

VOODOO 2: THE INVISIBLES



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GUMSHOE ZOOM: INTRODUCTION

Not everything can support a game of its own, or even a big sourcebook. For those things, we present the GUMSHOE Zoom, a sort of supplement focused on a key game mechanic and its possible applications. In general, Zooms are interesting potential hacks, or intriguing adaptations of the main rules. Some apply to one specific topic or sub-sub-genre. Others cross all manner of GUMSHOE turf; you can slot them in and adapt them to tales of Cthulhuoid investigation, mean superpowered streets, or alien colonies alike.

Zooms are experimental. That does mean that they haven't been playtested, necessarily. (If something in here is really really broken – and it's not, as this ain't our first rodeo – we'll fix it in post.) But that also means we encourage you to experiment with them. Changing the cost, or prerequisites, or point effect, or other mechanical parameters of a given Zoom changes how often it shows up and how much drama it drives. The dials are in your hands.

Zooms will change the focus of your play if you use them. Putting a mechanic on the table puts it into your game. Adding a Zoom means more actions, possibly even more scenes, using those rules. Since the Zoom mechanics are intended to encourage specific actions or flavors, to force a card in your storytelling hand, they aren't "balanced" against "normal" actions or rules. In general, if you don't want to see more of it, don't Zoom in on it.

Zooms are optional rules. You can and should ignore them if you don't want them, or change them at will. After all, if a given Zoom turns out to be crucial to an upcoming GUMSHOE game, we'll change it to fit that specific genre or form of storytelling.

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GUMSHOE ZOOM: INTRODUCTION	3
THE INVISIBLES	3
LESSER SPIRITS	3
<i>WHERE THE INVISIBLES DWELL</i>	4
INVISIBLE NATIONS	4
RADA AND PETRO	5
THE GUMSHOE INVISIBLES	5
<i>BLACK MAGIC</i>	6
<i>PETRO</i>	6
<i>PALO MAYOMBE</i>	6
<i>QUIMBANDA</i>	6
<i>KALI-MAI</i>	7
INVISIBLE FORMAT	7
LEGBA	7
<i>INVISIBLE DISTORTIONS</i>	8
AGWÉ	9
DAMBALLAH WÈDO	9
ERZULIE	11
MARINETTE	12
OGUN	12
SHANGO	13
TEMPO	14
YEMAYA	14
GHEDE	15



Voodoo 2: The Invisibles

INTRODUCTION

This issue follows the *GUMSHOE Zoom Voodoo 1: Magic*, and provides a broad overview of the demi-gods or semi-deities – the Invisibles – who power and inspire the magic system described in that issue. That magic system can be conveniently (if somewhat problematically) termed “voodoo,” to be distinguished from the Haitian religion of Vodou from which it emerged and with which it co-evolved.

The Vodou religion is only the best-known of a whole complex of Afro-Caribbean religions including Santería and Palo in Cuba, Candomblé and Umbanda in Brazil, Kumina in Jamaica, Shango in Trinidad, Winti in Suriname, and 21 Divisiones in the Dominican Republic. These religions all descend, by and large, from the Yoruba religion that culturally dominated coastal West Africa during the slave trade. Other influences on Afro-Caribbean religions include Roman Catholicism, Spiritualism, native Amerind religions, and other African faiths, especially those of the ethnically and culturally distinct Congo.

All of those Afro-Caribbean religions look to immaterial beings greater than man and less than God for answers, for help, and for a connection to the spiritual: the Invisibles. The Invisibles can make awesome patrons, or fearsome enemies – sometimes simultaneously. They're like that. Call on them to add depth, danger, and drama to your game, invoke

them as specters or saviors, blame them for your heroes' misfortunes and credit them with saving the story. They can handle it. They've been doing that for centuries.

THE INVISIBLES

“THE SENSE OF A VAST, INVISIBLE PRESENCE WAS INTENSIFYING AGAIN, AND SHANDY COULD FEEL THE ALIEN THING BENDING DOWN OUT OF THE SKY OVER THEM, GLARING WITH ALIEN OUTRAGE AT THE EIGHT INTRUDERS.”

— TIM POWERS, *ON STRANGER TIDES*

The great spirits we (and the Haitians) call the Invisibles have many names. The Loa of Vodou, Orishas of Santería and Shango, Orixás of Candomblé, Kimpungulu of Palo, Inquices of Kumina, Winti of Winti, and Misterios of 21 Divisiones are the intermediaries between the distant Creator God of those religions and His human creations. In some traditions, the Invisibles are similar to the avatars of Hinduism or the emanations of Kabbalah: not so much separate entities as aspects or reflections of the Infinite God necessarily simplified and humanized to interact with the material world and its inhabitants.

The Invisibles' role has been compared to that of the saints and angels in Catholicism, and Catholic slavemasters and priests in the New World did their best to replace the

one with the other. What happened instead is that Vodou colonized the Catholic tradition, took what it wanted – mostly symbolism and names, protective coloration, and some “magical” rites like baptism and Communion – and left the slave-masters' religion behind. Rather than assimilating Vodou, Catholicism found itself assimilated.

Even in Protestant countries, the Invisibles are present but less, er, visible. The Kele rite in St. Lucia banishes Akeshew and invokes Chango, for example. The Zion Revivalists, a Pentecostal-inspired offshoot of Myal in Jamaica, treat the Holy Spirit as a sort of mega-Invisible, although some Zion congregations also venerate angels and notably holy ancestors. The Spiritual Baptists in Trinidad have a generally similar theology, with some Hindu ritual accretions.

LESSER SPIRITS

Almost all Afro-Caribbean religions venerate, invoke, and summon ancestral spirits (*loa risen* in Vodou, *eggún* in Santería, *egun* in Candomblé) along with – and usually before – the Invisibles. Santería adds the Seven African Powers, tribal spirits of the seven African nations enslaved in Cuba: Yoruba (Lucumí), Congo, Takua, Kissi, Calabari, Arará, and Mandika.

Brazilian religions go still further and reveal other tiers of spirits between the *egun* and the Orixás. Most Afro-Brazilian faiths invoke the Exus, mischievous or downright

dangerous fragments or reflections of the Orixá Exú, the divine messenger and opener of the way. Influenced by the baroque occultism of Kardecist Spiritualism, Umbanda organizes the Astral into two overlapping sets of seven “Lines,” the vertical Lines denoting descent from and submission to seven major Orixás, while the horizontal lines denote rank within the spirit world. Specialized spirits abound: the Caboclos (spirits of Indians) provide herbal cures, Preto Velho (“Old Black Man,” spirits of slaves) offer compassionate counsel, Erês (“Children,” evolved spirits) provide hope, Baianos (“Bahians,” spirits of Umbandist and other religious founding fathers) provide doctrinal guidance, Boiadeiros (“Cowboys”) give love advice and tough-love spirit cleansing alike, Marinheiros (drowned “Sailors”) protect invocers from evil, and Orientals (spirits of wise men from the Middle East and ancient history) provide scientific and healing knowledge.

Umbanda also recognizes the Encantados, souls of powerful humans transmigrated without dying who became mermaids, fairies, and other magical beings. By contrast in Catimbo, the Amerind-derived sect of Candomblé, the Encantados are the main masters, and take the names of great Indian chiefs and powerful African magicians. So be careful – even the lowliest plant sprite might actually be an Invisible by another name!

