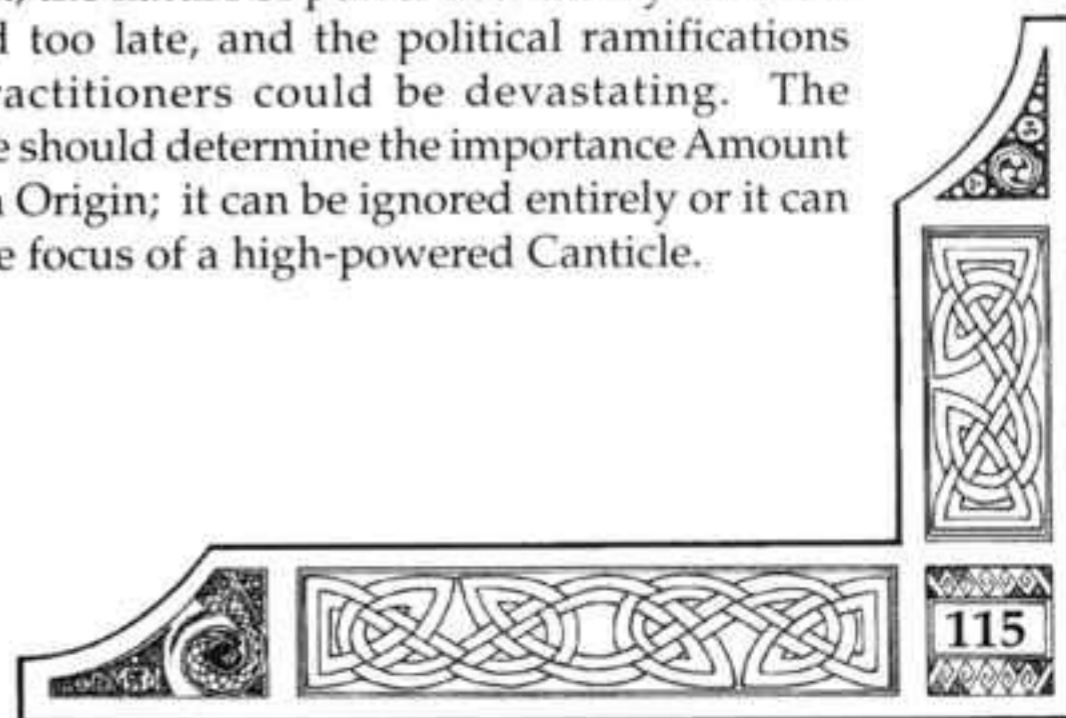
In Realities with limited Amounts of Omnescence, the use and measurement of power normally becomes a political consideration. For example, apprentices might be restricted to very limited power use, or Adepts could be set to guard dwindling Pools of raw power. Orders could enter into active conflict over philosophical differences in the way power should be treated. Interactive Histories serve as a convenient way to convey the importance of such considerations to players. Players can take the roles of individual Omnis through many years of development, allowing them to explore the long-term ramifications of Omnescence depletion. Refer to the section on Omnis later in this chapter for further insight into the social and political side of power use.

Amount Levels

Since Omnescence Amounts rarely have direct, short-term effects on personas, the Mythguide should decide how to interpret them. The Mythguide might simply keep a general level in mind. For example, he knows an Origin's Omnescence has reached Crisis Levels, and if something is not done will be entirely depleted in ten years. If something is done about the problem, these conditions might change.

Another option is for the Mythguide to quantify the Amount to some extent. Ten would represent abundant Omnescence while zero would represent no Omnescence. Such levels can be especially useful when using Interactive Histories. If checks are placed on Omnescence use, its depletion might be effectively halted for a while. If nothing is done, the depletion will continue. At the Mythguide's option, depending on the type of Omnescence, Amount can also affect Availability (with the two scales corresponding to one another). This is usually true if the power appears in constant quantities throughout the Reality; as the overall Amount decreases, so does the Availability in any given area.

Finally, knowledge of the limitations can be an important consideration. Do Adepts realize that power is Finite? Do they understand the nature of its depletion? If not, the nature of power in a Reality could be discovered too late, and the political ramifications among practitioners could be devastating. The Mythguide should determine the importance Amount plays in an Origin; it can be ignored entirely or it can become the focus of a high-powered Canticle.



Access to Omnescence

After the Mythguide has established the forms, frequency, Amount, and Availability of Omnescence in a particular Origin, he must decide how personas are able to Access the power. The Mythguide should consider Access carefully, since an individual's ability to Access Omnescence relates directly to the amount of power that can be placed in Paradigms. Access falls into one of two broad categories within a single Origin (although the Mythguide may allow more than one Access method in a particular Origin) - *Freely Accessible* or *Restricted*.

Freely Accessible Omnescence

Freely Accessible Omnescence has no restrictions placed on its acquisition. However, if Omnescence is not widely Available in a Reality, a persona might still have to go in search of it. For example, Omnescence in one Origin only exists in a remote desert Node. Most mages in the environment make a yearly ritual pilgrimage to gather Omnescence. They place it in ceremonial Vessels (see upcoming sections) and use it throughout the coming year. Once in the presence of the Node, a mage can gather the Omnescence freely. However, the mages must be in the presence of the Node to gather the power. Freely Accessible Omnescence falls into one of four Categories.

The Omnescence may simply be *Gathered*. If this is the case, the Mythguide should determine Access based on Amounts and Availability. If Omnescence is Pervasive, an Adept might be able to Gather power anywhere through meditation. If Omnescence only occurs in specific Manifestations, the persona may have to be within a certain distance of an appropriate Manifestation. The Mythguide should determine the range at which such Gathering is possible. Suggested range is Primary Trait x Availability Level (of the Manifestation) in yards. Obviously, a persona needs to be fairly close to the source to Gather power. In many Realities, practitioners are able to sense Manifestations of Omnescence at great distance. The recommended range is half a persona's Aura in miles. If this does not fit into the Mythguide's Reality, he should feel free to alter the units (i.e. half Aura in yards, leagues, tens of miles, etc.). This Aspect can also be used to describe power that is Gathered unconsciously. For example, Omnescence could regenerate each day if a persona gets appropriate rest (up to an amount equal to the persona's maximum access per day). The persona

might only know that he must rest in order to regain his innate abilities.

Omnescence might have to be *Released* from objects, creatures, plants, or individuals. This is essentially a similar process as Gathering Omnescence, except that it often requires more time and effort on the part of the persona (see the Method section for time constraints). Personas normally have to be in the presence of a Manifestation to Release Omnescence. It can rarely be accomplished from a distance. This Aspect can also be interpreted to handle spontaneous casting (i.e. the persona activates a Paradigm by Releasing energy in the surrounding environment).

In some Realities, Omnescence may be *Internal*, derived from an individual's own mind and will. This type of power can be used to simulate raw mental or psionic abilities, and its use can follow as sophisticated a model as external Omnescence. Internal Omnescence can also represent personal spiritual power; perhaps a persona is driven by an overwhelming Philosophy or mental discipline which approximates a religion but does not correspond to a Sentient divinity. However Internal Omnescence is interpreted in a Reality, its Origin is always Internal as well. Internal sources of power have an Availability Level equal to a persona's Aura and an Access Facility equal to a persona's Willpower. The Mythguide may impose ultimate Amount restrictions on Internal Omnescence.

Finally, Omnescence may be a *Grant*. Grants differ from the previous three forms of Access in that they represent a passive stance on the part of a persona. The persona might solicit the Omnescence, but cannot actively acquire the power. They must accept it passively from its source. A persona's Access limit indicates the amount of power an individual is able to accept from an Origin (the persona is unable to draw power on his own). Grants always come from Sentient, Partially Sentient, or Fluctuating Origins, and are a common form of Access when dealing with deities. A priest or follower appeals to his god and receives a Grant of Omnescence in return. In some Realities, Grants can also come from other Omnescence users or Adepts. Note that Freely Accessible Grants are usually quite rare. Origins tend to impose restrictions on such gifts of power, requiring some type of payment or personal sacrifice on the part of the individual seeking the Grant. See the following section for possible restrictions.

Restricted Omnescence

Restricted Omnescence cannot be freely acquired in an environment. One or more limitations exist

which inhibit such acquisition. Restricted Omnescence is described by one of the same four Categories which define Freely Accessible Omnescence. However, Access to Restricted Omnescence is further qualified by one or more Restriction Aspects.

Omnescence may have to be *Purchased*. This Aspect only applies to Sentient or Partially Sentient Origins, who normally require something of value (either to the persona or the Origin) in exchange for the power. The 'price' of the power can be the performance of some action important to the Origin, or it might take the form of a sacrifice. The type of sacrifice will depend on the nature of the Origin, and could be anything from valuable metals to a living being. Other Origins might require psychological or personality sacrifices. Maybe for every five thousand points of Omnescence drawn, a persona gains a Rank in a corresponding Motivation or Passion. Perhaps drawing power in another Reality slowly forces a persona into madness (a good Aspect if an Origin is Tainted in some manner). This could be represented by requiring Willpower Trials to resist gaining a Rank in the Insanity Background Aspect (with Difficulty based on the Cost of the Paradigm). Or perhaps every time a persona gains a specified amount of Omnescence, he needs to make an Aging Trial. The Mythguide should determine the Omnescence granted based upon the 'price' paid to an Origin. Such prices will differ among Realities and among Origins within the same Reality. The Mythguide should use Access Facility as a guide when establishing price.

An interesting variation on the Purchase Aspect is an Origin that treats Omnescence as a *Commodity*. In such environments, the Omnescence is actually 'bid' on in some fashion. Perhaps a certain god of chaos has a limited amount of Omnescence to grant each day. His followers are forced to bid on the power, with the individual willing to pay the highest price receiving a grant in whole or in part. His priests lead an uncertain life; each day, from their various positions throughout the world, they gingerly initiate contact with their deity to find out the 'daily rate'. Of course, there is always a chance that a follower will try too late in the day, only to find that there is no power left.

Another variation on the Purchase Aspect is the *Loan*. A persona receives power on Loan from an Origin, with payment to be collected at some later date. This later time might be negotiated each time a persona receives a Loan, or it might be consistent from one grant to another. Perhaps a Partially Sentient energy source, which happens to be quite insane, delights in 'Loaning' power to everyone. Although it is too far gone to ever collect on the Loans, most Adepts repay it anyway (just to be safe...). Except for the delayed



payment factor, Loans are treated in the same manner as Purchases.

Omnescence can also be *Guarded*. Guards are often set to watch over contained areas of Omnescence that would otherwise be Freely Accessible. The Mythguide should determine the type and nature of the Guards used by a particular Origin. Are they minions of a god, charged with allowing individuals to draw power only within certain established limits? Are they a race of magical beings who must feed off of the raw energy? Intelligent Guards will always have a Charge. The Charge might be as specific as "Only allow mages of the Crimson Order to pass into the Radiance" or as general as "Allow no one to pass". Guards can also be non-sentient wards or spells. Regardless of the nature of the Guard, the Mythguide should decide what is necessary to overcome it. Possibilities include passwords or phrases, riddle games, Challenged Willpower Trials, a minimum level of Aura or Faith, a specific Passion or Obsession, or a certain personal morality. In some instances, a persona may be required to fight a Guard to obtain Access to the power it watches. After a persona bypasses a Guard, he should be able to gain Access to the desired Omnescence as Freely Accessible power (perhaps he

can simply Gather it, or maybe the Guard has to Grant the power). Access Facility defines the difficulty of bypassing a Guard.

Access to Omnescence can also be contingent on a *Philosophical Restriction*. This Aspect may include elements of some of the previous Aspects, and is usually associated with Sentient or Partially Sentient Origins. Access is restricted based on a persona's Personality Traits, beliefs, or intentions. For example, if a benevolent Origin senses that a persona intends to use Granted Omnescence to harm another individual, the Origin may impose a Philosophical Restriction and decline to Grant the power. Perhaps it will require some type of oath from the persona before another Grant is made (although if the Mythguide is using specific types of Omnescence, the Origin might simply decline to Grant a persona a certain type of power).

In some Realities, personas must *Draw* power from other beings in order to Access it. This is a rare form of Access, since the persona is not taking power directly from an Origin, but it can exist as a test for followers or worshipers. Omnescence can be Drawn either with or without the consent of the target (if Drawn without consent, it is basically a theft of power). Such exchanges of power normally occur between members of the same faith or order; for example, a priest cannot indiscriminately Draw power from an Adept who receives Omnescence from another source. However, he could attempt to Draw Omnescence from another follower of his god (who would probably have the same type of power). Benevolent deities of law can require devotees to Draw Omnescence from each other in order to ensure loyalty and cooperation. Chaotic gods might require priests to steal power from each other, fostering an atmosphere of anarchy and distrust among followers. Access Facility can define the difficulty of Drawing power within a particular Origin.

Access can be restricted by a *Political Aspect*. This Aspect is basically a variation on the Philosophical Restriction Aspect. Access to Omnescence is restricted by the Political dictates of Origin relationships. This Aspect is especially relevant in Realities with gods who actively participate in mortal affairs, and who also practice intricate factional politics among themselves. The Greek and Norse pantheons from our own world are good analogs. Politics within an Omni can also restrict Access; see the section on Omnis later in this chapter for more information. The Mythguide should detail appropriate restrictions based on the individual situation and Origin.

Finally, Access may be restricted by a *Unique Aspect*. Unique Aspects handle extremely unusual Access possibilities that are not defined by any of the more conventional Aspects. For example, a dwindling race

of nomads has been persecuted for centuries in a particular environment, as has their god, who forces them to suffer. However, each member of the race has the ability to call on their god for aid (a Grant of Omnescence) once in his or her lifetime. The individual can use the power as if he had a Rank 10 in whatever Effect he attempts. Other Unique Restriction Aspects might allow a persona to receive Omnescence only once per month, or once per year. Perhaps Omnescence can only be Accessed by a dying individual. Whatever the case, the Mythguide can use this Aspect to create some fascinating limitations.

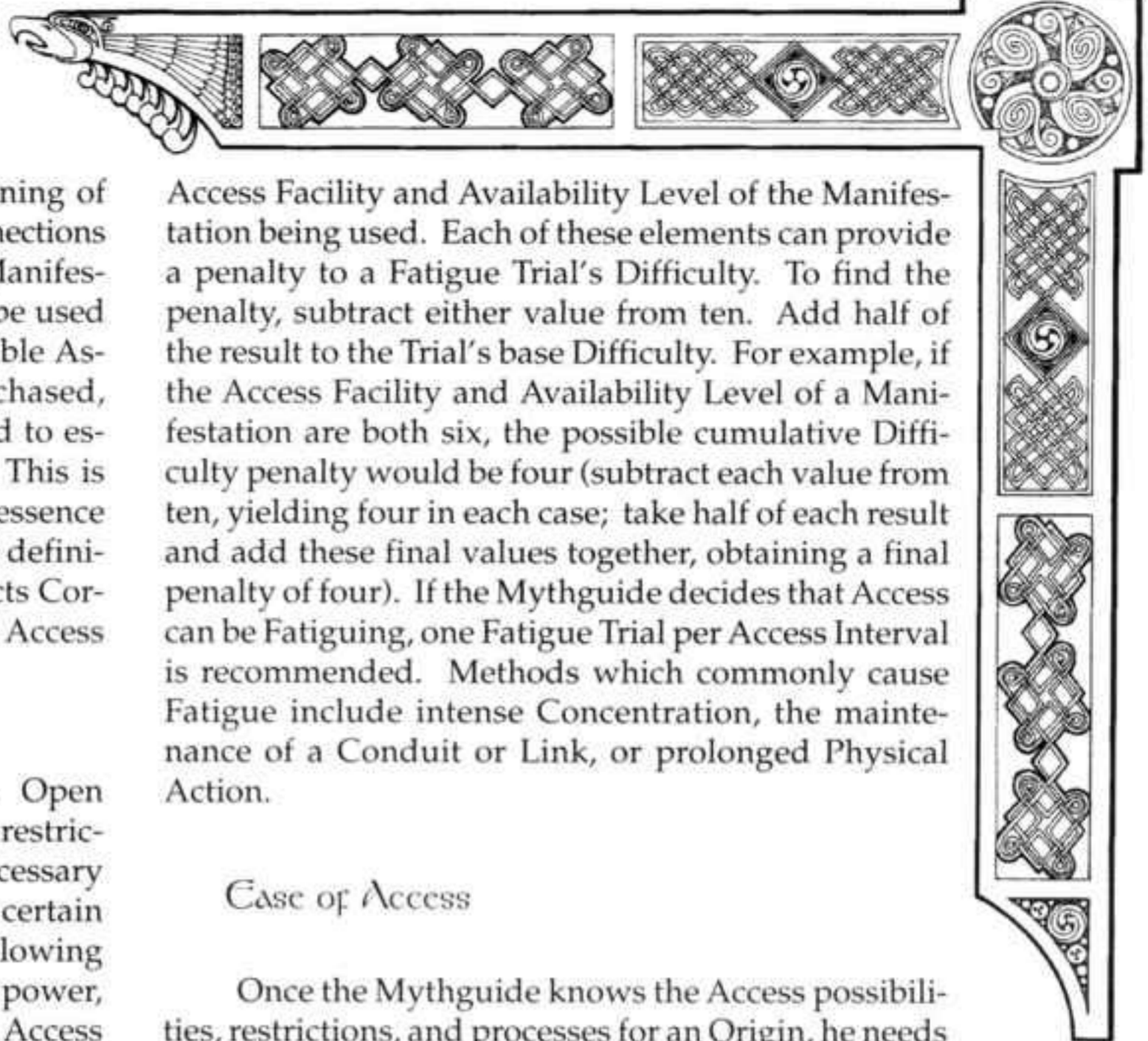
Access Method

Access is defined by specific Methods, which change from one Origin to the next. While the different Access Categories and Aspects describe how Omnescence is transferred to a persona, the Access Method details the nature of the transfer. Three principal Methods describe Access: *Physical*, *Mental*, *Spiritual*, and *Esoteric*.

Physical Access represents bodily actions on the part of the persona. Perhaps Omnescence must be physically Gathered in the form of a certain plant and then transformed into power. Maybe the persona must verbally barter with the minion of a god to be Granted power, or perhaps an elaborate ritual is necessary. In some Origins Adepts must inscribe sacred Symbols or use certain Materials. The nature of Physical Access should be described when the active Categories and Aspects are defined. If Access plays an important role in a Reality, the Mythguide might wish to go into more detail, further describing Access Methods with Aspects. If this is the case, all of the Physical Preparation Aspects can be used (see Preparation later in this chapter).

Mental Access is probably the most common Method of Access. It includes Meditation and Concentration on the part of the persona, and does not necessarily require any physical effort on the part of the practitioner. If the Mythguide needs more detail, he can use Mental Preparation Aspects as Access Aspects. All of the Mental/Spiritual Preparation Aspects except Memory can be used to define an Access Method.

Spiritual Access is also common among Sentient Origins and deities. This Method includes prayer, supplication, and devotion as possible Aspects. The Mythguide should define the Method further based on the Origin and Access Category. If the Mythguide needs further description, any of the Mental/Spiritual Preparation Aspects except Memory can be used.



Esoteric Access Methods include the opening of Conduits, Gates, or Portals which establish connections between an Adept and a particular Origin or Manifestation. Once established, the connection can be used to Access Omnescence according to the possible Aspects within the Origin (i.e. Gathered, Purchased, Guarded, etc.). This Method can also be used to establish Links among entities or individuals. This is especially useful if a persona must Draw Omnescence from other beings in his environment. If more definition is needed, the Esoteric Preparation Aspects Correspondences and Laws can be employed as Access Method Aspects.

Open and Closed Methods

Methods can either be Open or Closed. Open Methods can be used again and again without restriction. For example, if simple Meditation is necessary to regain Omnescence, a persona acquires a certain amount of power each Access Interval (see following sections). If the persona is able to store more power, he may continue Meditating for consecutive Access Intervals until he can gain no more power.

Closed Methods have restrictions placed upon them. For example, an Origin might require the performance of a sacred ritual in order to Release Omnescence to a persona. Because of the nature of the ritual, it may only be performed once per week. If the persona is able to store more Omnescence than he gains, he can do nothing about it until he performs the ritual again the following week.

Interruption and Fatigue

In addition to defining a Method as Open or Closed, the Mythguide should also determine whether or not it can be Interrupted. If a Method can be Interrupted, the persona will still gain a portion of the total power he would have gained had the Method followed through to its conclusion. For instance, if a persona is Interrupted halfway through a One Hour Access Interval, he still gains half the Omnescence he would have gained during the full Hour.

However, if Access cannot be Interrupted, the persona must begin the entire process again. Any time spent Accessing Omnescence short of a whole Access Interval is wasted and the persona gains nothing. In some cases, the Mythguide might decide that Interruptions cause backfires or other disasters. The nature of such mishaps will depend on the Origin and the Access Method being used.

Finally, some Methods may cause Fatigue. The Mythguide should decide whether a particular Access Method requires Fatigue Trials. The Difficulty of such Trials (if they are required) can be modified by the

Access Facility and Availability Level of the Manifestation being used. Each of these elements can provide a penalty to a Fatigue Trial's Difficulty. To find the penalty, subtract either value from ten. Add half of the result to the Trial's base Difficulty. For example, if the Access Facility and Availability Level of a Manifestation are both six, the possible cumulative Difficulty penalty would be four (subtract each value from ten, yielding four in each case; take half of each result and add these final values together, obtaining a final penalty of four). If the Mythguide decides that Access can be Fatiguing, one Fatigue Trial per Access Interval is recommended. Methods which commonly cause Fatigue include intense Concentration, the maintenance of a Conduit or Link, or prolonged Physical Action.

Case of Access

Once the Mythguide knows the Access possibilities, restrictions, and processes for an Origin, he needs to determine both how easy these processes are and how much time they require. Ease of Access is defined by a value from one to five, and represents the general difficulty of Accessing Omnescence from an Origin or Manifestation. This especially applies to Restriction Aspects. For example, if Omnescence is Guarded, an Ease of Access of two would represent a fairly weak Guard or a loose Charge, while an Ease of Access of five would represent a very powerful Guard. An Ease of Access of four might represent an essence flow which is difficult to tap in order to open a Conduit. Ease of Access can also represent severe Philosophical Restrictions or difficult negotiations if power is a Commodity. If the Mythguide determines that Access Restrictions require Trials to bypass, apply Difficulty modifiers according to the table below. For example, if a persona were required to make a Charisma Trial to convince a divine messenger that he is worthy to receive Omnescence, the base Difficulty of the Trial would suffer a Hindrance if the Origin's Ease of Access were three. Manifestations with Freely Accessible Omnescence always have an Ease of Access of one.

Ease of Access	
Value	Access Trial Modifier
1	Completely Accessible
2	Minor Hindrance (+1 Diff.)
3	Hindrance (+2 or +3 Diff.)
4	Consid. Hindrance (+4 or +5 Diff.)
5	Severe Hindrance (+6 or more)



Access Time

Access Time represents the amount of time it takes to Access and transfer Omnescence, and is based on Access Intervals defined by the Mythguide. The Mythguide should choose a Base Interval of time according to his conception of power acquisition in an Origin and the required Method of Access. There are eight Base Intervals to choose from: *Instantaneous, Seconds, Minutes, Hours, Days, Weeks, Months+, and Variable*. The Mythguide should then determine the actual Access Interval that will be used for the Origin. For example, if the Base Interval is Minutes, the Access Interval could be 30 minutes. If the Base Interval were seconds, the Access Interval could be 10 seconds, and if the Base Interval were Months+, the Access Interval could be five years. The Mythguide might also determine that the Primary Trait influences Access Time. For example, if the Base Interval were thirty seconds and Insight were the Primary Trait, an Adept might be able to reduce the Base Interval by a number of seconds equal to the Rank of the Trait.

Realities that enjoy appreciable levels of power use normally use Base Intervals of Seconds, Minutes, or Hours. Instantaneous Access represents immediate Access to an individual's personal limit of Omnescence. Variable Access represents either fluctuating Access to power or the delayed Granting of power; in the former case, the Mythguide should determine the high and low Access Intervals possible for the Origin. Whenever a persona Accesses power, Access Time is determined randomly between these high and low values. In the latter case, Access Time often

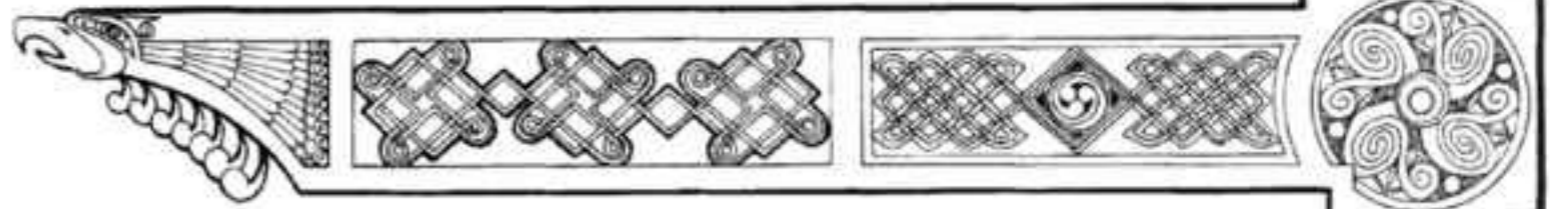
depends on the outcome of some type of interaction (i.e. a negotiation regarding Philosophical Restrictions, a Purchase, a Loan, or a bidding war). The Mythguide should determine the length of the Access Interval based on the relevant situational considerations.

Access Facility

Every Manifestation has an Access Facility ranging from zero to ten, with zero representing a totally inaccessible source of power and ten representing a completely open source. Access Facility indicates the innate difficulty of Accessing power, and has nothing to do with Availability. A strong source of Omnescence might resist Access for some reason, while a slight source might be easily Accessible. Access Facility should be assigned based on the nature of a particular Origin or Manifestation.

Personas are able to Access their Primary Trait + Access Facility of the Origin or Manifestation + Availability Level of the Origin or Manifestation per Access Interval in Omnescence. The persona must be able to use the appropriate Method and respect any Restriction Aspects in order to effectively Access the power. For example, an Adept is Accessing Omnescence from a Manifestation with an Availability Level of six and an Access Facility of four. Since the Method of acquisition is a precise but simple ritual, the Mythguide has assigned an Access Interval of One Hour. The Adept's Aura is eight, so the persona will be able to Access 18 points of Omnescence per hour. If the persona were required to make a Fatigue Trial, its cumulative Difficulty penalty would be five. Access and Availability





yield an appreciable difference among Realities; if the Mythguide desires more of a discrepancy, he should manipulate the Access Interval. After all, there is a big difference between Accessing 15 points of Omnescence per second and Accessing 15 points per day.

Storage of Omnescence

In some Realities, Omnescence can be Stored very easily, while in others such Storage is impossible. Origins which require preparations for Paradigm use might allow Adepts to Access Omnescence each morning, Storing the power in their minds to use as needed throughout the day. Another Origin might require practitioners to Store power in certain types of stone or crystal. Omnescence Storage falls into one of two broad categories: *Impossible* or *Possible*.

If Storage is Impossible in an Origin or Reality, Omnescence cannot be Stored at all. This is often the case with Granted or Released power (such as power channeled from a deity). The Mythguide should consider the Access Methods when defining Storage potential; if Omnescence must be Gathered but cannot be Stored, the power is probably useless. Storage possibilities should complement Access possibilities in the same environment.

In most Realities, Storage of Omnescence is Possible to some degree. An object or individual that can Store Omnescence is termed a Vessel, and the Mythguide should define allowable Vessels in a Reality. For example, in one Reality only organic things might be able to hold Omnescence, while in another Reality only items with an Affinity of zero will be able to Store power. Allowable Vessels can take almost any form, from an Adept's mind to a prepared object (such as a ring or a staff) to an organic Familiar or benevolent Spirit. The amount of Omnescence which may be stored in a single Vessel is defined by the Vessel's Affinity and Capacity.

Capacity

Capacity is assigned by the Mythguide, and represents the ease of Storing power in a particular Origin. Capacity is described by an open-ended value, with a value of one indicating little propensity for Storage and a value of ten showing power that lends itself to being Stored in Vessels. Higher Capacities are possible (in artifacts or other items of mythic importance), but are rare in most Realities. In Realities or Origins

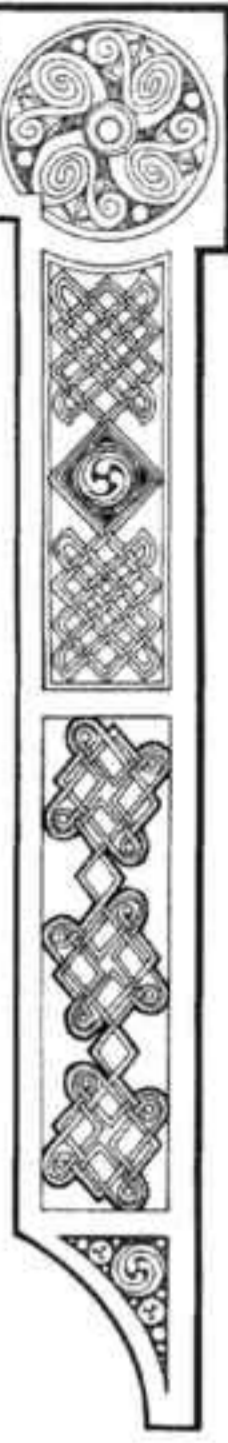


that rely heavily on the Storage of Omnescence, the Mythguide might allow the creation of Paradigms that increase Vessel Capacity.

The total amount of Omnescence that can be placed in a normal inorganic Vessel equals $(10 - \text{Vessel Affinity}) \times \text{Capacity}$. The total amount of Omnescence that an organic Vessel (such as an Adept's mind) can Store equals $\text{Aura} \times \text{Capacity}$. In the case of most personas (regardless of species) and creatures, Capacity equals the average of Intelligence and Willpower.

Storage Aspects

The Mythguide might wish to describe a number of Storage Aspects which are unique to a particular Origin or Reality. For example, an Origin may have time restrictions placed on Storage. After a set amount of time, a Vessel begins to 'leak' until there is no power left within. The opposite could also be true. Perhaps Omnescence left within a certain type of Vessel begins to grow, gaining 'interest' of a sort. The Mythguide should feel free to design unique Storage Aspects.



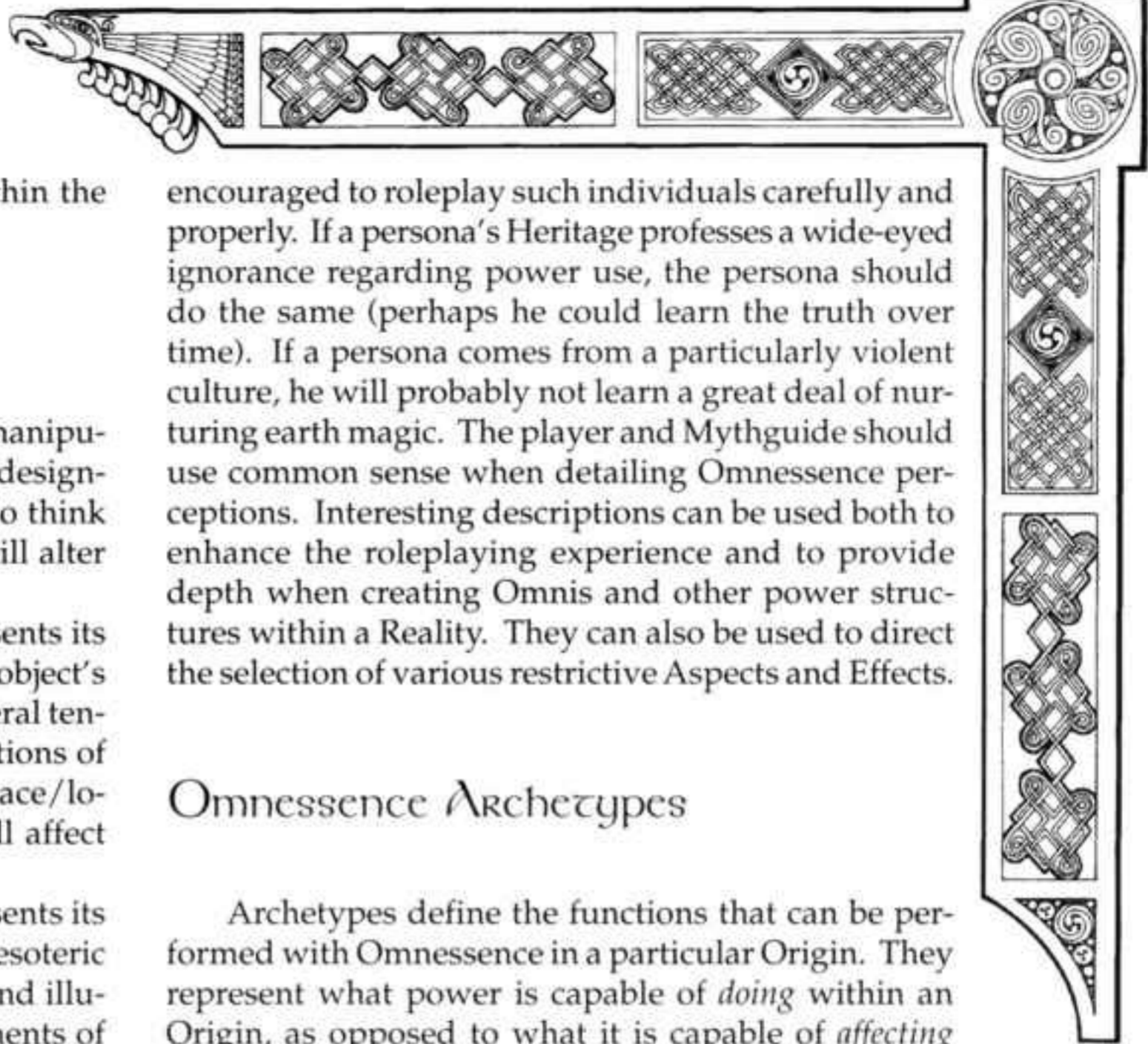
☉ Constructing Paradigms ☉

After the Mythguide knows where Omnescence comes from in an Origin, its Amounts and Availability, how it can be Accessed, and how it can be Stored, he should begin to consider what it can do. Omnescence is used to construct Paradigms, or alterations of the fabric of a particular Reality, in order to obtain a desired Effect. The Effects that can be achieved within an Origin depend on the Omnescence Province of the Origin (i.e. the operative Archetypes and Dominions). Every Paradigm consists of a Configuration (an Archetype plus a Dominion), which describes the intention of the Paradigm, and a base Cost, which details the amount of Omnescence necessary to use the Paradigm without modification. Paradigms are constructed differently among different Origins, and their base Effects can be modified by certain allowable Aspects. This section discusses the creation of individual Paradigms, the interpretation of their resulting Effects, and the nature of the possible Archetypes and Dominions.

One of the inherent challenges in the Aria Paradigm creation system is the ability to achieve similar Effects with different Configurations. This process can become a kind of game in itself, and creative and imaginative players will be able to develop an individual Omnescence Fundamental to its greatest potential. For example, the obvious Configuration to achieve an Invisibility Effect would be Transformation/Organic, representing a change into an unseen Form. However, if the Transformation Archetype were not available in a persona's Origin Province, the persona could also use Conjunction/Reality to move himself to a parallel plane only slightly removed from the mundane (and thus rendering him invisible to onlookers). If that Configuration used too much Omnescence, the persona could use a Manipulation/Will Configuration to alter the perceptions of an onlooker. Although the Adept is still there, the target of the Paradigm can no longer 'see' him there.

These examples illustrate the type of creative solutions that this system was designed to foster. There is a potential for abuse in any game system, and such potential increases as a system becomes more abstract. In this system, *anything* is possible at every conceivable level of power. Hopefully, such a framework removes the temptation for players to seek blindly after ways to outsmart the system, and instead encourages a spirit of esoteric creativity, discovery, and exploration. After all, if players are simply told that anything is possible, they are more inclined to step back and





examine what is playable and interesting within the context of a living world.

FORM AND STATE

Most Paradigms and their Effects alter or manipulate two principal aspects of a Reality. When designing individual Paradigms, it is often helpful to think of the results in terms of how Omnescence will alter the Form or State of a particular Dominion.

The State of an object or individual represents its overall inertia in a Reality. It shows both the object's current condition (i.e. where is it?) and its general tendency (i.e. where does it want to be?). Alterations of State include changes in motion, direction, place/location, and freedom. Certain Archetypes will affect State more than others.

The Form of an object or individual represents its composition and makeup. Form also includes esoteric or ethereal Forms (i.e. spirits, souls, images, and illusions). Alterations of Form are common elements of Creation, Destruction, and Transformation Archetypes. As a general rule, Effects that alter Form Cost more than those which alter State. The Mythguide should keep these concepts in mind during Paradigm creation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERCEPTION

In game terms, the perception of what Adepts do is an important consideration. For example, while a primitive shaman and a court wizard both use a Creation/Energy Configuration to light a flame, the individual perception of what each is doing may be vastly different. The highly-trained wizard (who also happens to possess a keen Insight) has a good idea of what he is affecting in the Reality. He knows that he weaves Omnescence into flows of heat Energy, which in turn cause a chemical reaction that produces a flame.

The shaman, on the other hand, uses his power to shape the spirits of flame which his people believe inhabit all living things, awaiting release. Although he performs the same basic tasks to produce the flame (assuming Access and Effects are handled in roughly the same manner in both Realities), his perception of his actions is completely different from the wizard's.

The Mythguide should keep such environmental, social, and cultural considerations in mind at all times when handling Omnescence-using personas. While the players must know what their personas are doing (in terms of creating Paradigms and figuring Costs), the personas themselves would not necessarily be in possession of the same knowledge. Players should be

encouraged to roleplay such individuals carefully and properly. If a persona's Heritage professes a wide-eyed ignorance regarding power use, the persona should do the same (perhaps he could learn the truth over time). If a persona comes from a particularly violent culture, he will probably not learn a great deal of nurturing earth magic. The player and Mythguide should use common sense when detailing Omnescence perceptions. Interesting descriptions can be used both to enhance the roleplaying experience and to provide depth when creating Omnis and other power structures within a Reality. They can also be used to direct the selection of various restrictive Aspects and Effects.

Omnescence Archetypes

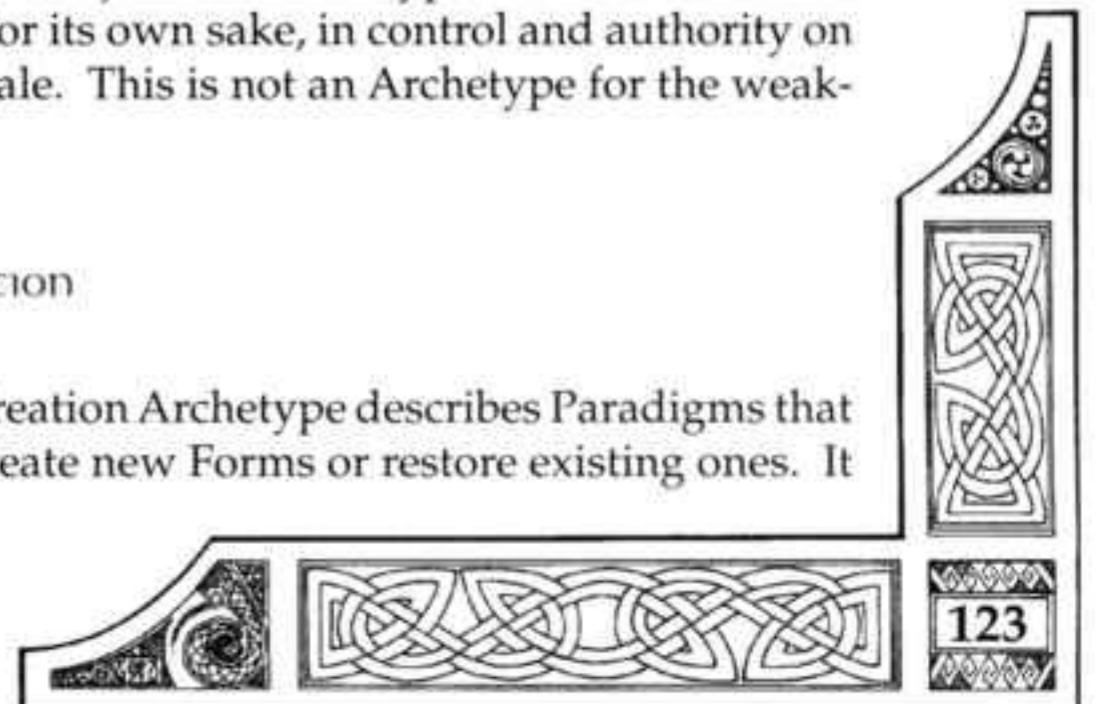
Archetypes define the functions that can be performed with Omnescence in a particular Origin. They represent what power is capable of *doing* within an Origin, as opposed to what it is capable of *affecting* (which is described by Dominions). The relative power of an Archetype within an Origin is described by a Power value between one and five. This value is added to the Facility value of a Dominion to obtain the resulting Might of a Configuration (i.e. an Archetype plus a Dominion). The Might of the Configuration determines the maximum amount of Omnescence that may be spent on a Paradigm within the Configuration. There are six possible Archetypes.

CONJURATION

Conjuration deals with the transference of objects, creatures, spirits, or individuals from one sphere to another. It represents movement among different levels or states of Reality, as well as movement within the same level of Reality (from one part of an environment to another, for example). Conjuration deals primarily with changes in the States of things (i.e. calling a spirit into the mundane plane, summoning another Adept from across a continent, etc.). Adepts who concentrate on the Conjuration Archetype are often interested in power for its own sake, in control and authority on a grand scale. This is not an Archetype for the weak-willed.

CREATION

The Creation Archetype describes Paradigms that actually create new Forms or restore existing ones. It





Form is most often effected. Adepts who concentrate on Destructive powers are fascinated with endings and barrenness. They are often corrupted by a desire for power and control, and may grow increasingly arrogant as they witness the death and destruction wrought by their knowledge and abilities. This Archetype attracts fiery and insecure personalities. In some Origins, this Archetype represents a violent affirmation of life through an eternal cycle of death and rebirth.

Divination

The Divination Archetype deals with the acquisition and study of knowledge and information in all of its forms. It represents the gathering of all types of knowledge, from the interpretation of sacred visions to the active pursuit of various divination and scrying methods. Divination Effects work primarily to affect the State of such knowledge, transferring and freeing it so that an Adept may gain access to desired information. Adepts who pursue the Divination Archetype are often withdrawn and curious introverts, interested in the philosophy and theory behind power use as much as in the actual power itself. This Archetype is normally pursued by scholars and academics.

Manipulation

The Manipulation Archetype describes Effects that attempt to alter the States of individuals or objects. It represents the initiation and suspension of motion, as well as the manipulation (acceleration, deceleration, direction, etc.) of items or objects already in motion. It also represents the direction of existing elements or energy (i.e. turning a candle flame into a raging fire), as well as the alteration of existing States (i.e. using a glacier to construct a billowing wall of steam). Adepts who concentrate on the Manipulation Archetype are often the most analytical of all Omniscience users, although they also tend to exhibit personality traits (such as Devious or Cunning) which reflect their particular area of expertise.

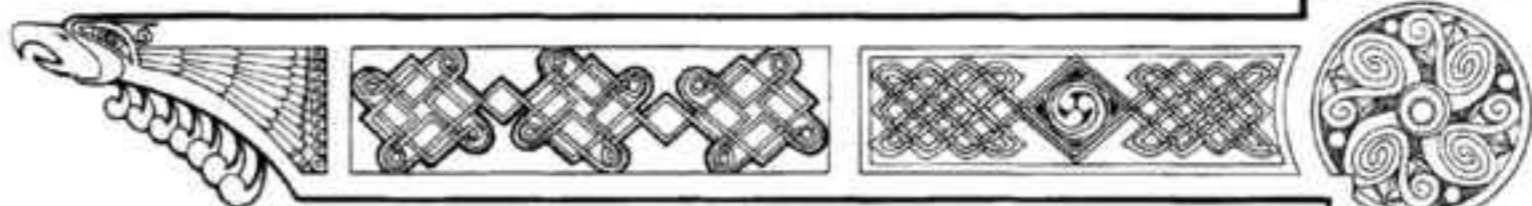
Transformation

The Transformation Archetype deals with the complete Transformation of individual Forms, whether sentient, spiritual, or inorganic. It represents a total alteration of Form, with the final Effect assuming all of the characteristics of the new Form. This Arche-

represents the spontaneous Creation of objects, energy, images, creatures, and even sentient beings. It allows the Creation of something from nothing (i.e. invoking a great flame in the midst of an arctic waste). It also describes Effects that Restore damage or decay in existing objects or individuals (i.e. healing an infectious disease or halting the spread of a toxin through the body). Adepts who follow the Creation Archetype are interested in wellsprings, origins, and beginnings. Although most practitioners of this Archetype use their powers to further their benevolent natures and aid their fellows, the fundamental lure of such primal Creative powers can prove too much for some.

Destruction

The Destruction Archetype describes Effects that either destroy existing Forms or begin to break them down. This Archetype also includes Effects that reduce Forms to their component parts or initiate and accelerate the processes of deterioration and decay (i.e. causing food to go bad or fresh wounds to become infected and fester). Destruction Effects can change both the Form and State of a target, although a target's



type has little to do with altering States, except as it creates a new State along with a new Form. Adepts who concentrate on this Archetype tend to be dynamic and perpetually curious individuals, although somewhat erratic. They often appear to be searching for something, using their power in an attempt to further this quest (for the perfect Form, perhaps?).

Omnescence Dominions

While Archetypes detail what Omnescence does in an environment, Dominions define what the power affects. The relative susceptibility of a particular Dominion to Omnescence use is termed its Facility. Facility is quantified by a value from one to five, which is added to an Archetype's Power to obtain the Might of a Configuration (i.e. an Archetype - Dominion pairing). A Configuration's Might determines the maximum amount of Omnescence that can be spent on a single Paradigm within the Configuration. Just as there are six Archetypes, there are six Dominions.

Energy

This Dominion deals with Effects which attempt to alter, create, or destroy any type of force or energy in an environment. Examples of such Energies include fire, sound, and electricity. The nature of Energy and physical force can differ from one Reality to the next, and the Mythguide should make players aware of any unusual or unique physical laws in his Reality. In some Realities, this Dominion becomes the embodiment of chaos. Individuals who concentrate on this Dominion often assume its nature - strong, willful, and volatile.

Organic

This Dominion deals with all things and creatures that are considered living according to the laws of a particular Reality. It does not automatically include all sentient beings (since some beings which fall within the Spirit Dominion are also considered sentient). Examples that fall within this Dominion include animals, plants and trees, and most intelligent mundane species. Practitioners who follow the Organic Dominion are often vibrant, erratic individuals, full of life but lacking order.

Archetypes and Dominions

Archetypes List

Conjuration
Creation
Destruction
Divination
Manipulation
Transformation

Dominions List

Energy
Organic
Physical
Reality
Spirit
Will

Physical

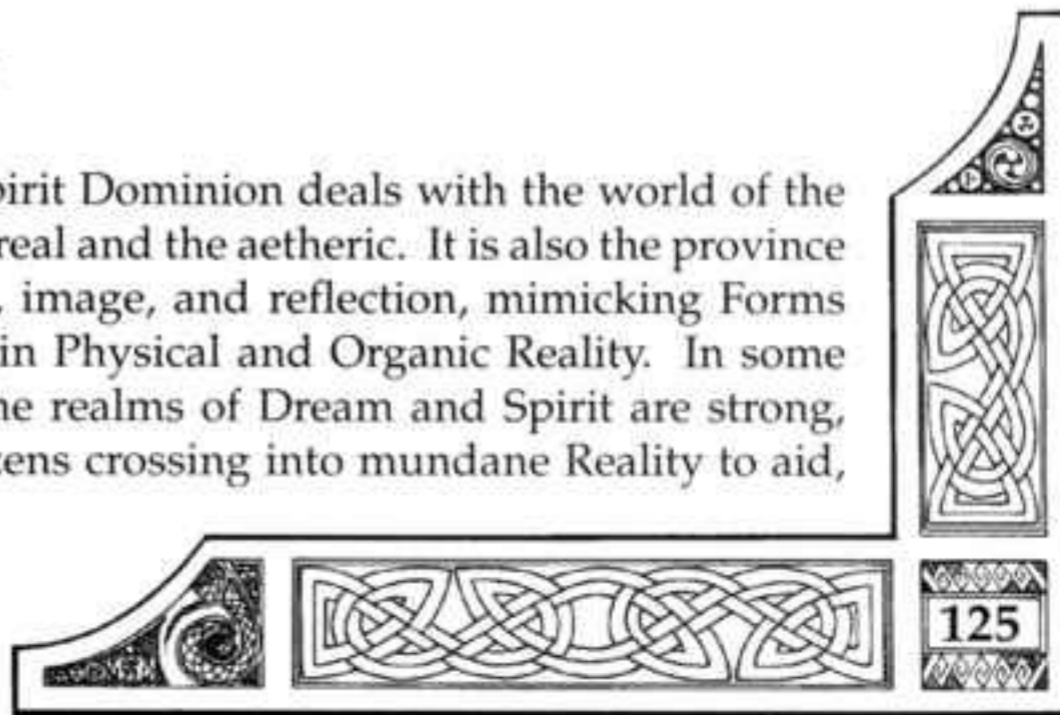
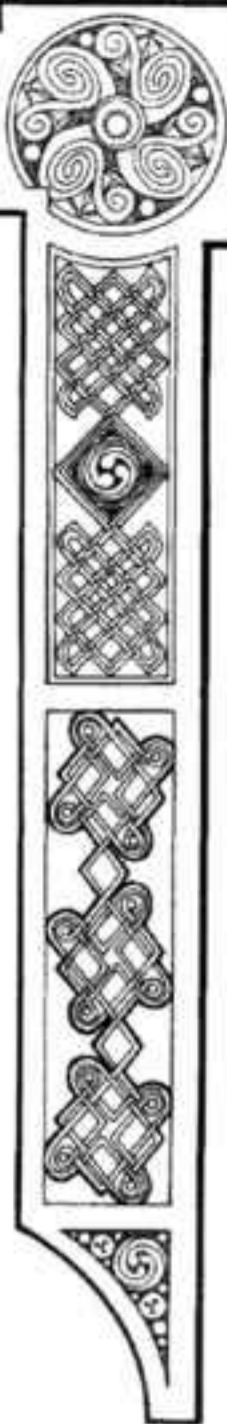
The Physical Dominion deals with inorganic objects, items, and creatures, including things that are considered once-living (but are no longer alive). Examples include water, wind, earth, minerals, and all other elements of mundane Reality. Adepts who specialize in the Physical Dominion often lead quiet, peaceful, contemplative, and ordered lives.

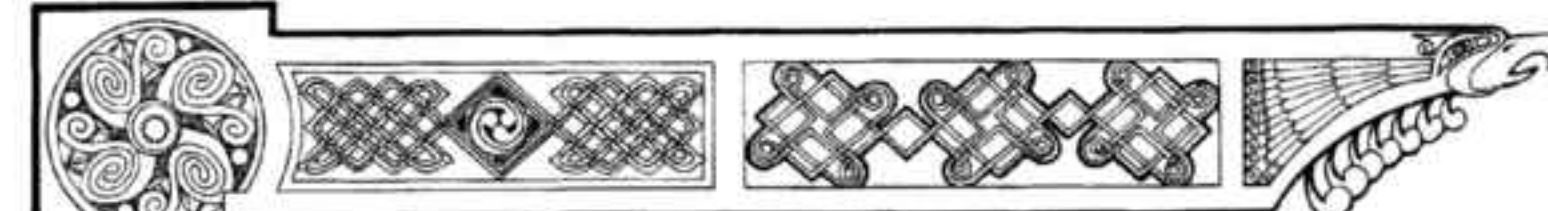
Reality

This Dominion deals with the substance and laws which govern an individual Reality. The Reality Dominion is at once the most abstract and the most powerful of all the Dominions; its province includes such things as time, spatial relationships, relativity, and the structure of planar space (if such a thing exists in the Mythguide's Reality). Those who concentrate on the Reality Dominion tend toward the unstable and the spectacular. Such Adepts are often quite brilliant, although their studies drive many beyond the frontiers of sanity. This Dominion is only for the strongest of heart and mind.

Spirit


The Spirit Dominion deals with the world of the non-corporeal and the aetheric. It is also the province of illusion, image, and reflection, mimicking Forms grounded in Physical and Organic Reality. In some Realities the realms of Dream and Spirit are strong, their denizens crossing into mundane Reality to aid,





observe, and hinder their Organic counterparts. In other Realities, Spirit realms are either nonexistent or appear as barren wastelands. The Mythguide should consider the forms and roles of the Spirit in his Reality when designing the Reality Concept. Those who follow the Spirit Dominion are often considered distant, or even disconnected (from Physical Reality), by their brethren.

Will




The Dominion of Will deals with the inner realms of the mind and the psyche. It is the province of emotion, desire, memory, and personality, and governs the maintenance of free will and independent thought. In some Realities, the landscape of the mind is as powerful as those of Spirit or higher Reality. Practitioners who concentrate on this Dominion are often individuals of piercing intellect and transcendent charisma. They lead existences of order and discipline, and tend to approach most situations from an assumed position of command.

Omnescence Nature

The nature and behavior of power within an Origin can vary. All power within an entire Origin can assume the same Nature, or different Archetypes and Dominions can possess different Natures. Omnescence Nature describes how Omnescence behaves once an Adept has already obtained Access to it, and Nature also has a bearing on the successful performance and realization of specific Preparation Aspects, Paradigm Methods, and Effects. Omnescence normally occurs in one of two principal Natures - *Static* and *Dynamic*.

Static



Omnescence with a Static Nature takes a workable and predictable form. Such power assumes a coherent Nature within an Origin and operates in a consistent manner. Several Nature Aspects further define Static Natures.

Omnescence use can be *Assured* within an Origin. This Aspect represents perhaps the most common Nature, and indicates power that works in an expected way. In an Origin in which Effects are Assured, Adepts know what they are going to get. If an Adept attempts to call fire, his companions won't turn into squirrels; a successful use of power will indeed result

in the appearance of some sort of flame. Tempered Forms do what they are created to do within such Natures.

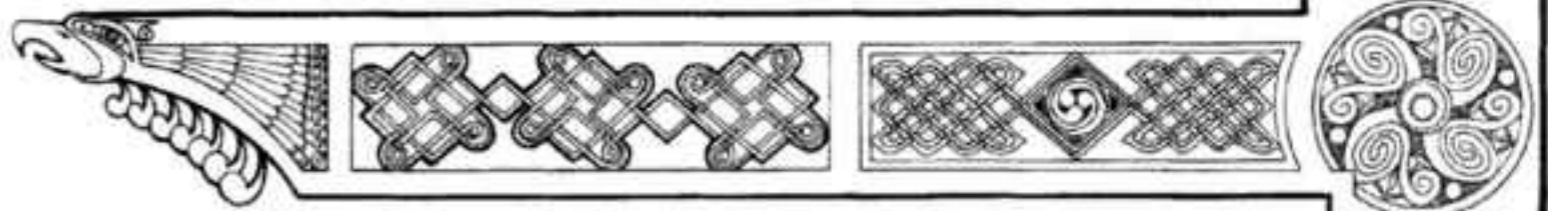
Omnescence use may be *Delayed* in an Origin. The reason for the Delay should be explained according to the Origin Concept. Perhaps there is a gap or time delay between Preparing a Paradigm on the mundane plane and processing the Effects on the spiritual plane. Maybe a capricious Origin always Delays Grants of power for the same period of time. The length of the Delay should be determined by the Mythguide, as should any possibility of altering its duration. The primary difference between this Aspect and those within a Dynamic Nature is that Delays can normally be predicted (i.e. an Origin always acts or Delays in the same manner, for the same period of time).

Finally, Omnescence use can be *Limited* in some fashion. This is a rare Aspect, and is often appropriate only for Mythguide personas or Omnis. The Mythguide should impose an extreme Limitation on Omnescence Nature. For example, a single Paradigm might only be able to be cast once or twice, ever. In another Reality, every use punches a 'hole' in Reality, making it impossible to ever use exactly the same power combination again.

Dynamic

Omnescence within a Dynamic power matrix is unpredictable and erratic. Its behavior cannot often be predicted, and its use may prove dangerous and random. Several Nature Aspects further define Dynamic Omnescence Natures.

Omnescence use can be *Erratic* within an Origin. Such tenuous power is unpredictable, and as such can require variable Preparation Times and cause random Effects. The Mythguide should determine the form of the power's erratic behavior. Perhaps the duration or range of a Paradigm's Effects become random. Maybe a Paradigm's Preparation Time is doubled, or maybe the Paradigm Method initiates nothing. Erratic Natures can alter a Tempered Paradigm only slightly (changing Preparation or Duration by a single Interval), or it can change its form significantly (altering different elements by many Intervals). The Mythguide might allow a Willpower or Aura Trial in order to see if an Adept can force Omnescence to behave according to his will. If such a Trial fails, the Erratic Nature of the power may take over. The difference between this Aspect and the Wild Aspect is a fundamental one; Erratic Omnescence normally accomplishes desired Effects, but changes their parameters (duration, damage, etc.). Wild Omnescence can alter intended Para-



digms completely (i.e. summoning an elemental while attempting to heal a small wound).

Omnescence use may also be *Wild*. Wild Natures are totally unpredictable, and should be handled by the Mythguide on a situation by situation basis. When using Omnescence within a Wild Nature, Adepts are never quite certain what they are going to get. The Mythguide should apply random die rolls to both the Preparation and Effects portions of Paradigm use. The extent of the randomness depends on both the environment and nature of a Reality. Is there only a slight chance that random Effects will occur, or do they occur every time a persona uses power? If the Effects themselves are random, where do they come from? How sweeping and dangerous are they? For example, if an Adept expends two Omnescence to light a candle flame, can the resulting Wild Effects behave as if he had spent one hundred Omnescence to level and entire city block? Sentient Origins might consciously initiate such Effects, while Non-Sentient Origins might generate them at random. Depending on the Origin, Wild might never be dangerous (maybe the Origin just has a sense of humor) or it might always be treacherous to use. Regardless of how it operates in a Reality, its use should always be uncertain and worrisome.

Finally, Omnescence can be *Interpreted* by a Sentient, Partly Sentient, or Fluctuating Origin. This Aspect is often used when Access must be Purchased or Granted. An Adept explains a desired Effect or attempts to initiate an Effect, and his actions are subsequently Interpreted by the Origin. Such Interpretation can be friendly (thus making this Aspect little different from an Assured Nature), unfriendly, or stern. Perhaps an Adept is required to carefully state exactly what he wants a Paradigm to do. Or maybe an Origin always Interprets Paradigms literally. Some Origins might Interpret Paradigms in light of its own interests or motivations (a common occurrence among Meddling Origins). The Mythguide describe the type and form of Interpretation according to the parameters of the individual Origin.

Limitation Aspects

Several Nature Limitation Aspects further define the Nature of power use within an Origin. These restrictions generally affect the form and limitations placed upon a Paradigm's final Effects. The Mythguide should choose those Limitation Aspects which he feels best enhance the uses of power within a particular Origin.

Curved

This Aspect usually appears with Dynamic Omnescence, but it can appear in Static environments as well. The Curved Aspect causes an Effect to diminish or increase with Range or Area. For example, an Effect might be at full strength for the first half of its Range Increment, dropping to three-quarter strength over the last part of its Range. The type and degree of the Effects Curve should be determined by the Mythguide.

Natural

This Aspect can appear with either Static or Dynamic Omnescence, and represents power which behaves in a more or less natural manner. For example, a magic flame created with Natural Omnescence could be doused with normal water. The presence of this Aspect will affect certain Preparation Aspects and their uses.

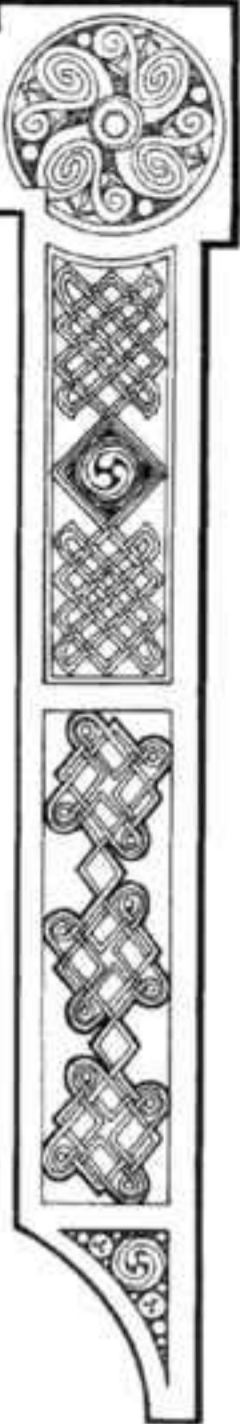
Restriction

The Restriction Aspect serves as a kind of catch-all for general power restrictions within an Origin. Any sort of limitation, to both target and caster, can be expressed through this Aspect. Perhaps a caster cannot be in contact with iron while using power. Or maybe Omnescence use is restricted by race, species, allegiance, or philosophical group (i.e. only affects a certain culture or a certain group of worshipers). In some Origins, power use must be invited by a target or needs the belief of a target. Using a certain amount of Omnescence can induce a magical slumber in the caster, or cause him to age prematurely. The Mythguide should use this Aspect to further explore the philosophical nature of an Origin and its power.

Paradigm Elements

All Paradigms consist of a group of standard Elements. In addition to its Configuration (consisting of an Archetype and a Dominion), all Paradigms are described by a Method, a Preparation element, Time and Distance elements, and an Effects element. When the variations on each of these Elements are calculated within a particular Origin, a base Cost (in Omnescence) is determined for the Paradigm. This is the Cost to activate the basic Paradigm, which is termed the *Standard Paradigm*.

After the base Cost of the Standard Paradigm has been determined, an Adept has the option of Tempering the Form, or altering the basic Paradigm structure to enhance or diminish one or more of its Elements.



Paradigm Elements

Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No Preparation - Preparation (Enhancers, Diminishers, & Neutrals)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation Aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access Methods Physical Mental/Spiritual Esoteric Preparation Time Preparation Trials
Paradigm Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Category - Casting Time - Distance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range Area - Duration - Effects Cost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope Potency Intricacy - Temper Aspects

Tempering a Form involves using Temper Aspects (those permitted in the Reality) to change certain effects; the Temper Aspects which are permitted within an Origin should be detailed by the Mythguide. For instance, in some Realities the Duration of a Paradigm might be a fixed period of time; in others, the time period could be completely variable. Aspects should be assigned based on both the nature of an Origin and on the type of Effects the Mythguide wishes to create in his environment. The final, modified Paradigm is called a Tempered Paradigm.

Paradigm Elements often apply to every Archetype and Dominion within an Origin's Omnescence Province. However, they do not have to; the Mythguide has the option of determining Paradigm Elements for individual Archetypes, Dominions, or combinations of the two. This is often an appropriate option in Realities with a single sweeping source of power. It is also a distinct possibility in Realities with Sentient Origins.

Preparation

When an Adept initiates a Paradigm to produce certain Effects, the actual process is divided into two

parts - *Preparation* and *Method*. Preparation includes any procedures that are required prior to initiating an actual Method to produce an Effect. Some Realities do not require Preparation before casting Paradigms, while in others extensive conditions must be met before a Method is able to create the proper Effects. There are two Preparation categories - *No Preparation* and *Preparation*.

No Preparation

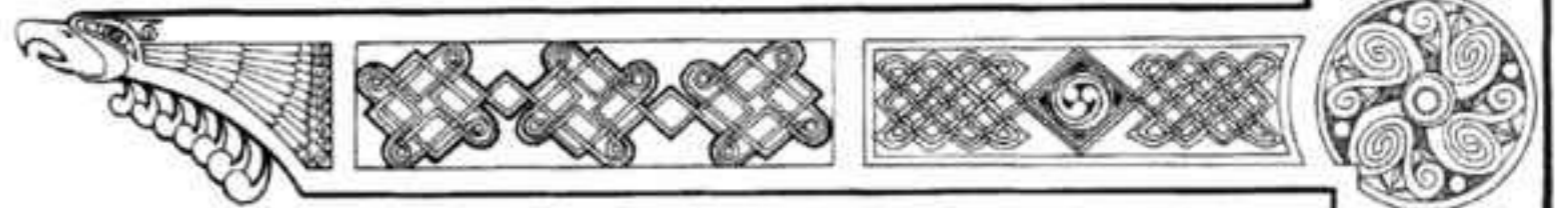
Paradigms within the Origin, Archetype, or Dominion do not require any sort of Preparation prior to the initiation of their accompanying Paradigm Method. Since Preparation is not a consideration, Preparation Aspects will not be available. Examples of Origins that do not require Preparation in order to activate Effects might include Origins with Wild Natures or Internal Origins which support purely Thought-activated powers.

Preparation

The successful execution of Paradigms in most Origins requires some type of Preparation. Preparation occurs in four distinct forms which are defined by individual Aspects. These forms are *Access*, *Physical*, *Mental/Spiritual*, and *Esoteric*. When detailing the Elements of Paradigm creation within an Origin, the Mythguide should determine the possible (or required) methods of Preparation.

All Preparation Aspects are described as either *Required* or *Possible*. Required Aspects must be chosen for specific Origins, Archetypes, or Dominions, while Possible Aspects represent Preparation methods which may be chosen (and which often yield additional Omnescence). The Mythguide should determine the extent of a particular Aspect. For example, a Preparation Aspect might hold sway over an entire Origin, or it might be Required only for spells within a certain Archetype. In extreme cases, individual Paradigms can have their own Preparation Aspects. The Mythguide should assign such Aspects according to both the Reality and Origin Concepts.

Preparation Aspects are further classified as *Enhancers*, *Diminishers*, or *Neutrals*. *Enhancers* give an Adept an Omnescence award which may then be applied to the overall Cost of a Paradigm. For example, a persona using a staff as a Focus for his concentration might receive an award of Omnescence equal to half his Aura. Enhancers can also reduce the Cost of an Effect. For instance, a sacred talisman might require a



persona to use only half the Omnescence it would normally require to initiate an Effect. A Paradigm which has been Solidified (perhaps cast many times) will often cost less Omnescence than a similar Effect that is achieved spontaneously. For the sake of convenience, such modifications are still interpreted as Omnescence awards. Both interpretations (outright awards and modifiers that reduce costs) lower the final personal Cost to the Adept. The Mythguide should determine the final awards for particular Enhancers. Such awards can be straight Omnescence awards, but are often affected by current Aura, Insight, Faith, or Archetype and Dominion expertises. Awards rarely exceed five points, and normally range from one to three, but high awards are occasionally appropriate. The size of the award is usually commensurate with the Preparation Time involved. Most Preparation Aspects are Enhancers of some sort.

Diminishers are the opposite of Enhancers. These Preparation Aspects require an Adept to pay some type of Cost in order to adequately Prepare a Paradigm. This Cost can be represented by Omnescence, or it can take another form. Fatigue and Willpower Trials are common forms of such other Preparation Costs. In some Origins, Costs can be more dear - sanity, personality, or some type of action (refer to the Access Aspects for more suggestions and the Preparation Trials section which follows for more information regarding Preparation Trials). The Mythguide should determine the extent of such Costs based on the nature of the Origin and the Time needed for adequate Preparation.

Finally, *Neutrals* represent Preparation actions or methods which must be completed in order to activate a Paradigm, but which carry neither Costs nor awards with them. Each of the four Aspect categories are described in the following sections.

Access

Omnescence Access Methods can be used as Preparation Aspects. For example, perhaps after Gathering Omnescence from a Manifestation, an Adept is simply able to use it without further Preparation. In such instances, the actual process of Accessing the power becomes the Preparation process for initiating Paradigms. Esoteric Access Methods which deal with the establishment of links, conduits, or portals are a common instance where Access Methods become Preparation Aspects (after the establishment of such a connection, the Adept may begin to use the Omnescence received through the link).

When Access methods are used as Preparation Aspects, they are always considered Neutrals and are normally Required as well. Preparation Aspects based

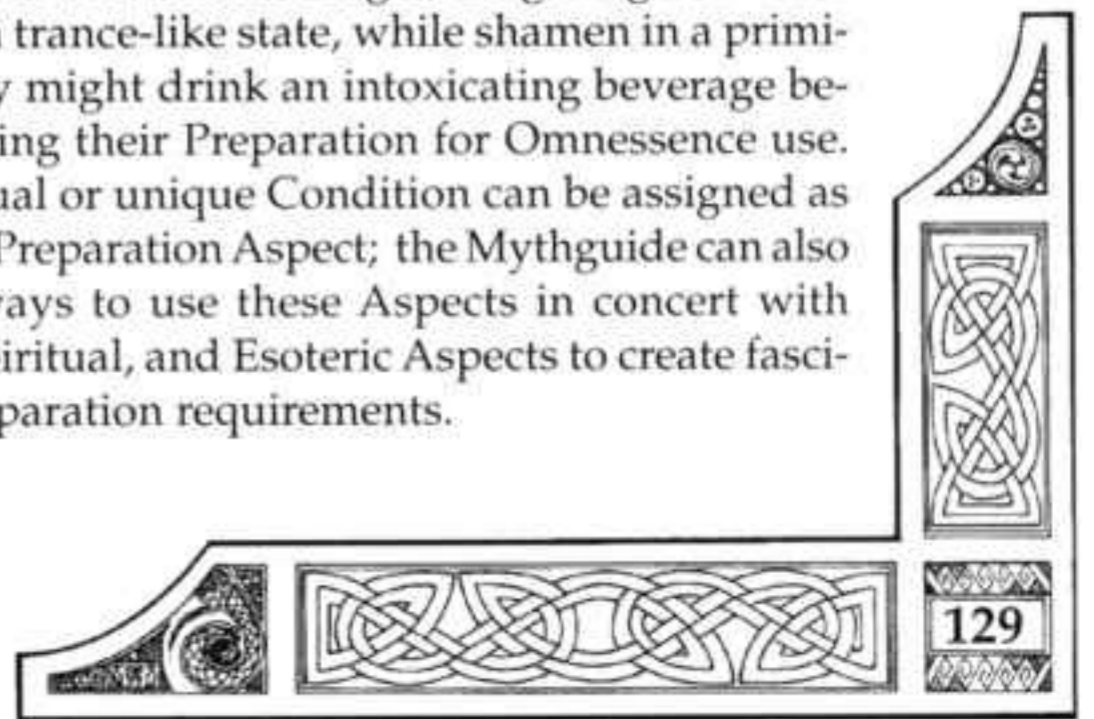


on Access may appear in conjunction with any of the other three types of Preparation Aspect. The nature of such a combination depends on the Origin.

Physical

Physical Preparation Aspects include an Adept's physical or physiological *Condition*, sacred or mythic *Symbols*, prescribed *Actions*, important or mystical *Materials*, and powerful *Language*.

Condition describes an Adept's physical state when Preparing a Paradigm. For example, in some Origins only practitioners who are Fresh (i.e. who are not Fatigued at all) may use Omnescence. In other Realities, Adepts might only be able to use Omnescence while in a dream-state, and therefore must be asleep in order to Prepare. In another Origin, drugs might be used to induce a trance-like state, while shamen in a primitive society might drink an intoxicating beverage before initiating their Preparation for Omnescence use. Any unusual or unique Condition can be assigned as a Physical Preparation Aspect; the Mythguide can also develop ways to use these Aspects in concert with Mental, Spiritual, and Esoteric Aspects to create fascinating Preparation requirements.



Symbols (in a Physical form) can also be used to Prepare for Omnescence use. Such images include written language or script, engravings and pictograms, drawings, and runes. Adepts might be required to lay the required Symbols in a certain pattern, to inscribe them as part of a holy ritual, or to ingest them in their material form. This Aspect is often used in conjunction with one or more Esoteric Aspects (particularly the Correspondences, Conduit, and Laws Aspects).

Preparation might require the performance of certain *Actions*, movements, or gestures. For example, Preparation for all Paradigms within a particular Origin (an Essence) might involve elaborate hand gestures. Another Origin might require the performance of a sacred Dance, while a third could demand a ritual sacrifice prior to initiating a Paradigm (or perhaps a specific intervals throughout the holy year). This Aspect (probably the most common of all Preparation Aspects) is often used in conjunction with one or more other Physical or Esoteric Aspects.

Certain *Materials* are often required in order to initiate a Paradigm. Such Materials can be just about anything, and normally depend on both the nature of a particular Origin and the environment in which its followers live. Materials can be Organic or Inorganic and can take any conceivable form, from specific minerals to rare herbs to the remains of sacred animals. This Aspect is often used in conjunction with Spiritual or Esoteric Aspects (especially the Correspondence and Laws Aspects).

Finally, *Language* can be used to Prepare a Paradigm. This might constitute a simple vocal shaping of the Paradigm (i.e. 'saying the magic words'), the utterance of one or more Words of Power, or the use of an entire magical language in which an Adept must describe the intended Effects of a Paradigm and subsequently activate them. The Language Physical Aspect often appears in conjunction with any of the other Preparation Aspects.

Mental/Spiritual

Mental and Spiritual Preparation Aspects include an Adept's mental, emotional, psychological, and devotional *Condition*, *Meditation*, *Concentration*, and *Memory*. These Aspects can also represent elements of religious supplication or personal belief.

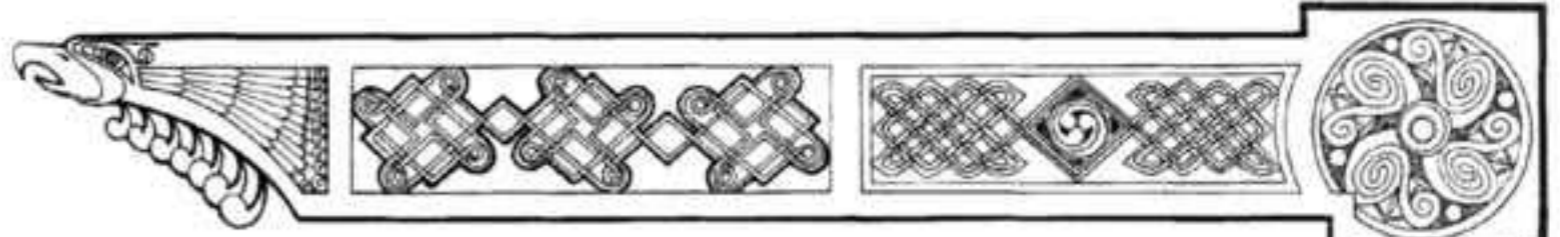
Mental *Condition* refers to the state of a practitioner's emotions and will. Priests of a somber agricultural deity might have to banish all capriciousness from their minds in order to Prepare a Paradigm (perhaps requiring a Personality or Willpower Trial). Shamens in a primitive culture might have to seize and hold certain primal thoughts (again requiring a Trial), or attain a state of rapture or religious euphoria, while

the followers of a malevolent god of war might not be able to Prepare for Effects if feelings of pity or mercy are present in their minds. The Mythguide should interpret such mental Conditions according to the Origin being used.

Meditation can also be used to Prepare a Paradigm. Where Concentration represents a precise and trained consideration, Meditation represents a centering, an emptying of one's mind of all conscious thought. Adepts should use their Meditation expertise to achieve this state, with the Mythguide applying any relevant modifiers (distractions, outside noise, etc.). In many religions, prayer and certain devotional considerations take the form of Meditation (fasting, out-of-body centering, etc.). This Aspect is often used in conjunction with certain Esoteric Preparation Aspects.

Preparation can require intense *Concentration* on the part of an Adept. Where Meditation represents an emptying process, Concentration represents an intense focus on the subject or task at hand (in this the case the desired Effects of the Paradigm). Formalized prayer and religious ceremony often takes the form of Concentration. Concentration is based on a persona's Willpower, and if a Preparation Trial is required the Willpower Characteristic should be used. A persona with the Superior Concentration Background Aspect can improve the Difficulty of a Concentration Trial by up to half the Aspect's Rank (the Mythguide should apply any additional modifiers, of course). This Aspect is often used in conjunction with Physical and Esoteric Aspects.

Finally, Mental Preparation can require an Adept to have a Paradigm already committed to *Memory*. This Aspect is useful in Origins with a more rigid conception of Omnescence use, since it represents Paradigms which are drawn from an Adept's Memory (and not spontaneously created), and which may have been prepared several hours before casting. Many Omnis work in this manner; apprentice Adepts are only taught Paradigms that are a part of an Order's Archives. The apprentices do not create the Effects themselves; they simply cast those Paradigms which they have been taught. The recommended number of Paradigms which may be committed to Memory is $2 \times (\text{Intelligence} + \text{Aura})$. The Mythguide should feel free to alter this number accordingly in his own Reality, as well as the time it takes to Memorize a Paradigm (perhaps ten seconds per point of Omnescence Cost). The Mythguide should also determine the length and operation of such Memorized Paradigms. Perhaps an Adept must study those Paradigms he wishes to have available in Memory each morning. Maybe once an Adept learns a Paradigm, he retains it in Memory for a much longer period of time (days, weeks, or even



years). Or perhaps the Adept must Memorize Paradigms from written texts. The uses of this Aspect will depend largely on the types and Access methods for Omnescence within an Origin, as well as the Storage and Vessel possibilities that are available. The Memory Aspect is often used in conjunction with Physical Aspects, and is far more common in Non-Sentient or Partly Sentient Origins than in Sentient Origins (who often Grant or channel power through followers). It is also common with Essences for which Omnescence must be Gathered. A persona who also has the Good Memory Background Aspect can Memorize two Paradigms more per Rank of the Aspect than an Adept without a Good Memory. Preparation which requires this Aspect can usually be Interrupted (see following sections).

Esoteric

Esoteric Preparation Aspects include the respect of specific Origin or Reality-based *Correspondences*, an adherence to certain accepted *Laws of Reality*, the *Solidification* of individual Paradigms, or the need to *Shape Affinities* when directing Omnescence at unresponsive targets.

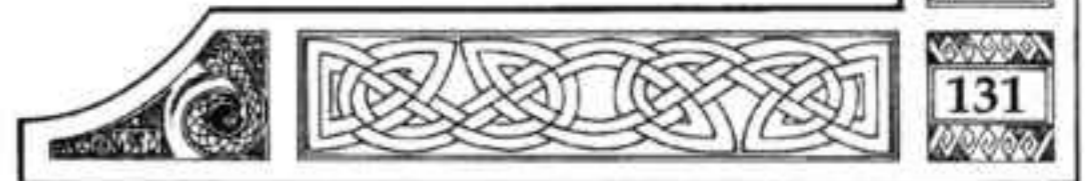
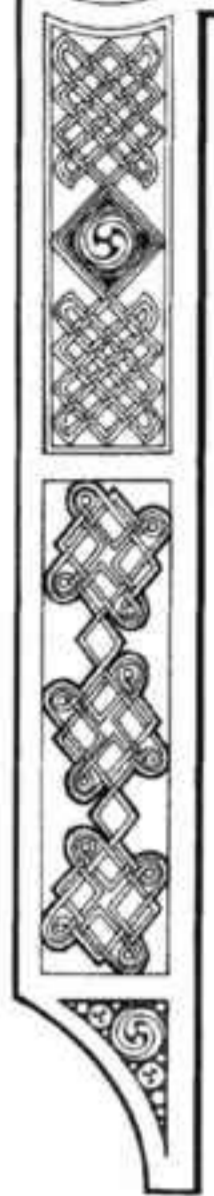
Preparation can require the use of certain *Correspondences*. Such Correspondences are often unique to a particular Reality or Origin, and exist as a master set of complementary symbols, items, and creatures which can affect the invisible structure of Reality. The Mythguide should create a list of the Correspondences which appear within an Origin; such lists are often based upon some type of great cycle (a cycle of years, months, or zodiacal symbols is common). For example, a specific zodiacal sign might Correspond to a particular tree, which in turn Corresponds to a specific gem, which Corresponds to a certain element, etc. The nature of the Correspondences themselves are left to the Mythguide (if examples are desired, any good book on astrology or magic should provide several variations). If this Aspect is chosen, the Mythguide should also determine the effects of the Correspondences and the number that are required. One Correspondence per ten points of Omnescence is recommended, but the Mythguide should decide on the precise numbers. The Mythguide should also distinguish between required Correspondences and possible additional Correspondences and their effects. This Aspect usually appears in conjunction with the Physical Materials Aspect.

Preparation can also require an adherence to certain *Laws of Omnescence* or Reality. Two of the most common such Laws are those of Similarity and Contagion. The principle of Similarity states that like produces like. In other words, conditions and Prepara-

tions which are Similar to a desired Effect enhance the ability to successfully realize the Effect. A primitive shaman might know that he needs to do a dance which simulates flight in order to summon an eagle, while a vile necromancer might require a human bone in order to kill a living target. The Law of Contagion maintains that once things have been together, they are always joined in some manner. The shaman in the previous example could use an eagle feather to summon the eagle, while a powerful sorcerer could use a piece of rock from a far-off mountain peak to teleport himself to the stone's point of origin. A Laws Aspect almost always appears in conjunction with a Materials Aspect.

Preparation in some Realities can require an Adept to *Solidify* a Paradigm. The Mythguide must determine the nature of Solidification within an Origin, but the process normally calls for extensive research and testing. Perhaps the Adept must Temper each element of the Paradigm in his laboratory, carefully recording the results and parameters for subsequent Memorization. This Aspect can also be used to place a Tempered Paradigm within an object, item, symbol, or focus. For example, an Origin might require that followers form bonds between themselves and Familiar Spirits. When creating Paradigms, the Adepts might first have to Solidify the Paradigm by passing its Tempered form into their Familiar, who serves as a temporary Vessel. The Adept can then Release the energy when he is ready. This Aspect can also be used to define Paradigms which must be cast from Formulas or Grimoires, or which must be carefully learned from a Master. When using Solidification in this manner, it often appears in conjunction with Symbols and Language Aspects, and it can normally be Interrupted. The Solidification procedure normally takes from several days to many years, depending on the Origin, and different Archetypes and Dominions within the same Origin might call for different tasks. A complete Solidification often necessitates a number of Preparation Trials. This Aspect usually appears in conjunction with Materials, Memory, Correspondences, and Laws Aspects.

Finally, Preparation might require an Adept to *Shape Affinities*. This Aspect is very common among Origins which support artificing or enchantment Paradigms (constructing magical weapons or enchanted materials, for example). The Adept must Shape an object until its Affinity is within the accepted range for Omnescence Effects. This often involves enchanting a material until its Affinity reaches zero, causing it to be an ideal receptacle or enhancer for further Omnescence use. This Aspect is rarely used on sentient beings (since their Affinity is represented by



Aura); if its use is permitted on such beings, it will be many times more difficult to Shape Auras than it is to Shape the Affinities of non-sentient objects. The process of Shaping an Affinity is often incremental, requiring a separate Trial and time period for each level of Affinity reduction. This Aspect is usually accompanied by a Materials or Laws Aspect.

Preparation Aspect Relationships

When designing an Omnescence Fundamental, the Mythguide should keep the interrelationships among various Preparation Aspects in mind at all times. Certain Aspects can be Required, while others might only be Possible (perhaps allowing an Adept to gain additional Omnescence prior to working a difficult Paradigm). Enhancers and Diminishers can be played against one another, perhaps requiring one type for certain Archetypes and another for the remaining Archetypes. For example, all Creation magic in an Origin might use a Concentration Aspect as an Enhancer (giving a persona more Omnescence as he Concentrates) while Destruction magic uses the same Aspect as a Diminisher (requiring the expenditure of Fatigue).

Aspects often work in concert with other. For example, Correspondence and Materials Aspects appear together, as do Concentration and Physical Aspects. A wooden staff could serve as a Physical Symbol at the same time as it becomes a Focus for Mental Concentration. Preparation Aspects should also relate to the overall structure of power in an Origin. By considering Access and Availability when designing an Origin's Preparation Aspects, the Mythguide will achieve a creative and consistent framework for Omnescence use in his environment.

Preparation Time

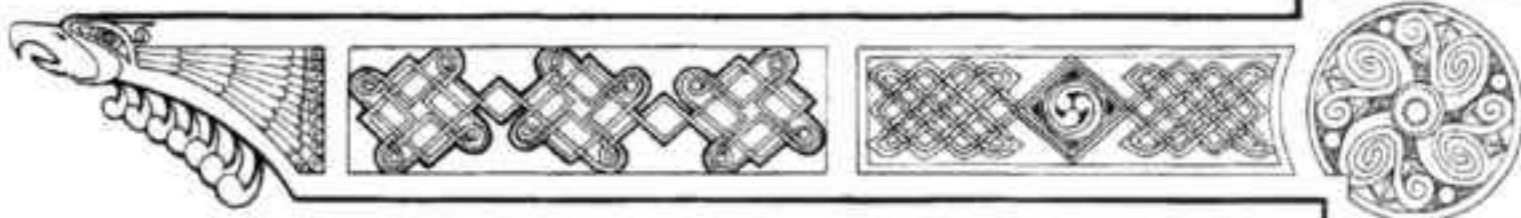
Preparation Time represents the amount of time it takes to complete the necessary Preparation Aspects before initiating the Effects of a Paradigm, and is based on Preparation Intervals defined by the Mythguide. The Mythguide should choose a Base Interval of time according to both his conception of Paradigm use in an Origin and the required Preparation Aspects. As with the determination of Access Intervals, there are eight Base Intervals to choose from: *Instantaneous, Seconds, Minutes, Hours, Days, Weeks, Months+, and Variable*. The Mythguide should then determine the actual Preparation Interval that will be used for the Origin, Archetype, Dominion, or Preparation Aspect. For example, if the Base Interval is Minutes, the Prepara-

tion Interval could be 10 minutes. If the Base Interval were seconds, the Preparation Interval could be 5 seconds, and if the Base Interval were Months+, the Preparation Interval could be five years. The Mythguide can also choose to modify the Base Interval by the Primary Trait, another Trait, or an appropriate expertise. For example, a Base Interval might be equal to ten seconds minus half an Adept's Primary Trait. Or the Mythguide could allow individual Archetype and Dominion expertises to modify Preparation Time according to their Rank (i.e. minus five seconds per Rank, etc.).

Realities that enjoy appreciable levels of power use normally use Base Intervals of Seconds or Minutes, although complex rituals might require hours. In more unique Realities, preparation Times could involve years. Instantaneous Preparation represents immediate Preparation, and is very rare (most such Origins will simply require No Preparation). Other Preparation Times can be either *Variable* or *Static*.

Static Preparation Times cannot be altered. A specific Preparation Aspect must be completed in a specified amount of time, and its form cannot be varied. It does not help an Adept to spend more time in Preparation on such a Paradigm since it will not yield any benefits. Nor is it possible for an Adept to rush his Preparation, gaining a Time advantage. Although *Variable Preparation Time* is more common, *Static Times* occasionally appear in extremely rigid or unyielding Origins.

Variable Preparation represents either fluctuating Preparation Times or the ability to adjust the required Preparation Time; the Mythguide should determine the high and low Preparation Intervals possible for the Origin. For example, if the modified Preparation Interval is fifteen seconds for a particular Origin, the Mythguide might define a minimum time of five seconds and maximum time of two minutes. Adepts will often want to take more or less Time in order to gain certain advantages. The minimum and maximum times represent the outside limits on each end. Although an Adept can willingly take longer than the maximum time to Prepare, any time spent beyond the maximum will yield no additional benefits. An Adept can never take less time than the minimum. Altering Preparation Time has no bearing on whether an Aspect is an Enhancer or a Diminisher; it builds on Preparation Aspects already in place. For example, if an Origin requires Adepts to inscribe certain Symbols as Preparation (thereby granting an additional point of Omnescence), and an Adept reduces Preparation Time, the reduction will come first from the Omnescence gained through the completion of the Aspect. Vari-



able Preparation Times take two distinct forms - *Fluctuating* and *Manipulated*.

Fluctuating Preparation Times will depend on the nature of the variation. Is Omnescence wild in the Reality, altering its form so that the same Preparation Aspects always take a different amount of time? If this is the case, Preparation Time can be determined randomly between high and low values established by the Mythguide. Fluctuating Preparation Times often depend on the outcome or resolution of some type of interaction (i.e. a negotiation regarding Philosophical Restrictions, a Purchase, a Loan, or a bidding war). They can also represent the results of Preparation Trials (perhaps the final Preparation Time depends on the Degree of Success of a preparation Trial). The Mythguide should determine the length of the Preparation Interval based on the relevant situational considerations.

Variable Preparation also represents the ability to consciously *Manipulate* Preparation Intervals. If the Mythguide decides that it is possible to alter the length of a Preparation Interval within an Origin, he should determine the general degree of variation which is possible (based on the minimum and maximum Preparation Intervals already determined). Variations are handled differently depending on whether an Adept is removing time from a Preparation Interval or adding time to the end of an Interval.

The ease of such alterations is based on a *Variation Facility* from 1 to 10+, with ten representing Preparation Intervals that are difficult to vary and one representing Intervals which are easy to vary. Such Variation can affect one of two areas: the Difficulty of Effects Trials or Omnescence Cost. When attempting to initiate Paradigms in less Time than is normally required, divide the Variation Facility by ten to determine the Increments by which Time can be reduced. For example, if the Preparation Interval for an Origin were sixty seconds and the Variation Facility were five, Preparation Time could be reduced by Increments of twelve seconds ($60/5 = 12$). If Difficulty is being affected, each twelve second Increment removed from Preparation increases the Difficulty of the necessary Effects Trial by one. If Omnescence is being used, each Increment increases the Omnescence Cost of the Paradigm by one point.

If Preparation Time is being extended, the Adept gains a point of Omnescence or reduces the Difficulty of the Effects Trial by one for each Increment of extension. To determine Increments of extension, multiply the Preparation Interval by the Variation Facility. In the previous example, if the Adept had wished to gain a -2 Difficulty modifier to his Effects Trial, he would have to extend the Preparation Time of the Paradigm



by ten minutes (Preparation Interval of sixty seconds x Variation Facility of five to determine the increment). Note that the highest Variation Interval is actually 10+; if the Mythguide desires extremely diverse Variation possibilities, he can assign values higher than ten to an Origin's Variation Facility. He might also wish to separate the higher and lower Variation Facilities (i.e. a facility of 10 for reducing Time and a Variation of 25 for increasing it). Remember that whatever Variations may be possible, any Variations are still restrained by the minimum and maximum Times established by the Mythguide.

PREPARATION TRIALS

Many Preparation Aspects, regardless of whether they are Enhancers, Diminishers, or Neutrals, require Preparation Trials of some sort. Such Trials should be assigned by the Mythguide depending on the nature of the Aspect. For example, an Action Aspect might call for an Adept to perform an intricate ceremonial dance. In this case, a successful Physical or Performance expertise Trial would represent successful Preparation. An Action Aspect used in conjunction with a Concentration Aspect would also require a suc-

successful Concentration Trial. Preparation which requires some type of bargaining or the performance of a Philosophical Restriction might call for a Social Interaction or a Charisma Trial (directed at a minion or representative of an Origin). Preparation will occasionally necessitate more than one Trial; for example, an Adept might be required to hold open a link or a gate (perhaps expressed by an Expanded Fatigue or Concentration Trial). The Mythguide should determine the type and nature of any Preparation Trials within an Origin; such Trials will always reflect the nature of the Origin itself. Complete Successes normally represent successful, timely Preparation. Failures might indicate backfires or increased Preparation Time, while Superior and higher successes can represent quicker preparation Times.

INTERRUPTION

Finally, the Mythguide should decide whether or not a Preparation Aspect can be Interrupted. If Interruption is possible, an Adept may cease Preparation and then resume the process again, continuing from where the Interruption occurred. As a general rule, the longer the Preparation Time, the more likely the procedure can be Interrupted. For example, it would be impossible to execute an uninterrupted Preparation lasting three weeks (unless more than a single individual were involved). However, Preparation requiring only seconds can rarely be Interrupted.

If Interruption is impossible and an Adept is Interrupted during Preparation, the individual loses all Preparation that has been completed. He must begin the entire process anew. In some cases, Interrupted Preparation might initiate some type of backfire or disaster (especially with Wild Omnescence). The Mythguide should decide if a Backfire Trial is appropriate based on the Preparation Aspect and the amount of Preparation finished prior to the Interruption.

Effects

All successful Paradigms culminate in one or more desired Effects. These Effects consist of several elements which contribute to the overall Omnescence Cost of the Paradigm. The Method of a Paradigm describes how Omnescence, once Acquired and Prepared, is actually shaped and transmitted into the environment to achieve a specific Effect. Effects are also governed by Distance (Range and Area) and Duration elements.

When developing a Paradigm and defining an Effect, the Omnescence Cost of the Effect is found by adding the individual Costs of the Effect's *Scope*, *Potency*, and *Intricacy*. These Costs may be further modified and altered by applying any Temper Aspects which are permitted within an Origin. The following sections detail the creation of individual Effects and the assignment of appropriate Omnescence Costs.

Paradigm Method

A Paradigm's Method describes the actual mechanism which transforms Omnescence into an Effect. It indicates the moment of 'casting', the point of no return. After a Paradigm has been Tempered (i.e. all of the Temper Aspects have been chosen and the Omnescence Costs calculated to obtain a final Cost), the initiation of the Paradigm Method represents the expenditure of the required Omnescence. The type of Method used in an Origin serves primarily as another descriptive element, since the nature and structure of Omnescence use within an Origin is defined by the Access and Preparation Aspects.

Paradigm Methods normally assume one of three forms - *Release*, *Channel*, or *Shape*. Released Omnescence has already been molded into or attuned to a specific Effect. Effects are often Released from enchanted objects, weapons, items, symbols, or living beings. Released Omnescence can also be used to express Paradigms that have been pre-cast or Solidified. For example, Adepts might be required to weave skeins of Reality into an Effect Pattern which is then Released into the mundane world. Internal power can use this Method as well; practitioners might have to Solidify a form in their mind before Releasing it into the world. This Method often appears in conjunction with Materials, Correspondences, Symbols, Solidification, and Laws Preparation Aspects.

Channeled Omnescence comes from the Origin itself, and simply uses the Adept's body as a vehicle through which to express Effects. Sentient or Partly Sentient Origins commonly Channel power through their followers. This Method is common when Access must be Granted or Purchased, or when such Access has Philosophical Restrictions imposed upon it. It is often used with Mental/Spiritual Preparation Aspects, including Concentration (especially prayer or supplication), Meditation, and Condition (perhaps some type of trance).

Shaped Omnescence is manipulated by an Adept at the time casting; this Method requires a practitioner to shape the appropriate amount of power into the desired Effects. Non-Sentient Essences or Internal

Origins often use this Method. The Shape Method commonly appears in conjunction with Freely Accessible Access Methods (especially variations on Gathering and Internal Aspects) and the Concentration, Actions, and Memory Preparation Aspects. It also complements any of the Esoteric Preparation Aspects.

Casting Time

Sometimes a Method will take time to perform. This Interval is termed the Casting Time of a Paradigm, and varies depending on Method and Origin. To simplify things during the Reality design process, Casting is often either *Instantaneous* or equal to Preparation Time. The latter is perhaps the most common. For example, in an Origin which uses a Release Paradigm Method and which requires Adepts to use both Materials and Language Preparation Aspects, the Preparation Time required by those Aspects constitutes the Casting Time. After Preparation is complete, an Adept can simply Release the necessary power to achieve a desired Effect.

However, Paradigm Methods in some Origins can take additional time to complete. If this is the case, the Mythguide should assign a Base Casting Interval in the same way as a Preparation Interval, although Casting Intervals tend to be far shorter. Like Preparation Time, Casting Time can also be either Static or Variable (which in turn can be Fluctuating or Manipulated). The various parameters of Casting Time (including its Variation Facility and the permissibility of Interruption) should be designed in a similar fashion as the same elements of Preparation Time. As a general guideline, the Casting Time for Release Methods is shorter than the Casting Time for both Shape and Channel Methods. In addition, the ability to actively Manipulate Casting Time when Omnescence is being Channelled is rare.

Fatigue from Casting

Like Preparation, using a Paradigm Method can cause Fatigue. If the Mythguide determines that Omnescence use within an Origin causes Fatigue, the nature of the resulting Trial should be determined. A simple way to handle such Trials is this: divide the Omnescence Cost by ten in order to obtain the Difficulty of the Fatigue Trial. If the Mythguide thinks Omnescence use would be more or less Fatiguing in a particular Origin, he can apply any further modifiers he deems appropriate. At the option of the Mythguide, an Adept's current Fatigue Category can affect the Difficulty of a Paradigm's Effects Trial.



Effects Trial

After the successful conclusion of the Paradigm Method, which represents the expenditure of the required amount of Omnescence for the Tempered Paradigm, a caster must make an Effects Trial to determine the overall success of the Paradigm and its Effects. Effects Trials themselves are made as Refined Trials against an Adept's expertise with the Configuration being used, and can be modified by numerous considerations. The result of the Effects Trial indicates whether or not a Paradigm did what it was supposed to do. The following sections show the Mythguide how to construct these Trials.

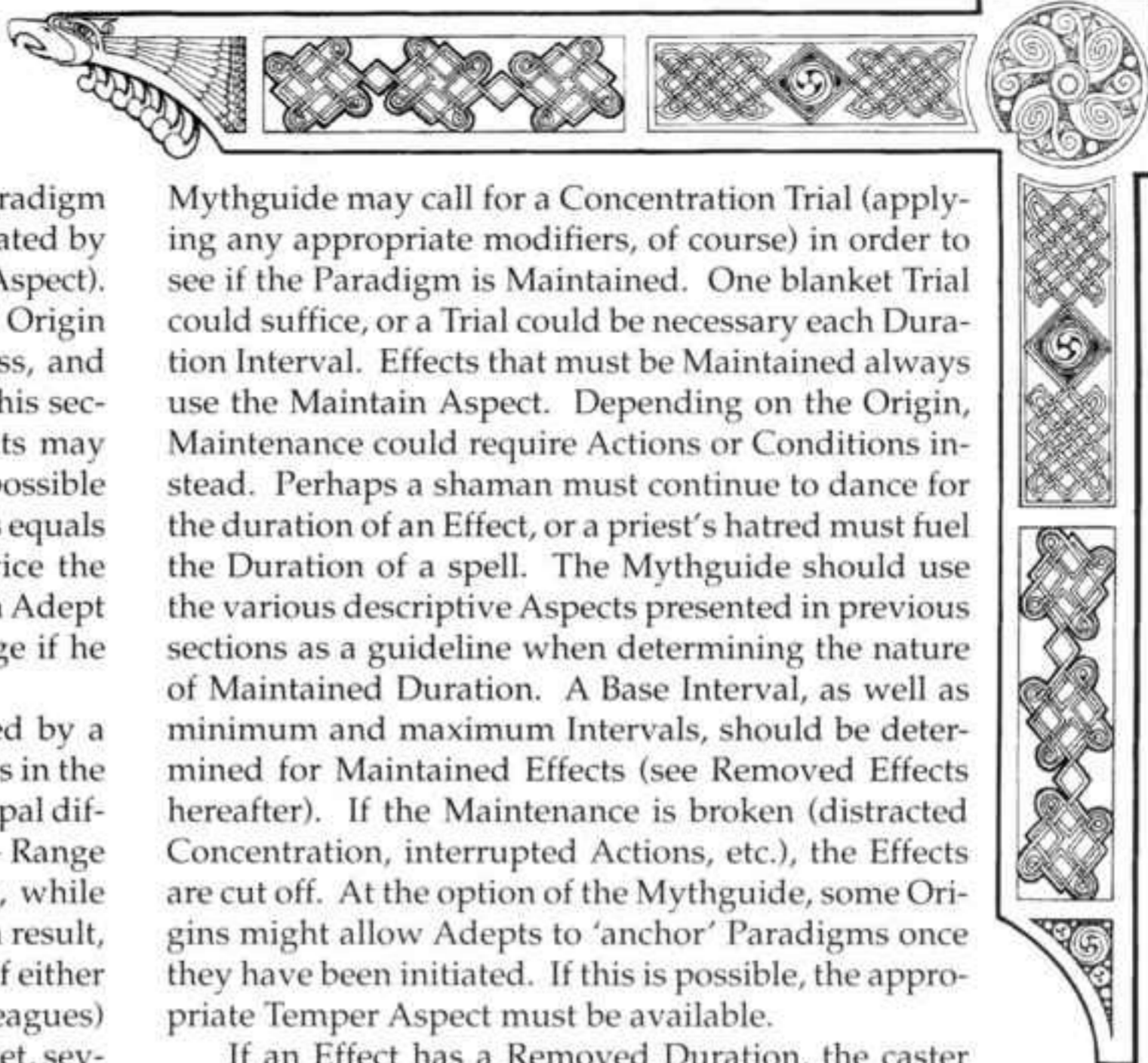
Distance

The Distance element of a Paradigm's Effects includes two principal considerations - *Range* and *Area*. Many Effects occur at some distance from the caster; others must be Targeted and thrown. The possible distances over which Effects can travel are termed the Range of a Paradigm. For example, a Paradigm that creates a small swarm of stone missiles might have an effective Range of ten yards (its Range Increment) if an Adept does not alter it. If Ranges are Variable within an Origin, Adepts may be able to use the Extend Aspect to alter the Range of a Paradigm.

Range is defined in the same manner as Preparation Time and Casting Time, except that Increments are used instead of Intervals. The possible Base Range Increments represent physical distance, and are *Personal*, *Touch*, *Inches*, *Feet*, *Yards*, *Miles+*, *Sight*, and *Unique*. After the Base Increment is determined, the actual Range Increments for the Origin, Archetype, or Dominion should be detailed. For example, if the Base Increment were Yards (probably the most common Base Increment), the Range Increment might be twenty yards. Personal means that Effects only affect the caster of the Paradigm. Touch means that the Adept must establish physical contact with the target of a Paradigm, while Sight means that the target must be visible to the caster (magical or extended visibility might also be included within this Range). Unique Increments represent interesting or symbolic Increments. For example, a god who has placed his essence within a crystal obelisk might allow Omnescence use in Range Increments equal to the height of the obelisk. Finally, the Range Increment can be modified by one of the Adept's Traits (usually the Primary Trait) in the same fashion as Preparation Time.

The Mythguide should also describe Range Increments as Static or Variable (which can be further di-





vided into Fluctuating and Manipulated). If Paradigm Range is Variable, it can normally be manipulated by using Temper Aspects (particularly the Extend Aspect). The Temper Aspects that are permitted in an Origin are chosen during the Origin creation process, and descriptions of these Aspects appear later in this section. Note that Fluctuating Range Increments may require Trials, with the results indicating the possible Range of the Paradigm (i.e. a Complete Success equals the Range Increment, a Superior Success twice the Range Increment, etc.). If Range is Variable, an Adept can normally use a Paradigm at a lesser Range if he wishes (at no additional cost).

Area defines the volume of space affected by a Paradigm, and is described by Area Increments in the same manner as Range Increments. The principal difference between the two is one of dimension - Range usually represents two-dimensional distance, while Area represents three-dimensional space. As a result, Area Increments are always defined in terms of either cubic space (i.e. cubic feet, cubic yards, cubic leagues) or individuals affected (i.e. one additional target, several, an entire crowd, etc.). If Area is Variable within an Origin, Adepts might be able to use the Widen Aspect in order to increase a Paradigm's Area of Effect.

Area Increments are defined in the same way as Range Increments. Possible Base Increments include both cubic measurements (*inches, feet, yards, etc.*) and individual numbers (*personal, target individual, two targets, multiple targets, etc.*). Personal Area describes Effects which can only affect the caster. Physical Effects can always be expressed by cubic measurements, even if they might visually appear to be two-dimensional. For example, if an Adept were attempting to create a slick of oil, the slick would still have a 'depth' to it (although it would be very, very thin). If the Area Increment were ten yards (i.e. ten cubic yards), and the slick were only a quarter inch thick, its surface area could stretch approximately thirty-eight yards by thirty-eight yards. Exact measurements under such circumstances are rarely necessary; the Mythguide should simply use common sense. Obviously, if Area affects individuals instead of volume, such calculations become completely unnecessary. Area manipulation can also be useful when Effects involve blast areas, clouds, or flares.

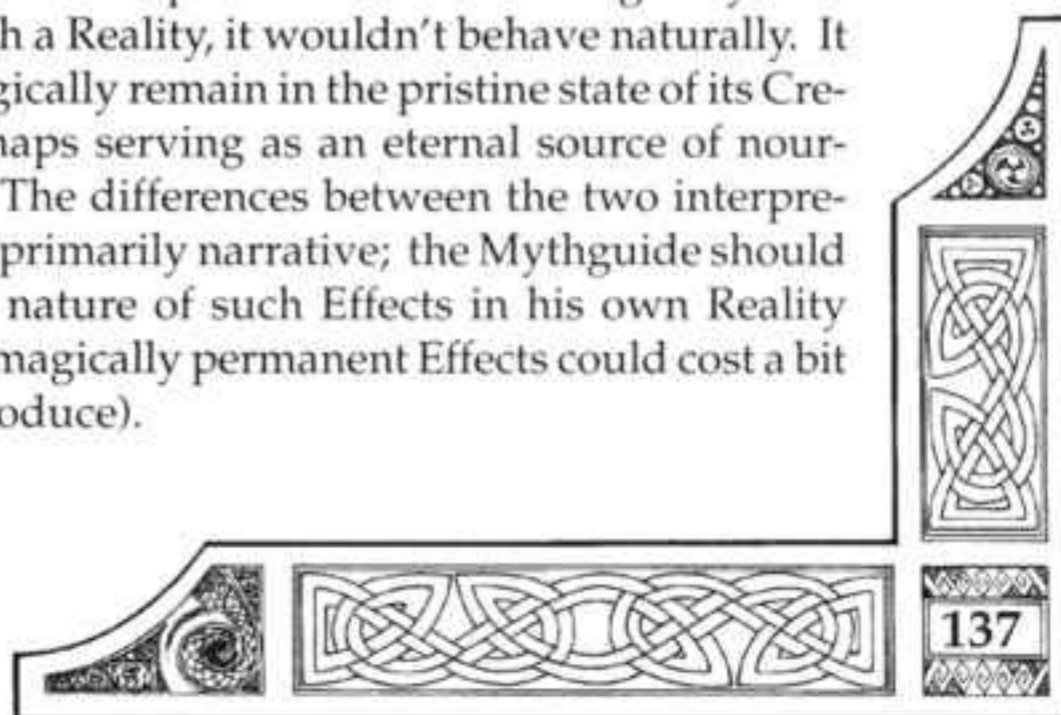
DURATION

Duration is defined by two primary categories - *Maintained* and *Removed*. Effects that need to be Maintained require effort on the part of the caster, and normally require uninterrupted Concentration. The

Mythguide may call for a Concentration Trial (applying any appropriate modifiers, of course) in order to see if the Paradigm is Maintained. One blanket Trial could suffice, or a Trial could be necessary each Duration Interval. Effects that must be Maintained always use the Maintain Aspect. Depending on the Origin, Maintenance could require Actions or Conditions instead. Perhaps a shaman must continue to dance for the duration of an Effect, or a priest's hatred must fuel the Duration of a spell. The Mythguide should use the various descriptive Aspects presented in previous sections as a guideline when determining the nature of Maintained Duration. A Base Interval, as well as minimum and maximum Intervals, should be determined for Maintained Effects (see Removed Effects hereafter). If the Maintenance is broken (distracted Concentration, interrupted Actions, etc.), the Effects are cut off. At the option of the Mythguide, some Origins might allow Adepts to 'anchor' Paradigms once they have been initiated. If this is possible, the appropriate Temper Aspect must be available.

If an Effect has a Removed Duration, the caster does not have to actively Maintain the Paradigm. He simply initiates its Effects, which then last for a specific Duration Interval. In some Origins, the Extend Aspect can be used to increase the Duration of a Paradigm's Effects (if the caster is willing to pay an additional Omnescence cost). In much the same way as Range and Area, the Mythguide should determine a Base Interval from among the following recommendations: *Instantaneous, Seconds, Minutes, Hours, Days, Weeks, Months, Years+, Permanent, and Unique*. Instantaneous Duration Intervals represent immediate Effects (a brilliant flash of light or a force blast, for example). Most Effects which involve some use of time (including image manipulation and illusion, information gathering, and alterations of State) have finite Durations.

Permanent Effects become a lasting part of a Reality. For example, a pool of water Created with a Permanent Duration won't disappear in an hour or a day. It is there for good, and will thenceforth behave like natural water in the environment. In some Realities, the Mythguide might decide that magical Effects remain magical. If a pool of water were magically Created in such a Reality, it wouldn't behave naturally. It would magically remain in the pristine state of its Creation (perhaps serving as an eternal source of nourishment). The differences between the two interpretations are primarily narrative; the Mythguide should define the nature of such Effects in his own Reality (although magically permanent Effects could cost a bit more to produce).



Finally, Unique Durations define odd or interesting variations on the standard Duration Intervals. Imbedded Effects or those Stored in appropriate Vessels (possible through the use of the Imbed or Mechanism Temper Aspects) are usually considered to have Unique Durations (i.e. they last until released). Other Unique Durations follow symbolic paths. For example, followers of a water deity might cast spells which last for the duration of a high tide. Priests of a malign god may use Paradigms which last as long as the Effects remain in darkness (either at night or in shadow). Unique Durations often appear within Sentient Origins (especially those who Meddle), and their form usually depends on the nature of the Origin.

Like Range, Duration can be either Static or Variable. If Duration is Variable, the Mythguide should determine whether it is Fluctuating or Manipulated. Fluctuating Durations often require Trials in order to determine the Duration of a particular Paradigm. Manipulated Durations can be altered by the caster through the use of the Maintain and Extend Aspects. If Duration is Variable, Adepts can normally use Effects with Durations less than the Duration Interval at no additional cost.

Base Omnescence Cost

The Aria Paradigm creation system is extremely interpretive. It is designed to be free-flowing and enjoyable; if used properly, it should foster a spirit of energy and creativity between Ensemble and Mythguide. Omnescence Costs depend largely on the nature of particular Origins, and the Mythguide should assign such Costs within a consistent framework.

Every Paradigm has both a base Cost and a Tempered Cost. The base Cost represents the standard Omnescence Cost for the Paradigm, while the Tempered Cost consists of a final Cost determined by taking the base Cost and adding the Costs of any Temper Aspects. The base Omnescence Cost of a Paradigm is found by adding the Costs of three primary components - *Scope*, *Potency*, and *Intricacy* - which appear in every Paradigm and describe the Paradigm's Effects.

These components are further defined by an Effects Level based on the amount of Omnescence used for the component. The Effects Levels are: *Slight* (1-3 Omnescence), *Moderate* (4-9), *Impressive* (10-20), *Epic* (21-35), and *Mythic* (36+). Effects Levels serve as a kind of general descriptive guide for Omnescence Costs, and create an absolute scale which helps to relate all of the variable elements of Reality and Origin design to one another. For example, if the Mythguide thinks

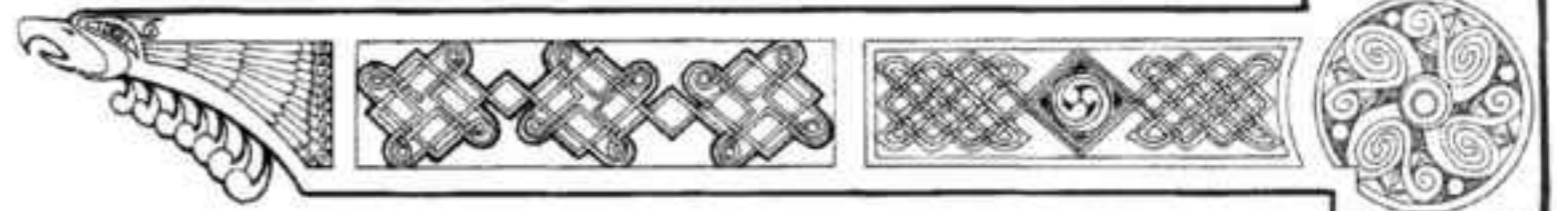
the Intricacy of a certain illusion would be Impressive, he knows that the Cost for the Intricacy component of the Paradigm will be somewhere in the 10-20 point range. The Mythguide should keep these Levels in mind when creating Paradigms and Effects.

Effects may be spontaneously created or prepared (depending on the Preparation and Access Aspects and Methods involved), and the Mythguide should keep the general nature of Omnescence use in mind when designing individual Paradigms and Effects. In some environments, all Paradigms are learned through instruction, and assume definite forms (especially if they require a Solidification Aspect). In others, all Effects are created in moments of need. The nature of Effects in a Reality lends itself to the manipulation of components. For example, if Effects need to be Solidified, it might not be possible to alter the Potency (its physical damage, say) of a Paradigm during the casting process. Such alterations are handled by using appropriate Temper Aspects; if the necessary Aspects are not available, the component cannot be altered during the manipulation of a Paradigm. It must be altered by creating and Solidifying an entirely new Effect.

Scope

The Scope component of a Paradigm deals with the physical parameters of the Paradigm's Effects - its Range, Area, and Duration. It costs an Adept one Omnescence for each parameter at its standard Interval. For example, if an Origin has a Range Increment of Touch and a Duration Interval of ten minutes, and an Adept wishes to use a Paradigm within those boundaries, the Scope of the Paradigm's Effects would be Slight (2 points) in terms of Omnescence Cost (although the Effects themselves might be grand indeed, when one considers the Potency and Intricacy components).

Area is a variable consideration; the Mythguide should determine whether Area plays a role when designing Effects. Creating a large glowing orb or Manipulating an illusion would both involve an Area parameter, but gaining specific information would not. If Area is a consideration, an additional one point of Omnescence is required to use a Paradigm within its established Area Increment. Scope is important for changes of both Form and State. The Scope of a Paradigm can be altered by using Temper Aspects such as Maintain, Extend, and Widen (if such Aspects are allowed in the Origin).



Determining Omnescence Cost

This table provides some examples of Effect Cost ranges. The Mythguide should use it as a guide when developing his own Costs. When constructing a Paradigm, all applicable Costs should be applied. Paradigms which have more extensive or intricate Effects will naturally possess higher Costs (since their Effects will touch on several categories).

Base Cost

Paradigm is affecting a Form	3
Paradigm is altering a State	1
Unaltered Scope	2 (or 3 if Area is also a consideration)

Potency

Size (if attempting an Alteration Effect)

Up to 50% larger or smaller than original size	Slight
Up to 100% larger or smaller than original size	Moderate
More than 100% smaller than original size	Impressive
Up to 500% larger than original size	Impressive
Up to 1000% larger than original size	Epic
More than 1000% larger than original size	Mythic

Fundamental Inertia (for Command Effects)

Effect is something complementary to target's State (perhaps a slight change in temperature or in the direction of movement)	Slight
Effects cause a minor alteration to target's mental or physical State (implanting a simple suggestion, emotion, or desire)	Moderate
Effects institute a significant alteration to target's mental or physical State (ordering someone to perform actions or follow instructions that are contrary to their nature or inclination)	Impressive
Effects cause major changes in physical or emotional State (target will risk his life for the Adept if necessary)	Epic
Effects cause fundamental changes to target's State (ordering a priest to slaughter an entire village - total physical control)	Mythic

Conflict

For each Attack Modifier value	2 Omnescence
For each Defense Modifier value	2 Omnescence
Causes target to make some kind of Trial	varies according to Trial; Mythguide might allow an to use extra Omnescence to modify Trial Difficulty

Enhancement/Hindrance

For each Rank improved/hindered Omnescence equal to the Interaction Point cost required to purchase the new Rank (Effects that decrease abilities incur costs as if the Adept were increasing the Rank by the amount it is reduced). If Fatigue Trials are required, use the guidelines for Trials under Conflict above.

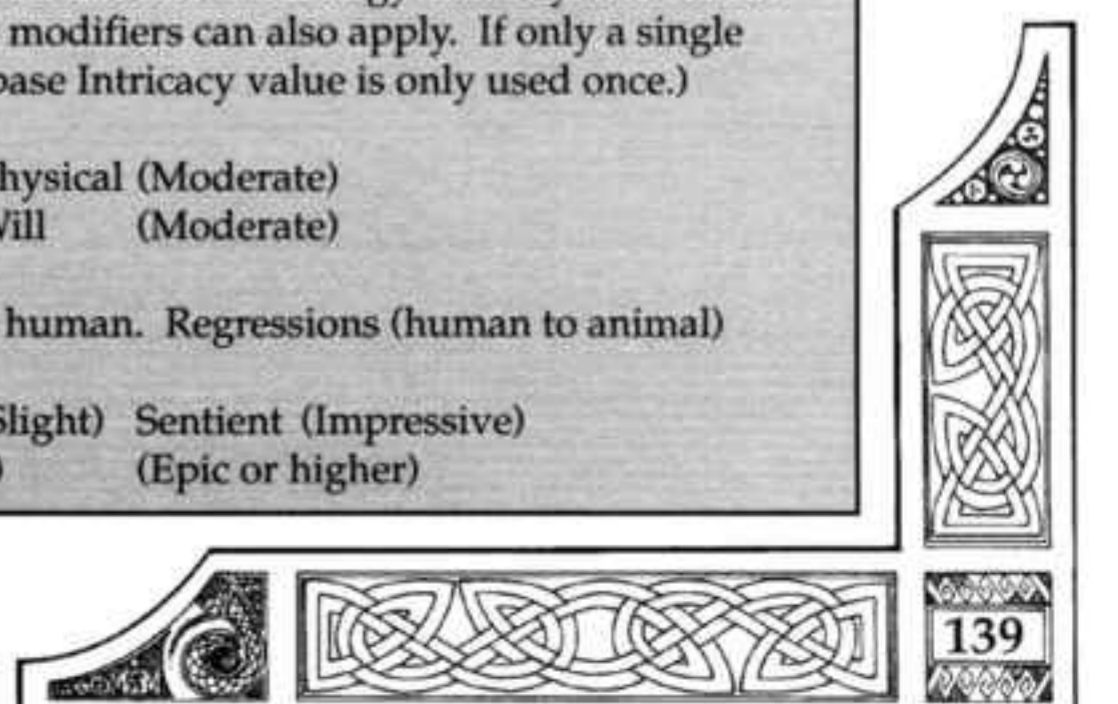
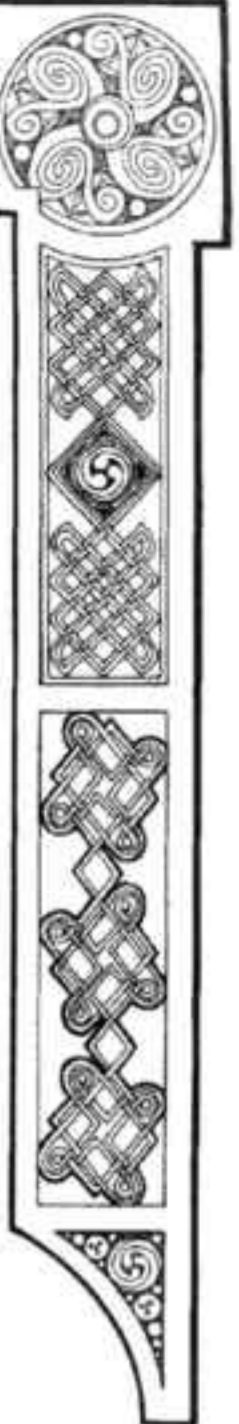
Intricacy

Nature of change (add value for initial target to resulting target after alteration - i.e. If an Adept is changing Energy (light) into Physical (stone), he must add the Energy and Physical values together to determine the base Intricacy; other modifiers can also apply. If only a single Dominion is used - i.e. Energy to Energy - the base Intricacy value is only used once.)

Energy (Slight)	Organic (Impressive)	Physical (Moderate)
Reality (Epic)	Spirit (Impressive)	Will (Moderate)

Sentience (these Costs only apply to Progressions - i.e. animal to human. Regressions (human to animal) have no Sentience Cost.

Non-Sentient (Slight)	Partly Sentient (Slight)	Sentient (Impressive)
Hyper-Sentient (powerful spirits, demons, etc.)		(Epic or higher)



Penetration

Effects can Penetrate (pass through) Physical	Impressive + Affinity of target in Omnescence
Effects can Penetrate Organic	Epic
Effects can Penetrate Spirit, Will, or Energy	Moderate
Effects can Penetrate Reality barriers	Mythic

Restoration/Creation/Depletion

Effects create an elementary construction (restoring a broken glass goblet, healing a light flesh wound, or creating simple Energy constructs)	Slight
Effects create or restore a more difficult Physical, Organic, or Energy element (creating a table and chairs, recreating a complex sound or music, healing a Wound)	Moderate
Effects create or restore very intricate elements (complex illusions from Spirit, healing broken bones with Creation, building intricate shields against other Paradigms with Reality)	Impressive
Effects can create or restore almost anything except complex Sentient Organic beings (although such Effects would include healing Major or even Mortal Wounds)	Epic
Effects are bound only by the laws of a particular Reality (Adepts could theoretically create new life)	Mythic

Divination/Sensitivity/Detection

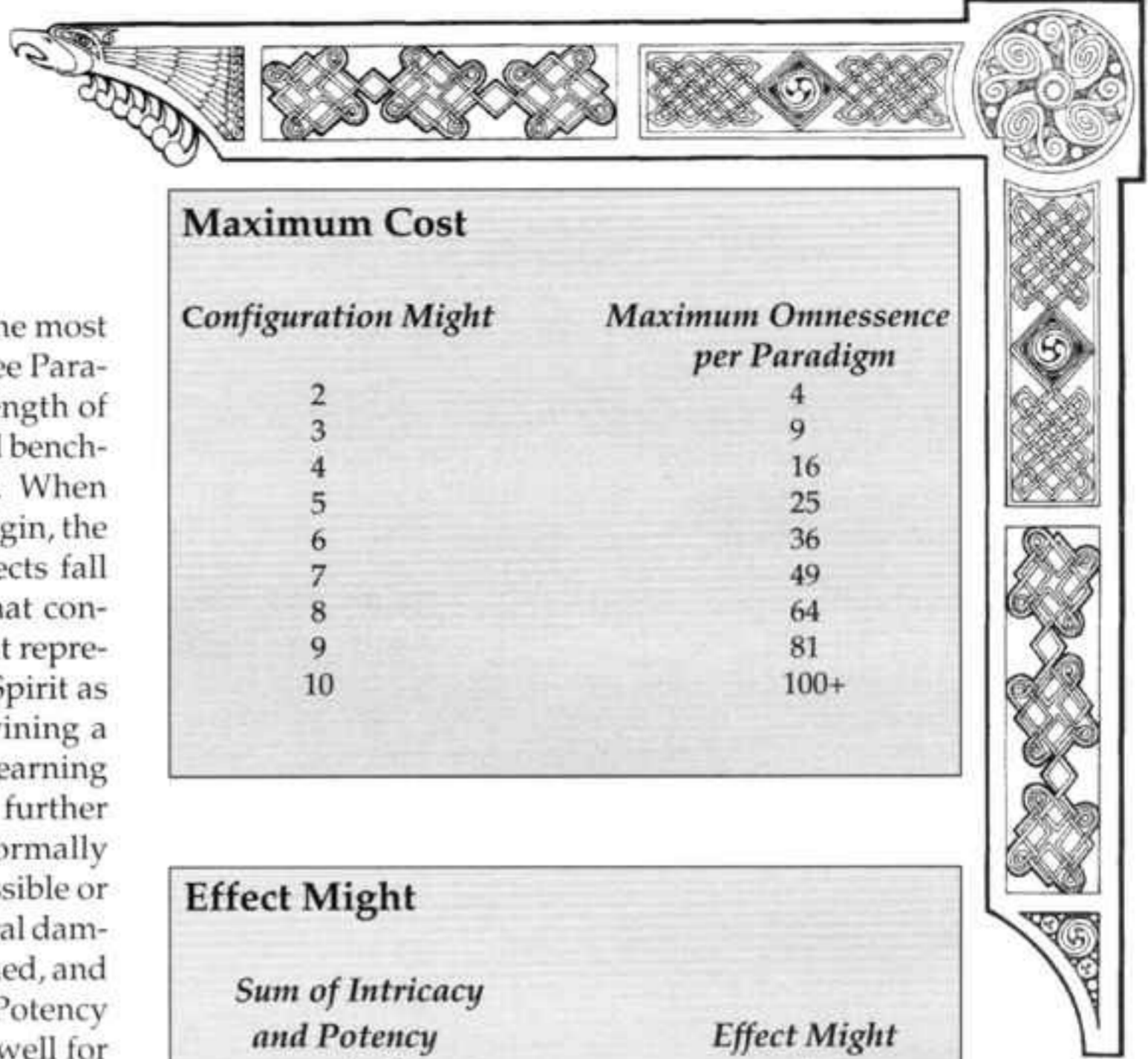
Effects are targeting an opponent's:	Will, Organic	Moderate
	Physical (Non-sentient or non-living things)	Moderate
	Spirit, Energy (imprints in the psyche)	Impressive
	Reality (sensitive in past or future)	Epic
Depth of contact to gain desired information:		
	Surface (scanning for a general emotion)	Slight
	Casual (looking for general information with minimal manipulation)	Moderate
	Intent (looking for specific information and trying to coerce or force target)	Impressive
	Deep (gaining extensive specific information or accessing desired facts forcefully)	Epic
	Total (target is laid bare and is helpless)	Mythic
Target is familiar to caster		Slight
Target is unknown to caster		Moderate
Effects use thought only		Slight
Effects add visual, audible, or other elements		Slight per element

Energy

Elemental Effects are present (i.e. fire acts like fire, not just as power that appears to be fire). Such Effects often cause additional damage based on the element.	Water, Earth	Slight
	Fire, Sound, Force	Moderate
	Electrical, Chemical	Impressive

Perception/Illusion

Effects target one element of perception only (an invisible caster could still be heard, touched, etc.)	Slight	
Effects target two elements of perception (and illusion which is also tactile)	Moderate	
Effects target three elements of perception (an Adept who enjoys nearly complete invisibility - perhaps he can still be Detected in some way)	Impressive	
Effects target four or more elements (illusion or deception is almost perfect)	Epic	
Any conceivable Effects are possible (huge functional images, complete co-location which makes any sort of contact impossible, etc.)	Mythic	
Images being created are:		
	Physical, Energy, Spirit	Slight
	Organic	Moderate
	Reality	Impressive



Potency

The Potency component is perhaps both the most important and the most interpretive of the three Paradigm components. Potency measures the strength of the Effects in the Reality, and serves as a general benchmark for comparing one Paradigm to another. When assigning Potency for Paradigms within an Origin, the Mythguide should have an idea of what Effects fall where along the Omnescence Cost scale. What constitutes a Moderate Effect for the Origin? What represents a Mythic Effect? Is Conjuring a type of Spirit as Potent as Destroying the same Spirit? Is Divining a certain type of information more Costly than learning another kind? The nature of the Origin will further define many of these questions. Potency normally describes the strength of Effects, including possible or necessary results Trials, physical or psychological damage, the amount and nature of information gained, and the severity and value of commands or tasks. Potency is important for Effects that change States, as well for determining whether an Effect is able to overcome another Effect already in place (dispelling an Effect). The accompanying table provides a number of suggestions for determining Potency.

Intricacy

Intricacy represents the completeness, accuracy, and believability of an Effect. The nature of a Paradigm's Intricacy often depends on the Dominion involved; the Reality and Organic Dominions usually call for the most Intricate Effects, while the Physical Dominion demands the least Intricacy. The Spirit Dominion demands great Intricacy for the Creation of accurate and believable illusions (especially when such images constitute Organic representations). Changes of Form normally require more Intricacy than alterations of State. The accompanying table provides a number of recommendations for determining the Intricacy of Effects.

Effect Might

A Paradigm's Intricacy and Potency Costs combine to yield the Effect Might of a Paradigm's Effects. Effect Might is used primarily when determining Magic Resistance and the Difficulty of Resistance Trials. Refer to accompanying table to determine Effect Might.

Maximum Cost

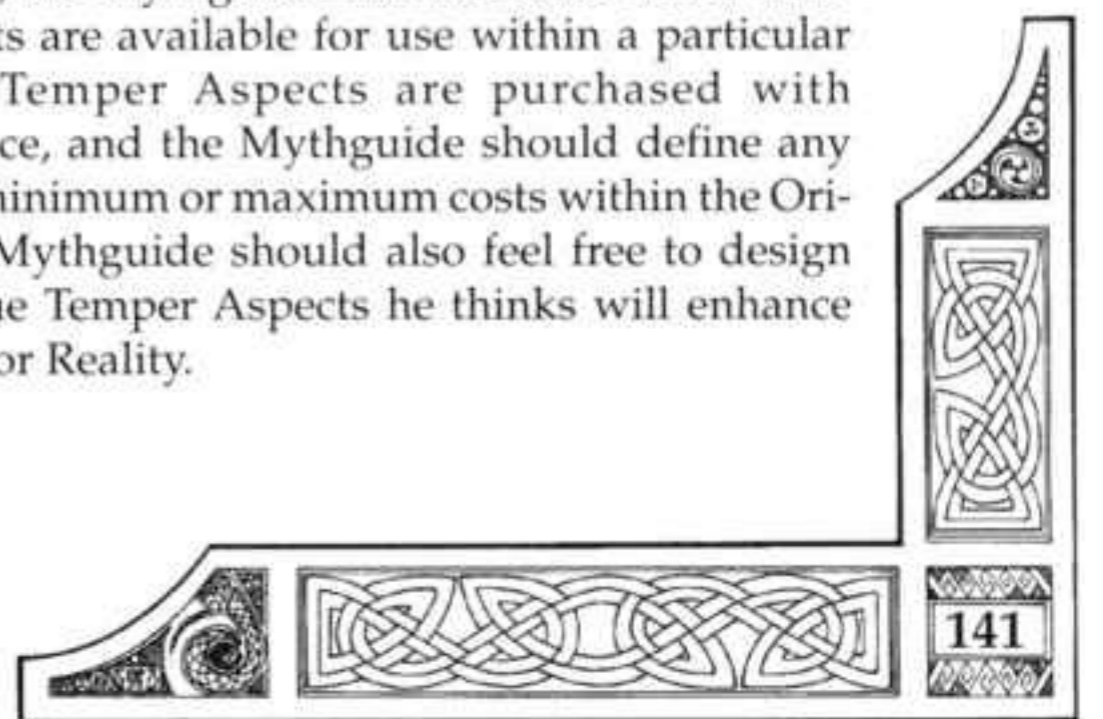
<i>Configuration Might</i>	<i>Maximum Omnescence per Paradigm</i>
2	4
3	9
4	16
5	25
6	36
7	49
8	64
9	81
10	100+

Effect Might

<i>Sum of Intricacy and Potency</i>	<i>Effect Might</i>
up to 10	1
11-20	2
21-30	3
31-40	4
41-50	5
51-60	6
61-70	7
71-80	8
81-90	9
91-100	10
100+	11

Temper Aspects

Temper Aspects are used to further define a Paradigm's Effects. They may be used to Extend the Duration of Effects, Widen the Area of the Effects, Delay the Effects, cast Removed Effects, or Diminish Casting Time. Few Origins allow the use of every Temper Aspect; the Mythguide should decide which Temper Aspects are available for use within a particular Origin. Temper Aspects are purchased with Omnescence, and the Mythguide should define any practical minimum or maximum costs within the Origin. The Mythguide should also feel free to design any Unique Temper Aspects he thinks will enhance an Origin or Reality.



Sample Temper Aspects

Alter Potency/Intricacy

Since many Origins allow practitioners to manipulate Paradigms and Effects as a matter of course, this Aspect primarily applies to those Origins which require all Paradigms to be Solidified, prepared, or recorded. In such Origins, Adepts often learn Paradigms that were created centuries earlier (often by an ancient member of their Omni or order); when these are learned, they are learned in a specific form. If this Aspect is available in an Origin, the fundamental elements of this form - its Potency and Intricacy - may be altered to some degree during the casting process. The Mythguide should determine the nature and degree of alteration which is permitted. The cost of the Aspect is one point of Omnescence for each component affected (two points if both are affected). After this initial cost, the player must still pay any additional costs for the Potency and Intricacy increases.

Anchor

The Anchor Aspect is one of the most powerful Temper Aspects, and its use should be carefully regulated (unless an Origin supports the use of tremendous amounts of power). This Aspect allows an Adept to 'tie off' a particular Effect, making it effectively permanent. If Effects are already Permanent in the environment, this Aspect will not be available. However, if finite or Maintained Duration Intervals are used, the Mythguide should decide whether or not such Effects can be established indefinitely. The difference between this Aspect and the Permanence Aspect is that the Effects established with this Aspect remain power-based, and can be dispelled by another Adept (with the appropriate knowledge). This Aspect costs again as much as the entire Paradigm cost (i.e. a Create Flame Paradigm which costs eight Omnescence to cast would cost another eight Omnescence to Anchor). The Mythguide should consider the nature of an Origin carefully before permitting the use of this Aspect.

Build

Adepts may have more than one Paradigm operating at the same time (according to the guidelines presented under Effects Trials later in this chapter). Effects may be held in reserve (using the Delay Aspect), or they may be used in conjunction with each other, effectively Building a new Paradigm. For example, an Adept might initiate a Manipulate Physical Effect that was created with a Delay Aspect in order to hold it. While holding it, the Adept could use a Create Physical Effect to create a bilious cloud of poison gas. After the cloud were brought into being, the Manipulation being held in reserve can be used to send the cloud into a suspicious looking breach. If an Adept is using more than one Paradigm at a time, the Build Aspect must be purchased for each successive Paradigm. Its cost is one point of Omnescence for the first additional

Effect, two points for the second, etc. up to the limit imposed by the Origin. If this Aspect is not available within an Origin, Effects cannot be Built.

Chain

The Chain Aspect can be used to describe an Effect which alters direction or snakes from one target to another. This Aspect is normally used in conjunction with the Target Aspect to hit a selected number of individuals or targets who are not in the direct line of effect for a normal Paradigm. It costs two points of Omnescence for the first change in direction, three points for the second, etc. At the option of the Mythguide, Effects may begin to dissipate as they progress along a Chain.

Contagious

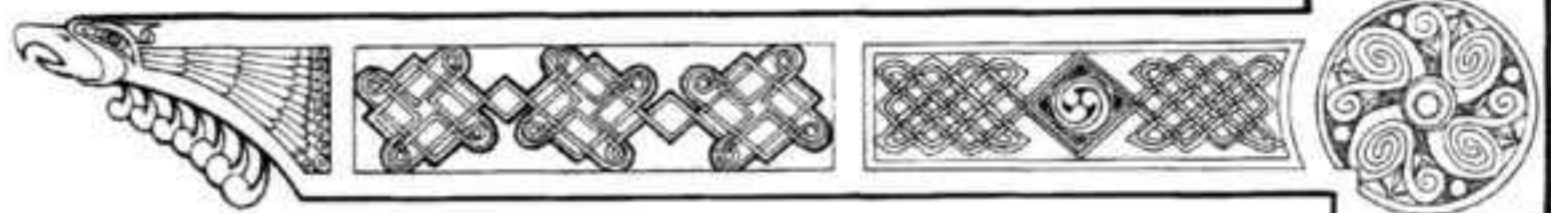
This Aspect essentially endows an Effect with mobility. For example, an individual who is the target of an amnesia Effect with this Aspect will be able to pass (unknowingly) the condition along to those with whom he comes into contact. The nature of the contagion will depend on the Omnescence placed within this Aspect; a target might have to touch or interact with another individual, or he might only have to be within a certain distance. The Omnescence cost of this Aspect depends largely on the Potency of the Effects. Purchasing this Aspect to accompany a Paradigm that makes people feel happy might cost only a single point of Omnescence, while purchasing the Aspect to accompany an Effect which turns its targets into ravaging killers might cost twenty Omnescence. At the Mythguide's option, the Contagious effects could run out after a certain number of transmissions.

Delay

This Aspect is used to Delay an Effect until such a time as the Adept wishes to release it into the environment. The Adept actually Prepares and casts the Paradigm normally, but can Delay the appearance of its Effects according to the level at which the Delay Aspect has been purchased. The Mythguide can either allow an Adept to Delay an Effect indefinitely (recommended cost = Base Cost/Primary Trait) or Delay it for a specified period of time. Duration Intervals can be used as Delay Intervals; it will cost an Adept one point of Omnescence per Interval of the Delay. At the option of the Mythguide, Delaying an Effect can also require Concentration Trials. This Aspect is commonly employed in conjunction with the Build Aspect. Channeled Effects can rarely be Delayed.

Diminish

The Diminish Aspect allows an Adept to reduce the Casting Time required by a Paradigm Method. This Aspect is only possible with Variable Casting Times, and it works in the same manner as a manipulation of Preparation Time. The Mythguide assigns either additional Costs or Difficulty modifiers according to a Variation Facility.



For the sake of convenience, the Variation Facility of Casting Time is often equal to the same value for Preparation Time. This Aspect is not usually available in conjunction with Channel Paradigm Methods.

Extend

The Extend Aspect is probably the most basic Temper Aspect. It allows an Adept to Extend the Range and Duration (if Removed) of an Effect. The Mythguide assigns a Variation Facility from 1 to 10+ to both Range and Duration that works in the opposite manner as the Variation Facility of Preparation Time. The reason for this is that, while Preparation Time is often both increased and decreased, Range and Duration are generally only increased (decreases are essentially free). A Facility of ten indicates extremely pliable Time and Distance elements, while a Facility of one represents elements that are more difficult to manipulate. For each point of Omnescence used to purchase this Aspect, either the Range or the Duration of a Paradigm can be Extended by an amount equal to the Range Increment or Duration Interval x Variation Facility. This Aspect can be used only if either Range or Duration is Variable.

Imbed

This Aspect must be purchased if a Paradigm or Effect is going to be placed in an object or item. The ability to Imbed an Effect depends upon the nature of Omnescence Storage in an Origin since Effects can only be Imbedded in appropriate Vessels. This Aspect is often used for temporary storage functions or in conjunction with the Mechanism Aspect. It can also be used as an aid in the creation of enchanted items, depending on how such creation is handled within an Origin. It does not overcome any Affinity restrictions; these must first be overcome before an Effect may be Imbedded. Note that Imbedding an Effect does not necessarily make it Permanent (neither does it create multiple charges). Additional actions often need to be taken in order to construct a permanent item of power. Effects that have been Imbedded do not need to be cast or prepared again; they have already been cast into their temporary receptacle. They simply need to be released (in exactly the same form in which they were stored). This can be a powerful Aspect, and the Mythguide not allow its abuse. The Imbed Aspect costs half again as much Omnescence as the Effects would cost if they being cast normally (i.e. an illusion which cost twelve Omnescence would cost eighteen Omnescence to Imbed). Imbedded Effects are rarely permitted by Sentient Origins who Channel power.

Invited

The Invited Aspect is used in conjunction with a target who welcomes the Effects being used against him. This Aspect often accompanies beneficial Effects such as Healing or certain types of Divination, and modifies the Difficulty of any associated Effects Trials. The Invited Aspect

is also used to express belief or faith in the abilities of an Adept (often a priest when used in this manner). If this Aspect is permitted in an Origin, the Difficulty of the appropriate Effects Trial may be reduced by one level for every point of Omnescence placed into the Aspect. Alternately, the Potency of the Effects can be increased (this can be useful if Effects cannot easily be manipulated, as in Origins which allow only prepared or Solidified Paradigms).

Maintain

The Maintain Aspect allows an Adept to extend the Duration of a Paradigm's Effects after the normal Duration Interval has ended. This Aspect normally requires intense Concentration on the part of the caster, and must always be used with Paradigms whose Duration Category is *Maintained*. In Origins that do not allow the Extend Aspect, but which still permit Adepts to lengthen the Duration of Paradigms, this Aspect is used instead. This Aspect costs one point of Omnescence to purchase; after its purchase, an Adept makes normal Concentration Trials each Duration Interval through which the Effects are Maintained. Adepts may use additional Omnescence to purchase the Aspect if they wish, applying the extra points to the Difficulty of individual Concentration Trials. Alternately, the Mythguide could decide that each point of Omnescence allows automatic Maintenance for a single Duration Interval. Effects that are Maintained will continue to affect a target for as long as the Maintenance lasts.

Mechanism

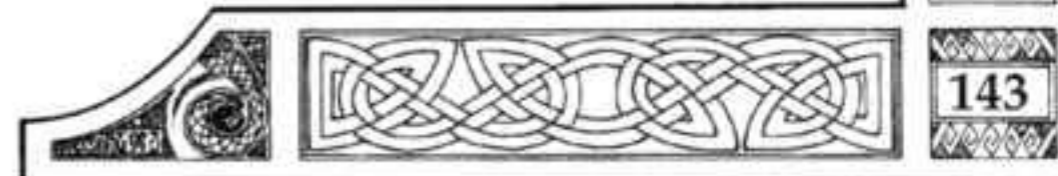
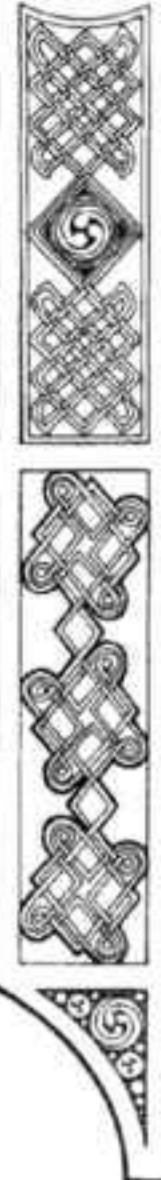
This Aspect allows an Adept to delay Effects until a specific incident or occurrence takes place. The Mechanism Aspect is normally used in Origins which allow both the Storage of Omnescence and which support Removed Durations. It almost always appears in conjunction with the Imbed Aspect. For example, a priest who places sacred wards around a holy place might Imbed the wards in the ground and then initiate a Mechanism which will activate their protective Effects if those not of the Faith pass over them. The normal cost for this Aspect is five Omnescence, although the Mythguide should feel free to modify this according to the circumstances at hand.

No Passive Resistance

This Aspect removes a target's ability to use Passive Resistance against an Effect directed against him. Suggested cost for the Aspect is one tenth of the total Omnescence Cost of the Effect (minimum of two Omnescence), although the Mythguide can raise or lower this cost according to the nature of the Origin.

Overpower

The Overpower Aspect allows an Adept to use additional Omnescence in an attempt to overcome a target's Active Resistance. For every two points of Omnescence placed into this Aspect, the Difficulty of a target's Resistance Trial is increased by one.



Permanence

This Aspect is essentially the same as the Anchor Aspect, except that the Effects become both Permanent and real in the environment. They cannot be dispelled; instead, they must be destroyed. This is an extremely powerful Aspect and costs twice again the entire cost of a Paradigm to purchase (i.e. ten Omnescence for a Paradigm that costs five Omnescence). In some cases, the Mythguide might wish to raise this cost, or make the cost itself permanent (an Adept might have to sacrifice a point of Aura permanently, or gain two points of a particular Passion).

Removed

This Aspect allows an Adept to create an Effect that does not originate at his person (although still within an allowable or modified Range Increment). For example, instead of Creating a ball of flame and throwing it, the Adept could Create the flame beneath the target. Or an Adept could create an Effect in a copse of trees beyond his line of sight, or on the other side of a castle gate. The Mythguide may wish to place certain restrictions on the uses of this Aspect. Perhaps an Adept must be familiar with his target, or with region or area into which his Removed Effects are reaching. Maybe the Adept must at least have seen his target once. This Aspect costs an additional one tenth of a Paradigm's overall cost (minimum cost is always two Omnescence). If a Paradigm costs fifty Omnescence to cast, it would cost an additional five points to use the Effects in a Removed manner. The Removed Aspect is often used in conjunction with the Target Aspect.

Sophistication

The Sophistication Aspect allows an Adept to use his knowledge of Reality to weave more intricate Effects. This Aspect makes it more difficult to dispel or counter a particular Effect or class of Effects. For every two points of Omnescence used to purchase this Aspect, increase the Difficulty of a counteractive Effects Trial by one level. For example, an Adept Imbeds a Ward in a piece of parch-

ment and adds six Omnescence worth of Sophistication. Another Adept trying to counteract the Ward would not only have to overcome the Potency of the Ward, but the Difficulty of his Effects Trials would be raised by three.

Target

This Aspect must be used in order to direct an Effect at a specific individual, creature, or area. This Aspect will be present in most Origins, with Wild or Erratic Omnescence Natures and Sentient Origins (especially those who Meddle and who Channel power through their followers) serving as possible exceptions. Effects that need to be Targeted include most Energy and Physical attacks, as well as many Manipulation and Destruction Effects. The purchase of this Aspect allows an Adept to make a Targeting Trial with a Base equal to the caster's Primary Trait and a Rank equal to the average of Insight + Willpower. If the Targeting Trial fails, the Degree of Failure will indicate the results. A Marginal Failure might represent a simple miss or miscalculation, while a Miserable Failure could represent some type of backfire or disaster (perhaps the Effects strike one of the Adept's companions). The Mythguide should determine the nature of such Failures depending on the Origin involved and the intended Effects. Targeting Trials can be affected by a number of situational modifiers as well; consult the accompanying table for details. If Targeting is required but automatic, a single point of Omnescence placed into this Aspect will successfully Target an Effect.

Widen

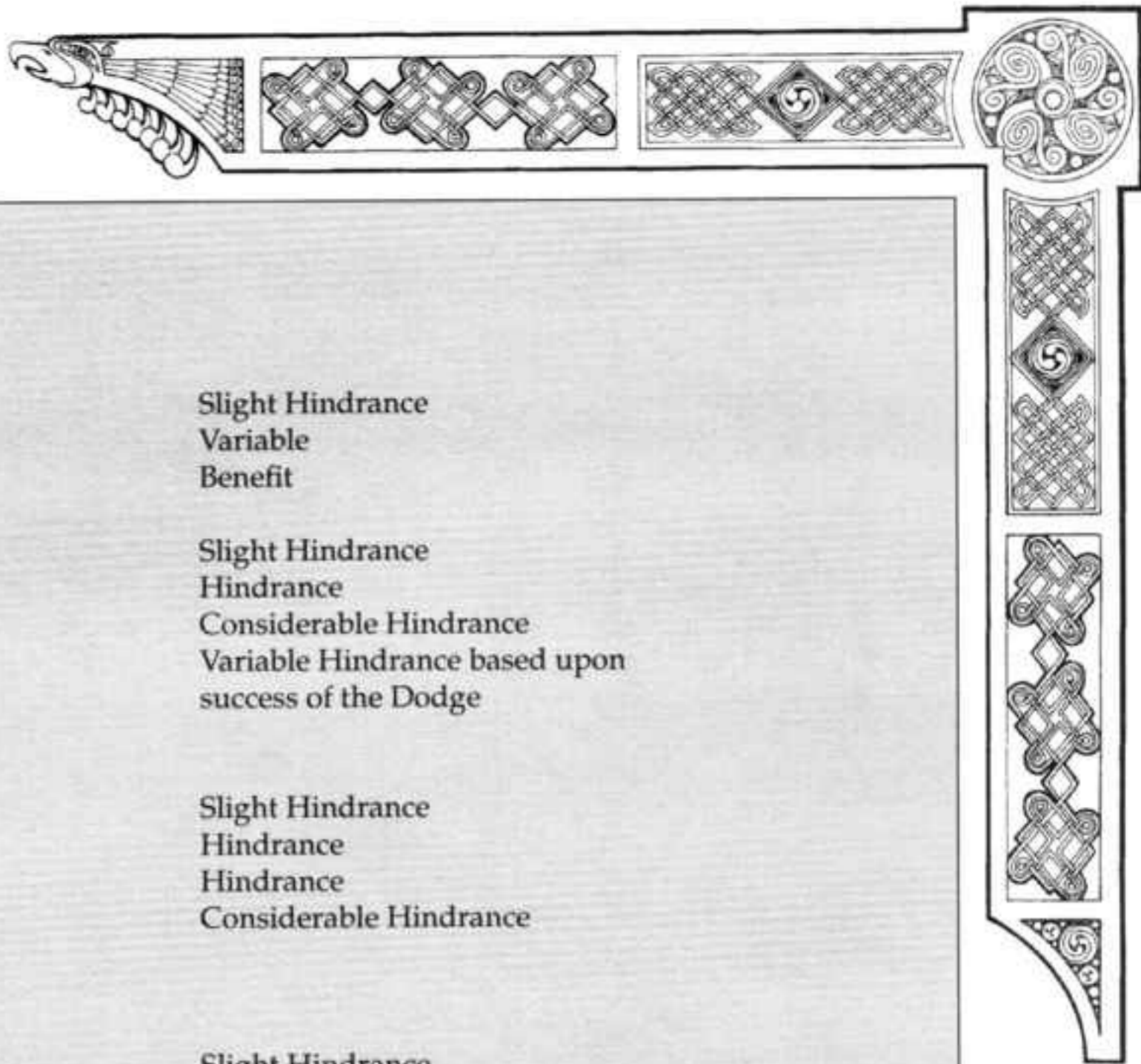
The Widen Aspect is the equivalent of the Extend Aspect for Effect Area; it increases a Paradigm's Area element, and allows Effects to cover a larger radius. The Mythguide assigns a Variation Facility in the same manner as for the Extend Aspect. For each point of Omnescence placed into this Aspect, an Effect can be increased by an amount equal to the Area Increment x Variation Facility. This will only be available if Area is Variable.

Resistance

In extremely rare cases, Effects may not be able to be Resisted. Such Effects are immensely powerful, and should be reserved for gods or other beings from beyond the mundane pale. Resistance is possible in most Origins and it appears in two forms - *Passive* and *Active*.

Passive Resistance can be used by both non-Adepts and Adepts who are neither prepared nor aware of an Effect being directed at them. An individual, animal, or item's Passive Resistance is usually equal

to its Affinity. When making a Passive resistance Trial, Affinity becomes the Rank of the Trial; its Base depends on the Effects and should be assigned by the Mythguide. For example, a Paradigm that attempts to confuse might allow its target to use Logic as the Base, while an Effect that attempts to command might let the target use Presence. If the Mythguide is unsure of the Characteristic to use, Willpower makes a good default. The Difficulty of a Passive Resistance Trial equals the Effect Might of the Effects being directed at the target. The Mythguide compares the final Degrees of Success of a Paradigm's Effects Trial and a target's Resistance Trial to determine a final Degree of Success



Targeting Modifiers

Base Difficulty = 2

Casting Time has been Diminished
 Omnescence Nature is Wild or Erratic
 Target is Unconscious/Asleep/Prone
 Target is moving
 Walk/March
 Double Time/Run
 Sprint/Dash
 Target is Dodging

Slight Hindrance
 Variable
 Benefit

Slight Hindrance
 Hindrance
 Considerable Hindrance
 Variable Hindrance based upon
 success of the Dodge

Limited Visibility
 Mist or light Fog
 Smoke or heavy Fog
 Moonlit night
 Total darkness

Slight Hindrance
 Hindrance
 Hindrance
 Considerable Hindrance

Protective Cover
 Target up to 25% concealed
 Target 25% to 50% concealed
 Target 50% to 75% concealed
 Target 75% or more concealed
 Per Rank that an Adept's averaged Archetype
 and Dominion expertise Ranks exceed the
 Might of the Configuration being used
 Target at a great distance from Adept

Slight Hindrance
 Hindrance
 Considerable Hindrance
 Severe Hindrance

Adept is distracted (combat, noise, etc.)

Slight Benefit
 Variable depending on environment and
 circumstances
 Variable

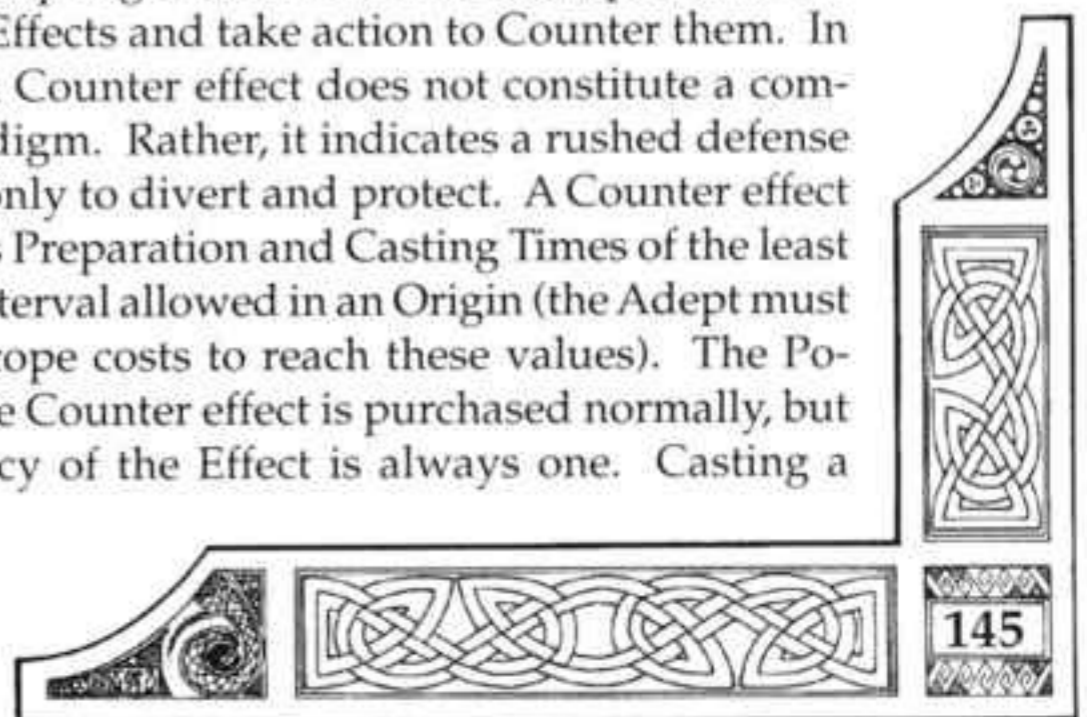
Note: All modifiers depend on the nature of individual Effects. For example, a priest of a god of the night might not be Hindered at all by darkness, while some Effects might have the power to blast right through Protective Cover. The Mythguide should be the final arbiter of such considerations.

or Failure for the Effect. At the option of the Mythguide, some Effects will not be able to be Passively Resisted.

All Adepts will be able to Actively Resist Effects directed at them. Active Resistance reflects the fact that Omnescence users or creatures are better able to defend themselves against that which they know (and are familiar with). Active Resistance in an Origin can assume one of three major forms - *Counter*, *Alter*, and *Absorb*. The Mythguide must decide which form or forms are appropriate within a particular Origin.

Counter Resistance is probably the most common form of Active Resistance. A successful Counter Resistance Trial can indicate one of two things depending on the Origin. First, it may represent a simple dissipation or shielding of the Effects, with the result be-

ing that the target either feels no Effects or only partial Effects (if the Trial were a Marginal Success). The Effect Might of the incoming Paradigm will affect the Difficulty of such a Resistance Trial (depending on the Configuration expertise of the target). Second, Counter Resistance can take the form of Counter effects. An Adept attempting a Counter effect must perceive the incoming Effects and take action to Counter them. In this case, a Counter effect does not constitute a complete Paradigm. Rather, it indicates a rushed defense designed only to divert and protect. A Counter effect always has Preparation and Casting Times of the least possible Interval allowed in an Origin (the Adept must pay full Scope costs to reach these values). The Potency of the Counter effect is purchased normally, but the Intricacy of the Effect is always one. Casting a





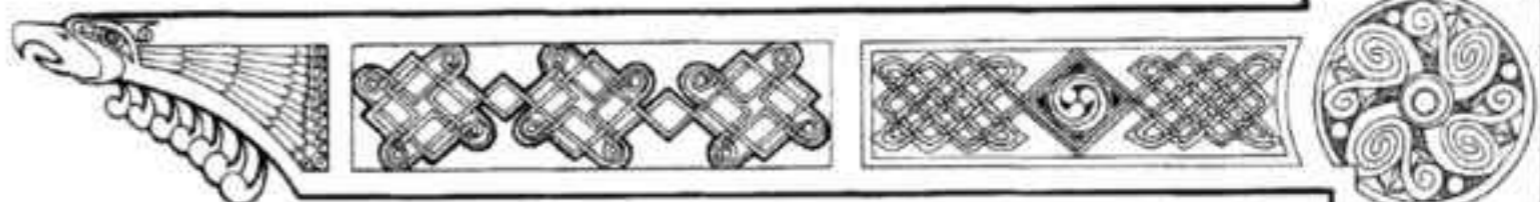
Counter effect increases the Difficulty of the Effects Trial by two, and the Effect Might of the incoming Paradigm is also added to the Difficulty of the Effects Trial. The Mythguide may allow the use of Temper Aspects with Counter effects (the Overpower and Maintain Aspects can be especially useful). If an incoming Effect reaches the Adept before the Counter effect is cast, the Adept's casting will be interrupted. A successful Concentration Trial (with appropriate modifiers) may allow the Adept to finish the casting, although it could be too late.

Alter Resistance allows an Adept who makes a successful Resistance Trial to change the incoming Effect in some manner. This is an unusual (and potentially powerful) form of Resistance, and the Mythguide should use it with care. It usually appears in Realities where Omnescence is unstable or fluctuating. The nature of the alteration depends upon the Archetype and Dominion involved, and can range from a simple deflection (perhaps back at the caster, if a high enough Success were achieved) to a conscious re-manipulation of the incoming Omnescence into a new Effect (normally from the same Configuration). The Mythguide also has the option of treating this type of Resistance as a kind of partial Effect, perhaps requiring an Adept to expend Omnescence in order to build up its Potency. The difference between the Effect Might of the incoming Effect and the Resistance Potency can yield a Difficulty modifier for the Resistance Trial. An Adept can attempt to Alter Effects cast with an Effect Might higher than his own expertise in the same Configuration, but the Difficulty of the attempt increases by two for each level of difference. For example, an Adept trying to Alter a Manipulate Physical Effect with

an Effect Might of 5 would have to have an average expertise Rank (in the Manipulation/Physical Configuration) of at least 5 in order to suffer no penalties. For each Rank lower in the averaged Configuration expertise, the Difficulty of the Alteration Trial increases by two. Note that this Difficulty modifier is in addition to the normal Effect Might modifier.

Absorb Resistance is another unusual type of Omnescence Resistance. An Adept who makes a successful Absorb Resistance Trial absorbs the incoming Effects as raw Omnescence. This form of Resistance appears in Realities where power is Wild or Erratic, or in which Storage is both common and easy. In order to Absorb an incoming Effect, the Adept must be able to Store the appropriate type of Omnescence, and he must have the free Capacity in an acceptable Vessel to do so. Once the Omnescence is Stored, it may be used by the Adept who has Stored it. A partial Success may indicate that only part of the incoming Effect has been properly Stored. The residual Effects which were not Absorbed may still affect the target. An Adept trying to Absorb Effects cast with an Effect Might higher than his Configuration expertise will suffer Difficulty penalties (see Alter above). This modifier is in addition to the normal Effect Might modifier.

Most Effects that directly attempt to alter the Form or State of an individual can be Resisted in some manner. Such Effects include Transformations, Manipulations (throwing someone against a wall, pushing them off a cliff, etc.), and any overt attacks or other hostile Effects (especially Energy Effects such as balls of flame or lightning, prisons constructed of air or force, etc.). Effects that do not bear directly on an Adept cannot usually be Resisted (although an Adept might be able



to Dispel such Effects after they have been cast). Creation and Destruction Effects that are cast directly on an individual can usually be Resisted as well; these might include healing magics or Effects which aim to poison or cause disease. Certain illusory images can be Resisted (such as those created by Manipulating the Will of an individual) while others cannot be Resisted in the traditional sense (for example, those created with a Create Spirit Configuration).

An Adept who Actively Resists an Effect must make a Resistance Trial; the Base of the Trial equals $(\text{Affinity} + \text{Willpower}) / 4$, yielding a number from one to five. The Rank of the Trial equals the Adept's Configuration expertise (the average of the Archetype expertise and Dominion expertise which constitute the Configuration) in the Configuration of the incoming Effects. The base Difficulty of the Trial is two; the Effect Might of the incoming Paradigm is added to this base, and the Mythguide should apply any other modifiers he deems appropriate (noise, distractions, etc.). The Mythguide may allow an Adept to use Omnescence to enhance his Resistance Trials. It costs five Omnescence to reduce Trial Difficulty by one level, and the Adept cannot expend more Omnescence than if he were creating an Effect within the incoming Configuration. For example, if a persona had a Configuration expertise of three, he could only use nine points of Omnescence on a Paradigm within the Configuration, and could only decrease the Difficulty of a Resistance Trial by one (a two point decrease would require ten Omnescence, which the Adept cannot spend). At the option of the Mythguide, an Adept could extend his Resistance to protect those near him; if this is permitted, the Difficulty of the Resistance Trial is increased by three for each added individual. The Mythguide might also require an Omnescence expenditure (based on the Area Increment of the Resistance).

Finally, the Mythguide should decide how incoming Effects are perceived. In many Realities, Adepts are sensitive enough to sense the type and presence of an incoming Effect. In other Realities, Adepts can only sense Effects which they would be able to create themselves. Or the Mythguide require a Sense Trial (Base = half Perception, Rank = Insight) at Difficulty two. At the option of the Mythguide, the Effect Might of the incoming Effects or the Configuration expertise of the target could also serve as Difficulty modifiers. If incoming Effects do not have to be Sensed in order to be Resisted, an Adept's resistance is often automatic (i.e. it does not have to be consciously initiated).

PARTICIPATION

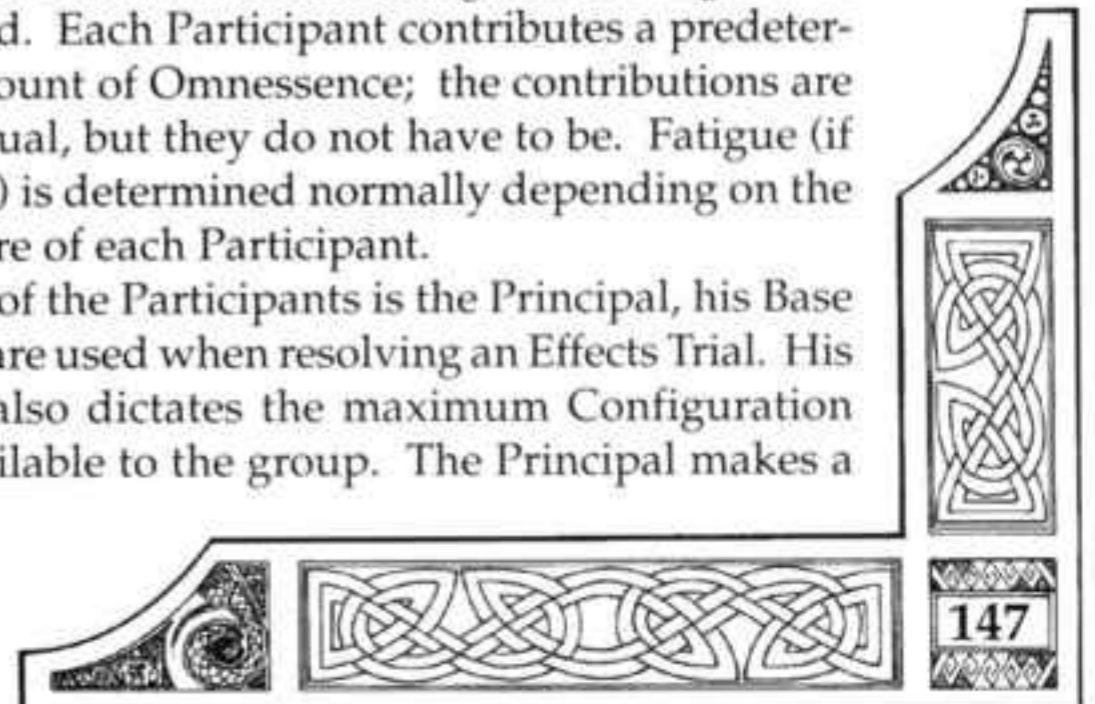
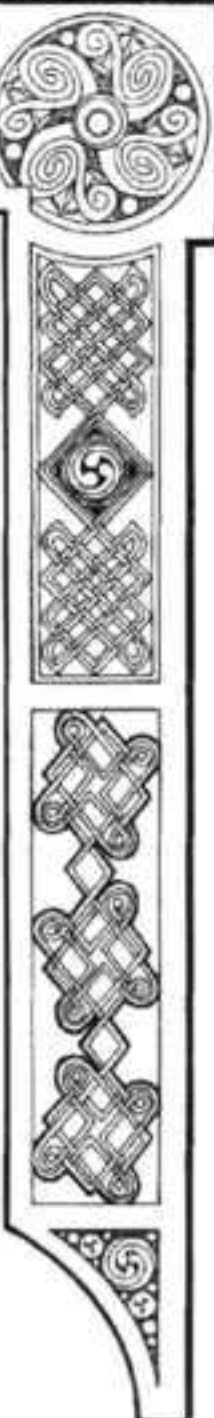
In some Origins, more than one individual can Participate in the creation of Effects. In certain types of Omni, Participation is a common practice (it is often used by masters to instruct apprentices). The Mythguide should decide whether such collective Paradigm castings are possible within a Reality or Origin. Participation is defined as either *Individual* or *Collective*. Individual Participation is self-explanatory. Only single Adepts are able to create and use Paradigms in the environment.

Collective Participation allows for multiple individuals to contribute to the casting process. The Mythguide needs to define the nature of such cooperation and its benefits within an Origin. Collective Participation is normally found in one of two forms - *Unlimited* or *Symbolic*.

Symbolic Participation is integral to a particular Origin and its symbols. For example, a nature deity might require a Circle of Participants (numbering seven or nine), representing the cycle of death and rebirth. A goddess of the moon could require a number equal to the number of days it takes the moon to wax or wane (in that particular world). Perhaps an essence only allows groups of three or four, representing the Archetypes governed by the Origin. Groups of thirteen (a coven) are common among our own European folklore. Whatever the symbol used, the intention when pooling the resources of multiple individuals is to ease the strain on any single individual.

Unlimited Participation does not have any constraining Symbolic numbers or shapes. Any number of Adepts can theoretically Participate in the communal endeavor represented by Unlimited Participation. The Mythguide should determine whether all of the Participants are Co-equal, or whether one of them can assume the role of a Principal. If the Participants are Co-equal, all of them assume an equal role in the creation of an Effect. When determining the Base and Rank of the Effects Trial, the Bases and Ranks of all Participants are averaged. However, the highest expertise Ranks from among the Participants are used to determine the maximum Configuration Might that can be used. Each Participant contributes a predetermined amount of Omnescence; the contributions are usually equal, but they do not have to be. Fatigue (if applicable) is determined normally depending on the expenditure of each Participant.

If one of the Participants is the Principal, his Base and Rank are used when resolving an Effects Trial. His expertise also dictates the maximum Configuration Might available to the group. The Principal makes a



Fatigue Trial (if required) as if he had used twice the Omnescence he actually contributed, while the other Participants make Fatigue Trials with a -3 Difficulty modifier (base Difficulty depends on their Omnescence contribution). This method can be useful if one member of a group is willing to make the appropriate sacrifice of exertion, since it keeps the other Participants fresh.

Incidentals

Incidentals include a number of odd or unusual enhancements and considerations. Incidentals are entirely optional, and the Mythguide should employ only those which he feels will enhance his system. Several Incidental Aspects are possible.

Omnescence can be *Wasted* in some Origins. This usually occurs when Adepts are required to use the Shape Paradigm Method in order to carefully construct an Effect. The Mythguide can require an Insight Trial to determine how exact the casting was. A Success indicates no Waste, while a Failure might indicate a point or more of Waste. The amount of Waste can be based on the Degree of Failure. Waste is added to the total Cost of an Effect.

Omnescence use can also have a *Signature*. Signatures include such things as noise (a stone missile that explodes with a 'bang'), color, appearance, or other Incidental effects. Signatures can be native to a certain type of Omnescence (i.e. Destructive), to an individual, or to an Omni. Adepts are encouraged to develop their own unique Signatures.

Omnescence use can also attract *Attention*. Perhaps the noise or effects associated with a Signature attracts the Attention of certain spirits. Or maybe all practitioners within an Origin are Watched or Monitored in some way. The Watchers could be agents of the Origin or agents of some malign presence (or competing Origin). They can be friendly or hostile. Perhaps they Watch to ensure the fulfillment of certain Aspects (to make sure Omnescence is correctly Recycled, for instance). The Mythguide should detail the nature of any Attention.

Finally, Omnescence use can produce *Side Effects*. Side Effects can be either Delayed or Immediate, and come in two forms. A *Reverberation* has some type of effect on the Origin itself and on the persona's relationship with it. Perhaps it causes certain natural phenomena, or maybe it causes pain to others associated with the same Origin. Perhaps it saps power or sanity from other Adepts within the same Origin. Whatever

its exact nature, a Reverberation is usually far-reaching.

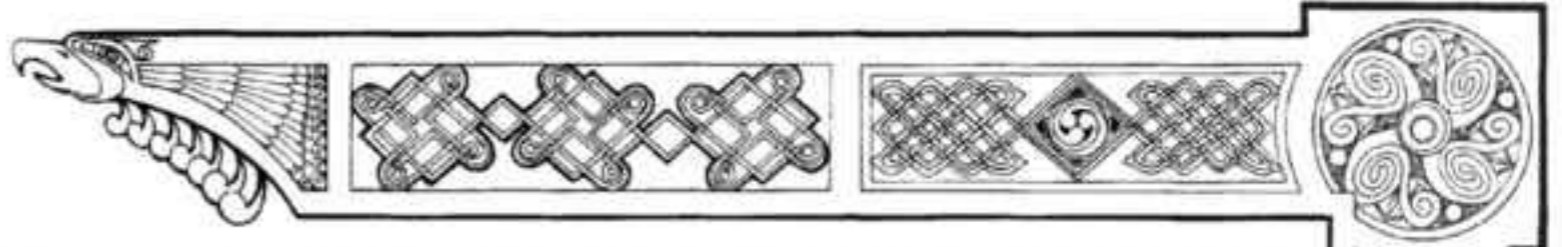
An *Alteration* can either affect the caster or the environment (and Reality). Personal Alterations include physical, mental, and psychological Side Effects. Environmental Side Effects can be Similar to a Paradigm's Effects, Opposed to them, or Complementary. The Mythguide should decide on the form and nature of Side Effects based on the Origin being used. Persona Background Aspects (both Favorable and Unfavorable) are convenient to use as Side Effects.

Effects Trial

Now that all of the possible modifying elements have been detailed, we return to the basic Effects Trial. Once a Paradigm has been adequately Prepared and cast, the Adept pays the final Omnescence Cost of the Tempered Paradigm and makes an Effects Trial to see whether or not the Paradigm acts as planned. The Base of this Trial equals half of the Adept's Primary Trait while the Rank of the Trial equals the average Rank in the Configuration of the Effects. For example, an Adept with a Primary Trait of eight (Aura) is attempting a Create Physical Paradigm. His Creation expertise is Rank four, while his Physical expertise is Rank six. His average Configuration Rank becomes five (the average of the Archetype and Dominion expertises which compose the Configuration) and his Base becomes four (half Aura). His Base Trial Chance is 9.

The Difficulty of the Effects Trial begins at a base of 2, but is often modified by conditions, Temper Aspects, Preparation Aspects, Resistance, or other restrictions. Current Fatigue and Mental Penalty (often a result of Shock) both affect the Difficulty of an Effects Trial. The Degree of Success or Failure determines the final Effects of the casting. A Complete or greater Success indicates the planned Effects (high Degrees of Success may enhance these Effects), while a Marginal Success indicates slightly substandard Effects (perhaps the Effect is reduced by a single Attack Modifier or it lasts several seconds less than planned). The Mythguide should remember that even successfully cast Paradigms can be Resisted.

A Failed Effects Trial represents different things among different Origins, Archetypes, and Dominions. Marginal and Complete Failures usually mean that the Effects don't work. Serious Failures or worse can indicate a Backfire. The Mythguide should interpret Effect Failures according to the circumstances surrounding an individual Paradigm.



The maximum amount of Omnescence which may be spent on a single Paradigm is determined by the Might of the Configuration into which the Effects fall. Consult the Maximum Omnescence per Paradigm table for the appropriate values. Adepts are also restricted by their expertise Ranks in a Configuration. Since every Configuration is comprised of an Arche-type and a Dominion, the average of an Adept's expertise in each element becomes the Rank of the Configuration. An Adept can only use an effective Might equal to or less than his expertise Rank in a Configuration. For example, a Destruction/Organic Configuration has a Might of eight in a particular Origin. An Adept with a Rank two Destruction expertise and a Rank four Organic expertise has an average Configuration expertise rank of three. Therefore, the Adept casts Destruction/Organic Paradigms as if they had a Might of three (thus he can spend only nine Omnescence per Paradigm instead of the sixty-four Omnescence which would be possible in the Origin). The Adept would need to develop his expertises until his Configuration Rank were eight in order to fully benefit from the Configuration Might of eight.

In some Realities, Automatic Effects might be an option. Such Effects do not require Effects Trials; they do what they are supposed to do after an initial Omnescence expenditure (Effects can no longer be manipulated by altering Difficulty, since an Effects Trial is no longer required). If Automatic Effects are used, they normally appear within Sentient Origins or within Origins that use the Channel Paradigm Method.

BACKFIRES

Extremely poor Effects Trial results can indicate Paradigm Backfires. Such Backfires should be defined by the Mythguide according to Origin. The severity of a Backfire is normally commensurate with the Omnescence placed into the Paradigm in the first place (especially its Potency). For example, a bolt of lightning which Backfires could turn on its caster, turn on a companion, or simply alter itself into something else (an explosion, perhaps). Its Potency or Intricacy might increase or decrease, it might drain additional Omnescence or Fatigue, or it could simply dissipate with only minor repercussions. Backfires can also be affected by the nature of an Origin. Omnescence being Channeled from Sentient Origins will probably be less likely to Backfire than power coming from a Non-Sentient Essence. The Mythguide should use the overall Degree of Failure define the nature of a Backfire.



Learning Omnesence Use

The Mythguide should determine the requirements for learning the use of Omnesence within an Origin. In some Realities, everyone might have the innate ability to learn magic, while in others only individuals born with a special Talent may learn. Some Origins endow entire cultures or species with Natural Talent. In Realities where all power must be Solidified in some way, an Omni might be the only place where Omnesence manipulation can be learned.

Several possibilities for awakening Talent in an individual exist. First, the Mythguide might require a persona to use a Window of Opportunity to initiate the Talent. This method is useful for Talent that must be awakened before an individual reaches a certain age. Second, the purchase of an Aspect (usually the Magical Talent or True Calling Background Aspects) at a certain Rank could be necessary. Third, Talent of some kind could be Innate in a certain culture, race, or individual. A persona might be able to make limited use of such Talent (perhaps it is expressed by giving the persona a Rank one in two Omnesence expertises - one Archetype and one Dominion) without further training, or the persona could decide to enter training as an Adept. Fourth, a persona might have to have a minimum requisite in order to begin training (an Aura of at least seven or a Willpower of at least six, for example). Finally, Talent can be Free; this gives anyone who wishes to learn the ability to use Omnesence. Any of the above can require an Initiation of some sort; the form of the Initiation will depend on both the Origin and the Omni (if the persona is associated with one).

Omnesence Expertises

The Omnesence Expertises represent the ability of an Adept to use Omnesence. Each Archetype and each Dominion has an associated expertise (thus Creation and Organic are both represented by expertises). These expertises form the Rank of Effects Trials, and dictate an Adept's knowledge of the particular Archetype or Dominion. Omnesence Expertises are treated as Knowledges but are purchased like Renown. Once acquired, they may be developed like normal expertises, although the Mythguide might place more severe restrictions on such continued development. Most Adepts will also acquire other Knowledges associated with their particular specialties. At the option of the Mythguide, these additional Knowledges can provide slight benefits to certain Effects Trials.

Depending on the nature of an Origin, the Mythguide may want to place development restrictions on the Ranks of some of these expertises. For example, a single Adept might only be able to have one Rank ten Archetype expertise. Origins with specific Provinces or unique restrictions might place even more severe limits on expertise Ranks. The Mythguide should impose such limitations based on the nature of power use in the environment. In some environments, it might be appropriate to treat individual Paradigms as separate expertises.

Learning Paradigms

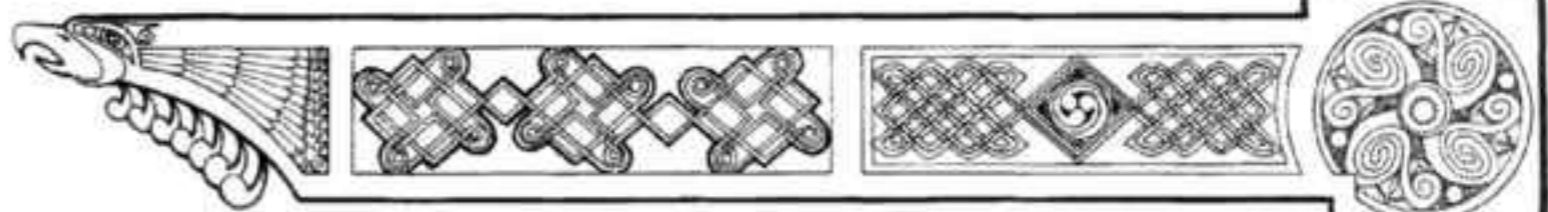
The necessity of learning Paradigms depends on how power works in an Origin. Aria leaves room for a great deal of spontaneous magic. If Effects do not have to be recorded, Memorized, or Solidified in any way, they can usually be developed independently. However, if they must be Solidified, the nature of the Solidification will affect how easy they are to learn. Many Omnis keep large Archives of Solidified Paradigms.

Personas are able to learn such Paradigms through Study, either with a teacher or a text. Although it will depend on the type of Paradigm and the form of Solidification, a general time guide for learning new Paradigms is one hour per point of Omnesence Cost when taught, three hours per point when studying. Of course, these numbers can be modified considerably. If magic is particularly rare, days, months, or even years can be substituted for hours. A normal Learning Trial (see Expertise Chapter) should be used to determine whether an Adept successfully learns the new Paradigm.

When Paradigms need to be Solidified, they can also be designed and researched in an appropriate laboratory or other facility. The Mythguide simply define the amount of time required for the research (the time needed will generally be several times what is needed to learn an already prepared Paradigm).

Sample Effects

The Aria Paradigm creation system is designed to be loose and free-flowing. By using different combinations of Access, Availability, Preparation, Archetypes, and Dominions, just about any conceivable Reality can be simulated. Because we feel strongly that a Mythguide's Reality should be his own, Aria does not include extensive lists of Effects or Paradigms. The



Sample Effects Catalogue

Alteration

Possible Configurations: Transformation/Any

Alteration is the basic Transformation Effect. It allows an Adept to alter physical Form, either of himself or of another. Perhaps a shaman is able to Alter the Form of his totem animal, or maybe he can assume the Form himself. Maybe a fire mage can change himself into flame, or priest of a sea god can alter his Form to resemble a creature of the sea. The Potency of this Effect depends on the fundamental nature of the Alteration (does the change make the subject more or less powerful?). Intricacy stems from the comprehensiveness of the change (changing a human into water is far easier than changing water into a human). Perhaps an Adept only takes on the appearance of an animal (a very high Intricacy would be necessary to actually *become* the animal). Powerful Alterations can change Reality. A Slight Alteration could represent the shift of one Physical item into another similar item (stone into earth). A Moderate Alteration could represent a minor shape shift (a human into a wolf). An Impressive Alteration might indicate the ability to turn another individual into a creature or animal. A Mythic Alteration could represent the ability to slow or halt Time itself.

Augury

Possible Configurations: Divination/Any Dominion, Manipulation/Will

Augury is used to divine information from items, places, creatures, or people. Augury is often directed at the Spirit and Reality Dominions, and the form of such Augury depends on the Origin; answers could take the form of mysterious dreams, animal or spirit messengers, or riddles. Alternately, a no-nonsense Origin could simply provide a straight answer. Augury directed at other people, animals, or things usually provides fairly definite information. Potency is derived from nature and form of the information desired, while Intricacy comes from the accuracy and completeness of the information. A Slight Augury answers an easy question about a particular forest grove (did a man pass here recently?) or removes a surface memory from an animal. A Moderate Augury reveals more information, possibly from a sentient mind. An Epic Augury could reveal ancient and specific information about a person, place, or thing.