INVISIBLE NATIONS

In many traditions, the Invisibles are further divided into loose groups called “nations” (e.g., *nações* in Candomblé, *nanchons* in Vodou). For

WHERE THE INVISIBLES DWELL

By and large, the Invisibles dwell among us at sacred sites: rocks, wells, cemeteries, caves, mountains, and so forth. Santería places the Orishas vaguely in Orun, while the Orixás of Candomblé float in Céu, both terms translated by Christians as “heaven” although “world of light” or “sky” are better. Umbanda locates the Orixás in the Plano Astral, taken from 19th century Spiritualism.

Vodou has a more specific cosmology. When not on earth, the Loa dwell in Guinée, a mythical Africa located *nan dlo*, “under the water.” Nan dlo also refers to the country on the other side of the mirror; mirror-magic is an important component of voodoo. Haitians often refer to themselves as *ti Guinéen*, the “children of Guinée.” Houngans and bokors, of course, exist in both worlds in a less metaphorical sense. Guinée also coincides with the material world in a village called Ville aux Camps, which manifests near St-Louis-du-Nord, in northern Haiti. Ville aux Camps, echoing the Yoruba sacred city of Ile-Ife, is a crossroads between Guinée and the material world, where the Loa meet up and gossip, like mortals in a market village.

each nanchon, there are different pantheons of Invisibles and different rituals, songs, dances, cheers, and even greetings. By and large, these represent major ethnic groupings from Africa, although Umbanda groups all the African Orixás into one Nagô nação. Some temples strictly worship only one nanchon; others give some nod to rival nanchons or set aside days for nanchons not their own. Other traditions exclude rival nanchons entirely: Santería keeps exclusively to the Lucumí or Yoruba Orishas, leaving those descended from the Bakongo peoples’ Minkisi to the Palo sects, and to Haitian-influenced faiths in Cuba.

Bantu slaves from Kongo and other regional kingdoms differed ethnically and religiously from the Yoruba, Fon, and Akan who originated Vodou and Santería. By and large, the Bakongo came over later and in more organized fashion than the West African nations, but their religion was less sophisticated

and organized than Yoruba practice. In Haiti, for instance, this meant that the Kongo Loa formed their own nanchon, though the basic form of even Kongo Vodou is fundamentally Yoruban-Fon. Kongo worship centers around the Haitian city of Gonaïves. Kongo Loa are usually exuberant and aggressive, and prefer the sacrifice of dogs to any other kind. They are also called the *loa-gad*, the “guardian loa,” because they actively protect their followers. As a minority nanchon, this would seem to be in their self-interest.

The Bantu-derived nação in Candomblé is called Angola, because most Bantu slaves in Brazil came from that Portuguese colony. The Yoruba-derived nação is Queto; Jeje (or Gêgê) refers to the Fon-descended nation. Candomblé-Angola and Candomblé-Queto are the most widely dispersed traditions (Candomblé-Jeje is more prevalent in the north and interior), but all can be found in Brazil’s major cities.

RADA AND PETRO

The best-known nanchons are those dividing the Vodou Loa: Rada and Petro. Rada is the most common type of ceremony; some estimates say that over 90% of Vodou ceremonies are Rada. While this is likely an overestimate, it does indicate the near-universal hold of the Rada Loa on the Haitian heart. That said, Kongo Loa are often worshiped with Petro rites, since they are more aggressive than Rada Loa. Kongo spirits and magic cross-fertilized more readily with the later, less conservative Petro rites than with the old-school Rada.

Rada Loa descend directly from West African Orisha; the name “Rada” comes from Arada, the original capital of the proto-Fon kingdom in modern Benin eventually conquered by Dahomey in 1724. Arada both represented a lost golden age and (after 1724) a lost physical homeland to the enslaved Fon. Hence, the Rada Loa are called *loa-Guinéen*, or loa of Guinée. Rada ceremonies are usually performed in white robes, have a higher component of African words in the sacred liturgies and songs, and generally involve no blood sacrifice larger than a chicken. Generally seen as beneficent elder deities, the Rada Loa are not above trickery, selfishness, or other human behavior. Rada Loa are also called the *dous* (“gentle”) loa, to distinguish them from the *amer* (“bitter”) loa of the Petro and Kongo nanchon.

Petro Loa are products of the slave experience; their worship began in the New World. This, understandably, makes their rituals harsher; their music is

more ragged, the prayers are for vengeance, and the Petro Loa themselves can be destructive and malign beings. Some Petro ritual songs involve cracking whips, a powerful indication of the severity of these Loa and the cruelty that drove their worshipers to them. The name Petro supposedly comes from Don Pedro, an 18th-century mulatto Spaniard who (if he really existed) invented the rituals and syncretized the older Rada loa into deities concerned with vengeance, fire, and blood. Don Pedro himself has become a loa, the “gunpowder god” Dompedre. Petro ceremonies use red robes, have a higher component of Spanish and Amerindian words, and often involve the sacrifice of larger animals like goats, dogs, and pigs. Petro Loa are *loa-chaud*, “hot loa” while Rada Loa are *loa-frét*, “cool loa”; identifying the one with Fire and the other with Water makes a potentially interesting (if oversimplified) magical shorthand.

THE GUMSHOE INVISIBLES

The Invisibles are multifarious. The direct, personal nature of Afro-Caribbean religion, its inherently syncretic and evolutionary nature, and the widespread illiteracy among its adherents make constructing anything like an ordered pantheon of Invisibles impossible. Voodooists know better than to try. Anthropologists and other authorities estimate that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of named loa in Haiti alone, each with their own variant rituals and vèvès. Many of these loa, however, are variations, avatars, or adaptations of the main Loa. Much

as the Greek god Poseidon was not only god of the sea, but also god of horses, earthquakes, and pine trees, the Invisibles also have different roles and names depending on the story and their worshippers. These different roles often interact with each other; Ogun Feray and Ogun Badagris can both be present in the same ceremony, possessing different worshippers.

In Santería the Orishas have aspects or avatars called *camino*s: “roads” that lead to or from the Orisha’s full nature. Often Haitians say that each Loa has seven faces; another term is the *escorte*, a group (sometimes specifically 21, sometimes just “an army”) of lesser loa who follow the main Loa and take on his characteristics. The *escorte* is also invoked to explain how some loa belong to more than one nanchon, or have overlapping roles. There are Haitian religious paintings that show, for instance, Erzulie Danto (the main Petro female Loa) and Erzulie Freda (staunchly Rada) seated next to each other! Erzulie would be one example of a Loa *andezo*, one who bathes “in two waters.”

While some Afro-Caribbean worshippers freely allow that all the various versions of a given Loa or Orisha or Orixá are somehow “the same,” others hotly deny any such thing. This supplement dodges the question by presenting not actual Loa but GUMSHOE Invisibles. They are gaming-optimized, syncretic renditions of Afro-Caribbean entities meant to be invoked and utilized in GUMSHOE voodoo magic only. Do not invoke them in real life! They may not exist – and if they do, I’m pretty sure I didn’t build them to code.