Bless

Possible Configurations: Manipulation/Reality

A Bless enhances the luck or fortune of its target. In game terms, this involves Manipulating the Reality around a target. The result is normally the equivalent of a Fortune Background Aspect. Or the Effect Might can favorably modify an individual's Trials for a specified period of time. Powerful Blessings may be able to remove Curses. A Slight Effect might give someone a -1 Difficulty modi-

fier to all Trials for the Duration of the Effect. A Mythic Effect could Bless an entire army.

Clairsentience

Possible Configurations: Divination/Organic, Spirit, Will, or Reality

Clairsentience allows an Adept to obtain sensory input from another place or time. Effects that deal with Clairsentience often use the Removed Temper Aspect. Potency depends on what is being done (seeing the past, future, or present, combining Hearing with seeing, etc.). Intricacy describes the completeness of the Effect (is it hazy, in the desired place and time, are images obscured?). A Slight Effect might let an Adept see through the eyes of a willing companion. A Moderate Effect could permit a persona to hear battle plans being made in a tent several hundred yards away. An Impressive Effect could allow a sensory transfer of many miles if the Adept is familiar with target or target area. An Epic Effect could allow an Adept to see through the eyes of a being on the spirit plane, while a Mythic Effect could allow an Adept to see accurately into the future.

Command

Possible Configurations: Manipulation/Will

This Effect has many uses in an environment. It can be used to Bind or control a Summoned creature, to affect or dictate the emotions or desires of a target, and to issue simple or complex suggestions and commands. In game terms, this Effect could be interpreted as a Social Interaction (with various Effects causing modifiers to the Interaction Trials). A Slight Effect might put a target to sleep. A Moderate Effect could allow simple suggestions and commands ('Cease and desist!'), especially things that the target might be inclined to do anyway. Impressive Effects allow more complex tasks and commands, while Epic and Mythic Effects could cause a target to sacrifice itself for the benefit of the caster.

Curse

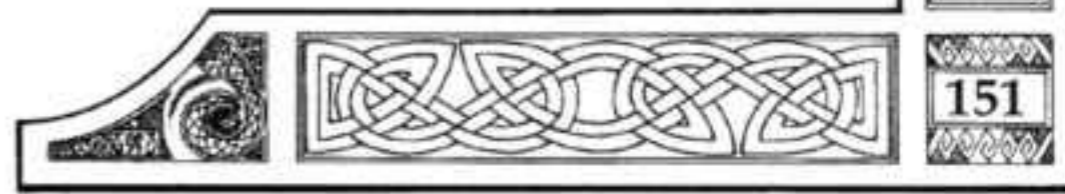
Possible Configurations: Manipulation/Reality, Destruction/Spirit, Organic, Physical

A Curse is essentially the opposite of a Blessing. It either Manipulates the Reality around an individual or begins to Destroy an individual's body or spirit. It could cause physical infirmity or a general withering. Often it simply causes bad luck, and takes the form of a Doom or Curse Background Aspect. A powerful Curse can negate Blessings. A Slight Effect could cause a +1 Difficulty modifier to all Trials for the Duration of the Effect. A Mythic Effect could initiate a great plague or epidemic within an entire region or section of countryside.

Detection

Possible Configurations: Divination/any Dominion

Detection Effects are another common facet of most fantasy environments. By combining the Divination Ar-



chetype with various Dominions, an Adept can theoretically Detect just about anything. Detect Physical could find specific minerals or metals. Detect Organic could find another sentient presence, or a specific person. Detect Reality could detect magic use in the environment, while Detect Will could divine the intentions of an adversary. The Potency of this Effect will increase amount and ease of Detection, while Intricacy will increase specificity (not just gold, but gold above a certain purity level). Slight Effects could Detect Omnescence in the immediate area. Moderate Effects could Detect a certain type of power. Impressive Effects could find all sentient beings in a large radius. A Mythic Effect could Detect a single individual on another continent.

Dispel

Possible Configurations: Destruction/Reality

A Dispel Effect negates or destroys the Effects of other Paradigms. In order for a Dispel to work properly, its Effect Might must be close to or greater than the Effect Might of its target. A Challenged Effects Trial is often used to determine whether or not the target is Dispelled. At the option of the Mythguide, Scope may or may not be an additional consideration (i.e. a Dispel must be able to enfold its target). Permanent Effects can only be Dispelled by Permanent Dispels. This Effect is useful as a Counter to hostile Effects directed at the caster. If types of Omnescence are being, a Dispel must be of the same power type in order to function (alternately, Dispels of other types can work, but at severely reduced efficiency - perhaps at an effective Might of half their actual Might).

Elemental

Possible Configurations: Creation, Manipulation, Transformation, or Destruction/Organic or Physical Dominions

These Effects represent a creation, use, or manipulation of the forces of nature. Elemental Effects often use the Build Temper Aspect to combine with other Effects. A Slight Effect might represent a pleasant smell on the breeze. A Moderate Effect could initiate a light rain (only within the Scope, of course). An Impressive Effect could represent a vast bank of fog or mist. An Epic Effect could initiate severe snow or hail storms. A Mythic Effect could produce a hurricane, tornado, or tidal wave.

Energy

Possible Configurations: Creation, Manipulation, Destruction, or Transformation/Energy

These Effects are the exclusive product of the Energy Dominion, although other methods might exist for initiating the same results. Energy Effects are sometimes used in conjunction with Elemental Effects (i.e. creating a storm and then manipulating the lightning), and often constitute an Origin's 'standard' attack form. Potency is usually based primarily on damage and penetration, while Intricacy depends on the type of Energy used and the type of damage done (plain Crush damage, penetrating fire

damage, etc.). Energy Effects include heat attacks and Effects (sheets of flame or fireballs), electrical Effects (lightning), sonic Effects (damaging booms or reverberations), light Effects (Paradigms that create or remove light), and more sophisticated forms of Energy (kinetic or magnetic Effects, for example). The manipulation of Forces is also possible; these forms of Energy can be used to fly, levitate, push things, initiate force attacks, or create walls or fields. A Slight Effect might represent a small globe of light. A Moderate Effect could represent light to medium damage Force blast. An Impressive Effect could indicate a high damage lightning bolt. A Mythic Effect could represent a sheet of searing flame that covers a large area of ground.

Enhance

Possible Configurations: Manipulation/Any Dominion

Effects that Enhance abilities or senses boost the strength of such abilities. Enhance Effects are often used to improve Characteristics or Traits temporarily. An Enhance Effect could also be used to increase speed or allow unusual movement (such as climbing slick surfaces). These Effects can also be employed to improve specific Omnescence-related abilities. The Potency of an Enhance is based on the nature and amount of Enhancement. Intricacy depends on the nature and inherent difficulty of the specific Manipulation. A Slight Effect might improve Strength or Endurance by one Rank. An Impressive Effect might cause a five Rank improvement, while a Mythic Effect could allow an Adept to temporarily Enhance a Trait beyond the normal maximum.

Fatigue

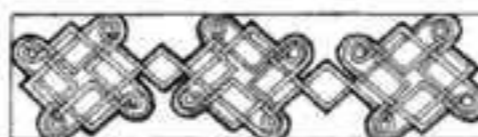
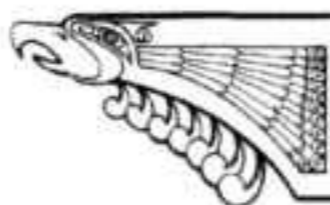
Possible Configurations: Destruction, Manipulation, or Transformation/Any Dominion

Fatigue Effects drain a target, cause weakness, or weaken other Effects. These Effects can initiate mental weakness, physical weakness, or psychological weakness. Such Effects might require Fatigue Trials or cause Mental Penalties. Other Fatigue Effects might be able to weaken incoming or already existing magical (Reality) Effects. Both Potency and Intricacy depend on the degree of weakening. A Slight Effect might represent a one point Mental Penalty while a Moderate Effect might represent a temporary loss of Strength. A Mythic Effect could represent a near total weakening (possible leading to death).

Healing

Possible Configurations: Creation, Transformation/Organic, Will, Spirit

Healing Effects are another common staple of fantasy. These Effects can be used to cure physical, mental, or spiritual damage or infirmity. They may also be used to regenerate damage or neutralize poison or disease. Potency depends on the degree of the cure required, while Intricacy depends on complexity. Healing basic physical dam-



age is easier than curing deep psychological trauma. Slight Effects can cure light cuts and scratches, or stop bleeding. Mythic Effects could bring someone back from the dead.

Illusion

Possible Configurations: Creation, Manipulation/Spirit, Will, Reality, Energy

Illusions appear in most Realities. No matter how they are created, they normally have the same Effect - they attempt to simulate something real or imagined, causing one or more onlookers to perceive an image as real. The Potency of an Illusion dictates its Effects (can it harm a target either physically or mentally, perhaps by causing fear? Does it require a Trial for perception?) and its Intricacy affects a target's belief and perception (an accurate illusion of a persona the target knows would have a high Intricacy). A Slight Effect might represent an illusory campfire. A Moderate Effect could represent an illusory wolf or bear. An Impressive Effect might add audial and olfactory elements to the previous example. A Mythic Effect could represent a dragon that could actually harm a target (if the target believed in the image).

Invisibility

Possible Configurations: Manipulation, Transformation/Spirit, Organic, Physical, Reality, Will

Invisibility Effects allow a target to move or act unseen or undetected. This Effect is not limited to sight; an Adept who casts a powerful Invisibility could be Invisible to all types of detection. Potency depends on the degree and nature of the Invisibility (each additional undetectable element adds to Potency). Intricacy represents the difficulty of maintaining each of the component elements. Slight Effects could represent simple, non-mobile Invisibility. Moderate Effects could represent mobile Invisibility. Impressive Effects could add audial and olfactory Invisibility. Mythic Effects could create an almost total immunity to detection of any sort.

Protection

Possible Configurations: Creation, Transformation, Manipulation/Any Dominion

Protection Effects serve as primary source of defense for an Adept. Such Effects can include shields against Physical missiles, spiritual attacks, or Reality Effects. They sometimes take physical Form, although they often remain invisible force fields. Protection can also be purely Mental in nature. Potency depends on the supposed Potency of the incoming attack or Effect. Protection against mundane attacks have Defense Modifiers based on Potency, while magical Effects often require Challenged Trials based on the Effect Might of each Paradigm. Slight Protection may create an shield against rain or wind. Moderate Effects could repel a number of mundane projectiles (arrows, for instance). Epic Effects can shield most Reality Effects.

Summon

Possible Configurations: Conjunction/Any Dominion

Summon can be a very powerful tool in a Reality, and its nature depends on the Reality itself. The Mythguide should determine the types of creatures or beings which may be Summoned (which are available in the spirit world? In the mundane world?). If a creature appears, is it already under control or does it need to be Bound in some way? A summon Paradigm will be very closely related to an Origin (perhaps only minions of an Origin answer a Summons), and the Mythguide should consider Origin nature and motivations carefully before allowing the construction of Summon Effects. Note that Summoning (and the Conjunction Archetype) also includes the reverse Effect - Banishment. Slight Effects could represent the Summoning of a small creature or animal. Moderate Summonings could bring minor minions of an Origin (often for question purpose only). Epic Summoning could call great demons, while Mythic Summonings might constitute requests for divine intervention.

Telepathy

Possible Configurations: Divination, Manipulation/Will

Telepathic Effects represent indirect and removed mental communication. It also includes the ability to 'read minds', with or without the consent of the target. Telepathic communication can consist of words, sounds, images, emotions, or combinations of all these. Potency depends on the nature of the connection; reading the thoughts of an unwilling target (requiring the purchase of a Trial) will cost more than communicating with a willing participant. Intricacy is based on the type and accuracy of the communication. If complete thoughts are desired, Intricacy will be higher than if simple images were transmitted. Slight Effects might represent a simple transmission from one companion to another (who is in the immediate vicinity). Mythic Effects could involve prying Effects out of a mind many miles away.

Transport

Possible Configurations: Conjunction, Manipulation/Physical, Organic, Energy, Reality

Transport Effects represent traveling, teleport, or co-location abilities. This Effect is often used for accelerated travel methods (a magic carpet, a mobile pocket of enchanted air, etc.). However, at high levels of power it can also be used for teleportation or instantaneous travel from one point to another. The nature of such travel depends on the Reality; perhaps a mage can simply 'blink' out of one location and into another (although he usually needs to be familiar with the destination). Maybe he needs to construct a sacred or magical gate or portal; perhaps walking a few steps through the spirit realm is equivalent to miles of travel in the mundane world. Whatever the individual case, extreme Transport Effects should be limited in most Origins. Slight Effects might represent hastened travel. Impressive Effects could indicate the ability to fly medium distances. Mythic Effects represent teleportation.



challenge is to create such Effects based on the Reality being used. However, some archetypal Effect categories are common to many fantasy genres; general guidelines and suggestions regarding some of these Effects are presented in the following section. Sample Effect Levels are provided for the entire Effect (i.e. a Slight Effect would have Slight Potency, Slight Intricacy, and Slight Scope); these provide the Mythguide with some idea of general Cost levels.

Designing an Omni

An Omni is a group or organization of Omnescence-users working together toward a common purpose and affording a sense of protection and community to its members. Many different types of esoteric organization are considered Omnis, from vast religious hierarchies and church bureaucracies to small, isolated magical Orders, Societies, and Lodges. Omnis bring a social and political element to Omnescence-using vocations. Adepts (especially when persecuted) are more powerful collectively than when considered singly, and Omnis are the logical social, political, and philosophical outgrowth of this simple truth. Much more on Omni design, function, and interaction will be included in future publications. All Omnis are composed of a number of Elements.

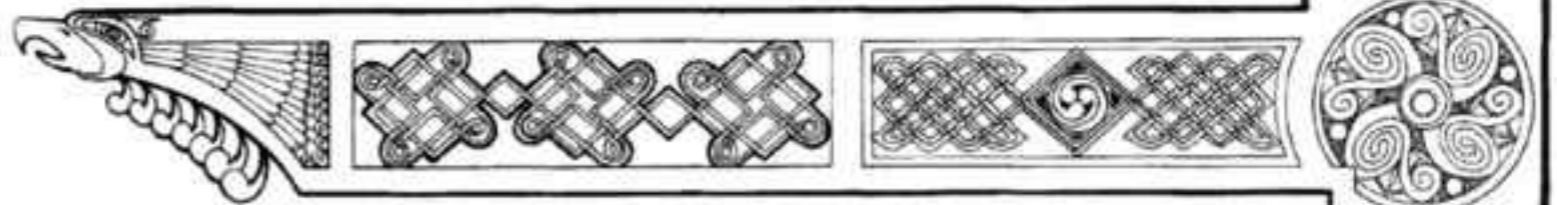
Name: The Mythguide (or the controlling player) names the Omni (i.e. The Crystal Lodge of Ice and Roses).

Governing Origin: Describe the Origin which serves as the source of the Omni's power.

Form: Describe the Form of the Omni. A *Fellowship* defines a group (usually smaller) connected by very loose ties or associations. An *Association* is a group with firmer connections, usually described by certain Strictures and Traditions (a religious sect is an example). An *Order* is an established and organized group governed by a complete set of Strictures, Traditions, and Laws (a monastic Rule would be an example of an appropriate Tradition). Orders often hold property and considerable social influence (depending on the Religious and Magic Tolerance levels in an environment). Finally, an Omni can be defined as a *Society*. Societies are normally large holding groups with numerous smaller Omnis as members. A Church is an example of one such group, since it supports a number of member Orders and Associations. Large magical Colleges or Schools are other examples.



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Resources: The Mythguide should give the Omni a Resources Value from 1-10. This represents the group's resource base (income, property, businesses, wealth, artifacts, libraries, etc.) *in relation to others of its size*. Any unusual or important resources should be detailed.

Size

Membership: How large is the Omni? How is its Membership distributed? The Mythguide should assign a Membership Value from 1-10. A value of one might represent three or four members, while a value of ten could represent many thousands of members.

Scope: What sort of reach does the Omni have? Is it a small village society, or is it a world-spanning church? A Scope Value between 1 and 10 should be assigned. A value of one represents an extremely localized group, while a value of ten indicates a Reality-wide Omni.

Social Position

Sponsorship: Where does the Omni rest in relation to others of its kind? Is it a Mother Order, resting at the top of an elaborate hierarchy, or is it a daughter house responsible to its superiors? The Mythguide should define the relationships among Omnis within a Society or among nonaffiliated groups who pay homage to the same Origin.

Perceptions: How does the Omni relate to society at large? To other similar groups? The relationship of the Omni to the larger mundane environment depends primarily on the Humanities values present in the environment (see both the Mythmaking and Interactive History chapters). The Mythguide might also wish to define Relations between the Omni and other Omnis in the environment by using Interaction Stance categories. For example, two Omnis with similar outlooks might be Friendly toward each other, while Omnis with divergent views could be Hostile. Such descriptions should serve as guidelines when determining the reactions of Omni members during social interactions.

Renown: Omnis develop Renown in a manner similar to personas and Kinship groups. The Mythguide should detail the form, Origin, and Aspects of each reputation. Most Omnis have more than one reputation (perhaps a certain Limited Renown among members and wider Expansive Renown within the Narrative Environment). Renown often results from an Omni's Philosophical elements.

Philosophy

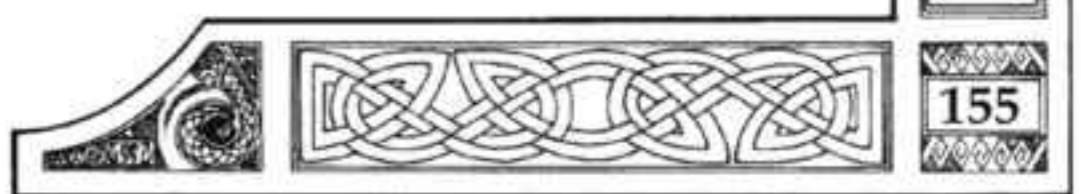
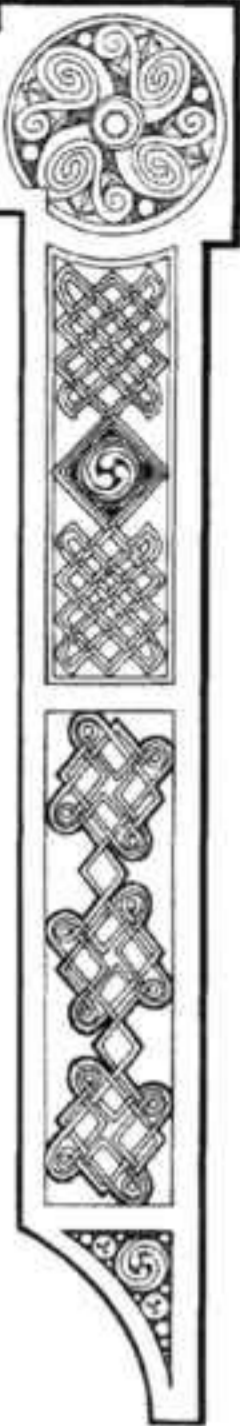
Orientation: The Omni Orientation describes the general philosophical outlook of the group. How does the Omni approach its position in the environment? How do its views toward other groups affect its actions? Omni Orientation is defined in the same manner as Heritage Orientation (see Heritage chapter). The Mythguide should choose an Orientation, any Manifestations, and any appropriate Orientation Aspects. Omni Orientation has a profound impact on how a group approaches and relates to the mundane world. The Mythguide may also require members to choose a personal Orientation describing their stance regarding the Omni's views (this personal Orientation corresponds to Cultural Orientation (again, see the Heritage chapter).

Demeanor: Demeanor describes the overall 'personality' and psychological direction of the Omni. Do the members meet on occasion to casually pursue esoteric knowledge? Do they dwell in an isolated community, following the secret ways and shunning the outside world? Or do they attempt to spread a sacred dogma with a fanatical zeal? The Mythguide should use Personality Traits to describe the Demeanor of the Omni (if the Demeanor is unusually strong, the Mythguide can define it as a Motivation, Passion, or Obsession).

Omnescence Philosophy: How does the Omni use its power to further its Orientation and Demeanor? What, if any, moral limits are placed upon such usage? The Mythguide should use guiding descriptive Aspects to define this Philosophy (i.e. Conservative, Unprincipled, Bold, Aggressive, etc.). Any philosophical restrictions on Omnescence use should also be detailed. Perhaps Destructive Effects are possible, but are disallowed in a specific Omni. Maybe all Effects must use the Invited Temper Aspect. Such restrictions depend on the philosophical outlook of the group. Finally, some Omnis use individual Signatures for their Effects (i.e. all Effects carry a crimson aura, or create a certain low vibration). These Signatures serve to identify members of the Omni when using their power.

Structure

Politics: The political structure of the Omni should be defined. Is the group ruled by a council of masters? Is it ruled Absolutely by one individual? Does every member have a vote in the Omni's affairs? The Mythguide can assign a Political Infrastructure to the Omni if he wishes (see both the Mythmaking chapter or the *Aria Worlds* book). The Mythguide may also want to detail the internal relations among the Key Elements of the Omni.



Initiation: What is the Initiation process for the Omni? Are there different degrees of Initiation? Are 'secular' and Omnescence-using members treated the same, or are they Initiated into different mysteries? The Mythguide should detail the Initiatory process or processes in the Omni. Initiation rites are normally derived from the symbols associated with a governing Origin. Perhaps an acolyte of a water deity must undergo some type of ordeal at sea. A follower of a god of order might require a sacred or binding vow. Magical orders often require symbolic Initiations that have meaning or historical significance within the Omni itself (especially if the governing Origin is Non-Sentient).

Initiations can assume several forms. An *Innate* Initiation means that an Adept is born into an Omni. Members can also be *Chosen*, either by other members or by an Origin. *Self-Initiation* is another possibility; prospective members simply need to 'join' the Omni. A period of *Training* might be required. This could represent either schooling or an apprenticeship. Finally, an *Ordeal* is often necessary. This is a mental, physical, or spiritual trial of some kind. Its form usually depends on the Origin or group involved. An Omni can use more than one method of Initiation.

Hierarchy: Based primarily on the Politics of the Omni, the Mythguide should define the Hierarchy and overall power structure. Small Omnis normally have simple structures, while large Omnis (such as churches) can support vast authority frameworks. Any important offices or leadership positions should also be detailed, as well as the positions held by new Initiates. The mechanisms for advancement should be covered; what advancement paths are available to members? What restrictions exist? The Mythguide may wish to describe advancement possibilities with Aspects (i.e. tests, ceremony, ritual combat, study, training).

Custom: What Customs govern the actions and lives of the group's members? Three types of Custom exist. *Traditions* are general agreements, codes, and philosophies which members are encouraged to live by. Traditions are often non-binding. *Laws* are dogmatic restrictions placed upon members by an Omni's leadership. Disobeying a Law often provokes severe punishment. *Strictures* are limitations imposed by an Origin itself. Many Origins monitor their followers in some way, and mete out punishment when Strictures are broken. The Omnescence *Incidental Attention* often accompanies Strictures.

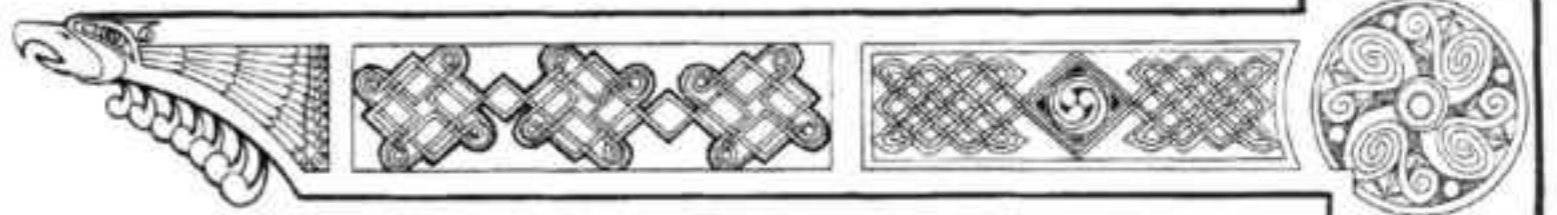
Customs are further divided along two lines: First, Customs can be *Selective* (they only apply to certain members or Hierarchy elements - i.e. all masters are exempt from a specific rule) or *Encompassing* (Pandects which apply to every member regardless of rank). Second, Customs can be *Non-Binding* (members can decide whether or not to obey) or *Binding*. Binding Customs come in several forms. They can be *Philosophically Binding* (dogmas, rules, oaths, or vows which may be broken - if caught, transgressors are punished), *Influences* (the Omni might know secrets about the member, it might have a link to the member through his blood, etc. - such Influences have a degree of real power; transgressions often alert other members), or *Controls* (a member is always punished when a Custom is broken - members might be linked magically in some fashion, or they may Watched by minions of the Omni or Origin. The Mythguide should also detail any important *Rituals* (symbolic actions performed only by Omni members) or *Ceremonies* (rituals that include affiliated laity and non-members) which the group engages in (including Initiations, holy days, consecrations, ritual combats, etc.).

Tenets: Many Omnis with defined Hierarchies possess Tenet Levels. Tenet Levels represent the degree of importance and secrecy placed upon different elements related to an Omni. The Mythguide can assign Tenet Levels (which normally range from 1-5) and restrictions as he sees fit. Individual Paradigms (from the Omni's Archives), specific Omnescence Expertise Ranks, certain ritual practices, and sensitive information - all can be given a Tenet Level. The Mythguide can then define what positions in the group's Hierarchy have access to specific Tenet Levels. Perhaps apprentices are not permitted to learn anything from a group's Archives. Maybe only the archpriests of an ordered religion can learn things beyond Tenet Level four. The uses and importance of Tenet Levels depends on the Size, Hierarchy, and Politics at work within the group.

Incidentals: The Mythguide should include any additional information he deems important. Ritual calendars, descriptions of member garb, decoration, and trappings (both ritual and everyday), and a brief history of the organization (and its place in the environment) can all be helpful.

Archive

An Omni's Archive includes a list standard Effects used by members. It also includes any Solidified Paradigms or other Effects which are taught to members. Special Preparations used by the group, in addition to any unique restrictions, should also be covered. Many Paradigms are traditional elements of an Omni, and possess involved and colorful histories within a group (Who invented an Effect? When was it first used? Can it be altered?).



Reality Creation Example

The following example moves through the Reality, Origin, and Omni design procedures in a methodical fashion. An initial Reality Concept is presented, followed by an Origin Template and an Omni example (along with a portion of its Archive).

Reality Concept and Nature: Owen decides that he wants two or three Origin Natures operating within the Reality. Gods and other mighty spiritual beings walk a number of symbolic spiritual realms and grant power directly to their adherents. An ancient primal essence (called the Lifeblood of the World by the Adepts of the remote mountain schools) is also present as a potential source of Omnescence, but Adepts with the ability to tap this flow are rare. Although there are many Origins (gods and their minions) in the Reality, their numbers are not infinite. The Reality Nature is *Multiple*. This example includes a single Origin Template - Onquis, Lord of the Dream.

Onquis, Lord of the Dream

Nature: Onquis is a dweller in the Celestial Sphere, a walker of the spirit realms. To his adherents and followers in the mundane world, he is revered as a god. As an intelligent and aware spiritual being, Onquis has a *Sentient* Nature.

Form: Onquis is an *Entity*. He can usually be found among his brothers and sisters on the higher spirit planes, but his own particular province often finds him roaming the dreams and dream realms of mortals.

Genesis: As far as Onquis and his brethren know, they are *Inherent* beings, and have always existed in their current forms. The level of Onquis' power waxes and wanes with the strength of mortal dreams.

Connections: Unlike the relationships among deities in some Realities, Onquis and his fellows are *Separate* Origins. There is little overlap among their various spheres of influence. For all practical purposes, these Origins are considered *Free* (although their power levels may be affected by the actions of their followers).

Orientation: Onquis does not concern himself with divine affairs; rather, he watches the dream realms. He cares little for the politics and maneuvering which consume his brethren. He is at peace with

his place in the cosmos, and he takes his responsibilities seriously. Those who meddle in his dream lands do so at their own considerable risk. Onquis has a *Visceral* Orientation with an Aspect of Prevention (integrity of the spirit realms) and Conviction (study of the dream).

Relations: Onquis is an *Interested* deity and will occasionally step in to aid his followers directly. He has a special affection for those who love to walk the spirit realms as he does, and he spends much of his time watching such individuals. Sometimes he assumes an alternate form and descends to walk with these favorites, showing them a few of his countless tricks and secrets for spiritual travel. When Onquis communicates with his mundane priests and followers, he usually appears to them in visions. Those followers who can walk in the realms are normally called to a sacred meeting place.

Apotheosis: Apotheosis for an adherent of Onquis means a permanent entrance into the world of dreams. Such honored individuals are known as 'Revered Walkers', and become spiritual minions of Onquis. Apotheosis is achieved by accumulating Spirit. A follower gains Spirit by traveling extensively in the spirit realms, learning the appropriate Ways, facing his anima and overcoming many archetypal obstacles. The Mythguide should not award Spirit easily. When a persona accumulates 100 Spirit, he will be able to enter the realm of the dream permanently.

Omnescence Fundamental

Conventions

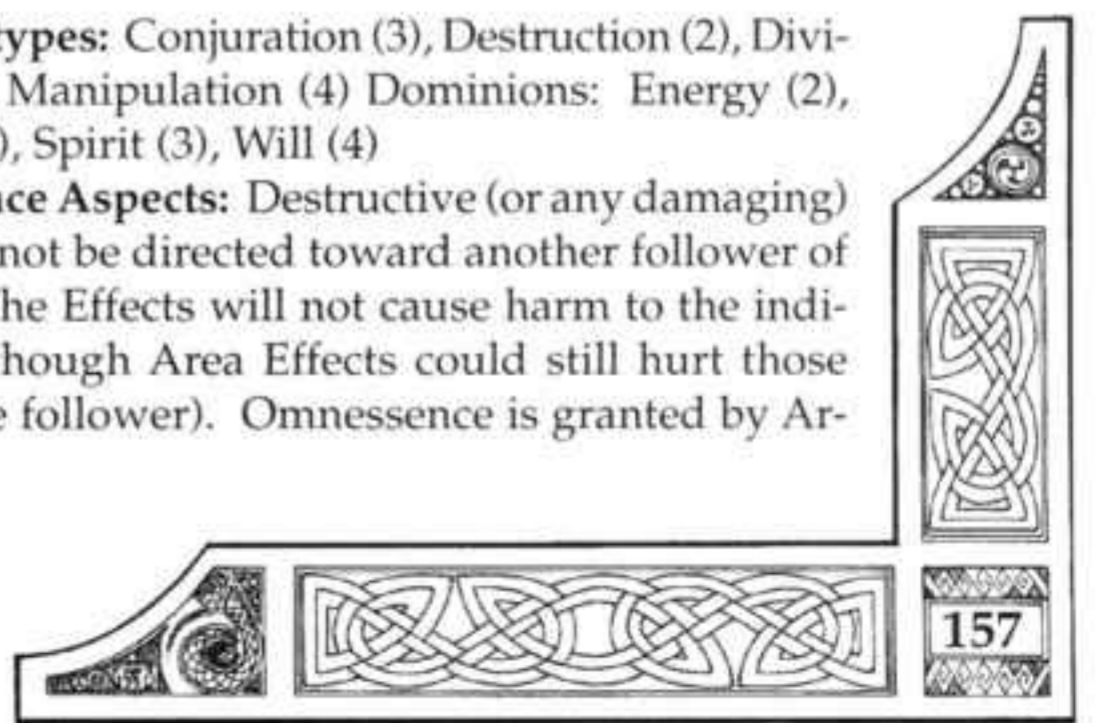
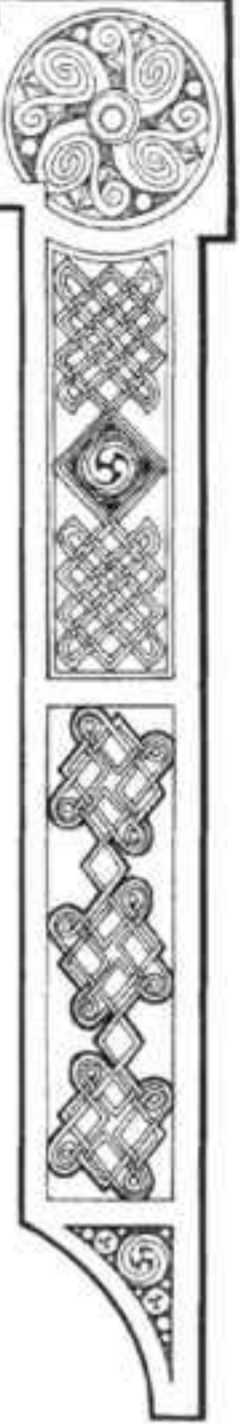
Primary Trait: Faith

Affinity: normal for Sentient beings; Non-sentient living things (plants, trees, etc.) have an Affinity of 3. Things that are considered once-living (dead wood) have an Affinity of 4, while non-living inanimate objects have an Affinity of 5. Affinity must be reduced to 0 in order to enchant an item or place Omnescence within a Vessel.

Province

Archetypes: Conjunction (3), Destruction (2), Divination (5), Manipulation (4) Dominions: Energy (2), Organic (2), Spirit (3), Will (4)

Province Aspects: Destructive (or any damaging) power cannot be directed toward another follower of Onquis. The Effects will not cause harm to the individual (although Area Effects could still hurt those around the follower). Omnescence is granted by Ar-



chetype in this Origin (i.e. Conjunction power can only be used for Conjunction).

Availability

Category: Omnescence Availability is *Pervasive*. Priests may obtain power wherever they are. However, certain limitations are placed on the Access process, since acquisition requires a subconscious journey into the dream realms to gather the power.

Manifestation: Omnescence appears in *Coherent Manifestations* within the dream realms. The power itself assumes the form of archetypal representations (i.e. Destruction power takes the form of ghostly fire, Divination power appears as small ghostly herons, etc.).

Availability Level: Availability Level equals an Adept's Aura. This represents the subconscious influence a powerful Adept has over the appearance of Omnescence in the spirit realms.

Amount

Category: Omnescence within the dream realms is both *Finite* and *Recyclable*. Onquis draws power from mortal dreams and weaves from this the fabric of the dream planes. Adepts who have the ability to travel these realms (by tapping into them through their own psyche) may Gather this power for later use.

Amount Level: Amount Levels in this Origin are abstract since they are based on mortal dreams. Initially, an Amount Level of nine is present. This Level will remain unchanged as long as the forms and processes of dreaming do not change. Only Reality-wide alterations (a demon lord stealing dreams, perhaps) could alter this fundamental Amount Level.

Access

Category: Access to Omnescence in the Origin is *Restricted*, while the Omnescence itself must be *Gathered* in the dream realm.

Restriction Aspects: Most Omnescence in the dream realm is *Guarded* by minions of Onquis. These guardians can also assume representational forms (i.e. an endless desert, a wild river, a bottomless chasm). However, they normally appear in forms closer to their true nature. These Guardians usually allow followers of Onquis free Access to power, but may occasionally test an adherent. The nature of such a test depends on the type of Omnescence being Gathered. A persona trying to Gather Destructive power might have to enter a battle of wills with the Guardian. An Adept trying to Gather Manipulation Omnescence might have to outsmart the Guardian in some way. There is a base 10% chance of such a test each time an Adept attempts to Gather power (subtract 1% for each Rank of a

persona's Faith. All Configurations incur normal Costs while an Adept remains in the dream realm. Outside this plane, Configurations that use the Destruction Archetype have twice the normal base Cost.

Method: Access within this Origin is based on a combination of two Methods - *Esoteric* and *Mental*. Before entering the dream realm, an Adept needs to center himself by making a successful Meditation Trial. After this state is reached, the Adept must open a Gate and establish a link to the dream realm. A successful Aura Trial is required to open the Gate. Once opened, the Adept may pass through into the dream realm and begin the search for Omnescence. This combined Method is *Closed*; an Adept can only establish a connection to the dream realm once during each tidal cycle. This means that after a link has been established, the Adept must wait at least another twelve hours before reentering the dream. If an Adept is Interrupted (i.e. his body is disturbed) while in the dream realm, he is immediately drawn back into his body. One Fatigue Trial per Access Interval is required.

Ease of Access: 2 (Guardians will occasionally test Adepts)

Access Time: Variable (ranging between an Access Interval of one minute and an Access Interval of twenty-five minutes). The precise Access Time depends on the type of Omnescence being Gathered. Different types have different representations in the dream realm. The Mythguide might allow the Adept to make a Faith Trial with the Degree of Success providing the final Access Time (in five minute increments). The type of Omnescence being Accessed can modify the Difficulty of this Trial.

Access Facility: Access Facility in the Origin equals the Willpower of an Adept.

Storage

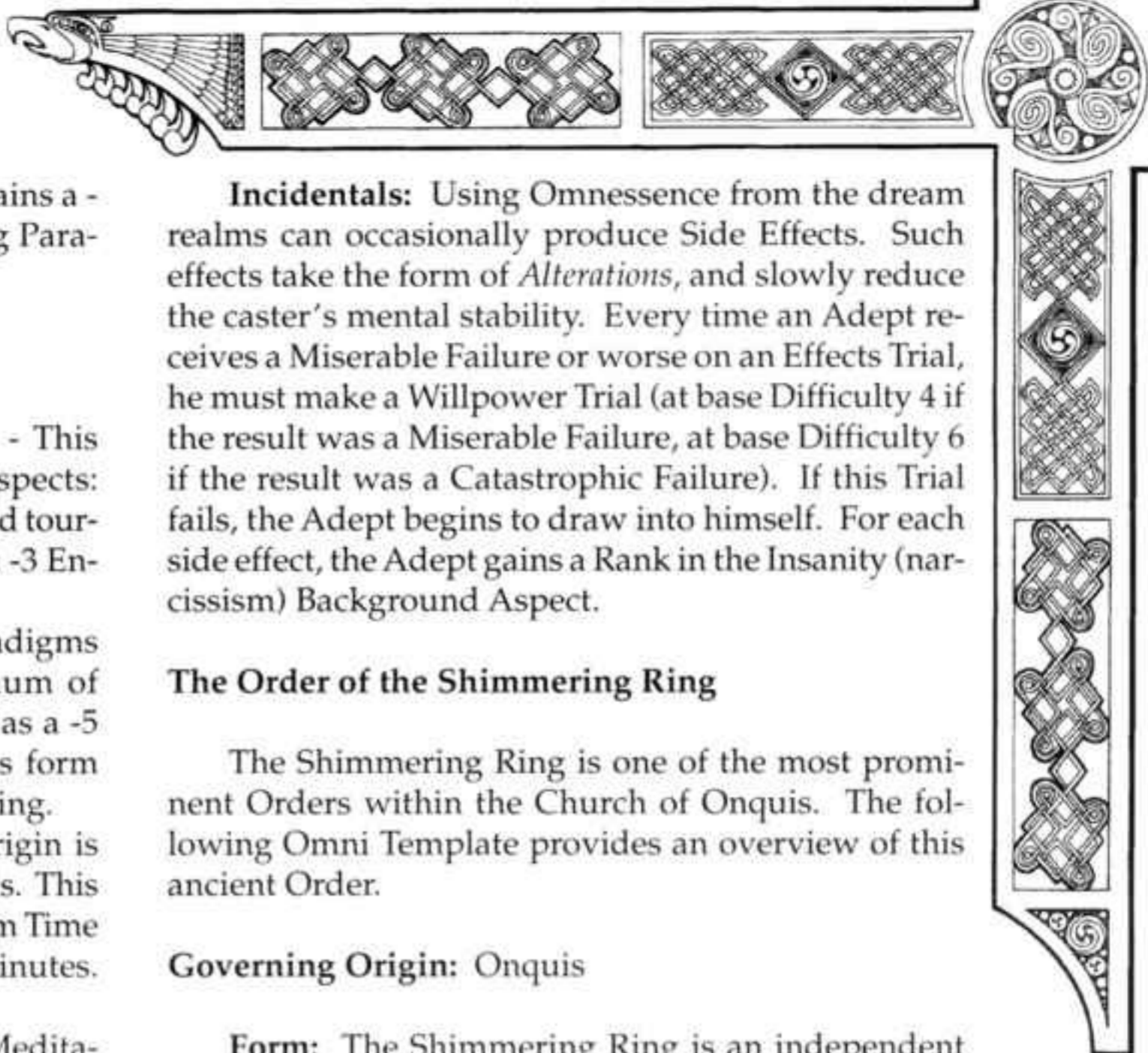
Category: Storage is Possible in the Origin, but only Sentient beings and creatures are able to act as Vessels. Magical items and artifacts are nearly impossible to create.

Capacity: Capacity in the Origin equals the average of Willpower and Faith.

Storage Aspects: Omnescence can only be Stored for the duration of two tidal cycles (approximately 24 hours). After this period, any unused power disappears at a rate of one point of Omnescence per second.

Omnescence Nature

Nature: Omnescence use within the Origin is both *Static* and *Assured*. Once Accessed and Gathered in the dream realm, Omnescence usually behaves in the expected manner.



Limitation Aspects: Restriction (Adept gains a -1 Difficulty to his Effects Trials when directing Paradigms against sleeping targets)

Preparation

Category: Preparation is required

Required Aspects: Mental (Meditation) - This Aspect is considered a Neutral. Possible Aspects: Physical (Materials) - A priest constructs a sacred tourmaline ring upon Initiation. The ring acts as a -3 Enhancer to appropriate Paradigms.

Esoteric (Solidification) - Individual Paradigms may be Solidified after being cast a minimum of twenty times successfully. Solidification acts as a -5 Enhancer. A number of Solidified Paradigms form the Archive of the Order of the Shimmering Ring.

Preparation Time: Preparation in the Origin is *Variable*. The Preparation Interval is five seconds. This Interval can be *Manipulated* between a minimum Time of two seconds and a maximum Time of five minutes. The *Variation Facility* is seven.

Preparation Trial: Based on an Adept's Meditation expertise. Interruption is impossible.

Effects

Paradigm Method: Adepts must *Shape* Omnescence into desired Effects.

Casting Time: Casting Time is *Instantaneous*. Once an Adept has centered himself and Prepared, the actual Shaping process occurs with a single thought.

Fatigue from Casting: None. Adepts only receive Fatigue when Accessing Omnescence.

Distance: Range in the Origin is *Static*, and the Range Increment is Sight.

Area: Area in the Origin is *Variable*. The Area Increment is five cubic feet. This Increment can be *Manipulated* according to a *Variation Facility* of five by using the Widen Temper Aspect.

Duration: All Effects created within this Origin possess a *Removed* Duration. The Duration Interval equals the caster's Faith in minutes. This Interval can be *Manipulated* by using the Extend Temper Aspect. The *Variation Facility* is six. Permanent Effects may be created in this Origin.

Temper Aspects: The following Temper Aspects are available in the Origin - Build, Chain, Delay, Diminish, Extend, Invited, Mechanism, Overpower, Permanence, Target, and Widen

Resistance: Active Resistance in the Origin uses the *Counter* form. A successful Resistance Trial results in a dissipation of the incoming Effects.

Participation: Only *Individual* Participation is allowed in this Origin.

Incidentals: Using Omnescence from the dream realms can occasionally produce Side Effects. Such effects take the form of *Alterations*, and slowly reduce the caster's mental stability. Every time an Adept receives a Miserable Failure or worse on an Effects Trial, he must make a Willpower Trial (at base Difficulty 4 if the result was a Miserable Failure, at base Difficulty 6 if the result was a Catastrophic Failure). If this Trial fails, the Adept begins to draw into himself. For each side effect, the Adept gains a Rank in the Insanity (narcissism) Background Aspect.

The Order of the Shimmering Ring

The Shimmering Ring is one of the most prominent Orders within the Church of Onquis. The following Omni Template provides an overview of this ancient Order.

Governing Origin: Onquis

Form: The Shimmering Ring is an independent Order within the Church of Onquis.

Size: The Membership of the Order is concentrated in the City-State of Amilanth, and is largely restricted to women (although some men are Initiated at the lower levels). Its Membership Value is six; the Order has approximately nine hundred members throughout the Cape Cities. Its Scope Value is five, since the Order's reach does not extend beyond the Cape of Sivray.

Sponsorship: The Order of the Shimmering Ring is responsible to the Pontiff of Onquis in Amilanth. There are eight other Orders within the Church; all are accorded equal treatment by the Pontiff and his Camera.

Perceptions: The Order of the Shimmering Ring goes relatively unnoticed among the peoples of the Cape. Religion in general occupies a position secondary to commerce, and the Church of Onquis is not as popular as that of Artee. However, because of this accepting and rather apathetic posture, the religions of the Cape tend to work together to further a common agenda. The Shimmering Ring has established a solid reputation for itself within this circle, and has earned the respect of its brethren. The Interaction Stances among religions are uniformly Neutral.

Renown: The Order of the Shimmering Ring has a Limited Renown of six (with an Aspect of efficient and capable) among the other religions of the area,

with an Origin of Amilanth itself. The Order is only slightly recognized in society at large, and has an Expansive Renown of three.

Orientation: The Order has a Relativist Orientation with Aspects of Conviction (tenets of Onquis) and Prevention (degeneration). The members of the Order are dedicated both to its survival and to spreading the word of their god. They make a concerted effort not to degenerate to the treacherous levels of some of their politically-minded brethren. Most adherents would rather emulate the contemplative nature of Onquis himself.

Demeanor: The Order is a close-knit group. All members are connected by a number of Customs, and the members live a communal lifestyle in a network of complexes called Ramalories. The Order itself remains above much of the petty conflicts and treacheries which plague most other elements of Amilani society. The Traits Loyalty and Introspection describe the nature of the Order.

Omnescence Philosophy: The Order takes a Conservative stance toward Omnescence use by members. Blatant or unfounded displays of power are regarded with suspicion in Amilani society, so members normally reserve Paradigm use for instances of personal defense or religious ceremony. On a more subtle level, power is used to spread the faith and the word of Onquis.

Politics: The Order is ruled by a Council of Revered Masters who are elected from among all eligible Masters in the Order. Order policy is voted on by this Council, but all members (beyond the level of Master) are given a voice in the affairs of the Order. The political structure of the Order is almost Republican in nature.

Initiation: All Candidates are escorted into the dream realms by their Master. Once there, the Candidate is left alone for the Ordeal of Three. This Ordeal lasts three days. On the first day comes the Trial of Fear; on the second day comes the Trial of Conscience; and on the third day comes the Trial of Self. If the Candidate successfully completes these tests, he emerges from the dream realms an Acolyte. A persona who wishes to join the Order must accompany the Ordeal with the True Calling Background Aspect (at a minimum Rank of four).

Hierarchy: The Hierarchy of the Order is simple: Candidate, Acolyte, Priest, Master, Revered Master. An

Adept advances through these ranks by gaining experience and demonstrating leadership skills within the Order. Such advancement is arbitrary, and is voted on by a special board convened by the Council of Revered Masters.

Custom: All Customs are both Encompassing and Philosophically Binding within the Order. The Three Laws of the Order are based upon the Trials which compose the Ordeal of Three. The Laws are long documents which set forth the governing principles of the faith. All members of the Order swear to uphold these fundamental tenets at the close of their Ordeal. If a transgressor is caught, the punishment is expulsion from the Order. The Church of Onquis is a religion of inner searching; as such, there are few important yearly rituals. The Festival of the Dream is celebrated once each year at the winter solstice. Weekly Conventicles are held for lay worshipers, but Masters are not required to attend such mundane services (which are basically for the benefit of the uninitiated).

Tenets: There are five Tenet Levels in the Order, with each Level corresponding to one of the Hierarchy ranks. These Tenet Levels are fairly loose divisions, and mainly represent increased privileges within a particular Ramalory (increased access to the library, exemption from weekly services, etc.). Tenet Levels also represent better opportunities for training within the Order, as well as higher administrative status.

Incidentals: Members of the Order of the Shimmering Ring still wear traditional Onquian garb, unlike several of their more cosmopolitan brothers. Acolytes wear brown robes, priests wear gray robes, Masters wear gray robes bordered in white, and Revered Masters wear white robes. Most citizens of the Cape recognize the white robes of a Revered master.

Archive: A number of Solidified Paradigms have assumed a permanent place in the Order's lexicon.

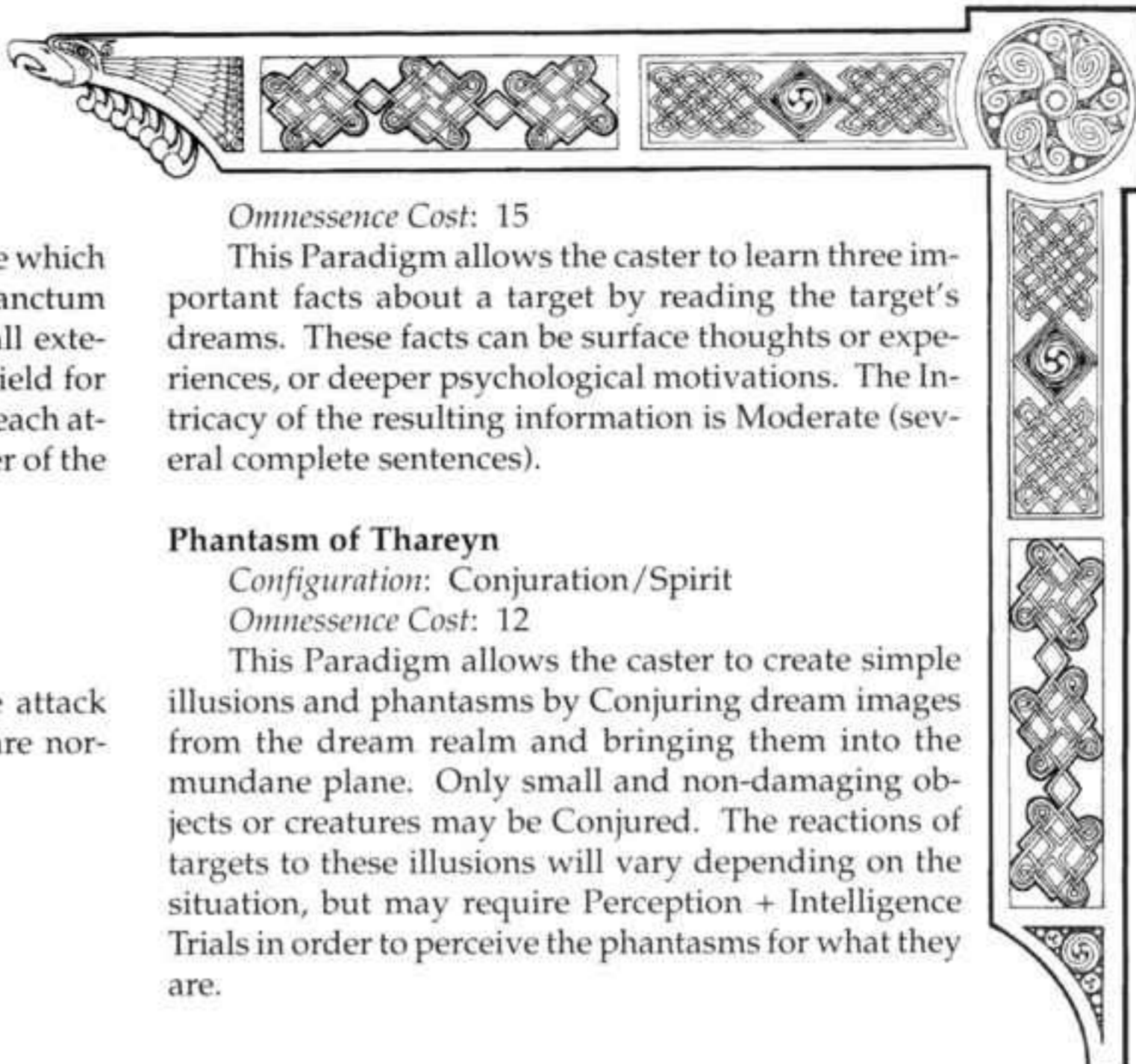
Sleep of the Realms

Configuration: Manipulation/Will

Omnescence Cost: 7: This Paradigm causes all targets who fail Resistance Trials to fall into a deep, dream-filled slumber. Upon waking, the sleeper will recall strange images a dreams of a ghostly ur-realm. After the normal (or Extended) Duration of the Effects ends, the sleeper must make a successful Willpower Trial in order to awaken.

Sanctum of Evarune

Configuration: Manipulation/Energy



Omnescence Cost: 25

This Paradigm creates a small dome of force which arches over the caster and protects him. The Sanctum has a Defense Modifier of 9, and blocks out all exterior sound and distraction. It is useful as a shield for both physical protection and Meditation. For each attack repelled successfully, the Defense Modifier of the shield decreases by one.

Hand of Onquis

Configuration: Manipulation/Energy

Omnescence Cost: 16

This Paradigm creates a damaging force attack with an Attack Modifier of 10. The Effects are normally Targeted.

Dream Seeing

Configuration: Divination/Spirit

Omnescence Cost: 15

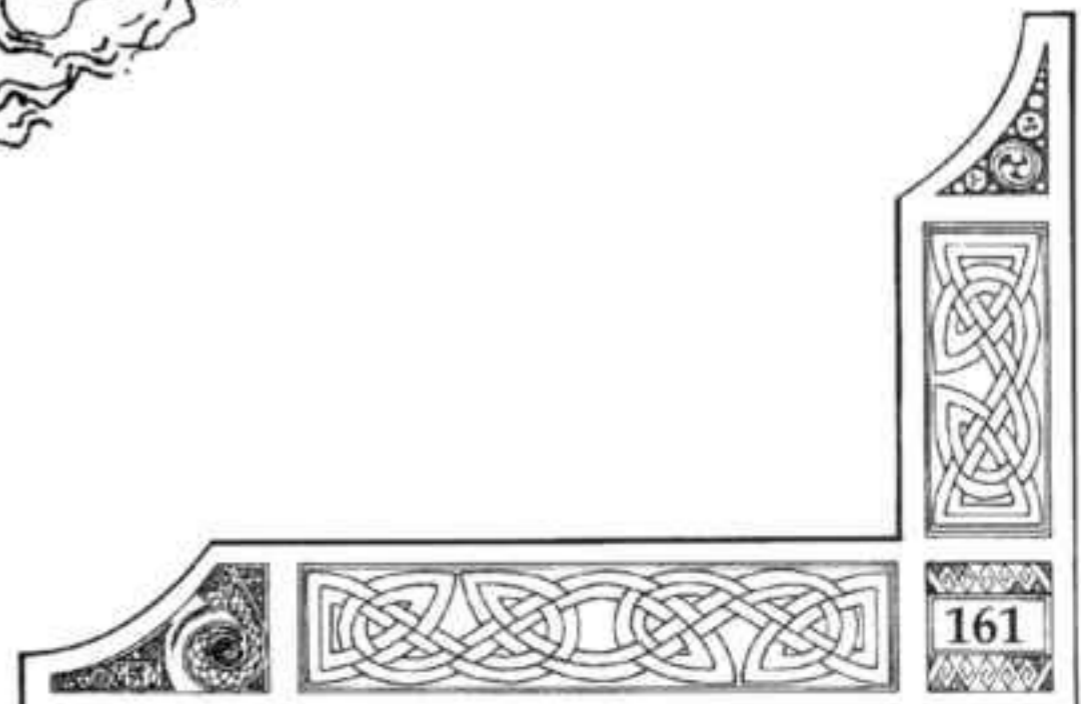
This Paradigm allows the caster to learn three important facts about a target by reading the target's dreams. These facts can be surface thoughts or experiences, or deeper psychological motivations. The Intricacy of the resulting information is Moderate (several complete sentences).

Phantasm of Thareyn

Configuration: Conjunction/Spirit

Omnescence Cost: 12

This Paradigm allows the caster to create simple illusions and phantasms by Conjuring dream images from the dream realm and bringing them into the mundane plane. Only small and non-damaging objects or creatures may be Conjured. The reactions of targets to these illusions will vary depending on the situation, but may require Perception + Intelligence Trials in order to perceive the phantasms for what they are.

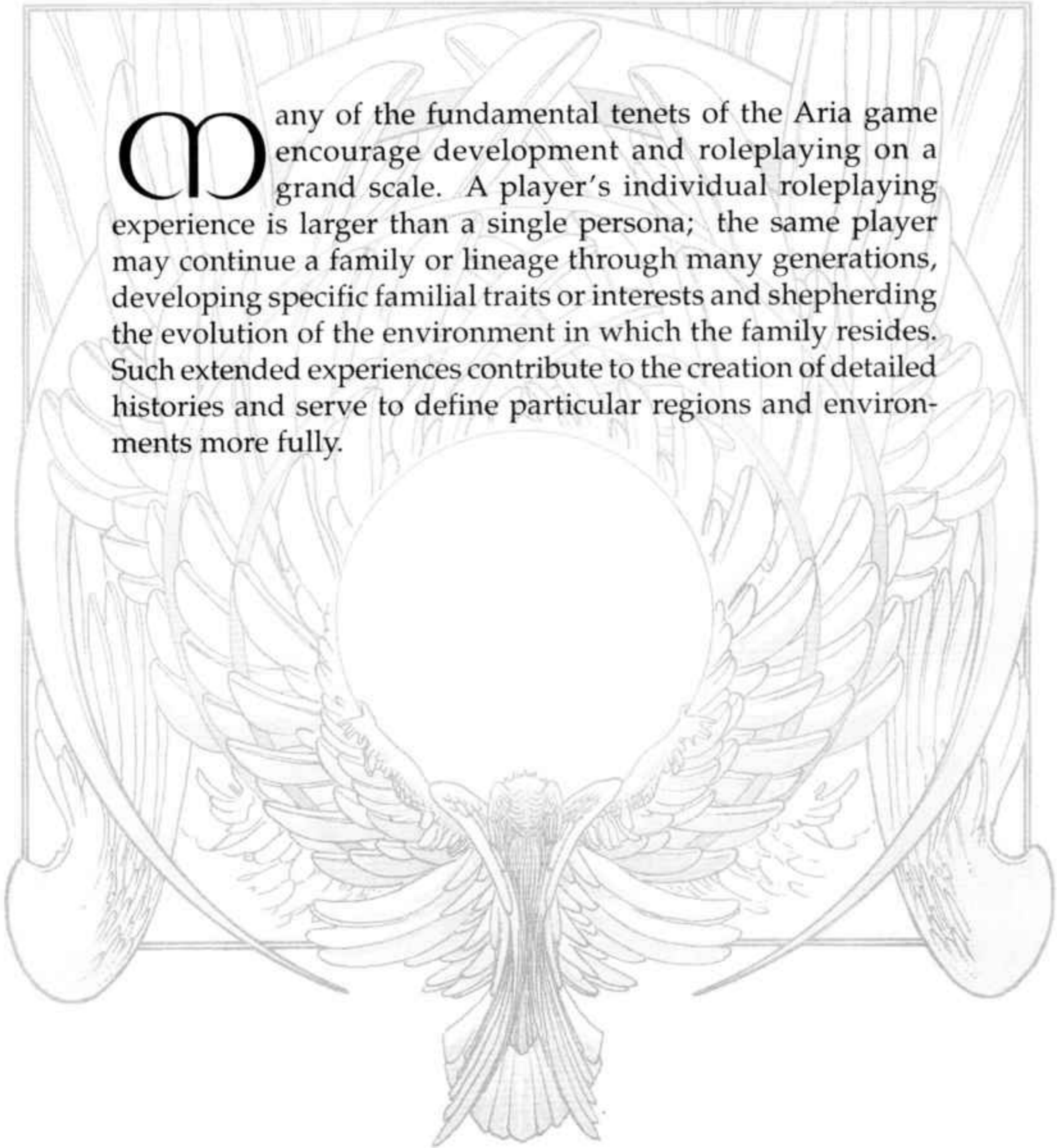




INTERACTIVE HISTORY

☉ CHAPTER FOUR ☉

Many of the fundamental tenets of the Aria game encourage development and roleplaying on a grand scale. A player's individual roleplaying experience is larger than a single persona; the same player may continue a family or lineage through many generations, developing specific familial traits or interests and shepherding the evolution of the environment in which the family resides. Such extended experiences contribute to the creation of detailed histories and serve to define particular regions and environments more fully.

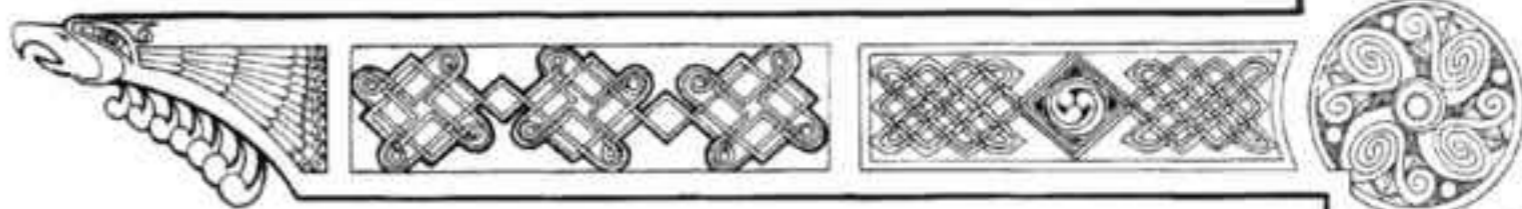




Aria environments are never static entities; each is a living, breathing creation that exists in a perpetual state of flux. Interactive Histories define and accelerate the development of individual Narrative Environments. The need for such description depends on the context in which it appears during play. For example, in some cases an Interactive History is used simply to 'kill time'. A recently deceased persona may have lived in a volatile environment. The player who controlled the persona might wish to resume play with the persona's son, but the boy is only an infant at the time of the father's death. Although the player immediately begins creating the new persona (accelerating development through Early and Background periods), many years will pass in the environment before the new persona actually enters play. The Mythguide decides to use an Interactive History to see if any unusual developments occur while the youth matures.

In other cases, personas might be directly involved in an Interactive History (using Leverage to modify important Trials). The players can play through historical development in Aria Time, with the Mythguide allowing the players either to direct development or actually to assume the roles of the societies or environments involved. In Canticles where environmental development is an important aspect of the game, play in Aria Time can be interspersed with play in Narrative Time. Perhaps a Canticle records the history of a twenty year revolution. The Canticle begins with a lengthy narrative detailing the start of the conflict. After the successful completion of the narrative, the group moves into Aria Time for ten years. The players control the revolutionary factions while the Mythguide controls the government. At the close of the ten year period, the movement reaches a critical juncture. The Mythguide has designed a narrative based on the course of the revolt, and play resumes in Narrative Time once again. The personas are now a little older and a good deal wiser. If this narrative is completed successfully, development in Aria Time may commence again. If an end to the conflict is not resolved in the personas' lifetimes, their children may continue the fight.

Interactive Histories are an abstract element of the Aria game, and their purpose is to foster interaction and storytelling on a grand scale. The results gained through their development must be interpreted on an environment-specific basis. For example, if a series of actions yield a fundamental economic Regression, this Regression must be interpreted by the Mythguide. A Regression for a small society might represent the loss of an important shipment of grain, while a Regression for a large empire could represent the destruction of a portion of the Resource base. The guidelines in this



chapter provide a general direction for social development; this direction should be defined and explored according to the specific environment being used and individual results and social improvements must be explained according to the environments which they affect. The progress of an Interactive History remains an interpretive exercise at every level of the process.

Interactive History Elements

Depending on both the situation and the environment being used, the Mythguide and players should determine the participants in a History. Interactive Histories always describe social development. The evolution of these Histories can be shaped and affected by cultural elements, religious and political factions, and powerful individuals, but the end effects always apply to a specific society or social group. A History can relate one nation to its neighbors or one social element to another within the same state. A society is defined as: *A region, area, or settlement, of any type or size, containing any number of diverse Heritage groups, with these diversities coexisting as a single contiguous whole.* The Mythguide and players need to determine the societies involved in a particular History, as well as any direct or indirect persona involvement.

Social Determinants

Every society is defined by a group of Social Determinants. If the *Worlds* book is being used, these Determinants correspond to those which form a society's Environmental Profile. If this book is being used independently, the following sections provide general guidelines for establishing these Determinants. Social Determinants are divided into three groups: Environment, Economic, and Political. The Mythguide should read the following sections and assign Determinant values based on his familiarity with and conceptions of a particular society. Further (and more general) guidelines are provided in the Mythmaking chapter regarding Social Determinants and their role in the Narrative Environment.

Environment

Scope: A value from one to ten describes the size of the society. This value allows for an absolute com-

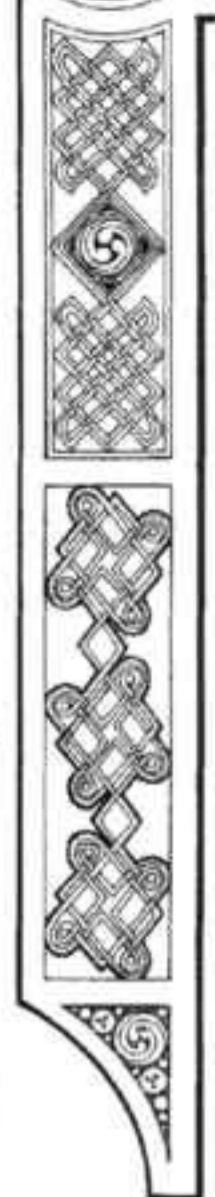
parison along a linear scale, and relates different environments and societies to one another according to an abstract Scope description. A Scope of one indicates the smallest possible social groups (perhaps a small village or an element of a larger culture), while a Scope of ten represents the largest (a great empire, for example). Scope also serves as an abstract gauge of a society's population. Finally, Scope can be an important modifier in less advanced societies because far-reaching communication is often difficult. Effective lines of communication and transport are necessary for social advancement and development.

Determining Scope

Value	Description
1	Village (unwalled)
2	Town (walled)
3	City (unwalled)
4	Large City (walled)
5	Small country/region
6	Medium country/region
7	Large country/region
8	Colonial Nation (one or more colonies)
9	Small Empire (one or more satellite states)
10	Vast Empire (many subjugated countries)

Military: A value from one to ten describes the effectiveness of the society's military presence. This value is derived from the society's Philosophical Orientation and the type of forces present. Effectiveness is no substitute for sheer numbers, but there is some trade-off between the two. Refer to the accompanying table to determine a society's Military value.

Philosophical Orientation: Philosophical Orientation describes the prevalent motivations and intentions at work in the society. A society will tend to move toward its Orientation over an extended period of time. Philosophical Orientations include Survival, War, Conquest, Equilibrium, Peace, and Knowledge/Thought. These Orientations are further defined by Orientation Aspects, which are similar in most respects to the Orientation Aspects used to describe Heritage Orientation. Possible Orientation Aspects include Acquisition, Conviction, Prevention, Tradition, Stagnation, and Revolution. A society's Philosophical Orientation is always described in terms of its Aspects. For example, a society might be Oriented toward War with Aspects



Determining Military Value

Base Value	Force Type Modifier	Orientation Modifier
Standing = 5	Professional (+4)	Survival (+0)
	Mercenary (+3)	War (+1)
	Conscript (+2)	Conquest (+1)
	Volunteer (+/-2)*	Equilibrium (+0)
		Peace (-1)
Provisional = 3	All-Inclusive (+/-3)*	Knowledge/Thought (-2)
	Conscript Militia (+/-2)*	
	Volunteer Militia (+/-2)*	
	Feudal (+3)	

To determine the Military Value: Base Value + Force Type modifier + Orientation modifier

Note: Special modifiers can also apply to a society's Military value, depending on a number of special considerations. Geographic location might play a role. If a Heritage group is fighting on unusual terrain with which they are very familiar (a desert waste, for example), an additional +1 or +2 modifier can apply. Also, certain races or species might have advantages. Although an Elven society is oriented toward Knowledge/Thought, the Elves may also be resilient. Their knowledge and resilience could give them an additional +2 modifier.

* The effectiveness of these forces depends on the nature of the Military in the society. A Volunteer Standing Force in a Peaceful society will probably have a -2 modifier; an All-Inclusive force in a society of barbarian raiders will probably have a +3 modifier.

Determining Total Size of Military Forces

Force Value Base	Force Value Modifiers
Base = Scope Value	Standing Force (-1)
	Provisional Force (+2)
	Philosophical Orientation:
	Survival (-3)
	War (+2)
	Conquest (+1)
	Equilibrium (+0)
	Peace (-1)
	Knowledge/Thought (-2)

Force Number x 1000 = Force Value
 Society Size x Force Value = Total Military Force Size

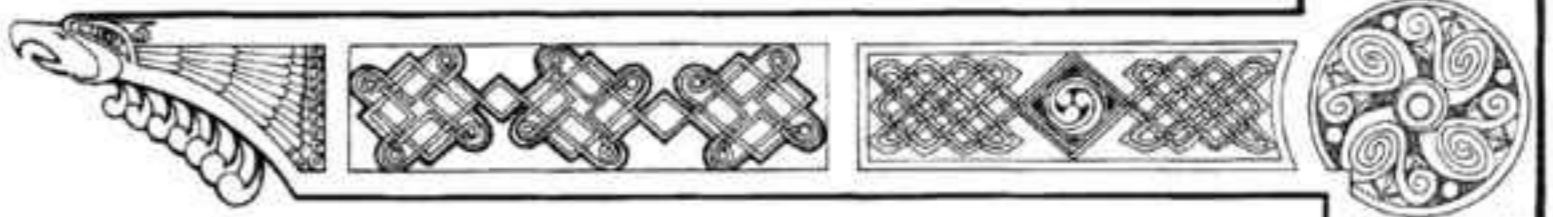
ex. A society with a Scope of 8, Standing Forces, and an Orientation toward War has a Force Value of 9000. Its large Scope ensures that it can field 72000 (Scope 8 x 9000) troops in an all-out war.

of Conviction (strong political beliefs) and Revolution (internal civil war).

Societies may also approach their Philosophical Orientation in an Active or a Passive manner. This approach is called the Orientation's Posture, and may be important when determining certain reactions during an Interactive History.

Humanities: The Humanities element measures the Prevalence, Tolerance, and Diversity of the four Humanities in the society. These are: Religion, Arts, Scholastics, and Magic. Each Humanity is placed on the three scales (Prevalence, Tolerance, Diversity) and is described by a number from one to twenty on each scale. Low numbers represent limited Tolerance, Prevalence, and Diversity while high numbers represent extensive levels of each Humanity. The ramifications of these scales will change from one environment to another.

Technology: This element measures the level of technological advancement reached by the society. This level of advancement is expressed by a general Technology Value (from one to twenty), which is actually the average of seven different Innovation Scales. The Innovation Scales are: Dominant Materials, Power/Manufacturing, Agriculture/Environment, Building/Architecture, Transport/Communication,



Military, and Miscellaneous. The Dominant Materials scale provides the Mythguide with an abstract gauge of a society's technological progress.

Economic Determinants

Resources: The Resources element is also described by a value from one to twenty. Resources illustrates the average level of available and exploitable resources within an environment, and represents both natural and imported resource levels. Low values indicate scant available resources and no surplus, while high levels indicate an extensive resource base with high surpluses.

Exploitation: Exploitation represents the average extent to which a society utilizes and exploits its resources, both natural and manufactured. Exploitation varies according to a society's needs. For each point on the Exploitation scale, a society exploits 5 percent of its available resources. For example, a value of one indicates 5 percent exploitation while a value of 20 indicates one hundred percent exploitation.

Trade: A society's Trade value shows the amount of Trade, consisting of both imports and exports, practiced by the society. A low value indicates almost no extra-communal or international trade, while a high value represents a large volume of international trade. The society may be an economic power or leader. The reasoning behind any Trade value depends on the individual society and its relationships with its neighbors (as well as its Philosophical Orientation). A society's Trade value ranges from one to twenty.

Political Determinants

Key Elements: The Mythguide or player may wish to detail certain important political leaders or factions in the society. Every society must have a Ruling Agency at all times. This Agency can represent a single individual (if the society is under Absolute rule), a group of individuals (such as a Parliament or ruling council), or a larger segment of the population. Prominent individuals should also be detailed here. For instance, certain Council members might be defined if the Ruling Agency were a group of individuals. The leaders of opposing or rival factions are also important. Finally, the general motivations of all of these individuals should be outlined. If a detailed Narrative Environment is already being used, much of this information will be apparent. Players may announce

Dominant Materials Scale

<i>Value</i>	<i>Available Materials</i>
1	STONE & Wood
2	Stone, BONE (horn), & Wood
3	Stone, Bone (horn and antler), Wood, & Skins
4	Stone, Bone, Wood, Skins, & Clay
5	Stone, Bone, Wood, Skins, Clay, & Woven Cloth
6	COPPER, GOLD, & SILVER
7	BRONZE, Gold, GLASS, & Silver
8	Bronze (copper/tin alloy), Gold, Glass, & Silver
9	Bronze, Gold, Glass, & Silver
10	IRON (bloom), Ivory, Ceramics, and Enamels
11	Iron(carburized)
12	Iron/STEEL
13	Iron/Steel
14	Iron/Steel
15	Iron/Steel (carbon controlled steel)
16	Iron/Steel (blast furnace)
17	Iron/Steel (cast iron)
18	Iron/Steel
19	Iron/Steel & Pewter
20	Iron/Steel

**Note: The first material listed is the primary material. Materials listed in CAPITALS indicate innovation flashpoints.*



Consent Descriptions

<i>Value</i>	<i>Description</i>
0	Revolt
1	Unrest
2	Unrest
3	Dissatisfaction
4	Dissatisfaction
5	Satisfaction
6	Satisfaction
7	Satisfaction
8	Satisfaction
9	Contentment
10	Contentment

Relations

<i>Value</i>	<i>Description</i>
0	Hostile
1	Poor
2	Poor
3	Suspicious
4	Suspicious
5	Neutral
6	Neutral
7	Neutral
8	Neutral
9	Friendly
10	Friendly

that they are sending Key Elements with certain missions or Actions (such as Diplomacy or Embassy). If Key Elements are present on such missions, their presence can affect the Difficulty of related Society Trials. If the Mythguide allows such use of Key Elements, he may want to limit their number according to society Scope (perhaps four Key Elements per Scope value).

Power: This element represents the relative level of power held by the Ruling Agency. It represents the ability to get things done, but not necessarily the right to do them. Power is expressed by a number from one to ten, with one representing limited Power and

ten indicating nearly absolute Power. If development within a society is occurring, the Mythguide may wish to give abstract Power ratings to other factions or individuals.

Authority: Authority represents the vested right to act and exercise Power in a society. It is often supported by extensive legal or constitutional support. If a Ruling Agency attempts to circumvent the law in some way, its Authority could suffer. In a similar vein, a Ruling Agency who seizes power illegally will begin its reign with little Authority. Authority is also represented by a value from one to ten.

Suppression: The difference between Power and Authority is the society's Suppression value, and represents the degree to which the normal rights of the people are Suppressed. For example, a society with a Power of eight and an Authority of four would have a Suppression of four. Suppression values of five or more are inherently dangerous and can lead to unrest. Suppression is connected to Personal Freedoms in some societies.

Consent: Consent represents the popular mandate needed to rule effectively. It serves as a general gauge of the popular will and represents the public's approval of the Ruling Agency's methods and policies. Consent is placed on a scale from one to ten, while a value of zero represents a complete lack of Consent (i.e. Revolt). Consent is also described by several Consent Classes: Contentment, Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, Unrest, and Revolt. The Mythguide should determine a society's Class at the outset of the History. If Consent drops to a level of two or less, there may be a danger of popular unrest or revolt. Consent may be affected by Personal Freedom considerations.

Relations: Relations represents a society's relationships to other societies or social elements. Whenever two societies interact with each other, their relationship is always described by one of five Relationship Classes. These Classes, in descending order, are: Friendly, Neutral, Suspicious, Poor, and Hostile. Relations are also described by a scale from one to ten, with a value of zero indicating interaction but no positive Relationship (i.e. open Hostility). Relations is a mutual value; two societies that have a Relationship can affect each other's Relations values, since these values are the same (they define the same Relationship). For example, if one society gets caught practicing Espionage, the Relations values of both societies go down. Societies that do not deal with one another have no Relationship.

Playing the History

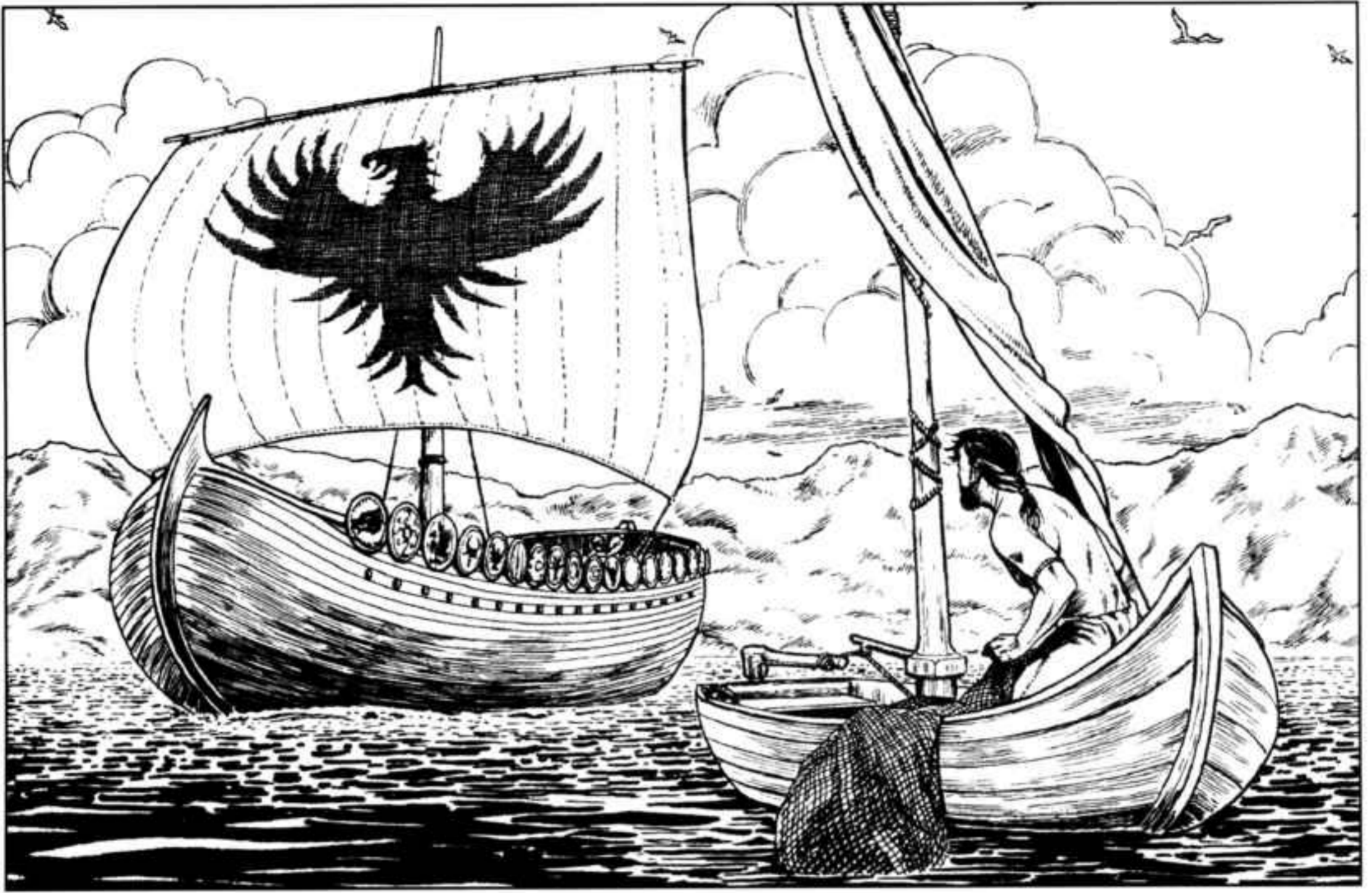
Interactive Histories are normally resolved in Intervals of Aria Time. Aria Intervals can last from one to ten years; the recommended Interval length for the development of Interactive Histories is five years. If the Mythguide wishes to use longer or shorter Intervals, he may want to tailor the results of a particular History slightly. If the Mythguide wishes to use Intervals of Mythic Time for development, major changes might be required. The nature of any such changes depends on the form and nature of the environment being developed.

Histories are developed in Historic Intervals which correspond to the chosen Intervals of Aria Time. Within each Interval, societies perform a series of internal and external Actions. Societies can also resist the effects of Disasters, Critical Junctures, and Reactions. Society Trials resolve all situations and Actions, and result in Improvements, Regressions, and Incidentals (all of which are defined in the coming sections). All participating societies are controlled either by the players or the Mythguide.

When entering History development, it is recommended that the societies involved actually be 'roleplayed' by the players. Environments are described by parameters that detail abilities and attempt to describe a society's relationships to its brethren; these parameters are analogous to a persona's characteristics. A society's motivations and desires correspond to the different elements of a persona's personality. When making decisions and declaring Actions within a History, the players should always keep these fundamental similarities in mind. Players should roleplay an environment according to its descriptive elements, remaining true to the intentions of its leaders and expressing the needs and motivations of its people in every action or decision. The resulting History will unfold with a remarkable aura of 'realism' and clarity, and players will find themselves paying more attention to the nuances and strategies involved in its development.

Interactive Histories develop in a smoother and more interesting manner if the Mythguide and players are already familiar with the societies being used, and if those societies already possess a fair amount of detail. If the players are familiar with their societies, Action results won't leave them guessing. For example, if a strange society suffers a Consent Regression, the players will not be able to put the result in the proper context without asking the Mythguide questions or making unfounded assumptions. How-



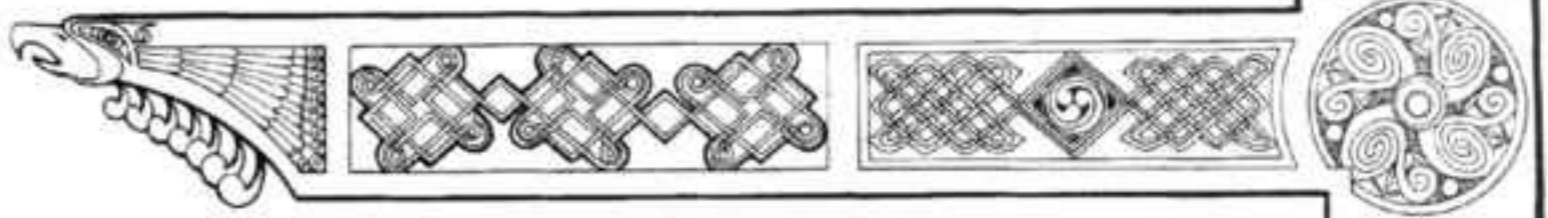


ever, if the player knows the society's background, he may know that the society has been religiously polarized for many years, and that the reduction in Consent is a direct result of the society's failed attempt at Negotiating a settlement with one of the society's key religious leaders. In game terms, the Ruling Agency attempted a Negotiate Action directed at one of the society's Key Elements, which subsequently failed. Although this Action and its results were determined during the appropriate phases, the real History emerges from the player's knowledge of the society and its place in the game world. Familiarity allows players to engage in colorful, relevant, and consistent descriptions of what Actions only describe in general terms. It lets them interpret game results as historical events which apply to the societies in which they occur.

The uses of Interactive Histories during play depends on both the nature of the Canticle and the wishes of the players. If the game focuses entirely on single persona development, Histories may not be used at all. However, since Aria is usually played on a larger scale, the Mythguide will often employ Histories to some degree. Their use allows the Mythguide to relate persona actions and narratives (and their consequences) to the greater social fabric of an environment.

For example, if the Mythguide feels that a certain narrative could initiate long term effects, he may shift the game into Aria Time for several years. The players could play different factions of their home society while the Mythguide assumes the role of a neighboring power. After the societies and factions interact for a few years, the personas could position themselves to enter Narrative play once again (possibly as result of some larger social result - an assassination, a plague, a war, popular unrest, etc.).

Alternately, the Mythguide could run his Canticles as elements of much longer Arias, concentrating on the development of certain regions, nations, movements, or environments. In this case the game could begin in Aria Time, with development dropping into Narrative Time to allow the players to roleplay the most important elements of the overall history. Each player might control a lineage through several generations, with any individual persona playing four or five narratives over the course of his life. Remember that personas can also have direct effects on the development of a History through the use of Leverage Pools, Influence Pools, and Myth Points. Refer to the Persona Involvement section later in this chapter for guidelines.



Range and Travel

When determining the possible interactions during an Interactive History, the Mythguide may also wish to consider the distance between societies. Obviously, societies in close proximity to one another can always affect each other. But can societies on opposite sides of a continent interact on a regular basis? Are such societies able to travel through other societies to reach targets? The Mythguide should decide on possible interactions depending on the distances involved, the technology of the participating societies, and the relationships with any interrupting societies.

The Mythguide might want to institute a general Range of possibilities for a single Interval. If the society wishes to interact with another society beyond this Range, any Actions declared will take two Intervals to accomplish. The first Interval is considered travel time, and the society must forfeit an Action to represent time in transit. For example, it might take a society two Intervals to send an Embassy across a large continent. The length of Historic Intervals becomes important when considering Range. If Intervals only last one year, long-range Actions will often take more than one Interval to accomplish. However, if Intervals are five years long, most conceivable Actions can be accomplished in a single Interval.

Technology is a major consideration when determining effective Ranges. A society with an extensive system of roads has access to far better transport and communications abilities than a primitive society with no organized communications network. The knowledge of ocean-going navigation methods is also an important consideration, as is the development of crucial land-based transportation innovations.

Finally, a society attempting long-distance Actions often has to travel through Interrupting societies. If the Interrupting societies are friendly, travel is unobstructed. However, if an interrupting society is not friendly, the Mythguide might allow it to make a Trial to detect the passage of foreign elements. This Trial is based on the Interrupting society's Power and should be modified by the size of the group or mission traveling through.

If a foreign group is detected, the Interrupting society may either allow the elements to pass or attempt to halt their progress. The ability to intercede depends on the size and power of each side. A tiny society might decide to let an imperial army pass through their territory without complaint, while the same society might detain a small diplomatic mission for questioning. If a society has the power to stop an element pass-

ing through its lands, it may automatically destroy the mission. If the group traveling through the hostile land has the ability to fight (i.e. it is part of an Invasion force or a Raiding party), the Interrupting society may have to fight to stop the group. The particulars of Range and Interruption should be detailed according to the societies involved in the History.

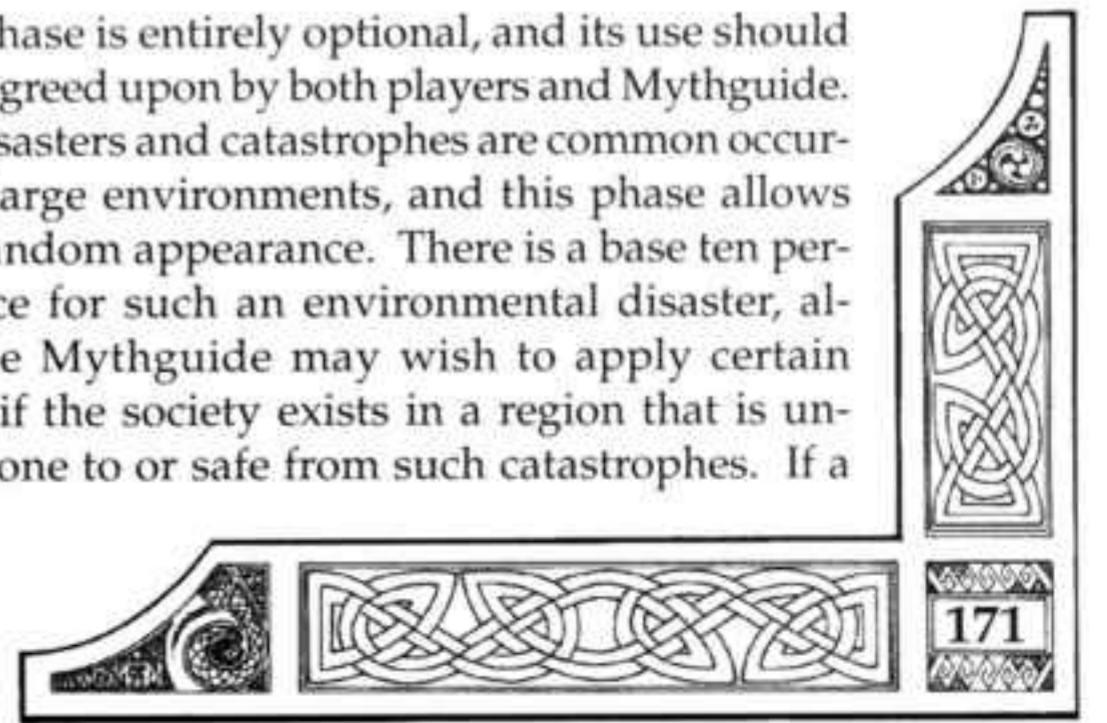
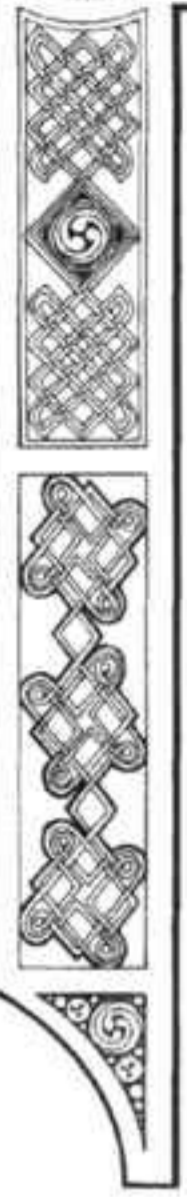
The Historic Interval

Any Interval in which an Interactive History is being developed is called an Historic Interval. Historic Intervals consist of several phases, and provide a degree of structure to the Interactive History design process. Players simultaneously progress through the appropriate phases each Interval, making Society Trials and taking specific actions. Results are expressed as Improvements, Regressions, Incidentals, or Reactions, and are normally interpreted by the Mythguide according to the societies involved. For example, an economic Regression might mean something totally different to a small cultural faction than it would to a large coastal maritime power. If the Regression were in Resources, for instance, the first case could represent a poor harvest leading to a reduced grain surplus. The second example might represent the loss of several important shipments of raw materials, or the result of an effective blockade. The results of Interactive Histories are both interpretive and intuitive. A single Historic Interval consists of the following phases:

- I. Events Phase
- II. Internal Development Phase
 - A. Resolve any Critical Junctures
 - B. Declare Actions
- III. External Interaction Phase
 - A. Resolve any Critical Junctures
 - B. Declare Actions
- IV. Resolution Phase

Events Phase

This phase is entirely optional, and its use should be jointly agreed upon by both players and Mythguide. Natural disasters and catastrophes are common occurrences in large environments, and this phase allows for their random appearance. There is a base ten percent chance for such an environmental disaster, although the Mythguide may wish to apply certain modifiers if the society exists in a region that is unusually prone to or safe from such catastrophes. If a



Events Phase (Disasters)

1d10 Result	Disaster
1	Flood
2	Hurricane
3	Earthquake
4	Tornados
5	Drought
6-7	Famine
8-10	Epidemic

Note: If a disaster occurs, it is considered to be the worst example of its kind. The society makes a Society Trial to resist the Regressive effects that normally accompany the aftermath of a Disaster. The resistance Trial uses the following guidelines:

Base=2 Rank=Scope (of society) Difficulty=at least 4 (depending on the severity of Disaster)

Disaster Results

Trial Result	Effect
Mythic Success	No Effect
Extraordinary Success	No Effect
Superior Success	Slight Regression
Complete Success	Regression
Marginal Success	Regression
Failure (any)	Severe Regression

Possible Regressions: Power, Authority, Consent, Key Elements, Humanities, Technology, Military, Exploitation, Trade, Resources

Note: Most Regressions resulting from Disasters involve destruction or death. Certain Key Elements and leaders may perish. Recommended Incidentals include massive losses of Population, Wealth, and Conditions (social).

Finally, Disasters cause a cumulative +1 Difficulty modifier to internal Critical Juncture resolutions per Interval until an internal Develop/Invest Action is chosen.

EXTERNAL INTERACTION PHASE

disaster occurs, the Mythguide should consult the accompanying table to determine the type and effects. If a certain type of disaster would not occur in a certain area (i.e. a Flood in a desert), the Mythguide should alter the nature of the disaster.

A Society Trial is required to resist the long-term effects of a disaster. The Mythguide should consult the accompanying tables both to determine the type of disaster and to describe its immediate effects. Disasters are both described and resolved during this phase.

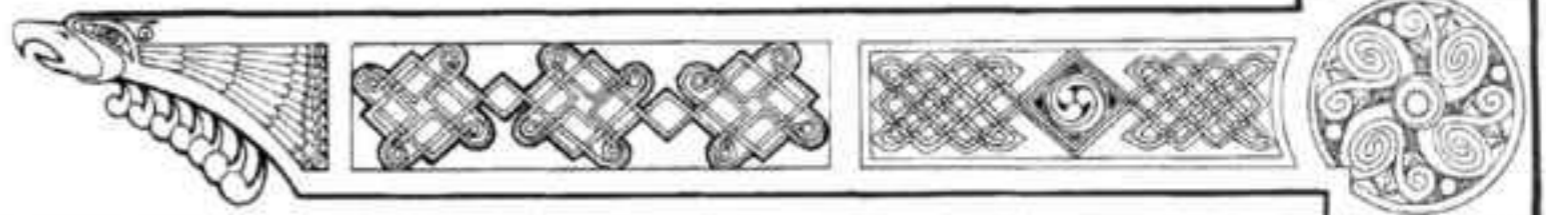
INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE

This phase initiates any development that takes place within the society and resolves any internal Critical Junctures. For example, a Ruling Agency might attempt to institute a technological improvement or build new infrastructure. An oppressed people might be moved to revolution, or religious persecution might lead to a Heresy. This phase is divided into two parts: the resolution of Critical Junctures and the Declaration of internal Actions. Each of these procedures is described later in this chapter.

This initiates external development and resolves any external Critical Junctures. External development includes actions and interactions among different societies, and explores such relationships. Diplomacy among nations can be carried out, wars begun and interrupted, and espionage conducted. The External Interaction Phase is also divided into two parts: the resolution of Critical Junctures and the Declaration of external Interactions. Each of these procedures is further described later in this chapter.

RESOLUTION PHASE

All Actions and Critical Junctures, both internal and external, are resolved for the societies participating in the Interactive History. Improvements, Regressions, Incidentals, Reactions and other effects should be explained and interpreted during this Phase. Many results during the course of a single History require player and Mythguide interpretation. Such general results should be detailed in a narrative manner during this Phase, and these results can then affect future social development and interaction. If play resumes in Narrative Time, effects can affect continued persona



Internal Critical Junctures

Situation

- Suppression is 5 or higher
- Consent is 2 or less
- Tolerance(any Humanity) is 6 or less
- Power is 2 or less
- All three Economic Determinants are 3 or less
- Negotiation pledge broken last interval
- Intrigue attempt foiled last interval

Society Trial is based on...

- Consent
- Consent
- Authority and Prevalence(same Humanity)
- Power
- Authority
- Power
- Power

External Critical Junctures

Situation

- Intercepted foreign Espionage attempt during previous Interval
- An Action (Diplomacy, Embassy, etc.) is Interrupted and the elements are destroyed as they travel through a Hostile foreign society
- Relations have fallen to a level of 2 or less

Society Trial is Based on...

- Relations
- Relations
- Relations

development and roleplaying as well. For example, if a History lowers Religious Tolerance in an environment, a persona who is a priest may feel the effects immediately and directly. Other members of society could feel the effects more indirectly; perhaps a lower Religious Tolerance lowers the general level of acceptance or safety (both defined by Incidentals) in the society.

CRITICAL JUNCTURES

Critical Junctures are reached whenever certain Determinant scales or interactions approach critical levels. For example, if Suppression reaches a level of five or higher, a Critical Juncture appears. Critical Junctures represent tense or unstable situations that need to be checked and resolved immediately during each Interval, before the normal Resolution Phase. They are usually the results of Actions or Disasters that occurred during a previous Interval.

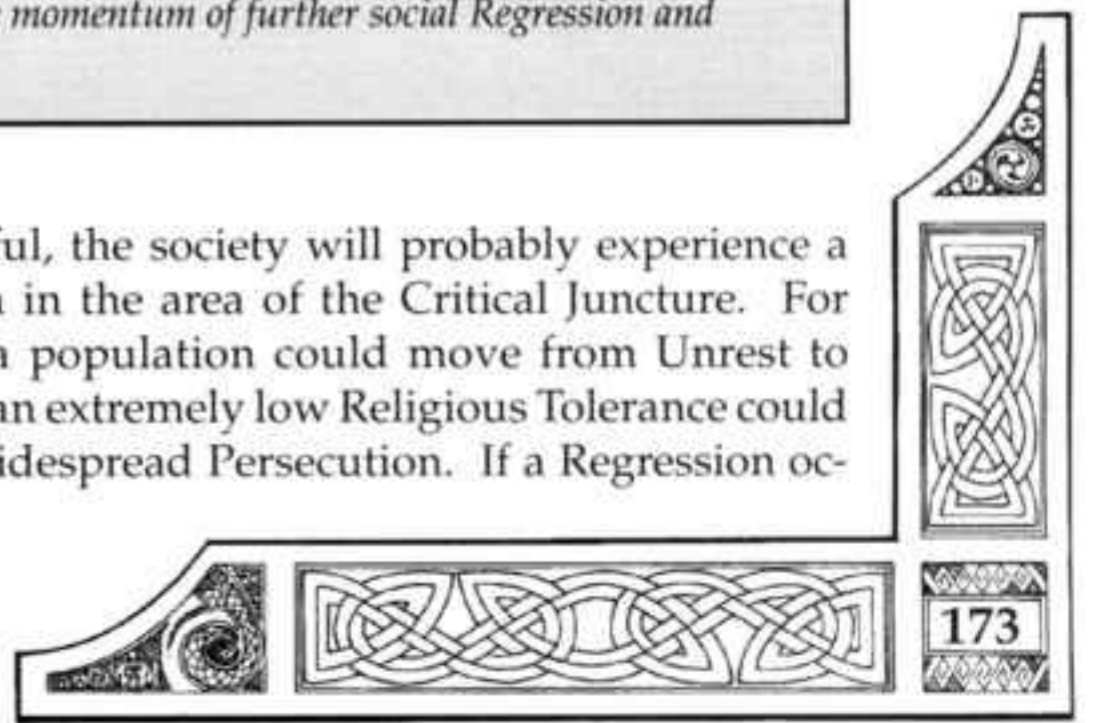
Internal Critical Junctures are checked during the second phase of an Interactive History. The accompanying table shows the internal situations that are classified as Critical Junctures. The player controlling the society makes an appropriate Society Trial and consults the Critical Juncture Results table. If the Trial is

Critical Juncture Results Table

<i>Result</i>	<i>Effects</i>
Mythic Success	Slight Improvement
Extraordinary Success	No Effect
Superior Success	No Effect
Complete Success	No Effect
Marginal Success	No Effect
Marginal Failure	Slight Regression
Complete Failure	Regression
Serious Failure	Regression
Miserable Failure	Severe Regression
Catastrophic Failure	Severe Regression

Note: Since Critical Junctures already represent tense situations, these resolution Trials are essentially being made to resist the momentum of further social Regression and conflict.

unsuccessful, the society will probably experience a Regression in the area of the Critical Juncture. For example, a population could move from Unrest to Revolt, or an extremely low Religious Tolerance could set off a widespread Persecution. If a Regression oc-





curs during one Interval, and nothing is done to improve or alter the outcome of the Regression during the remainder of the Interval, the situation remains a Critical Juncture during the next Interval (and its outcome must be checked again).

External Critical Junctures are checked during the third phase of an Interactive History. External Junctures are similar to internal Junctures in all respects, except that they relate to interactions among different societies and environments. The accompanying table shows those situations which are considered external Critical Junctures.

ACTIONS

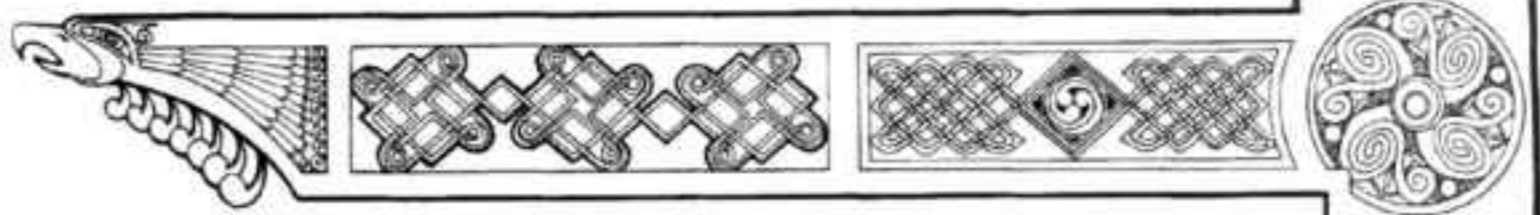
A society may perform Actions during the course of each Interval. Players declare Internal Actions during the Internal Development Phase and External Actions during the External Interaction Phase. Actions are resolved during the final Resolution Phase of an Interval, when their results are considered and explained within the context of the environments being used. Actions normally lead to Improvements or Regressions, and may also affect a society in Incidental ways or cause Reactions.

A single society can perform a finite number of Actions per Interval. Two Internal Actions are allowed each Interval, along with a number of External Actions equal to half a society's Scope. External Actions can be directed at more than one society at once. Certain Philosophical Orientation Aspects may add or remove possible Actions. Refer to the accompanying table for more information.

When Actions are declared during the appropriate phase, the controlling player should define the nature of the Action and its proposed intent. Since most Action results need to be interpreted to some degree, a clear declaration of intent will help to gauge the nature of a resulting Improvement, Regression, or Incidental. Players should attempt to place themselves in the position of the society they are controlling. Actions should not be declared as "I change Fundamentals." Rather, the controlling player might declare "At a special session of the Thalnoch, the ruling council debates the wisdom of imposing additional restrictions for the duration of the crisis. Most leading factions finally support the measure, although they make it clear that it is only a temporary solution to a much larger problem. However, it seems the logical short-term decision if a full scale Civil War is to be averted." The player declares a Fundamentals Action, but the declaration is made in a narrative fashion and is entirely pertinent to the society's internal state of affairs.

Action declarations should constitute colorful, narrative descriptions. The players will gain a much clearer picture of the conflict and interaction occurring, while the Mythguide will find it much easier to interpret Action results within the context of the History. At the Mythguide's option, Action Declarations can be written in the form of orders at the beginning of an Interval. These 'orders' are revealed during the Action Phases and resolved during the Resolution Phase. Handling Interactive History development through order writing is especially useful if the Mythguide is acting as a sort of moderator, or if many players or societies are involved in a History.

Depending on the situation, some Actions can be roleplayed to their conclusion. This option is useful if different players are controlling opposing societies. Embassies or Diplomatic missions can be played out, as can Espionage or Intimidation attempts. Players should be careful to act in the manner their society would act, according to its motivations and the needs of its people. For example, a small town would not tell a large nation attempting Intimidation to shove off. Instead, it would try to reach an accord with the larger society. The Mythguide can allow interesting roleplaying to modify the Difficulty of Society Trials. In some cases, the results of the roleplaying itself can



yield Improvements and Regressions, removing the need for a Trial at all.

SOCIETY TRIALS

Unless all results are being roleplayed, Society Trials are used for all resolutions during the course of an Interactive History. Society Trials are used to resist Disaster effects, to resist Critical Juncture effects, and to resolve most Actions. These Trials are made as normal Refined Trials, with a Base of two and Rank based on a particular Social Determinant. Determinant values that range from one to ten use the entire value as a Trial Rank, while Determinants which range from one to twenty use half their values as Trial Ranks. The Action descriptions list single Determinants as the sources for related Society Trials, but in some cases the Mythguide might wish to use more than one Determinant. If it seems that more than one Determinant would form a certain Trial's Adjusted Rank, the Mythguide should feel free to use multiple Determinants.

The Difficulty of Society Trials depends on both the nature of the Trial and on the societies involved. Scope and Philosophical Orientation are the two most common Difficulty modifiers, and either Determinant can modify any trial under the appropriate circumstances. For example, a village that issues an ultimatum (represented by the Intimidation Action) to an empire will probably not be taken very seriously. This is primarily a result of the Scope difference between the two societies, and Scope becomes a modifier in the accompanying Society Trial. Other Actions and Incidentals can also affect the Difficulty of Society Trials.

ACTION RESULTS

Several results are possible when resolving actions. An action or event can lead to an Improvement, indicating that one or more of a society's Determinants or Relationships have improved. Regressions indicate the opposite, and represent a fall in one or more Determinants or Relationships. Most Improvements and Regressions are temporary changes, and are subject to an inevitable social inertia, which states that social elements tend to return to their original levels. Note that internal Actions always result in internal Improvements or Regressions, while external Actions can lead to both internal and external results. A single Improvement or Regression normally shifts a Determinant scale by one value.

Actions per Interval

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Number of Actions</i>
Base Internal Actions per Interval	2
Base External Actions per Interval	Scope/2
Orientation Aspect Stagnation	-1 (Internal or External)
Orientation Aspect Revolution	+1 (Internal or External)
Active Orientation Posture	+1 (Internal or External)
Passive Orientation Posture	-1 (Internal or External)

Action Results Table

<i>Trial Result</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Mythic Success	Significant Improvement
Extraordinary Success	Significant Improvement
Superior Success	Improvement
Complete Success	Improvement
Marginal Success	Slight Improvement
Marginal Failure	Slight Regression
Complete Failure	Regression
Serious Failure	Regression
Miserable Failure	Severe Regression
Catastrophic Failure	Severe Regression

Action results during a particular Historic Interval must be interpreted by the Mythguide according to the situation. After each of the Action descriptions, several possible Improvements and Regressions are listed. Any of those elements represent appropriate results for the Action, depending on the situation. For example, two societies are engaged in Diplomatic negotiations. The first society achieves an Improvement during the Resolution Phase. Since the negotiations are going well, the Improvement increases the society's Consent slightly (which had been dropping), indicating a renewed confidence in the Ruling Agency's foreign policy. Incidentals of Social Conditions and Scarcity (the negotiations deal with trade relations) accom-



Improvement/Regression Effects

Action Result	Effects
Severe Regression	2 Determinants (Effects may be permanent, but normally last up to three intervals) 3 Incidentals / Reactions are possible
Regression	1 Determinant (Effects last up to two Intervals, and are rarely permanent) 2 Incidentals / Reactions are possible
Slight Regression	No Determinant Effects (except possible Reactions) 1 Incidental / Reactions are possible
Slight Improvement	No Determinant Effects (except possible Reactions) 1 Incidental / Reactions are possible
Improvement	1 Determinant (Effects last up to two Intervals, and are rarely permanent) 2 Incidentals / Reactions are possible
Significant Improvement	2 Determinants (Effects may be permanent, last up to three Intervals) 3 Incidentals / Reactions are possible

Note: Temporary Determinant Effects will tend to return to initial levels after an appropriate period of time. This is the result of social inertia. The Mythguide should determine which Effects are permanent. Personas may be able to permanently affect certain Determinants by expending Myth Points.

pany the Improvement. The second society also scores an Improvement. This society's government is new and unproved, and its Improvement increases the Authority of the Ruling Agency. Incidentals include Political Conditions and Wealth. While each society received the same results for the same Action, the results are interpreted according to each society's individual situation.

The length of a particular Improvement or Regression depends on the significance of the result. Improvements and Regressions both occur in three forms, each of which represents an increasing level of effect and duration. For example, a Slight Improvement indicates an Incidental that lasts one Interval, while a Significant Improvement represents two Determinant Improvements (each lasting up to three Intervals) and three Incidentals that last one Interval. Refer to the accompanying table for more information.

Incidentals are secondary elements related to primary Improvements or Regressions. Incidentals do not directly affect any Determinant value or scale, and they rarely last for more than one Interval. For example, if a Significant Regression results from an Internal Intrigue action, the Consent Class of the populace may drop to a Dissatisfied level. This drop carries two Social Incidentals with it: Conditions (increased crime) and the temporary addition of a Conviction (distrust of government) Philosophical Orientation Aspect. The purpose and effects of Incidentals depends on the situation in which they appear and on

the course of the Interactive History. Incidentals affect the Difficulty of any related Society Trials during the Interval after they appear.

Finally, Reactions can occur as a result of certain Actions. Reactions are similar to Incidentals, but they cause major Determinants Effects. Reactions usually appear as a result of unexpected or treacherous Actions. For example, a society with a Relations value of nine (Friendly) with its neighbor suddenly attacks its neighbor. Normal Action resolution might reduce the Relations value by two levels. However, the betrayed society will probably React to the unprovoked attack, causing the Relations value to immediately drop to zero. Reactions are further described later in this chapter.

Using Results

Action Results affect a society's most basic parameters. The most obvious use for results is the modification of further Actions and Society Trials. However, since the results also represent far-reaching social effects, the Mythguide should stress them when play in Narrative Time resumes with personas. This is especially true if the Ensemble shifts often between Narrative and Aria Time. For example, an Incidental of Social Conditions could represent an increase in the society's crime rate. Although this might normally mean little to a persona, the Mythguide should make

personas feel the effects of an Interactive History. Perhaps the persona is robbed as soon as Narrative play resumes. Maybe his family is attacked in a previously safe area of a city. If an Income Incidental is a result, the persona's holdings might produce less each year, or the market for a certain product could dry up. Basically, the Mythguide should cause the personas to notice and experience the consequences of social development and evolution. By linking their own development to a society's development, personas gain a new interest in and appreciation for continued societal interaction.

INTERNAL ACTION DESCRIPTIONS

The following section contains descriptions of the possible Internal Actions and their results. Internal Actions are declared during the Internal Development Phase of the History, and their results are interpreted during the Resolution Phase. Each of the descriptions in this section opens with the Determinant on which the Rank of an accompanying Society Trial is based. Following each description are possible Improvements and Regressions. Note that all of the suggestions cannot be *both* Improvements and Regressions; many possibilities can only be one or the other when related to a specific Action.

CIVIL WAR

Society Trial: Military

The society either begins or continues a Civil War. Civil War often occurs as a result of a Critical Juncture, but it can also be voluntarily initiated if the Consent Class of a society's population is Unrest. The player and Mythguide should detail the factions or individuals involved in such a conflict, and the roles which these Key Elements play.

If a Civil War has already begun as a result of a failed Critical Juncture (which means it was initiated by an unhappy population), the player must choose this Action if the Ruling Agency wishes to defend itself. The society can choose both this Action and a Negotiate Action during the same Interval, indicating that it is fighting the rebellion and attempting to negotiate its end at the same time. Internal force divisions (Resistance faction versus the Ruling Agency) are determined by consulting the accompanying table. Players should use the War Matrix during the Resolution phase to determine the outcome of the Interval's fighting. Improvements and Regressions can also result from the outcome of the Civil War.



Division of Forces during a Civil War

% of Total Forces controlled by Ruling Agency

$$\frac{\text{Power} + \text{Consent} + \text{Authority}}{3} \times 10\% = \text{Total \% controlled by Ruling Agency}$$

% of Total Forces controlled by Resistance

$$\frac{\text{Power}^* + \text{Consent} + \text{Authority}}{3} \times \text{Suppression Value} = \text{Total \% controlled by Resistance}$$

* Power (maximum) = 10 - Power of Ruling Agency for Resistance

Power, Consent, and Authority Values should be assigned to the Leader(s) of the Resisting Factions. Value assignments for Consent and Authority may be related to those of the Ruling Agency but not necessarily as directly converse Values.

ex. If Ruling Agency has a Consent of 3, Resistance Faction may have a Consent Value of 7, but it is possible that the rebellious populace does not give the Resistance leaders its complete consent. It is also possible that both warring factions share an equal amount of Consent or Authority among the populace. In this case the populace either recognizes both parties' right to rule or consents equally to either party gaining/retaining control.

When resolving Civil conflict, the Military Values for both forces = the Military Value of the Society.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Power, Authority, Consent, Relations, Resources, Exploitation, Military, Trade, Humanities, Technology

Develop/Invest

Society Trial: Exploitation

The society uses its resources to build internal infrastructure and develop specific social elements. Such development includes increasing the size and effectiveness of a society's military machine, increasing the governmental presence in outlying areas (assisting in areas such as education), and investing in cooperative projects with local governments. Development often creates opportunities and improvements in the areas in which it occurs, and the local population usually enjoys the benefits. An Improvement might indicate increased Trade or Exploitation, creating an Incidental of increased Wealth. A Regression probably represents some unfortunate accident or misplaced investment, possibly leading to an unfinished project and bad feelings (decreased Consent) among the populace. Development can be extremely costly for a government, and the Mythguide should determine if the Ruling Agency has the necessary funds to initiate the desired programs (Incidentals such as Wealth and Income can affect this decision). The society might have to institute new Taxation to raise the needed funds.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Trade, Exploitation, Resources, Military, Consent, Humanities

Elections

Society Trial: Suppression

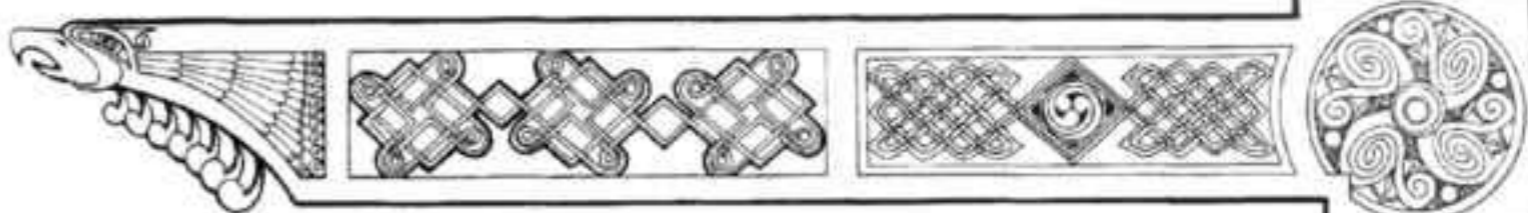
The society holds internal Elections. If the society already supports a democratic form of government, Elections will probably not have long-term effects. However, if Elections are instituted in an Absolute society, they can have important effects on the future Power and Authority bases in the society. Elections are often used to improve popular sentiment. An Improvement indicates popular support for the process, while a Regression indicates problems (perhaps segments of the populace don't want Elections).

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Power, Authority, Consent, Humanities, Key Elements

Exile

Society Trial: Consent

One of the society's Key Elements is Exiled. The Key Element can represent a single leader or an entire group or faction. An Exile normally occurs at the behest of the Ruling Agency, and it normally removes



the leader or group from the internal political sphere (unless they go underground). The results of an Exile will depend on the internal state of a society. An Improvement could reflect the loss of an interfering leader or faction (as represented by the Element), while a Regression might indicate popular disapproval of such an action. Exile is often used to remove important or vocal opponents to a Ruling Agency.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Power, Authority, Consent, Humanities, Key Elements, Relations

FUNDAMENTAL

Society Trial: Power

The society alters one or more of its Fundamental political or economic tenets. The reasons for the change should be carefully described, since such changes often have far-reaching repercussions. Fundamental changes include a Democratic government declaring martial law, a Monarch dissolving parliament and instituting a Dictatorship, or a council of Oligarchs suspending a free enterprise economy (with severe price controls or government sanctions, for instance). An Improvement usually affects the area targeted (i.e. a government declaring martial law would receive more Power), while a Regression would concentrate on the popular consequences.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Power, Authority, Consent, Key Elements, Relations, Exploitation, Trade, Resources, Military, Humanities

INTRIGUE

Society Trial: Power

Intrigue represents clandestine internal maneuvering. The Ruling Agency may be attempting to gain secret information about the movements or agenda of a rival political faction, or it may attempt more direct action (such as an assassination). An Improvement represents some degree of success; the Mythguide might wish to give the controlling player some important information about the Key Element that served as the target, or the Mythguide could rule that a Significant Improvement represents the elimination of a target. A Regression indicates a failure, and probably heralds a period of worsening relations.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Power, Consent, Key Elements

NEGOTIATION

Society Trial: Authority

Negotiation represents internal bargaining and diplomacy. It allows a Ruling Agency to attempt to



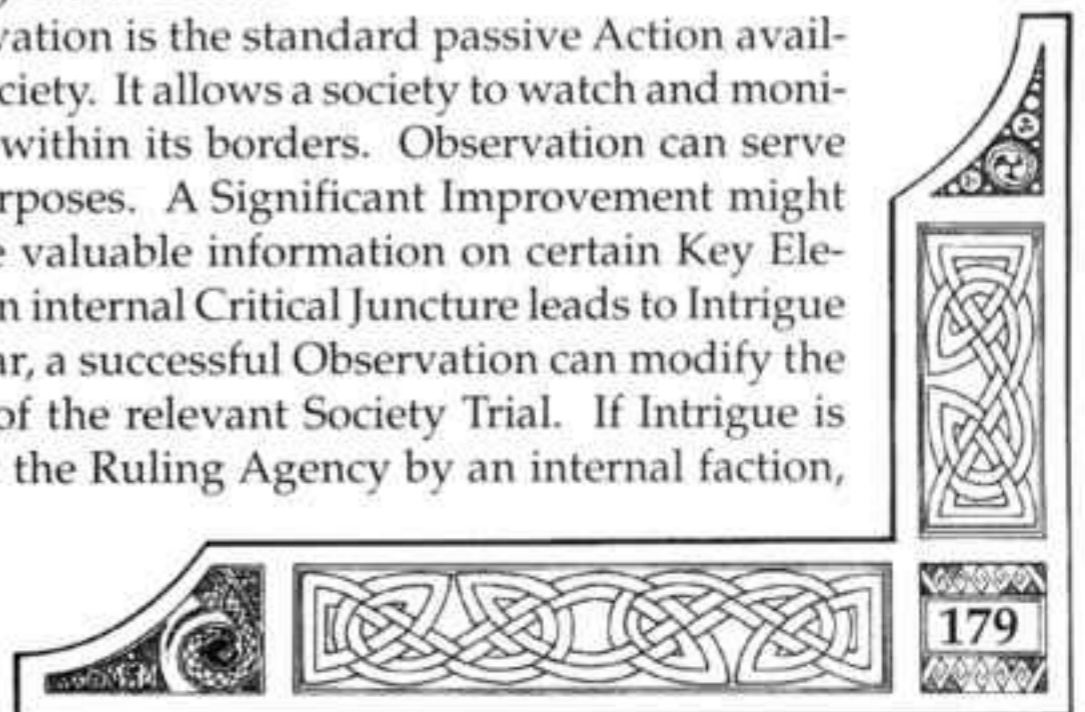
placate a discontented population or resistance faction. Negotiation can involve gift exchanges, marriage, or extended diplomatic talks. For a Negotiation to be successful, a society must make a pledge to improve the current situation. This promise must take the form of a favorable Action (such as Develop/Invest), to be performed during the next Interval. If the pledged Action is not performed, a Critical Juncture automatically results. Negotiation is normally used to restore popular Consent and Consent Class; it may also be employed to halt a Civil War.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Consent, Authority, Relations, Key Elements

OBSERVATION

Society Trial: Power

Observation is the standard passive Action available to a society. It allows a society to watch and monitor events within its borders. Observation can serve several purposes. A Significant Improvement might yield some valuable information on certain Key Elements. If an internal Critical Juncture leads to Intrigue or Civil War, a successful Observation can modify the Difficulty of the relevant Society Trial. If Intrigue is directed at the Ruling Agency by an internal faction,





Observation might help to intercept an assassination attempt. If a Civil War begins, a society that Observes instead of immediately entering the conflict receives a bonus to a subsequent Negotiation attempt (in the following Interval, for example). The results of Observation should be carefully described according to the individual situation.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Key Elements, Power, Authority, Consent

RESEARCH

Society Trial: Technology

Research indicates a concerted internal effort to develop new technology and new innovations. The conduction of Research can either be general or more specific (i.e. military research, metals research, etc.). Research is similar to the Develop/Invest Action, except that it usually occurs on a more intimate scale. Successful instances of Research can benefit society in many ways. New agricultural techniques and implements can be developed, new smelting techniques invented, and new architectural styles introduced. The nature and form of any Improvement should be defined by the circumstances surrounding a society's Research. Regressions rarely lead to actual technologi-

cal regressions; rather, they indicate poor Incidentals or a waste of important resources.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Technology, Power, Resources, Exploitation, Trade, Military

SPONSOR

Society Trial: Power

The society's Ruling Agency attempts to Sponsor a specific Key Element. The nature of the Sponsorship depends on the form of the Key Element. An individual might be offered a position in the government, a group might be given important concessions or political aid. In any case, the purpose of the Sponsorship is to win a new ally for the Ruling Agency. The Ally may be able to provide important information or much needed aid with specific factional conflicts. An Improvement probably indicates a profitable political move, with at least one Key Element transferring its allegiance to the Ruling Agency. A Regression might indicate that the people see the Sponsorship as a transparent attempt to buy off political opponents.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Key Elements, Consent, Power, Authority, Humanities

TAXATION

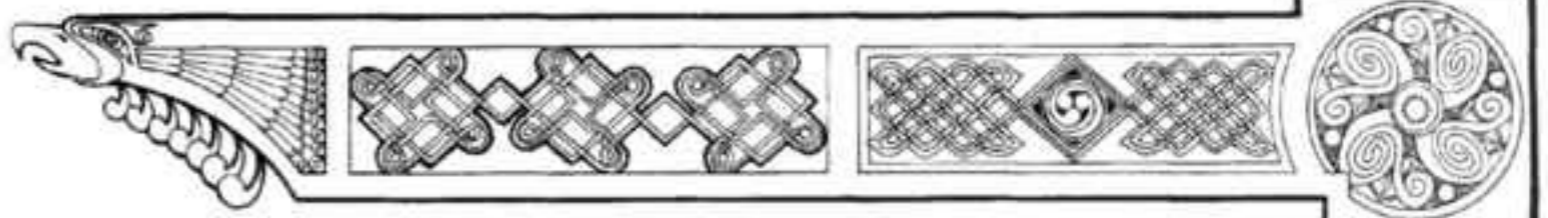
Society Trial: Consent

The society institutes new Taxes in order to raise additional money. The reasons for the new or increased Taxes affect their reception and modify the Difficulty of the Society Trial. Taxes levied to fight a crucial war will be viewed more leniently than taxes levied to build a new palace for the king. An Improvement represents an understanding populace who recognizes the need for higher revenues. A Regression indicates a people who are very upset about what they consider to be an unwarranted or gratuitous levy. The nature and form of the taxation is always an important consideration.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Exploitation, Trade, Resources, Consent, Military

EXTERNAL ACTION DESCRIPTIONS

The following section contains descriptions of the possible External Actions and their results. External Actions are declared during the External Interaction Phase and are resolved during the final Resolution Phase. Each of the descriptions in this section opens with a Determinant on which the Rank of an accompanying Society Trial is based. Following each descrip-



tion are possible Improvements and Regressions. Note that all of the recommendations cannot be *both* Improvements and Regressions; many possibilities can only be one or the other when related to a specific Action.

Alliance

Society Trial: Power

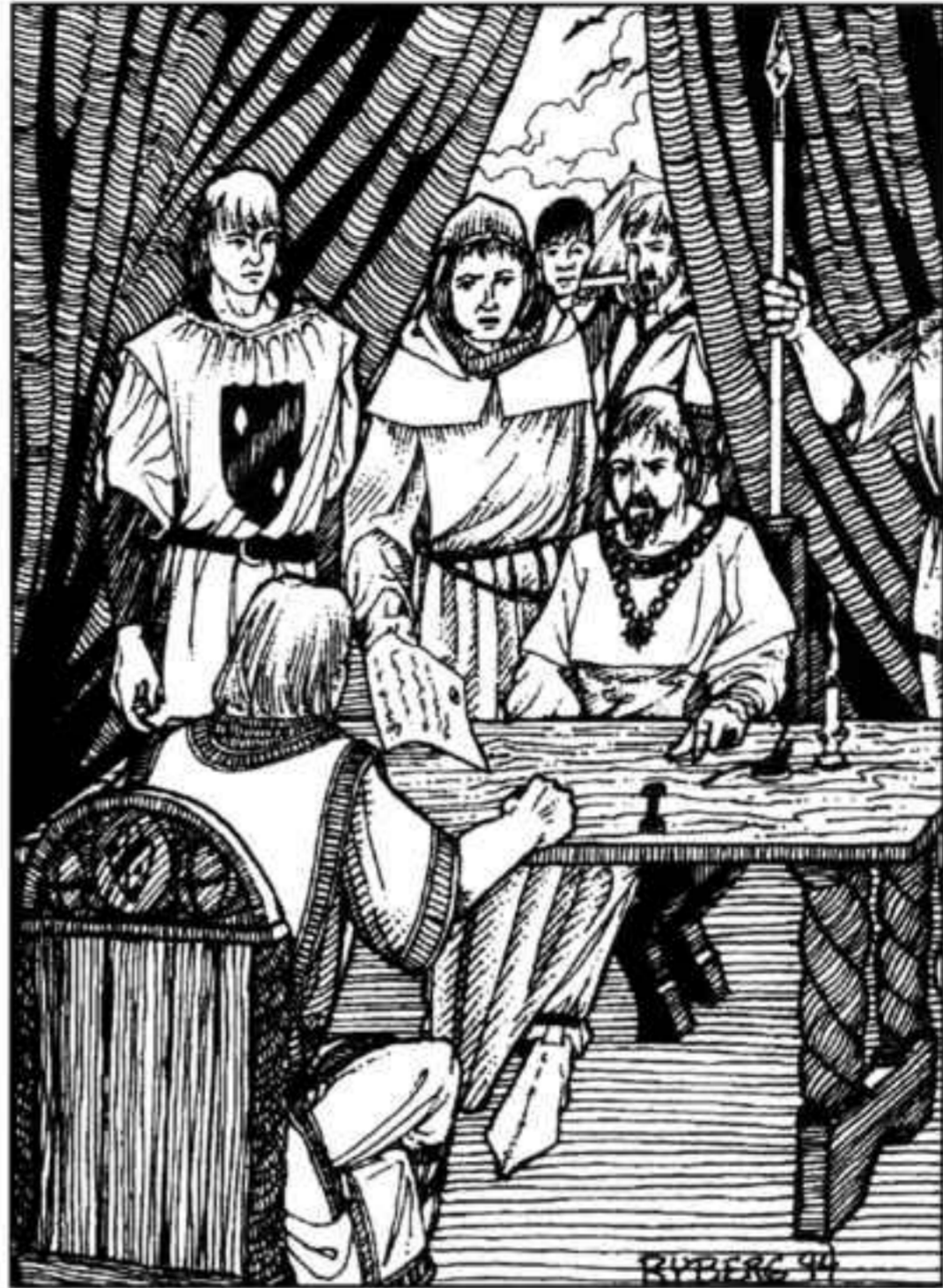
The society attempts to enter into an Alliance with another whole society or a Key Element of another society. The nature and form of the Alliance depends on the relationship between the two social groups. The purpose of most Alliances is to provide mutual gain and benefit, and the society attempting to forge an Alliance normally offers some type of aid or pledge. This aid can be military, technological, or political, but it is always something favorable for the target society. The target society usually possesses something that the initiating society needs but does not wish to take by force - information, specific resources, a crucial trade route, etc.. The two societies (or Key Elements within them) usually enter into a binding agreement to cement the Alliance. Marriages of state, official treaties or other documents, extravagant ceremonies or gifts - all of these things can be used to close a newly made Alliance. The Mythguide may wish to detail the specific provisions of an Alliance when it is made; for instance, is one society always required to go to the other's aid? Or does a treaty only cover certain contingencies? Alliances among societies of different Power and Scope levels are often skewed in favor of the more powerful party to the agreement (unless the less powerful society has a great deal of leverage for some reason). Improvements represent successfully concluded Alliances, while Regressions indicate failed or disastrous attempts.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Relations, Consent, Power, Authority, Trade, Resources, Exploitation, Military, Technology, Humanities

Blockade

Society Trial: Military

A society can attempt to institute a Blockade, preventing another society from receiving necessary supplies and cutting off most access to its interior. The nature and feasibility of a Blockade largely depends on the geographic relationship of the two societies. For example, if one society could be reached only through a small mountain pass which happened to belong to another society, a Blockade might be easy to effect. However, if two societies share a small common border, a Blockade could be nearly impossible to imple-



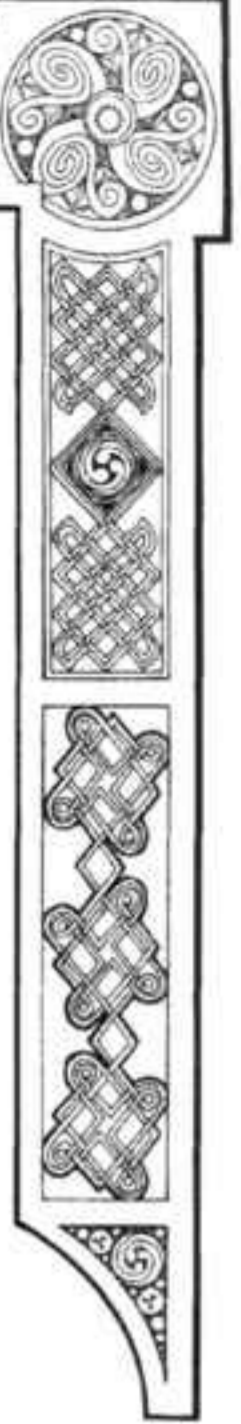
ment. The Mythguide make a decision based on the situation. A successful Blockade effectively cuts its target off, and an Improvement usually imposes Economic limits on the target of the Blockade. A Regression indicates either an unsuccessful Blockade or some form of internal backlash. This Action must be chosen during each Interval that the society wishes to maintain the Blockade.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Trade, Exploitation, Resources, Consent, Relations

COVERT

Society Trial: Power

The society engages in some type of Covert bargaining or discussion. This Action always represents secret offers or negotiations. For example, if the Ruling Agency sent operatives to bribe a foreign official, the attempt would qualify as a Covert Action. Covert offers usually involve a pledge of some type (in a similar vein as the Negotiation internal Action), although such promises are frequently broken. Money is the most common form of coercion used when attempting Covert Actions. Improvements indicate successful resolution, which can represent the acquisition of



valuable information or the performance of some critical Action. For example, successful Covert Actions can cause Key Elements in other societies to betray their fellows. In game terms, this affects the Difficulty of future Actions. A traitor might give up important military information (giving the attacker a Military bonus during War or a Raid) or he might set up a fellow leader (making it easier for the society using the Covert Action to conduct Espionage, possibly an assassination, during the next Interval). Regressions often indicate failed attempts or slip-ups, and usually affect Relations with other societies.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Key Elements, Relations, Technology, Consent, Trade

Diplomacy

Society Trial: Authority

Diplomacy represents external and inter-societal negotiation and bargaining. Diplomacy can be used to build strong relationships and alliances, as well as to improve flagging or poor relationships. Diplomacy includes gift exchange, foreign investment and loans, alliances through marriage, and spoken negotiation. Successful Diplomacy always involves some type of pledge. Such promises include cease and desist pledges (if societies are at War), pledges of economic aid, and permanent Embassies for the regularized exchange of technology and innovation. If an Improvement occurs, and if the pledge is not carried out during the next Interval, a Critical Juncture automatically results. Relations among the involved parties will probably suffer. An initial Regression indicates an unsuccessful attempt at Diplomacy.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Relations, Key Elements, Consent, Power, Trade, Authority, Technology, Resources, Exploitation, Humanities

Embassy

Society Trial: Relations

The society initiates an Embassy or other form of exchange with one of its neighbors. Embassies can be semi-permanent, consisting of an extended diplomatic mission, or permanent, with an ambassador remaining full-time on foreign soil. The purpose of an Embassy is to conduct exchanges of technology, collect important social information, and increase cultural awareness among societies. Once an Embassy is established, it may be used as a base of operations for Espionage (and thus improving the Difficulty of an Espionage-related Society Trial), Observation, or Covert Actions. However, if such Actions are discovered, Relations often deteriorate very quickly. An Improve-

ment usually means the acceptance of an Embassy (or a receptivity to further negotiations, depending on the degree of Improvement). A Regression indicates a refusal.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Relations, Technology, Key Elements, Trade, Humanities, Resources, Exploitation

Espionage

Society Trial: Power

Espionage represents clandestine external maneuverings, and corresponds to the Intrigue internal Action in many ways. Societies use Espionage to gather information, plant false information, and carry out secret agendas. Assassination and sabotage are also key aspects of the Espionage Action. An Improvement represents a degree of success; the nature of the Improvement should be interpreted according to the situation. Perhaps a Significant Improvement is required to reach a well-guarded foreign politician. A Slight Improvement might provide a limited amount of valuable information. A Regression indicates a failure of some type, and will probably lead to worse Relations between the parties involved. The perpetrators of the Espionage may either be killed or held by the target society.

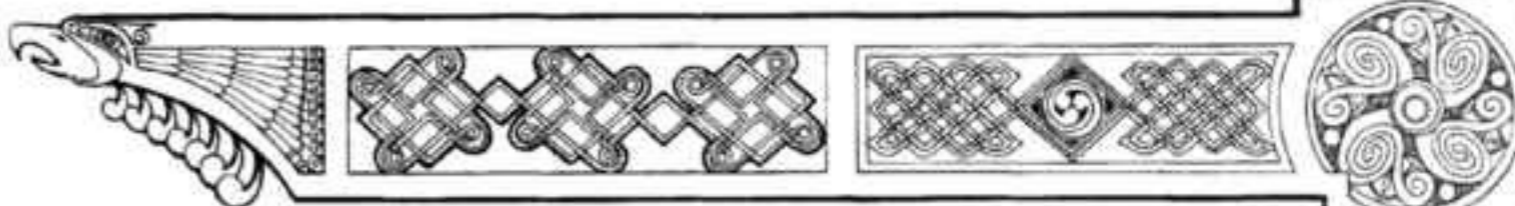
Possible Improvements/Regressions: Power, Key Elements, Technology, Relations, Humanities, Consent, Trade

Intimidation

Society Trial: Power

Instead of conventional Diplomacy or Covert negotiation, a society can attempt to intimidate or browbeat another society into acquiescence. Intimidation can take the form of threats, ultimatums, or outright demands. It can be used to gather important information or to force the outcome of a specific conflict or interaction. It also allows a society to give fair warning before taking drastic action. For example, a society wishes to assist an Ally who has been Invaded. Being a powerful and honorable nation, the society issues a warning to the Invading society before retaliating. An Improvement might indicate a successful threat; the Invader does not wish to trifle with its target's more powerful Ally. A Regression represents an unsuccessful Intimidation attempt (which can make the society look weak). Scope and Military are often important considerations when resolving an Intimidation attempt.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Relations, Power, Authority, Consent, Key Elements



Invade

Society Trial: Military

A society can Invade one of its neighbors and initiate a War. Invasions are often the result of a Critical Juncture, but they can be voluntarily initiated at any time. Invasions normally occur as a result of a Hostile Relationship, and they determine the general location of the resulting conflict. A society that Invades another has the ability to Recall its troops, while a society that is the target of an Invasion cannot Recall its troops because the conflict is taking place within its borders. The Mythguide should pay special attention to Invasions when there are multiple societies involved in Wars on several fronts. A single society can Invade on one front and suffer an Invasion on another front. Invasions rarely occur as the results of Critical Junctures; a society instead gauges its chances of success based on its Scope and Military, and decides whether to invade. Its Philosophical Orientation affects the decision. Invasions are resolved like Wars, except that the Invading society gains a slight (+1) Military advantage during the Interval of the Invasion.

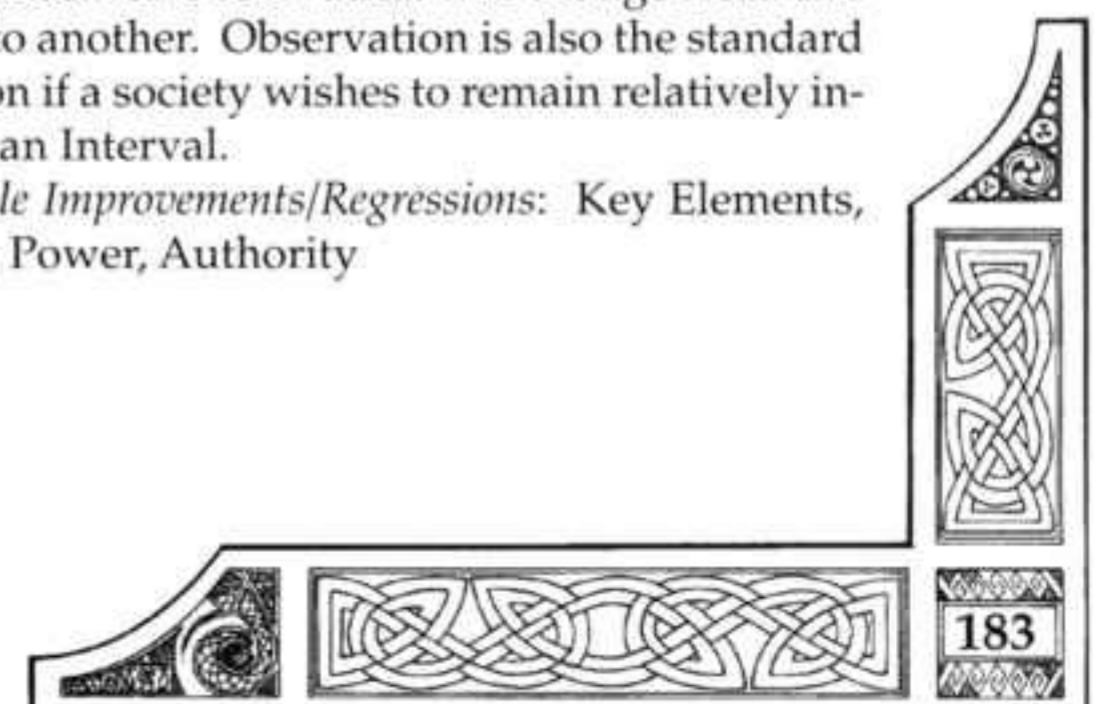
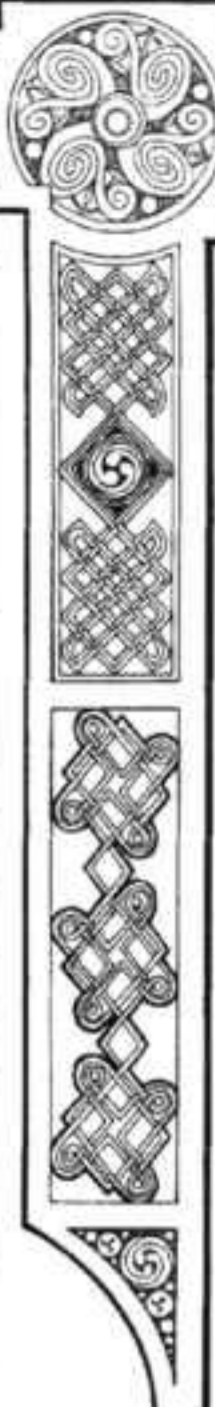
Possible Improvements/Regressions: Power, Authority, Consent, Relations, Resources, Exploitation, Trade, Humanities, Military, Technology

Observation

Society Trial: Power

External Observation is similar in most respect to internal Observation. The society watches a particular neighboring society carefully, recording unusual movements, actions, and events. Successful Observation can yield general information about other societies, their customs, and their Key Elements. If a society chooses Observation during the same Interval that another society Invades them, the Invading society does not get its +1 Military bonus. Also, Observation helps to detect Covert and Espionage attempts directed toward the Observing society. The presence of an Embassy in a foreign society makes Observation easier (it lowers the Difficulty of the Society Trial). The nature and effects of Observation will change from one situation to another. Observation is also the standard pass Action if a society wishes to remain relatively inactive for an Interval.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Key Elements, Relations, Power, Authority



OVERTURES

Society Trial: Scope

A society can make Overtures toward another society, indicating that some type of relationship is desired. Overtures can only be made toward a society with whom no Relationship exists, and they normally represent the formation of the initial stages of a Relationship. The success of the Overtures depends on what is being proposed and offered. A mutually beneficial Trade arrangement is likely to receive a better response than a proposal of annexation (although a very small society might be forced to give in to the latter). Improvements represent successful Overtures and the establishment of a Relationship (usually favorable). Regression indicates a worse situation than if the Overtures had never been made (usually the advent of poor Relations).

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Relations, Power, Consent, Key Elements, Trade

Raid

Society Trial: Military

A Raid represents a quick hit-and-run military mission into another society. It allows picked troops to cross borders, destroy infrastructure or attain some concrete objective, and then return without significant losses. Speed and precision are the keys to a well-executed Raid; hesitation is likely to be very costly. The force performing a Raid cannot consist of more than two thousand troops. An Improvement indicates a successful Raid, meaning that some or all of the Raid's objectives were attained. If it was very successful, the identity of the Raiding party may not have been learned. A Regression indicates a failure, and means that the Raiding party has been intercepted inside foreign territory. A War will commence during the following Interval unless both of the societies take extreme steps to avert it (by each Declaring a Diplomacy Action and not initiating further conflict). If the target society is employing an Observation Action during a Raid, the Difficulty of the Raid's Society Trial is increased by one. State-sponsored acts of Piracy also fall under this Action. Piracy attempts are normally more Difficult to execute safely, but if successful they are also more likely to remain undetected or unidentified.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Relations, Resources, Exploitation, Trade, Power, Authority, Consent, Military, Technology

Recall

Society Trial: Authority

The society may Recall an Embassy, an army, an Exile, or a detachment of military troops. Remember that only a society which has Invaded another society has the option to Recall troops. A society that has been Invaded must attempt Diplomacy if it wishes to halt a conflict already in progress. Any society can Recall an Exile, Embassy, or similar mission. An Improvement indicates a successful Recall, although fighting still occurs during the Interval of the Recall (and the withdrawing society will still suffer losses). A Regression indicates a mistake or hindrance; the Recall may be impossible for some reason. A War will continue unless another means is used to halt the conflict (such as Diplomacy).

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Key Elements, Relations, Consent, Power, Authority, Military

SANCTIONS

Society Trial: Power

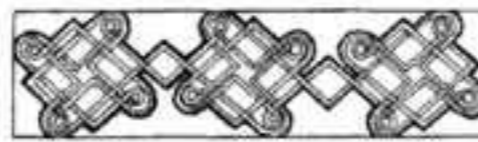
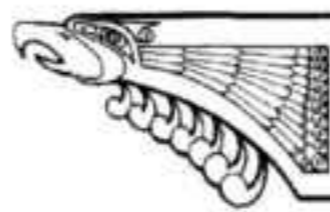
The society imposes Sanctions on another society or region. The nature of the Sanctions and their form will depend on the situation. Sanctions may be imposed across the board, or specific areas or products can be targeted (certain spices or weapons, for example). The effectiveness of Sanctions depends on the target society's Relations with other societies in the region. Can it get products from other sources? Does it depend solely on the society imposing the Sanctions for products? Such considerations affect the Difficulty of related Society Trials. Sanctions may be supplemented by a Blockade if further support is needed, although normal trade restrictions are often adequate. A Sanctions Action must be chosen during each Interval that Sanctions are imposed. An Improvement indicates a successful application of Sanctions, while a Regression represents some type of failure on the part of the society imposing the Sanctions (the failure can either be related to the Sanctions themselves or to popular repercussions at home which are related to the Sanctions).

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Trade, Exploitation, Resources, Relations, Technology, Military, Consent

WAR

Society Trial: Military

Unlike a Civil War (which can be initiated spontaneously within a society), an external War Action is usually declared as a result of a Raid or an Invasion.



War Results (Challenged Trial - Degrees of Success)

Society		Opponent								
D o S	Myth Succ.	Extra. Succ.	Super. Succ.	Comp. Succ.	Marg. Succ.	Marg. Failure	Ser. Failure	Comp. Failure	Miser. Failure	Catast. Failure
Myth. Success	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>SV</i>	<i>SV</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>T</i>
Extra. Success	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>SV</i>	<i>SV</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>T</i>
Super. Success	<i>D</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>SV</i>	<i>SV</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>T</i>
Comp. Success	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>SV</i>	<i>SV</i>	<i>T</i>
Marg. Success	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>SV</i>	<i>SV</i>
Marg. Failure	<i>SD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>SV</i>
Comp. Failure	<i>Dis</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>V</i>
Serious Failure	<i>Dis</i>	<i>Dis</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>V</i>
Miser. Failure	<i>Dis</i>	<i>Dis</i>	<i>Dis</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>
Catastr. Failure	<i>Dis</i>	<i>Dis</i>	<i>Dis</i>	<i>Dis</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>St</i>	<i>St</i>

Note: The War Results table is presented from the perspective (Triumph vs. Defeat) of the Society who initiates the War or Invasion.

War Results Key: T=Triumph (Significant Improvement), SV=Significant Victory, V=Victory (Improvement), St=Stalemate (Slight Improvement/Regression), D=Defeat (Regression), SD=Severe Defeat (Severe Regression), and Dis=Disastrous Defeat (Severe Regression)

War casualties (see Determining Losses, next page) do not count as Improvements or Regressions; they are considered to be Incidentals. Improvements and Regressions indicate changes in social Determinant Values. For example, a society that wins a Victory (Improvement) might increase its Scope, Resources, Exploitation, or Consent values by 1 point or level. Refer to the text for other areas of Improvement and Regression.

* Remember: The number of troops affects the Military values of societies engaged in conflict. For each 2000 troop increment of difference (rounding up to nearest 2000 troop increment) between the warring army sizes, reduce the Military Value of the smaller army by 1. For example, if a society with a force of 9000 and a Military Value of 8 is attacking a society with a force of 6000 and a Military Value of 10, the effective Military Value of the smaller army is reduced by 2 (3000 troop difference rounds to 4000 troop difference). Because of the difference in size, the smaller army (which happens to be better trained) suffers in its overall effectiveness against the larger, poorer-trained army.



Determining Losses

Result of Conflict	Losses Ratio
Triumph	1:10
Significant	1:5
Victory	1:2
Stalemate	1:1
Defeat	2:1
Severe Defeat	5:1
Disastrous Defeat	10:1

Note: Losses are always determined from the perspective of the society making the Society Trial, and are always defined by a ratio. The Mythguide determines what the ratio means based on the individual situation and the parties involved. For example, a Victory indicates a ratio of 1 : 2 in favor of the society making the Trial. Based on the course of the War, the Mythguide decides that the winning society loses 2,500 troops. The losing society automatically loses 5,000 troops (based on the 1 : 2 ratio). If the winning society had scored a Triumph (1 : 10), the loser would have lost 25,000 men (possibly more than could be lost). The Mythguide might wish to tailor casualty levels based on the Size of the smaller society in any conflict.

A Critical Juncture can also lead to War if a society's population is Hostile. At the Mythguide's option, a society can declare War and wait until the next Interval to Invade. An honorable society might make such a declaration to allow its opponent to prepare for war. Another society might want to Develop infrastructure or Research technology for an Interval before attacking. Whatever the reason, a formal declaration can be answered in one of two ways. The enemy can Invade first, or it can send an Embassy to accept the declaration and agree on the terms of the War. If the declaration is made and accepted honorably, each society may choose a War Action to begin the War (an Invasion is not necessary). If a War begins in this manner, both societies are able to use a Recall Action. Of course, after one society Recalls its armies, the other may then Invade. Once a War begins, a society must choose a War Action during each Interval it wishes to continue fighting. A society may attempt Diplomacy during a War, but a Regression usually indicates the death of the diplomatic mission. In the same vein, if a society has an Embassy in a society with whom they enter a War, the Embassy (and possibly a Key Element, if one were sent with the Embassy) may be killed immediately at the option of the controlling player. Alternately, the Embassy can be seized (and used as a bargaining chip) or released.

Players should use the War Results Table to determine the outcome of an Interval's fighting. The relative size of a society's military force is also important to conflict resolution. If force size needs to be determined randomly, use the accompanying table. For each 2,000 troop difference (round up to the nearest increment of 2,000) between combatants, reduce the Military value of the lesser force by one. Refer to the notes section of the War Results Table for an example.

Possible Improvements/Regressions: Relations, Consent, Trade, Exploitation, Power, Resources, Authority, Technology, Humanities, Military, Key Elements

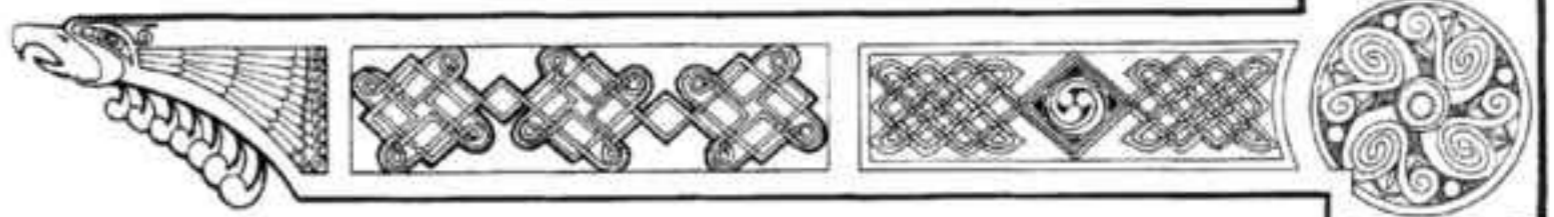
Incidentals

The Results of all Actions and Critical Junctures are described during the Resolution Phase of an Historic Interval. Improvements and Regressions, which affect actual Determinant scales, are the primary results of Actions and Critical Junctures. However, every Action and Critical Juncture also produces Incidentals.

Incidentals are social, economic, and political side effects and miscellaneous consequences of larger Actions. Incidentals measure more abstract environmental changes, and their forms and origins change from one situation to the next. For example, a society that Develops new infrastructure successfully undergoes an Exploitation Improvement. It is a Significant Improvement, so two Incidentals accompany it. The Mythguide decides that both Wealth and Conditions (social corruption) are affected. In another society, Income and Philosophical Orientation could accompany it. Incidentals are abstract effects that need to be interpreted by the Mythguide. The same Action affects different societies in radically different ways.

Incidentals affect the Difficulty of all relevant Society Trials while the Incidental remains in effect. For example, increased Wealth can affect the Difficulty of economic-related Society Trials and Cost of Living can affect Consent-based Society Trials. Philosophical Orientation changes only affect the Difficulty of Trials in the area of alteration. For example, a society that successfully completes Research might temporarily gain an Acquisition Aspect. If the same society attempts to gain additional knowledge during the following Interval, the Acquisition Aspect causes a favorable Difficulty modifier. The temporary Aspect would not affect a society beginning an Invasion.

Unlike more permanent Improvements and Regressions, Incidentals only last for a single Interval. The Mythguide can choose or invent Incidentals that



make sense in the context of a particular society or situation. The accompanying table provides possible complementary Actions and Incidentals as examples. The following section gives short descriptions of some possible Incidentals.

ENVIRONMENTAL

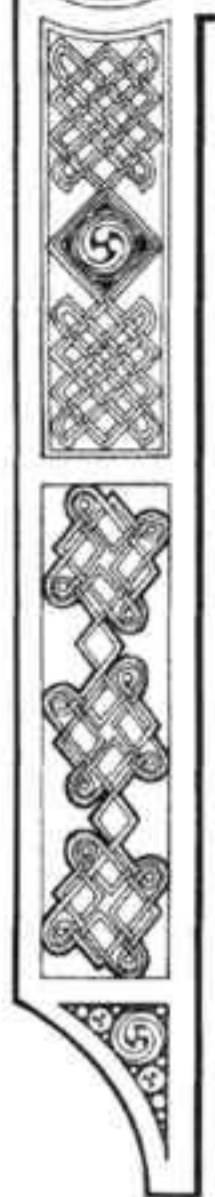
Conditions: Conditions represents the general social climate that prevails within a society. It indicates the average levels of safety and corruption present. As safety increases, crime, violence, and social corruption decrease. As corruption increases, safety and legal presence decreases. Consent often affects Conditions in a society.

Philosophical Orientation: It takes a succession of major Actions and results to affect a society's Philosophical Orientation. If a player uses two Incidentals per Interval for four consecutive Intervals, the society's overall Philosophical Orientation can be altered. Normally, Incidentals affect either Orientation Aspects or Postures for a single Interval. For example, the institution of new Taxes might give a society a Prevention Aspect. This outlook will affect all related Society Trials for one Interval.

Population: Scope gives the Mythguide and players a general idea of a society's Population. Population is rarely affected to an appreciable extent by Actions, but certain situations can have severe effects. Disasters that cause Severe Regressions may represent large losses of life. War can also represent significant losses to a society's population, especially if a society's troops are completely defeated. The Mythguide should decide on the extent of such losses depending on the situation. Population increases can result from large-scale immigration or economic Improvements.

Persecution: Persecution represents wholesale discrimination and prejudice directed at a specific Key Element, cultural group, or Humanity. Persecution can result from many different situations. A religion might persecute another religious element; the government might persecute a certain political faction. The form and nature of the persecution (and its consequences) should be described according to the society being developed. Heresies and Inquisitions are types of Persecutions.

Interaction: Interaction represents a society's dealings and relationships with other societies. If a soci-



ety limits its Interaction with another society for one reason or another, the number of Actions it can direct toward the other society may be limited. Any such limitations exist at the discretion of the Mythguide.

Status: If enough Status Incidentals occur in succession (perhaps two or more Intervals in a row), the society's Custom or Rigidity can change. For example, a society's Ruling Agency might Negotiate its way out of a Civil War (gaining its first Status Incidental) during one Interval, and begin Developing infrastructure during the next (a second Status Incidental). A third Status Incidental could lead to a reduction in the society's Custom (perhaps indicating that a society's different Status Archetypes have learned to work together).

Economic

Scarcity: Scarcity represents the general availability of normal items and materials in the society. It also serves as another indirect gauge of the people's quality of life. Life will be harder in societies where simple resources are scarce. Environmental Incidentals such as Conditions often accompany Scarcity.

Wealth: Wealth represents the average level of personal Wealth in the society, and serves as a general measure of overall Wealth in the entire society. As a society Improves economically, its Wealth will rise. Increased Income often accompanies increased Wealth, and Wealth is often the result of Exploitation Improvements.

Income: Income represents the average level of disposable personal Income in the society. It serves as a general gauge of regulation in the society, since disposable Income represents income after all fees, levies, and taxes have been removed. As a society Improves economically, its Income usually rises. Wealth Incidentals often accompany Income Incidentals.

Cost of Living: Cost of Living represents the average Cost of Living in the society. This Incidental often depends on Wealth and Income, but it can also be effected by Scope, Population, and Geographic considerations. For example, a small island with a large population probably has a higher Cost of Living than a landlocked nation with a similar Population.

Political

Conditions: Political Conditions represents the different relationships among a society's various political and governmental factions. It can also affect the Ruling Agency's relationship with a society's different Key Elements. Conditions also indicates the levels of political corruption present in the society.

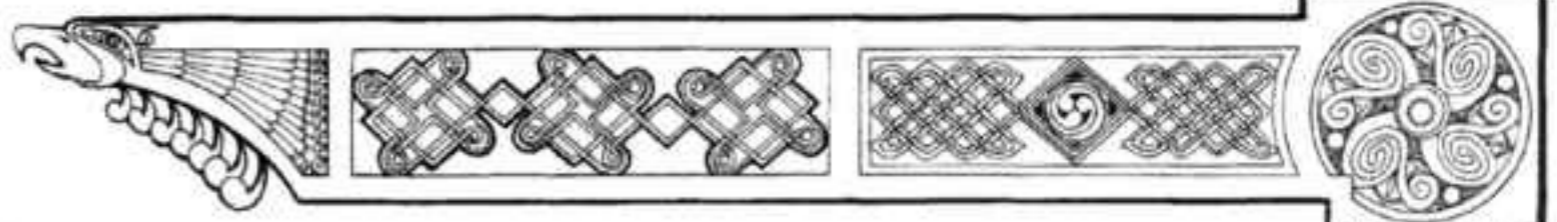
Freedom: Freedom is essentially a by-product of Power, Authority, and Consent relationships. Personal Freedoms can exist across an entire social spectrum or within a single Status Archetype. Custom and Rigidity can affect Freedom as well. This Incidental tracks temporary fluctuations in a society's Personal Freedoms. It will normally take several Freedom Incidentals in successive Intervals to permanently affect Personal Freedom.

Geographic: This Incidental represents all transfers and changes in a society's borders. It represents land gifts and acquisitions as a result of Diplomacy, Covert negotiations, or concessions as a result of an Intimidation. It can also represent territory lost during the course of a War or Invasion. This Incidental can be the result of any Improvement or Regression during which land could change hands.

Reactions

Reactions are similar to Incidentals in most respects, except that Reactions affect Determinant scales. When some Actions obtain an Improvement result, they can still have unfavorable incidental effects; these effects are what Reactions describe. Reactions are often the result of unsolicited violence or conflict, and can cause sweeping immediate changes in certain Determinant scales. For example, if two societies view each other Neutrally (Relations values of six), and one society Invades or Raids the other for no reason, their Relations values will immediately drop to zero as a result of the unprovoked attack.

Treachery also causes Reactions. For example, if a society initiated Overtures of peace or friendship, and then attacked, a logical Reaction would be immediate Hostile Relations. A society's Philosophical Orientation Posture can affect the form and nature of a particular Reaction. The accompanying table provides several examples of possible Reactions. The Mythguide should allow other Reactions depending on the environment in which a History is unfolding.



Persona Involvement

Personas can use Leverage or Influence Pools to affect Action resolution during an Interactive History. For each point of Leverage spent, the persona can alter a single appropriate Society Trial by one Difficulty level. Appropriate Society Trials include those Trials within the domain of a particular Leverage Pool. Consult the accompanying table for possible Leverage effects. Influence can only be used on individuals, but its use may apply to Interactive Histories if a persona attempts to Influence one of a society's Key Elements.

A persona can also spend Myth Points to affect a society's Determinants. The number of Myth Points required to attain a specific effect depends on the persona's relationship to the society. A persona can take one of three postures toward a society's continuing development.

A persona on the *Periphery* of societal development is not involved, directly or indirectly, in the progression of a society's various Social Determinants. It will cost such a persona three Myth Points to create a normal Improvement (for a variable duration). If the persona wishes the effect to be permanent (meaning it lasts until it is changed during the course of a History), the cost increases to six Myth Points. A society's Scope also affects Myth Point costs. For every Scope value over five, add another Myth Point to the total cost.

A persona can be *Indirectly Involved* in a society's development. The persona could have friends with positions in the government, acquaintances who are Key Elements, or an extremely powerful family. It costs the persona two Myth Points to initiate an Improvement. If the effects are permanent, the cost is doubled. For every Scope value over five, increase the total Myth Point cost by one.

Finally, a persona may be *Directly Involved* in a society's development. Such personas usually hold powerful positions in the society, whether as members of the government (and therefore as possible Key Elements), military leaders, or prominent and active citizens. It costs the persona one Myth Point to initiate an Improvement; two Myth Points are required if the effects are meant to be permanent. For every Scope value over five, add one Myth Point to the total cost.

Personas can also use Renown, Status, and Esteem to affect the course of an Interactive History. The Mythguide should determine the extent of these effects depending on the nature of the society. For example, a society's Custom dictates the maximum possible Status modifiers available in the society. Renown

only affects areas in which a reputation is recognized. The Mythguide can interpret possible effects in two ways. First, he can reduce the Myth Point or Leverage Pool cost required to change a Determinant. Such reductions should always be very slight (perhaps only one or two points for a Renown Value of ten).

Second, the Mythguide can allow Trials based on Status, Renown, or Esteem. Such Trials should be limited to one per Interval, and must have a concrete objective. For example, a persona wishes to sway an important government decision by influencing a Key Element. The Mythguide can allow the persona to use Renown or Status to influence the Key Element. A simple Trial based on the Trait can be used, or a Social Interaction can be attempted with the target individual as its object (using the guidelines presented in the Action and Conflict chapter). The effects should be interpreted based on the action being attempted.

Final Thoughts

Once players and Mythguides get the hang of these rules, Interactive History development should become a very fluid process. Actions should always be considered in terms of the social dynamics which govern their performance, and should never be reduced to simple cause-effect models that exist in a social vacuum. The same Action is never performed in the same way twice, and never elicits exactly the same results. For successful History development, three elements are required: description, intuition, and interpretation. A player's intuitive familiarity with a society allows accurate and interesting result interpretations. Colorful descriptions change these interpretations into fascinating stories and Histories, and provide a foundation for continued interpretation during future Historic Intervals.

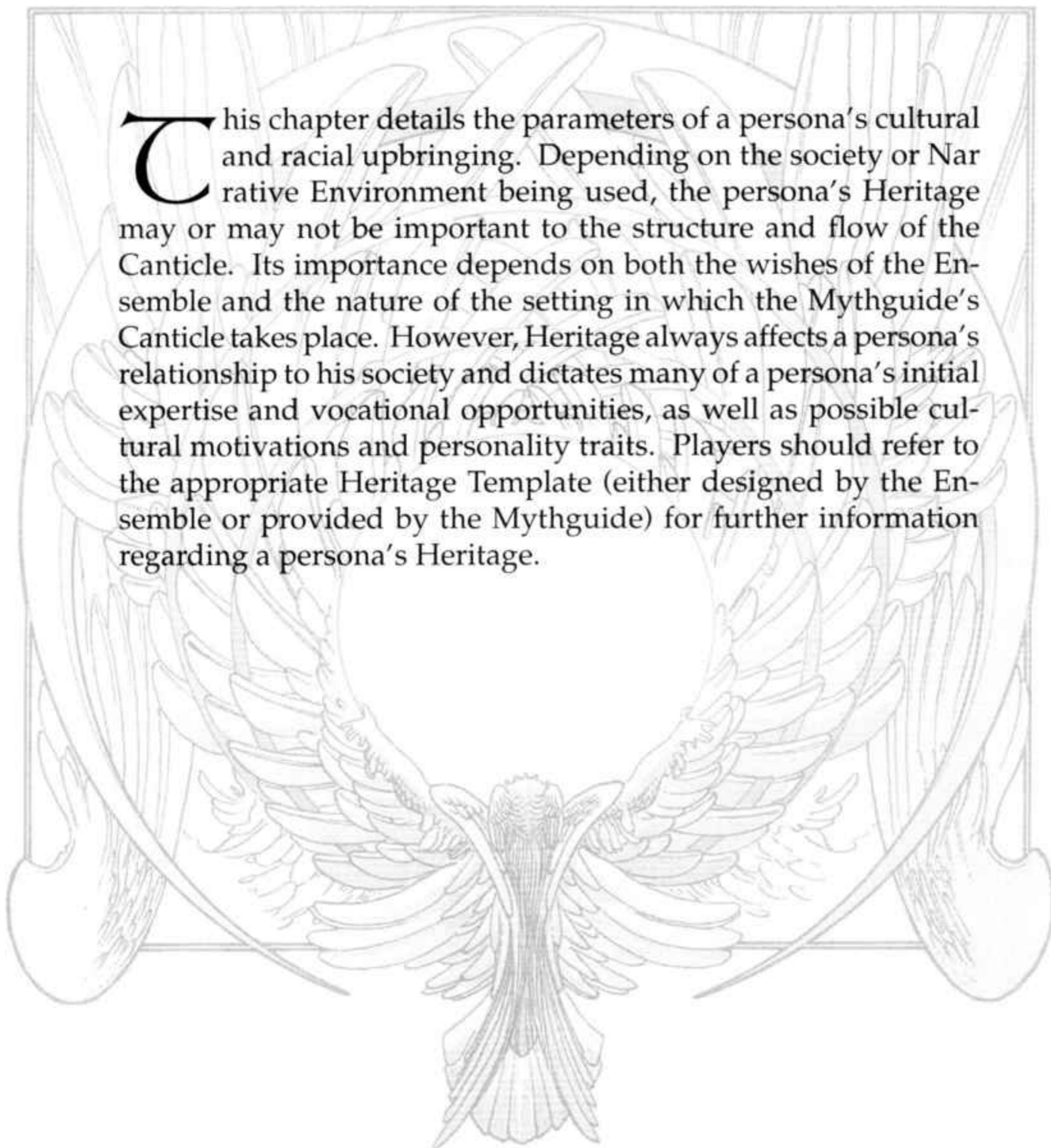




Heritage

⊗ Chapter Five ⊗

This chapter details the parameters of a persona's cultural and racial upbringing. Depending on the society or Narrative Environment being used, the persona's Heritage may or may not be important to the structure and flow of the Canticle. Its importance depends on both the wishes of the Ensemble and the nature of the setting in which the Mythguide's Canticle takes place. However, Heritage always affects a persona's relationship to his society and dictates many of a persona's initial expertise and vocational opportunities, as well as possible cultural motivations and personality traits. Players should refer to the appropriate Heritage Template (either designed by the Ensemble or provided by the Mythguide) for further information regarding a persona's Heritage.



Heritage vs. Society

Heritage and society are considered independent - although often overlapping - concepts in Aria. The Mythmaking and Interactive History chapters deal with society and environment creation; this chapter deals with the cultures and Heritage groups that inhabit those environments. The following section clarifies the distinctions Aria draws between society and culture.

Step Two of the Preparation outline presented in Chapter Two calls for the delineation of a concrete Narrative Environment. This is the environment in which play occurs, and can be as detailed or as open as an Ensemble likes. The Narrative Environment represents an entire *society*, no matter what size that society might be. It could represent a medium-sized region of the countryside or it could represent an entire continent. The Mythmaking and Interactive History chapters make such development clear and logical, treating it in a linear fashion. If those guidelines are not being used, the Mythguide should simply write a concise description of the environment and its parameters. These include size, population, political atmosphere, economics, and an environment's general philosophical orientation and approach. Societies are normally geopolitical entities that contain many diverse cultures and races, although it is possible (usually in isolated areas) for a single culture or race to comprise an entire society.

Heritage Templates, on the other hand, are lineage-related entities. Individuals are usually born into a Heritage, while anyone can become a member of most societies. Heritage Templates can either contain or fit within Narrative Environments and societies. The relationship depends on the size and nature of the Template. For example, a Template that represents an entire Species probably contains several Narrative Environments, while a Heritage representing one small cultural group could be one of a dozen independent cultures existing within a larger society. It all depends on the nature of the world or setting being used. Cultural diversity might be widespread in one world, while on another it is almost nonexistent.

These divisions are obviously somewhat arbitrary, and may enter completely gray areas at times, but they provide a simple and ordered way to distinguish environments (regions, societies, etc.) from their inhabitants (races, cultures, species, etc.). In short, *Narrative Environments represent contiguous societies that share common legal, ethical, political, economic, and technological elements. Heritage Templates represent groups of indi-*

viduals united by common lineage, heritage, customs, beliefs, religion, language, abilities, or lifestyle.

Questions of Species, Race, and Culture

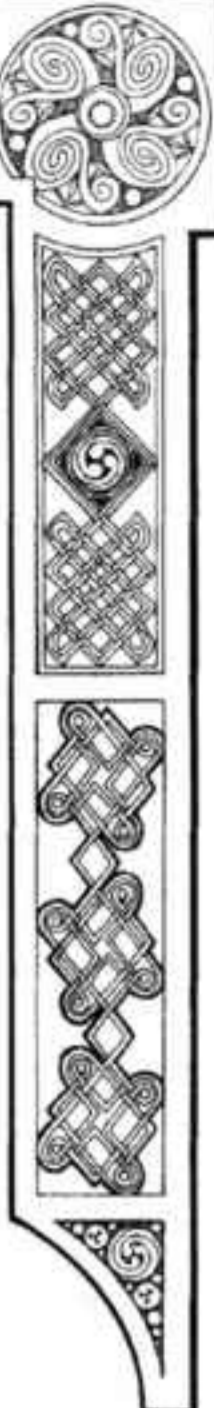
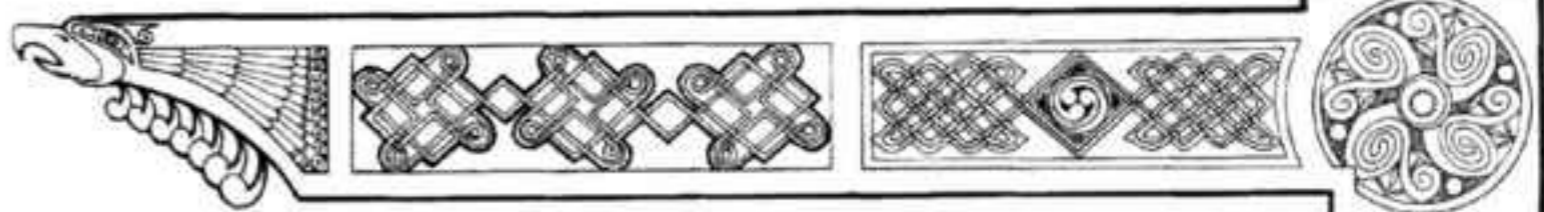
A quick and precise delineation of the terms species, race, and culture is necessary for a broad-based understanding of the concept of Heritage. Species is a blanket term which describes a major biological or genetic group - it includes all members of a given species type. All humans in a given world constitute a species. Race is a more specific term, indicating similar physical characteristics and features within a specific member group of a species. Racial divisions are biological, but they often have certain cultural similarities as well - religion is one example of such a similarity.

A culture signifies a group of people living within the same belief system, keeping the same traditions, holding similar values, or speaking a common language. A society may consist of a single culture (or even a part of one) or many cultures. A culture usually consists of a single species, although it is possible for more than one species to form a culture in rare cases. A culture also normally consists of a single race, although multi-racial cultures are possible. Specific cultural traits can easily pass from one culture to another; any region containing several old cultures evidences many shared traits.

Society always precedes culture, since it represents basic interaction among individuals. Culture goes beyond social forms and injects numerous moral, ethical, and traditional uniformities into a species' relationships. Codes of acceptable conduct, ethics, and morality allow orderly and ritualized social interaction. One of the principal factors of cultural evolution is the use and application of symbols.

Symbols give meaning to life and its many patterns. They allow true culture to transcend basic society, and imbue simple tools and customs with ritual significance. The operational symbols in a particular culture often depend primarily on the physical environment in which the culture exists. For example, the belief systems of an arctic culture and an island culture will use different symbols (although the root beliefs might be very similar). The former could worship a vast but severe nature deity, while the latter might revere a volcano spirit.

Other symbols predominate as well. Axes and swords become symbols of authority. Death is no longer an end in many cultures; it becomes a new beginning, a gateway. Certain traditions, such as mar-



riage and inheritance, become solemn ceremonies, transforming such basic occurrences as mating and death into elaborate ritual celebrations. The depth and importance of symbol to an individual culture depends on the nature of the culture and its relationship to other cultures and societies in the Narrative Environment.

Most Heritage Template descriptions are actually cultural descriptions, since cultural elements always apply to race and species models. Such definitions simply depend on the detail required by the Ensemble; while it might be more appropriate to define the ten cultures which constitute a particular race, this is rarely feasible. The Heritage Templates are designed to work at each level of the creation process. Although they are more accurate when used for smaller cultural designs, they can be employed just as effectively for sweeping species design.

The Mythguide should be able to use the guidelines presented in this chapter to create diverse cultural groups and interests within larger social models. For example, a player wishes to play a persona from a desert barbarian nation in the Narrative Environment being used. The persona is human (his species), and a member of the Desert Tribes - a tall, dark, hardy stock indigenous to the eastern deserts (his race).

Determining Heritage Costs

<i>Heritage Group</i>	<i>IP Cost</i>
Species (Human, Elf, Dwarf, etc.)	Special
Race (Northmen, Everdawn, Steamrift, etc.)	Special
Culture (Firnost, Thaldu, High Canyon, etc.)	Special

The Mythguide must determine which Species, Races, and Cultures within the Narrative Environment are available for use in Persona Creation. It is recommended that the Dominant Species, Race, or Culture be available for Persona Generation at a Cost = 0 IP. Heritage Groups which are less common may cost more IP to play or may be unavailable for Persona Heritage designation. If the Mythguide permits the Ensemble to play uncommon Heritage groups, then IP costs must be assigned to each Heritage group on the basis of their Innate Characteristics, Traits, or Aspects.





The Desert Tribes themselves share common ancestors, but have diverged culturally into three distinct spheres over the centuries.

The first of these spheres, a nomadic culture associated with both a reverence of nature (especially water) and the construction of large obelisk shrines within large oases, appeals to the player's sensibilities, and he decides his persona will come from this cultural background. A large region containing numerous temporary villages, shrines, and campsites represents the area dominated by the culture. All that remains is for the player to pick the tribe in which his persona was born (note that in this case it would be possible to treat groups of villages or even single villages as separate societies, thus creating a situation in which numerous environments all fall within a single culture).

Culture among mythic species is handled in a similar manner. For example, a player who wishes to play a Wood Elf must design a persona who is both a member of the Elven species and the Wood Elven race within that species. In the Narrative Environment being used, all wood elves may share a common culture, or there might be several distinctive cultures (North Woods, Southern Forest, etc.). The player should work with the Mythguide to determine the persona's specific cultural background.

Mythic Races and Species

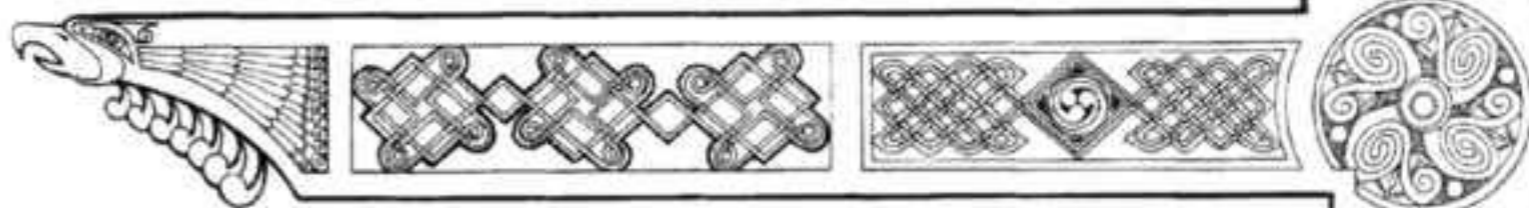
Mythic species - elves, dwarves, halflings, etc. - are a common feature in both fantasy roleplaying games and fantasy literature. Their inclusion in Aria is optional and should follow a specific design, much like the other important facets of society and culture. Including such races and species in a Narrative Environment becomes a real consideration because of the game's nature. Emphasis is placed on societal development and interaction, and the inclusion of mythic races will have far-reaching effects on both the form and type of this interaction.

A world with several intelligent, competing species - each with different cultures, values, goals, and outlooks - is a more complex interactive environment than a world with a single dominant species. Countless new opportunities, both for narrative play and for social and historical detail, are immediately created. If the Mythguide is willing to do the necessary development and preparation, the incorporation of one or more mythic species should prove both challenging and interesting.

Each mythic species or race should have its own Heritage Template detailing the racial and cultural norms of the species, their inherent abilities and capacities, and their general personality and psychological tendencies. If more specific information becomes necessary, the Mythguide can subdivide the species Templates into separate racial Templates and the racial Templates into individual cultural Templates. Such precise design depends on the needs and desires of both the Mythguide and the Ensemble.

The Mythguide, in conjunction with the Ensemble, must also determine which mythic species can be used by personas. If allowing a persona from a specific mythic race is going to cause problems within the Ensemble or severely unbalance play, then the Mythguide should feel justified in reserving the mythic race for Mythguide personas only.

No matter what mythic species and races are ultimately included in the environment, the Ensemble must never lose sight of the purpose and intent of such inclusion. The possibilities inherent in interracial and inter-species contact and interaction are limitless, and should provide many hours of challenging roleplaying. Their inclusion should make the game even more interesting and playable. If this does not happen - if the inclusion of new races causes problems or casts game balance too severely - then the Mythguide is probably better off not using them. However, when used properly, the increased diversity



created by including mythic races should add a fresh interactive dimension to any Canticle.

PERSONA HERITAGE

A persona's Heritage depends on the Heritage Templates being used in a particular Narrative Environment. A player should be allowed to choose his persona's Heritage from among several possibilities. The nature and detail of the available Heritage opportunities are the result of the Ensemble's needs and wishes. If play is confined to a small area, such opportunities may be more limited and general. If play is occurring on a larger scale, the Mythguide should be able to provide a number of more specific and diverse cultural opportunities for persona development.

A consideration that immediately presents itself is the relationship between an available culture and society. Is the culture a part of a larger society? Are several societies components of the culture? Does the culture constitute an entire society in itself? The player and Mythguide should define a culture's relationship to the Narrative Environment, since this relationship will affect certain elements of the Heritage Template. For more information regarding these effects, consult the Heritage Template description later in this chapter.

The persona's basic relationship to the culture also needs to be established early. Obviously, the most common situation is for a persona to simply be a member of his home culture (i.e. he or she was born into it). However, the persona could also have been a stolen child, a foundling, or a runaway. Such distinction affect a persona's cultural background but not their racial or species background.

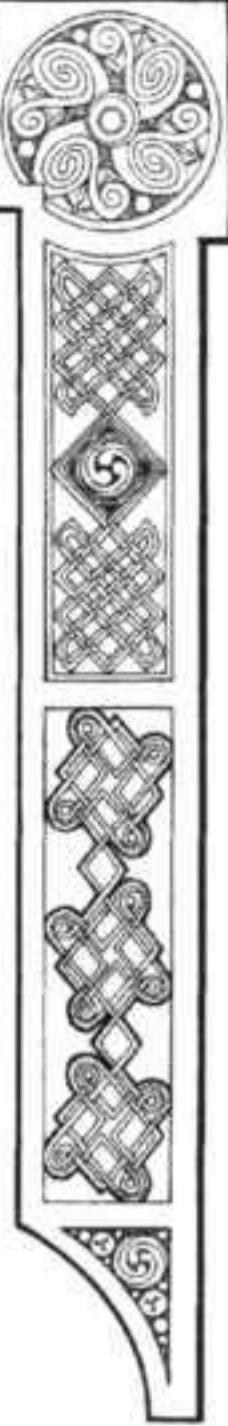
For example, a persona who was raised by a species other than his own would have the specific cultural and racial knowledges associated with the culture that raised him. However, he would not possess any species-unique abilities since he is not a biological member of the species (even if he was raised as one). A human child found and raised by elves would not have superior elven eyesight or resistance, even if in most other respects he considered himself a member of the race and species who raised him. Culturally, he would be an 'elf'. The culture in which a persona is raised dictates many of the persona's Early Development opportunities.

Determining Persona Heritage

There are three methods for determining Persona Heritage in Aria, and the Ensemble should choose the method which best suits its own needs. The first and simplest method is to allow the players to assign a Heritage to their personas. If this method is employed, there is no cost to purchase the Template. The player chooses the race or species he wishes to play and automatically receives all appropriate Aspects and benefits associated with the chosen Heritage. The assignment of the Heritage Template thus becomes a simple decision and not an integral part of the Persona Creation process.

The second method of determining Persona Heritage uses Windows of Opportunity to purchase a persona's species or race. The player expends a single Situational Window to make his persona a member of a Mythic Race. Players will normally not have to purchase their Heritage if they wish to be human, although if humans are not the Dominant species in a specific setting it might cost the player if he wishes to play one. Generally, the most common species or race in a given setting does not carry any Window cost with it. Only the less common, or Mythic, species usually carry such costs. For example, if a player wishes to play an elf in a primarily human world, he would have to expend a Situational Window to purchase the appropriate Heritage Template. If the same player wished to play a human persona in the same setting, there would be no Window cost.

The final method of purchasing Heritage Templates assigns Interaction Point costs to their various elements. Assigning costs to a Mythic Race's innate capacities helps maintain play balance, and the Mythguide should consider using this method if a species or race has an unusually large number of special abilities. If this method is being used, the Mythguide assigns relative Interaction Point costs to all special abilities or capacities inherent in the Template (using Background Aspect costs as a guide), while Background Aspects for the persona are purchased normally. The Mythguide can determine which abilities are assessed these costs. Depending on the setting being used, the Mythguide might require the expenditure of a Window of Opportunity in addition to the Interaction Point costs involved. If a race is particularly rare in a certain world, such a determination method could be appropriate.