BLACK MAGIC

Popular Western culture overwhelmingly connects voodoo – and Vodou – as a whole to black magic, thanks to racism, exoticism, and sloppy research. From *The Believers* to *Angel Heart*, the Afro-Caribbean religions of 60 million people apparently only exist to produce blood sacrifice, voodoo dolls, and zombies. That said, every religious faith has its believers in black magic – and sometimes, its practitioners.

Ask most Afro-Caribbean locals about black magic, and they nearly unanimously respond with two answers: “Our tradition never does that” and “Of course it exists.” A number of specific (usually smaller) denominations get fingered by the majority as “the black magic users.” Some of them do, indeed, pronounce themselves more capable or more willing to work with dangerous magic and malevolent Invisibles. Some voodoo societies do engage in the same sort of threatening propaganda as, say, Masonic initiations: “revealing our secrets means death” and “we can strike you anywhere” are standard imprecations in all cultures’ self-proclaimed mystery sects. Where you draw the line in your own game is up to you.

PETRO

The Petro rites (see p. 5) elevate Loa seen as scarier and more dangerous such as Baron Samedi to the forefront, and have a historical connection with the Makandal poisoning campaigns against white slaveowners. Makandal has become a Petro Loa in his own right. Most of the Sects Rouges (“red sect” secret societies) associate themselves with Petro; their bokors might be anywhere! Thus devout Rada followers accuse suspected necromancers as *servir a deux mains* “those who serve with both hands,” meaning the worship of both Rada and Petro Loa. This assertion is far less shocking now, as Vodou engages with Western post-modern occultism. In previous decades (such as the 1930s), such an accusation was tantamount to witch-finding.

PALO MAYOMBE

This sect of the Regla de Palo (“rule of the stick,” referring to Palo’s ritual use of sticks) religion in Cuba emphasizes Kongo arts of necromancy. Mayombero *rayados* (“cut ones,” referring to their initiatory scars) fill their nganga (magical cauldron) with human bones, skulls, blood, and worse. (The *ndoki* charm involves boiling a cat alive after torturing it, for example – the “black cat bone” extracted from the carcass becomes a powerful wanga.) The rayado gets such things by robbing graves, preferably those of violent white people (the most dangerous kind of people, after all). With these relics, he commands the *kiyumba*, or ghost, attached to the cadaver as his main magical servant. Paleros, of course, maintain that most of their magic is beneficent healing work; only *paleros judios* (“unbaptized” Paleros) send ghosts out to kill and spy.

QUIMBANDA

Quimbanda began in early 20th century Brazil as a reaction to the “Europeanized” Umbanda religion. The Quimbandeiros claimed their tradition was purer, harsher, more practical, and less Christian. (That said, some Quimbanda traditions have syncretized the Exus with demons like Lucifer and Ashtaroth.) Many of them openly embraced “black magic” in much the same way American Satanists would fifty years later: as a pragmatic method to obtain one’s desires. Rejecting Umbanda’s bourgeois leanings led Quimbanda to define its Exus as *povo da rua* (“people of the streets”) or dead criminals, and their feminine equivalent, the Pomba Giras, as dead prostitutes. Like Petro, Quimbanda uses gunpowder (*furia*) in its rites; like Palo, it emphasizes necromancy as a badge of its seriousness. Quimbandeiros point to Umbanda’s history of collaboration with the government, and its vested financial interest in blaming Quimbanda for black magic *trabalhos* (workings). It’s just the Quimbanda Malei who are actual demon-traffickers, they say.

VOODOO 2: THE INVISIBLES

KALI-MAI

After the abolition of slavery in the 1830s, Trinidad's planters imported 150,000 indentured field hands from India – and Hinduism ran into Trinidadian obeah and ecstatic Christianity. The result was a sect practicing ritual possession (by Hindu gods and Orishas), blood drinking, and animal sacrifice: Kali-Mai. Suppressed by the white colonial masters and by the orthodox Hindus, it went underground. *Kali-pujaris* don't claim any black magic powers, but their healing arts surpass their rivals. Those rivals in turn blame the Kali-Mai for any strange or eerie occurrences in the area. Pirated copies of European grimoires were common in Trinidad among obeah-men from the 1890s forward, and among "Kabbalah societies" there now – another possible "black magic" tradition to explore.

INVISIBLE FORMAT

Each of the major Invisibles listed below follows this format. The names of the Invisibles – and most of the other details given – are usually that of their Haitian Loa equivalent, which is most likely the most familiar to gamers and readers. If not, the descriptive text underneath notes the exceptions.

Many authorities provide different details for the same Invisible; I have attempted to find the most common or reliable one where possible. Where separate traditions differ strongly, I either default to Vodou or indicate the variances.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

What the Invisible controls, where it dwells, and what help magicians mostly call on it for. Play this as loose as you can without letting players crock the system; Invisibles have broad remits. They also often represent tricky concepts that are hard to pin down in a single system of classification; it is a gross oversimplification to refer to Damballah simply as "the snake god," for example. Conversely, some aspects of Damballah are specifically restricted to snakes, though tied to all the other aspects as well.

OFFERINGS

The favored offerings to the Invisible: food, scent, liquor, etc.

POSSESSION

How the "horse" behaves when the Invisible rides her. By and large, an Invisible invoked with the proper rites and treated with appropriate respect offers help to petitioners; if a specific Interpersonal ability (most likely a spend) is likely to help, it's noted in parentheses. You can also use this for roleplaying notes – as possessed chvals or as the GM, whichever. If there are any likely or possible bonuses (or penalties) to abilities for the possessed, they show up here, too. Whether the possessed receive them, and for how long, is up to the GM, but a spell might make it happen. These bonuses make ideal things to bind into a wanga, too.

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

The symbols, elements, icons, emblems, items, and other correspondences associated with the Invisible. Most Invisibles have characteristic numbers, days of power, and so forth.

Afro-Caribbean religions influenced by Catholicism associate the emblems of various saints with the Invisibles; the standard associations appear here. Remember that Damballah, for example, isn't "really" St. Patrick, or vice versa. Rather, St. Patrick's traditional iconography (a man with a stick surrounded by snakes) symbolizes Damballah.

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

This section describes not just the escorte and caminos associated with a given Invisible, but its parallels, equivalents, and co-descendants in other nanchons and other Afro-Caribbean traditions.

CTHULHU MYTHOS

This section provides some possible Cthulhu Mythos identifiers for a given Invisible. See *Invisible Distortions*, p. 8, for the tangled metaphysical possibilities behind this game advice.

LEGBA

Legba is the lord of the road, the gate, and the crossroads. He must be invoked to open the way for the other loa, and is both the trickster and the venerable guardian. In Yoruba-Fon cosmology, Esu-Elegba was the orisha of good luck and his phallic statues stood at crossroads in Dahomey. As the opener of the way, Esu-Elegba was also identified with the sun, fertility, and destiny. His Rada form is venerated as Papa Legba, a wise old man. He wears a wide hat to shade his eyes, walks with a crutch or cane, smokes a pipe, and is weighed down by his macoute, or haversack, full of knowledge. His younger Petro form (hearkening

INVISIBLE DISTORTIONS

Please respect the religions you're borrowing from. Ideally and as often as you can, try to keep the outright evil human, not divine. Keep in mind that Invisibles with immense, alien agendas may well be challenging enough for your heroes. But yes, some games and some stories may demand "evil" Invisibles.