CULTURAL ORIENTATION

The stance a persona takes in relation to his Heritage group can determine several important aspects of background and development. This personal approach to a culture's Heritage Orientation, views, and motivations is termed a persona's Cultural Orientation. Six Cultural Orientations are possible: *Embrace*, *Refuse*, *Select*, *Suppress*, *Consider*, and *Abstain*.

A persona can *Embrace* a culture's Heritage Orientation. Such personas hold and support beliefs that complement the prevailing designs and motivations of their Heritage group. These personas have at least two Motivations that relate directly to their Template's Heritage Orientation (one of which is often a Passion). Of course, a persona may also have additional Motivations based on family or background. Most individuals who hold leadership positions (and high Status) in a culture will Embrace the culture's views.

A persona who *Refuses* a culture's Heritage Orientation opposes most of the views and beliefs that their Template embraces. They never have common Motivations, and they will always have at least one opposing Motivation. Depending on the nature of the Heritage group and the persona's relationship to it, the persona might be shut out of the culture as a result of his Orientation. Personas in positions of authority in a culture never Refuse their group's Heritage Orientation, nor do personas who desire high Status within their Heritage group.

A persona who *Selects* his beliefs chooses from among the components of his group's Heritage Orientation. He may agree with some beliefs and disagree with others, but his views are generally compatible with the culture's. Such a persona always has a single Motivation in common with the Template, although he can also have an opposing Motivation (which is rarely higher than the complementary Motivation). This is the most common Cultural Orientation.

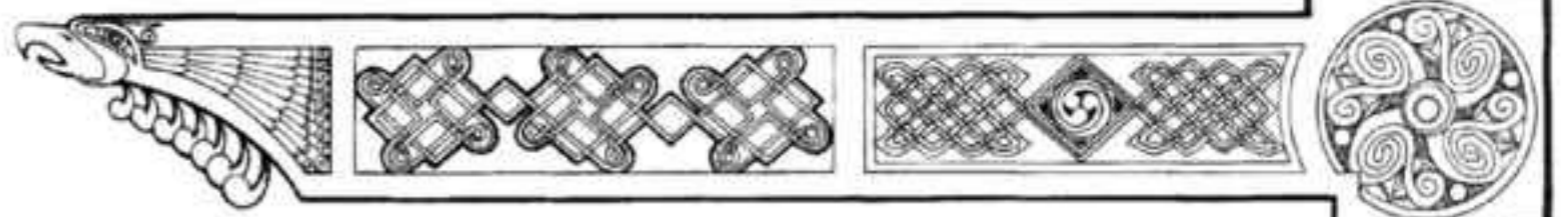
A persona can also *Suppress* his views. The persona can either agree or disagree with his culture's Heritage Orientation. However, for some reason he has chosen to keep his true beliefs secret. The persona chooses one or more surface Motivations to disguise his actual views. Such action may be necessary because of the larger society in which a persona lives (especially if the persona holds an official position), or because the persona lives and travels amidst hostile cultures. The Mythguide should determine the ramifications of a discovery of the persona's real beliefs. In certain situations a persona may actually con-



Amilani Freedom Fighter

Petruchae's Heritage

All natives of the City-State of Amilanth are humans of Temreloni racial stock. They are a lithe olive-skinned folk commonly possessing dark, black or brown hair, and almond, grey, or green eyes. Because the narrative is set within the southern cape, there are no costs incurred by purchasing an Amilani Heritage. Petruchae is representative of the average Amilani male. Physically he appears average. This serves as an advantage for Petruchae because he is a fraternal member of the secret Order of the Ebon Claw, a guerilla organization dedicated to establishing gender equality within the City-State of Amilanth. Engaging such a covert side-profession during evening hours requires that Petruchae affect a mask of content during his working hours. To fit this concept, Petruchae's Cultural Orientation is considered *suppressed*. He conceals his true discontent behind a more amicable facade of obedience and hopelessness.



vince himself of a surface belief. A persona who Suppresses his Cultural Orientation will have at least one hidden Motivation and at least one apparent Motivation.

A persona who *Considers* his views reserves judgment on most crucial cultural matters. The persona has his own beliefs but is still unsure of them. As a result he takes no Motivations that are a direct result of cultural influences (either favorable or unfavorable). The persona can still choose family or personal Motivations. This Cultural Orientation is often appropriate for younger personas; it allows a player to develop his persona's relationship to their Heritage group over time through actual roleplaying. If the persona's Orientation changes during play, the player should note the change and choose any appropriate Motivations.

Finally, a persona can *Abstain* from an overt Cultural Orientation. An Abstaining persona is either removed from such considerations or simply does not care about them. The persona might take no interest in his Heritage group, or he may have been cast out for some reason. A persona with this Cultural Orientation may still choose Motivations related to other areas (family, background, etc.) of development.

☉ Heritage Templates ☉

Once the Mythguide and the Ensemble have decided which species, races, and cultures to include in the Canticle, Heritage Templates must be designed for them. Heritage Templates can be designed for each species, for each race within a species, or for divergent cultures among both races and species. The Mythguide needs to determine how much racial and cultural detail is necessary in his Canticle; this decision determines the creation philosophy (general or specific) used. If the Canticle is oriented towards high fantasy, it might be enough to know that a Mythguide persona is simply an elf, a dwarf, or a human. However, if the Canticle supports more complex social and cultural interaction, designing Heritage Templates for specific racial or cultural divisions might facilitate and enhance the narrative experience. Regardless of the final design philosophy employed, the Mythguide should be sure to keep the scope of the individual Heritage Template in mind during the course of the design process.

Elements of the Heritage Template

The following section provides an outline of the standard elements used to construct a Heritage Template. A design sheet is included as well.

PERSONA CONSIDERATIONS

PHYSICAL TRAITS

FRAME

The average Frame Value for both sexes of the Heritage group should be listed here. The average Frame Value of the Template affects the Interaction Point cost when purchasing a persona's actual Frame. The Variation (see Appearance sections) among Frame types for the race or species should also be recorded within this element. The Mythguide may wish to list any maximum or minimum Frame Values here if they exist.

HEIGHT

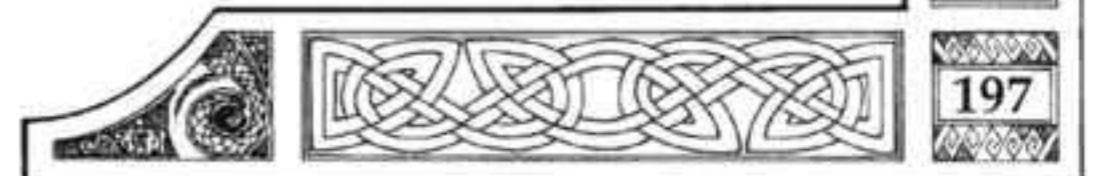
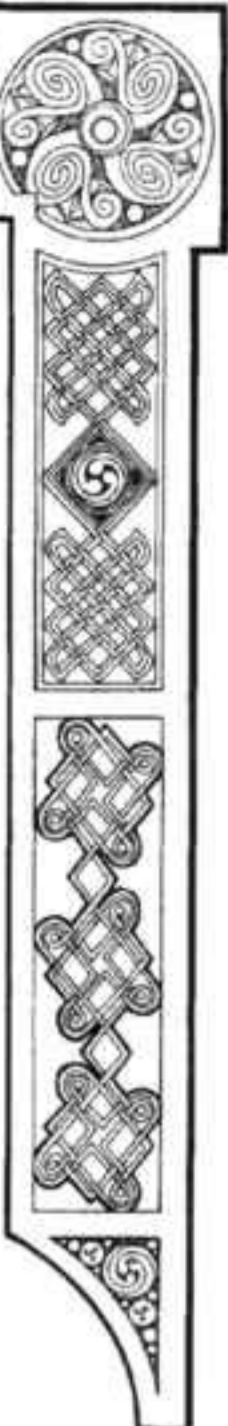
Both the average Height and the Variation among Heights for both sexes of the Heritage group should be listed here. Height, in addition to Frame, is important when determining the Weight of a persona. The Mythguide can also detail maximum or minimum heights (even 'record' maximums and minimums, if he wishes).

PHYSIQUE

The average Physique, as well as the Physique Variation, for both sexes of the Heritage group is recorded here. Once Physique is found, its corresponding Weight Multiplier can be used to find average Weights for members of the Heritage group. The Mythguide may wish to detail maximum or minimum Physiques for the Template.

APPEARANCE

Appearance considerations for members of the Template should be detailed here. These include Complexion (ranging from Very Dark to Very Fair), Hair Color, Hair Texture, and Eye Color. For example, members of a specific human race may never have red hair, or green eyes - or maybe whenever one has red hair,





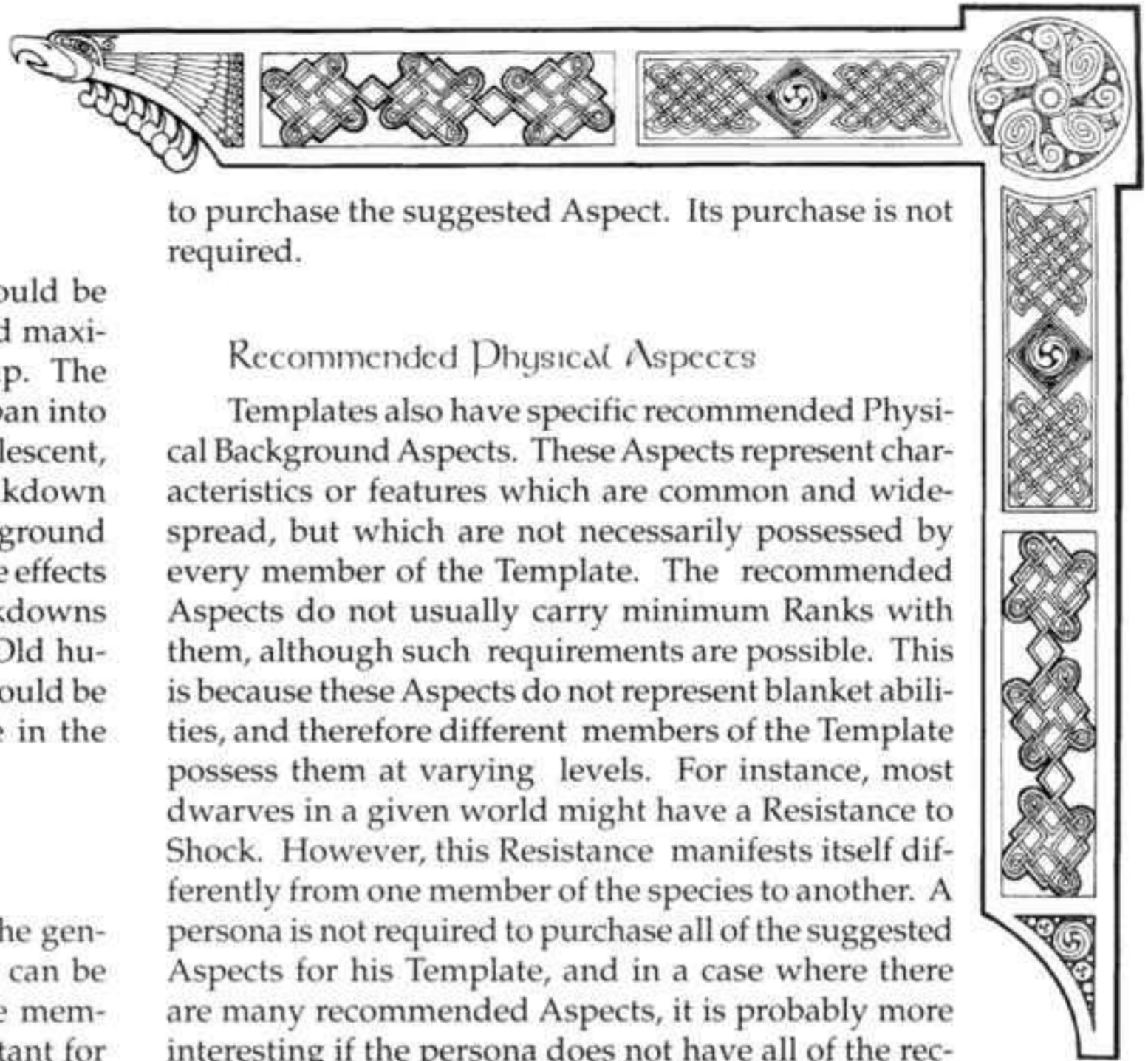
he will *always* have green eyes. Complexion and Hair Color also enter into these relationships - a certain complexion in a certain race often dictates specific eye and hair color possibilities. Any common Appearance Aspects or distinctive racial or species features should also be described. Certain features may be unusual outside a species, but within the species they are considered normal. The Mythguide should keep point of view in mind when detailing a Heritage group's Appearance. Judicious use of different appearance elements enhances diversity and stresses the idea of true cultural interaction in an environment.

Resilience

This element details the general physical resilience and endurance of members of the Template. This is something of a general description, affecting certain recommended Background Aspects or abilities as well as the minimum and maximum Attribute recommendations at the end of the Heritage Template. For example, a dwarven race might be described as 'unusually hardy and resistant to fatigue'. This description would take shape both in the race's minimum Endur-

ance and Hardiness Attributes and in the race's recommended Physical and Psychological Background Aspects (perhaps a Resistance to Fatigue Aspect). Alternately, certain unusual abilities might be expressed as Unique Abilities. Such decisions should be made by the Mythguide based on his own world and Canticle structures

Special modifiers and considerations which are neither Aspects nor Unique Abilities also fall within this element of the Template. Maybe a Heritage group always gets a minus one Difficulty modifier to Endurance Trials, regardless of the situation in which the Attribute Trial is made. Or perhaps the modifiers are against a certain type of magic (dwarves might get a modifier against earth magic, or elemental magic in general). These special considerations do not cost Interaction Points; they are an integrated part of a specific race or species. All members of the Template possess them, and the Mythguide should make sure that such abilities do not unbalance play.



Lifespan

The average Lifespans for both sexes should be detailed in this section, as well as the recorded maximum ages for members of the Heritage group. The Mythguide should also break down the Lifespan into the appropriate Age Categories - Child, Adolescent, Young, Adult, Old, and Very Old. This breakdown can be important both during a persona's Background Development period and when determining the effects of advanced age in older personas. The breakdowns among different races may vary greatly - an Old human might be 64 years old while a Old dwarf could be 464 years old (or the opposite could be true in the Mythguide's Canticle).

Gender

The proportionate relationship between the genders should be detailed in this section. This can be expressed as percentages of male and female members of the Heritage group, and can be important for demographic considerations such as marriage and birth rates. The Mythguide can make all of his races fifty-fifty male/female or he can include some inequitable ratios. For example, perhaps some cataclysm or disease had killed most of the male elves in the Mythguide's world several years prior to the beginning of the Canticle. The ratio of male to female elves in such a world might only be ten-ninety. Interesting cultural or historical reasons should be found to explain extreme differences in ratio.

Inherent Physical Aspects

Certain Heritage groups may have inherent Physical Background Aspects. These Aspects represent specific racial or species characteristics and features, and must be purchased by all members of the Template. Innate resistances and immunities fall within this category. At the Mythguide's option, the required Aspects might also carry minimum Ranks with them. For example, all elves in the Mythguide's Canticle might be required to purchase both Slow Metabolism and Immunity (Disease), each at Rank seven. The required Aspects and their corresponding levels should reflect primary facets or abilities of the individual Heritage group - qualities which all of the group's members would be expected to possess. If all members do not possess a quality, but many do, the appropriate Aspect should appear within the Recommended Physical Aspects section. A player designing a persona who is a member of the group may choose whether or not

to purchase the suggested Aspect. Its purchase is not required.

Recommended Physical Aspects

Templates also have specific recommended Physical Background Aspects. These Aspects represent characteristics or features which are common and widespread, but which are not necessarily possessed by every member of the Template. The recommended Aspects do not usually carry minimum Ranks with them, although such requirements are possible. This is because these Aspects do not represent blanket abilities, and therefore different members of the Template possess them at varying levels. For instance, most dwarves in a given world might have a Resistance to Shock. However, this Resistance manifests itself differently from one member of the species to another. A persona is not required to purchase all of the suggested Aspects for his Template, and in a case where there are many recommended Aspects, it is probably more interesting if the persona does not have all of the recommended elements.

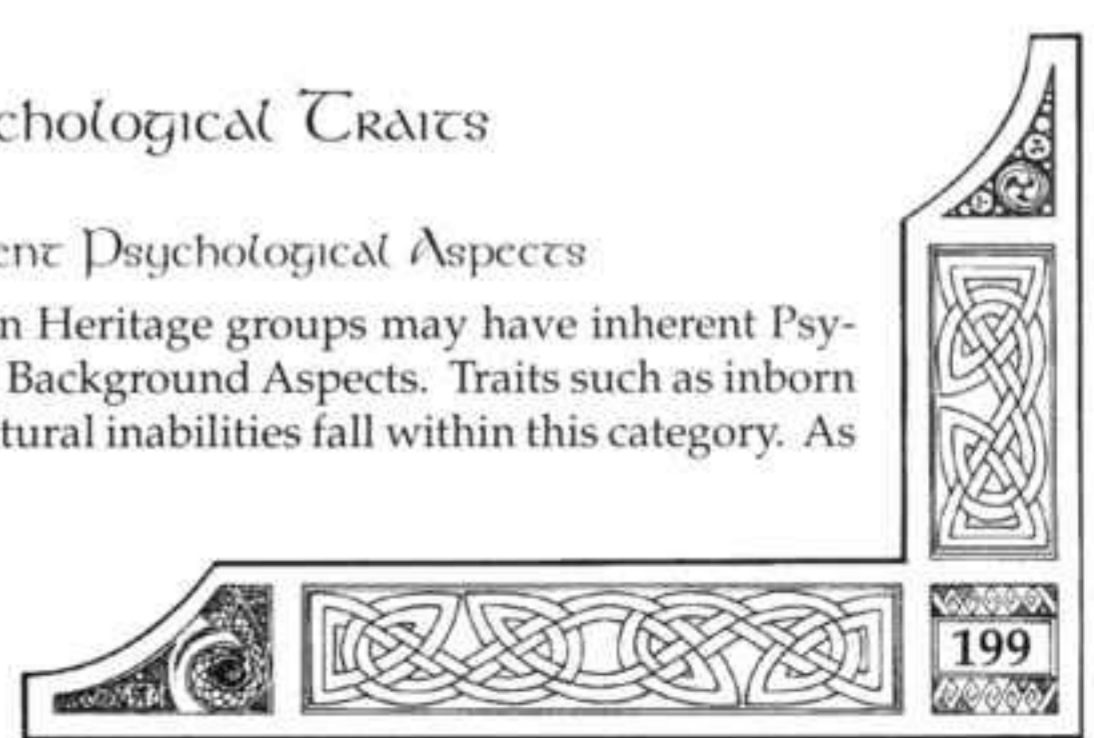
Unique Physical Abilities

Individual Heritage groups may also have certain Unique Abilities. These abilities are those which do not fall within any existing Background Aspect description. They may be represented either by designing Unique Aspects or by treating them as innate capacities. Any Unique Physical Abilities are usually possessed by every member of the race. If the Unique Abilities are handled by creating Unique Aspects, the Aspects may carry minimum Ranks with them (because of the pervasive nature of the abilities within the race or species). For instance, certain elves might have the Unique Aspect of being able to go without sleep for extended periods of time. The Mythguide assigns the Aspect a required minimum Rank of five. If the abilities are being treated as innate capacities, there is no cost to purchase them. The Mythguide simply needs to determine their relative power and effects.

Psychological Traits

Inherent Psychological Aspects

Certain Heritage groups may have inherent Psychological Background Aspects. Traits such as inborn fears or natural inabilities fall within this category. As



with the Inherent Physical Aspects, any Inherent Psychological Aspects present represent universal features of the Heritage group and must be purchased by every member of the Template. These Aspects may also carry minimum Ranks with them.

Recommended Psychological Aspects

Heritage groups can also have recommended Psychological Background Aspects. These Aspects are suggested for use with the Template but are not required. Every member of a group may not possess these Aspects, but a large cross section of the group probably will. Recommended Aspects do not usually have minimum Ranks, although it is possible for the Mythguide to assign them if they seem appropriate. Any unique motivations, affinities, hates, fears, weaknesses, or phobias are included within this element of the Template. Members of specific Heritage groups are not required to purchase any of these Aspects, although their use often cements an individual's relationship to his Heritage. Remember that the Template itself also has its own Orientation and Motivations (see Cultural Features), and that the Recommended Background Aspects are normally based on these. Whether or not a persona has any of the Template's Recommended Aspects depends on the persona's Cultural Orientation.

Mental and Spiritual Traits

Inherent Aspects

Certain Heritage groups have inherent Mental or Spiritual Background Aspects. These Aspects are possessed by every member of the Template, and are normally rare (because of their all-encompassing nature). For example, a species associated with pure magical energy might have innate Magical Talent or Heightened Magical Affinity, while one with a unique kinship with an animal species could have Animal Kinship or Natural Friend. The implications of such powers being present in every member of a species should be obvious, and as a result these inherent Traits should be treated and assigned carefully. If Inherent Mental or Spiritual Aspects exist in a particular Heritage group, each member of the group must purchase the Aspects (which often carry minimum Ranks with them).

Recommended Aspects

Most Heritage groups also have suggested Mental or Spiritual Background Aspects associated with them. These Aspects represent Traits that occur in a large cross-section of the Template's population. Players can choose whether or not to purchase these Aspects. Recommended Aspects do not usually require Rank minimums, although it is possible for the Mythguide to assign them in appropriate cases.

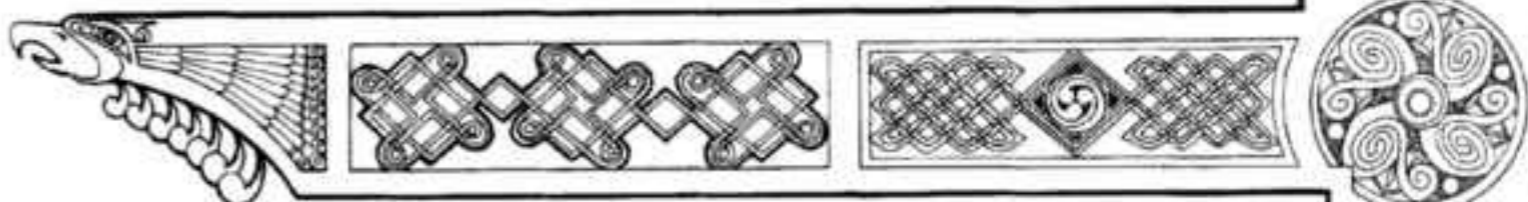
Unique Abilities

Heritage groups can also possess Unique Mental or Spiritual Abilities. This element includes those abilities that fall outside the parameters of the existing Aspect descriptions, and which are unique to the Template being described. These abilities can be treated as either Unique Aspects or innate capacities, and are often found in every member of the Heritage group (although they can be selective). If Unique Aspects are used to detail these abilities, they usually have minimum Rank requirements. For example, a specific human race might have the innate ability to commune with ancestral spirits. This ability would probably be represented by a Unique Spiritual Aspect with a required Rank of seven. If the abilities are being treated as inherent capacities, there is no Interaction Point cost to purchase them. However, the Mythguide still needs to determine the relative effects and power of the abilities.

Development Considerations

Inherent Expertises

Certain expertises are considered Inherent Expertises, and represent specific capacities which are possessed by every member of a Heritage group. Proficiency in a form of spoken language is an example of such an Inherent Expertise, while proficiency in the corresponding written form of the language would probably be considered a Recommended Expertise. Various sensory, perception, or physical expertises may also be appropriate as Inherent Expertises. Since this category indicates skilled abilities present in every member of the Template, the Mythguide should be careful when assigning the requisite Expertises. When a racial or species group possesses Inherent Expertises, every member of the group will have the appropriate Expertise at Rank one. It costs nothing for a member persona to open the Expertise, and the Expertise itself can be developed during the Background Develop-



ment process in the normal fashion. In extreme cases, the Mythguide might rule that a particular Expertise is possessed to a high degree by an entire Heritage group. In these cases, a minimum Rank value can be assigned. Every member of the race opens the expertise at this elevated Rank. Cases such as this should be both rare and unique to a specific environment or situation.

Recommended Expertises

Certain expertises are recommended for members of specific Heritage groups. Recommended Expertises are possessed by a large cross-section of the group's population as a result of specific cultural or environmental considerations. The Script Aptitude in one's native language falls within this element, since writing ability and knowledge often depend on a persona's Status Archetype. Recommended Expertises form a broader category than Inherent Expertises because their possession is not universal. Players decide which Recommended Expertises to purchase for their personas, and the chosen expertises are purchased and developed normally. At the Mythguide's option, suggested Ranks can also be given with the Recommended Expertises.

Profile Restrictions

Any unique racial or cultural restrictions to persona development should be described here. Certain cultural situations can be prohibitive to specific vocational paths. For example, a culture might exist in which only women are permitted to wield magic or enter religious vocations. A Template's Heritage Orientation or Status framework can also affect development possibilities in an environment and provide either opportunity or restriction. The Mythguide should also remember that even when Profile Restrictions are present, players may still circumvent them through the judicious use of Windows of Opportunity.

Minimum Attributes

Certain Heritage groups may have minimum required values for specific Attributes. If appropriate within the environment being used, such restrictions should be detailed here. For example, a race that dwells deep within a desert region might have unusually high Endurance and Hardiness values, represented by minimums of 4 for each characteristic. The Mythguide should be careful when assigning such minimums, because the values will affect every member of the group being designed. In some cases, it

might also be appropriate for the Mythguide to determine recommended maximums for certain Attributes.

CULTURAL FEATURES

Environmental Adaptation

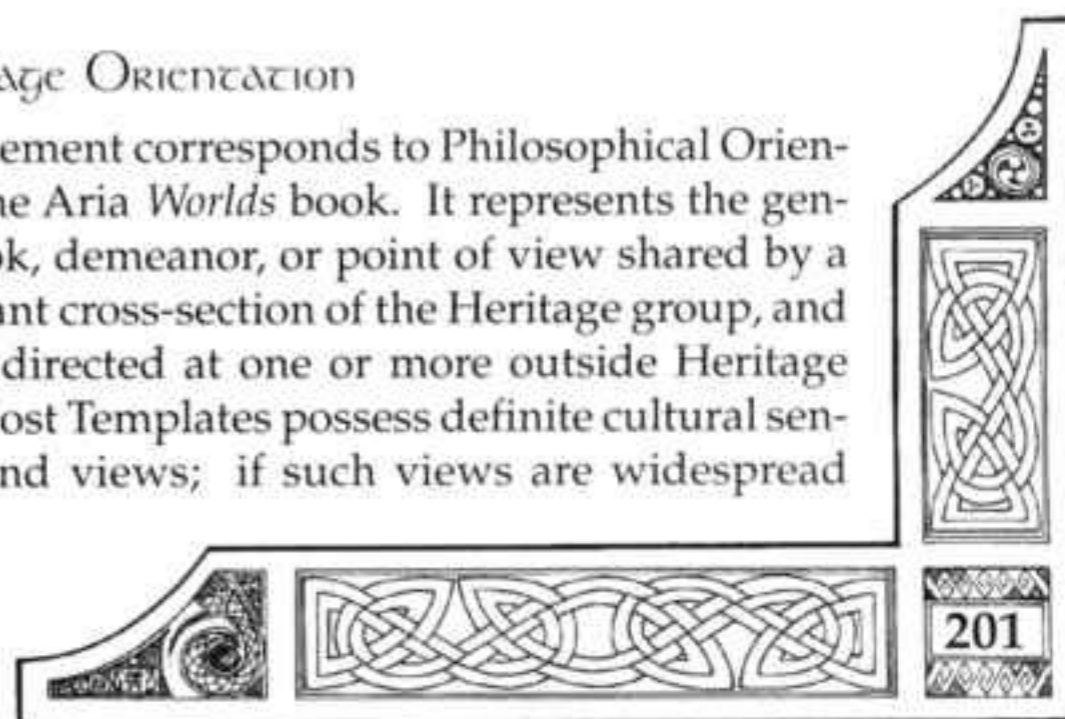
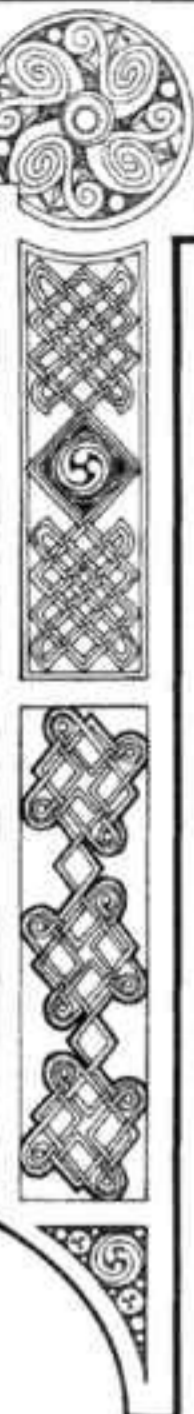
A Template's principal environment or environment of origin should be listed here. The Template's adaptability to other environments and climates should also be rated as High, Average, or Low. This consideration is more important for entire species or races. For instance, a species that has developed in a cool desert region might have a difficult time transplanting itself to a sweltering jungle (or the Template may have no trouble at all). A Template's ability to adapt can affect interaction during an Interactive History.

Dominance

The relationship of the Template to both society and environment should be detailed here. What does the Template represent? A species? An individual culture? Once the Template's place in the environment is defined, the Mythguide should indicate whether it is a Dominant group in the Narrative Environment. Dominance can represent population size, power (any kind), influence or a combination of these factors. Members of a society's political and ruling classes often come from Dominant cultures, and Dominant Templates usually have disproportionate amounts of power and authority in relation to other social groups. Dominance is an abstract concept, and the Mythguide should determine its importance in the Narrative Environment. The nature of a Template's Dominance should be described by the Mythguide; it is usually based on Power (military, esoteric, political), Tradition (maybe a certain culture or race has always been an environment's priestly class), or Philosophy (perhaps a certain culture is revered because it espouses specific ideals or qualities). Dominance plays a small role in the development of Interactive Histories.

Heritage Orientation

This element corresponds to Philosophical Orientation in the *Aria Worlds* book. It represents the general outlook, demeanor, or point of view shared by a predominant cross-section of the Heritage group, and is usually directed at one or more outside Heritage groups. Most Templates possess definite cultural sensibilities and views; if such views are widespread



enough that they provide a reasonably accurate method of identifying members of the Template, or of predicting behavior or reactions of the Heritage group's members, they should be included within this element. There are three primary Heritage Orientations: Ethnocentric, Balanced, and Relativistic.

Ethnocentric Orientations view and judge other Heritage groups in terms of their own accepted beliefs and customs. They tend to be rather closed-minded and fearful, although both arrogance and violence are other outlets for groups with this Orientation. Ethnocentric cultures are often isolationist.

Balanced Orientations achieve a kind of cultural equilibrium. They recognize and accept the differences inherent in any environment that supports cultural diversity, although they do not necessarily attempt to understand other cultures or ways of life. Balanced cultures are often content to simply maintain normal relations with neighboring Heritage groups.

Relativist Orientations view other Heritage groups from a completely objective point of view. These groups are open-minded and accepting, and tend to have a genuine curiosity about other cultural systems. They do not evaluate foreign Heritage groups in terms of their own customs and moral conventions; rather, they attempt to truly understand and appreciate diverse ways of life.

These Orientations, while representing general views, are also directed toward specific foreign Heritage groups. The Mythguide should decide on the nature of such concentrations, as well as the principal manner in which the Orientation manifests itself. For example, some Ethnocentric cultures give in to hatred and violence while others simply shun all contact with other groups. Balanced cultures may be ambivalent towards other cultures, or they could be suspicious. This is called the Manifestation of a group's Heritage Orientation. The Mythguide should simply give the Orientation a short description (usually one word) that describes its principal form of Manifestation (the Mythguide can use Personality Traits or Motivations as descriptive tools). Possible Manifestations include hatred, fear, hostility, friendship, curiosity, and equability. A single Heritage group can have several Manifestations depending on its relationships with other groups.

Each Heritage Orientation is further defined by a number of possible Orientation Aspects. The possible Aspects roughly correspond to the Philosophical Orientation Aspects presented in the *Aria Worlds* book,

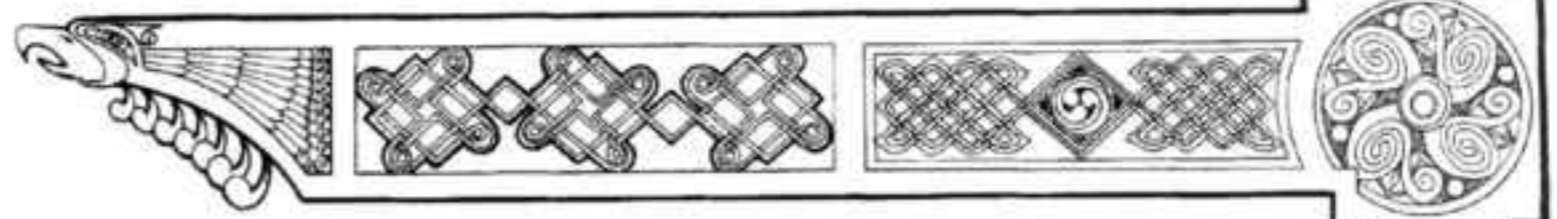
although these tend to be based more on cultural sentiment than on policy. Each Aspect description consists of the Aspect category and a specific concentration or reaction. These concentrations often overlap with a group's Manifestation. For example, a culture with an Ethnocentric Orientation has a prejudice Manifestation and an Orientation Aspect of Conviction (prejudiced). Like Manifestations, the Mythguide can also direct Aspects toward specific Objects, making them as general or as detailed as he likes. The previous example could become Conviction (prejudiced against all northern peoples, but particularly the Arigun Plains cultures). Orientation Aspects are often directed at the society within which a culture rests. Such expression allows Orientation Aspects to assume an important descriptive function within an environment. Seven Orientation Aspect categories are possible (although the Mythguide should feel free to design any additional categories he feels are necessary).

The Mythguide may also want to add a narrative element to Heritage Orientation, writing a set of outlook and culture-based guidelines describing the race's principal motivations, philosophies, and goals. Background Aspects can also be used to further enhance a Template's Heritage Orientation. Appropriate Aspects might include Hunted, Debt/Creditor, Ally, Adversary, Dependent, and Unique Responsibility (such as an obligation to guard a cultural relic or holy place). Finally, the Mythguide may wish to describe the Origin of a particular Heritage Orientation and its attendant Orientation Aspects and Manifestations. Such Origins are often important since they contribute to a Template's history, its current identity, and its future development.

The relationship between a society's Philosophical Orientation and a culture's Heritage Orientation can be important. If a Heritage group is Dominant, and if it exists within a larger society, its Heritage Orientation must complement the society's Philosophical Orientation. The Mythguide should determine what constitutes 'complementary' Orientations in a particular environment. Heritage groups that are not Dominant can have Heritage Orientations which directly oppose their parent society's Philosophical Orientation.

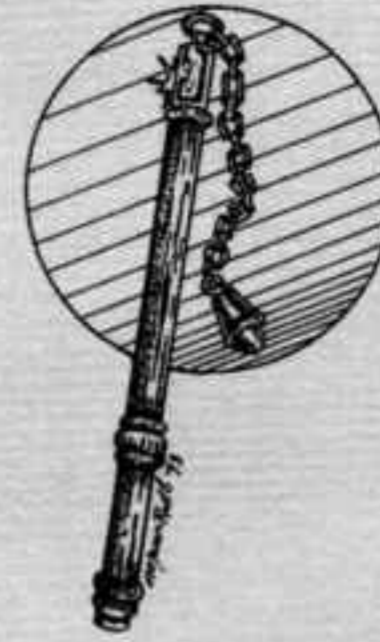
Custom and Lifestyle

This element provides basic notes on the structure and relationships within a community or society composed of the Heritage group. The Mythguide might wish to detail settlement patterns, normal community types and layouts, or the average daily routine of a



HERITAGE ORIENTATION ASPECTS

Acquisition Aspects motivate Heritage groups who are trying to acquire or procure something. The Object of an Acquisition Aspect can be either tangible or abstract. For example, an enslaved culture could have the Aspect Acquisition (freedom) or Acquisition (social value). A hostile culture could have Acquisition (wealth) or (land), while a Relativist culture could have Acquisition (racial equality).



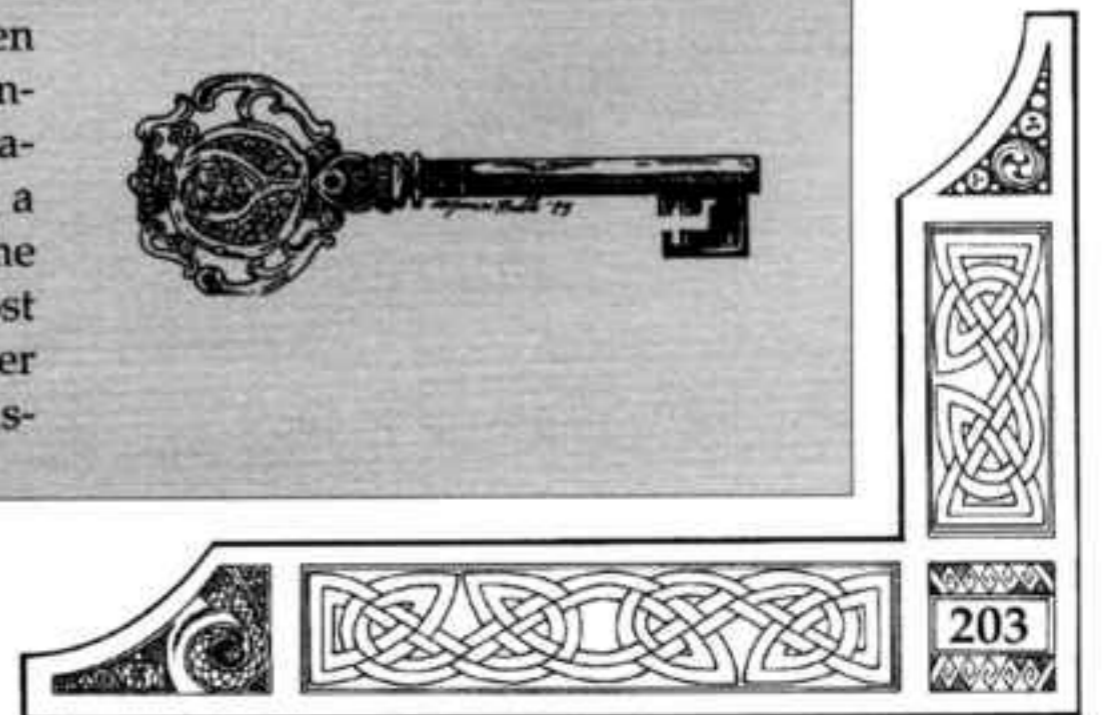
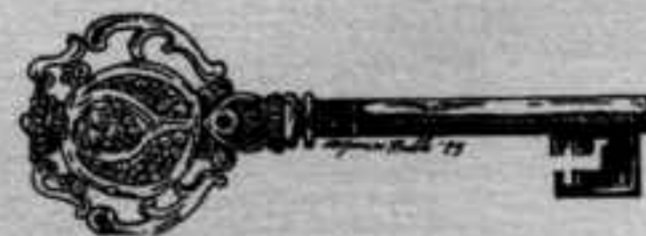
Conviction Aspects represent strong motivating beliefs and ideals. For example, a benevolent culture could have an Aspect of Conviction (generosity) while the followers of a dark power might have Conviction (destroy all minions of Light). Conviction is often motivated by a Heritage group's customs and symbols, since these things are usually direct extensions of a group's beliefs.



Prevention Aspects attempt to stop either actions or beliefs. The Heritage group can take a defensive stance, preventing only those actions directed towards it, or it can take an active interest in the events of the environment at large. For example, a Relativist culture could have an Aspect of Prevention (racial conflict) while an Ethnocentric culture might have the Aspect Prevention (Assimilation). Objects can also be more concrete; a culture with a dark secret surrounding its origins could have the Aspect Prevention (discovery of Origins). Finally, active cultures use this Aspect to justify abrupt or preemptive action. A group with a Prevention (repression) could use the Aspect to justify a preemptive attack on another culture.

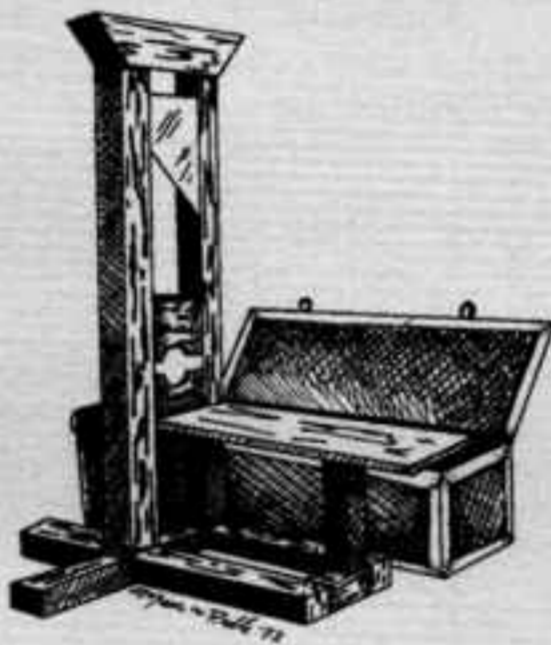


Tradition Aspects represent views or beliefs that have been passed down as a matter of course in the group. Where the Conviction Aspect encompasses active and passionate beliefs, the Tradition Aspect represents passive, staid beliefs. A culture feels a certain way because the previous generation felt that way, and the generation before that... This Aspect can be used to explain almost any point of view, especially in older Heritage groups. Remember that Tradition Aspects often have their roots in the Conviction Aspects of several centuries before.

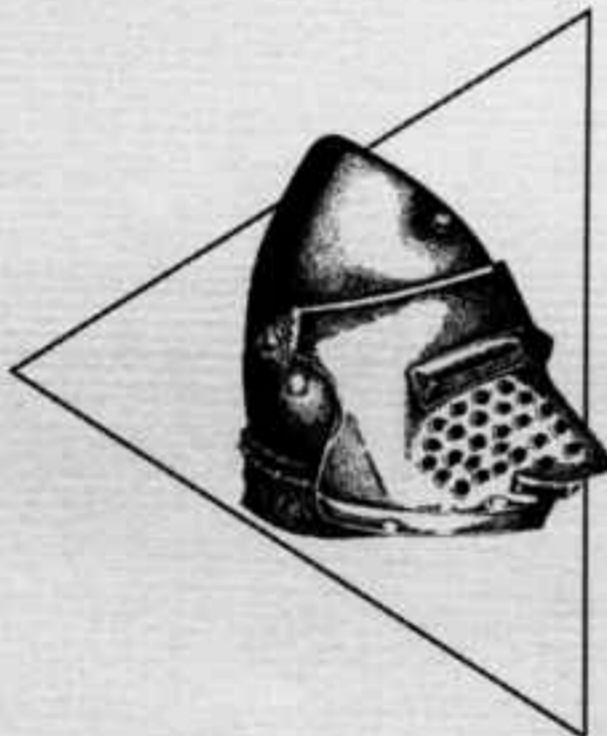




Stagnation Aspects represent a general deterioration and degeneration of a Heritage group's traditional systems of values, customs, and beliefs. For instance, an Ethnocentric culture could have a Manifestation of decadence and an Orientation Aspect of Stagnation (decadence). A Relativist culture could have an Aspect of Stagnation (cultural identity) because of its continued exposure and assimilation of multicultural practices.



Revolution Aspects indicate a volatile cultural atmosphere that inevitably leads to major change. It does not have to represent violent change, but it always represents rapid evolution on a fundamental level. For example, a Balanced culture could have an Aspect of Revolution (philosophy) that could change its Manifestation. A Relativist culture might have an Aspect of Revolution (custom), indicating that the culture is undergoing a period of radical assimilation and integration of foreign custom and belief. Cultures can also have Aspects of Revolution (parent society), indicating dissatisfaction with the society in which they rest.



Reaction Aspects are responses to actions and philosophies directed at the Heritage group. They represent reflex actions and intuitive reactions on a cultural level. For example, culture that has been the object of persecution for much of its existence might have an Aspect of Reaction (exclusion). The culture is Ethnocentric because of the way it has been treated. A culture that has been the object of numerous surprise attacks throughout its history might have an Aspect of Reaction (suspicion); its trust of other Heritage groups has been severely depleted.

society inhabited primarily by members of the Template being discussed. Marriage or burial customs, codes of ethics or conduct, unusual technology (that deviates from the environment's Technology Value), educational opportunities unique to the Heritage group, etc. - the Mythguide should detail the cultural elements he deems interesting or necessary for his purposes. Specific facts and local color add a rich dimension to any interactive situation, but the Mythguide should be careful not to go overboard. The Mythguide should outline those aspects of a group's Lifestyle that either affect or enhance narrative play, as well as those cultural elements which affect persona development. Special attention should be given to cultural aspects that diverge from the predominant forms in a larger environment or society (i.e. a culture does something differently from the environment in which it rests). Elements of the Environmental Profile used in the *Aria Worlds* book can be employed to describe certain common cultural features (see the Heritage Template Archetypes for an example of this in practice). This is especially useful when detailing the relationships between larger species or races and societies.

Status and Family

A Template's social framework should be detailed in this element. A basic Status model can be defined using the guidelines in Chapter Six, although if the *Worlds* book is being used for society design its Hierarchy of Social Estates can be used instead. Depending on the relationship between society and culture in a particular environment, it is also possible for a Heritage group to have a different Hierarchy of Social Estates than the environment in which it rests. If this occurs, personas will have Status in both models; when dealing with their Template of origin they possess Status according to its rules, while their Status in the environment at large is governed by a different group of determinants. This often occurs when many species live in the same environment. For example, while an elven culture may have no internal Status, all elves are accorded Privileged Status in a neighboring human society (probably because of one or more species-related traits).

Family considerations are handled in the same manner. The Mythguide should define a Template's Kinship structure and values (i.e. how does Inheritance work? Who is eligible? etc.) based on the nature of the Heritage group and the freedoms present within it. It is possible for a Template to have different sensibilities regarding Kinship than the environment in which it is found. The player and Mythguide will need



to resolve any conflicts (although such conflicts can be the stuff of entire Canticles).

Symbols and Creative Arts

The Mythguide should detail any prevalent symbols, their uses, and their meaning for the Heritage group. Symbolism is an important part of a culture's identity, since it serves as one of the principal vehicles for establishing hope and purpose among a people. By imbuing common items and occurrences with ritual significance, a Heritage group justifies its own place in the cosmos and gives meaning to its existence. Symbols are usually based on or related to common practices and elements of a Template. Authority and political structures are explained (this is especially true in primitive cultures), kinship ceremonies and traditions are explained, and the cultural identity is tied to one or more prominent belief systems. Religious and mythological symbols are very common, although symbols denoting rank, authority, and status are also prevalent (badges and heraldic devices are examples from our own history). Rites of passage and initiation rituals often take the form of physical trials or elaborate ceremonies; these rituals symbolize the transfor-



mation of a youth into an adult (a participating member of a culture). Many cultures also develop symbolic numbers that reappear in various places. For example, a culture with four principal gods (based on the four seasons) might also have a council of four elders, celebrate four major festivals each year, and practice a four field system of crop rotation.

Symbolism also permeates the creative and fine arts of a culture. Decorative symbols and motifs are based on images from other facets of society. Building and architectural styles also reflect such influences, as do music and performance philosophies. The Mythguide should detail any important artistic schools or trends that are present, as well as their relationship to the environment or society as a whole. The Humanities Values provided in the *Aria Worlds* book are helpful in this regard (they define the Tolerance, Prevalence, and Diversity of particular Humanities in an environment).

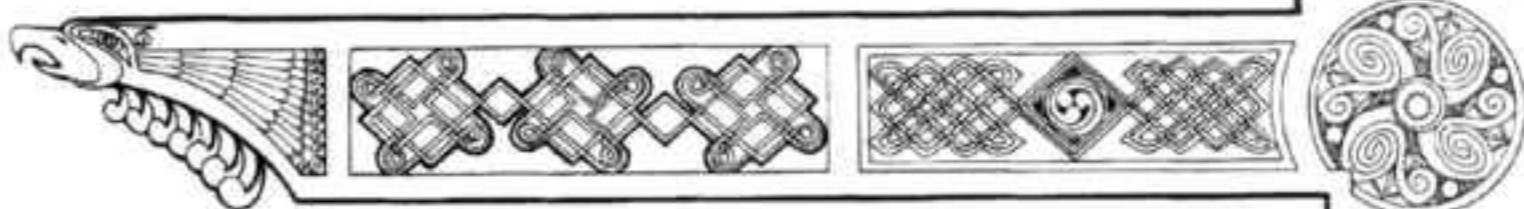
Clothing and Decoration

This element provides a basic outline of a Heritage group's preferences regarding personal accoutrement and decoration. For example, members of the group might only wear certain fabrics or styles, or

perhaps a specific type of traditional cloak or mantle. Specified styles or displays may be forbidden by cultural mores and customs, or they might indicate a young man or woman's acceptance as an adult. Methods of bodily decoration - whether jewelry, body painting, or tattoos - should also be described within this element. The Mythguide may be as general or as specific as he wishes in this section; however, he should be certain that his descriptions follow any cultural or social guidelines presented elsewhere in the Template.

Religious and Magical Considerations

The Mythguide should detail any unique religious or magical considerations within this element. Certain Heritage groups are naturally oriented toward specific religious or magical practices and abilities. For instance, a race of elves might possess natural magical ability, or all members of the race could have some type of unique association with a particular deity. Such considerations change from one environment to another, although they are usually appropriate to a specific group and its cultural situation. They must also fall within the parameters of the original Reality designed by the Mythguide for the environment (see the



sections on magic and religious system creation later in this book). Powers and abilities that are commonplace in one environment might be impossible in another. If a race or species is composed of multiple cultures, these considerations might be more appropriately divided along cultural lines. The Mythguide should also detail the Heritage group's knowledge of an environment's Reality. Such knowledge can affect both a group's Heritage Orientation and its relationship with the environment. For example, one culture might have an intricate cosmology that is completely fallacious while another culture in the same setting communes regularly with a certain higher power (and thus has an accurate view of Reality). Since the Mythguide designs the Reality of a Narrative Environment, he must determine what the various approaches toward that Reality represent. Knowledge of the Truths which govern an environment can be classified as Complete, Partial (which runs the gamut of in-betweens), or None. Partial knowledge can be further described by assigning Aspects - examples could include Partial (true nature of magic), Partial (celestial hierarchy), etc.. It is often interesting to juxtapose a Heritage group's beliefs with the actual Truths behind a particular world or environment. Magical and religious groups will also be present according to the cultural and social acceptance of magic and religion in an environment. Refer to the section on designing original Realities later in this book for more information regarding the description of individual religions, magical orders, etc..

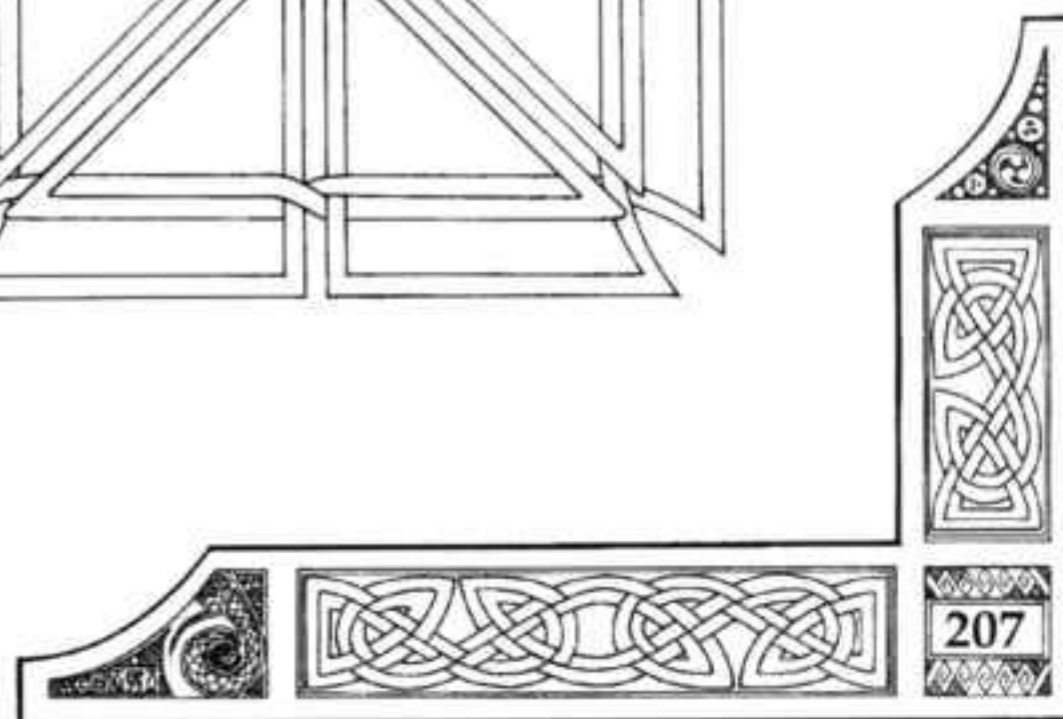
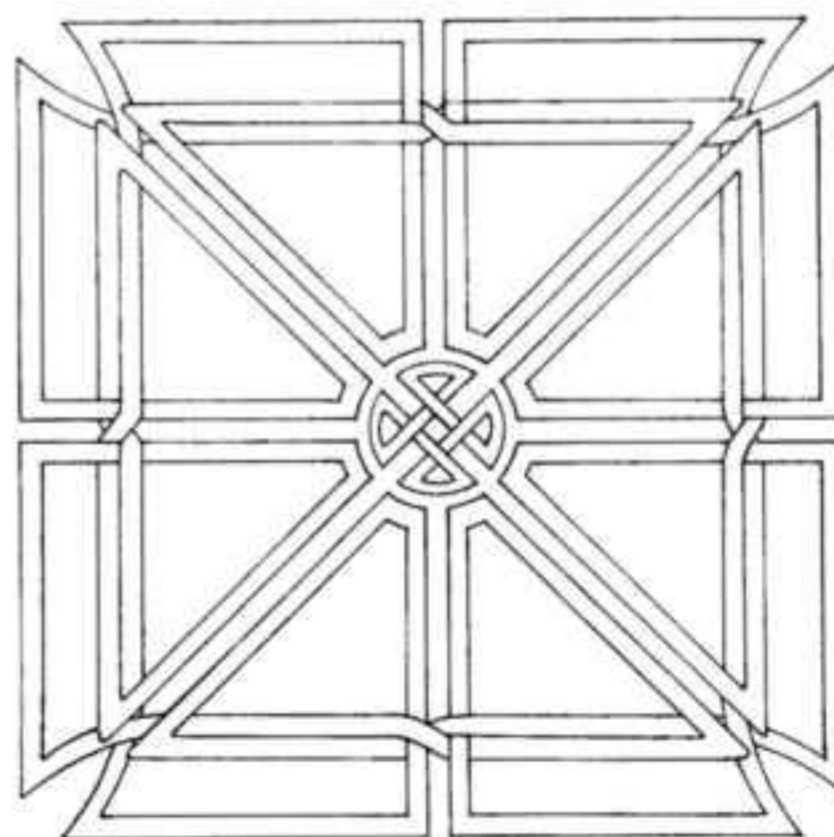
Language

Heritage groups - especially races and cultures - often share a common language or language family. Similar cultures tend to use languages that are related in some fashion, usually by common roots or phonetic structure. Such related language systems are called language families. Nuances of usage and dialect should be discussed within this element, as should the relationship a language has with other tongues belonging to the same family. The Mythguide may wish to draw a sort of language 'genealogy', mapping a root tongue and all of its subsequent branch tongues. Such a diagram allows the Mythguide to visually establish a relationship between related (and unrelated) languages. If all members of the group normally possess specific language abilities or capacities, those should be described as well. Finally, any important delineation between spoken and written proficiency (if writing exists in the culture) should be mentioned, and the type of writing used should be detailed. The Mythguide defines Literacy possibilities depending on Sta-

tus and culture. Societies with high Technology, Interaction, and Specialization Values have higher Literacy rates than less advanced societies. The higher Status Archetypes also have higher Literacy rates. The Mythguide should make a Status Trial, modified by the considerations mentioned here, to determine whether a particular Mythguide persona is Literate (player personas can always be Literate if they want to be).

HISTORICAL NOTES

If applicable, the Mythguide can detail a history or chronology for the Heritage group being designed. This chronicle can be as simple or as elaborate as the Ensemble desires, but it should at least explain the group's role in the Narrative Environment. A Heritage group's history shapes its Heritage Orientation, its traditions, and its long term motivations. It allows both the Mythguide and the Ensemble to see how a Template's current incarnation developed over time, and it shows the evolution of a culture's individual personality. The Mythguide should initially outline only the necessary elements of the history; if the Template is being used during narrative play, the history will continue to grow and develop on its own. By allowing the intricacies and nuances of a Heritage group's history to unfold over time through actual play, the resulting chronicle assumes the mantle of a truly interactive creation. This is especially true if Interactive Histories are being used to further define a Template's long term development.



Heritage Archetypes

The following section details three sample Heritage Templates. Each of the Archetypes shows a different degree of specificity. The first provides a broad-based overview of an entire species while the second defines a specific race within a species. The third Archetype details a specific culture within a race. Taken as a whole, the three Archetypes show the possible range and diversity inherent in the Heritage Template design process. Whether a Template's subject is as broad-based as an entire species, or as narrowly conceived as an individual culture, the nature of the Heritage Templates allows for the divergence. For variety's sake, the Archetypes provided here outline two sample Mythic Species (one in a broad-based fashion and one in a more specific manner) and a single human culture.

The Elves of Everdawn

- This Archetype illustrates the use of Heritage Templates in a standard environment of balanced fantasy.

The first sample Heritage Template details an entire species from the mythical world of Everdawn. Everdawn is a collection of small islands set in the midst of a trackless ocean, and is in most respects a relatively 'normal' fantasy environment. Magic is prevalent but not pervasive, the climate is pleasantly temperate, and the political situations in most lands are reasonably stable. Most of the Elven lands are coastal, and the Elves have traditionally been the shipwrights and merchants of Everdawn. The human kingdoms prosper in the land-locked interiors of the islands, dealing frequently if suspiciously with their Elven neighbors. The two races have enjoyed their uneasy peace for over two hundred years, since the last warring human nations retired into their interior mountain and valley holds. Since that time, relations have steadily improved. However, old prejudices heal slowly and both races have long memories. Although most open animosity has lessened, the two peoples are still wary of each other, and tend to keep to their own societies. The Elves are divided into several cultures, but the species as a whole retains a fierce racial identity. Their spiritual and moral traditions run deeper and flow with more purity than those of their human neighbors, and the Elves jealously guard these traditions. The Elves and humans are equally dominant on the world, and the Elves are the only Mythic Species used in the setting.

Physical Traits

Frame

The Elves of Everdawn are tall, slight, and thin by human standards. The average Frame Value for a male Elf is 4, while the average Frame Value for a female is 3. Both of these Values represent the average Frame Value within the Medium Frame Category for each Gender. Elven Frame Variation is Low.

Height

Male Elves average 6'5" (HV 9) and females average 6'2" (HV 8). The tallest Elf in Everdawn history was Andric, Lord of Emberhaven, who was rumored to have been well over seven and a half feet tall. Height Variation is Average.

Physique

Male Elves have an average Physique of Ideal with a corresponding average Weight of 163 (WV 13 x 1.2.5 Weight Multiplier) pounds. Female Elves have an average Physique of Thin, with a corresponding average Weight of 121 pounds.

Appearance

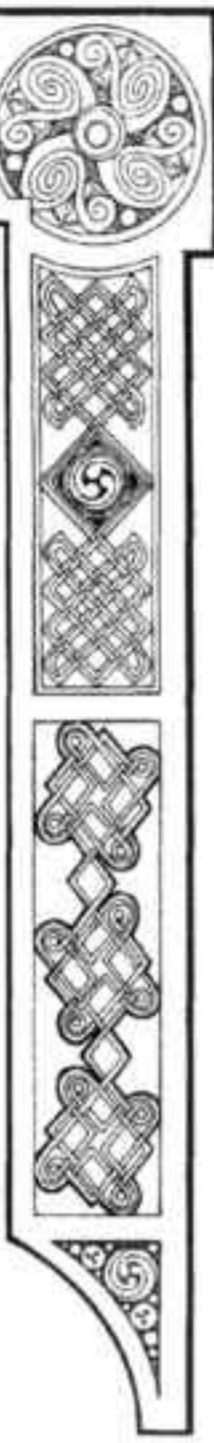
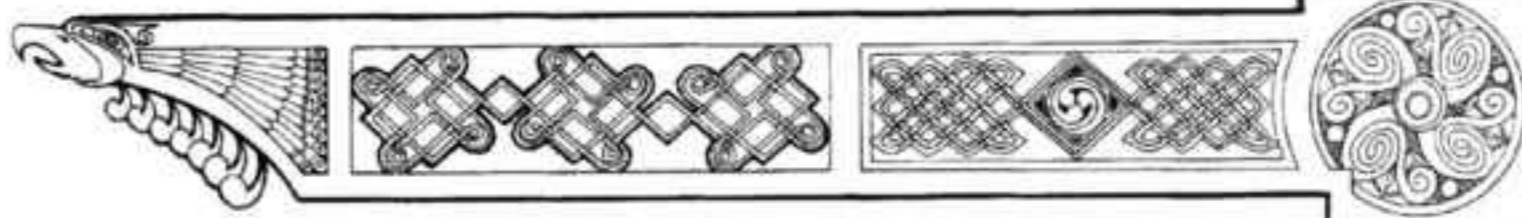
Elves have Fair or Very Fair complexions with hair of varying colors. Black, brown, or white hair are common, and all Elven hair is fine and straight. Eyes generally range from grey to dark blue or violet, with medium shades of grey blue or ice blue being the most common. The Elves enjoy angular features and have long, tapered fingers and ears.

Resilience

Elves possess normal levels of endurance with regard to physical exertion, but do not need sleep as humans do. They need to sleep for only an hour or two each night to regain their full strength, and if they do not sleep they suffer only one half the fatigue penalties of a human in a similar situation. Because of their spiritual nature, the Elves are also more susceptible to magic than are their human counterparts. Their Magical Affinity is always raised by one level.

Lifespan

The Elves of Everdawn are spiritual beings, and because of their ties to the spiritual world live very long lives. The average Lifespan of an Elven male is approximately 900 years, while that of an Elven female is 975 years. At 20 years, Adolescence begins for an Elf. Between the ages of 40 and 130 an Elf is considered Young. From the age of 131 to approximately 400 an Elf is an Adult, while Old age begins sometime around 450. Elderly Elves are those over 600, while those who live 900 years or longer are Venerable.



Gender

The ratio of male to female Elves in Everdawn is equal. For all practical purposes, the ratio should be considered to be 50/50.

Inherent Physical Aspects

All Elves have the Aspects Light Sleeper (minimum Rank of three), Immunity to Disease (minimum Rank of seven), and Enhanced Senses of both Sight and Hearing (minimum Ranks of four each).

Recommended Physical Aspects

Certain other Physical Aspects may also be appropriate for use with the Elven race. Specific Immunities and Resistances (to toxins, infection, etc.) can build on Inherent Aspects and other innate abilities.

Unique Physical Abilities

If an Elf does not sleep, he receives only half the fatigue penalties a human would (see above). Elves are also far-seeing, and can see three to four times farther than the human norm, no matter what level their Enhanced Sight Aspect might be.

Psychological Traits

The Background Aspect Calm/Peaceful Temper is usually appropriate for a member of this species. Certain individual Passions or Motivations may also be appropriate, although these depend on the individual.

Mental and Spiritual Traits

Many Elves also have the ability to sense movement and occurrences in the spiritual world, as well as the presence of spiritual beings. Elves with such abilities have the Sensitivity Aspect (minimum Rank of three). Certain Elves might also have a Spiritual Ally (no minimum Rank).

Development Considerations

Inherent Expertises

All Elves possess the Physical (swimming) Inherent Talent and the Language (speak Eldene) and Performance (singing) Inherent Aptitudes.

Recommended Expertises

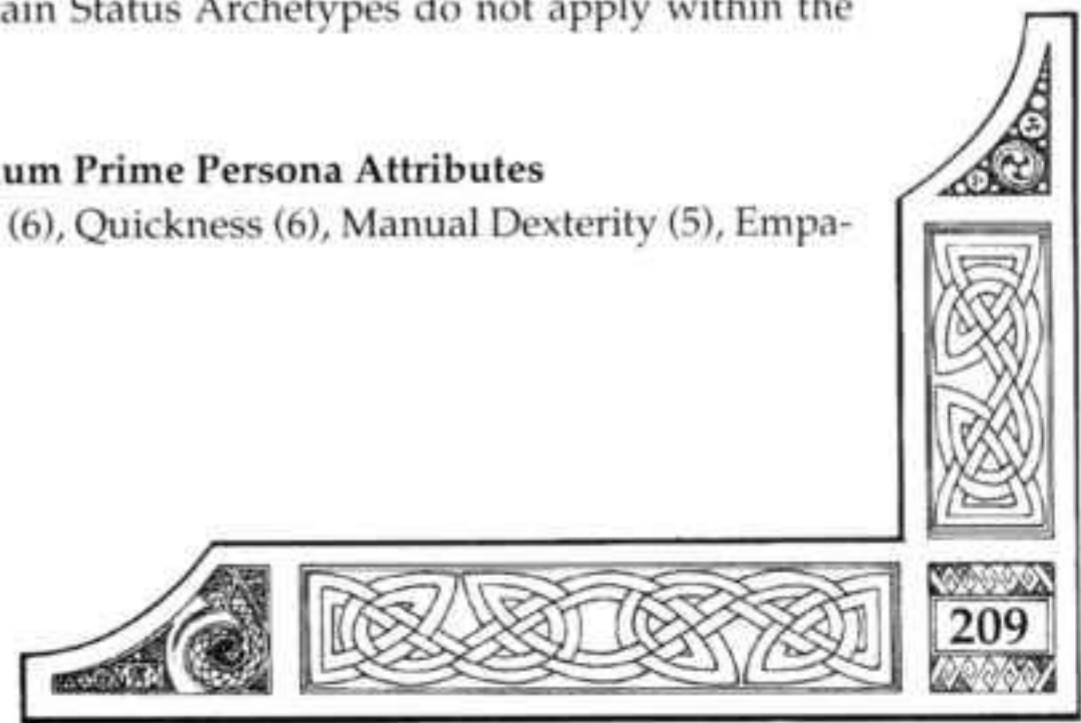
Certain Expertises are also suggested for use by members of the Elven race. These are: Script (Eldene), Language (one human tongue), Performance (dance or recitation), Artistic Expression (any), Observation (estimate distance), History (native or Everdawn), Etiquette (specify), Politics (current), Lore (weather patterns), and Craft (ocean navigation).

Profile Restrictions

The Elves of Everdawn have no Profile Restrictions (although certain Status Archetypes do not apply within the culture).

Minimum Prime Persona Attributes

Agility (6), Quickness (6), Manual Dexterity (5), Empathy (6)



Cultural Features

Environmental Adaption

The Elves have adapted to life in Everdawn's temperate coastal regions, although Elven explorers and wayfarers have shown no handicaps in adapting to a wide variety of climates. Elven Adaptability is Average.

Dominance

The Elves are considered a Dominant species on the world of Everdawn, with their Dominance based partly on power (economic, geographic, and military) and partly on philosophy (interaction and civility). All Elven cultures are considered coequal, and either all of them or none of them (depending upon one's viewpoint) should be considered Dominant.

Heritage Orientation

The Elves of Everdawn are honest to a fault, and to less long-lived peoples (humans, for example) they seem to have unnatural patience. They are an innately philosophical and introspective race, preferring to dispute and ponder all elements of a question or problem before making a decision. They have no overriding species-wide morality, but rather an intrinsic sense of justice that manifests itself in most decisions. The Motivations Honorable, Just, Dutiful, and Compassionate are all appropriate for members of the race. Suspicion (of humans) and Stubborn might be appropriate Personality Traits, depending on the specific region of Everdawn from which an individual Elf comes.

The species itself has a Balanced Heritage Orientation with a (wary of human intentions) Manifestation. Orientation Aspects include Conviction (honorable ideals), Prevention (interspecies conflict), and Reaction (suspicion of former human enemies). The Origin of the first Aspect is as old as Elven history while the latter two are the products of more recent events (the wars with the human regions).

Custom and Lifestyle

Elven society takes many of the same forms as human society, although these forms develop at a decidedly slower pace. Most Elven societies are very old, regardless of whether they are organized around a central political authority. The youngest Elven society on Everdawn is the Kingdom of Indor, and the first king of that land ascended to the Silvermoon Throne nearly eight hundred years ago.

Most of the Elven lands in Everdawn are Oriented either toward Equilibrium or Peace, depending on their individual location. The Elves are not aggressive, but they will defend what is theirs. They do not forget the old wars between the races.

Interaction and Isolation vary from one society to another, although the former is usually prevalent as a result of the Elves' mercantile nature, while the latter is high because

of the physical nature of the world (it is mostly islands). The Elves are slightly more advanced technologically than their human counterparts, though they keep no secrets. Everything their craftsmen make, they trade. The working of most metals is known, and forging techniques are fairly advanced. The Elves also excel at the crafts of shipbuilding and glass-making, and in these areas they have no equal. Ingots of green olon (a type of finely blown stained glass) are prized throughout the human lands of Everdawn for their unusual refractive qualities, and slim elven thenars ply the world's shallow waterways. The international economy of the world is based on buying and selling, and while currency is known, the concept of credit is not.

Most Elven nations are small compared to their human equivalents, and such social groupings always take the form of Divided Infrastructures. All Elven societies are Representative Democracies, although Limited Monarchies existed until approximately four hundred years before the present. Individual Elven settlements are small, and are invariably governed by some type of council (usually one composed of the community's Elders). All members of the society have a voice in its governance, and those who wield actual power do so in the form of a trust. There are no class separations within Elven society; those who rule are accorded honor and respect, but not the deference one would expect to find in a human society.

Elven military power is composed primarily of community levies in time of war. Certain Elven governments and several of the largest merchant houses maintain standing forces, but such groups are rare in Elven society. The Elven way is one of reflection and non-combativeness, and organized military power runs contrary to these cultural mores.

Finally, most Elves receive extensive education no matter what their eventual vocation. This is partly because of their genuine fondness for learning and partly because their extended lifespans allow for the possibility. Itinerant Scrollmasters provide instruction in a multitude of disciplines at every level. Organized universities are nonexistent, but the traveling scholars convene a Learned Conclave every ten years to share techniques and information.

The arts are heavily supported in Elven society, and many young Elves spend some time pursuing the fine arts before settling into another vocation. Elven poetry, music, and painting are far superior to human versions of the same. Even though Elven populations are small compared to human populations, Elven settlements constantly produce the finest artists, musicians, poets, and storytellers on the world of Everdawn.

Status and Family

Status is essentially nonexistent in Elven culture. Younger Elves respect their elders, and most citizens respect capability and elect competent delegates to the councils.

Nothing akin to human Status hierarchies exist in Elven society. Kinship is handled in an equitable manner as well. Inheritance is divided among offspring, and both genders are treated equally. Lineage is Omnidirectional and can be traced through either the male or female parent. Elven families tend to be rather small, since most Elven couples do not have more than one or two children.

Symbols and Creative Arts

Because of the spiritual nature of Elven culture, few symbols are truly revered. The Elves believe that spirits, or enyi, reside in every facet of the natural world, and therefore endow unusual natural specimens with ritual power and significance. Elven meditation shrines (called enyiren) dot the countryside; all are far from inhabited areas, and each is built in, around, or among a unique natural phenomenon (a huge, gnarled tree or a towering waterfall, for example). These phenomena serve as the culture's principal symbols, and many Elves carry small images or carvings of them either for luck or for use as meditation foci.

Elven artistic and architectural styles follow a natural form and emphasize simple, pure lines. Plant and animal motifs are common, and many structures are built to resemble the symbolic shrines of the countryside. Musical style is also influenced by natural forms; Elven music often imitates the sounds of nature and carries with it an elemental syncopation. Composers and musicians are a common sight in the wilderness, wandering from one shrine to the next in search of inspiration.

Clothing and Decoration

Elves generally favor comfortable, loose-fitting garments cut from finely woven silks or wools. Loose tunics with bilious sleeves, called valaths, are worn belted with leather or woven metal belts, and with the sleeves cinched with worked metal armllets. Loose-fitting trousers fall to just below the knees, and are gathered by silver stelae known as amrans. High boots of soft reversed leather, dyed in earth shades, finish the standard outfit. In cooler weather, a mantle of supple wool or soft leather is added, clasped at the neck with a large brooch.

Most Elven jewelry is simple and elegantly worked. Sinuous tracery patterns and exquisitely realized knotwork predominate, and the preferred metal for such artwork is silver (although gold is extensively worked as well, gold products are usually reserved for human trade). Gems are also used sparsely in certain pieces. They are always employed in the breech stelae (pins) which clasp the trousers, because cut gems are used to denote specific clan and extended family associations among the Elves.

Religious and Magical Considerations

The Elves are an inherently spiritual race, and most are very sensitive to events that occur in Everdawn's parallel

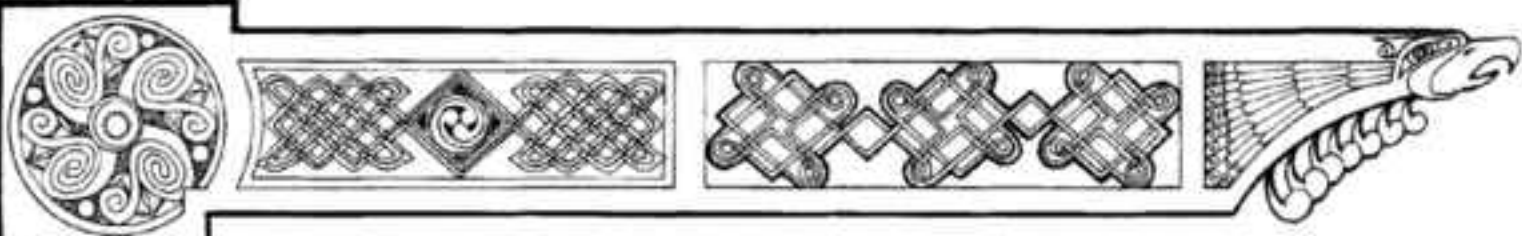


spiritual world. As a result, they are not overtly religious. The reverence of nature and ancestor spirits constitutes the extent of most Elves' spirituality, although some cultures within the race revere other denizens of the spirit world as well. Elves do not practice organized religion; enyi are honored, respected, and revered. They are not worshipped as deities. Spiritual tradition and ceremony occur on either a personal or family level, and large festivals or celebrations are rare. Most families also make a yearly pilgrimage of introspection to one or more of the wilderness shrines; this is called the Walk, and fellow travelers and family members speak no words for its duration.

Magic is universally tolerated by the Elves, and the spiritual nature of the race causes an increased sensitivity and kinship with the supernatural arts. All Elves have the Heightened Magical Affinity Background Aspect. Many are Talented Adepts as well. The Elves have an intuitive knowledge of the spirit world, and understand the nature of spiritual Reality in the environment. They are less certain of the Sources and nature of pure magical power in the environment. Their Knowledge of Reality is considered Partial (spirit world).

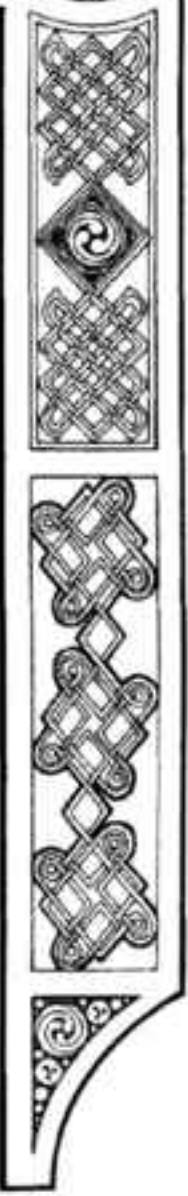
Language

The Elves of Everdawn speak a single common language (called Thanyen) with little dialectical variation. Because of



the world's limited size, and because of the Elves' interactive nature, divergent language families were never able to develop. Both the spoken and written forms of Eldene, the Elves' language, have existed in their current forms for as long as any Elf can remember. The only significant dialect variants appear in the eastern realms of the world, but even these are easily recognizable by one familiar with the language. Nearly all Elves are Literate.


Historical Notes



Everdawn history begins approximately nine thousand years before the 'present' in the environment. Elven legend tells of a great journey made by the race from a land of mists. Contemporary Elven scholars take these accounts to mean that the race migrated from the spirit world, which seems the likeliest theory when considering the Elves' unique affinity with that realm. After their arrival, the Elven folk settled on several of the northern islands of Everdawn. They enjoyed something of a golden age prior to the coming of man, although the two races initially led divergent existences. The human races settled the southern islands of the world and lived primarily in the inland valleys and hills, while the Elves kept to their northern coastal settlements. It was during these early days that the Elven shipwrights began building the vessels for which they would eventually become famous. And the Elven merchants and seafarers began to venture for the first time into the southlands.

Contact with the human races was established soon after these forays began, and the initial relations between the two races were civil, if strained. Each race expanded within its own sphere - kingdoms were founded and passed into memory, wars major and minor redefined the boundaries of countless realms, and the social and cultural sensibilities of the races progressed accordingly. Finally, economic conquests gave way to significantly more mundane acquisitiveness. An alliance of several human trading states launched an invasion of the southernmost Elven isles.

The Elves retaliated, and the time of the Worldstrife began. The wars continued, with greater or lesser ferocity, for most of the next three hundred years. The conflict became an integral part of both races' cultures, and generations of humans knew nothing but war. For this reason, the humans are currently more wary than the Elves. After all, there are Elves still living who can remember the time before the war began.



The Worldstrife ended with little having been gained by either side. With the signing of the Treaty of Idan, the races ushered in a new age of cooperation and interaction. Much prejudice remains, but the two peoples have also made definite progress in the two hundred years since the Treaty. Trade is frequent and open, diplomatic relations are generally stable among the various states of both races, and specific academic and cultural exchanges have been initiated. The world stands at the threshold of a new age of explora-

tion, with new lands far to the south having recently been discovered, and a renewed spirit of cooperative identity is on the rise.

The Canyon Dwarves of the Steamrift

- This Archetype illustrates the use of Heritage Templates in a truly fantastic environment.

The second sample Heritage Template details an individual race within a species. The Canyon Dwarves, or Zhul'rhan, are one of three races of dwarves on the fantastic world of Dhal'zhan. The race is composed of numerous cultures, most of whom dwell within the vast region known as the Steamrift. The Steamrift itself is a great canyon, narrow and many miles long, which meanders across the arid world's largest continent. All along the canyon's bottom can be found geothermal rifts and geysers, making the canyon regions even warmer than the desert lands surrounding them. However, the natural moisture provided by these steam emissions also makes the canyon uniquely habitable, and the Canyon Dwarves of Dhal'zhan have adapted well to their unusual environment.

Political instability and an unforgiving climate are accepted facets of life in this wasteland, although the Canyon Dwarves have managed to remain apart from the ravages of the humanoid wars that continually erupt among the tribal states of the Great Desert. Except for occasional ambushes and raids by the tribes, the Dwarves of the Steamrift keep to themselves, trading with the coastal merchant caravans brave enough to skirt the fringes of the Great Desert for the few goods they cannot produce themselves. The Dwarves also plant crops on the terraced walls of the Steamrift, where the plants can fully benefit from the natural water vapor rising from geothermal rifts in the canyon floor. The natural moisture near the canyon floor also makes it possible for the Dwarves to harvest the large desert antelope, which they herd in certain areas of the canyon. Most of the raw materials necessary for comfort and sustenance are produced by the Dwarves themselves, either drawn or mined from their extensive delvings in the Steamrift's walls.

Several distinct Canyon Dwarf cultures live in their own regions along the length of the Steamrift. Inter-cultural relationships consist of equal amounts of cooperation, respect, and competitiveness. Feuds are rare, although they do sometimes occur. Generally the Dwarven settlements and communities of the canyon work together to repel the larger dangers created by the proximity of the Great Desert. Each culture and Clan is a proud group, but when outside threats present themselves the Dwarves band together to defend their homeland as a single unified race.

PHYSICAL TRAITS

Frame

The Canyon Dwarves are a short, broad, hardy race. The average Frame Value of a male Canyon Dwarf is 7. Average Frame Value for females is 6. Frame Variation among the Dwarves is Low.

Height

Male Canyon Dwarves average 4'9" (HV 5), while females average 4'5" (HV 4). Variation among heights is Low for members of the race.

Weight

Male Dwarves have an average Physique of Burly, and a corresponding average Weight of 180 pounds. Female Dwarves have an average Physique of Average, and a corresponding average Weight of 130 pounds.

Appearance

The Canyon Dwarves have Medium or Dark complexions, and most also have a ruddy cast to their skin. Shades of red or auburn are common hair colors, although brown is known as well. All Dwarven hair is thick and straight, and is cut very short because of the climate. They grow no facial hair. Eyes are usually earthy shades of green or brown, although bright greens are not uncommon. Dwarven eyes also seem slightly larger than those of the humanoid races of the Great Desert. This is a result of the time the race spends underground.

Resilience

The Canyon Dwarves possess both an impressive endurance and a truly elemental hardiness. They can go for long periods without food or water in extremely arid conditions while performing physical labor or undertaking actions requiring significant exertion. They are as tough as the rock from which they maintain the race was created.

Lifespan

The Steamrift is an unforgiving homeland, but the average lifespan of a male Canyon Dwarf is still around 400 years. Females have a similar expectancy. Adolescence begins early in the race, at the ripe age of eleven. A Youthful Dwarf is one who is between the ages of 20 and 45, and between the ages of 46 and 200 a Dwarf is considered an Adult. Old Dwarves are those over 200, while those who are Elderly are over 300. Venerable Dwarves are those over 400 years of age.

Gender

The ration of male to female Canyon Dwarves is slightly skewed in favor of the female gender. The ratio is considered to be 40/60, male/female.





Inherent Physical Aspects

All Canyon Dwarves have Resistance to Fatigue (minimum Rank of three), Slow Metabolism (minimum Rank of two), and Enhanced Sense (can see in dim light - minimum Rank of six).

Recommended Physical Aspects

Certain other Physical Aspects may be appropriate for use with the race, although not every member of the race will necessarily possess them. Specific Immunities or Resistances are fairly common (and develop naturally in the desert), as is Rapid Coagulation. Many Canyon Dwarves also develop the Strong Stomach and Tolerance of Extremes Aspects.

Unique Abilities

Canyon Dwarves are able to go for extended periods without liquid nourishment. They may function for up to three full days without receiving any negative performance modifiers. Even when they are affected by extreme thirst, the Dwarves experience only half the negative effects a human would. Their Enhanced Sight is also specific to poorly lit places and darkness. They can see in near total darkness, but not very well (one fifth normal range). However, if even a small light source is available, they can see normally (where

a normal human could barely see at all). Finally, the Dwarves are extremely resistant to the effects of heat. They do not suffer from heatstroke or heat exhaustion, no matter what the conditions, and they receive a -2 modifier to the Difficulty of any resistance Trial made versus a heat or fire-based attack form.

Psychological Traits

Many Canyon Dwarves possess a degree of Trauma Resistance (no minimum).

Mental and Spiritual Traits

Inherent Aspects

Because the Dwarves spend much of their lives within the rock walls of the Steamrift, all have an innate Sense of Direction (minimum Rank of four).

Recommended Aspects

Many members of the race have the Short Attention Span Aspect as a result of the nature of their environment.

Development Considerations

Inherent Expertises

All Canyon Dwarves possess the Language (Speak Dhan'at) Inherent Aptitude.

Recommended Expertises

Certain expertises are appropriate for use with members of this race. These are: Wilderness (desert foraging or desert survival), Healing (first aid or herbal medicines), Lore (mineral), Craft (terrace farming), Animal Handling (desert antelope husbandry and herding), Craft (mountaineering or caving), and Knowledge (Zhu'l'ghan signaling methods and trailsigns).

Minimum Prime Persona Attributes

Physical Strength (4), Endurance (6), Hardiness (6)

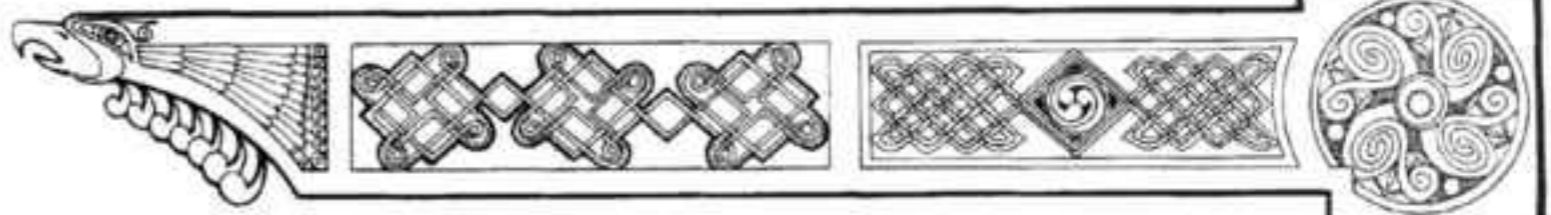
Cultural Features

Environmental Adaption

The Canyon Dwarves are denizens of a remarkably unforgiving environment, and could easily adapt themselves to other environmental conditions (with the possible exception of a frigid climate). The race's Adaptability is High.

Dominance

This Template represents a single Dominant race on the world of Dhal'zhan. Although a number of different cultures exist throughout the Steamrift, these cultures normally represent individually autonomous societies. There is also



significant distance separating many of the cultures, so no single culture can be said to be Dominant in relation to the others. Except for limited communication and trade, the various cultures tend to keep to themselves.

Heritage Orientation

The Dwarves of the Steamrift live from one day to the next. The canyon itself, and the Great Desert beyond, offer no mercy or compassion to their residents. The Dwarves are a strong, hardy people with a deep sense of tradition. There is no place for the weak, either of body or of spirit, and the Dwarven culture does not produce such types. The Dwarven way is one of justice, but justice swiftly rendered; there is no time for debate or discussion. Life in the wastes deals quickly with those who falter. The following Motivations might be appropriate for a member of the race: Honorable, Brave, Just, Dutiful, and Loyal. Personality Traits such as Fortitude or Pride would also be appropriate.

The Heritage Orientation of the Canyon Dwarves is Ethnocentric with a Manifestation of (hostile). Most of the Dwarves' neighbors would destroy the rift and its inhabitants without a second thought, and the Dwarves realize this. Their ethnocentric views are more a result of their surroundings than anything else. After all, they need to preserve their race. Their relationship with the coastal caravans developed over a long period of time and is one of mutual need. Orientation Aspects include Prevention (protect territory within and around the Steamrift), Conviction (hatred and distrust of desert tribes), and Reaction (isolation). The Origins of all three Aspects stem from the Dwarves' history in the region and the conflicts they have weathered. The Dwarven race is also given an Adversary (a specific desert tribal leader) Background Aspect.

Custom and Lifestyle

The forms of Canyon Dwarf society are remarkably simple, and remain much the same from one culture to the next. The societies existing within the boundaries of the Steamrift are old, and have experienced little change or internal upheaval. There is an existence of the greatest utility; the Dwarves are too busy surviving in the face of brutal hardship to worry about playing intricate political games, and they are too concerned with honor and appearance to risk much in the way of inter-cultural intrigues. The cultures themselves differ primarily in areas of tradition - religious practices, battle traditions and modes of combat, subsistence practices, available crafts - and for the most part are the simple result of geography and limited interaction.

All societies within the rift are Oriented toward Equilibrium. The Dwarves are not overtly aggressive, but they are a xenophobic people and are quick to defend themselves either when attacked or when it is deemed necessary. Most Dwarven societies are kept busy warding off the constant

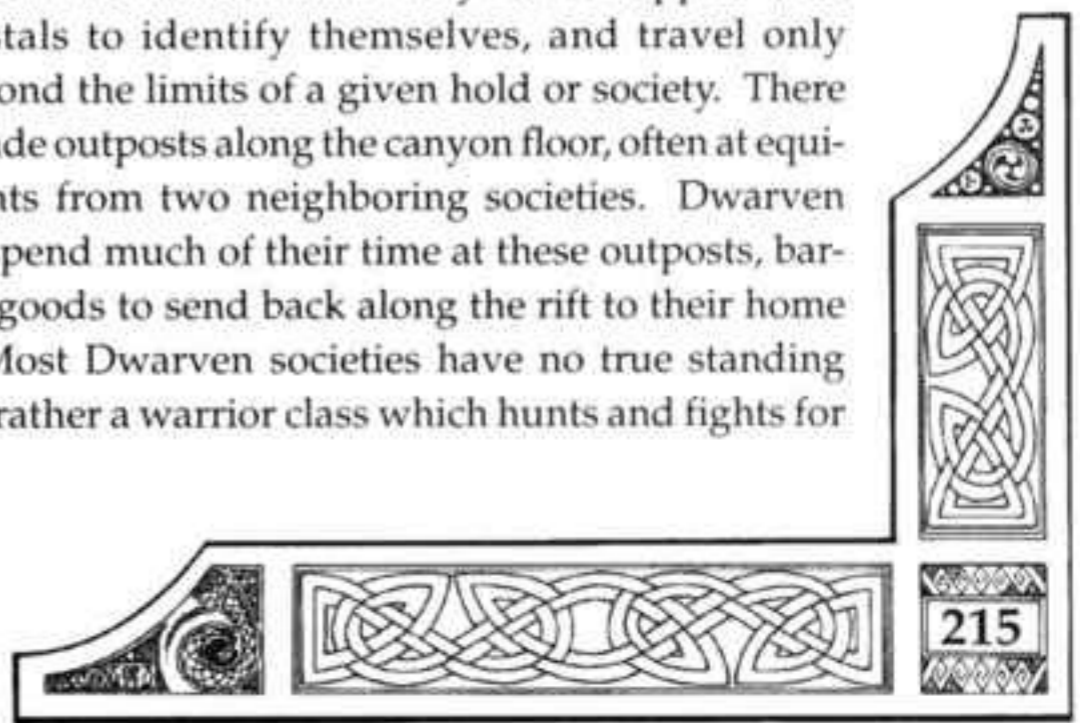
threats from the Great Desert that continually plague the canyon all along its length.

Interaction and Isolation vary considerably from one society to another. Most habitable areas of the Steamrift have been settled, and some are more naturally isolated than others. The level of a society's isolation depends on where the society is located along the rift. Interaction occurs at a more standard level. Most Dwarven societies have limited contact and traffic with their immediate neighbors, and most trade happens in a kind of 'chain-link' fashion, with societies only trading and communicating with neighboring societies. In this manner news, information, goods, and necessary materials are all passed along the network, eventually reaching a destination in which they are needed. Random travel between societies or cultures within the canyon is rare, and while not discouraged, such travel is regarded with suspicion. Although the various societies and cultures of the rift support one another, sharing both resources and information, actual contact is minimal and the Dwarven folk seem entirely content with the system they have developed.

Technologically the Canyon Dwarves are fairly advanced. They have developed cold forging techniques to rival the smiths of the coastal nations, and their weaponsmiths craft some of the finest weapons on Dhal'zhan. The small number of Dwarven weapons that have been seen outside the Steamrift area have all been breathtaking examples of the smith's art, showing fine artistic technique coupled with the use of a many-layered steel whose strength has not been equaled. Dwarven armorers are said to produce works of exquisite craftsmanship as well.

Dwarven societies are generally small affairs, consisting of either a single community or a small group of communities. Both communities and societies are usually organized around a single Clan, and are nominally governed by the Clan's Khand, or chief. Occasionally a council is present to advise the Khand, but such structures usually appear only in the larger societies. Settlements are small, with one hundred being the average size of a single community, and carved into the walls of the gorge. The Dwarves have hollowed out extensive cavern systems in certain areas, and several large settlements and towns exist deep beneath the surface of the desert.

The Canyon Dwarven economic system is one of trade, and the economies of most societies are based on a system of barter. Dwarven merchants carry staves tipped with quartz crystals to identify themselves, and travel only slightly beyond the limits of a given hold or society. There are many trade outposts along the canyon floor, often at equidistant points from two neighboring societies. Dwarven merchants spend much of their time at these outposts, bargaining for goods to send back along the rift to their home societies. Most Dwarven societies have no true standing armies, but rather a warrior class which hunts and fights for





the community. When significant threats appear, every able-bodied clansman bears arms to defend the society.

There is little practical education in most Dwarven settlements, and the fine arts are almost non-existent. There is not much time to spare for these pursuits; in many societies it is difficult to just survive. A few youths with promise are sent each year to Khanra, the Dwarven holy place, an area near the center of the rift that experiences an unusually large amount of geothermal activity. These priests then travel throughout the Steamrift, spreading Dwarven tradition and history, and represent much of the schooling young Dwarves receive. Their badge of office is a small wooden gourd worn around the neck and filled with water from the hot springs at Khanra.

Status and Family

There are three distinct classes in Dwarven society - artisans, warriors, and the Clan nobility - although there is little separation among them. They represent more of a division of roles and responsibilities than a distinction between real social classes. Priests and minstrels occupy unique positions in Dwarven society and are given freedoms (such as the ability to travel from society to society) not usually accorded other members of the race. Although Status is fairly open in Dwarven society, responsibility is taken very seriously, and individual Dwarves will not disobey orders given by those in a position of command.

The family is de-emphasized in relation to the Clan in Canyon Dwarf society. Dwarven children are often raised communally within the Clan compound, and the ties of the nuclear family are not strong. Marriage is unknown, although life mates are common; the Clan is the center of most cultural activity and becomes a kind of extended family.

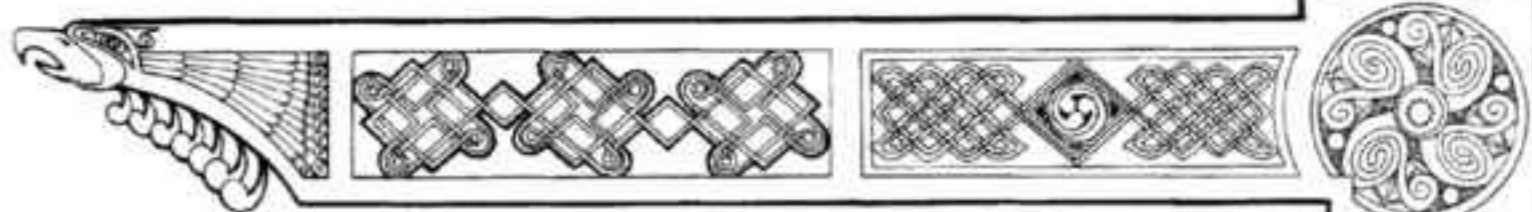
Symbols and Creative Arts

Artistic practice is very limited in Dwarven society, although each settlement usually has its own resident skald or bard. Stories are told in the clanholds at night, and the ancient traditions are preserved. The minstrels hold a rather strange position in the society, being simultaneously honored and misunderstood by the majority of the Dwarven folk. The fine arts are nonexistent, practiced only on a personal level by talented individuals, and the value of 'art' is regarded with some skepticism. Architectural practices are simple, with most dwellings and communities built into the walls of the rift itself, and the little adornment that exists is based on elemental motifs. The Dwarves are also fond of natural light, and many tiny windows and balconies can be seen dotting an inhabited expanse of canyon wall.

Symbolism in Dwarven culture is minimal but important. Priests wear water gourds as symbols of office, and water itself is the primary symbol of life and health in Zhul'ran culture (remember that some of the Khands use silver cups as badges of office). Each of the other elements is given ritual significance as well, and all are used in the simple religious ceremonies practiced within the rift. The quartz used in the staves of the merchants symbolizes a far-seeing ability, and represents the intuitive nature of their trade.

Clothing and Decoration

Canyon Dwarves favor loose, flowing linen robes in the heat of the Steamrift. Soft boots of antelope leather are also worn, as are slender hemp belts. When traveling or venturing into the Great Desert, the Dwarves outfit themselves in sandy-colored reversed leathers and full linen cloaks. They also wear a kind of combination hood/scarf called a Zhusk



to protect themselves from sand and dust. When moving into the desert itself, the Dwarves often wrap linen cloths around their boots to further protect them from the elements.

Canyon Dwarf decoration is almost non-existent. Most jewelry and ornamentation is crafted by individual Dwarves for personal use. Clothing and spiritual regalia are never decorated, although Clan Khands occasionally possess a silver cup or brooch as a badge of rank. Most normal Dwarves have a single piece of jewelry or decoration, but more are rare and several would be considered vain. The only area exempt from these sensibilities is that of weapon and armor crafting, where intricate decoration is accepted and commonplace.

Religious and Magical Considerations

The Dwarves of the Steamrift are not a spiritual race; their natures are tied far too closely to the realities of life in the arid wastes of Dhal'zhan. Religious practices are limited, and a primal form of element worship predominates. The principal duty of the race's priests is to educate the population in the traditions and histories of the rift and its founding clans. True religious observances and ceremony come second, and are practiced infrequently. While not completely without faith, the Canyon Dwarves remain closely tied to the earth from which they sprang.

Magic is known to the Dwarves and tolerated, but its practice is rare among the inhabitants of the Steamrift. They do not seem to possess a particular affinity for the art, and young Dwarves with the Talent are rare. Most Adepts among the race become priests or skalds, and travel from one society to another. The Dwarves know little of the Reality that shapes their world. They revere the elements, but have no desire to understand their nature. If it weren't for the existence of the priests and the minstrels, the race's collective knowledge of their environment's Reality would be None. As it stands, it is considered to be Partial (selective elements).

Language

The Canyon Dwarves speak a unique dialect of Dhezhen, the Dwarven tongue. Their version of the language would probably be incomprehensible to a member of another Dwarven race on the world, for many of the changes in the language sprang from the Canyon Dwarves' contact with the coastal nations and the occasional caravans passing through the Steamrift. Over the centuries the additions to the language became commonplace and new additions sprang from them, with the result being an almost entirely new language. Part of the reason for this occurrence is the lack of contact the Canyon Dwarves have had with other Dwarven races. Any common references associated with the old Dwarven tongues were lost, although the Canyon dialect of Dhan'at therefore becomes a unique language in its own right.

Historical Notes

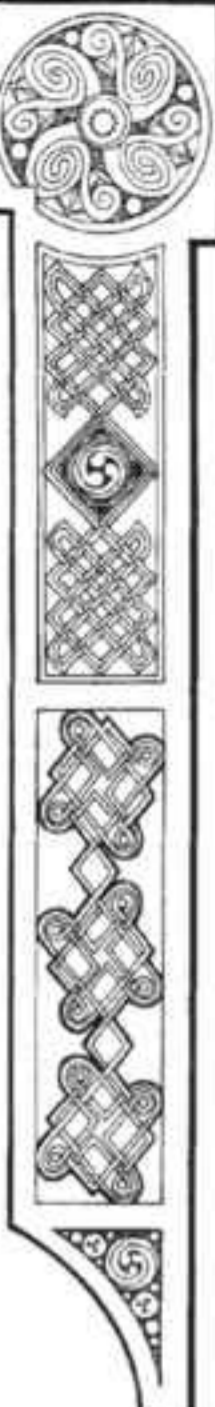
Dwarven history begins several thousand years before the present day in the environment. The chronicle of the Steamrift and its peoples is a simple one, telling a never-ending tale of war and conflict counterpoised against a simple need to survive. It is a short and repetitive history; one war begins to sound like another, one battle resembles another, etc. The Canyon Dwarves have recorded their history on the Tablets of Semhon, which are kept in the Zhirdhon - the Hall of the Elements - at Khanra. The Dwarves do not study their history so much as celebrate certain traditions or specific occurrences, and the Tablets are perhaps the only written record of the history in its entirety. Several of its major elements beg mention here.

The First Clans of the Dwarves arrived at the Steamrift from across the trackless sands during the period known as the Time Before. They initially settled along the rift's borders and in its upper reaches, and immediately felt the sting of numerous humanoid tribal raids from the Great Desert. Several of the Khands united the Clans to put a temporary end to these incursions. However, the Dwarves realized that if they were to survive in their harsh new home, they would need to seek more protection for their growing numbers.

Their folk had always been talented at stonecraft, and the Dwarves descended into the rift itself and carved their new dwellings from the living rock of the canyon's walls. As the settlements grew, many young Dwarves set out on journeys east and west along the canyon floor in search of new lands and regions for colonization. This yearning for exploration and discovery ushered in the Age of Light, and many adventures were had and valorous deeds performed. The Legend of Thorgran and the Bottomless Canyon dates from the period, as do most of the Dharl Ven myths. According to legend it was a wondrous time.

The Age of Light was brought to a close by the First Cataclysm. Most of the Steamrift had been settled by this time, and a particularly harsh succession of sand and wind storms had ravaged the Great Desert, driving countless hordes of the waste's humanoid tribes toward the canyon seeking refuge. The Dwarves met the onslaught valiantly, and fought a series of pitched battles on the surface of the desert several leagues from the edge of their canyon home. Although the humanoid raiders were pushed back, the losses suffered by the Dwarves bordered on the genocidal. The survivors limped back to their canyon homes and began the long process of rebuilding what had been lost. So began the Age of Sorrow.

Out of the ashes of war rose a single leader who was able to unite most of the Clans. Although such an alliance was unprecedented in Dwarven history, the situation immediately following the First Cataclysm was extreme, and the unification was viewed as necessary. Bhalgar of Coldrift ruled the Dwarven folk as High Khand for over four hundred years; his reign is remembered as one of justice and



The Northmen of Firnost Heath

- This Archetype illustrates the use of Heritage Templates in a realistic Narrative Environment.

The Northmen of Firnost Heath represent a specific cultural division within the race of Northmen on the world of Amarene. The culture is a small one, its members spread among several roving tribes who inhabit the sparsely populated region of northern scrub lands known as Firnost Heath. The Heathlands are a windswept region of northern plains, covered with intermittent patches of low-lying evergreen vegetation and other scrub. The land itself is generally flat, with scattered highlands found in its southern reaches. The Heath is bounded in the south by the metes of the Thyren Forest, in the north and east by the Everstorm Mountains, and in the west by the Highlands of Cendar. Its climate is harsh and dry, with temperate weather arriving only during the height of summer and remaining for a scant two months.

Each of the tribes that roam the Heath has its own ancestral territory through which it moves in a seasonal pattern. There is more than enough land to go around, considering the vastness of the scrublands and the dwindling numbers of their only inhabitants. The tribesmen of Firnost share most of the same cultural practices, although regular contact among the various tribes of the Heath is rare. Most tribes jealously guard their own section of the plains, and conflict has been known to erupt over land and hunting rights. Most of the normal contact among the tribes occurs at the Cheralla, the Festival of High Summer, which is celebrated once a year. Even though frequent interaction between tribes is not common, all of the people of Firnost, no matter what tribe they are from, retain a fierce sense of collective unity and identity. They share the same gods, the same way of life, and the same values and sensibilities. Although the tribal divisions on the Heath are ancient, the sense of a shared cultural identity among the tribesmen is more ancient still.

PHYSICAL TRAITS

Frame

The Northmen are strong and broad, eminently suited to their environment. A Frame Value of 7 is average for male Northmen, while a Frame Value of 6 is average for women. There is an Average degree of variation among Frames within the race.

Height

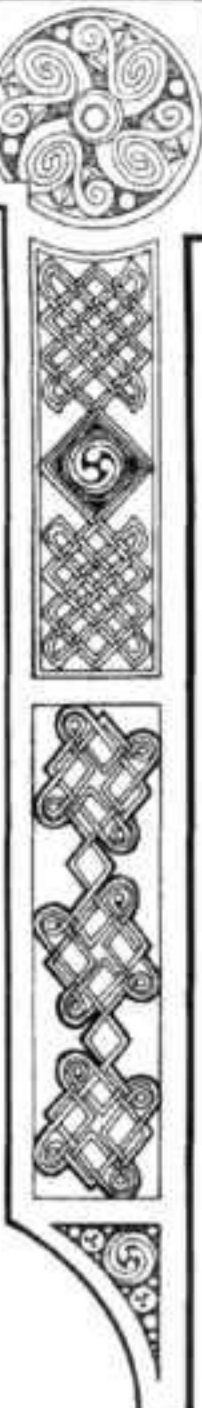
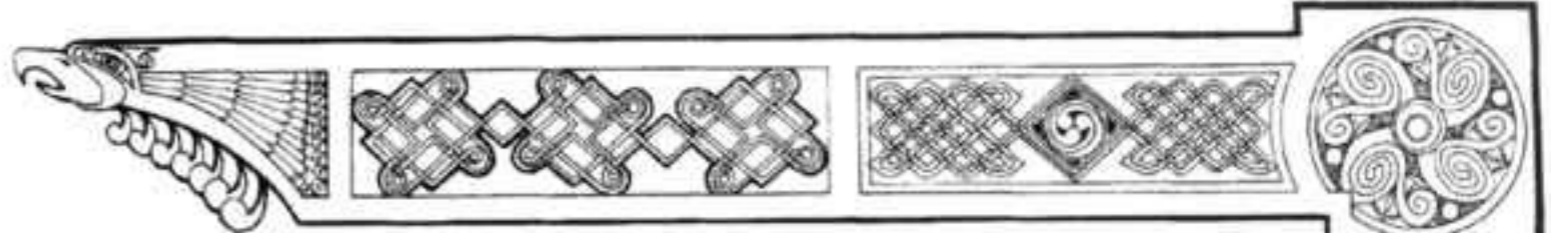
The people of Firnost are a tall folk, with men averaging approximately 6'0" (HV 8) and females 5'7" (HV 7). There is an Average level of variation among heights within the race.

cooperation. During this period, much that was lost was rebuilt, and the Clans themselves had begun the return to their former glories. After Bhalgar's death, a council of Khands was convened, and the Clans participated in a sort of community government. This lasted for approximately two thousand more years until the individual Khands began to grow restless. One by one, with little resistance from the council, the Clans withdrew once again into their own individual regions of the Steamrift. The idea of the council has been preserved, however, and the body is still convened occasionally for traditional purposes (such as the investiture of a new Khand) or for deliberation on issues crucial to the entire Steamrift and its people.

With the dissolution of the council as an official governing body, the Age of Sorrow passed into memory and the current Age (unnamed) began. The Clans had regained their former stature, and the humanoid raids also began to increase in scope and ferocity once again. However, with the new Age also came new alliances and discoveries. Caravans from the coastal kingdoms began to frequent the Steamrift, and the Dwarves were now both better prepared and better equipped to deal with the desert marauders.

One hundred years before the present day, the humanoid tribes attacked again. Although this incursion is called the Second Cataclysm in the Dwarven histories, its effects pale in comparison to the First. Many Dwarves were lost, but the battle lasted only a fortnight, and the humanoid tribes were routed at its end. The Dwarves had won a great victory, for not only had they succeeded in driving the enemy back into the Great Desert, but they had also secured several of the important trade routes between the Steamrift and the coast.

And so the chronicle reaches the present day. A new opportunity for interaction exists between the Canyon Dwarves and the coastal states. The Dwarves themselves are undergoing another long rebuilding process, and the humanoid tribes of the Great Desert are massing once again. The region has entered a time of precarious instability, and the new Age waits to see whether the Clans of the Steamrift can hold fast either against or within it.



Weight

Male Northmen have an average Physique of Ideal and a corresponding average Weight of 187 pounds. Female Northmen have an average Physique of Thin and a corresponding average Weight of 143 pounds.

Appearance

The Northmen of Firnost have Medium to Very Light Complexions, with straight hair in a variety of lighter shades. Blond hair is the most common, although light or sandy browns are common as well. Occasionally red hair is also seen. Eye color ranges widely, with blues and browns being the most common. Green and hazel eyes are fairly common as well.

Resilience

The Northmen possess an exceptional endurance when compared to normal men, and are especially resistant to the rigors of the elements. This inborn resistance is evidenced in the race's increased ability to withstand the onset of fatigue (see Recommended Physical Aspects).

Lifespan

The average Lifespan of a male Northman is 60 years. Females average a slightly higher 65 years. Adolescence begins at age nine, and Young Northmen are those between the ages of ten and seventeen. At age eighteen a Northman is considered an Adult and at age 40 that same man is considered Old. Elderly Northmen are those who live past 60, and Venerable Northmen are those who live past 75.

Gender

The ratio of male to female Northmen is an equitable one, and is approximately 50/50.

Recommended Physical Aspects

Resistance (fatigue), an Enhanced Sense, Tolerance of Extremes, an Unrealized Potential, Weather Sense, and Ferocity.

Unique Abilities

Northmen receive a minus two modifier to the Difficulty of any Trial associated with resistance to cold or cold-based attacks.

Psychological Traits

The Aspects Trauma Resistance and Psychosomatic Resistance (to cold) are suggested for use with this race.

Development Considerations

Inherent Expertises

All Northmen possess the Language (speak Erinic) Inherent Aptitude.

Recommended Expertises

Certain Expertises are suggested for members of this culture. They include: Wilderness (plains survival or foraging), Tracking (plains and heath), Lore (northern weather), and Craft (timbercraft or campcraft).

Cultural Features

Environmental Adaption

The Northmen are uniquely suited to their environment, and members of the culture who have traveled to warmer climates have not found them comfortable. The Adaptability of the culture is Average.



Dominance

The Northman culture is the Dominant cultural group in the Narrative Environment; Firnrost Heath is an isolated plateau and the Northmen are the only culture that dwell upon it. Although a number of different tribes coexist in the region, they are all members of the Heath culture. In the case of the Northmen, society and culture are synonymous; the various Heath tribes constitute a loose confederation.

Heritage Orientation

The Northmen of Firnrost are a hardy race, possessing both a keen respect for tradition and a fundamental concept of personal honor. The Heath is a cold, bleak, and barren land, a place where a warrior is measured by the amount of honor he has acquired, both for himself and his tribe. The Northmen know strength only through honor, and their system of bestowing and recognizing such honor is an intricate one. As a people, the Northmen are oriented toward a kind of equilibrium based upon mutual respect. Inter-tribal conflict only occurs within the rigid bounds of a traditional Code - any other way would not be proper. The Personality Traits Pride and Respect (tradition) are all appropriate for members of this culture, as are the Motivations Honorable, Brave, and Vengeful.

The Heritage Orientation of the Heath tribes is Balanced with a Manifestation of (introspection). The Northmen maintain an attitude of civility toward most foreign societies and cultures, although such contact is limited. They tend to pay little attention to events and lands outside the Heath except when such interaction cannot be avoided. Orientation Aspects include Conviction (code of honor), Prevention (incur-sion), and Tradition (established way of life). The Origins of these Aspects are as old as the Heath tribes themselves (which isn't very old in terms of the previous two archetypes).

Custom and Lifestyle

The culture of the Northmen has remained much the same for centuries, and the Northmen of Firnrost are no exception. Their lives are simple, consisting primarily of hunting and herding, and of the maintenance of the tribe's honor among its brothers on the Heath. Each of the tribes also has its own home territory through which it roams on a seasonal basis, and for which it will fight without quarter. Most Northman traditions are upheld by the tribes of the Heath, and these traditions form much of the basis for both the existence of the Northmen and their unique codes of honor.

All of the tribes of the Heath are Oriented toward Equilibrium; they will not attack their neighbors without provocation, although they will ruthlessly defend their territory if the need arises. This attitude toward organized conflict stems in part from the Northmen's unique, and somewhat odd, codes of honor. In Firnrost society, a warrior receives more honor in battle for simply touching an opponent with his

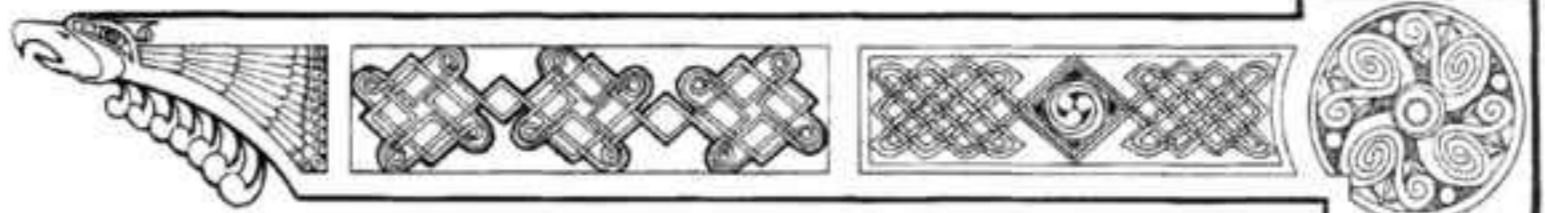
weapon than for actually killing him. This ritual practice is called Theyning, and it is responsible for turning many combat situations into intricate ceremonial dances. A warrior's Theyning spear, with its small marks of honor, is his most treasured possession.

The different cultures of the Heath are not physically isolated, and most of their borders are defined by simple landmarks - a specific treeline, an unusual rock formation, etc. Most of the tribes' isolation is territorial and self-imposed. Interaction among the tribes is limited as well. Some inter-tribal movement occurs, but this interaction is essentially limited to traders, minstrels, and messengers traveling from one chief to another.

The Cheralla represents the primary opportunity for interaction and communication among different tribes and their chiefs. This fortnight-long celebration occurs at the height of midsummer, and is held on a different tribe's lands every year. It serves as a setting for trade, gossip, and political maneuvering within and among the tribes. Treaties are made, land disputes are settled by a tribunal of Chiefs, inter-tribal marriages are announced and performed, and delegations from the lands beyond the Heath are received by the council of Chiefs. It is a time of remembrance and renewal of ancient traditions, a time when borders mean nothing and all are simply people of the Heath.

The Northmen of Firnrost have developed relatively advanced iron-working techniques, although they are still not conversant with the forging of steel. Northman craftsmen are also adept at the working of silver, and many intricately wrought decorative objects and pieces of jewelry are traded far beyond the borders of the Heath. Although the Northmen's subsistence relies predominantly on hunting and herding practices, the tribes do have knowledge of cultivation and planting methods. A few of Firnrost's southern tribes are able to remain in the same area year round, and these tribes may be considered Fully Agricultural. The majority of the remaining tribes migrate throughout their territories in a biannual pattern, practicing incipient cultivation techniques during the spring and summer months, and then moving on to their winter hunting grounds. Herds are kept year round and travel with the tribe.

Northman tribes are generally small groups, with populations of about seventy-five being common. Communities are governed by the chief and a council of Elders, half of which must be women. Women are often chiefs as well, for an important aspect of the tribal Code is its inherent assumption of equality between the genders. The villages themselves are composed of groups of wooden longhouses, each of which serves as the home of an entire extended family. These tents are arranged in a large triangular shape, with the chief's lodge in the center of the triangle and the Elders' tents at the corners. The communities themselves are usually situated either on high ground or on a man-made hill-ock or motte. Settlements in the northern region of the Heath



are usually surrounded by a wooden palisade, while those in the southern reaches of the plain are encircled by a wide ditch and bailey.

The economies of the Firnost tribes are based exclusively on barter, and currencies are unknown on the Heath. There are no real class distinctions within the society, while the distinctions that exist are based on personal and tribal honor. Most members of the tribal societies have a primary vocation (such as farmer, shepherd, etc.) as well as the requisite hunting and fighting skills needed by an inhabitant of the Heath. During times of crisis, every able-bodied member of the society, both male and female, will take up arms.

Northman society is predominantly uneducated. Most children receive only practical education in their parents' vocation and very little training in anything else. A few youths who show aptitude are chosen to begin training as priests, and all children are taught the use of arms. The fine arts are practiced even less frequently, although youngsters with talent are not discouraged as long as their artistic interests do not interfere with their mundane responsibilities. The result is the emergence of a few musicians and poets within each generation, talented individuals who assume the responsibility of handing down the tribe's histories and traditions. These minstrel-skalds are still warriors within their own tribes, but they are permitted to travel throughout the Heath with impunity. Shamen and Shaman-skalds are also allowed to journey freely among the tribes, and are welcomed by most elements of the culture.

Status and Family

Social Status among the Firnost tribes is based primarily on conduct, and rewards honorable action and courage. Both shamen and skalds are given Status outside of the normal social framework since these vocations are viewed as unique and exceptional among the Northmen. Individuals practicing these vocations are also permitted to travel freely throughout the Heath without challenge. Aside from these considerations, the Status Hierarchy among the tribes is fairly standard. Leaders and elders are accorded more respect than younger members of the society, although those who have gained large amounts of honor will have higher Status regardless of age. An abstract gauge of a Northman's Status is the quality of his or her Theyning spear.

Although Northman society revolves around the tribal and clan structures, the family is important as well. Both genders enjoy exactly the same rights and opportunities in the culture, and lineage passes through both parents. Inheritance is divided equally among offspring, although the inheritance of a father's Theyning spear depends on the personal honor acquired by his children (both male and female).

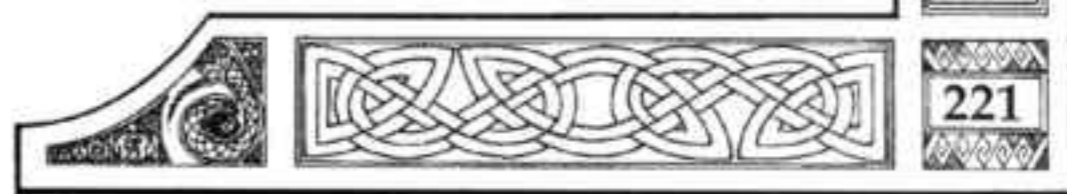
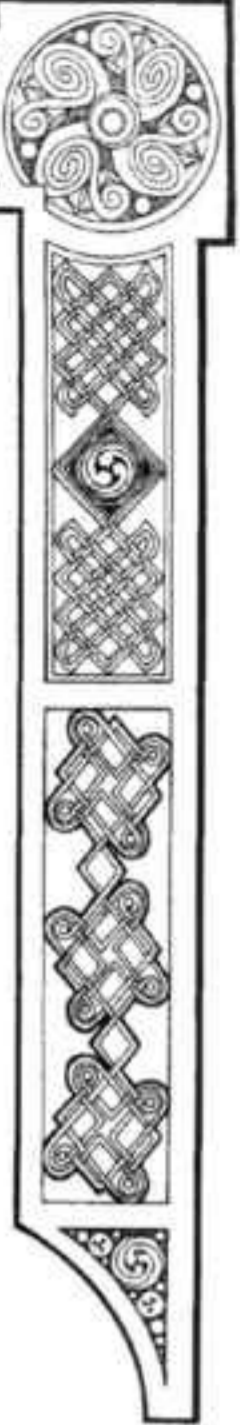
Symbols and Creative Arts

A prevalent symbol in Firnost culture is the equilateral triangle. The Northmen set up their camps in the shape, it



is used as the principal decorative motif on pottery and jewelry, and its spiritual significance is integral to the culture's belief system. It is also said that the triangle represents the strange trinity of Northman warriors, shamen, and minstrel-skalds. The Ritual of Ascendance, in which a boy becomes a man, employs each of these three cultural vocations as guides along the ceremonial Paths of Wisdom which symbolize the journey into adulthood. It is interesting to note that the minstrel-skald traditionally serves as the final Guide and the bestower of the initiate's Theyning spear. Because of the triangle and its significance, the number three often appears in various cultural forms (the number of 'seasons' in a year, the traditional number of principal seasonal migrations, the number of tribal council members, etc.).

The fine arts are not very prevalent in Firnost culture, although they are practiced. Intricate carvings and jewelry are two of the most common forms of such artwork and are usually crafted of worked silver. However, some of the most beautiful works produced in Northman society are those of the Spearcrafters. Theyning is a practice crucial to one's personal and tribal honor, and most ritual Theyning spears are tipped with ornate and elaborately worked points. These points are often leaf shaped and chased with exquisite tracery work in silver and gold. A man's position and honor can usually be determined by viewing his Theyning spear. Small silver marks of honor (triangular in shape) are braided





with horsehair and hung from the top of the spear haft. Shamen are forbidden to carry Theyning spears, while the points of those carried by minstrel-skalds are tempered in animal bloods and dyes, giving them an iridescent crimson cast.

Although the practice of fine arts in Firnost society is limited, the performing arts are alive and well. The minstrel-skalds are responsible for handing down the culture's history and tradition, since the Northmen do not use a common script. Tales are told and songs are sung in the Heath Tongue, the common form of the Erinic language that is spoken every day by most members of the culture. Among the minstrel-skalds and the Shamen, an older version of the Erinic language is used. It is called the Clan Tongue, and is used for the recitation of epic lays and poems on festival days in the clan halls. Most tribal histories and legends are told in this elevated and poetic language. Rhyme and meter are important elements of Firnost poetry, which is always very structured. The music of the Northmen is simple, dissonant, and haunting.

Clothing and Decoration

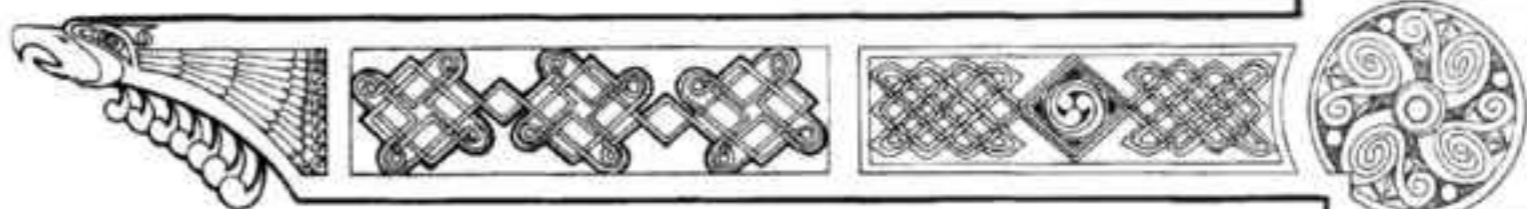
The Northmen normally construct their garments from medium to heavyweight wools and reversed leathers. Long trousers are tucked into knee-high hard leather boots, and hip-length heavy tunics are belted at the waist. In colder

weather, heavy leather overshirts are worn, as are cloaks and mantles of fur or fur-lined wool. Decoration on clothing is limited to basic embroidery and stitch patterns, although such embellishments are rare. Most garments are cut simply to be functional.

Northman decorative techniques are simple and straightforward. Most jewelry and pieces of art are worked silver, with geometric etchings and carved knotwork being common forms. Tribal chieftains wear large silver stelae called Brochen to denote their rank. Trade among the tribes is uncommon, even at the Cheralla. Most work either remains within the tribe that produced it or is sold to foreign merchants at the Cheralla.

Religious and Magical Considerations

The people of Firnost Heath are a very religious folk, and religion forms an important part of their culture's foundation. Because the practice of fine arts is limited, much emphasis is placed on religious ceremony and observance. Such ritual almost becomes a form of entertainment for the people. The Northmen pay tribute to a large pantheon of deities, with each tribe adopting a kind of patron from among the gods. Most of the gods represent elemental or traditional mythic forms, with gods whose dominions include war and honor being very prevalent within the culture. Shamen are trained in each community, and then travel



from one tribe to another. Because each tribe does not have a permanent spiritual leader, the result of this itinerant tradition is that the entire culture receives a more broad-based understanding of religious sensibilities. Many of the shamen become skalds as well.

Magic is known only in Firnost legend. The world of Amarene is a magic-weak setting, and most of the magic present is wielded by a small esoteric order far to the south. It is believed that there are no practicing Adepts on the Heath, although it might be possible for some Northmen to be born with the Talent. It is also possible that some of the culture's priests have developed a limited use of magic, although they might not recognize it as such.

The culture's Knowledge of Reality is scant, with elements of the Truth known only by select shamen and minstrel-skalds. Much of what the people believe is result of cultural myth and tradition, and has little foundation in the Truths of the Amarene universe. The tribes' Knowledge of Reality is considered to be Partial (shamen and skalds).

Language

The Northmen of Firnost speak their own dialect of the more common Northman tongue, Erinic. This dialect is standard throughout the Heath, with slight variations appearing in the southern regions, and is called the Heath Tongue. The shamen and minstrel-skalds use an older, more poetic form of the same language which they name the Clan Tongue. A written alphabet does not exist, and the Northmen do not have the ability to write Erinic. However, the shamen and minstrel-skalds do employ a crude symbolic collection of pictograms to represent important aspects of life on the Heath. A strange runic alphabet has also appeared, but its individual characters do not represent phonetic sounds or letters. Only certain shamen and minstrel-skalds know their meaning (or the alphabet's origin, for that matter).

Historical Notes

The history of the Northmen of Firnost is short and uneventful. The first tribes began arriving on the Heath approximately three hundred years ago. The first immigrants settled in different areas of the plains, and thus had little contact with each other. These tribes dwelt in peace for fifty years, until further migrations from the west began to displace certain tribal lands.

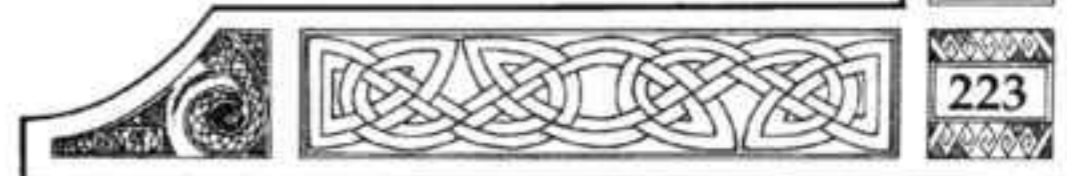
During a period of significant political upheaval in the lands west of the Heath, numerous refugees crossed the Highlands of Cendar into Firnost searching for a respite from war and destruction. This new infusion of settlers, although not large in comparison to the size of the Heath itself, was large enough to be felt by the tribes already in residence. These tribes resented both the incursions and the presence of the new tribes, and thus began what is known today as the Migration Wars. The older tribes banded together in an attempt to turn the refugees back, but the effort was ulti-

mately to no avail. The conflict was bitter and bloody, and wore on for more than fifteen years. In the end the new arrivals remained, more firmly entrenched than ever, and the chiefs of all the tribes met at what would become the first Cheralla.

Negotiations quickly ground to a halt; neither the 'old school' nor the new could agree on even the smallest matters. The meeting disintegrated even further when Yarec, one of the old chieftains, challenged a young chief called Viric to trial by combat over an incidental point of personal honor. Being one of the foremost proponents of peace among the tribes, Viric realized that his only chance of true victory rested in the life of his challenger. Instead of using his fighting ability to kill (he was a legendary warrior), he used it to wear down his opponent. Every time an opening was available, he would pull his attack in the final moment and only touch the older man with his spear. The combat wore on for an entire afternoon, until Yarec finally collapsed from exhaustion. The old chief forgave the younger and accorded him much honor for his unusual performance. The Cheralla's purpose was given new vitality and news of the combat spread throughout the tribes. Theyning (named for the small, quick owl of the Heath) became an integral part of the Firnost code, and has been refined over the centuries into something of an art form.

In the years following the initial Cheralla, borders were settled upon, as were trade relations and mutual laws, and the tribes agreed to coexist side by side in peace. The detailed code of honor that would eventually become an integral part of the culture's sensibilities was expanded and enhanced by the new art of Theyning. All chiefs took solemn oaths to uphold these covenants, and it is a matter of pride among the tribes that none of these oaths has ever been broken. The yearly meeting quickly became a part of Firnost tradition, and Cherallas have been celebrated at midsummer ever since.

The tribes of the Heath have existed with each other in a state of relative peace for the last two hundred and thirty years. Although individual skirmishes and small wars have been fought among the tribes during that time, none lasted long and few were even mildly damaging. The tribesmen's honor and the ritual of Theyning demand defense and retribution, but often stop short of actual killing. However, new incursions from the civilized lands to the west and south have lately begun to plague the cultures living at the borders of the Heath. The Northmen realize that something must soon be done about these threats, and a small faction (including members of the priesthood) is beginning to speak out in favor of leaving the Heath itself to face the interlopers. This internal conflict is expected to be resolved at this year's Cheralla, but many chieftains are worried that these new threats will cause many young Northmen to journey beyond the Heath in search of greater honor and glory.



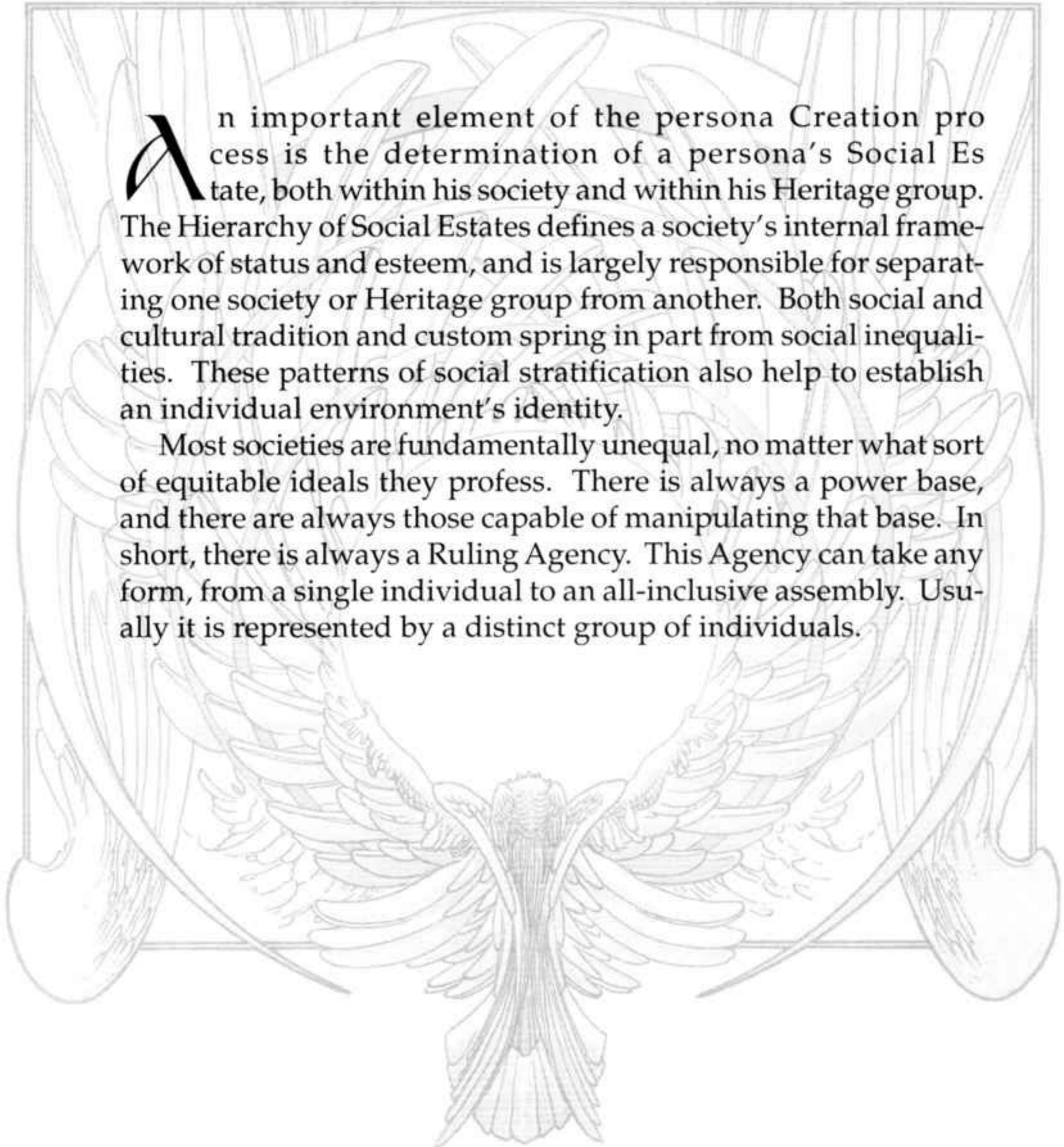


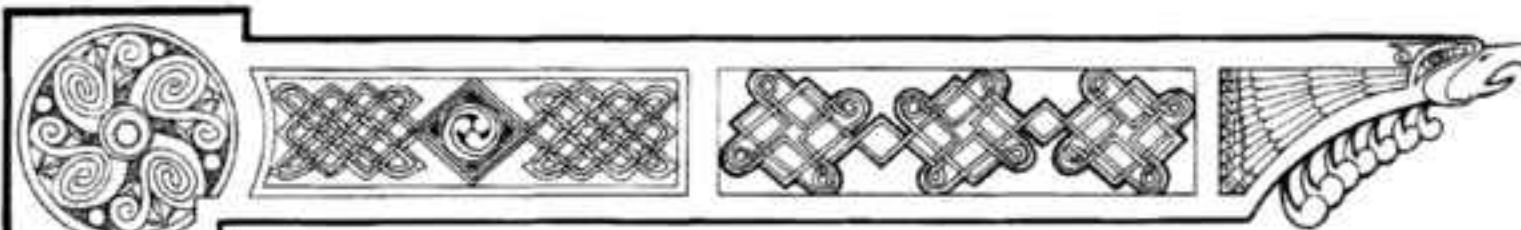
Status

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An important element of the persona Creation process is the determination of a persona's Social Estate, both within his society and within his Heritage group. The Hierarchy of Social Estates defines a society's internal framework of status and esteem, and is largely responsible for separating one society or Heritage group from another. Both social and cultural tradition and custom spring in part from social inequalities. These patterns of social stratification also help to establish an individual environment's identity.

Most societies are fundamentally unequal, no matter what sort of equitable ideals they profess. There is always a power base, and there are always those capable of manipulating that base. In short, there is always a Ruling Agency. This Agency can take any form, from a single individual to an all-inclusive assembly. Usually it is represented by a distinct group of individuals.





Knowledge and acceptance of the Ruling Agency within the bounds of a social valuation system is necessary to properly understand an environment's Hierarchy of Social Estates. Although the form and philosophy of the Ruling Agency might change from one society to another, the actual concept changes little. By treating the Ruling Agency as a constant within the overall social ranking system, it becomes easier to make relative comparisons among the lower tiers of the Hierarchy.

All personas exist as integral participants in their respective environments and are directly and intimately affected by an environment's operating social forms. These can be approximations of thirteenth century Europe, templates drawn from the pages of fantasy fiction, or completely fantastic original settings created by the Ensemble. The players should never forget that their personas are part of a larger society or culture. The Mythguide's job is to foster and nurture this realization. Personas do not act in a vacuum; they are major performers in a greater narrative drama and all of their actions have consequences. If the Mythguide promotes these ideas and relates them to the group's own situation, the result is hopefully an increased awareness of the Narrative Environment among the personas and a heightened sense of responsibility among the players.

☉ The Hierarchy of Estates ☉

A Hierarchy of Social Estates must be described before a player can assign or determine his persona's individual Estate. If no Hierarchy exists, the persona's Estate cannot be considered relative to other Estates and vocations within an environment. The Hierarchy represents a standardized framework into which varying social divisions are placed, and which can be used to describe any conceivable social framework. A particular environment's or Heritage group's Hierarchy is based on one or more Status Foundations and is divided into six primary divisions called Status Archetypes. The amount of Personal Freedom present in an environment can also affect the design of its Hierarchy. After a basic model is established, the Mythguide can place specific professions or offices into the archetypal Hierarchy divisions; the result is an original social valuation system unique to a particular environment or culture.

Using the design guidelines found in this chapter, an interesting and original Hierarchy of Social Estates can be created for any culture or environment. This Hierarchy is presented as a general framework in

which to work, while its component parts help the Ensemble maintain a consistent direction throughout the persona Creation process.

Status

While the Hierarchy of Social Estates establishes the order of social placement, Status represents the often intangible social rewards and privileges that accompany each Archetype. The reasons why one individual lives in a palatial environment while another begs for his supper in the marketplace are often entwined with the concept of Status. Status is conferred by society according to an accepted system of social evaluation.

The fundamental ideologies that support this evaluation of social roles and contributions are termed Status Foundations. Depending upon which Status Foundations operate within an environment, an individual will enjoy varying degrees of Status. If, for example, education is highly valued by a society, a lame but brilliant philosopher would enjoy relatively high Status. If, on the other hand, martial prowess was highly valued, the same philosopher would likely have very low Status. The achievement and maintenance of Status is a subjective issue and varies from one environment or culture to another. In determining the function and rewards of Status within a given environment, much of the daily life of the society or culture - the interaction and integration of its divergent classes - is illustrated.

Cultural Status vs. Social Status

An individual persona can have different Status in his Heritage group than in his society. It depends on both the nature and description of the Narrative Environment being used, as well as the place held by a persona's Heritage group within it. If culture and society are synonymous in the Mythguide's setting, Status in one translates to the other. However, if a large amount of cultural diversity is present within a single environment, social and cultural status may be separated.

For example, a large kingdom contains many subject nomad peoples, and a persona is born the son of the chieftain of one of these tribes. Within the tribe the persona is a member of the Ruling Archetype and wields a great deal of power. However, when the persona travels beyond his people's lands, he is accorded



little respect; the nomadic peoples are viewed as uncivilized savages and are tolerated only as a source of spare manpower for the kingdom's vast armies. The chieftain's son might be treated as little better than a Laborer in the society at large.

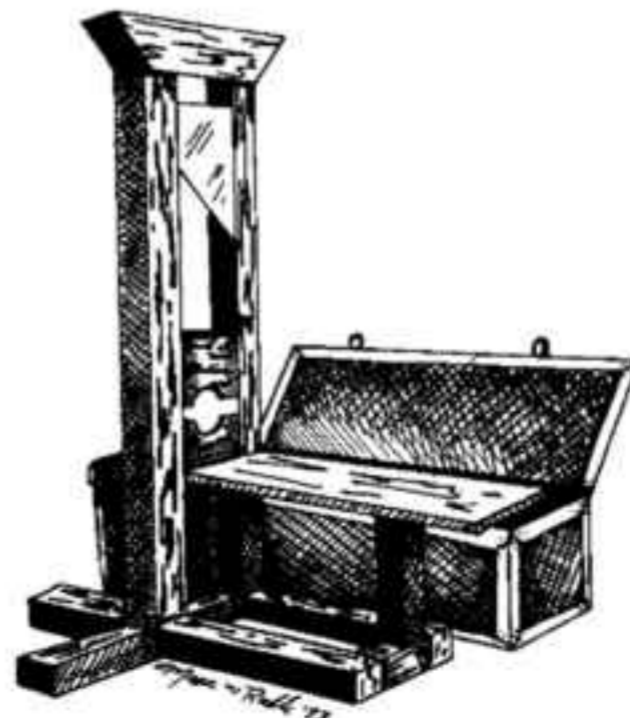
The Mythguide should define the active Status models in the Narrative Environment. It is possible for several such models to interact with each other at the same time (i.e. cultural status, social status, professional status, etc.). The Mythguide does not need to detail every Hierarchy; instead, he should simply keep the relationships among the different models in mind during both play and persona creation. Because of the linear and consistent nature of a Hierarchy's elements, it is easy to relate one Hierarchy to another. The clearest definition of a Hierarchy's nature is obtained from its active Status Foundations and Freedom Aspects.

Status Foundations

The placement of vocations and the assignment of Status within an environment's Hierarchy of Social Estates depends on five primary elements. These factors are called *Status Foundations*, and their relative importance differs from one environment or Heritage group to another. Foundations are further defined by Foundation Aspects, which detail specific areas within the larger Foundation. Status is normally based on combinations of these Foundations, and the relationships among the active Foundations dictate the progression of an environment's Hierarchy. This is usu-

ally expressed in terms of a primary Foundation (and an appropriate Aspect) and several supporting Foundations. Status is often affected by Aspects from each of the five Foundations.

When designing a Narrative Environment or Heritage Template, the Mythguide must determine the operative Status Foundations that apply to the creation. This determination depends primarily on the environment's Concept. Specific Social Determinants or Heritage Elements will particularly affect the Aspects attached to the Foundations. For example, a culture ruled by a council of successful merchants might have a Hierarchy based primarily on a Foundation of Wealth, although Tradition (Contracts), Power (Economic Strength), and Capability (Economic or Diplomatic) could all constitute additional Foundations.



Status Foundations & Aspects

The attached Foundation Aspects usually reflect the nature of the environment or Heritage group. Status Foundations and their Aspects represent an abstract model within which justification can be found for any Hierarchy, no matter how strange or diverse. The following section lists the five Status Foundations and suggests possible Foundation Aspects.

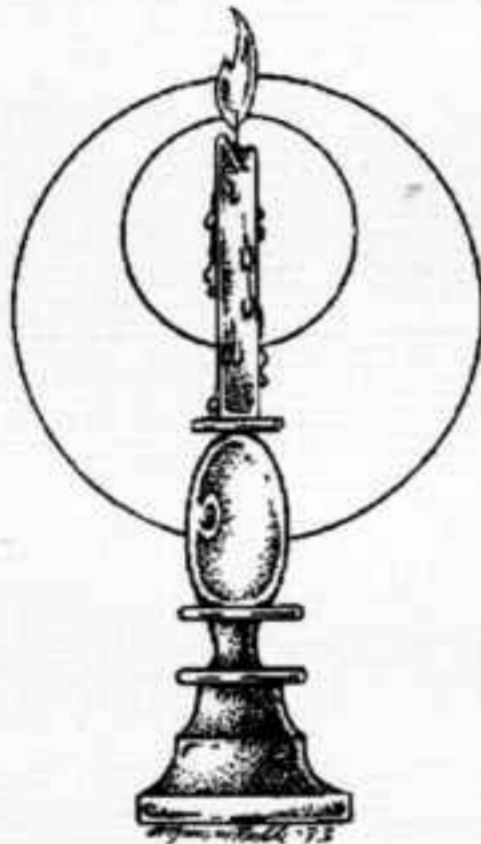
• **Tradition** In environments with Hierarchies based primarily on Tradition, Status is derived from accepted social forms or practices. Most of these practices have long histories within the environment, and represent sensibilities that are completely ingrained in a group's popular consciousness.

In a system based on *Kinship*, Status results from an individual's heredity and family relationships. Specifics depend on the society or culture's methods for determining Inheritance and Lineage. Traditional Feudal societies with their operative philosophies of Kingship follow this model.

In civilized environments, this Foundation may have a *Contracts* Aspect. Status is based primarily on contracts or agreements. Legal documents represent certain vested rights and authority, and confer Status on their bearers. Constitutional documents are an example of this type of Foundation Aspect.

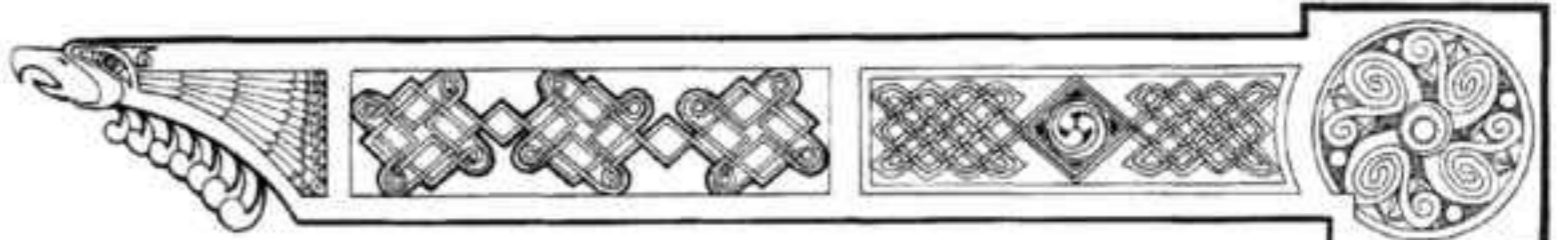
Status based on Tradition may also follow a *Cultural* Aspect. Status is based on a specific facet of an individual's culture or Heritage group, hinging on unique customs or other questions of Heritage. Perhaps one gender or race traditionally performs certain functions or occupations, and therefore enjoys higher Status. A society in which only females are permitted to conduct religious ceremonies might fall within this Foundation Aspect.

Finally, Status can be based on *Authority*. Certain offices or positions carry higher Status with them as a matter of Tradition. The importance of this Aspect depends on the nature of authority within an environment's political system. This Aspect does not necessarily constitute increased respect or esteem (thus distinguishing it from a Philosophical Foundation); instead it represents heightened recognition as a result of Traditional positioning within a social or cultural Hierarchy.

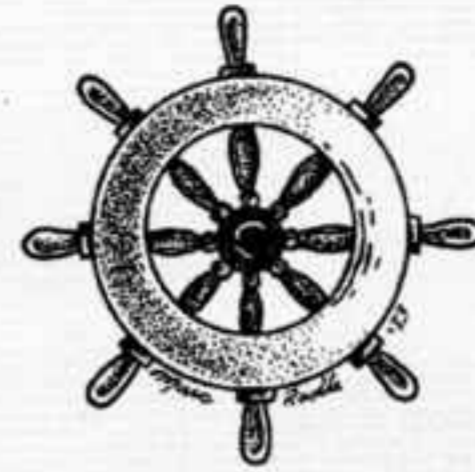


• **Capability** Status can be based on an individual's Capability in one or more areas. Capability represents a respected or admired trait within a society or culture. The raw ability to perform certain tasks or disciplines well may confer status on the performer. For example, in a society with a Status Foundation of Capability (Martial), those who are especially adept at the practice or theory of battle would receive higher Status as a direct result of their Capability. The extent of the award depends on the nature of the environment. Possible Foundation Aspects include Martial, Economic, Diplomatic, Ecclesiastic, Intellectual, Artistic, and Esoteric.





• **Wealth** Personal Wealth is perhaps the most common basis for Status. Most societies and cultures place at least some value on an individual's earnings and personal worth. This Foundation represents the overall monetary worth of a member of the environment. This Foundation is exceptionally strong in mercantile aristocracies, and its Aspects may include specific types of Wealth. For instance, the possession of certain items or materials may confer additional Status (depending on the nature and values of the environment).



• **Philosophy** Status can also have a Philosophical Foundation. In certain societies and cultures, Status is based on popular ideals and sensibilities. Individuals who provide these ideals with their truest expression have greater Status than those who do not.

Status in an environment with a Philosophy Foundation may be based on *Ideals*. Each society or Heritage group has its own sensibilities and conceptions of morality. In certain cases, these conceptions can form the partial basis for an environment's Hierarchy. Such Ideals can include Piety (especially in theocratic societies), Justice, Benevolence, or Honor.

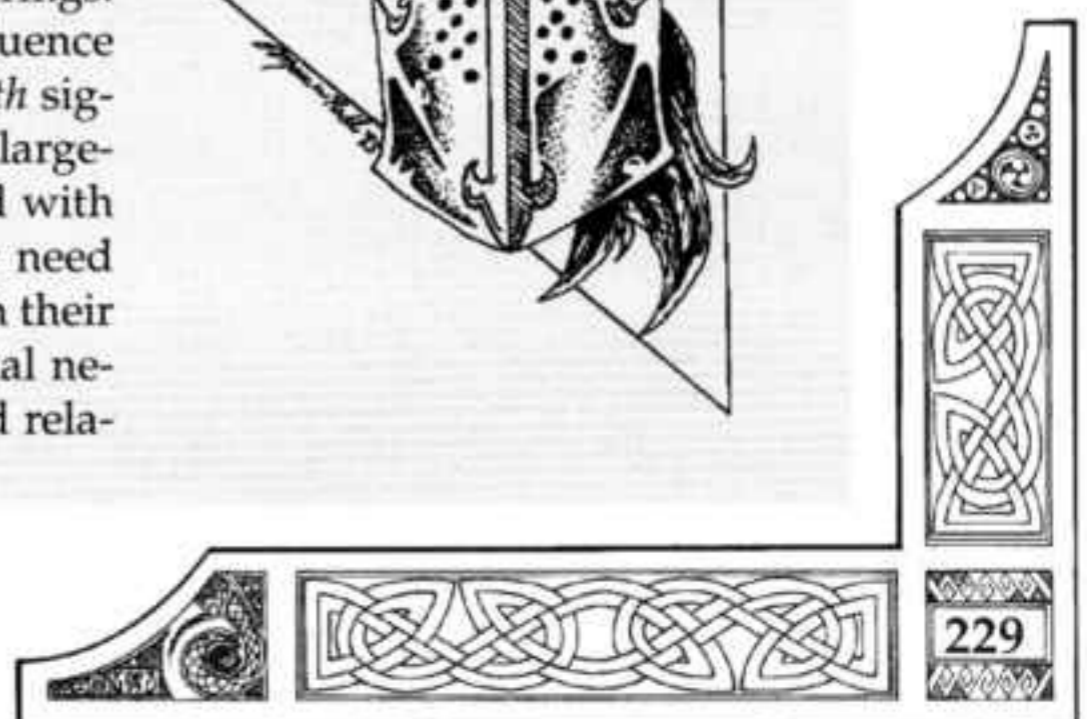
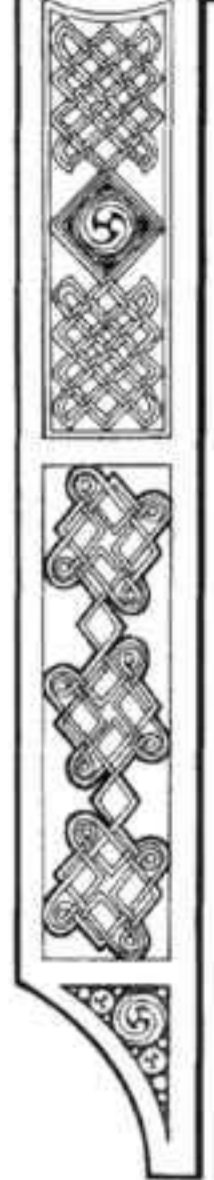
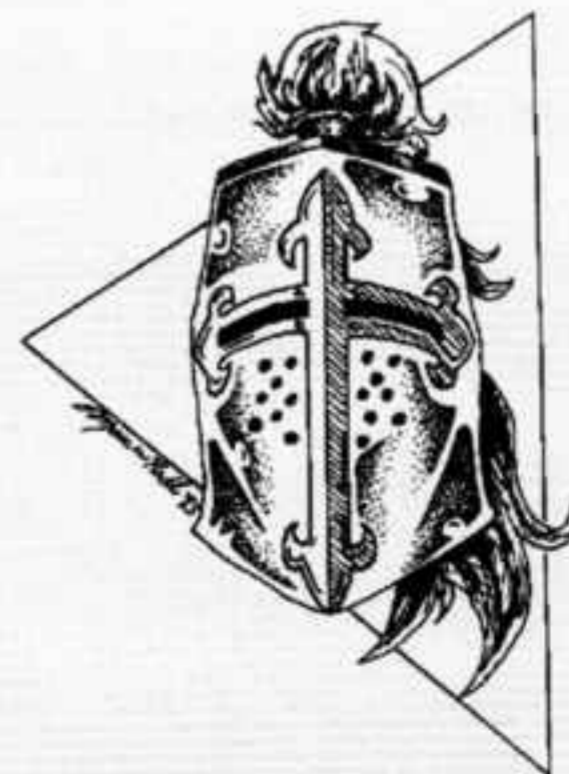
Status can also be founded on a *Doctrine*. This can take the form of an actual text or collection of teachings, or it might be represented by an abstract code of conduct or behavior. The nature of the Doctrine depends on an environment's political structure, philosophical outlook (either Heritage or Philosophical Orientation), and belief system.



Finally, Status can be based on *Obligations*. Obligations include official tasks, responsibilities, or duties. Depending on the other Status Foundations in use, Obligations may be attached to family, cultural, bureaucratic, or political entities. For example, Status may be attached to the duties performed by a priesthood. In another culture, Status could be founded in certain responsibilities performed by members of the nobility. The nature of the Obligations depends primarily on the political organization and philosophical sensibilities of the environment.

• **Power** Status can be based on the amount of Power an individual possesses. In this context Power represents the ability to exert control or accomplish a desired end. Such influence is effected regardless of an individual's *right* to act. It simply embodies the ability to act.

If a Power Foundation is active, Status is always based on *Strength*. A Foundation Aspect of *Military Strength* indicates the ability to exert influence through the use or display of troops or military forces. *Political Strength* represents Power gained through political connections or maneuverings. *Esoteric Strength* is founded in an individual's connections to or influence with particular esoteric groups or spiritual orders. *Economic Strength* signifies the ability to acquire money or financial backers and direct large-scale economic venture. Economic strength should not be confused with the Wealth Foundation because those possessing economic power need not own large amounts of money, property, or land; rather, they gain their power from careful economic maneuverings and successful financial negotiations. Status conferred by Strength depends on the nature and relationships of Power within the environment's social framework.





Personal Freedom

In addition to the intangible degrees of power, respect, wealth and authority conferred by Status, the amount and nature of Personal Freedom present in a society or culture forms a principal basis for the Hierarchy of Social Estates. Environments which embody certain political structures obviously have very little inherent Personal Freedom, while others possess a large amount. The manner in which the freedom appears affects both the overall social structure of the environment and the prevalent attitudes of the populace.

The levels of interaction and communication among the various Social Estates indicate the relative health of a society. The people's attitudes toward the Ruling Agency are crucially important both to the overall stability of the society and to the viability of the ruling class in particular. Is the populace content? Does the Ruling Agency hold its power through true popular Consent? Does a considerable resistance to the current Ruling Agency exist? If so, is the society or Heritage group close to some form of rebellion? The nuances and interplay of Personal Freedom have far-reaching effects on the general social and political structures of any environment.

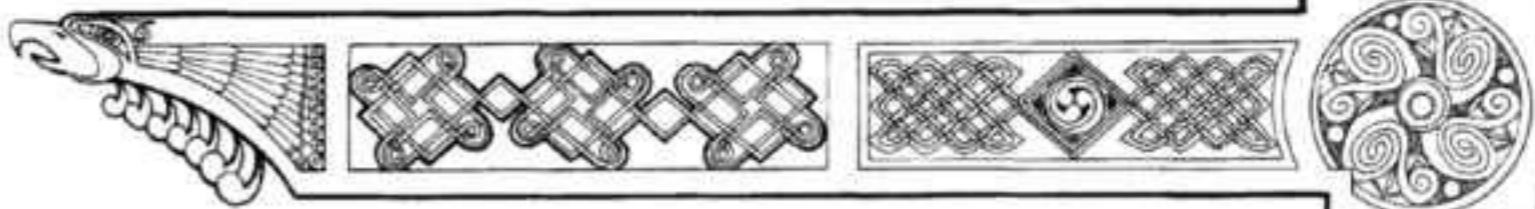
Assigning Personal Freedom

Personal Freedom occurs in numerous concentrations and manifestations among different environ-

ments. The Mythguide should decide exactly how Personal Freedom is treated and in what form it appears within the Narrative Environment, since societies and cultures who share a common environment might treat freedom differently. There are normally legal or cultural checks on an individual's freedoms. These checks tend to be standardized and unconstraining as long as one lives within the prescribed codes of law. However, when one oversteps the legal, ethical, or social bounds of the environment, these basic freedoms may be taken away.

The amount of Personal Freedom that exists in a society or culture affects the environment at its most basic level. It alters and defines relationships among the Social Estates, especially between Free and Unfree Archetypes or Vocational Clusters. How do the different levels of society perceive one another? How do individual cultures interact with a larger society? How are subject Heritage groups treated? Where is the separation between the Free and Unfree classes? How pronounced is the separation? What levels of servitude exist - serf, slave, etc. - and how do they treat each other? How are the Unfree classes treated by the upper classes? All of these considerations are important when defining an environment's Personal Freedoms.

Since Personal Freedom is a relatively abstract concept, it is not necessary to minutely define an environment's freedoms. Once the Mythguide develops a general idea of the Personal Freedoms operating in different regions of the Narrative Environment, he may assign the Freedoms in several ways. Two principal Methods of assignation - Vertical and Horizontal - serve as the basis for a number of Freedom Aspects upon which Personal Freedom in a society can



be founded. A Vertical assignment of Personal Freedom indicates an assignment across at least two Status Archetypes (i.e. vertically). A Horizontal assignment of Personal Freedom pertains to a single Archetype.

Freedom Aspects represent categories on which Personal Freedom may be based. Possible Aspects include Heritage (race or species), Gender, Culture, Status Archetype, or individual Occupation. For example, Personal Freedom might be assigned Vertically with a Heritage Aspect in a particular society. This means that all members of a certain race or species, regardless of Status Archetype, have either more limited or more expansive freedoms. Freedom may also be assigned Horizontally within a society or culture. With an Occupation Aspect modifying the result, all professions within a specific Status Archetype might enjoy greater privileges or suffer further restraints in addition to those imposed upon the other members of the professional class.

Types of Personal Freedom

<i>Major Types</i>	<i>Sample Issues</i>
Physical	Ownership of physical body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - privacy - physical exploitation - geographic mobility - personal defense - bodily expression
Material	Ownership of Property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - land - dwellings/buildings - transportation - animals - arms/armor - personal effects
Social/Cultural	Marriage / Divorce Kin obligations Pursuit of vocation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access to occupations - changing professions Lifestyle
Moral/Spiritual	Religion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choice of deities - expression of worship Ideology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access to ideas - expression of ideas
Political	Ruling Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - selection of leaders - ability to affect policy - obligation to government (taxes? military service?)

Amilani Freedom Fighter

Petruchae's Status and Freedoms

Amilani culture dictates that only women may possess great status within the City-State environment. Official, mercantile, magical, and military vocations are reserved for women and men cannot receive status associated with these vocations even if they practice covertly. In addition, Amilani law denies all men enfranchised citizenship. Consequently, men are prohibited from owning real estate or grand material properties such as ships or carriages, voting for public officials, bearing arms, practicing magic, and engaging in trade (except retail vending).

The unfree labor class, of which Petruchae is a member, is further limited in its personal freedoms. A worker in the glass factories, Petruchae is provided with House sponsored living quarters. He receives a wage that he can spend freely but it is not enough to live independently in the rental housing districts available to Amilani men. So long as he resides in House sponsored quarters, he must abide the house rules which includes an evening curfew limiting night movement. Labor commons including a tavern and recreation house are open

to him but surveillance is extreme and spies/tattlers are bountiful. Petruchae slips out to engage his illicit profession and he bribes house lackeys to provide him with re-entrance passes and alibis to cover his occasional encounters with the housing common guards. In addition to suffering all the previous restrictions Petruchae must be careful never to be caught with weapons in his possession. A man of his class arrested for armed combat is typically executed during arrest, and lengthy prison sentences are awarded for merely possessing a concealed weapon.



Freedom Aspects Descriptions

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Horizontal Description</i>	<i>Vertical Description</i>
Heritage	<p>All members of a particular race or species which exist within a particular Status Archetype enjoy/suffer additional freedoms/restraints.</p> <p>ex. All dwarven professionals working within the city limits pay 20% less occupational tax.</p>	<p>All members of a particular race or species enjoy/suffer specific freedoms/restraints regardless of their individual vocations or Status Archetypes.</p> <p>ex. Only elves are permitted within the sacred Grove of Inurahd.</p>
Gender	<p>All members of a particular gender which are placed within a particular Status Archetype enjoy/suffer additional freedoms/restraints.</p> <p>ex. Only male Aristocrats are permitted to own property within the Garden District.</p>	<p>All members of a particular gender enjoy/suffer specific freedoms/restraints regardless of their individual vocations or Status Archetypes.</p> <p>ex. All males can serve in the militia.</p>
Culture	<p>All members of a particular culture which exist within a particular Status Archetype enjoy/suffer additional freedoms/restraints.</p> <p>ex. Only the Caravan merchants of Trelingklon may sell wares within the market.</p>	<p>All members of a particular culture enjoy/suffer specific freedoms/restraints regardless of their individual vocations or Status Archetypes.</p> <p>ex. No barbarians from 'the lawless sectors' are permitted to participate in elections.</p>
Status	<p>All members of a particular Status Level or Archetype enjoy/suffer particular freedoms/restraints allotted to that Level or Archetype.</p> <p>ex. Only Privileged citizens are permitted to travel the streets after midnight.</p>	N/A
Vocation	<p>All practitioners of a particular vocation which exist within a specific Status Archetype enjoy/suffer additional freedoms/restraints.</p> <p>ex. No marginal street performers may enter the Noble quarter of the city.</p>	<p>All practitioners of a particular vocation (which crosses Status Archetypes) enjoys/suffers specific freedoms.</p> <p>ex. All street performers are permitted within the city bazaar.</p>

⑥ Status Archetypes ⑥

Six different Status Archetypes form the basic structure of the Hierarchy of Social Estates. These Archetypes, in order of ascending Status Level, are: Marginal, Labor, Professional, Privileged, Ruling, and Ruling Agency. Status Archetypes represent universal models of social stratification. These models provide the society with a standard and accepted framework on which a more advanced system of social valuation is founded. Most societies follow these models closely, with each Archetype having an important role in the overall social mechanism.

Each Archetype is uniquely defined by its society. No other society will have exactly the same Archetypal breakdown. Two societies never have precisely the same types of Personal Freedom, or vocations whose progression of Status Levels is exactly the same. Political and philosophical situations among societies differ as well, and the complex interactions between a society's Hierarchy of Social Estates and its individual system of values and sensibilities must be considered at all times during the design process. For example, the Privileged Archetype in a trade-oriented Republic might consist almost entirely of wealthy merchants, while the same Archetype in a Representative Democracy would probably be formed by a class of high-level government bureaucrats or elected officials. In either case it is the nature of the society itself, its Personal Freedoms and bureaucratic mechanisms, that provides the detail necessary to construct each Archetype.

A Hierarchy's Status Archetypes are defined in two ways - by the level of Personal Freedom enjoyed by the Archetype's members, and by the Vocational Clusters and their subdivisions that fall within the Archetype. Personal Freedom depends on the nature of the society's government and on the philosophy of its Ruling Agency. Freedom also depends on the relative balance of power within the environment. If the Ruling Agency's power base is slipping, it may slacken control for a while to put things in order. Conversely, if a Ruling Agency enjoys total control of an environment, social constraints may become tighter.

Composition of the Status Archetypes

The composition of the different Status Archetypes will vary from one society to another. In the following sections, each of the six Status Archetypes is presented and discussed. Guidelines and suggestions for their use accompany the descriptions, as well as sug-





gestions for Vocational Cluster placement and Archetype composition. The Status Archetype descriptions are presented in order of decreasing Status Level, since an environment's Hierarchy is always assigned from the top down.

The Ruling Agency

The Ruling Agency represents the individual or group of individuals who directly rule an environment. A distinction between this Archetype and the Ruling Archetype is the level of Authority held by members of each. Members of the Ruling Archetype hold their Authority as a grant from the Ruling Agency, while the Ruling Agency itself is the ultimate source of true Authority in any society or culture.

The nature of an environment's Authority base and its current political situation combine to shape its Ruling Agency. For example, an Absolute Monarchy has a lone figure as its Ruling Agency - the king. The aristocracy and their families form the Ruling class, with the monarch's family also included in this group. The king alone represents the Ruling Agency.

In a Representative Democracy, the elected governing body is the Ruling Agency, and each of its members is considered a member of the Ruling Agency. In this situation, the nature of the society could preclude any sort of Ruling class. The families and relations of the ruling body's members might simply be members of a Privileged class. When the members of the Ruling Agency in such a society cease their careers in public service, they revert to a Privileged level of status.

The security enjoyed by members of this Archetype depends upon the state the environment itself is in. If the relationship between the governing classes and the people is a tenuous one, the security of the Ruling Agency is uncertain as well. If the government enjoys widespread popular consent and constitutional support, no class of society is more secure than that which holds the reins of Authority.

The Ruling Agency represents a logical extension of the society's Ruling Archetype. The two Archetypes are intimately related (the Ruling Agency will always be part of the Ruling class), and their individual designs should both complement and enhance one another.

The Ruling Archetype

The Ruling Archetype represents the ruling class of an environment. Not all societies and cultures have ruling classes as such, and a Ruling class is not the same thing as a Ruling Agency (although the latter will always be a member of the former if both are present). The Ruling Archetype is separated from the Privileged Archetype by the levels of Authority wielded by each.

Authority is defined as the vested right to exercise Power, and while certain members of the Privileged Archetype may hold significant amounts of Power, they do not usually hold large amounts of Authority. Members of the Ruling class generally wield large direct amounts of Authority, and often Power as well, in the name of the Ruling Agency. The distinction is important; a fabulously wealthy craftsman can possess a great deal of social Power as a result of his wealth. If he were a town official, he might also hold a limited degree of Authority. However, a poor baron, by virtue of his relationship to the crown and his rank, would hold far more Authority than the artisan ever could.

When detailing an environment's Privileged and Ruling Archetypes, the characteristic that separates the two categories is the nature of the environment's Authority base. Is Authority represented by military

might? Wealth? Tradition? Answering this simple question allows the Mythguide to make a final decision on the nature of both the Privileged and Ruling Archetypes.

Members of the Ruling Archetype often have access to the Ruling Agency and hold their Power and Authority as a direct result of the whims of the Ruling Agency. For example, in a Feudal society the wealthy merchant class falls within the Privileged Archetype while the nobility as a whole (those lords who compose the extensive aristocratic hierarchy) comprises the Ruling Archetype. The king is the Ruling Agency, although he is also a member of the Ruling class. The Mythguide should detail the composition of the Archetype according to the nature of the Narrative Environment. The general political climate of the environment dictates the stability of a position in the Ruling Archetype.

The extent and the specific nature of the Ruling Archetype's influence depends on the structure of the society or culture and its Power base, just as the real Power behind the Ruling class's Authority depends on the security provided by the Ruling Agency. In most environments, the Ruling Archetype is the level of society from which the Ruling Agency comes. In a society or culture with a Ruling class, there is always a Ruling Agency, while the reverse is not the case at all. For example, a Dictatorship is ruled by the Dictator and a small cadre of specially chosen and privileged advisors. In this case, the entire group of men constitutes the Ruling Agency and there is no Ruling class.

The Ruling Archetype defines an actual *class*, not a specific group of individuals. Class is defined as every member of a certain social strata, including all family members (wives, children, etc.). If a powerful, limited group of individuals is being described, these individuals represent an extended Ruling Agency and not an entire Ruling Archetype.

The Privileged Archetype

The Privileged Archetype represents the upper echelons of society or culture, or those professions involving little or no manual labor. Some vocations fall solely within the Privileged Archetype, while for other professions the Privileged Archetype is home to the highest levels of a vocation (such as guild officers or masters). In environments with little Personal Freedom, few social elements fall within the Privileged Archetype. There is often a large Professional class and a small Ruling class in such environments, but no Privileged class.



In most societies the Privileged Archetype represents both the Wealth and Power Status Foundations to a lesser or greater degree. The whimsical and fleeting natures of both of these social elements express themselves in the Privileged Archetype. This Archetype is also represented differently in the countryside than it is in an urban environment. A rural Privileged Archetype might include extremely successful gentleman farmers, landed gentry who are not members of the Ruling class, wealthy merchants, and possibly certain members of the clergy.

The urban Archetype is more structured, including wealthy independent merchants, guild or other organized labor officials, high government officials, religious officials, highly placed military officers, and highly placed academics or scholastic officials. The Ensemble should remember that a high degree of urban specialization is present in towns or other urban environments. This and other social factors have a pronounced and direct effect on the final Archetype design. Also remember that the examples given here constitute 'standard' examples. When designing an original Hierarchy, anything goes as far as Archetype composition.



The Professional Archetype

The Professional Archetype represents those members of an environment who practice some type of accepted craft, vocation, or skill. Such vocations may involve manual labor, but this labor is considered skilled and is usually directed toward the completion of a craft or project. This distinction separates the Professional classes from the Laboring classes, who often labor for ends other than artisanship or production.

Certain Professional occupations may be entirely service-oriented as well. Taverners, innkeepers, and barber-surgeons are examples of such vocations. Unfree Professionals are often bonded to an organization, individual, or aristocratic house in some fashion, and usually enjoy considerably more respect and status than Unfree Laborers.

The Professional Archetype is perhaps the most constant of all the Status Archetypes. Privileged and Ruling classes may change over a period of time, but the Professional classes are the framework around which any 'Civilized' society is built. Professional vocations found in the countryside include blacksmith,

millers, masons, innkeepers, timberwrights, hideworkers, and hostlers. Professional vocations found in an urban environment are more numerous, and include chandler, taverner, innkeeper, tailor, clothier, glassblower, tanner, cobbler, cutler, swordsmith, potter, jeweler, goldsmith, lexicographer, shipwright, perfumer, cooper, wainwright, butcher, tinker, barber, harness maker, wine seller, and money lender. The Ensemble must decide exactly which vocations are present in the initial Narrative Environment, and the level of Specialization present defines the availability of individual vocations.

In societies which allow the practice, Urban Professionals often organize themselves in the form of craft organizations. The kind of organization varies from one society to another, but guilds and confraternities are common types. Such organizations serve to heighten the status of their members, since they often control commerce in the environment. This control can take many forms, but usually includes workmanship standards, price controls, and safeguards against unfair competition. The result is an important and powerful element of society. These organizations are a principal reason for the discrepancies in power, status, and opportunity between urban and rural professionals.

Again, remember that these examples are standards. In practice, an original Hierarchy can take any course as long as it is based on the active Status Foundations. For example, the Professional Archetype in a magic rich environment might include a guild of mercenary adepts who hire their services to the highest bidder. In another environment, artisanship might be revered as art and its practitioners elevated into the Privileged Archetype.

The Labor Archetype

The Labor Archetype represents the laboring classes of an environment, or those vocations that practice some form of manual labor to sustain themselves. The composition of the Labor Archetype changes from one society or culture to another. The Laboring classes of a Dictatorial society, for example, might be the Professional classes of a Limited Monarchy.

The classes that normally comprise this Archetype are those which consist primarily of unskilled or semi-skilled manual labor. Common rural members of this Archetype include farmers, thatchers, fishermen, herdsman, trappers, whalers, and domestic or farm servants. Urban members include charcoalers, icemen, thatchers, cooks, carpenters, salters, miners, weavers,

dyers, bakers, and brewers. However, an original environment could show different social patterns. For example, if a culture were isolated and dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and philosophy, all warriors might be relegated to the Labor Archetype. In an extreme case, those who use edged weapons could comprise a class of untouchables, treated poorly and employed only when necessary. It all depends on the environment.

Rural artisans are generally less specialized than their urban brethren, and are not usually organized into guilds or craft associations. Because of the nature of urbanization, rural vocations have broader, more general skill bases, while urban vocations tend to be more specific. Such specificity is a basic consequence of true urbanization, and should be considered by the Ensemble when detailing both this Archetype and the Professional Archetype.

The Marginal Archetype

The Marginal Status Archetype represents the element of the populace that exists on the fringes of society, outside the bounds of the accepted social framework. Members of this Archetype are without Status and possess Status Levels of zero. Depending on the political, cultural, and moral values embraced by an environment, the Marginal Archetype can contain almost any vocation or profession.

This Archetype usually represents those vocations that exist somewhere in the shadier areas of legality and acceptance - thieves, beggars, prostitutes, etc. It also represents those who follow no vocation at all. For example, traveling performers and artists might fall within this Archetype in some environments. Such environments would likely have a low tolerance of the fine and performing arts. Stranger exclusions can also occur. In a religious society, certain crafts or vocation might be outlawed and their practitioners relegated to Marginal Status. In a superstitious culture all magic using individuals could be persecuted.

Exactly which vocations belong in the Marginal Archetype depends on the individual environment. Numerous considerations affect the assignment process. How do the environment's economic and governmental systems operate? Will the environment's current political situation affect the determination? How does the environment's legal system operate? How extensive is that system? What is the environment's Heritage or Philosophical Orientation? To what extent does religion dictate the society or culture's moral sensibilities? How do different reli-



gions or philosophies interact to form a coherent moral base (if they do)? What cultural specifics come into play? Because the Marginal Archetype represents elements outside the bounds of normal society and culture, the Mythguide has more latitude when defining it.

Vocational Clusters

The Vocational Clusters are convenient occupational bundles that allow the Hierarchy design process to progress more easily. Each Vocational Cluster contains professions of a common theme or group. For example, the Warrior Vocational Cluster contains all martial occupations (common soldier, mercenary, etc.). The Vocational Clusters are inserted into the various Status Archetypes to create a broad-based and all-inclusive Hierarchy of Social Estates.

The simplest way to use the Vocational Clusters is to assign each Cluster to a Status Archetype. Ranges of possible Status Levels are then assigned to each Cluster division within the appropriate Archetypes.



A more detailed method for using the Vocational Clusters includes specific professional subdivisions. Such a system of subdivided Clusters might be appropriate for a large urban setting or a particularly intricate Narrative Environment. When using the Clusters in this fashion, subdivide them according to the needs of the individual environment. This division can itself be handled in two ways. First, the entire Cluster can simply be divided in a general manner. For example, the Warrior Vocational Cluster could be divided into Warrior I, which would fall into the Professional Archetype, and Warrior II, which falls into the Privileged Archetype. Specific occupations are assigned to one of the two Clusters based on the nature of the society. For instance, all common soldiers might fall under the Warrior I Vocational Cluster while officers above a certain rank or level fall within the Warrior II Cluster. Such divisions offer more detail than a basic Cluster system, but they still leave plenty of room for innovation and change.

The second method of dividing the Vocational Clusters is more specific. Using this method, subdivisions are based on individual vocations or small vocational groups. For example, the Mythguide wishes to specifically define an Archetype breakdown for the

hideworkers' profession in a large city. The group decides that three divisions are necessary. Apprentices fall within the Labor Archetype, journeymen and most masters within the Professional Archetype, and a few masters and all guild officers within the Privileged Archetype. The breakdown is a specific one and in this case applies only to this particular vocation.

An alternative to the method just presented is one that details a group of vocations. For instance, in the previous example the Ensemble could have detailed an Archetype breakdown for all guilded professions, or perhaps just for those in a certain specialized area or industry (in this case leather craft - hideworkers, tanners, harness makers, glovers, etc.). The crux of this illustration is that the Vocational Clusters, much like the Status Archetypes, can be used effectively with as much or as little detail as the Ensemble and the Mythguide are willing to provide.

COMMERCIAL ORIENTATIONS

The Vocational Clusters are divided according to their Commercial Orientations. Vocations within the Clusters may be oriented toward either the production of goods or the rendering of services. In a goods-oriented profession, some concrete product or craft is exchanged or purchased. In a service-oriented profession, an intangible service or ability is exchanged or purchased.

Some Clusters are composed primarily of one Commercial Orientation or the other, while others contain a combination of the two. The Commercial Orientations represent a convenient way to divide the occupations comprising the Vocational Clusters. The Clusters themselves are described in the following section.

The Fringe Cluster

The Fringe Vocational Cluster consists of those vocations on the fringe of society, outside the bounds of the accepted social norms. The composition of this Cluster changes depending on the Narrative Environment.

The Fringe Vocational Cluster appears in three general forms. The first consists of goods-oriented Fringe occupations, such as peddlers, fences, or black marketeers. The second contains occupations that are service-oriented, such as prostitutes, entertainers, and assassins. These professions provide valuable (if of-

ten illegal) services within the shadier realms of society in return for material compensation. Finally, there are miscellaneous Fringe occupations, providing neither goods nor services. Such vocations include beggars, vagrants, outcasts, and thieves (although this latter occupation could also be viewed as service-oriented).

The Unskilled Labor Cluster

The Unskilled Labor Vocational Cluster contains those occupations that consist entirely of unskilled or semi-skilled manual labor. These vocations are generally service-related, although they may be goods-related.

Laboring professions often consist of work for work's sake, and include such vocations as farmers, servants, and hired manual laborers. Distinctions between goods and service-related occupations may be drawn if a society has a large Unskilled Labor Cluster, but such distinctions are not usually necessary.

The Warrior Cluster

The Warrior Vocational Cluster consists of those professions which rely on the use of arms or martial prowess. These professions are always service-related, and include such vocations as professional soldiers, mercenaries, military engineers, sappers, and weapons instructors. There is often some overlap between this Cluster and certain other Clusters.

The Artisan Cluster

The Artisan Vocational Cluster contains those production and craft-oriented professions that are primarily goods-related. Most Artisans specialize in a specific product or good which they produce for general sale.

This Vocational Cluster includes most craft professions, such as smiths, hideworkers, tailors, woodworkers, etc. This Cluster is also closely related to both the Merchant and Skilled Professional Clusters, and the distinctions among the three should be carefully described by the Mythguide.



The Merchant Cluster

The Merchant Vocational Cluster contains those trade and establishment-oriented professions that are primarily service-related (although they may be viewed as goods-related as well, since they derive their profit from the sale of others' goods). Merchants can either specialize or maintain a broader base for their services.

This Vocational Cluster includes such occupations as innkeeper and taverner (those who operate service establishments), as well as true merchant occupations such as wine seller, Chandler, and grocer (those who sell goods produced by others). Larger and more broad-based merchants fall within this category as well. Merchant-adventurers, such as those who trade or broker many different sorts of goods, and caravan masters are two examples. Such traders can be very wealthy, and in some environments may be assigned to the Skilled Professional Vocational Cluster instead.



The Ecclesiastical Cluster

The Ecclesiastical Vocational Cluster contains all religious professions and members of the clergy. These professions require widely different levels of training and education, depending on the individual position and its rank within both society and church. All religious vocations are considered service-oriented professions, and their treatment in a society depends largely on the society's attitude toward religion.

Religious occupations include all members of major religious orders (priests, religious officials, monks, lay brethren, etc.) and the members of certain minor orders. Those who belong to minor religious orders or organizations, and for whom religion is a true vocation, are placed within this Cluster. This Cluster also includes the priesthood in more primitive cultures.

Members of minor orders whose primary occupation lies elsewhere fall within both of the appropriate Clusters. Members of a military religious order, for example, would be placed within both the Ecclesiastical and the Warrior Clusters (with Status Level based on the higher of the two). This Cluster and its nature changes from one environment to another, and the Ensemble should be careful to clearly define its components.

The Skilled Professional Cluster

The Skilled Professional Vocational Cluster contains those service-oriented professions that require extensive specialization and training. Great merchants and traders often fall within this Cluster instead of the Merchant Cluster. This is especially true if they have grown large enough to become primarily service-oriented. Merchants in this category include merchant bankers, capital lenders, usurers, and members of large trade or caravan companies.

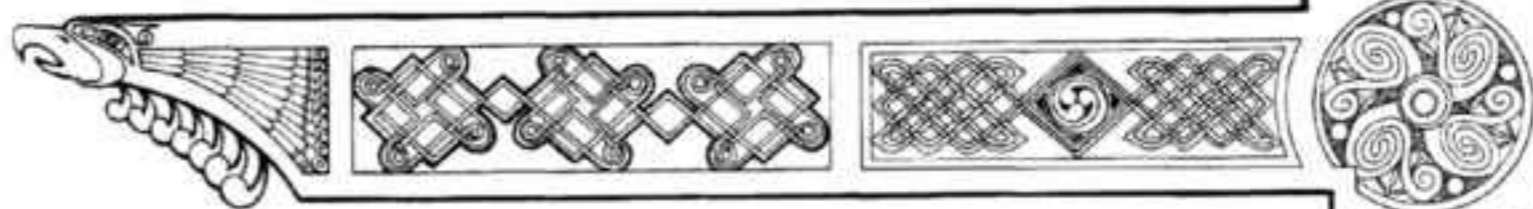
Other professions that fall within this Vocational Cluster are those which require high degrees of education or lengthy training. These occupations include physicians, apothecaries, heralds, barber-surgeons, architects, and lawyers.



The Academic Cluster

The Academic Vocational Cluster contains all purely academic and scholastic professions. These professions require high degrees of both education and training. All Academic vocations are usually service-oriented professions (with a few exceptions, such as writers and those who produce manuscripts). Status Levels vary considerably in this Cluster, although this variance does not generally approach that found in the Ecclesiastical Cluster.

Academic professions include masters and teachers, scribes, illuminators, university officials and scholars, students, philosophers, and disputators. There is often some overlap between this Cluster and both the Ecclesiastical and Skilled Professional Clusters. In many societies, scholars and teachers are members of religious orders, while scribes and engravers might be considered Skilled Professionals.