One possibility comes from the notion that Don Pedro built the Petro Loa out of the ghosts of poisoners, cruel overseers, and local devils – and they simply took the forms of the Rada Loa who had "fixed" the local astral plane in those shapes. Whether imitations, imposters, or energy thieves, this lets your evil loa be parodies and travesties of the real gods. Thwarting and exorcising them becomes the right thing to do for Vodou hounsans, too. This option works especially well with the Outer Dark Entities found in the *Esoterrorists RPG* – the ODEs took advantage of the horrors of slavery to enter through the tattered Veil as false reflections of the true Loa. Their outrages both thin the Veil further and degrade the human, inspirational nature of the Loa they impersonate. Perhaps "Don Pedro" was the Esoterror cultist who opened the way for them.

Another possibility is that the innately fissiparous Orishas were distorted by some force in the New World: the immense evil of slavery, the ruins of Atlantis, or the horrific undersea entity known only as Duppy Jonah. The evil Invisibles are false reflections, brief mad nightmares, things about themselves that even they would rather not face. The Invisibles might also have splintered, twisted, or deformed upon encountering the immense metaphysical gravity of the gods and titans of the Mythos, either in Africa or America. Blasphemous bokors use these *loa-lonbraj*, these "shadow loa," to invoke Yog-Sothoth, Tsathoggua, or Cthulhu.

A fully Purist reading of Lovecraft, by contrast, casts all the Loa as misunderstandings, domestications, and corruptions of Mythos truths. This is, of course, true of all religions and most sciences in Lovecraft's cosmology. In this reading, both Rada and Petro Loa are at best the "weak gods of Earth" and at worst thin, uncaring masks for the true horror at the heart of the world.

back to his trickster role as Esu) is Maît' Carrefour, the Master of the Crossroads, emblematic of the setting sun and black magic done in secret. Carrefour is strong and vibrant, because he has no worries. As Legba opens the door for helpful spirits, Carrefour opens the way for harmful baka and other evil beings. Since he can open or restrain evil

spirits, Carrefour is often invoked to protect against them.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

Guardian of crossroads, barriers, gates, and doorways. Inhabits crossroads and gateways. Finder of hidden treasures, guards the house. Interpreter between loa and mankind; thus, patron of communication.

OFFERINGS

Alcoholic drinks, candy, and grilled or smoked goat meat. Spotted roosters. Dogs (Kongo); rum (Petro). Pipe tobacco. Offerings to Legba cannot have any broken bones.

POSSESSION

His chwals walk with a limp, often using a cane; often, they simply fall to the ground unable to walk. They seem much older than usual. (Reassurance)

Choose: +6 Athletics (for feats of strength only), +1 to hand-to-hand or melee damage, +2 Languages, +3 Cryptography (decoding only), +3 Locksmith, +4 Digital Intrusion, or +4 Infiltration.

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Wednesday (or Friday and Saturday), black and white, the crutch, the mirror, the crossroads, a pipe hung in the doorway, the numbers 3 and 21. Fig tree, calabash, medicinier-béni, frankincense; dogs, rooster; low-smoldering fire (Carrefour).

St. Anthony the Hermit (patron saint of lost objects), St. Lazarus (at the door to death; often depicted with a staff), St. John the Baptist (who makes straight the way of the Lord), and St. Peter (keeper of the keys to heaven).

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

Papa Legba (Rada, 21 Divisiones), Legba Chemin (Rada, guardian of the Gran Chemin, or great highway), Legba Maît' Bitasyon (Rada, guardian of the house threshold), Attibon Legba (Rada), Legba Sé (Rada); Maît' Carrefour or Legba Kalfu (Petro), Sousou Pannan (Petro, depicted as an old vagabond covered with

VOODOO 2: THE INVISIBLES

sores); Papa Leba (Sanse); Papa Lebat (Louisiana); Leba (Winti); Elegguá (Santería); Shango features both Eshu and Legbara (identified with the Devil); Nkuyu (Palo); Aluvia (Candomblé-Angola); Belie Belcan (21 Divisiones) is a blend of Ogun and Legba, a limping soldier defending justice; Exú (Candomblé, Umbanda) is usually seen as a dangerous force that must be appeased or driven away before the ceremony can begin. In Quimbanda, Exú Morcego is the Bat Exu, who governs vampirism.

CTHULHU MYTHOS

Yog-Sothoth (the Key and the Gate), Nyarlathotep (the mirror and devil), Nodens (old man with hounds), Daoloth.

AGWÉ

Agwé (also Goueh, Agoueh, or Agive) is the lord of the ocean. As Agwé-‘Woyo (or Agwé-Taroyo, “Agwé of the Streams”) he captains the *Immamou*, the ship that carries the dead to Guinée. He appears as a tall, bearded man with green eyes, wearing a white naval uniform. He is married both to Erzulie-Freda and La Sirene, the mermaid sea loa. Ceremonies to Agwé begin in the hounfor with the sounding of a conch horn, and end on the seaside with sacrifices launched to him on a small boat called the “barque d’Agwé”. His New Orleans cult is large, worshipping him at the Bayou St. John and Lake Ponchartrain.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

Agwé dwells on the sea bottom in a great palace, governing the ocean and all life coming from or sailing on it; winds, currents, whirlpools. Protects sailors, ensures good fish catches. Direction, navigation; thus

also a source of guidance in general. Signals and communication.

OFFERINGS

White sheep or hens, blue-dyed ram, male goat (Agwé-‘Woyo), rice with coconut milk, fine drinks, naval rum, crème de menthe, white cakes, champagne; wet sponges and towels to cool off with. No seafood, please – he gets plenty of that at home.

POSSESSION

Agwé’s steeds are noble, distant, and polite, unless they find indiscipline and must bark orders. They tend to gurgle their words, and sometimes “row” themselves around the ceremony in chairs pushed by sticks. They must be kept from diving into the water, especially when the ceremony is held on a boat. (Military Science, Reassurance)

Choose: +4 Piloting (boats or navigation only), +4 Athletics or Fleeing (for swimming only), or +3 Outdoorsman (only on water).

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Thursday; white but also blue or green; boat or ship, oars, cannon fire, thunder over the ocean, conch and other seashells, salt water, metal fishes; compass, telescope; fish hooks, nets; lavender, heron (Winti).

St. Ulrich, Archangel Raphael (both depicted with fish).

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

His Rada titles or escorte include Ange-en-Miwa (“Angel in the Mirror”), Agoueh tha-Oyo (African passage), Coqui-Nan-Mer (“Shell of the Ocean”), La Balene (the Whale), Mat-Agwé (“Master Agwé,” the navigator), Zangi (the Eel); Agwé-

je-Rouge (Petro, “Red Eyes”), Agwé-Flambeau (Petro) governs undersea volcanoes, fire (and other bad luck) at sea, and hot springs; Agbe (Candomblé-Jeje); Awese (Winti); Tin Djo Alaguey (Sanse).

CTHULHU MYTHOS

Cthulhu, Dagon, Gol-Goroth, Nodens (depicted with a net, Lord of the Abyss).

Agwe’s first lieutenant is Agassou, a crab-shaped loa reminiscent perhaps of the Mi-Go.