The Bureaucratic Cluster

The Bureaucratic Vocational Cluster contains all governmental and non-governmental administrative positions within a society. These professions require varying degrees of education and training, and most bureaucrats are both literate and mathematically competent. These occupations are entirely service-oriented. Most societies, no matter what their size, have some form of bureaucratic structure.

Status Levels within this Cluster vary considerably, and there is often significant overlap between the upper echelons of this Cluster and those of the Political Cluster. Bureaucratic professions include positions from the lowest clerks and assistants to the highest levels of administration. Members of the Bureaucracy are often clergy or members of the aristocracy (the Political Cluster).



The Arcane Cluster

The Arcane Vocational Cluster contains those vocations that deal primarily with magic and the supernatural. These professions normally require highly specialized training and lengthy periods of study and education, although in some environments this is not the case (see the section later in this book on designing Realities). When these vocations manifest themselves as actual occupations, they are invariably service-oriented.

Such manifestations depend upon the manner in which magic is viewed in the environment, and Status Levels in this Cluster vary considerably. The same mage could be a member of the Marginal Archetype in one society, while in another all mages are members of the Privileged Archetype. Arcane professions include such things as professional mage (court magician, etc.), alchemist, astrologer (one with true Talent), and seer. In certain environments, Adepts may have to keep their Talent secret. This is a direct result of an environment's level of magic tolerance.

The Political Cluster

The Political Vocational Cluster contains those vocations that directly affect both the Power and Authority bases of an environment's political structure. These professions are entirely political in nature, and

often fall within the society's Ruling Archetype. Members of this Vocational Cluster always have some type of connection to the society's inherent Authority structure. They usually wield large amounts of social or political Power as well. Status Levels in this Cluster are always high, while the precise nature of the Cluster depends upon the environment's current state of political affairs.

Political vocations include members of the aristocracy in a Monarchical political system, members of the ruling body in a Divided system, and members of the Ruling Agency (possibly extending to the Ruling class) in an Absolute system. There is often a gray area between these vocations and actual occupations. For game purposes all are treated alike. For example, a Feudal lord's vocation could be just that - Feudal lord. Such a job entails many different qualities and talents, such as administration, martial prowess, and judicature. Although each of these aspects might fit into other Clusters, the individual's actual vocation is 'lord', and this vocation definitely falls within the Political Vocational Cluster.

Some amount of overlap might be present with this Cluster. For instance, certain distinctions between this Cluster and either the Bureaucratic, Warrior, Eccle-





siastical, or Academic Clusters will have to be made at each Cluster's highest levels.

The Arts Cluster

The Arts Vocational Cluster contains those vocations which deal with either the fine or performing arts. These vocations are service-related, and include such professions as painters, sculptors, illuminators, actors, mimes, and vocalists. This Cluster's place in a society's Hierarchy depends primarily on an environment's tolerance of the fine and performing arts. There may be some overlap between this Cluster and others.

Custom and Rigidity of Status

Different societies and cultures view the social hierarchy in different ways. Some espouse an accessible and open attitude toward class, while others rigidly adhere to the social framework. Official titles and

awards mean more in some environments than in others. The Mythguide and the Ensemble should determine the prevailing attitudes toward class and status in each area of the Narrative Environment.

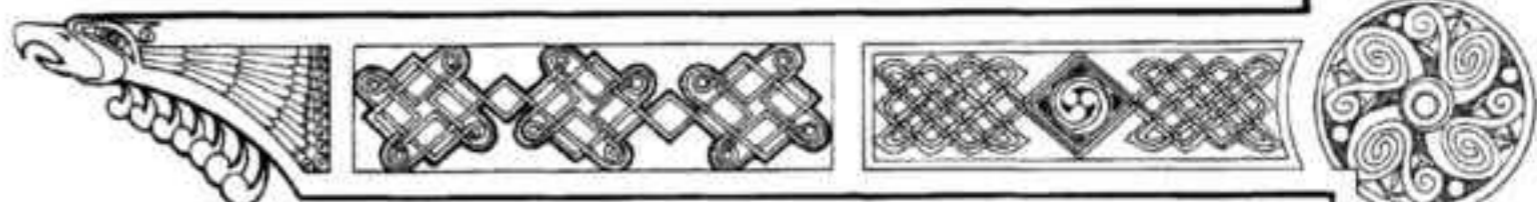
Many factors contribute to such attitudes - the levels and nature of Personal Freedom present, the current political atmosphere, the attitude toward heredity and kinship as it relates to status, the current economic climate, any unique or specific religious sensibilities, and the general level of interaction among the Status Archetypes. All of these elements combine to form two important social indicators - Custom and Rigidity. Both are expressed by values ranging from one to ten, and both attempt to illustrate abstract facets of the social framework.

Rigidity represents the possibility for advancement both within and across Status Archetypes. A value of ten indicates little or no possibility of such advancement occurring, while a value of one describes a social system in which the lowest domestic servant could theoretically advance into the Ruling Archetype.

Custom represents the amount and strictness of protocol that is present in the environment. It indicates the fundamental importance of the social framework to members of a particular Hierarchy. A value of one represents an extremely loose environment, one in which social labels and sensibilities mean little. A value of ten represents an extreme example of status-oriented tradition and protocol. Stepping beyond the bounds of one's position in a society or culture with high Custom can have severe repercussions.

Custom and Rigidity can be founded on many different concepts, both abstract and concrete. For instance, a Custom Value of ten in one society could indicate an upper class who holds power through fear and oppression, while in another it might represent extreme reverence and esteem for such a class. Certain amounts of resentment, scorn, and envy are inherent in any system of class divisions, as are corresponding feelings of respect and admiration.

Such emotions and reactions are defined by the Status Foundations and accompanying Foundation Aspects at work in the Hierarchy (as well as by several Cultural Features, Heritage Orientation among them). The Mythguide should determine the root causes and philosophies behind a society or culture's Custom and Rigidity values because these values are important to the practical application of an environment's Hierarchy of Social Estates.



Hierarchy of Social Estates: Northmen of Firnost Heath

Status Foundations
 Tribal Nation - Tradition (Cultural Aspect: Exemplary Conduct*)
 Tribe - Philosophy (Doctrine/Ideal aspect: Strict codes of Personal Honor)
 Clan - Philosophy (Obligational aspect: Welfare of Clan)

Freedom Aspects
 Horizontal (Occupational) - Tribal Shamans have greatest personal freedom by virtue of occupation(interpreters of omens).
 Vertical (Cultural) - Foreigners (non-tribesmen) are accorded relative status according to their professed/apparent vocations; however, they require permission to court clansmembers, attend religious ceremonies, or traverse territorial borders.

<i>Status Archetype</i>	<i>Vocational Clusters</i>	<i>Sample Occupations</i>	<i>Status Level</i>
Ruling Agency	Political (I)	Chieftain (elected by Trial)	20
	Ecclesiastical (I)	Tribal Chiefs (appointed councillors) Spiritual Leader (appointed councillor)	19 18
Ruling Class	None	n/a	
Privileged Class	Political (II)	Tribal Chieftains	17
	Ecclesiastical (II)	Tribal Shamans	16
	Political (III)	Clanheads	15 - 13
Professional Class	Academic	Skalds (Shamanskalds & Smithskalds)	13 - 12
	Artisan (I)	Smiths (Blacksmiths & Silversmiths)	11
	Warrior (I)	Elite Guardsmen to Chieftain	10
	Artisan (II)	Smiths (Coppersmiths)	10
Labor Class	Warrior (II)	Eligible conscript warriors	9
	Unskilled Labor (I)	Hunters, Herdsmen, & Farmers	8
		Miners, Carpenters, & Masons	7
		Weavers, Tanners, & Potters	6
		Foragers, Thatchers, & Kindlers	5
		Arts	Sword Dancers & Choir singers (adolescents)
	Unskilled Labor (II)	Dung Collectors & Diggers (Field hands)	3
		Professional Understudies (adolescents)	2
		Fringe Cluster	Unemployed (Aged & Children)
	Marginal Class	Special	Dishonored Clansmen (Unfree): Clansmen who have greatly dishonored themselves by committing crimes or other morally offensive acts are either branded and exiled or allowed to remain but treated as "Unfree" with regard to personal liberties.



Amilani Matriarch

Nayetsha's Initial Persona Estate

In the City-State of Amilanth, the powerful trading Houses compose the society's Ruling Archetype. This alone indicates that Nayetsha's Status Level must be at least 16. Being the eldest of her siblings, Nayetsha is trained as a House director (Status level 18). When she finally inherits her legacy, she becomes House Matriarch (Status level 19). Should she choose to serve among the City-State's Council of Representatives her Status Level will increase to 20. During her Background Development, she inherits and serves 3 years in her House's purchased Council seat. After this time, she places her noble kinswoman upon the ruling council and withdraws to private life. Her Status Level decreases by one point for abandoning her official duties, but may return to 20 if and when she resumes her family's council seat.

Outside of the political arena, Nayetsha is more able to engage in the ruthless trading practices which may have conflicted somewhat with official duty. Her house's political influence is maintained by her cousin and Nayetsha is unconstrained by the time and responsibility associated with office. As the Matriarch of one of Amilanth's most powerful and respected trading houses, Nayetsha's status can never drop below a level of 18, even if her house's wealth and political influence were to diminish to an average level. Houses rise and fall by necessity and of the thirty-nine purchased council seats, few are supported by wealth so ancient as that of House Iedani. Short of a catastrophic event which results in her imprisonment or exile, Nayetsha's personal status will remain within the higher levels of the ruling class.

Maintaining a high level of Status is one of Nayetsha's priorities, however. With such high status, Nayetsha and her house are politically invulnerable and she can use this to her advantage when dealing with foreign merchants and trading companies. Even within her own society, Nayetsha employs her status to guarantee a high standard of living. Members of the Privileged and Professional archetypes scramble over one another to please her and any laborers she happens to pass must bow their heads with traditional reverence.

Status Level

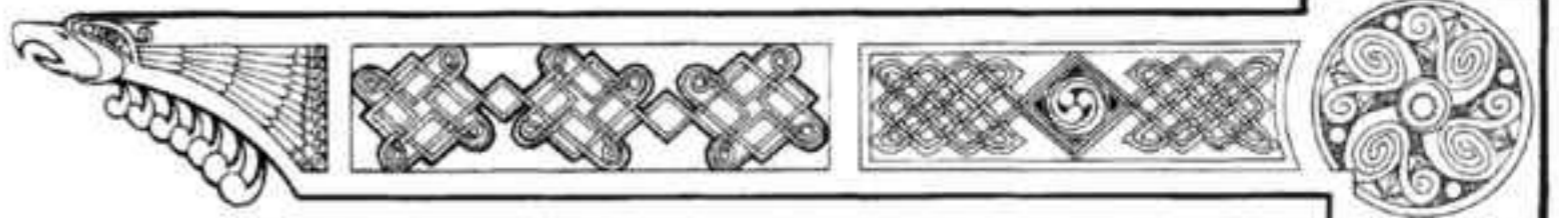
Status Level is an arbitrary value that ranges from zero (usually Marginals or those outside the bounds of accepted society) to twenty (the Ruling Agency). Status Level allows different levels of a society to quantitatively interact with one another. Every individual has a Status Level that relates directly to a Status Archetype.

Status Level places each member of the Narrative Environment in a position that is socially relative to everyone else, and gives the Mythguide a solid frame of reference for any questions of social ability or influence which might arise. Status Level also serves as a reference point within an Archetype. It determines the general importance and power of a persona relative to others both within his specific vocation and within the overall Archetype. The assignment of Status within an individual Hierarchy depends largely on the active Status Foundations. Status is always an arbitrary element of society; the Status Foundations attempt to provide a slightly more structured method of assigning it.

Each Status Archetype has a suggested range of possible Status Levels, and the Mythguide determines the individual range of a particular vocation. Within this range, an average member of the vocation falls at about the middle, while all other members are assigned Status Levels relative to that position. Unimportant or unsuccessful members of the Archetype have low values on this possibility scale, while important members have high levels.

For example, a system of assignments is being made for the armorers in a large city. The armorers fall within the Professional Archetype, and the range of Status Levels is agreed to be from six to twelve. The group now assigns Status Levels within this range to the various levels of the armorers' profession in this manner: apprentices (6), journeymen (7), masters (9), guild officers (10-12 depending on rank). The average level of Master falls in the middle of the possible range. This system of Status Level assignments is placed within the appropriate Archetype (Professional) as a part of the Narrative Environment's Hierarchy.

Certain individuals may pursue overlapping vocations (this often occurs if a persona holds an official position). For example, a landless knight could also hold a position in a society's bureaucracy. In such cases, the higher Status Level of the two vocations is ascribed to the persona (although the Mythguide may wish to assign one as social Status and the other as cultural Status). Certain vocational areas are gener-



ally conducive to vocational overlap. These include religious orders (which may overlap with political or military vocations), government or administrative officials (which overlap with religious and aristocratic vocations), and political or titled positions (which often overlap with bureaucratic, military, or religious vocations).

Status Level also serves as a tool that relates the different Status Archetypes to one another. For example, in a Feudal society a well-respected and successful peasant falls within the Labor Archetype and has a Status Level of two. A modest tinker in the same society would be from the Professional (Free) Archetype and might have a Status Level of six. A poor knight would fall within the Ruling Archetype and have a Status Level of fifteen. The king would represent the Ruling Agency with a Status Level of twenty. By comparing relative Status Level values, one can obtain a fairly clear picture of the social structure and stratification present in any environment. Using Status Level to quantify the decisions made in the Personal Freedom and Archetype design processes is an important part of the overall Hierarchy design.

Initial Persona Social Estate

A persona's Initial Estate is the Estate of which the persona is a member at the start of his Background Development (and therefore at the end of his Early Development). It affects a persona's initial vocational, expertise, and Background Aspect opportunities. The Initial Estate is derived from the persona's Family Situation and Legitimacy, and determines the persona's Initial Status Level. It normally represents the Estate of the persona's parents or family, but this is not always so (if the persona were an orphan or runaway, for instance). Social Estate is always described in terms of Status Archetype and Status Level.

Initial Social Estate is determined according to Status Archetype, since the basic framework of the Status Archetypes remains constant among otherwise divergent societies. It is their form and composition which changes from one society to the next, not the Archetypes themselves. Once the Initial Estate is determined, the persona is assigned an Initial Status Level. The Mythguide assigns Status Level within a Status Archetype's range based on a persona's Vocation, Family relationships, and Status Foundations. After Background Development begins, Status is always considered Current Status. A persona's Current Status Level can change during both development and actual play.

Persona Status Level

Altering Status during Background Development

Method I - Windows of Opportunity*

Method II - Interaction Points

Rigidity Value	IP Cost
1 - 2	1
3 - 4	2
5 - 6	3
7 - 8	4
9 - 10	5

*Note: Windows of Opportunity indirectly raise Status by changing a persona's background situation. If changes of vocation, changes in family relationships (esp. inheritance), etc. effect the persona's Status Archetype, Status level may be altered.



Altering Status during Play

Method I - Myth Points**

Method II - Status Trial

Base = 3

Rank = Charisma

Difficulty = 1/2 Status level + Rigidity Modifier

Rigidity Value	Difficulty Modifier
1 - 2	1
3 - 4	2
5 - 6	3
7 - 8	4
9 - 10	5

** Note: Mythoints may be spent like Interaction Points to increase Persona Status Level. It is recommended that Status Level increase by one for each Mythpoint spent. If a society evinces an extremely Rigid view of Status, the Mythguide may change the ratio from 1:1 to 1:2.





Warrior and Political Vocational Clusters. In the society's Hierarchy of Social Estates, these Clusters fall within the Professional and Ruling Status Archetypes respectively. In this case, the persona's Status Level should fall within the possible range for lesser barons in the Ruling Archetype. Depending on a persona's exact social situation (Renown, Family relationships, Background Aspects, etc.), the Mythguide may opt to place the actual Status Level at the higher or lower end of that range.

A similar situation arises when a persona's Concept calls for cross-cultural Status. If a persona has Status in both a society Hierarchy and a cultural Hierarchy, the Mythguide should assign Status Levels within both groups. For example, a persona is a member of both a tribal priesthood and the ruling council of a nation. Tribal shamen fall within the culture's Privileged Archetype while members of the ruling council fall within the society's Ruling Archetype. Status Level within each Hierarchy is assigned according to the active Status Foundations.

ALTERING STATUS: Background Development

Once a player determines his persona's Initial Status Level, it becomes a fluid trait. Status Level can be altered during Background Development in several ways. If either the persona's Concept or Foundation calls for an unusual history or development path, or if unique situations arise during Background Development (as they often will), the Mythguide should allow the persona to follow the new track and develop Status narratively. For example, a player begins developing a persona whom he has Conceptualized as an accomplished street actor. The persona's initial Status Archetype is Marginal and his Status Level is zero. However, through a strange turn of events, the persona is noticed while performing by a highly placed member of the king's court. He is invited to perform at court and subsequently becomes a member of the king's retinue. At this point the persona would gain a higher Status Level, although the nature of the rise in station will depend on the individual environment's Hierarchy.

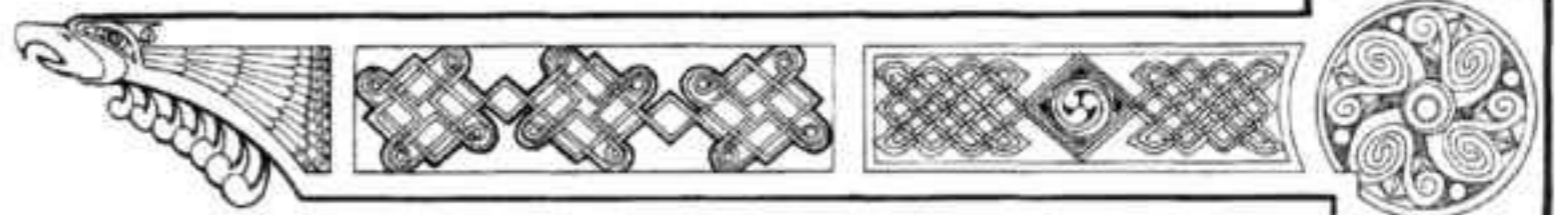
The persona might be considered a member of the Labor Archetype, or (if the king were a true patron of the arts) he could become a member of the Professional class. This is an extreme example since Personas will often advance in Status Level without moving into a higher Status Archetype. For instance, a member of the city guard who performs a particularly courageous act might only rise a single Status Level. The rate and

Maximum Status Modifiers

<i>Custom</i>	<i>Possible Modifier</i>
1-2	none
3-4	up to 2 levels
5-6	up to 4 levels
7-8	up to 6 levels
9	up to 8 levels
10	up to 10 levels

Note: Modifiers can be either positive or negative, depending on the Status of the persona and the Status of a Trial's target.

Occasionally, persona Concepts require special consideration when assigning Status Level. Whenever a persona's Concept indicates some overlap between Status Archetypes or Vocational Clusters, the Mythguide should decide in which range persona Status falls. As general rule, a persona's Status Level should fall within the range of the *greater* Status Archetype. If a player were playing a lesser baron in a Feudal society, his persona would probably belong in both the



method of advancement depends on both the nature of the Narrative Environment and the Rigidity of Status within a Hierarchy. Whenever a persona's Status Level passes into the range of a higher Status Archetype, the persona enters the new Archetype (unless a unique Rigidity prevents such advancement).

Status Level can also be raised by expending a Window of Opportunity. Depending on the course of development, a Situational, Vocational, or Developmental Window can be used. Windows represent unique or unusual opportunities, and a player should describe a Window's effects in a narrative manner. Windows indirectly affect persona Status by initiating changes in a persona's social situation. Spending a Window allows the persona to advance to any Status Level the player wishes. The Mythguide may rule that Rigidity affects such development.

Interaction Points can be used to increase Status Level during Background Development. The accompanying Rigidity Table provides Interaction Point costs to raise Status by one level based on Rigidity. A persona can never raise his Status Level above the possible maximum for the persona's Status Archetype through the use of Interaction Points. He must use a Window of Opportunity to do this.

(round up) and the appropriate value from the Rigidity Table are added to the Trial's Difficulty, and Renown (if it applies) is subtracted. Otherwise Difficulty is modified normally (according to situation, environment, etc.). The use of certain expertises may be especially helpful when making Status Trials. For example, a persona with a Status Level of ten saves the life of a city alderman's son, and the Mythguide decides that a Status Trial is appropriate during a feast in the persona's honor. The persona has a Trial Chance of eight (Charisma is five and the standard Attribute Base is three). The Mythguide decides that circumstances favor the persona and assigns a base Difficulty of one. Five is added to this number as a Status Level modifier and three more are added since the environment's Rigidity is five. Three levels of Difficulty are subtracted (for applicable Renown). The final Difficulty for the Trial becomes six, and the Adjusted Trial Chance becomes two. If the persona receives a Complete Success, his Status Level increases by one. At the Mythguide's discretion, higher Degrees of Success can yield larger increases (two Levels for a Superior Success, for example). A player may always reduce his persona's Status Level at no cost if it suits the Persona Concept.



ALTERING STATUS during Play

Using STATUS during Play

Once play begins, a persona's Status Level can be increased in two ways - by making Status Trials or by expending Myth Points. The latter method is optional. Myth Points are gained at the conclusion of each Narrative, and are used to improve certain attributes and abilities. At the Mythguide's option, they may be used to raise a persona's Status Level. The Mythguide should determine the number required to increase Status by one level (this number is often modified by a persona's Renown and the environment's Rigidity).

For a persona to be able to use Status during play, he must be in an area or region where his position is respected (see Relative Status later in this chapter). The nature of such respect is defined by Custom, and its effective area is normally a region of one or more environments, although it may extend much further. The Mythguide determines whether a persona's Status can be used to influence an encounter depending on the individual situation. Possible uses include Renown Trials and certain expertise Trials; Status is also used during the development of Interactive Histories and as one of the contributing elements of a persona's Influence Pool.

Status Trials are made whenever a persona accomplishes something which the Mythguide feels could increase Status. This includes status and influence-based expertise Trials and important Trials made during the course of Interactive Histories. Certain actions, such as helping or influencing individuals who are a persona's social superiors, can also bestow opportunities for Status Trials. For example, a persona successfully completes a task for an extremely powerful lord. Upon completion of the job, the persona is allowed to make a Status Trial to see if his Status increases as a result of his patron's influence.

If Status does apply to a particular situation (as it often will in social interactions), it becomes a *social modifier* to the Difficulty of the Trial. Up to one half (round up) of a persona's Status Level can be used as a modifier and either added or subtracted from an eligible Trial's Difficulty. The precise modifier will relate to both the Custom of the environment and the level of influence it is possible for the persona to exert. The modifier also depends on the circumstances of the individual situation. Consult the accompanying table

Status Trials are made as normal Refined Trials using Charisma. Half of a persona's Status Level



for recommended maximum Status-based Difficulty modifiers.

These maximums depend on an environment's Custom and cannot be exceeded. For example, if an environment has a Custom of two, and a persona has a Status Level of eighteen, the persona cannot use Status to modify Trials. However, if the same persona has Status in an environment with a Custom of nine, the persona can employ up to a -8 Status-based Difficulty modifier. The suggested maximums on the table also work in a negative direction. A persona with low Status trying to influence an individual with higher Status may suffer an appropriate Difficulty penalty.

The Mythguide can also use the difference between two Status Levels to modify Difficulty. This is often convenient when two or more personas are interacting with one another. When handling Status-based social modifiers in this manner, the maximum Difficulty modifier becomes half of the difference. For example, a persona with a Status Level of sixteen is trying to influence someone with a Status Level of ten. The difference between the two values is six, so the modifier could be up to three. Custom still dictates the maximum possible modifiers.

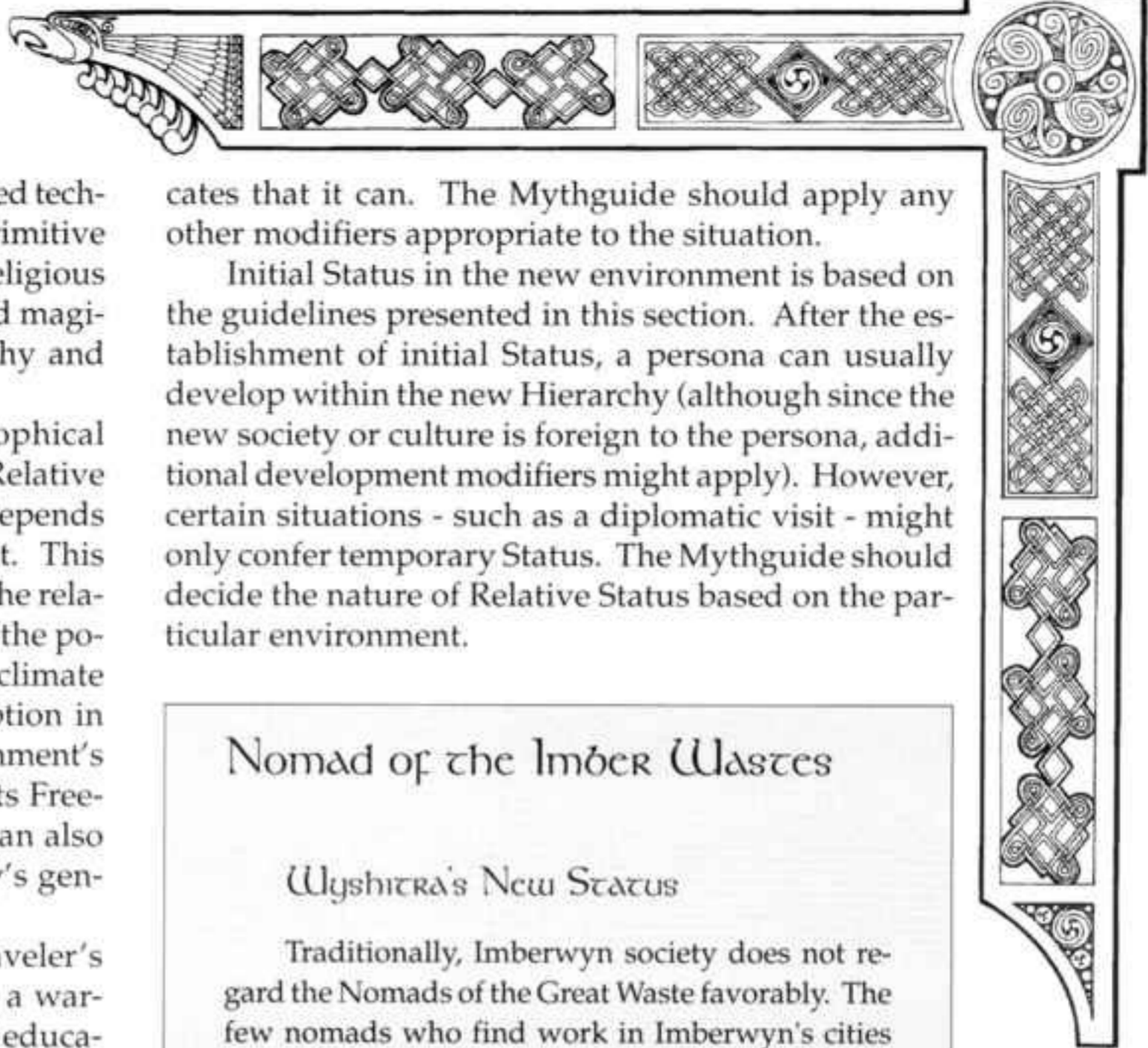
Relative Status

It is often important to relate Status in one environment or culture to Status in another. This is especially true in the case of most personas, since they will normally travel far from their homelands during the course of their adventures. Status might translate completely to a foreign environment or it may not transfer at all. The benefits received by a persona depend on the nature of the environment (its Status Foundations, Heritage Orientation, etc.).

Each society's Hierarchy of Social Estates is unique. The intricate relationships inherent in any detailed group of social parameters only fully apply to the environment for which they are designed. All other societies, no matter how similar, have slightly different social breakdowns. However, Status can transfer from one society to another, and the Mythguide should determine the precise nature of the transfer.

This determination can be aided by examining certain specific factors and their similarities between two environments. The first of these factors is the level and type of interaction that occurs between the environments. Such interaction is affected by both an environment's active Status Foundations and its Custom. Interaction also illustrates the differences be-





tween levels of technological progress. Advanced technology can often be a source of wonder for a primitive culture. However, depending on a culture's religious motivations, technology can also be considered magical or evil. Differences in religious philosophy and belief affect Relative Status as well.

An environment's Heritage and Philosophical Orientations also affect the determination of Relative Status. Whether status is affected adversely depends upon the Orientation of the new environment. This process is contingent on an understanding of the relationship between the societies involved. Both the political system and the environment's political climate have a profound effect on a foreigner's reception in an alien society or culture, as does a new environment's embrace of Personal Freedom (described by its Freedom Aspects). Kinship patterns and values can also affect a traveler's reception, as can the society's general economic and trade climate.

Finally, Relative Status is affected by the traveler's vocation. For example, if a scholar travels to a warlike society with an extremely low tolerance of education and learning, he will not enjoy high status. However, a traveling warrior might enjoy higher status than he would at home. Status is completely relative from one society to the next; it is only a certainty in the Hierarchy's environment of origin.

Unique environmental factors take precedence when translating status among societies. For example, if a society is trying to stimulate trade, and a traveling merchant arrives, the merchant probably receives favorable status modifiers. If the trade environment is unfavorable, there will inevitably be several negative modifiers to the traveler's status.

By using the foreign society's Hierarchy of Social Estates and Status Foundations as a framework, its current situation as a modifier, and the traveler's vocation and motivations as further modifiers, the Mythguide should be able to determine how Relative Status operates in almost any foreign Narrative Environment.

cates that it can. The Mythguide should apply any other modifiers appropriate to the situation.

Initial Status in the new environment is based on the guidelines presented in this section. After the establishment of initial Status, a persona can usually develop within the new Hierarchy (although since the new society or culture is foreign to the persona, additional development modifiers might apply). However, certain situations - such as a diplomatic visit - might only confer temporary Status. The Mythguide should decide the nature of Relative Status based on the particular environment.

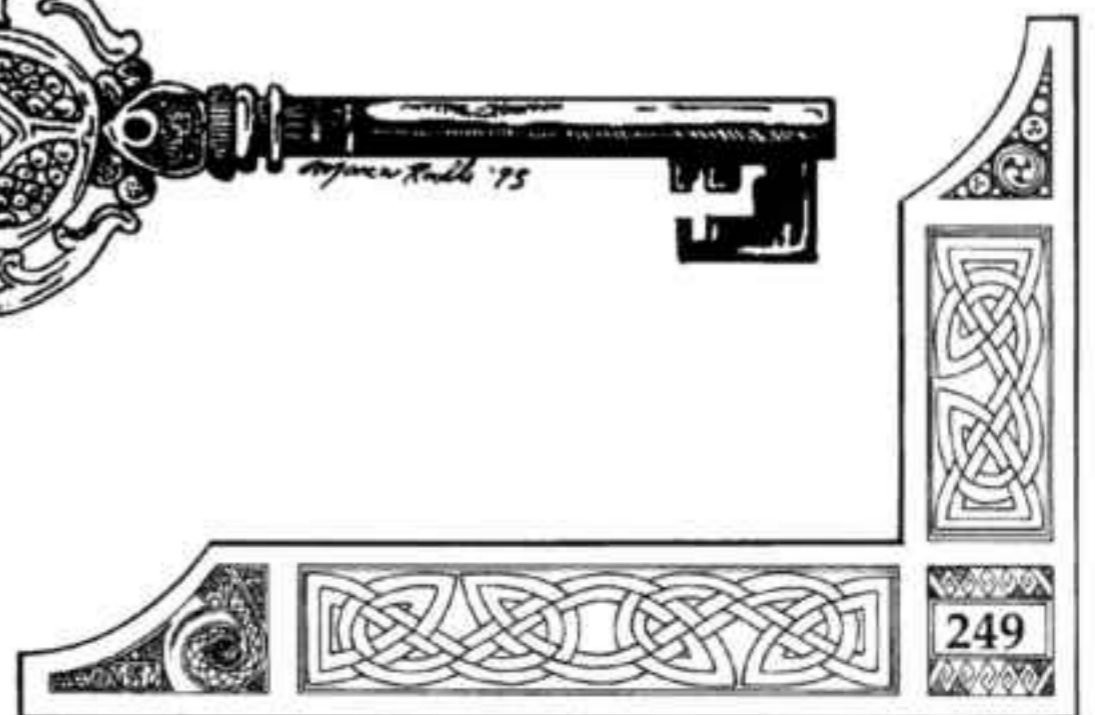
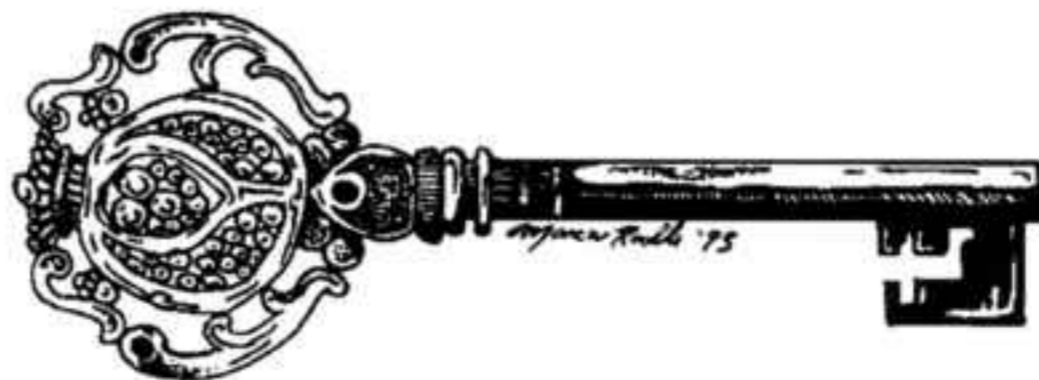
Nomad of the Imber Wastes

Wyshitra's New Status

Traditionally, Imberwyn society does not regard the Nomads of the Great Waste favorably. The few nomads who find work in Imberwyn's cities invariably suffer low levels of status within the Labor Archetype. Those without apparent vocations are considered Marginals and are watched with measured suspicion. Wyshitra's situation is different though. As a follower of the Master he commands high respect within his own society. It is fitting that as a guest and diplomatic liason of a Imberwyn nobleman, Wyshitra is accorded much higher status than other Waste 'barbarians'. Wyshitra's Relative Status is 10. His host is an esteemed member of the Privileged class (status level 15), and the nobleman's advisors receive elevated status commensurate with their privileged station. Wyshitra falls among the lowest of the nobleman's advisors but still commands respect from the nobleman's soldiers and servants.

STATUS IN A FOREIGN ENVIRONMENT

At the Mythguide's option, a persona can establish new Status in a foreign environment after he has been functioning in the environment for an extended period of time. The Mythguide might require a Charisma Trial (using the environment's full Custom value as a Difficulty modifier) to determine whether actual Status can be established. A Complete Success indi-

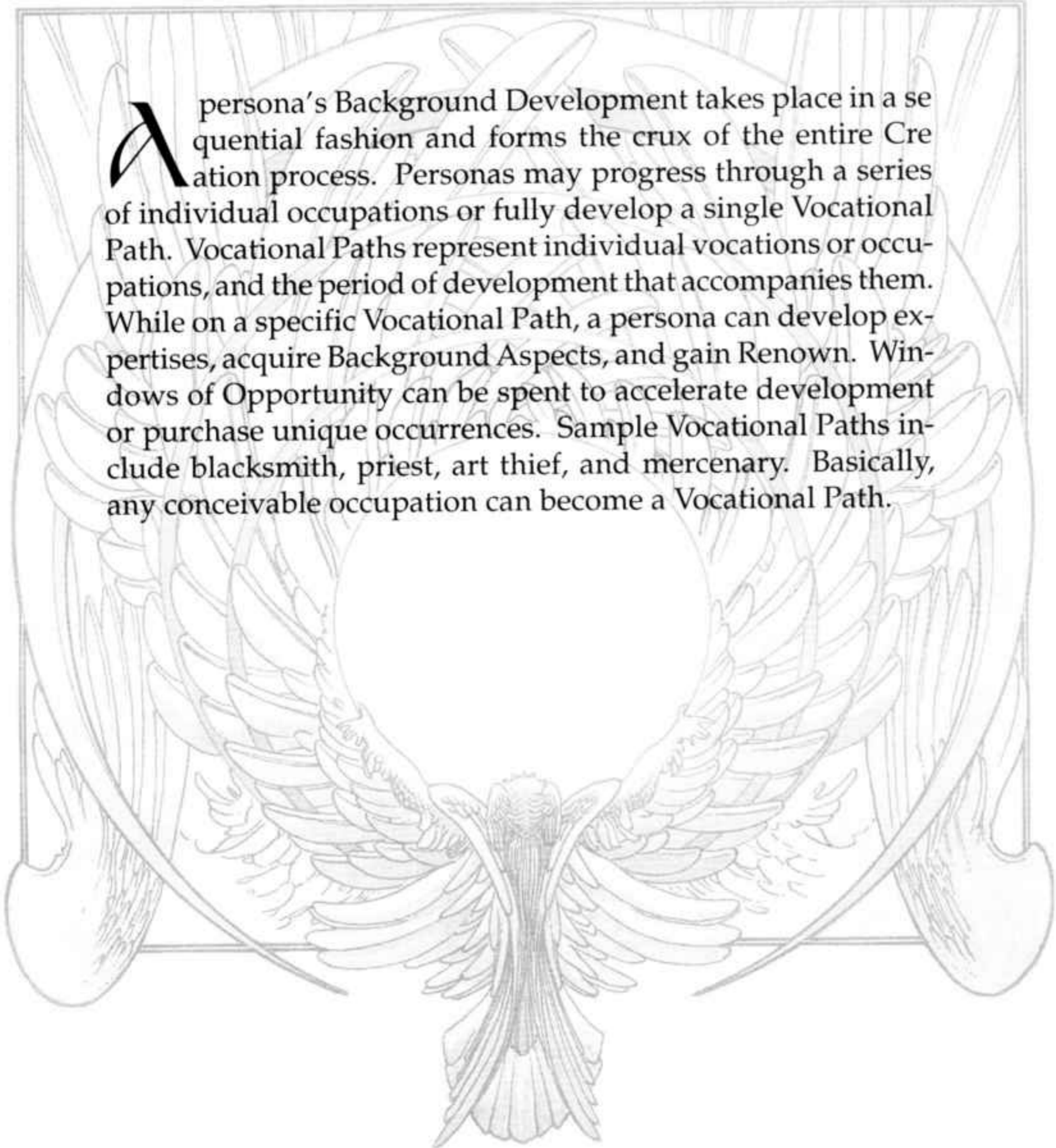


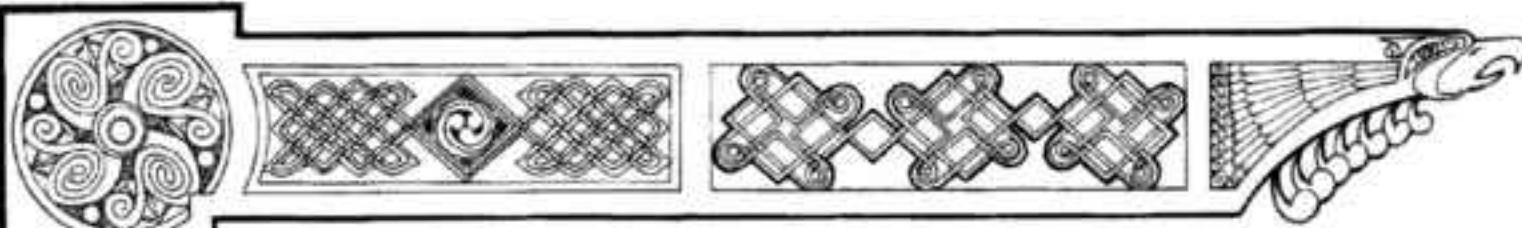


Vocational Setting

⊗ Chapter Seven ⊗

A persona's Background Development takes place in a sequential fashion and forms the crux of the entire Creation process. Personas may progress through a series of individual occupations or fully develop a single Vocational Path. Vocational Paths represent individual vocations or occupations, and the period of development that accompanies them. While on a specific Vocational Path, a persona can develop expertises, acquire Background Aspects, and gain Renown. Windows of Opportunity can be spent to accelerate development or purchase unique occurrences. Sample Vocational Paths include blacksmith, priest, art thief, and mercenary. Basically, any conceivable occupation can become a Vocational Path.





There are no established 'classes' in Aria. Any combination of developmental paths is possible, and the eventual developmental outcomes are constrained only by the limitations of the environment being used. Social Estate determines a persona's vocational possibilities within a society, and Family Renown and Estrangement can affect a persona's ease of entry onto an individual Vocational Path. Vocational Paths unfold within specific Vocational Settings, which are described in terms of their Location and defined by three major parameters - Purpose, Prominence, and Potential. Vocational Paths always fit within one of an environment's Vocational Clusters. If the Vocation is also an Office or an administrative position, it is also defined by the amount of Responsibility it entails.

Each environment is defined by its own parameters and operates within its own set of social and cultural laws. Just as each society or culture has its own Hierarchy of Social Estates, each environment also supports its own rules for operating within those Estates. By roleplaying development through original Vocational Settings, the Mythguide ensures that Background Development among different environments is never exactly the same. The Background Development process itself can be handled in one of two ways - Directed or Environmental.

Directed Development

Directed development allows a player to build exactly the persona he wants. While following the guidelines for expertise, Personality Trait, and Attribute purchases, the player can spend Interaction Points on anything he wishes. For example, a persona from an isolated tribe of plainsmen wants to develop the Craft (navigation) Aptitude. If an Environmental method of development were being used, the acquisition of this expertise would be impossible (no teacher, no water, inappropriate technology, etc.). However, when using Directed development, all things are possible. The final persona design takes precedence over any relevant environmental concerns. If an Ensemble is using Directed development, much of the material in this chapter will not apply. The Mythguide should read the chapter carefully and select only the information needed by the Ensemble.



Environmental Development

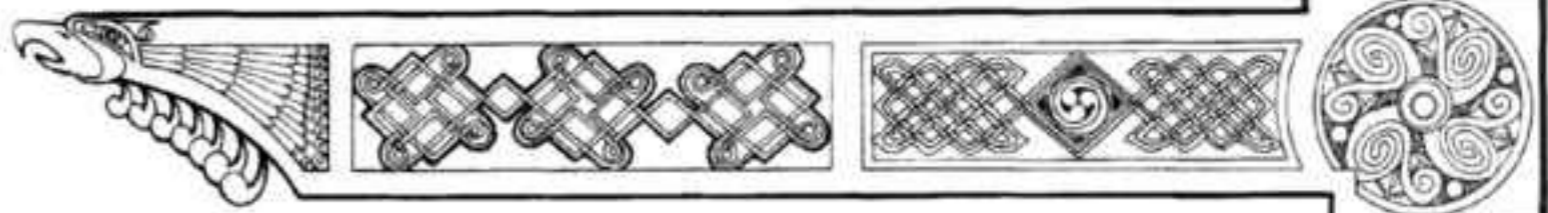
Environmental development encourages players to roleplay the persona design process. Years of persona development will pass quickly, but important events or specific narrative situations can be roleplayed more completely. Personas evolve during Early and Background Development by interacting with their environment. Most of the opportunities available to a persona during these periods are the result of specific environmental considerations; Heritage, Kinship, and Status are among the most important of these considerations, although the location of the Creation Environment can be very important as well.

The final outcome of persona development - from Concept and Foundation to the interactive Background Development period - should constitute a rewarding narrative experience in itself, and sets the stage for further persona development and narrative exploration as actual play begins. Environmental development can be as simple or as detailed as the Mythguide and Ensemble wish. The guidelines in this chapter should be used to shape and empower persona development within diverse and original settings.

⊗ Vocational Specialization ⊗

Before a persona can begin his journey along a specific Vocational Path, the Mythguide must determine what Vocations are available within the Creation Environment being used. The Creation Environment refers only to the immediate environment in which a particular Vocational Setting is found, and in which persona development occurs. It is always part of a larger Narrative Environment. If certain elements of a Creation Environment differ from those of the Narrative Environment in which it rests, the Mythguide should outline the differences. Such modifiers are primarily related to Environ Class.

Vocational availability depends on the degree of Specialization present in the environment. Specialization ranges from None to Very High, and is determined in part by an environment's Environ Class (Urban, Semi-Urban, Rural, or Wilderness). The Specialization Levels of individual vocations represent the levels of Specialization at which particular vocations appear within the society. Specialization depends entirely on the environment; occupations that are rare in a mountainous environment could be very common in a maritime environment.



Environ Class

An environment's Environ Class - Urban, Semi-Urban, Rural, or Wilderness - indicates its degree of urbanization. The Location of a particular Vocational Path or Setting is always described in terms of its Environ Class. The determination of an area's Environ Class depends on several factors.

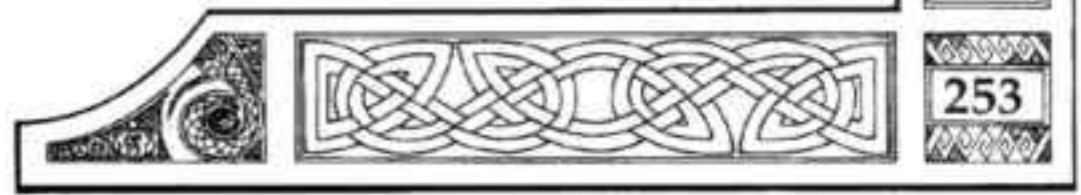
Urban Urban areas are normally defined by a number of social institutions: 1) the growth of a settlement beyond a few hundred inhabitants (creating a population larger than is necessary for the people to grow their own food) 2) the development of long-distance trade for necessary goods and materials 3) the evolution within the environment of a situation in which important obligations are related more to contracts than to kinship, and in which power is concentrated in the hands of several principal families or agencies 4) the presence of other similar communities in the same or neighboring regions at an equivalent stage of development, with which the community maintains contact 5) the existence of a standardized citizenship process 6) the development of a sys-

tem of specialized craft occupations that supports the regular exchange of goods and services. If all or most of the above specifications are met, it is safe to assume that the environment is Urban.

Semi-Urban Semi-Urban environments represent a median level of development between Urban and Rural settlements. A few of the above factors might be present in such an environment, although a limited degree of specialization is always present. Small towns, large military communities, and market centers on the path toward true urbanization are common Semi-Urban environments.

Rural Rural environments undergo slow and limited development, and are often represented by small villages or tribal settlements. Specialization is minimal or nonexistent in such environments. In Rural societies, there is little distinction between the makers of goods and the purveyors of services. The two Commercial Orientations are often united in the same person.

Wilderness Wilderness Environs are almost devoid of habitation. Isolated homesteads, clanholds, or manors are all that will be found in this Environ Class.



Specialization & Environ Class

<i>Environ Class</i>	<i>Specialization Range*</i>
Urban	High or Very High
Semi-Urban	Average to Very High
Rural	None to High
Wilderness	None to Average

** Note: The Mythguide should determine the Degree of Specialization for a Persona's Vocational Path according to the Specialization Range provided by the Environ Class. Specialization Aspects such as unusual resources, heightened technology, or religious tolerance may increase the Specialization level of certain Vocations within the Creation Environment. The Degree of Specialization of a particular Vocational Path restricts Expertise development within certain vocations in the Setting.*

Specialization is minimal, although some environments (a frontier manor, for example) are fairly self-contained and may offer a reasonable amount of opportunity.

Determining Specialization

When a persona begins his development within a particular Creation Environment, the Specialization Level of the environment dictates the Vocational Paths available. Five primary Specialization Levels - Very High, High, Average, Low, and None - detail such availability. A Creation Environment with an Urban Environ Class always has a Specialization of at least High. A Semi-Urban Environ always has a minimum Specialization of Average, a Rural Environ may have any Specialization except Very High, and a Wilderness Environ can have a Specialization of Average or lower.

The Mythguide should assign Specialization to the Creation Environment based on the environment's Specialization Aspects. If the *Aria Worlds* book is being used, these elements can be taken directly from the Environmental Profile. If that book is not being used, the Mythguide should assign them based on his conception of the Narrative Environment (although Heritage Template descriptions might help). Depending on the environment, Specialization Aspects can include technology, physical isolation, interaction and

trade, available resources, exploitation of resources, and Philosophical or Heritage Orientation.

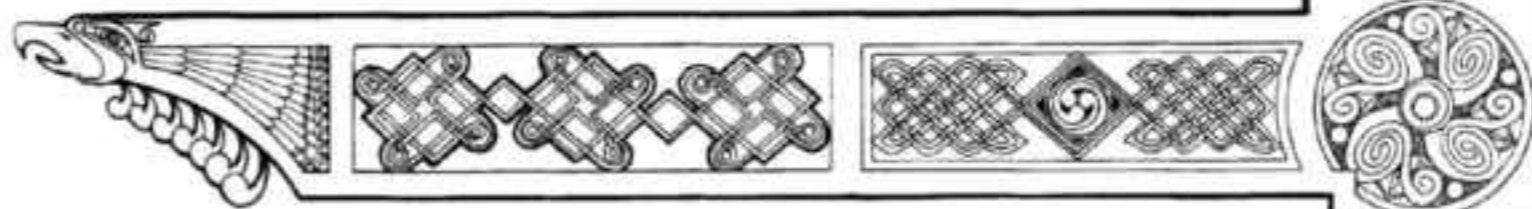
These factors can change from one Environ Class to the next in the same environment and are the principal indicators of an environment's degree and form of Specialization. For instance, a single environment might have an abundance of cloth-producing plants but very little natural metal deposits. Weaving, dyeing, and cloth-making vocations would be very Specialized while metalworking professions would remain more general. The environment's resources modified its Specialization. Each of the Aspects can modify Specialization in a similar manner; the Mythguide should apply such modifiers when appropriate, based on environmental considerations.

⊕ Vocational Availability ⊕

The Mythguide should determine the Availability of specific vocations based on environmental considerations. The Hierarchy of Social Estates shows the relative positions and importance of several major vocations in the environment (either in the form of individual vocations or Vocational Clusters). The Specialization of the Creation Environment modifies their Availability within the environment; an Urban environment probably contains all of the vocational possibilities listed in the Hierarchy breakdown while a Rural environment might contain only a quarter of them.

Vocational Availability depends on several other environment-specific considerations as well. The Specialization Aspects mentioned in the previous section are very important. For example, a society situated in the midst of a forest might have an overall Specialization of Average, but might contain an extremely specialized group of wood and timbercrafting occupations. This is because those resources are very abundant; Specialization in this environment would have an Aspect of resources (timber). A society oriented toward War possesses a disproportionate number of military occupations, while one oriented toward Peace has few individuals engaged in full time military pursuits. Specialization in these cases is modified by Philosophical Orientation.

An environment's level of Personal Freedom and its Custom also affect vocational Availability. For instance, certain classes may be considered Unfree or untouchable, and are prohibited from following many Vocational Paths. Status Archetypes can also place constraints on vocational development in societies with high Custom values. For example, Adepts might constitute their own Privileged class in a magic-rich



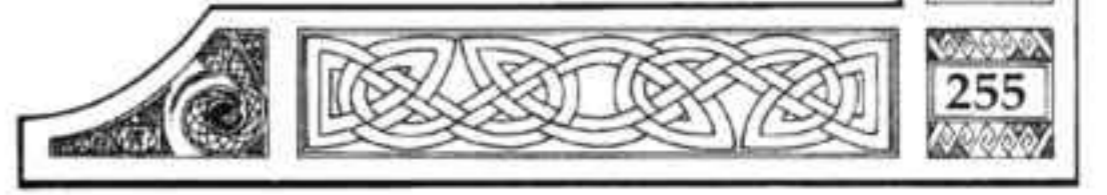
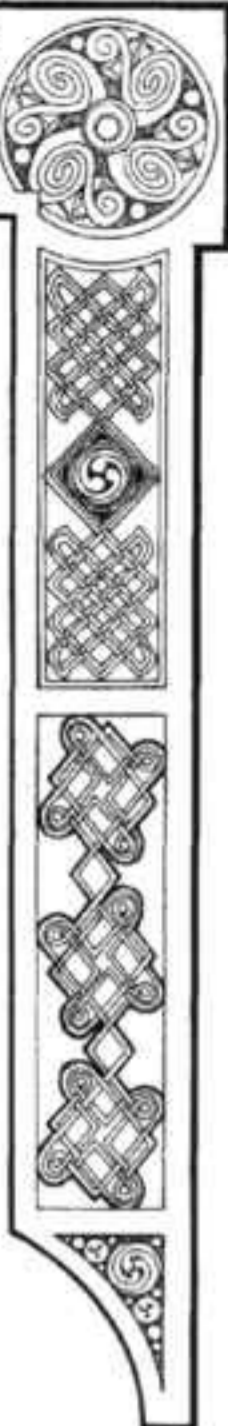
Effects of Specialization upon Vocational Expertise Development

Degree of Specialization - Restricts Maximum Expertise Rank (#) obtainable in Vocational Setting

None	Low	Average	High	Very High
Talents (no limits)	Talents (no limits)	Talents (no limits)	Talents (no limits)	No Restrictions
Aptitudes	Aptitudes	Aptitudes	Aptitudes	No Restrictions
Broad Aspects Only	Broad Aspects Only	Narrow Aspects (-2)	Narrow Aspects (-1)	
Acrobatics (6)	Acrobatics (8)	Administration (7)	Broad Aspects (10)	
Administration (3)	Administration (5)	Artisan (8)		
Artisan (4)	Artisan (6)	Craft (9)		
Craft (5)	Craft (7)	Healing (9)		
Healing (5)	Healing (7)	Transport (9)		
Performance (6)	Performance (8)			
Tracking (6)	Tracking (8)			
Transport (6)	Transport (8)			
Disciplines	Disciplines	Disciplines	Disciplines	No Restrictions
Broad Aspects only	Broad Aspects only	Narrow Aspects (-3)	Narrow Aspects (-1)	
Knowledge (4)	Knowledge (6)	Knowledge (7)	Research (8)	
Lore (6)	Lore (8)	Lore (10)		
Military (4)	Military (6)	Military (8)		
Politics (5)	Politics (7)	Politics (9)		
Research (none)	Research (2)	Research (5)		
Under. Mech. (4)	Under. Mech. (6)	Under. Mech. (8)		

Note: The Degrees of Specialization suggested above apply to specific Vocational Expertises only. Expertises not listed on this table are not affected by Specialization and should reflect Specialization only in choice of Aspects. Specialization affects Expertises differently depending on the specificity (Broad or Narrow) of the Expertise. Aspect specificity is relative and must be decided by the Mythguide. In Settings which possess lower Degrees of Specialization certain Aptitude and Discipline Aspects may only be developed in a Broad sense.

- ex. Acrobatics -- Tumbling may be considered a Broad Aspect while Trapeze might be considered Narrow.*
- Administration -- Estate Administration may be considered a Broad Aspect while City Admin. may be Narrow.*
- Artisan -- Blacksmithing may be considered a Broad Aspect while Engraving (Iron) might be a Narrow Aspect.*
- Healing -- First Aid is considered a Broad Aspect while Surgery is considered to be a Narrow Aspect.*
- Performance -- Folkdance may be considered Broad while Ceremonial Court Waltz may be considered Narrow.*
- Knowledge -- Physics may be considered Broad while Irrigational Engineering may be considered Narrow.*
- Politics -- Local/Regional Politics may be considered Broad while National Economic Reform may be Narrow.*
- Lore -- Mineral Identification might be considered Broad while Mineral Properties & Uses might be Narrow.*
- Military -- Local/Conscript Defense may be considered Broad while Tactical National Strategy may be Narrow.*
- Research -- Research is always Narrow. It requires a great deal of time to become familiar with a particular Knowledge Base*
- Understand Mechanism -- Mill Gears may be considered Broad while Clock Mechanisms may be Narrow.*





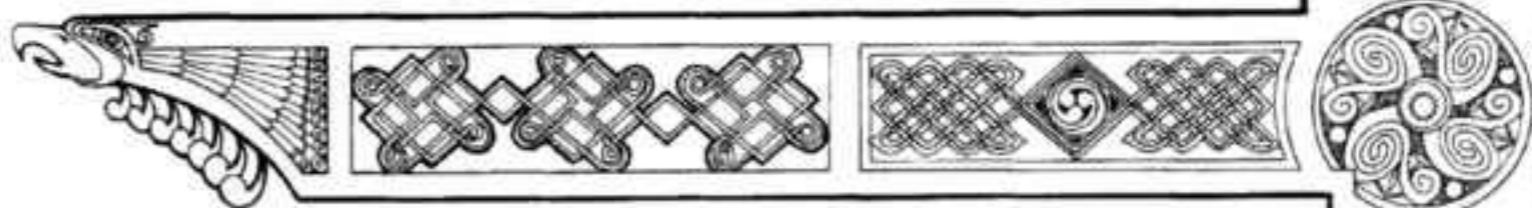
society. If the environment's Custom is also high, only personas from the Privileged or Ruling Archetypes may be able to enter their Order.

Vocational Availability will occasionally diverge from the expected. This is often the case in more fantastic environments, and can apply in isolated cases in 'normal' environments as well. For example, a small town might exist in proximity to an old, abandoned stone quarry. Although the quarry has not produced workable stone in many years, there are still an inordinate number of stonemasons and sculptors living in the town. Specialization is unusually concentrated in a single area.

Availability Trials

At the Mythguide's option, Trials can be used to determine vocational Availability in an environment. If development is being roleplayed, this can be a challenging way to enter a Vocational Path or move from one Path to another. A persona might have to travel to another environment in order to find an appropriate vocation, or he might move on to a similar vocation in another environment after he has reached the limits of possible training in his original Vocational Setting. Availability Trials can also be used to determine expertise availability in an environment or Setting.

Availability Trials are made with a Base of one and a Rank based on Specialization (see accompanying table). Difficulty depends on both an environment's Specialization Aspects - a persona trying to develop as a sailor will gain a positive Difficulty modifier in a desert environment and a negative modifier in a coastal environment - and the Rank required of a teacher within the Setting; for each Rank required of a prospective teacher in a certain Vocational Expertise (see expertise chapter), one level is added to the Trial's Difficulty. For example, a persona is attempting to train as a forester and travels into the countryside searching for an appropriate Setting or teacher. The Mythguide allows an Availability Trial every month or so, but the persona already has the Tracking Aptitude (his Vocational Expertise) at Rank 4. Therefore an appropriate teacher must possess the expertise at at least Rank 5, and this necessary Rank becomes a positive modifier to the Trial's Difficulty. Availability Trials can add something of an adventurous or searching quality to a roleplayed Background Development.



Windows and Vocational Availability

If a player wishes to expend a Window of Opportunity to affect Vocational Availability, the Window may cause anything to become available in a particular environment. Although the expenditure of a Window in this manner indicates 'free' availability, the player should still be able to explain the availability in terms of both his persona's Concept and the realities of the environment being used. For example, a persona could not develop as a horse trainer on a world where horses do not exist.

⊗ Vocational Paths ⊗

Background Development is broken down into individual Vocational Paths and occurs in a linear fashion. A persona's development within a particular Vocation is detailed year by year. The pursuit of a Vocational Path can last any length of time, and personas may pursue a single Path or many Paths throughout their Background Development period. Every Vocational Path falls within a Vocational Cluster and a Status Archetype. For more information regarding the social placement of specific Vocational Paths in an environment, consult the Vocational Clusters section of the Status chapter.

A specific Vocational Path is also described in terms of its Vocational Setting. The Vocational Setting provides an environment within which the various elements of its attendant Vocational Path are developed. When a persona moves from one Vocation to another during the Background Development process, the Vocational Setting in which the persona's development is occurring changes as well.

For instance, if a persona becomes a shipwright's apprentice during his adolescence, the shipwright's shop and work area constitute the persona's initial Vocational Setting. While the persona pursues his vocational development as a shipwright, all such development occurs within this Vocational Setting. After serving an appropriate period of time as an apprentice, the persona wishes to become a shipwright's journeyman. Since the context of development changes, the new developmental environment is treated as a new Vocational Setting. In this case, the situation is a special one because a journeyman is an itinerant worker. He may move from one Vocational Setting to another as he travels along the coast searching for work (see section on Itinerant Vocations). Finally, the per-

Vocational Availability Trials

Trial Base = 1

Specialization	Trial Rank
None	1
Low	2
Average	5
High	7
Very High	9

Sources of Difficulty

Difficulty Modifier

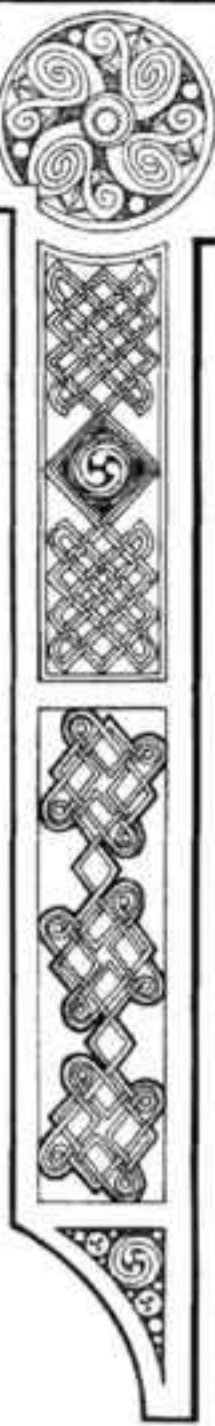
Vocational Expertise	Special*
Specialization Aspects	+/- 1 to 10**
Social Estate & Freedom	Special***

* Certain Vocational Expertises are restricted by Specialization (See Specialization Effects Table). If the Vocational Path desired is restricted by Specialization, Subtract Maximum Rank from 10 to find Difficulty Base for Trial. If not restricted by Specialization, Base Diff. = 2.

** Based on Environmental suitability
 ex. Vocation (Sea Captain) in Desert Society, +10 Diff.
 ex. Blacksmith in Iron Age Society, + 2 Difficulty

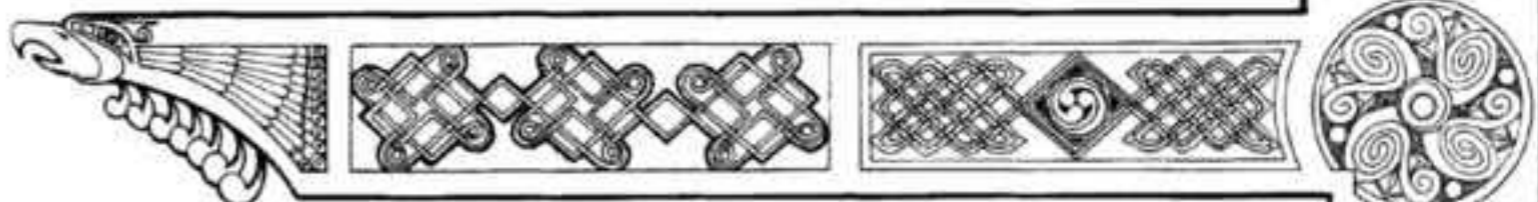
*** Certain Vocational Paths may be closed or restricted to Personas because of a Persona's Status Archetype or Personal Freedom. Determine whether a desired Vocation exists in the Vocational Setting. If a Vocation is available, then Persona may need to pay additional costs if Status Archetype restricts his individual access. As a general rule, a Persona must possess Status equal to the Archetype in which the Vocation falls to order to gain access. At the Mythguide's option, the Persona may pay IP = Custom or Rigidity of Status (whichever is more) to gain admission to Vocations which fall within a higher Social Estate than is possessed by a Persona.

If Windows of Opportunity are being used for Persona Creation, the expenditure of a Vocational Window allows a Persona to pursue the desired Vocation without an Availability Trial or IP expenditure.



Sample Vocational Paths (placed by Vocational Cluster)

<i>Political</i>	<i>Bureaucratic</i>	<i>Skilled Professional</i>	<i>Ecclesiastical</i>
Ruling Agencies Monarch, Statesman, Senator, Lord, Governor, Clanhead Ruling Aids/Councillors Advisor, General, Emissary, Diplomat, Scout, Spy Government Officials Judge, Mayor	Administrator Clerk Liason Secretary/Recorder Courier Reeve Steward Guild Officer	Physician Apothecary Herald Surgeons/Healer Architect Lawyer/Litigant Engineer Cartographer Captain/Pilot	Priests Abbots/Abbesses Prior/Prioress Pardoners Friars Monks Acolytes/Disciples
<i>Merchant</i>	<i>Warrior</i>	<i>Arcane</i>	<i>Artisan</i>
Trader Entrepreneur Shopkeeper Taverner Wine Seller Chandler Grocer Slaver Black Marketer	Soldier/Guardsman Mercenary Knight Crusader/Paladin Assassin General Gladiator Arms Instructor Hunter StrongArm	Shaman Mage Wizard Alchemist Necromancer Astrologer Seer Magician Magician's Apprentice	Smith Armorer Carpenter Cooper Mason Miller Tanner Weaver Shipwright Brewer
<i>Academic</i>	<i>Arts</i>	<i>Unskilled Labor</i>	<i>Fringe</i>
Professor Scribe Illuminator Philosopher Disputator Arbitrator Scholar Historian Accountant	Painter Sculptor Dancer Actor Acrobat Playwright Poet Storyteller Musician	Herder Farmer/Gardener House/Body Servant Laborer Miner Fuller Bearer/Footman Animal Handlers Sailor Cook	Beggar Thief Prostitute Forger Assassin Bounty Hunter Arsonist Kidnapper Peddler/Fence False Prophet



sona succumbs to the lure of the sea and signs on as the second mate of a merchant vessel (he is able to do so because of his background experience in the related field of shipbuilding). The player decides that after this experience he will begin narrative play with the persona. The ship itself becomes the persona's final Vocational Setting, and the development he undergoes is the final development prior to actually beginning play with the persona.

A keen sense of drama and narrative presence should govern the persona's actions while on an individual Vocational Path. It would be patently boring if a persona moved from one Vocational Path to another, always excelling and outperforming his fellows. If a persona is too superhuman, a large portion of his character is lost. By tempering developmental successes with failure, the resulting persona becomes much more broad-based, realistic, and colorful. The persona assumes an air of true humanity.

Every Vocational Setting is described by four elements - Location, Purpose, Prominence, and Potential - which help to define the Setting's place in the Narrative Environment. These elements are detailed in the following sections.

LOCATION

Location refers to the physical Location and description of the Vocational Setting, and is always described in terms of Environ Class. The Mythguide and player should also provide a brief description of the Location for each of the Vocational Settings through which a persona passes on his various Vocational Paths. For example, a Vocational Setting's Location would not be described simply as Rural. Instead, the Setting's description might describe a prosperous country inn, within which the persona has apprenticed himself to the ostler. Other sample Vocational Settings could include a poor apothecary's shop in a great city, a high-ranking clergyman's estate in the developed countryside of a society's wine regions, a musty and dilapidated forest keep owned by an aging knight, or a small but respectable mill nestled in an outlying rural village. Literally any developmental Setting is possible, and a description of the surroundings and trappings of a Setting add further color to the Background Development process.

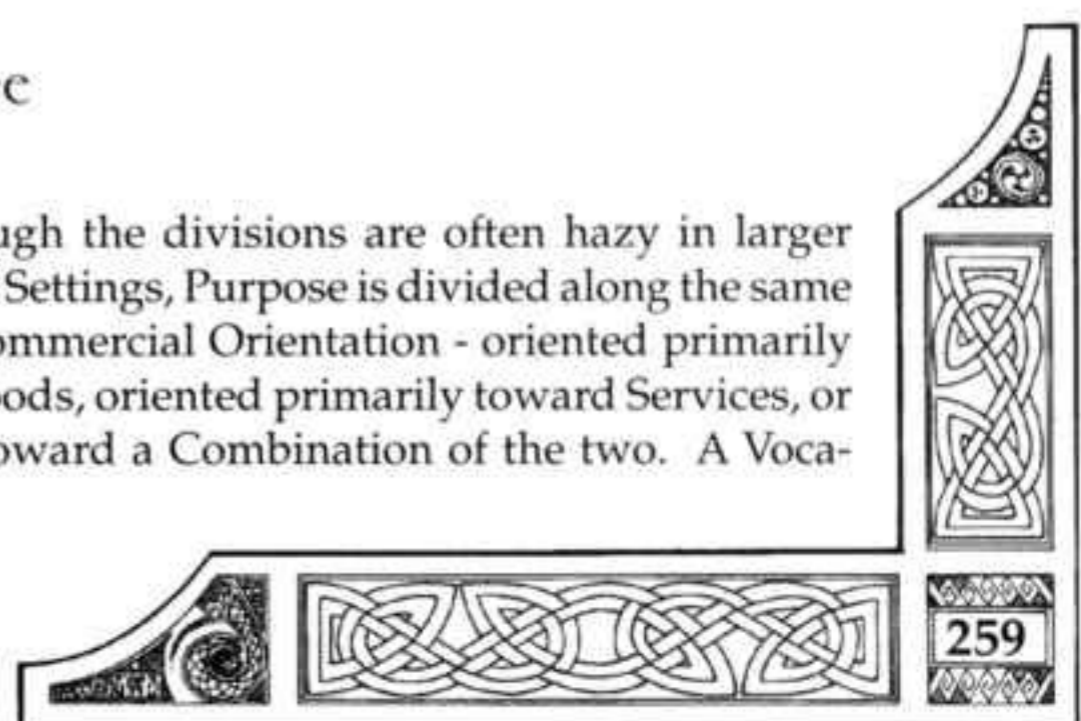
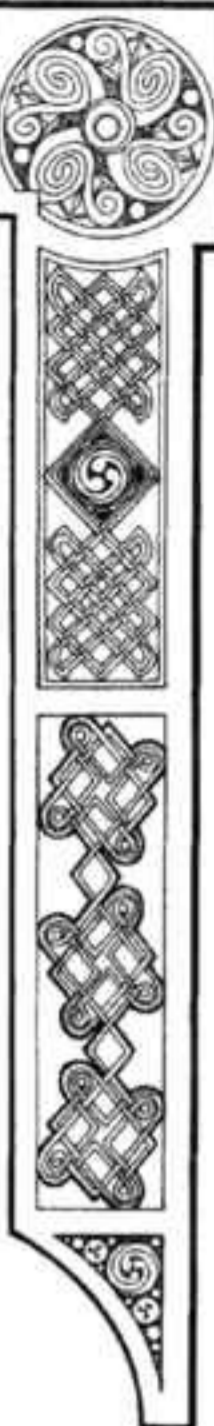
A Setting's Location allows the Setting to be considered in relation to its parent Narrative and Creation Environments. For instance, in the case of the prosperous country inn mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the Mythguide might ask himself several ques-



tions. Are there any other inns in the region? How big is the town or village in which it is situated? Is the inn on a major caravan route? Questions like these lead the Mythguide to simple conclusions. If the inn is alone in the vicinity, it might also contain a chandlery and a smithy. If the inn sits astride an important trade route, it probably contains such shops. It may also contain a larger stable than would be normal for an inn its size, especially if it serves as a way station or caravansary. The size and extent of its immediate surroundings also dictate the amount of local business the inn can expect. By providing answers to a handful of simple questions, each Vocational Setting becomes an interesting and unique backdrop for persona development.

PURPOSE

Although the divisions are often hazy in larger Vocational Settings, Purpose is divided along the same lines as Commercial Orientation - oriented primarily toward Goods, oriented primarily toward Services, or oriented toward a Combination of the two. A Voca-





tional Setting's Purpose is derived from several sources.

The Specialization of the Creation Environment in which the Vocational Setting appears acts as a general guide. At the highest levels of Specialization, the makers and sellers of Goods are often entirely separate. As Specialization decreases, the two begin to overlap. Finally, at low levels of Specialization single individuals are found who both make and sell Goods, and who also act as the purveyors of specific Services. An environment's Specialization Aspects can further affect a Setting's Purpose by giving it specific direction.

Prominence

Prominence describes the reputation of a Setting in abstract terms. This aspect of the Setting's description has little direct effect on a persona's development within a particular Setting. Rather, it affects the persona's Renown, a portion of which is derived from each Vocational Setting through which a persona moves during Background Development. A Setting's

Prominence is given a value from one to ten; refer to the Purchasing Vocational Setting table for costs.

The Prominence of a particular Setting and that Setting's master are inextricably linked in many ways. If there is only a single Master at a particular Location, his personal Renown normally translates directly into the Prominence of the Setting. Prominence describes the general reputation of a Setting as perceived by the Setting's vocational peers. Naturally, such opinions also carry over into the common perceptions of the populace at large. Personas benefit from a Setting's Renown according to the number of years they spend developing within the Setting. Refer to the section on developing Renown in chapter five.

Prominence often carries descriptive Aspects along with it, in a manner similar to Renown. However, since Prominence describes the general reputation of a Vocational Setting among peers, it is usually founded primarily in the work-related aspects of the Setting. The nature of a favorable Prominence often follows naturally from the Setting itself - the Setting produces exceptional goods or delivers exceptional services, it produces them on time, and its price to quality ratio is a fair one. The Mythguide should describe a Setting's Prominence in terms of the individual Setting's relationship with its environment.

Potential

The Potential of a Vocational Setting indicates the Setting's capacity to pass on its inherent skills and information. This element represents the access a persona developing within a Setting has to competent or exceptional teachers, learning resources (books, treatises, etc.), and necessary craft materials and resources. It also represents both the availability of these elements and the willingness of those who possess expertise to pass it on to those who wish to learn. For example, an extremely Prominent Vocational Setting might have an impressive resource base, but it may lack teachers willing to spend necessary time with pupils. The Masters in such an environment might be too busy to bother with mere students, who are consequently treated as little more than glorified servants. The Internal Potential of such a Setting would fall in a medium range because of the resources present. Although the masters may not actively instruct a persona, the persona is able to observe and gain access to enough of the Setting's resources to derive an average Potential from the experience.

Potential is divided into two categories - Internal and External - that each range from one to five. Po-

tential is determined by the Mythguide based on the nature of the Setting, and affects the cost to enter a particular Setting. Internal Potential represents the Potential to learn within the Vocational Setting. Internal development includes only those expertises made available by a Vocation's Cluster.

External Potential represents the persona's ability to learn and receive instruction in the area surrounding the Vocational Setting. External development includes expertises developed in a Setting's Environ Class, as a result of a persona's Status Archetype, or as a consequence of an Official or Itinerant Vocational Path. Some expertises are considered Universal expertises, and can be developed by personas in any Cluster or Archetype during external development.

For example, a persona developing in a large university would use the university campus as his Vocational Setting. Internal Expertises could be chosen from among those listed as possibilities within the Academic Vocational Cluster. Development within its walls would be dictated by the Setting's Internal Potential while development in the surrounding city would be dictated by the Setting's External Potential. External expertises might include any of those made available by the Urban Environ Class or the student's own Status Archetype. External development could also include any of the Universal expertises.

Expertise Development

As players choose Vocational Settings and Paths for their personas, the Mythguide must determine the availability of expertises based on both Internal and External Potential. The Vocational Expertise Development table lists expertises available for Internal development by Vocational Cluster. For example, a persona developing as a household knight in a baron's retinue would have access (for development based on Internal Potential) to those expertises listed under the Warrior Cluster on the table. Depending on the environment being used, the Mythguide may have to tailor the internal lists to better fit a particular occupation. This often means specific Aspects, but it can mean additional expertises. For example, an order of desert priests might be required to perform an elaborate sword dance as a part of a seasonal ritual. In this unique case, the expertise Favored Weapon (sword) might qualify for internal development by the priesthood.

The Additional Expertise Development table lists those expertises available for both external development and additional internal development. Expertises





that overlap (can be developed both internally and externally) include those which are made available by Official and Itinerant Vocations. External expertises include both Universal expertises and those made available by a persona's Status Archetype.

When progressing through the Background Development period, a persona acquires and improves expertises according to the Internal and External Potentials of the Vocational Setting. In a given year of development, a persona can spend Interaction Points equal to twice a Setting's Potential and develop a number of expertises equal to the Potential. For example, a persona developing in a Setting with an Internal Potential of three and an External Potential of four can spend a maximum of six Interaction Points on internal development and eight Interaction Points on external development each year. A maximum of three internal expertises and four external expertises can be developed each year.

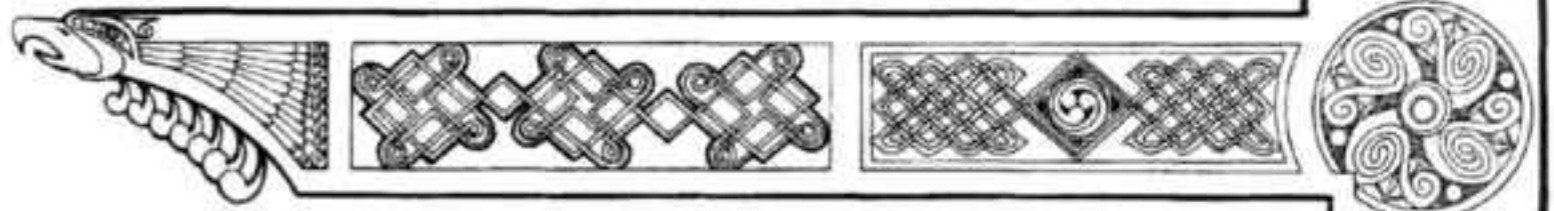
Gentlewoman Thief

Dirdrien's Vocational Journey

Dirdrien spent her early developmental period in an academy for young girls where she learned the etiquette, grammar, and social conduct befitting a maiden of the Privileged Class. Watching for the opportunity to flee, Dirdrien, settled upon a group of traveling entertainers who made an annual circuit from Galenir to Imberwyn. Dirdrien traded her academy savings for passage and instruction with the troupe.

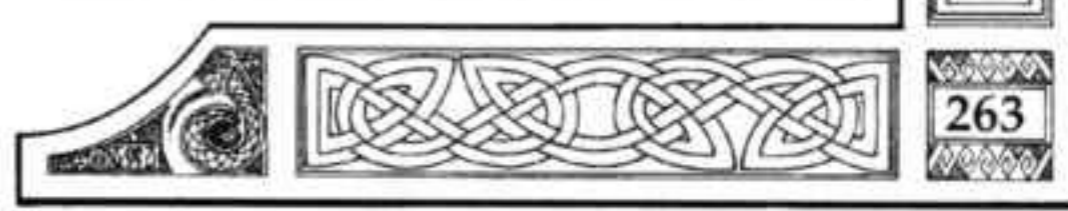
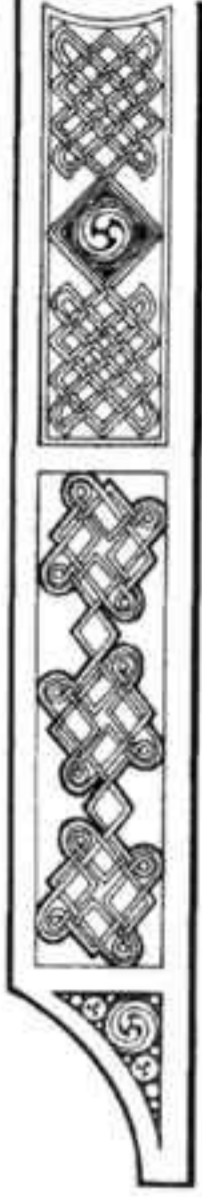
The Mythguide determines that the Vocational Setting is readily available (in return for her savings) and assigns Setting values to the Itinerant circus entourage (Prominence 3, Internal Potential 5, External Potential 1). Deciding that she would like to accelerate her learning in this setting, Dirdrien spends one Vocational Window of Opportunity to allow her to utilize the Settings full Potential for one year (even though she only spends 6 months with the circus). In 6 months Dirdrien Spends 10 IP Internally (Knife Throwing and Acrobatics) and 2 points Externally (Riding).

Leaving this setting to live among the Marginal classes of Alathel (Prominence 0, External Potential 4), Dirdrien works odd jobs (Internal Potential 1 - Unskilled Labor Cluster) until she finds a job to her liking. At the end of the year, the Mythguide makes an Availability Trial. The Specialization of Alathel gives the Trial a Base of 1 and a Rank of 7. Since the Caravan is Itinerant, no Vocation Expertise modifiers apply. The city of Alathel greets many small caravans yearly so there is a -3 Difficulty modifier from the Specialization Aspect of Alathel. Lastly, Dirdriens innate breeding reveals her to initial Status, so there is no Difficulty modifier from that consideration. Overall, the Trial has an Adjusted Trial Chance of 8, (Base 1 + Rank 7 - Difficulty of 0 (2 - 3)). The Mythguide rolls a 5, indicating a complete success and determines that Dirdrien has been offered a position with a small Merchant Caravan headed by the widow Lirah.



Vocational Expertise Development (Internal Potential of Vocational Setting)

<i>Vocational Cluster</i>	<i>Available Expertises (Internal Development)</i>
Fringe Cluster	Awareness, Brawl, Dodge, Guile, Improvisation, Influence, Physical, Physical Adaption, Savvy, Social Adaption, Acrobatics, Animal Handling, Bribery, Craft, Disguise, Forgery, Healing, Favored Weapon, Intrigue, Leadership, Manipulation, Observation, Performance, Seduction, Stealth, Tracking, Transport, Unarmed Combat, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Military, Politics, Understand Mechanism
Unskilled Labor Cluster	Physical, Savvy, Social Adaption, Animal Handling, Craft, Healing, Observation, Manipulation, Transport, Stealth, Tracking, Wilderness, Knowledge, Lore
Warrior Cluster	Awareness, Brawl, Dodge, Influence, Physical, Physical Adaption, Acrobatics, Craft, Favored Weapon, Healing, Leadership, Observation, Riding, Unarmed Combat, Wearing Armor, Military
Artisan Cluster	Guile, Influence, Savvy, Social Adaption, Administration, Artisan, Bribery, Craft, Manipulation, Transport, Knowledge, Understand Mechanism
Merchant Cluster	Awareness, Improvisation, Influence, Savvy, Social Adaption, Administration, Bribery, Diplomacy, Elocution, Favored Weapon, Transport, Etiquette, Knowledge, Language, Script
Skilled Professional Cluster	Guile, Influence, Improvisation, Savvy, Administration, Bribery, Diplomacy, Elocution, Healing, Intrigue, Leadership, Riding, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Politics, Research, Script
Ecclesiastical Cluster	Influence, Savvy, Administration, Artistic Expression, Elocution, Forgery, Healing, Leadership, Meditation, Performance, Unarmed Combat, History, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Politics, Research, Script
Academic Cluster	Influence, Savvy, Administration, Artistic Expression, Diplomacy, Elocution, Forgery, Intrigue, Leadership, Meditation, Performance, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Military, Politics, Research, Script, Understand Mechanism
Bureaucratic Cluster	Guile, Influence, Savvy, Social Adaption, Administration, Bribery, Diplomacy, Elocution, Forgery, Intrigue, Leadership, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Politics, Research, Script
Arcane Cluster	Awareness, Guile, Influence, Savvy, Animal Handling, Artisan, Artistic Expression, Diplomacy, Disguise, Elocution, Healing, Intrigue, Leadership, Manipulation, Meditation, Observation, Performance, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Research, Script
Political Cluster	Awareness, Guile, Improvisation, Influence, Savvy, Social Adaption, Administration, Bribery, Diplomacy, Disguise, Elocution, Intrigue, Leadership, Observation, Seduction, Stealth, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Military, Politics, Script
Arts Cluster	Improvisation, Savvy, Social Adaption, Acrobatics, Animal Handling, Artistic Expression, Disguise, Elocution, Forgery, Intrigue, Manipulation, Meditation, Observation, Performance, Seduction, Etiquette, Knowledge, Language, Research, Script



Additional Expertise Development (cont. Internal and External Potentials)

Special Vocations

Additional Expertises (Internal/External Development)

Official Vocations

Influence, Savvy, Administration, Bribery, Leadership, Knowledge, Politics

Itinerant Vocations

Animal Handling, Craft (travel-oriented), Favored Weapon, Riding, Transport, Wearing Armor, Wilderness, Knowledge (travel-oriented), Lore (travel-oriented)

Persona Status Archetype

Available Expertises (External Development)

Ruling Archetype

Administration, Artistic Expression, Diplomacy, Elocution, Favored Weapon, Intrigue, Leadership, Performance, Riding, Seduction, Unarmed Combat, Wearing Armor, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Military, Politics, Script

Privileged Archetype

Administration, Artistic Expression, Diplomacy, Elocution, Favored Weapon, Intrigue, Leadership, Performance, Riding, Unarmed Combat, Wearing Armor, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language, Politics, Script

Professional Archetype

Diplomacy, Elocution, Favored Weapon, Forgery, Intrigue, Riding, Wearing Armor, Etiquette, Knowledge, Language, Politics, Script

Labor Archetype

Craft, Favored Weapon, Intrigue, Manipulation, Wearing Armor, Knowledge, Lore

Marginal Archetype

Acrobatics, Artistic Expression, Bribery, Disguise, Favored Weapon, Forgery, Intrigue, Manipulation, Seduction, Stealth, Unarmed Combat, Knowledge, Language, Lore, Politics, Research

***Environ Class
(Vocational Setting)***

Available Expertises (External Development)

Urban

Craft, Seduction, Transport, Etiquette, History, Knowledge, Language (Native)

Semi-Urban

Craft, Transport, History, Knowledge, Language (Native)

Rural

Animal Handling, Artisan, Craft, Healing, Riding, Tracking, Transport, Wilderness, History (Local), Knowledge, Language (Native), Lore

Wilderness

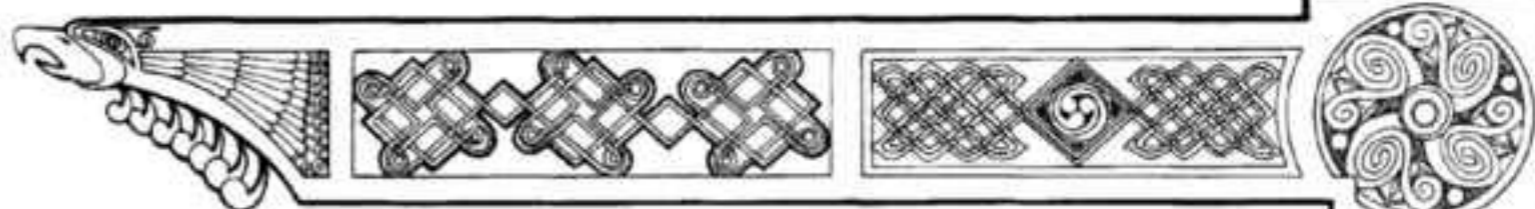
Animal Handling, Artisan, Craft, Healing, Manipulation, Riding, Stealth, Tracking, Transport,, Wilderness, Knowledge, Language (Native), Lore

Universal Development

Available Expertises (External Development)

Universal (All Personas)

All Talents (Awareness, Brawl, Dodge, Guile, Improvisation, Influence, Physical, Physical Adaption, Savvy, Social Adaption), Language (Native), History (Local), Healing



Itinerant Vocations

Not all vocational development occurs in stationary Settings. Certain Vocations are Itinerant, either moving from one Setting to another or moving within a self-contained Vocational Setting. Itinerancy enhances both vocational and expertise availability, since the persona is able to develop in Settings throughout several different environments. Itinerant personas are often able to develop more diverse expertises than their stationary brethren.

Stationary Settings

A persona can remain within a single Vocational Path and move through a number of different Vocational Settings. Itinerant Vocations might include traveling actors or players, minstrels, pilgrims, and craft journeymen. For example, a persona serves an apprenticeship to a stonemason. After completing his apprenticeship, the persona enters a period of Itinerancy as a journeyman to further develop his craft. As a journeyman the persona travels, working as a stonemason, from one Vocational Setting to another. His apprenticeship takes place in the first Setting. His second Setting might be in a neighboring town where he is able to find temporary work. His next Setting could be even further away. Development continues in this manner until the persona either begins narrative play or moves onto another Vocational Path (perhaps as a Master of his vocation).

In the previous example, the persona's Creation Environment changes from one Vocational Setting to another. Each change creates new Internal and External Potentials. The Mythguide should make sure that a persona's continued development reflects the changes among different Creation Environments. In this type of Itinerant Vocation, where a persona travels from one stationary Setting to another, Itinerant expertises can only be developed as external expertises.