DAMBALLAH WÈDO

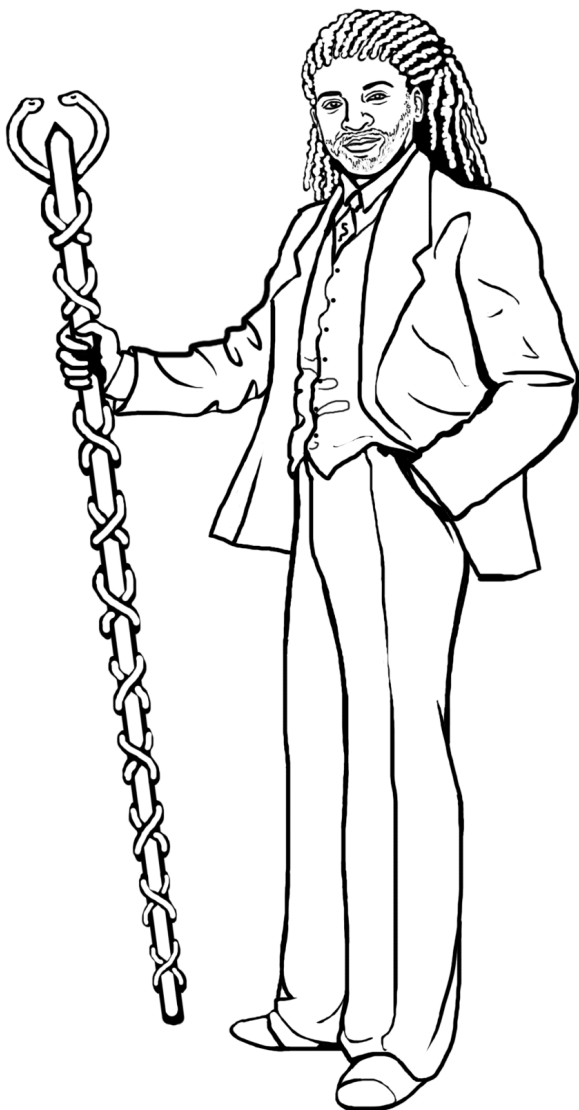
Damballah Wèdo (also spelled Damballa, Dambala, Danbhalah, and Danballa) is often thought of as the head of the Rada pantheon. His few Petro forms are less malevolent and spiteful than the usual run of Petro deities. Damballah is the Sky Lord, the Rainbow Serpent; his connection with the sky and his sinuous shape tie him to rivers and to the rain as well. These attributes also make him a fertility loa.

He is often described as “white,” and is sometimes even shown with red hair. Often, he is depicted as ugly. The word Wèdo (or Ouedo, or Houédo) refers to Whydah, the major slave port of Dahomey; Dan and his wife Ayida Wèdo come from Fon, not Yoruba tradition. Ayida (or Aida) Wèdo is the wife, consort, and feminine aspect of Damballah. Her worship is performed alongside Damballah, perhaps as half of a double-entity. In Africa, Ayida was a male spirit, the earthly incarnation of Dan.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

Snakes, floods, rains, the sky; Ayida usually governs the rainbow.

VOODOO 2: THE INVISIBLES



Damballah and Ayida live in springs and rivers, especially a sacred waterfall at Saut-d'Eau. Cures desperate illness, with Ayida sanctifies and blesses marriages. Power over silver (a "white" metal), thus also power over treasure, luck, and wealth. Twisted spines and the handicapped.

OFFERINGS

Eggs especially. White meat, white roosters (white hens for Ayida), pork. Clear alcohol. òjat (orgeat, thick almond and sugar syrup).

White flour (also used to draw his vèvè) and rice. Anisette (Petro only).

POSSESSION

Humans possessed by Damballah often roll or writhe on the ground like serpents. They often do not speak but dart their tongues or whistle. Sometimes they will climb trees; Damballah is often depicted near a tree or wrapped around a tree. (Reassurance)

Choose: +4 Athletics (to escape or climbing attempts only), +4 Filch (to escape handcuffs only),

+4 Health (resisting poison only), +4 First Aid or Medic (against disease or venom), or +2 Notice or Evidence Collection.

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Thursday; white; serpent, rainbow, lightning; the number 8. Cotton tree, silk tree, bougainvillea, lilac, hyacinth (Ayida); albino, chameleon.

St. Patrick (commanding snakes), Moses (raising the serpent image above the Hebrews in the desert), St. John the Evangelist (who drinks from a poisoned cup containing a serpent). Ayida is represented by Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Carmel, and other forms of the Virgin.

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

Dambala (Rada), Dagowe (Rada), Damballah Verre (Rada), Ossange (a Rada loa devoted to healing and forests); Damballah La Flambeau (Petro, Damballah of the Torch, also known as Damballah Flangho, Saint Blanc, or Petro Blanc), Coulevre (Petro, lord of poisonous snakes), Dan Petro (Petro, possibly cognate with Dompredre); Dangbe (Candomblé-Jeje); Dan or Danny (Louisiana), Li Grand Zombi (Louisiana); Danbala (21 Divisiones); in Africa, he was known as Dan, Danbada, or Da; some of his functions are subsumed in the Santería orishas Obatala (the King of White Cloth, orisha of peace and purity) and Osain (a forest orisha, Osain has only one leg, one arm, and one eye, the parallels with the snake deity Damballah should be obvious), with Ayida as Oshun; in Candomblé and Umbanda he is probably represented by Oxumarê (Ayida is Oxum).

VOODOO 2: THE INVISIBLES

CTHULHU MYTHOS

Yig, Zhar (twin deity), Nyarlathotep (as Dan Petro or Dompédre), Serpent-Folk magicians or racial spirits, a mighty dhole.

ERZULIE

Erzulie was a major orisha (or several of them) in Africa; one of her names in Dahomey was Aïson (a linguistic halfway-point between Oshun and Erzulie), a protectress of public gatherings. Although she is almost as popular as Damballah, Erzulie's role is more ambiguous. Erzulie (also spelled Ezili and Èzilie) is the great loa of love, from fierce motherhood (as Erzulie Dantò) to sweet seduction (as Erzulie-Freda), to pure (or impure) carnality (as Erzulie Banda, a devotee of the sensual banda dance).

Light-skinned and long-haired, Erzulie is beautiful and desirable, wearing three wedding rings. She also rules feminine virtues like grace, beauty, and family, and holds down the familiar mythic roles of maiden, mother, and crone (as Grande Ezili, she is an aged woman hobbling about on a cane). As Maîtresse Mambo, she is the patroness of priestesses.

Erzulie can be jealous; when she is married to a human such as a houngan (or simply a handsome man whom she fancies), her husband must refrain from sex on Erzulie's sacred days, since on those days he is reserved only for her. As the loa of desire, she incarnates the desire for better things and a better life. She is the loa, therefore, of dreams, and her vanity mirror is just as much a portal to the supernatural as Legba's looking-glass.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

Love, fertility, lust, sex, family, and motherhood. Jealousy, discord, vanity, vengeance. Beauty and creativity, dreams and desires. She dwells in riverbanks. She loves jewelry and luxury, and that trait and her ties to fertility give her influence over wealth and prosperity.

OFFERINGS

Champagne, red sugary drinks, cosmetics, scent, chicken and rice, gourmet prepared dishes and desserts; basil, Florida water; fancy soaps still in the wrapper.

POSSESSION

Those possessed by Erzulie find their behavior varies depending on which form of Erzulie is riding; some are coquettish, flirtatious, and speak ladylike French in a high voice (especially Mademoiselle Charlotte, who will refuse to speak any other language); others are earthy and gladly make romantic assignations (which are sometimes carried out before Erzulie leaves, to the occasional chagrin of the possessed); others simply move fluidly, graciously, and elegantly, extending effusive greetings to their favorites and a politely extended little finger to acquaintances or strangers. Male or female, the chwal dresses up in fancy silk gowns, and applies cosmetics and scent liberally. Erzulie loves to dance. However, as a divine being used to luxury, if every little thing is not perfect, Erzulie weeps sadly because her worshippers no longer love her. Humans possessed by Erzulie-jé-rouge will tense in an agony of frustration and anger, clenching their fists so hard

they cut their palms with their fingernails, speaking only in a raging groan; the legacy of slavery, rape, and abuse that spawned the Petro rites is particularly visible here. (Flattery, Flirting, High Society or Credit Rating 6+)

Choose: +3 Flirting or Flattery, 3-point Health refresh, or +3 Art.

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Tuesdays and Thursdays; heart, lipstick, vanity mirror, white lamp, the moon, roses, laurel, rocks found in running water, dove, bells, three rings; blue, pink, gold (Santería and Candomblé); the number 5; bowl of blood with knives (Petro).

Our Lady of Sorrows (her heart, often shown pierced with a sword in Catholic iconography, is the basis of Erzulie's vèvè), Our Lady of Czestochowa (the Black Virgin, patron saint of Poland, and often identified with Erzulie Dantò), other versions of the Virgin, and (for Grande Ezili) St. Anne.

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

Her role as one of the great Rada loa is recognized in her titles Erzulie-Freda-Dahomey (or Erzulie-Wèdo-Daromain, meaning Erzulie of Whydah in Dahomey), Maîtresse Erzulie (or Metrès Ezili, Mistress Erzulie), Èzilie Doba (or Dogba, named after a town in Dahomey); her Petro forms are just as diverse as her Rada ones, including the older witch Erzulie-jé-rouge (or Ezili Je Wouj, Erzulie of the Red Eyes, red eyes being a common trait among the Petro loa), Ezili-mapyang (or Erzulie Mapiangueh), Maîtresse Espagnole (who only speaks Spanish, a Petro langay), Ezili-

VOODOO 2: THE INVISIBLES

Coeur-Noir (Erzulie of the Black Heart), Ezili-bumba, Ezili-kokobe (Erzulie the Shrivelled), Ezili-kanlikan (who has a taste for the “two-footed goat,” or human flesh), and even Ezili Dantò, whose rages are feared by some as evidence of her Petro allegiance; Metres Ezili, Anaisa Pye (21 Divisiones); Metresili (Sanse); Chola Wengue (Palo); Oxum (Candomblé); Kisimbi (Candomblé-Angola); Oshun (Santería).

CTHULHU MYTHOS

Shub-Niggurath, Y’gonolac, Mormo, Bast, Lilith.

MARINETTE

Marinette may be the Petro reflection of Erzulie, just as Carrefour is of Legba. Her names Marinette-Bwa-Chech (“Marinette of the Dry Arms”) and Marinette-Pied-Cheche (“of the Dry Feet”) imply she is a skeleton or mummified. She shares characteristics with Erzulie Dantò, namely a scarred face and no tongue. Other loa, it is said, cut it out fearing that she would betray them to the whites during the Haitian Revolution. In other versions of the story, Marinette was the mambo of Erzulie Dantò who sacrificed the first black hog during the great Vodou Ceremonie at Bois-Caiman in 1791, starting the Haitian Revolution. However, her roots in Petro are deep and possibly go back into the Indian myths of the vengeful and bloody-minded corn goddess, called Xilonen by the Huastecs and Coatlicue by the Aztecs.

Her son, likely by Don Pedro (Dompedre, Dan Petro) himself, is the one-legged cannibal fire-loa Ti-Jean Petro. In some traditions, he is her husband.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

Freedom from bondage (and thus, bondage), revenge and revolt, death and undeath, sorcery, werewolves and baka. She wanders the woods, swamps, and waste places.

OFFERINGS

Black pigs, black roosters plucked alive and buried; salvia and marijuana, black pepper, candy, lavender; salt and gasoline thrown on a fire.

POSSESSION

Marinette’s mounts thrash cruelly around, stiff-jointed, burning animals in the fire or people with brands or cigars. They can walk on fire. In gravelly voices, they confess Marinette’s latest outrages. Other chwals bend from the hips, hooting and hooking fingers on their heads representing owls. (Bargain or Negotiation, Intimidation)

Choose: +2 to any combat ability.

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Tuesday, screech owl, werewolf, red cloth, sharp coral, black and blood red; whip (Oyá); the number 9.

Anima Sola (Lonely Soul in Purgatory), Joan of Arc (woman with a sword), St. Barbara Africana.

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

Marinette Lumin-de-Fe (“Light-the-Fire”); Marinette Kongo (Kongo); Centella Ndoki (Palo).

Marinette’s iconography has much in common with the Santería orisha Oyá, who wears a mask and lives in graveyards. She rules winds, storms, vengeance, ghosts, and fire; her Candomblé equivalent is Iansã.

CTHULHU MYTHOS

Mormo, Nyarlathotep, Gol-Goroth (violent orgies), Ghatanothoa (evil eye, mummies), Quachil Uttaus (dryness).

OGUN

Ogun (also Ogoun, Ogu, Ogou, Ogorin, etc.) is the great warrior of the Invisibles, descended from the Yoruba orisha Ogun and the Fon vodu Gu. He rules metals, weapons, and combat, as well as technology, progress, and machinery. In Haiti, he has more recently mastered diplomacy and power politics, usually in his Ogun Badagris (Ogu-Badagri) identity. This angers his more traditional warrior self, Ogun Feray (also Ogun Fai, Ogun Ferraille); in all his forms, Ogun must watch his destructive temper. He is a tall, imposing black man in a military uniform, bearing a sword. He, too, is married to (or carrying on a long-term affair with) Erzulie. A helpful but fiery, angry deity, Ogun straddles the line between Rada and Petro; some Vodou traditions give the Oguns their own nanchon.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

Metals, especially iron, blacksmiths; weapons, combat, machinery, technology, vehicles, and those who use them; defenders of society such as soldiers, policemen, and doctors; might, power, victory, authority. Many of Ogun’s houngans are Freemasons. Ogun lives in bamboo groves or piles of scrap iron. His warrior connection to blood allows him power over blood diseases; his command of knives extends to surgery. Ogun Badagris also commands storms and lightning in areas where Shango does not predominate. (Ogoun Chango blends the two loa into one.) In Trinidadian Shango, Ogun takes Legba’s role as lord of the gateway.

VOODOO 2: THE INVISIBLES

OFFERINGS

Flaming rum, red wine (21 Divisiones), cigars, cinnamon; red rooster, red beans and rice, nuts, red berries, bullock, sheep (Trinidad); Red Bull; fire made with three railroad ties, black dog, pigeons, yams, turtle, smoked fish, toy cars or trains; gunpowder.