Mobile Settings

As an alternative to treating Itinerant Vocational Paths as a succession of different Vocational Settings, the Mythguide can treat the whole period of Itinerancy as one extended and mobile Vocational Setting with a variable Location. The Prominence of mobile Settings tends to be slightly higher than stationary Settings of

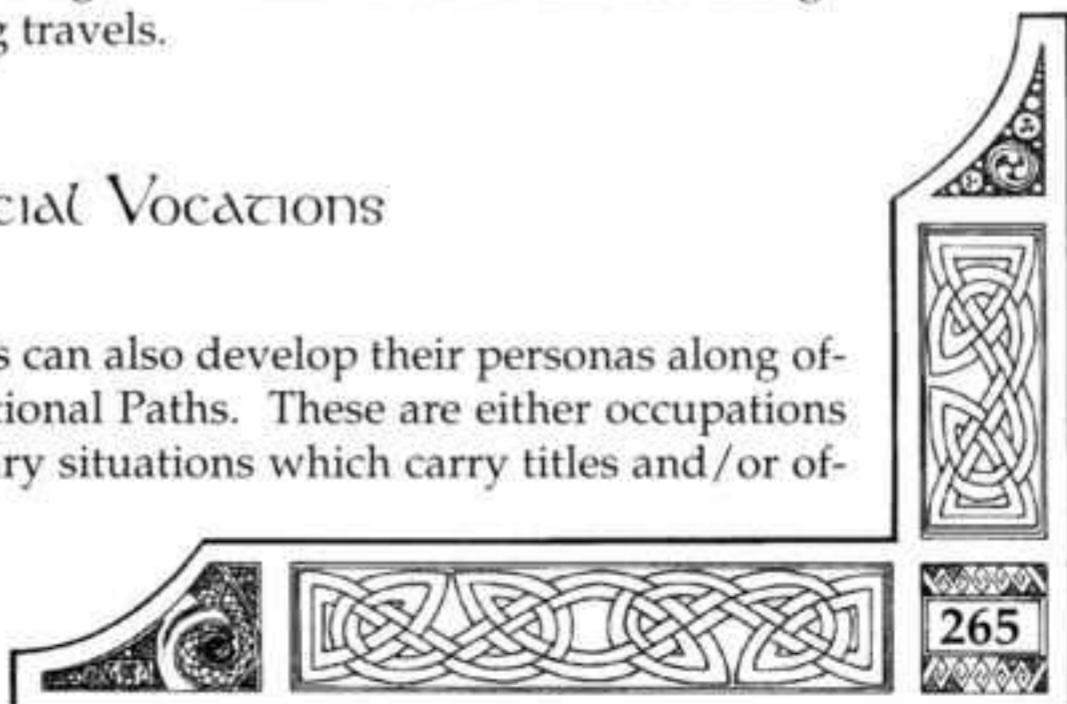
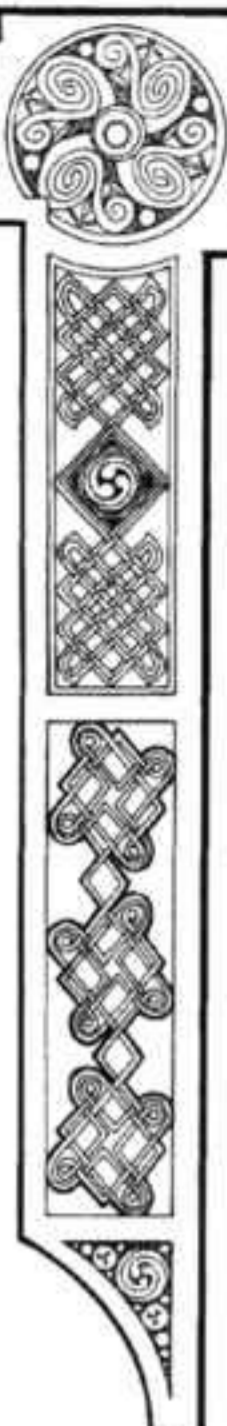


the same type. The Itinerant Setting reaches many more people throughout a much greater area. In mobile Settings, Itinerant expertises (from the Additional Expertise Development table) can be developed internally as well as externally. All other internal development occurs normally.

The External Potential of Itinerant Settings is usually at least average (External Potential of three or higher), although it depends on the Environ Classes through which a Setting normally travels. For example, an Itinerant persona who moves from one city to another probably operates within a mobile Setting with an External Potential of five. Another persona who moves from one country village to another might only move within a Setting with an External Potential of three (average). External Potential can also change as a Setting travels.

Official Vocations

Players can also develop their personas along official Vocational Paths. These are either occupations or hereditary situations which carry titles and/or of-

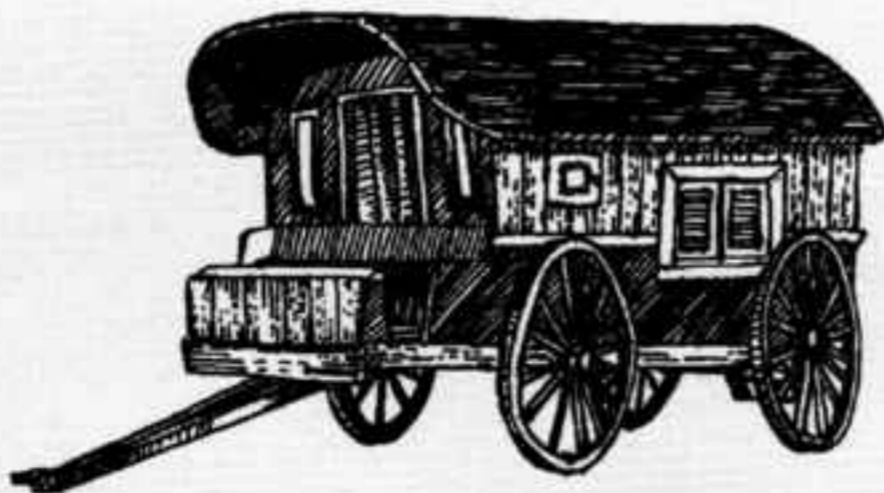


Gentlewoman Thief

DIRDRIEN'S ITINERACY WITH LIRAH

Lirah Evandovska assumed command of the trading caravan upon her husband's demise. Though Imberwyn supports equality among the sexes, it is not customary for women to brave the dangers of the poorly-maintained byways which amble through the wilder regions of the Kingdom. Consequently, Lirah has earned a reputation (Renown Value 2) in the rural villages and towns upon her route. She is known for her courage and tenacity, and few dare quarrel with her because of the rugged henchmen she employs. The Mythguide considers Lirah's caravan and assigns it Setting Values for Dirdrien's vocational development. The caravan's Prominence equals Lirah's Renown (Value 2), its Internal Potential is 3, and its External Potential is 3 (since she only travels through rural towns and wilderness settlements).

Accepting Lirah's offer to join her small caravan, Dirdrien develops the Internal and External Expertises that are available to her. Entering the Vocational Setting costs 4 IP (0 IP for Average Specialization, 1 IP for Prominence 2, 1 IP for Int. Pot. 3, 1 IP for Ext. Pot. 3, and 1 for an Itinerant Vocation). Under Lirah's instruction Dirdrien is able to spend 6 IP per year on Merchant Cluster vocational Expertises. Externally, Dirdrien has the resources of Lirah's men (most of which are Marginals), the wilderness, and Itinerant experiences from which to learn. Dirdrien remains with Lirah for 6 years, building the rough and tumble skill-base which she uses to begin her new vocation in Alathel. Upon settling in Alathel, Dirdrien ends her Background Development period and enters Narrative Play.



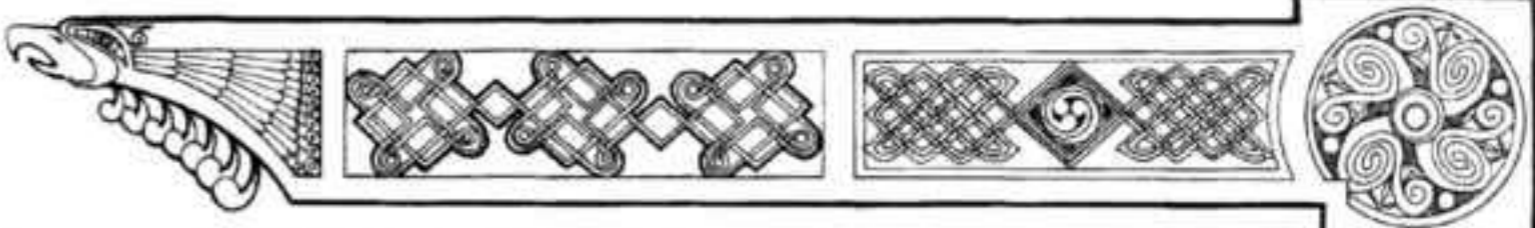
fices with them. Such personas could be members of the aristocracy, itinerant justices, village officeholders, or members of a guild council. Titled personas are normally members of either the Ruling or Ruling Agency Status Archetypes, but those holding offices can be members of almost any Archetype. Personas who pursue an Official Vocational Path add a new dimension to the Background Development process - the dimension of Responsibility.

Responsibility represents an official's or noble's duty to their public. If a persona following an official Vocational Path performs well in a Vocation requiring a high level of Responsibility, the persona benefits by gaining Renown. There are five levels of Responsibility in Aria, ranging from Limited to High. The Mythguide should assign a Responsibility Level to an individual Office or Title based on considerations unique to the Narrative Environment and on the vocation's Prominence within that environment.

Official Vocations with high levels of Responsibility are often full time positions, and usually fall into either the Political or Bureaucratic Vocational Clusters. Official Vocations with lower levels of Responsibility often represent titles (a hereditary honorific), honorary positions (the King's Cup Bearer), or part-time responsibilities (a village reeve) that require neither a persona's full attention nor a considerable time commitment. Offices can become incidental positions, with a persona concentrating on other areas of development at the same time.

The Mythguide should determine the extent of an individual office's Responsibility within the environment. For example, if a persona served as Chancellor of the Realm for a small nation, the office would probably be treated as a full-time Vocational Path while the persona held it (such a persona would normally have a title and holdings as well, which would probably be administered by someone else in his absence). A great vocation such as this would fall within the Political Vocational Cluster. However, if a rural persona served as a local tax assessor or village reeve, these offices would likely be regarded as part-time endeavors. The persona might double as the local miller and develop within the Artisan Vocational Cluster. His Official vocation would overlap with his primary vocation, giving him the opportunity for expanded external development. An Official Vocation allows a persona to develop Official expertises (from the Additional Expertise Development table) during external development.

Personas are judged according to their Performance in a particular office. There are five possible Performance grades, which are usually purchased using Interaction Points. At the player's option, an Vo-



ational Window of Opportunity could also be expended to automatically gain a Performance level of Exceptional. Performance ratings are important when determining additional Personal Renown gains during Background Development. At the Mythguide's option, Performance Trials can also be used determine Performance in a particular Setting. These Trials work in a similar manner as Availability Trials, and lend an air of tension and uncertainty to development that is being roleplayed. Performance Trials are usually Refined Trials based on Charisma and Intelligence. Background Aspects, social conditions, and the Administration expertise serve as Difficulty modifiers. The accompanying table relates Performance Trial success to levels of Performance.

Firnost Clanhead

Fymn Connor's Vocational Path

Fymn Connor of the Highland Tribe spent his early developmental years assisting his father in tending the flocks. From age 8 to 12, Fymn demonstrates increasing aptitude for herding, and on his thirteenth birthday Fymn enters his first vocational setting as an apprentice herdsman under his father's tutelage.

Since Fymn desires to enter his father's vocation, the Mythguide determines that no availability trial is required - the vocational path is available, and Fymn's Status Archetype suits his placement within the vocation. Because his father is known as a talented shepherd and skilled warrior, the Mythguide estimates the setting's Prominence to be 6. The Mythguide evaluates the Vocational Path (Unskilled Labor Cluster - Shepherd) and establishes the Internal Potential of the Vocational Setting to be 4. Fymn's father knows nearly everything there is to teach on the subject of Shepherding. Additionally, Fymn's father is the head of clan Connor; his administrative talents, war skills, and highland folk-sense serve as good External developmental resources for Fymn to draw upon during his spare time. Overall, the Mythguide estimates the Vocational Setting's External Potential merits a 3. The total cost for entering this setting measures 4 Interaction Points (-1 IP for Low Specialization, 2 IP for its Prominence, 2 IP for Internal Potential, and 1 IP for External Potential).

Official Vocations

Prominence of Office	Responsibility
1 - 2	Limited
3 - 4	Fair
5 - 6	Average
7 - 8	Considerable
9 - 10	High

Official Performance (Cost or Trial)

Performance Description	IP Cost*
Poor	-2
Fair	-1
Average	0
Impressive	1
Exceptional	2

Performance Description	Trial Result**
Poor	Complete Failure
Fair	Marginal Success
Average	Complete Success
Impressive	Superior Success
Exceptional	Extraordinary Success

Base = 3

Rank = (Charisma + Intelligence)/2

Difficulty Modifiers	Modifier
Administration Expertise	-1/Rank
Social Conditions	+/- 1 to 5
Background Aspects	+/- 1 per Rank

* Personas may use Vocational Windows of Opportunity to ensure Exceptional Ratings for the durations of their official careers (1 to 5 years) instead of spending Interaction Points per year.

** If unusual Social situations occur, Performance can be roleplayed or determined randomly with a Trial.



Firnost Clanhead (cont.)

After three years, Fymn Connor finishes his apprenticeship, and is sent by the Chieftain upon a four month journey to the Seer of the Great Flat Lake. Upon his return, Fymn finds that his father has died (during the winter migration), and Fymn has been elected by his Clan to replace his father as the family Clanhead. The death and family Inheritance is activated by a Situational Window but the election to Clanhead costs a Vocational Widow because it is not an inherited title. Having gained much of his father's wisdom during his apprenticeship, Fymn decides to continue his administrative education by spending his evenings (after the flock has been safely led home) with the other Clanheads. In Firnost Society, the position of Clanhead is an Official duty but not a full time Vocation. As such, Fymn may only develop Official Expertises as External Potential. Each year Fymn may spend up to 8 IP on Shepherding (Internal, Vocational) Expertises (dividing them among no more than 4 Expertises) and up to 6 IP on External Expertises (dividing the points among no more than three Official or other External Expertises). Fymn Connor spends five more years as Shepherd-Clanhead, expending his remaining Interaction Points. At the end of the period he begins Narrative Play.



Unfree Vocations

Personas who come from an Unfree family or who develop within an Unfree Vocation undergo a normal Background Development period. The player must decide whether his persona enters play as a Free or Unfree individual. If the player wishes his persona to acquire his Freedom during Background Development, this Freedom can be gained in two ways. It may be purchased with a Situational Window of Opportunity or it may be roleplayed. A persona could begin narrative play in an Unfree situation and win his Freedom during play. The Mythguide and player must determine the narrative basis for the persona's newfound Freedom.

Hidden Vocations

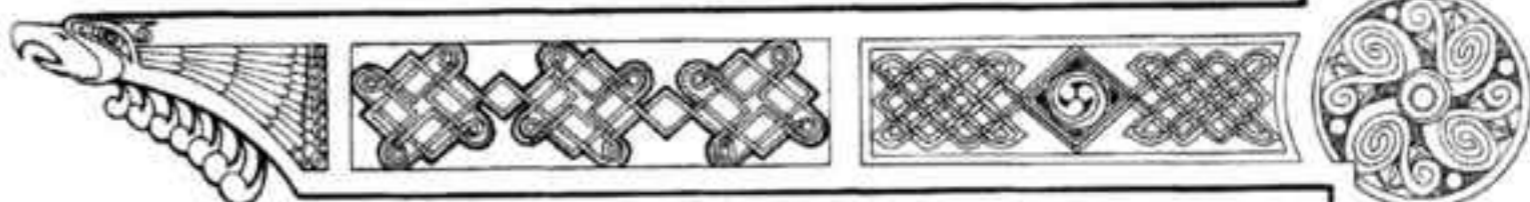
At the Mythguide's option, personas can also develop within Hidden Vocations. Such personas normally lead an Apparent life as well, keeping the Hidden Vocation secret. For example, a persona who is the son of a Privileged merchant works for his father's trading company during the day, while at night he runs a lucrative black market enterprise forging artwork and antiquities. The trading company becomes the persona's Apparent Setting while his forgery business becomes a Hidden Setting.

The Mythguide should assign Internal and External Potentials to a persona's Apparent Setting normally. The persona is then considered to have an additional Internal Potential for his Hidden Setting. This second Internal Potential is derived from the External Potential of the Apparent Setting. The Internal Potential of the Hidden Setting takes levels away from the Apparent Setting. In the previous example, the trading company Setting has an External Potential of four. The black market business can have an Internal Potential of up to four (but such an assignment would leave no External Potential at all - the persona would divide all of his time between the two enterprises). The player gives the Hidden Setting an Internal Potential of two, leaving an overall External Potential of two for the Apparent Setting.

Depending on the nature of the Hidden Vocation, recognition or discovery might also become a problem. Obviously, recognition is only a problem if an individual's identity is known. If it is, use the recognition guidelines included in the sections on Renown in the Traits chapter. If discovery is a risk, the Mythguide might require the player to make a Discovery Trial (based on Intuition) during each year of Background Development. Modifiers should be based on the circumstances surrounding the vocation (i.e. does the persona take numerous risks). Such Trials can be particularly useful if Background Development is being roleplayed.

Magic or Religion-based Settings

The guidelines for entering religious or magical training differ from one environment to another. In one environment, magic might be an inherent power; in another its practice might be restricted to a certain gender or Status Archetype. In a third, personas who wish to have the Talent must purchase an appropriate



Background Aspect to indicate that they were born with the power. Such considerations all depend on the Reality that governs a particular environment. The Mythguide should refer the chapters of this book which deal with the creation of an environment's Reality (and therefore its magic and religious systems).

⑤ Entering a Setting ⑤

There are several ways in which a persona may enter a particular Setting and begin development there. First, the Mythguide can simply allow a persona to enter a Setting based upon availability. Second, a player can expend a Window of Opportunity to enter a Setting. Third, entrance into appropriate Settings can be purchased with Interaction Points. Consult the accompanying table for costs and modifiers.

Alternately, the persona can wait to enter the Setting. For each year a persona waits to enter a particular Setting, the total cost to enter the Setting decreases by two Interaction Points (the one year period should be extended for Heritage groups that are especially long-lived). During this time a persona may still develop expertises based on the Setting's External Potential. This represents the persona's interaction with the society around the Setting that he wishes to enter. However, the persona will not be able to develop any specific Vocational Expertises.

Finally, if Environmental Development is being roleplayed, Entrance Trials can be used to see if a persona successfully enters a particular Setting. Entrance Trials are made as Refined Charisma Trials, although numerous modifiers can apply to a Trial's Difficulty. These modifiers will depend on the environment being used, but usually include Environ Class, Prominence, Potential (Internal), personal Renown, Family Renown, Status Archetype, and certain Background Aspects (Famous/Infamous Relation, Debt, Favorable Inheritance, etc.). Setting Prominence, Personal Renown, and Family Status are probably the most important considerations, although Status Archetype can play a critical role in environments with high Custom. The nature and value of the modifiers should be determined based on the environment being used.

A persona can check once per year to see if he has been admitted to a chosen Setting. The persona may choose to expend either a Vocational Window or the requisite number of Interaction Points at any time during the waiting process, at which time he is automatically admitted to the Setting.

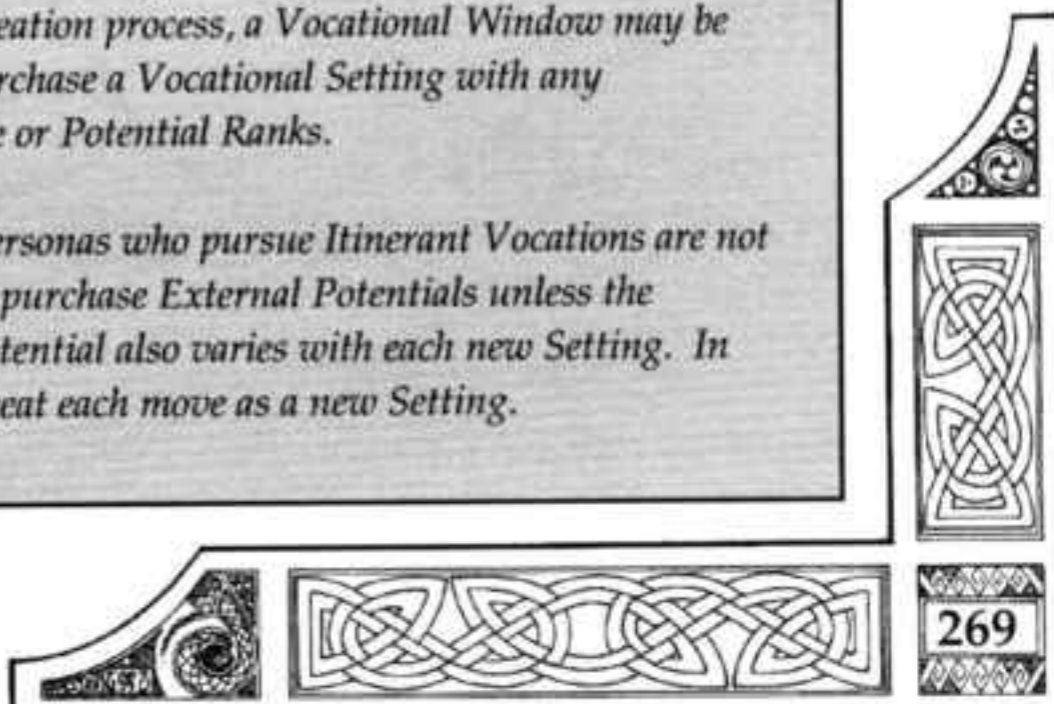
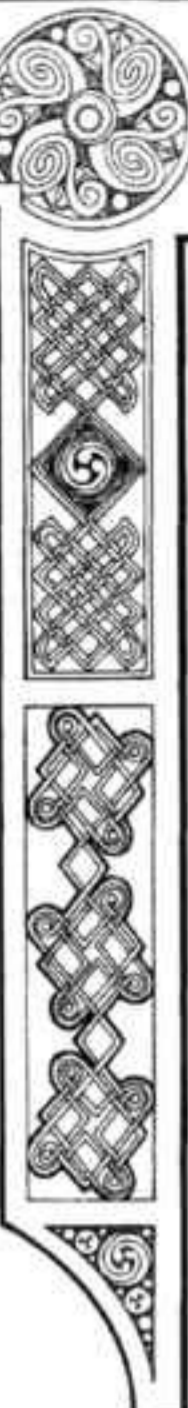
Purchasing Vocational Setting

<i>Setting Element</i>	<i>Interaction Point Cost*</i>
Specialization	
None/Low	-2/-1 IP
Average	0 IP
High	1 IP
Very High	2 IP
Prominence	
0	0 IP
1 - 4	1 IP
5 - 7	2 IP
8 - 10	4 IP
Internal Potential	
1	- 1 IP
2	0 IP
3	1 IP
4	2 IP
5	3 IP
External Potential	
1 - 2	0 IP
3	1 IP
4	2 IP
5	3 IP
Itinerant Vocation	2 IP**
Official Vocation	1 IP

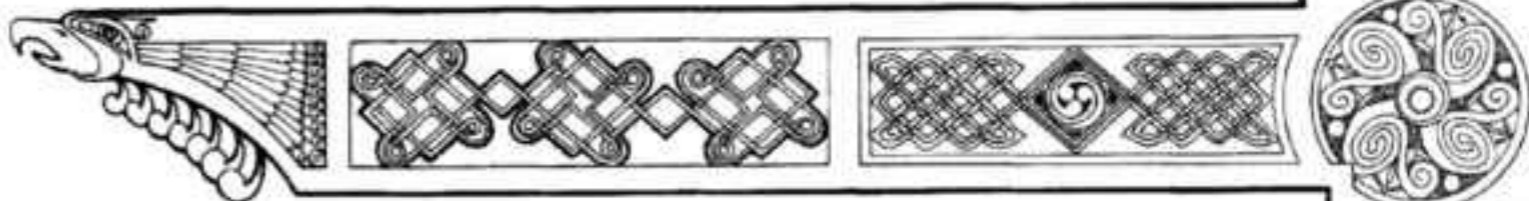
* Note: Negative Interaction Point Costs indicate a bonus IP award for selecting an Underdeveloped Potential (Rank less than 5). Bonus IP add to the Interaction Point Pool and may be spent as normal IP. If Personas are being created Narratively, Prominence and Potential Ranks are assigned without IP costs or awards.

If Windows of Opportunity are being used in the Persona Creation process, a Vocational Window may be spent to purchase a Vocational Setting with any Prominence or Potential Ranks.

** Note: Personas who pursue Itinerant Vocations are not required to purchase External Potentials unless the Internal Potential also varies with each new Setting. In this case, treat each move as a new Setting.







⊕ Vocational Setting Archetypes ⊕

These Archetypes can be used either as guidelines for establishing original Vocational Settings or as pre-generated Settings which can be plugged into most environments. Suggested Vocational Path possibilities are provided in each Archetype description, arranged according to the Status Archetypes in which they appear. Expertise opportunities are also suggested. The names of the Archetypes serve to illustrate the individual nature of any Setting, and do not represent elements of any existing world or environment. If the Mythguide wishes to use these Archetypes in his own Canticle, he should feel free to change names or locations.

ENVIRON CLASS Wilderness

Thorn Deeping Lodge, Order of the Sable Faun

Specialization Level of Creation

Environment: None. The Order of the Sable Faun is proscribed in the Kingdom of Evria; Thorn Deeping, as the Mother Lodge of the Order, is many leagues from the nearest signs of habitation and is nestled comfortably against a hillside in the lush Grove of the Faun. The Lodge interacts only with members, servants, and certain honored delegates. Resources are procured by servants affiliated with the Order, and the Adepts are never left wanting for any luxury or delicacy. The Lodge's secrecy is its salvation.

Location: Thorn Deeping rests in the heart of the vast Domyr Forest, in the unexplored western reaches of the Kingdom of Evria. There is no other habitation for miles, although numerous Evrian fur trappers work the eastern borders of the forest. Many of these hunters eventually become agents of the Order.

Purpose: Services. Thorn Deeping is far removed from any sort of habitation, but most necessary goods are still transported to the site. Several necessary craftsmen live in the Lodge compound, but the primary Pur-



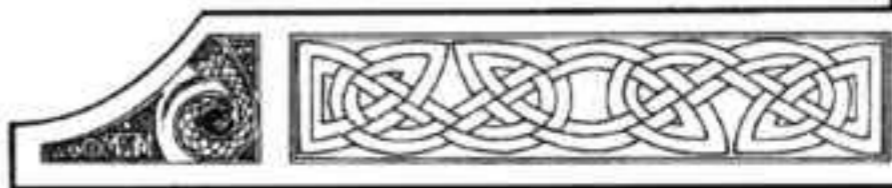
pose of the Lodge is to serve as the nerve center for the largest magical Order in the western lands.

Prominence: 9 The Lodge itself is the stuff of legend among Adepts throughout the lands. All know of its existence and revere its history; few know its location. In mundane circles, the Lodge is treated as an ancient legend, but there are those among the powerful who suspect that there is more to the stories than most guess.

Potential: 5 Internal, 1 External The opportunities for development within the Lodge are unparalleled. A developing persona would have access to one of the most impressive libraries in all the lands, as well as to some of the most experienced and talented instructors. Not surprisingly, the Masters at the Lodge accept few apprentices. There is almost no opportunity for External development in this Setting.

Development Notes: Thorn Deeping should probably be used as an entire Setting in itself, although if a persona were developing with a specific Master the Lodge could represent the Setting's External Development.

Possible Vocational Paths: Marginal (none) Labor (domestic servants, cooks) Professional (guards, smith, ostler, apprentice Adepts) Privileged (Adepts, Lodge officials)



ENVIRON CLASS RURAL

Adric's Rest, a Wayside Inn along the Timber Road

Specialization Level of Creation Environment: Low. Adric's Rest is a large traveler's inn situated at a crossroads along the eastern Timber Road. Although the inn is relatively isolated, it sees a respectable amount of traffic because of its role as a way station on the route to the eastern logging camps. It also serves as a caravan-sary for merchant trains passing over the eastern mountains. Resources in the immediate area are scarce, supplemented by seasonal caravan and merchant visits.

Location: Adric's Rest is located at a crossroads of the great eastern Timber Road, amidst a region of rugged heathlands. The nearest settlements are the logging camps on the edge of the Eastern Wood, five leagues to the east.

Purpose: Combination. The inn is quite self-sufficient, and professions oriented toward both goods and services are present.

Prominence: 3
The inn enjoys a steady, dependable reputation throughout the timber regions. Travelers recognize the name, and accord the establishment a healthy respect. However, little is known of the inn outside the ranks of the loggers, timberwrights, and regular caravan merchants.

Potential: 3 Internal, 1 External. The inn itself presents a unique opportunity for broad-based Aptitude development, since all manner of travelers constantly pass through. Master Jurgen, the innkeeper, also employs several bonded professional craftsmen full time.

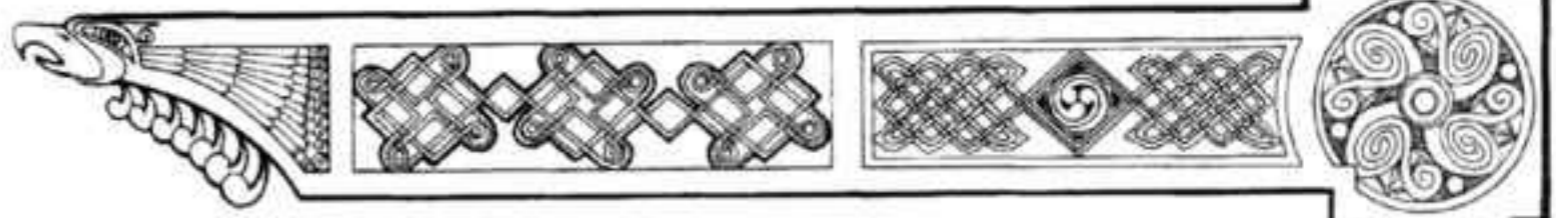
External development possibilities are limited, consisting only of the nearby logging communities and a few isolated homesteads.

Development Notes: Adric's Rest may be used as an entire Setting in itself, or as a larger environment within which several craft-related Settings operate. Its use depends on the player's desires and on a persona's intended Vocational Path. If a persona is developing in the inn proper, perhaps as an apprentice to Master Jurgen, the whole compound acts as the Setting. Most development is Internal. If a persona develops as an apprentice to one of Master Jurgen's bonded craftsmen, the individual workshop serves as the Setting,

with the inn representing an External Potential for additional development.

Possible Vocational Paths: Marginal (beggar, prostitute, displaced farmer) Labor (grooms, domestic service in inn, bartender, cooks, guards, apprentices) Professional (bonded smith, carpenter, or chandler, minstrels, guard captain, Master Jurgen and family)





ENVIRON CLASS SEMI-URBAN

The Silver Falcon College of Heraldry, seat of the Greymantle Pursuivant

Specialization Level of Creation Environment: Average. The College operates in the town of Anrath, which sits along the King's Road. The town itself sees a large amount of traffic during the year. It is only twenty leagues from the capital and it rests beside a major trade thoroughfare.

Although interaction with other parts of the kingdom is prevalent, resources in the vicinity of Anrath are scarce.

Location: The College of Heraldry forms the northern border of Anrath's Market Square. It is directly across the square from Anrath Cathedral and the famous Four Crowns Inn.

Purpose: Services. The College is responsible for the education of heralds in this region of the kingdom. Its duties also include the registration and cataloging of Arms and Badges for those who have been given Grants by either College or Crown.

Prominence: 7 The Silver Falcon College enjoys an impressive reputation throughout the kingdom. Its heralds have chronicled many of the king's greatest battles, and have earned the respect of noble and commoner alike. This College is also one of the oldest in the land, and its reputation and influence rest on solid foundations.

Potential: 4 Internal, 3 External. The Potential inherent in the College is fairly broad-based, consider-

ing the nature of the Herald's vocation. Heraldry has specific training in vocational areas and more general training in other areas, reflecting the eclectic nature of the profession. The External Potential of the Setting is based on the opportunities present in Anrath.



Development Notes: The College presents a unique opportunity for broad-based development within a single Setting. The Greymantle Pursuivant is answerable only to the Crimson Oak King of Arms, and wields considerable power in the kingdom. His heralds are more than mere functionaries. They are information gatherers, advisors to great lords, and government officials. The College may be subdivided into smaller Settings if the persona wishes to develop in one of the mundane jobs connected to it (laborer, craftsman, etc.). However, if the persona wants to develop as a Herald or in a related field, the College must act as the Setting.

Possible Vocational Paths: Marginal (none) Labor (domestic laborers, guards) Professional (clerks, record keepers, bonded craftsmen, musicians, limners, lexicographers, painters, lesser Herald) Privileged (master Herald and officers) Ruling (Greymantle Pursuivant, usually a lord)



ENVIRON CLASS Urban

The Adanaeum, a Gladiatorial Arena in the Empire of Carnos

Specialization Level of Creation Environment: Very High. The Adanaeum is the largest arena of its type in Carnos, and it is located in Byriell, the largest city in the Empire. The city is the center for trade and commerce from all corners of the known world, and it boasts a harbor that would swallow most other 'cities'. Resources in the region are abundant, and with the influx of goods from around the continent they are nearly unlimited.

Location: The Adanaeum rests on the outskirts of the primary merchant's quarter of Byriell, near the Auction Square where the arena slaves are purchased.

Purpose: Services. Personal and mass combats among trained slaves are staged several times per week for the entertainment of Byriell's citizens.

Prominence: 9 The arena stages the finest combats and trains the most skilled gladiators in all the known world. Personal combat becomes an art form within the Adanaeum, and the arena's almost mythical worldwide reputation is well-deserved.

Potential: 4 Internal, 5 External. Personas developing within the arena receive unparalleled special-

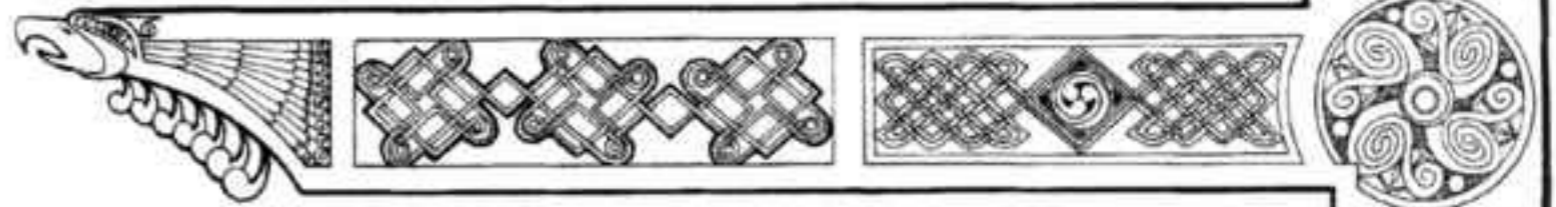
ized training (primarily combat) from the finest instructors in the world. Because of the wide array of personalities and backgrounds among the other slaves, there is also ample opportunity to develop in more diverse areas. External Potential for development is

very great in the city of Byriell, but most arena slaves are not able to take advantage of such opportunity.

Development Notes: The Arena may be used as an entire Setting by itself, but because of the Unfree nature of most residents a subdivision might be more advisable. Free instructors could develop in the Arena as a single Setting, using the Arena itself for Internal Development and the city for External Development. Unfree gladiators might wish to use a particular training area or school within the Arena as their Setting (thus using such a smaller division for Internal Development), allowing the larger everyday routine of Arena life to become an opportunity for External development.

Possible Vocational Paths: Marginal (none) Labor (domestic slaves, laboring slaves, prostitutes, students in gladiatorial training school - all Unfree) Professional (gladiators, instructors - both Unfree) Privileged (Free instructors, arena administrators)





A PRIMITIVE SETTING (ENVIRON CLASS RURAL)

IMBRE, A PRIMITIVE VILLAGE IN THE TATHA HIGHLANDS

Specialization Level of Creation Environment:

Low. Imbre is the home of the Thalda tribe, a Primitive fishing culture who have just reached an Early Iron Age level of technological development. The village enjoys limited interaction with other peoples in the region, and natural resources are abundant.

Location:

Imbre is situated on the shore of a swift mountain river, deep within the Tatha Highlands. Imbre is a sedentary community because its principal subsistence is taken from the river. Most other cultures in the Highlands are nomadic, traveling from one seasonal hunting ground to another.

Purpose: Combination. The village is entirely self-sufficient.

Prominence: 3

The village of Imbre is known to most of the migratory tribes in the region, some of whom are welcome visitors. Most of the other tribes respect the Thalda, but a few consider them weak for abandoning their nomadic hunting traditions.

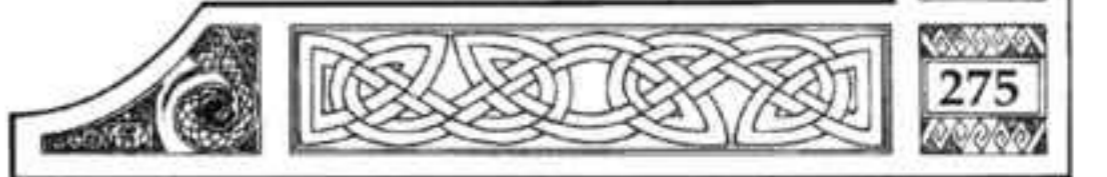
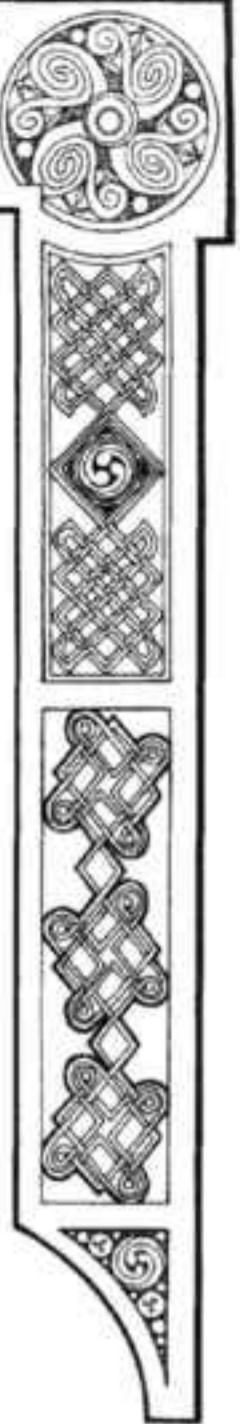
Potential: 3 Internal, 1 External. Although there is little specialization among vocations in the tribe, most members are willing teachers. The village itself could

be an entire Setting, or it might contain several smaller Settings. External development depends on what is considered the Vocational Setting. Development possibilities beyond the village are almost nonexistent. Personas may be able to learn from other tribes passing through the area.

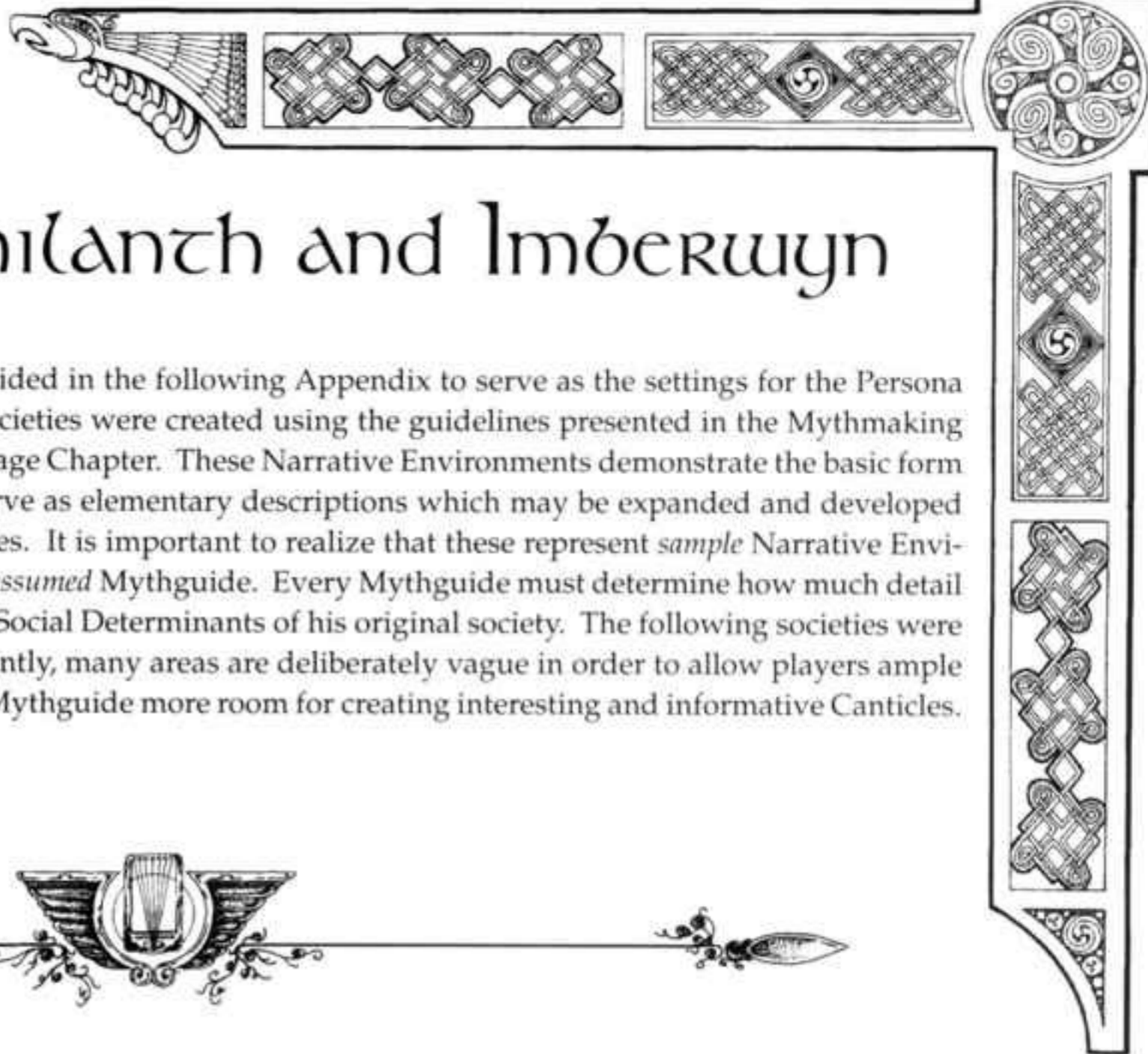
Development Notes: If the village is the Setting, most development is Internal. Personas may have the opportunity to travel the region and learn from other tribes, but such development is rare. If a smaller Setting is used, the village itself represents the External development possibilities.

Possible Vocational Paths: Marginal (none) Labor (fishermen, simple craftsmen, weavers,

simple laborers, herdsman) Professional (warriors, certain artisans, guards) Privileged (great warriors, holy men, shamen, clan heads) Ruling (village elders) Ruling Agency (chieftain)







Appendix: Amilanth and Imberwyn

Two sample Narrative Environments are provided in the following Appendix to serve as the settings for the Persona Concepts set out in Chapter 1 of this book. The societies were created using the guidelines presented in the Mythmaking Chapter, Interactive History Chapter, and the Heritage Chapter. These Narrative Environments demonstrate the basic form that a group's initial setting might assume, and serve as elementary descriptions which may be expanded and developed through Interactive Histories or traditional Canticles. It is important to realize that these represent *sample* Narrative Environments and therefore reflect choices made by an *assumed* Mythguide. Every Mythguide must determine how much detail he is going to include when describing the various Social Determinants of his original society. The following societies were designed with Persona Creation in mind; consequently, many areas are deliberately vague in order to allow players ample leeway when designing Personas and to allow the Mythguide more room for creating interesting and informative Canticles.



The City-State of Amilanth

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS Scope

Situated on the Cape of Sivray, a large peninsula expanding the lowest reaches of the continent Temrelon, the seven Cape Cities mark the final stretch of the fabled Spice Route, which snakes southward from the low savannas of Temrelon's vast interior. The City-State of Amilanth, largest of the Cape Cities, straddles the narrow mouth of the Giren Estuary, its long, graceful bridges demonstrating the combination of aesthetic form and technological accomplishment that has earned Amilani architects great renown. The City-State rests upon the southernmost promontory of the Cape of Sivray, bounded to the south, east, and west by water, and to the north by the imposing Fereyn mountains. It is a medium sized nation and merits a Scope value of 6.

Military

Though geographically isolated, Amilanth maintains a well-trained Standing Army comprised entirely of women. While the total of professional

forces numbers approximately five thousand, the military body is divided between the City Watch and the Marine Garrison, which constitute army and navy respectively. Ultimate command of the combined forces lies within the authority of the aristocratic ruling council, which is comprised of thirty-nine seats held by the most powerful of the Amilani Trading Houses. The largest of these houses also support private police forces which may be conscripted by the ruling council during times of crisis. Additionally, during national emergencies the ruling council has the vested right to call private citizens to arms, thereby swelling the numbers of defensive troops by many thousands.

Of all the city-states, Amilanth devotes the most time and resources to organizing and drilling its popular Militia, which like the army and navy must be comprised of women by virtue of Amilani tradition and law. The Military Value of Amilanth is 9, with force numbers equaling five thousand Standing Professionals and an addi-

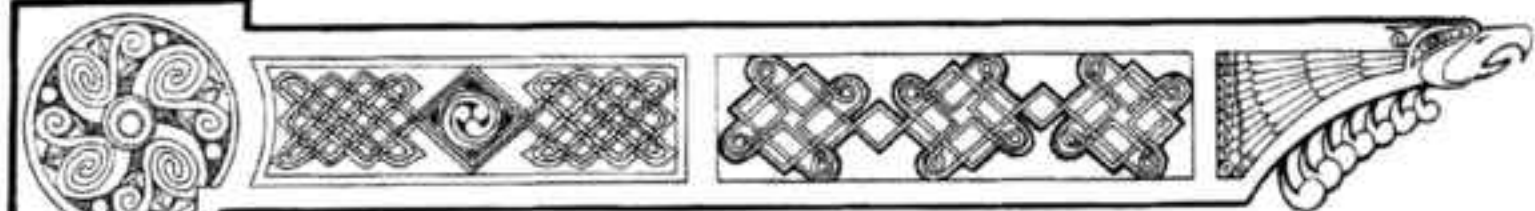
tional three to eight thousand Conscripts depending on the severity of the crisis.

Philosophical Orientation

Despite its apparent war-readiness, the City State of Amilanth is a peaceable nation. Though vigilant of its own security and interests, Amilanth prefers trade to conflict, profit to bloodshed, and economic competition to acquisition through force. Actively oriented toward Equilibrium Amilanth postures itself defensively with regard to its territory and resources, but seeks to expand its economic welfare through strident commercial enterprise and careful internal exploitation. Amilanth's Philosophical Orientation is best defined by the Aspects Stagnation (Ethics) and Acquisition (Wealth).

Humanities

In the City-State of Amilanth, a society motivated by profit and governed by a factionalized matriarchal Oligarchy, the Humanities constitute a welcome reprieve from the primary



affairs of the day. Though viewed as a luxury, or an oft-times inessential vice, the humanities are welcomed by the male portion of Amilani society as the foremost means for ascending the social hierarchy and elevating their low sense of esteem.

The small pantheon of old Gods is worshipped throughout the seven Cape Cities, but it is in Amilanth that the Goddess Ärtée, and her subjugated brother Equariel, maintain an active base of devotees. The vast Temple Complex of Ärtée is the largest of all religious institutions in Amilanth. Subscribing to the four Coordinates of the Tetrateuch, the clergy of Ärtée observe Her Will, Law, Order, and Logic in due proportion. According to Amilani mythology, Ärtée is the goddess of Law who led the other gods against her misdirected brother Equariel, who stole the divine technology and delivered martial arms into the destructive hands of mankind. Punished for his aberrant behavior, Equariel (and all his male progeny) repents through subservience to Ärtée's Will. Equariel accomplishes this by serving as the patron deity of Healing and Charity, and his male devotees serve the greater Temple Complex by administering the healing ward and orphanage of the Diamond Order which bears his name.

Because Amilani social structure is based upon religious belief, new religions are tolerated only if they fail to upset the laws and mores which contribute to Amilanth's matriarchal dominance. The ruling council accepts the old pantheon as a useful, politically reinforcing pursuit. The precepts of Ärtée rationalize female superiority, and males are encouraged to enter the lower echelons of the Temple hierarchy where they actively serve the welfare of Amilani society. The other deities are worshipped by smaller numbers of followers, but their efforts are supported by the council and funded by reputable patricians as well. Religious Tolerance merits a value of 15, Prevalence 9, and Diversity 8.

The Arts have recently earned the attention and occasional patronage of the powerful Trading Houses of Amilanth. While architecture, painting, and music are the most traditional art forms, Drama has emerged as the new hype of the patrician classes. One dramatic troupe, discourteously named "The Menagerie" in reference to the duplicitous ruling council, is patronized by several of the greatest House Matriarchs (who can afford to mock the governance which they command). Depending upon the life span of this novel enterprise, Drama may become the vogue for aspiring artists of the lower classes. In Amilanth, Art Tolerance is 12, Prevalence is 7, and Diversity is 11.

Amilanth supports Scholastics wholeheartedly and education flourishes within the small town grammar schools as well as in the more wealthy City universities and the Temple academy. Economic and administrative disciplines are favored by women who enjoy promising futures in the employ of the great merchant houses while men lean toward philosophy, history, and engineering. University education is priced to exclude the lower classes; however, the richest families employ private, salaried mentors rather than sending their offspring to commingle with lesser patrician students. With few disciplines excepted, course work is led by instructors belonging to both sexes; men find teaching to be one of the most highly respected vocations available to them. Scholastic Tolerance is 15, Prevalence is 14, and Diversity measures 9.

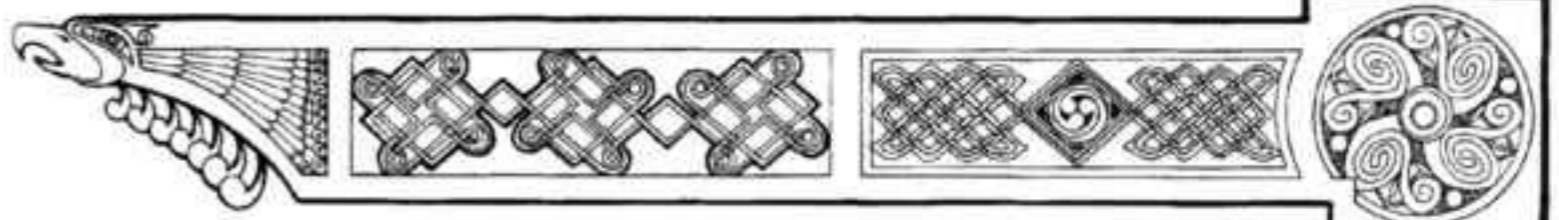
The practice of magic is carefully monitored in the City-State of Amilanth. Viewed as an invaluable, yet potentially dangerous, aptitude, magical practice is prohibited to males, with the customary sentence for disobedience resulting in the death of the male practitioner. Female adepts have two sources of magical instruction available to them. The College of Mystics, situated on a low bluff overlooking the Giren Estuary, is a religious institution

which preserves the esoteric knowledge of Onquis, matron-goddess of the Waters of Entropy. The College teachings focus on the sacred philosophies, relating the religious heritage of Onquis to the mortal and magical worlds.

The antediluvian Mountain Schools provide the second outlet for arcane instruction. These sororal organizations share a common insight but practice secret rituals and ethics which create something of a rivalry between the five prominent Orders. Aside from their existence and identities, little is publicly divulged about their internal organization and practice. Powerful Houses within the ruling council often send at least one family member to one of the magical schools, and those ruling houses that cannot gain entrance often employ an adept-mentor from the ranks of the lower Orders of either school. Magical Tolerance in Amilanth has a value of 14, Prevalence has a value of 12, and Diversity has a value of 13.

Technology

Amilanth's technological progress surpasses that of any of the other Cape Cities. Exploiting metals such as silver, gold, copper, tin, iron (steel and wrought iron), and glass, Amilani innovations excel in many areas of technological development. Amilani architecture and shipbuilding are both extraordinarily beautiful and technologically advanced compared to the innovations of the other Cape Cities. Glass has been employed for many years and the science of optics has lately emerged. Amilani weapon smiths and armorers create fine specimens, and several houses have reputations which span both Continents. The Amilani Longsword and Warhammer are the most popular military weapons, and fine ribbon-lace chain byrnies are the most common form of armor. While plate armor is available, only military leaders receive the financial sponsorship necessary to purchase such defense. Technology has a value of 17.



Economic Determinants

Resources

Though Amilani trade practices import nearly every conceivable resource, the territory of the City-State yields a stable resource base. Gold, silver, iron, marble, and soft timber are among the most valuable domestic resources. Tobacco, fruit nuts, and wine are also produced in great measure. Overall, Amilanth has a domestic Resource value of 14.

Exploitation

Amilanth's technological development makes exploitation of resources (especially mined metals and stone) a relatively easy task. However, legislation passed by the mercantile ruling council restricts exploitation and exportation of many domestic resources. For example, the softwoods used for building the sleek, three masted Amilani trading galleons are reserved entirely for domestic use. Low quantities of ships may be traded each year, but the softwoods used to build them may not be exported.

Trade restrictions imposed by the ruling council touch many resources and products. The resultant scarcity of exported goods drives prices higher and gives Amilanth an economic advantage when forging trade alliances with the other Cape Cities and nations of the Southern Continent. Exploitation stands at 20% on average.

Trade

Amilani trade ships enter foreign ports over most of the known world. Flying the banners of their sponsoring Houses, these ships carry Amilani goods to wealthy consumers and return to Amilanth with hulls laden with foreign goods and materials.

Amilanth's chief competitor for foreign exports is the Sareman League, a large mercantile confederation composed of powerful families from the leading nations of the Southern Continent. In order to compete with the Sareman League's unfair trade practices, several prominent families from

the Cape Cities have agreed to form a competition pact which unifies the purpose and direction of Cape City trade. The historical rivalry among the Cape Cities makes this agreement momentous, but the leaders of the Amilani partners report that the Cape League effort is far from reaching multilateral agreement. Amilanth has a Trade value of 20.

Political Determinants

Key Elements

The ruling agency of Amilanth is best described as a Patrician Oligarchy. The political body is comprised of thirty nine powerful women who represent the most powerful economic factions existing within the City-State. Because the merchant Houses are organized along familial lines, most seats within the ruling council have been occupied by the same families for hundreds of years. When a House Matriarch dies or retires, she traditionally passes her legislative seat and baton either to one of her daughters or to a close kinswomen. Though seats may be surrendered back to the council or sold to an aspiring Family, they are usually retained (though the annual cost is quite high). By perpetuating such a system, Amilanth ensures great annual revenue from the lease of each seat, and continues a patrician system of kin association.

Because of its familial and monetary constitution, the ruling agency has become factionalized over the course of many generations. Marriages and economic alliances provide greater power through unified votes in council, and large economic entities such as House Iedani and the Church of Ärtée accumulate political leverage through the use of personal influence, wealth, religious doctrine, and duplicitous maneuvering. The overall power of the Ruling Agency suffers from its factionalization, but Power still measures a strong value of 7.

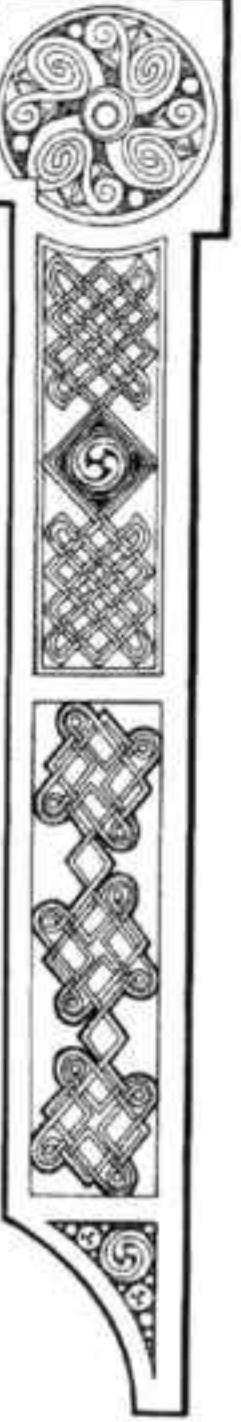
The ruling agency's authority depends upon the dominance of women

in Amilani society. While the mythology of Ärtée supports female rule, the ruling council's real authority hails from its efficient performance during the great Civil War that occurred some 400 years ago. Since those days, women of the great houses have earned the right to rule Amilanth, and the established legal traditions ensure the ruling council's Authority to govern. The Authority of the ruling agency has a value of 10.

Though Amilani males occasionally complain of social injustice, the ruling agency's popular Consent remains high. Time and again the council has proved its ability to protect the interests of the Amilani citizenry and the quality of life within the City-State continues to rise. Of course, dissenters exist, but Amilani law makes it difficult for them to organize. One organization, the Order of the Ebon Claw, has instigated civil disobedience in the male population for over 180 years. However, since men are forbidden to bear Arms, practice Magic, or own real estate, the Order has had little opportunity to gain the power it would need to emerge from its covert meeting rooms. The Ruling Agency's popular Consent stands firm at a value of 8.

Relations

Amilanth regularly interacts with states and nations of both the Northern and Southern Continents. Because of their shared racial Heritage, Amilanth and the other Cape Cities enjoy somewhat better political and economic relations than they do with other foreign powers. Amilani relations with Southern nations vary from friendly neutrality to reserved suspicion. Because of its economic influence and unusual Matriarchal organization, however, Amilanth is distrusted by the founding nations of the Sareman League. Amilani Relations can be quantified as follows: Cape Cities (5 - 6), Cape League (7), Southern Powers, non-Sareman (4 - 5), and Sareman Powers (2 - 3).



Incidentals

There are many particulars of Amilani life that change according to the political and economic climate. Incidentals describe areas which tend to fluctuate from current events and prolonged trends. The following Incidentals illustrate facets of Amilani life which are most susceptible to change.

Environmental Incidentals

The conditions of daily life are subject to change from a variety of political, economic, religious, and secular stimulants. Whenever the ruling body imposes new legislation that the male population views as unjust, public upheaval is sure to erupt either in the form of a passive reduction of productivity or active violence. Occasionally, the City-Watch reciprocates with undue force and an ethos of persecution results. The male freedom movement embodied in the Order of the Ebon Claw thrives on such conditions usually demonstrating their resentment in the form of random violence or inflammatory propaganda. The southern nations (especially those belonging to the Sareman League) enjoy such unrest and do everything in their power to provoke civil unrest within the City-State.

Economic Incidentals

Because Amilanth typically enjoys a high level of external trade, many Amilani denizens take for granted the wide variety of goods to which they have access. When trade partners or shipping routes become hostile, the resulting scarcity of some market goods drives prices higher or results in shortages which tend to upset the consuming populace. During the monsoon season, when trade by sea drops approximately 30%, a gloomy ambience sweeps the marketplace. Vendors sulk, customers become easily enraged, and the police force grows irritating if not outright oppressive. Many festivals ease tensions during these months, but should war or broken trade relationships create economic

adversity (such as incomes dropping, or unemployment and/or cost of living rising), popular consent and civil disobedience could rise to dangerous levels.

Political Incidentals

Political maneuvering occurs as the norm of the day in Amilanth. Powerful Houses constantly bid and strive against one another, and occasionally a new seat on the council emerges as a result of unexpected death or impoverishment. Whenever vacancies appear, there is always a flurry of House posturing which occasionally lowers consent among the agitated, underprivileged populace. Criminal activity within the ruling council is not appreciated by the public, but should foreign powers be indicated as the source, the Amilani citizenry usually rallies in favor of the measures taken by the ruling council.

Amilani Heritage

Native denizens of the City-State of Amilanth represent a specific Cultural group which shares a common Racial Heritage with the other Cape City folk whose populace dominates the Cape of Sivray. All members of Sivray-Temreloni Heritage belong to the Human Species, and other non-human species are known only in the oral folklore held dear by the people of the Cape Cities.

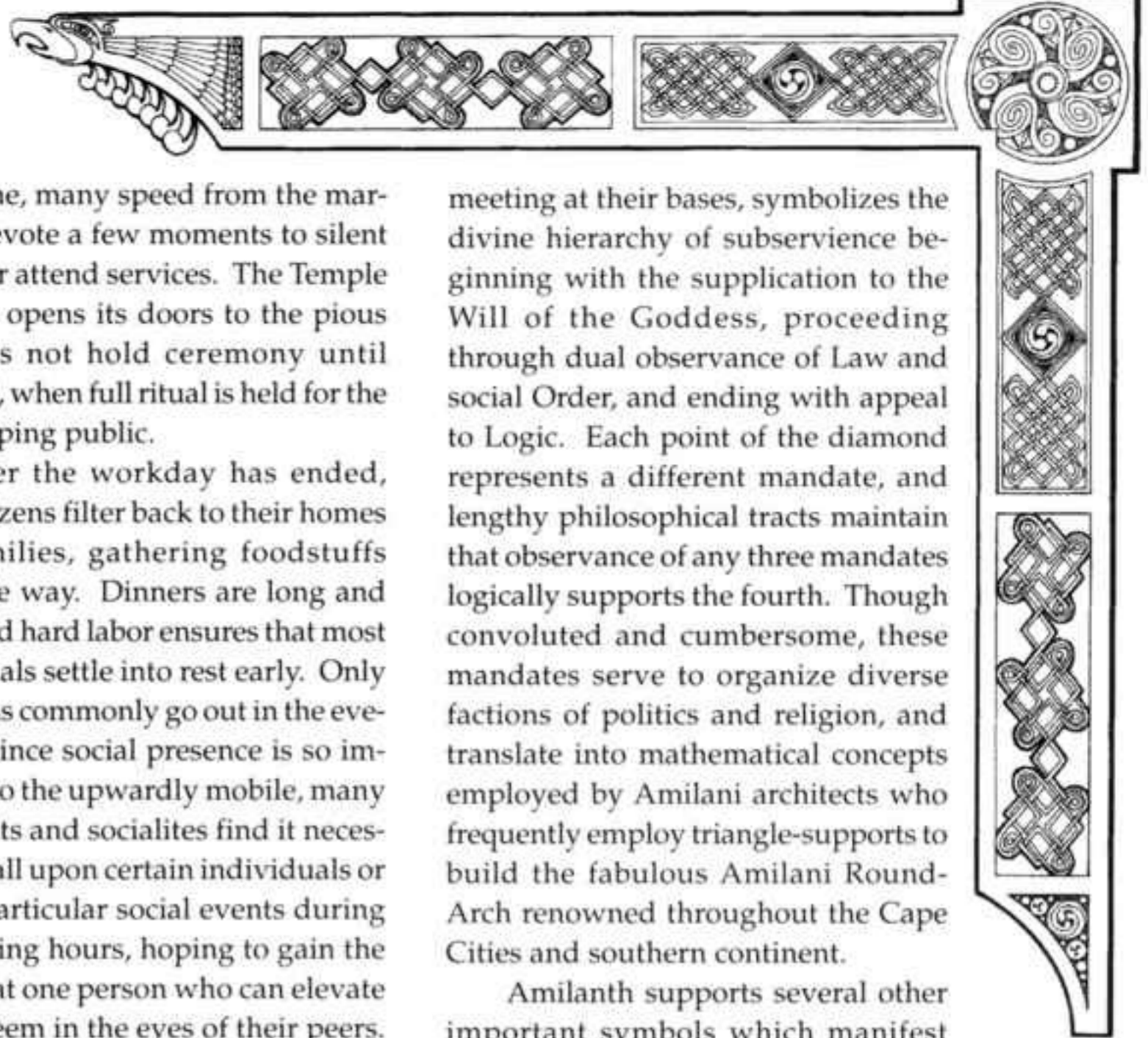
Sivray-Temreloni Racial Heritage manifests primarily in the form of shared genetic traits that are readily observable in the Physical Appearance of its descendants. The folk of the Cape Cities are tall and lithe compared to the stout, hardy Temrelonians to the North. The average Height for a Cape City male is 6' while the average female stands 5'7". Both males and females have median Frames and Ideal Physiques. Sivray-Temreloni denizens possess olive-toned skins varying from light to dark in hue. Facial features are long and sharp, commonly framed by dark locks (either brown or auburn), and set with brown, green, or hazel

eyes. Cape City folk wear their hair differently according to the modes of their particular Culture and social estates, but Amilani men tend to wear their hair in short curly ringlets, while the women allow their hair to grow in long gentle waves. While Amilani folk have angular jaws and proud chins, full pouting lips are a mark of an ancient familial strain which manifests in varying degrees within most members of the patrician classes.

Language also ties the independent Cape City cultures to a common Racial Heritage. Capespeak, the colloquial term for the shared Sivray-Temreloni language, serves as the popular root language from which various similar dialects emerge. Amilani Capespeak is marked by an unusual pitch emphasized in long vowel sounds, especially in words terminating with 'u' and 'o' sounds.

Aside from its shared Racial Heritage, Amilanth professes its own set of Cultural practices and beliefs. Female dominance pervades Amilani culture, and most of the social and legal customs of Amilanth revolve around this central notion. The gender ratio supports female dominance, with women composing some 60 to 65 per cent of the reckoned Amilani population. Male Amilani archivists have also noted that Amilani women tend to live 8 to 12 years longer than the Amilani male, but whether this is explained by biological superiority or preferential medical care and maintained physical hygiene is a question debated only in private academic circles.

Because the City-State of Amilanth is situated in a subtropical zone of the planet Kyphria, garments tend to be constructed from light materials fashioned into loose-fitting apparel. Fabrics vary in cost, and fashions consequently differ from one social estate to the next. Male laborers commonly wear loose cotton knickers and slit v-neck smocks. Dock workers often wear thin vests or no shirts at all, while wearing hats or turbans to guard against the beating sun. Males of the



professional classes wear the uniforms of their vocations or the regalia of the Houses and institutions they serve. Women's apparel varies similarly according to social estate and time of day. Roomy singlets of muslin or soft linen are common among bureaucrats and professionals while patricians prefer hose and tunics or long, draping sivellas (resembling togas) for official business. Women of all classes affect veiled headdresses during the day, with materials and style distinguishing patricians from members of the lower classes. Evening wear assumes a variety of cuts and fabrics among the patrician citizenry, and cloth apparel is often accentuated with elegant jewelry revealing an array of precious metals and stones. Of all garments, footwear varies the least, with sandals being the norm for both men and women. Shoes and low boots are worn only during the evening or when deemed necessary to protect the foot during labor or sport.

Amilani culture displays a regimented gamut of social customs ranging from the length of the working day to the observance of religious festivals. Most of Amilanth's workers perform their duties 6 days per week, 10 hours per day. Morning and afternoon shifts are separated by a two hour reprieve during which laborers may eat, sleep, and observe religious prayer. The common markets remain open during this time finding that many citizens swell into the bazaar to shop or associate with friends or family. When the Nolatimus Horns sound the mid-after-

noon tone, many speed from the market to devote a few moments to silent prayer or attend services. The Temple of Artée opens its doors to the pious but does not hold ceremony until Artesdai, when full ritual is held for the worshipping public.

After the workday has ended, most citizens filter back to their homes and families, gathering foodstuffs along the way. Dinners are long and quiet, and hard labor ensures that most individuals settle into rest early. Only patricians commonly go out in the evenings. Since social presence is so important to the upwardly mobile, many merchants and socialites find it necessary to call upon certain individuals or attend particular social events during the evening hours, hoping to gain the ear of that one person who can elevate their esteem in the eyes of their peers. Within the ruling classes, evening time is divided between House business and social events; to stay at home is to remain ignorant of the affairs of the competition. Deals and secret negotiations occur with or without the participation of minor nobles, so attendance at social affairs is mandatory for the less powerful matrons.

Aside from the many symbols and rituals associated with religious or magical participation (much of which is not shared with the general public), there are certain cultural symbols which saturate Amilani life. Paramount, the Diamond symbol of the Artée-Equariel divinity manifests throughout Amilani culture. The Diamond, representing two triangles

meeting at their bases, symbolizes the divine hierarchy of subservience beginning with the supplication to the Will of the Goddess, proceeding through dual observance of Law and social Order, and ending with appeal to Logic. Each point of the diamond represents a different mandate, and lengthy philosophical tracts maintain that observance of any three mandates logically supports the fourth. Though convoluted and cumbersome, these mandates serve to organize diverse factions of politics and religion, and translate into mathematical concepts employed by Amilani architects who frequently employ triangle-supports to build the fabulous Amilani Round-Arch renowned throughout the Cape Cities and southern continent.

Amilanth supports several other important symbols which manifest time and again in the arts and folklore of the populace. The Green Moon of Onquis is believed to incite disorder among animals and low-caste humans. So powerful is this belief that it has been employed as a rare defense in Amilani law, and often results in offenders being sent for religious pronouncement rather than receiving a customarily intolerant public sentence. Silverkelp, also called Kelpie-hair or Sea Angel Locks, is a symbol of mystery and deep entanglements. Superstitious sailors fear to embark on nights when Silverkelp lilies amass in the harbor. It is from this folklore that mysterious, or duplicitous, women are often called 'Kelpies' in wharf-side taverns.

The Kingdom of Imberwyn

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS

Scope

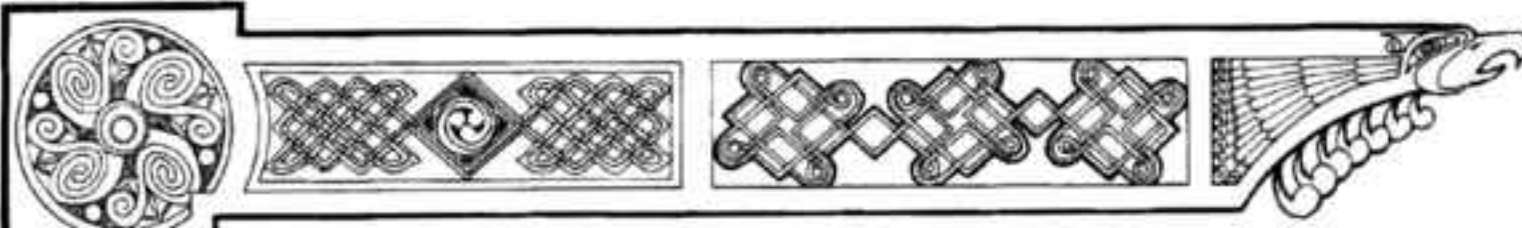
The Kingdom of Imberwyn rests off of the eastern marches of Eledur. The western terminus of Imberwyn stretches alongside the Elodren River, which runs through a narrow mountain pass, while the central region of

the Kingdom occupies the fertile forest lands immediately beyond the low mountain range. The north, south, and east of Imberwyn are bordered by a windswept plateau inhabited by several tribes of roving barbarians, and the western mountain pass provides the only accessible route through to the

coastal nations of Eledur and Galenir. The Kingdom of Imberwyn is a medium sized country and the Scope value merits a 6.

Military

Because Imberwyn evolved as a result of civil rebellion against Eledur,



it maintains a permanent standing army of trained professionals which numbers approximately 6000 troops. The Thalnoch, a legislative body comprised of commoner and noble alike, enjoys the constitutional right to conscript troops, and in times of emergency can summon some 20 000 additional men to swell the army forces. As an additional safeguard the King is authorized by the Thalnoch to hire mercenaries, and with the support of Imberwyn's wealthiest lords the King has the resources to hire many highly trained professional soldiers. Imberwyn has a Military Value of 9.

Philosophical Orientation

The Kingdom of Imberwyn is philosophically oriented toward a state of Equilibrium. In its formative years, Imberwyn struggled to escape the racial persecution of its parent nation Eledur. Though Imberwyn forged its independence through civil rebellion, the resulting conflict with Eledur was relatively bloodless. King Auberic, the man who later became Imberwyn's first monarch, marshaled his forces and repelled Eledur's forces in a single, decisive battle in the pass. Confronted with more pressing matters to the north, Eledur acquiesced and allowed the persecuted Imberfolk to retreat into the mountain pass and the region beyond. Since those days the rulers of Imberwyn have taken measures to protect their new lands and political sovereignty. Though not overtly belligerent, the people of Imberwyn refuse to relinquish the new lands that they call home. Imberwyn's Philosophical Orientation is further defined by the Aspects Conviction (Racial Heritage) and Prevention (Foreign Incursion).

Humanities

The Imberites worship a small pantheon of old gods retained as part of their racial heritage. At one time the gods of Eledur and Imberwyn co-existed within a single pantheon, but cultural differences and philosophical conflicts divided the old beliefs into

two distinct pantheons. Among the gods still worshipped in Imberwyn are Aaren, god of knowledge and technology, Dharmon, god of earth and agriculture, Fehanna, goddess of the hunt and wilderness, Grehlen, god of enterprise, and t'Houn, god of storms and war. Though partial to its own traditional pantheon, the people of Imberwyn preach tolerance and permit the worship of foreign gods with mild reservation. Eledu religions are not received favorably, although Imberite intolerance never approaches violent persecution. In Imberwyn, Religious Tolerance has a value of 10, a Prevalence value of 16, and a Diversity value of 5. Nearly all citizens observe religion of one type or another.

The Arts are enjoyed in Imberwyn, but few individuals find artistic vocations to be financially lucrative. Imberwyn culture emphasizes economic and technological advancement, allowing the arts to provide diversions to be pursued in the little free time available. Nobles, of course, have more leisure time to spend in artistic pursuits and many houses sponsor artists by commissioning artworks and supporting one or two house artists/mentors. Imberwyn sculpture, tapestry-weaving, and musical instruments represent the nation's highest achievements while oral folklore and dance remain the most evident manifestation of the popular arts.

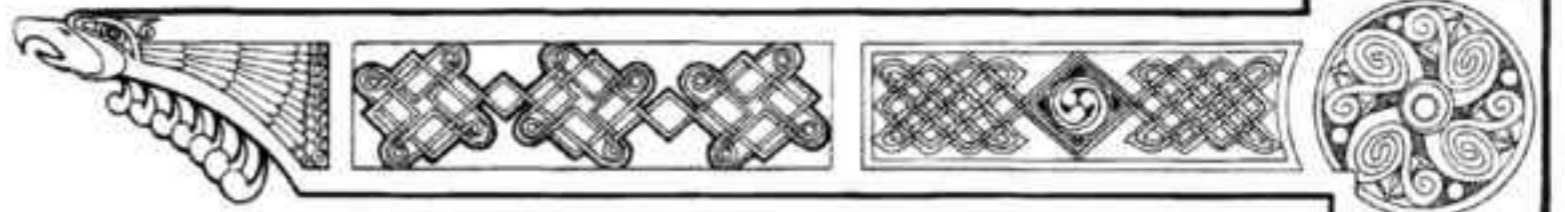
Scholastic achievement is taken seriously by the inhabitants of Imberwyn. Whether finances enable parents to send their children to rural grammar schools or allow for an expensive urban university education, academic education is viewed as a method to insure upward mobility, both socially and economically. The College of Aaren located in Alathel is perhaps the most prestigious scholastic institution in Imberwyn. Sponsored by wealthy noble families and various religious organizations, the College opens its doors each year to a handful of the most promising students, regardless of their ability to pay. College graduates

typically leave the school to enter bureaucratic, mercantile, or religious vocations and society rewards their achievement with elevated status. Throughout the Kingdom of Imberwyn, scholastics enjoy a Tolerance of 12, a Prevalence of 11, and a Diversity of 10.

Like the other humanities, magic receives widespread acceptance within Imberwyn. Though true practitioners are rare, they enjoy the political freedom and social ignorance to be left to their own devices. This freedom is guaranteed in the Green Book of the Chamber and legislation rarely touches on this certified right. Generally speaking, most Imberites feel that magic has passed from the world and current practitioners possess only a vestige of the powers that existed in the times of legend. While this is not entirely true, magical adepts foster such beliefs in order to preserve the relatively scarce supply of omnescence that is available to them. Though secluded magical orders exist, they serve the primary function of retaining the sacred knowledge of magic. Most practicing adepts leave the orders after instruction, wandering into the world in order to seek out new, untainted sources of power. Because of the legal ramifications, magic has a Tolerance value of 17. For other reasons, largely unknown to the public, magical Prevalence has a value of 10, and a Diversity value of 12.

Technology

Imberwyn technology equals that of Galenir but has yet to match the advancement found in Eledur. Possessing the knowledge to forge iron and steel, Imberwyn has entered a period of hastened advancement in the realm of tool making, and consequently in the realms of agriculture, building, military, and transportation. Imberite blacksmiths manufacture iron and steel implements such as plowshares, chisels, saws, nails, and swords. The horseshoe, horse collar and stirrup have improved agricultural and transportation efforts, while iron picks and chis-



els have initiated the building of cut stone dwellings and fortifications. Recent military developments include the manufacture of wire-made chainmail and the improved Imberwyn Swan steel which is used in the straight sword of Imber Knights and the conical half-helms employed by the mercenary "plumes" who defend the walled towns of the most powerful Imberite lords. The introduction of carts with pivoting front axles improves trade capacity as does the advanced keel rudders used on the Imber river barges. Overall, Imberwyn has a Technology value of 13.

Economic Determinants

Resources

If the rulers of Eledur had expected the lands beyond the mountain pass to be so rich in natural resources it is unlikely that they would have acquiesced the territory without incurring greater losses. The Elodren river valley possesses a rich soil which feeds the wooded lands beyond the mountains. While agriculture prospers within the valley, timbering and iron mining flourish within the central forests. The outlying highlands which reach toward the plateau provide excellent pasture for sheep, goats, horses, and oxen, and the rocky outcroppings yield plentiful amounts of silver and tin. Imberwyn has a Resource value of 16.

Exploitation

While its resources are capable of providing for a nation many times larger than the scope of Imberwyn, the Kingdom finds itself unable to exploit vast amounts of resources as a result of its small population. However, technological improvement and the strong drive of the Imberite spirit allow Imberwyn to exploit approximately half of its primary resource base. Imberwyn possesses an Exploitation value of 11.

Trade

Although past relations with Eledur have been less than ideal, Imberwyn has opened impressive markets in both Galenir and Eledur. Imberwyn timber, silver, and steel are traded in abundance with the coastal nations, and several Imberwyn merchants have earned themselves and their peers a reputation for hard negotiation and honest business dealings. As Imberwyn goods and materials become established within the foreign markets, the prospects for future trade relationships increase in number. Certain prominent delegates from Galenir have already made overtures to the Imberwyn government and outland fiefs have reported that regular trade has commenced with a few of the neighboring barbarian tribes. Even though trade with the nomads represents but a small portion of Imberwyn transactions, the breakthrough indicates hope for improved political and cultural relations.

Overall, Imberwyn's Trade value is 15.

Political Determinants

Key Elements

As a Limited Monarchy, Imberwyn's governmental infrastructure consists of the King, a national Constitution, and two advisory bodies called the Thalnroch and the Privy Council. The current King of Imberwyn is Leonand Montclair Orgylle, descended from King Auberic Leonand Orgylle. Auberic had formed the Thalnroch after the rebellion as a form of advisory/regulatory council composed of noblemen and common citizens alike. The Thalnroch serves to check the powers of the King (preventing the tyranny of Absolute Monarchy which they had seen in Eledur), and over the years has grown to be the primary legislative body within the Kingdom.

Within the great hall of the Thalnroch rests a great tome called the Green Book of the Chamber. The Im-

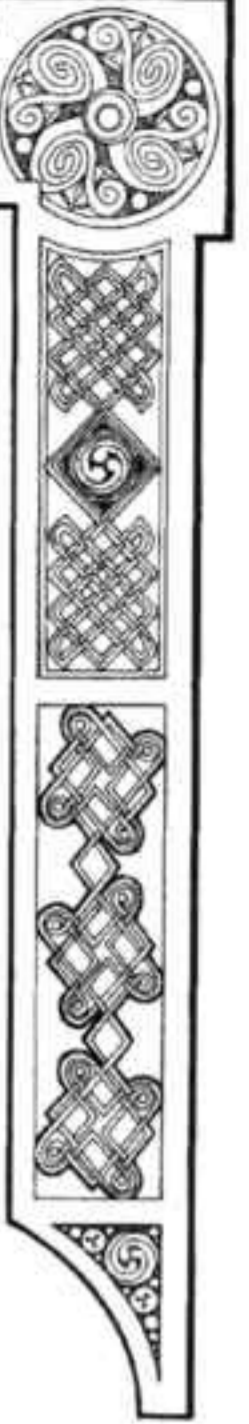
berwyn constitution, the limitations set upon the ruling agency and the rights and freedoms guaranteed to the people, are recorded in this volume. The original book is displayed in the center of the hall, and serves as an historic reminder during the great legislative debates that occur within the Thalnroch.

While the Thalnroch has grown and transformed over the years, it is still comprised of both noble and commoner. Descendants of the original founding families, such as Arwewen of Imalador, Jenzern II of Greengate, Thasforden of Angorming, and the Bishop of Chatwick all hold seats within the Thalnroch as do Mirel Sautenbrough and Karl Dansdale, representing the only two common families to retain Thalnroch offices from the days of its founding. Many other minor families compose the majority of Thalnroch votes, but the most powerful of the original founding families influence the King through their membership within his Privy Council.

Although the power of the Monarch is limited by the existence of the Thalnroch and the Imberwyn constitution, political power remains centralized within the governmental chambers of the Palace in Alathel. Because Imberwyn is young and vigorous, most members of government are willing to put aside personal differences for the benefit of the Kingdom and its people. This effort is recognized and appreciated by the general populace, so Consent remains high. Authority to rule is granted by virtue of the country's history, and as long as the monarch does not overstep his constitutional power, Authority remains high. Overall, the Ruling Agency's Power is 8, Authority is 8, and popular Consent is 9.

Relations

Imberwyn diplomats and trade representatives work diligently to improve relations with the surrounding countries. Though language is something of a barrier obstructing interac-



tions with the barbarians, all signs indicate that the currently neutral relations may become more friendly with time. Relations with Galenir have always been stable, and as trade increases the situation appears to improve. Eledur poses the only hindrance to foreign relations, but time heals old wounds and diplomatic liaisons strive to eradicate some of the persisting racial prejudices which deter friendly interaction. Relations with Galenir have a value of 7. Relations with the Plateau nomads range from 4 to 6 depending on the tribe, while Relations with Eledur currently exist at a value of 5.

Incidentals

Though Imberwyn society and culture have proven to be stable, the Kingdom is still relatively young. Imberites are diligent and enthusiastic and their land abounds with a variety of natural resources. For the time being, the Kingdom of Imberwyn shows every promise of embarking upon a long, prosperous future.

Environmental Incidentals

As Imberwyn builds larger population centers and continues to assimilate new technology, the race of hardy Imber folk thrives. New technology and manpower ensures greater ability to exploit natural resources. With many expanding industries, there is ample vocational opportunity, and unemployment is reserved for the aged and physically disabled. Low unemployment rates reduce crime rates, and Imberwyn cities are considered safe at night. Because these cities are relatively new, there are few impoverished slum districts and it is rare for violence to occur in the city streets. Occasionally tavern brawls spill out into the streets, and duels between gentlemen occur as a matter of honor, but overall Imberwyn residents do not fear to walk alone in the cities. It would require drastic reductions in cultural pride, trade relations, or national wealth to alter the environmental conditions of

Imberwyn life, but wars, natural disasters, and foreign invasions could adversely affect population growth, interaction, philosophical orientation, and status divisions to an appreciable extent.

Economic Incidentals

The Imberwyn economy develops at a rate commensurate with population growth, technological innovation, resource exploitation, and trade market expansion. Large trading houses are beginning to rival the wealth of the wealthy aristocracy, and a middle, professional class exemplifies the rewards of devoted labor. While average wealth continues to rise, the cost of living remains low, especially in the rural craft villages. The current level of exploitation ensures that resources will remain abundant for centuries to come, and this provides Imberwyn with a substantial economic advantage over Eledur and Galenir which are much older nations. At present, trade with the Nomads of the Plateau is infrequent and unsure, but relations are improving. Eventually, the Nomads may prove to be a valuable economic and military ally, but current estimations of their numbers cannot validate this hope. Because of their resilience, it appears that only plague or catastrophic disaster could prevent economic advancement. War could also prove a temporary setback, but if the nation survived, the resulting war economy would certainly prove a boon to the economic state of affairs.

Political Incidentals

Because Auberic, first King of Imberwyn, established provisions for a stable government structure, Political determinants such as Power, Authority, and Consent all enjoy high values. Relations between the King and the Thalnroch are good, and the Ruling Agency's relations with the general populace are good as well. Economic opportunity serves as the primary cause for competition among powerful aristocrats or trading companies,

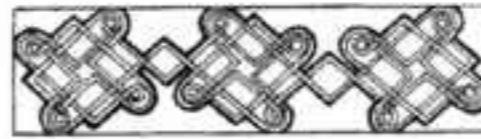
but overall economic competition creates little long-term resentment among the factions of Imberwyn government.

Freedom is widespread throughout the Kingdom of Imberwyn. In the 112 years of political sovereignty, the nation has enjoyed complete autonomy, and its Constitution guarantees many freedoms for the common citizenry. Oppression angers the people of Imberwyn, and it is their intolerance of tyranny which endangers Imberwyn's freedom the most. Though unlikely, it is possible that Imberite pride coupled with their resentment of all forms of oppression could cause them to enter into a War with Eledur. Several noble families harbor grudges, and there is rumor that one of the powerful houses actively spies for the government of Eledur. While current relations with Eledur are Suspicious, neither side shows any indication of preparing for military conflict. For the time being, hostilities are being fostered through trade competition and covert action. Only time can tell if current relations will deteriorate into a state of open conflict.

IMBERWYN HERITAGE

Much of the Imberite racial heritage is unknown by the general populace, who demonstrate mixed genotypes resulting from generations of racial interbreeding with the Eledu racial stock. Of Imberwyn's population, only a fraction of the citizenry possess blood-lineage which has not been tainted by Eledu blood. During the centuries of Eledu persecution, most of the purebred families were eliminated or scattered and the very survival of the Imberwyn people results from the moral and physical adaptability which results from Teutimber racial Heritage.

Legend tells that Aaren Teutimbraes, also known as "Godson" and "Teutimbraes, the Forlorn," was cast out of the celestial gardens to walk the world in exile. Taking pity upon him, his father Aaren, god of Knowledge, Prophecy, and Innovation, blessed him with a second sight which



manifested as limited prophetic power. During his wanderings, Teutimbraes took many wives. Scattering his progeny in isolated areas, Teutimbraes hoped to live on through his descendants, realizing through his second sight a way to achieve the immortality which was denied him in paradise. Teutimbraes's children prospered long after he vanished from the world, but one by one their civilizations fell to savage usurpers who plundered their lands for the divine knowledge they held. The Imberites are descended from the Children of Teutimbraes, and history suggests that they are the only progeny to escape the bondage of their rapacious conquerors.

The Teutimberite Race was tall, strong, and proud. They possessed strong, supple bodies and courageous, noble hearts. They were a fair race, exhibiting predominantly blue eyes and golden brown or coppery blonde hair. Standing over 6 feet tall and living more than 250 year life spans, they were giants out of legend. Misunderstood, and feared for their great knowledge and size, the Teutimbre peoples were portrayed as tyrants, arrogant and cruel to the rest of humanity. They were painted as lovers of Elvenkind, and fellows to Dwarves, both of which struck terror into the heart of savage man. Teutimbraes's descendants believe themselves to be the first civilized humans, accomplices by association with the Elves and Dwarves who similarly suffered the conquests of primitive man.

The physical appearance of modern Imberites reveals an amalgam of Eleduric and Teutimberite genotypes. The Eleduric are a medium-sized people with light complexions, fine, dark hair, and bright, beautiful eyes. They have long, tapered faces and slender physiques which contrast with the proud, squarish features of the hardy Teutimberites. Most Imberites evince a healthy combination of these traits while a scarce minority (mostly within the gentry) retain a strong, Teutimberite resemblance. The aver-

age Height for Imberites is 5'10" (males) and 5'6" (females). Average Frames are Medium (values 7 and 6 respectively) and the average Physique is also Medium. Physical coloration favors light skin, although hair and eye tincture varies widely. Unfortunately, the modern Imberites have lost the longevity of their Teutimberite Heritage and live an average life span of 70 years.

The Teutimber or Imber language survives only as words and phrases which pepper the current Imberite language. The pronunciation and comprehension of ancient Teutimberite glyphs are lost to the general populace of Imberwyn, although the Church of Aaren preserves the written language in its ceremonial rituals and magic. The current language of Imberwyn represents a dialect of Eleduric-Galenari which forms the "Common Tongue" of the entire coastal region.

Aside from the mysticism which surrounds the Teutimberite glyphs, several other symbols recur in Imberwyn's cultural heritage. Of all visual symbols, the circle is paramount in both representational diversity and cultural significance. In its geometric form, the circle has come to represent Unity, Perseverance, Natural Order, and Divinity. The spoked wheel, one popular manifestation of the circle, serves as the religious symbol of Aaren. As a metaphor for technological innovation and cyclic repetition, the Aaren wheel signifies wisdom through perseverance, the reaching of enlightenment through seemingly endless repetition.

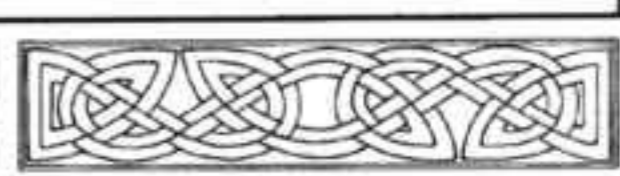
Imberites see the wheel in the cycle of seasons, the life-cycle of mankind, and the cycle of the celestial sphere. A ruddy clay wheel is the favored symbol for the Wheel of Fate, where followers of Dharmon must prove themselves before gaining admittance into the realm of earth. Many Imberwyn potters follow the religion of Dharmon, and it is common to hear them liken their work to that of Dharmon's furies in a joking humor

that no Imberite could mistake for hubris.

The routine of daily Imberite life varies greatly according to Environ Class. Rural denizens rise early, often before daybreak, and work throughout the daylight hours. Evenings are spent at home with the family, and days of rest are spent pursuing recreational activities out of doors. Rural life consists of honest labor and simple pleasures, with religious worship and cultural tradition guiding the norms of daily existence. Urban life differs primarily as a result of heightened awareness of foreign activity. Urban citizens have greater access to international information, and it is within the cities that Imberites feel the external pressures from the coastal community.

Social Status is more evident in the cities (exemplified by higher Custom and Rigidity values) and urban Imberites assimilate foreign ideas and innovations more readily than to their rural kinsmen. Inns and taverns patronized by merchants and caravansaries enjoy heightened popularity because it is there that foreign news is disseminated and exotic fashions are first revealed. Generally speaking, Imberites do not rush to embrace foreign modes of dress, but their appearance serves as a source of casual amusement and naive speculation which reunites the folk of Imberwyn by reminding them of their communal sensibilities and hard-won sovereignty.

Rather than appealing to foreign dictates, Imberite sensibilities lean toward a comfortable practicality in dress. Imberwyn tailors take pride in their handiwork, favoring reliable materials and traditional styles. Since Imberwyn resides in a temperate zone, garment materials vary depending upon the season. Wool and leather are popular materials, largely because of their relative abundance and extraordinary durability. River washed linens represent the summer alternative to wool, while luxurious furs gain popularity during the frigid winter months.



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REFORGING THE MONOMYTH

Throughout history, peoples and cultures have told stories of their gods, heroes, and villains in order to better understand the world around them. These myths seize upon the hopes and fears of society; heroes embody a culture's highest ideals while villains manifest as ancient dreads personified. Aria focuses on the Journey of the Hero, the sacred quest or Monomyth, which represents in mythic language the seeking of cultures after their own identity. Aria Canticle of the Monomyth™ is a roleplaying game system which attempts to embody this connection between hero and culture.

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