POSSESSION

Those ridden by Ogun wear a kepi or tie a red scarf around their head. They brandish blades, stabbing themselves with them to no effect, pour liquor on their hands or spray it through their teeth and set it afire, swear like soldiers, and occasionally propose marriage. Ogun Badagris picks his favorites up and carries them around; Ogun Feray strikes them on the legs, imparting strength. (Cop Talk, Bureaucracy (Ogun Badagris or Panama only), Military Science)

Choose: +2 damage or +4 Weapons for any bladed weapon, or +1 damage or +3 Shooting or Firearms, +4 Explosives, +2 to any Technical ability, or -3 Armor (against either fire or bullets only).

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Tuesday or Wednesday; June 29, July 25; the numbers 3 and 4. Calabash tree, mango tree, breadfruit tree, bamboo, pine, swords, machetes, knives, red flag, butterflies, dogs; saber driven into the ground, iron (especially heated or magnetized iron), chain, hoe blade, three railroad spikes, locomotive. His colors are green and black (Cuba and Brazil) or red and blue (Haiti).

St. James the Greater (warrior saint), St. George, St. Peter (Santería and Palo), St. Sebastian (especially in

Bahia, suffering with arrows), St. Wenceslas (21 Divisiones), Archangel Michael (Shango, Sanse).

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

Ogu Balenjo (protection from poison) is part of Agwé's crew and commands ropes, Ogun Batala (among other things, an alchemist) is a version of the Santería orisha Obatala, Ogun Bayé opens the gateway, Ogun Jekke (ironworking), Ogou Panama (named for his natty straw hat) governs hunsi initiation, sunstroke, and diplomacy, Ogun Sen Jac (protection from bullets and shells); Mounassou (Petro, gangsters and organized crime), Ogun Feray de Menm (Petro, "Two-Handed Ogun"), Ogun Chadé or Achardé is a Petro bokor, Ogun Jaco (Petro, discord and ill-temper), Ogun Je-Rouge (Petro), Ogu Tonnerre (Petro, "Thunderstone"), Ogu Yamsan (Petro, storms); Ogoun Bachango (Kongo); Ogun Balendyo (21 Divisiones) appears as an old veteran; Ogum (Candomblé); Gu (Candomblé-Jeje); Nkosi-Mukumbe (Candomblé-Angola); Ogou Fegay (21 Divisiones); Oggun (Santería); Joe Feraille (Louisiana); Zarabanda (Palo) commands death-magic.

CTHULHU MYTHOS

Cthugha, Nyarlathotep.

SHANGO

Shango (or Chango) began as a conquering king of Oyo in Africa, and ascended to divinity. One of the most popular orisha in Cuba and the lead orisha in Trinidad, he governs fire, thunder, and lightning. He appears as a handsome, powerful, muscular man in peak condition. He governs the masculine virtues, and the masculine vices as well.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

Music, drums, fire, thunder, lightning, volcanoes; masculinity and macho behavior, as well as its needed counterpart self-control; law, justice, magical knowledge (Candomblé). Shango lives underneath mountaintops or other high places. He traps in fire those who offend him.

OFFERINGS

Apples, yams, corn, red peppers, okra; rabbits, bull, ram; anisette, absinthe, red wine. To break a powerful curse, sacrifice a horse to Shango.

POSSESSION

Shango's caballos become passionate, swaggering, sensual, risk-seeking, and dangerous. They may start fires. Like Shango himself, they dread the sight of skulls. (Flattery, Flirting (female characters only), Intimidation, Streetwise)

Choose: +2 damage or +3 Shooting or Firearms, +4 Explosives, or -3 Armor (against fire or electricity only).

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Friday (Thursday in Vodou) or Saturday, the 4th day of the Month, December 4; double-bladed axe, drums, meteoric iron, flint, thunderstorms, mortar and pestle, castle, cup; yellow kerchief (Vodou); red and white; the numbers 4 and 6. Shango's thunderstones (flint, meteorites, or obsidian) appear where his holy lightning strikes, and must be picked up after a year and a day to be magically potent. St. Barbara (patron saint of artillery, depicted with lightning and a sword), St. Bartholomew, St. Mark, St. Jerome (Brazil).

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

Xangô (Candomblé); Heviosso (Candomblé-Jeje); Nzaza-Loango (Candomblé-Angola); Tupan (Catimbo); Chango (21 Divisiones); in Palo he is Nsasi, called Siete Rayos (“Seven Scars”); in Trinidad Shango also takes the names Abacuso, Guroon, and Saja, mostly governing his peaceful side.

In Vodou, Sogbo is the loa more often associated with lightning and thunder.

CTHULHU MYTHOS

Cthugha, Hastur (yellow cloth, mountains), Nyarlathotep, Shudde-M’ell and the cthonians (earthquakes and volcanoes).

TEMPO

Tempo is the Candomblé-Angola orixá of the trees, of nature, of the turning of the seasons, and of time. In Brazil, Tempo is widely identified (save by the most fanatical “re-Africanizing” purists) with the Candomblé orixá (and hence the Vodou loa) Iroko, or Loko. His name comes from the Kitembo tribe of the Congo, and he appears as an old man gnarled like a tree trunk.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

Nature, the seasons, the weather, and time; trees and leaves, herbalism; guardian of entrances, reversal of fortune, broken bones, insanity, dreams and hauntings; the wind, and thus diseases and secrets. Loko is the first houngan, and thus governs initiation and the forms of worship.

OFFERINGS

Alcohol of any kind, especially aged alcohol, beer and wine;

boiled corn, popcorn, cornmeal, red or white chickens, honey; cigars. Often petitioners leave offerings to Tempo or Loko hanging in a bag from the branches of a sacred tree, along with their question.

POSSESSION

Those entered by Tempo may spin and bend drunkenly (he is a famous imbiber), crouch into an ever-smaller ball, or stalk haughtily around the room judging others omnisciently. They carry sticks and smoke pipes. (Oral History, to share ancient anecdotes)

Choose: 2-point Health refresh, +3 Outdoorsman or Outdoor Survival, +3 Biology, +4 Preparedness, +4 Sense Trouble, or +3 Theology.

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Tuesdays, January 6, May 1, August 10; brazier, metal banner, white flag, ladder, keyhole, spears, butterflies, propeller, windmill, clock; the numbers 4 and 16; white and green; the pine, jurema, mapou, ceiba, and white fig trees.

St. Francis of Assisi (outdoors in nature), St. Lawrence (holds a ladder-like gridiron).

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

In some terreiros, Tempo manifests as a “white Xangô,” while in others he is equated to Obaluayê or Omolu, the masked Lord of Earth. Omolu is the orixá of disease, rebirth, and the graveyard; he is chief of the ghosts.

CTHULHU MYTHOS

Azathoth, Chaugnar Faugn, Cthulhu (the stars coming right, dreams and nightmares), Quachil Uttaus, Great Race of Yith.

YEMAYA

Yemaya (or Yemanjá, Iemanya, Yemayah) is one of the most popular and beloved orishas in Santería. (She is, if anything, even more popular as the orixá Iemanjá in Brazilian Candomblé.) She is the Mother of Waters (Madre Agua), guardian of the ocean and of motherhood.

She is the mother to all life, a beautiful matronly woman with long black hair and a lush figure. Originally Yemoja, a Yoruba orisha of the Niger River, she is the patron goddess of all the Africans carried across the sea.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

Yemaya governs the seas, life, childbirth, dreaming, music, divination, meditation, mental health, healing waters, and motherhood. She owns sunken treasure and pearls, and brings wealth. She brings drenching rains and hurricanes when displeased, or drowns her foes in floods.

OFFERINGS

Watermelon, guinea hens, ducks, rams; fried pork rinds, plantains; coconut balls, sugar-cane syrup, molasses; flowers, perfume, combs, mirrors. Her offerings should be floated out to sea, ideally with a white candle.

POSSESSION

Yemaya’s caballos walk like sailors or like the waters themselves, circling and swaying; as La Sirene she has trouble walking due to her mermaid’s tail, but speaks perfect French. (Bargain or Negotiation, Flattery, Reassurance)

VOODOO 2: THE INVISIBLES

Choose: +4 Health (against drowning only), 2-point Health refresh, +4 Hypnosis, +4 Shrink or Psychoanalysis, +4 Piloting (at sea only), or +4 Sense Trouble.

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Saturday, New Years' Eve, February 2, December 8; seashells, stones found by the shore, fish, mirrors, combs, trumpets, moon, canoe, fan (Candomblé), ants, indigo, the colors blue and white; the number 7.

Our Lady of the Seafaring, Stella Maris, La Diosa Del Mar, St. Martha (seen on a boat), Our Lady of Regla (patron of the Afro-Cubans; shrine in Havana).

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

In Santería, she manifests in at least seven other caminos: Yemaya-Ashaba (overwhelming beauty), Yemaya-Asseu (dirty waters, necromancy), Yemaya-Awoyo (age and wisdom, crowned with rainbows), Yemaya Ibu Aro (markets and commerce), Yemaya-Malewo (forest lakes and herbalism), Yemaya-Ogunte (war and iron weapons, rocky coasts), and Yemaya-Okutti (violence and piracy, witchcraft, sends messages by mice). Other caminos of Yemaya include Yemaya Acuaro (breaker of witchcraft), Yemaya Afodo (liberator of slaves), Yemaya Ibu Konla (builder of boats). She is equated to another orisha, Olokun, the impossible depths of the ocean. In Vodou, she is Lasyrenn or La Sirène, the mermaid wife of Agwé; La Balenne (Petro, female Whale); Emanja (Shango); Janaina (Catimbo); Kaitumba, Calunga (Candomblé-Angola); Tobossi



(Candomblé-Jeje); Lamanté, Maman Dlo (Quimbois); Má Lango (Palo); Watramama (Winti).

CTHULHU MYTHOS

Abhoth (the Source of Uncleaness), Cthulhu, Hydra, Shub-Niggurath.

GHEDE

Vodou and other Afro-Caribbean ceremonies end with an invocation of Ghede, or Guédé, the lord of death and the dead.

He is not an “evil god,” but rather the “great leveler” in whose domain everyone is finally equal. Hence, he is traditionally full of low humor and coarse jokes. He appears as a short, dark-skinned man wearing a fancy hat, smoking a cigar, and eating an apple. In some traditions, Ghede has a whole nanchon or Line to himself, complete with his own Twins (the all-seeing gravediggers Marassa and Ouassou, who wear contrasting colors and genders) and court.

VOODOO 2: THE INVISIBLES

In 21 Divisiones and some Haitian traditions, Ghede is eclipsed by his junior loa, the Baron (Le Bawon). Various known as Baron Cimetièrè (Baron del Cementerio in 21 Divisiones and Sanse), Baron Samedi, or Baron Le Croix, he embodies the cemetery and the grave, including the magic worked there. He appears with a white skull-face (or even with the head of a skull), wearing a top hat and tailcoat, and carrying a cane. He wears smoked glasses or sunglasses, often with one lens knocked out, to adjust to the brightness of the world above the grave. His wife Maman Brigitte (from St. Brigid, protectress of gravestones) is the mother of the lesser Ghedes, symbolized by mounds of stones in a cemetery.

POWERS AND DOMAIN

Lord of the dead, lord of death. Inhabits the first grave dug in any cemetery. Governs disease and thus healing; protector of children who must not die before their time. Ghede also governs obscenity and taboo-breaking, magic, clowns, androgyny and transvestitism and transitional states in general. Shares gate-opening with Legba, as he controls the gates of Death.

Maman Brigitte controls gravestones as well as judgement, including legal proceedings and monetary awards.

OFFERINGS

Cheap taffia rum infused with habaneros and other hot spices; hot peppers, salt herring, roasted corn, roasted bananas, bread with oil, black beans; black chickens; Coca-Cola or other kola beverages; black coffee and gin, an orange cut in four (21 Divisiones).

POSSESSION

Those ridden by Ghede stuff cotton in their nose and ears and speak in a high, nasal voice. They express lascivious sensuality culminating in the groin-shaking banda dance. The chwals of Ghede are ravenously hungry, smoking cigarettes in between meals. They enjoy filthy wordplay, rub hot peppers on their skin and eyes, and have no memory of their possession. Possession by the Baron is much quieter, traditionally. (Streetwise for low talk, Credit Rating 0 or 1)

Choose: 3-point Health refresh, +4 to one damage roll once, +3 Intimidation, or +3 Occult.

SYMBOLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Despite Baron Samedi's name, the Ghede day is Monday. Black and purple or mauve, smoked glass or mirror, mercury, myrrh, citron, cross-dressing, crosses and stones, skull and bones, playing cards, graveyard tools (spade, pick, and hoe), machete, checkerboards or check patterns, dogs, the numbers 9 (Brigitte), 13, or 17. His sacred day is November 2 (All Souls').

St. Lazarus, Elijah, St. Roch (patron of plague sufferers), St. Expedit (crow and cross symbolism), St. Martin de Porres (Baron Samedi), and St. Gerard Majella (unborn children).

OTHER FORMS AND PARALLELS

The Ghedes are more often seen as separate entities than aspects of Ghede, especially where the Baron has usurped his master's domain. Ghede Nimbo (or Nibo) is the first to die by violence, patron of the unknown dead, psychopomp; Mr. Entretoute or "Goes-Anywhere" is

a sophisticated man of the world, while Jensiman Britisse is a "British Gentleman." Other Ghedes include Brav Ghede or just Brav (Rada, ancestral spirits), Guede-Double (second sight), Guede-z-Araignée (spiders), Gede-L'Oraille (Petro, storms), Gede-Zeclai (lightning and sudden death in general). Baron Kriminel is a Petro aspect, the first murderer; his chwals attack others or themselves with their teeth; Kobayende (Palo), Kaviungo (Candomblé-Angola).

In Santería, Babalú-Ayé (Omolu in Candomblé) is the Orisha governing death and disease, especially smallpox. He carries two bags full of corn, their straps crossed on his chest. Babalú-Ayé is closely associated with Elegua, and shares wealth and healing freely. The negative, seldom-invoked aspect of death in Santería is ikú.

CTHULHU MYTHOS

Gol-Goroth, Mordiggian and ghouls in general, Tsathoggua.

