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1 Magical tradition

1.1 Overview

Magical traditions are methods and approaches that magicians in the world of Empire use to perform their magic. A tradition represents a shared set of guidelines that magicians can use to add additional significance to their rituals, not a prescriptive list of elements that must be included or your ritual will fail. The different traditions represent different ways of performing magic and while they are primarily useful for ritual magic, they have applications in spellcasting as well as crafting items.

The most prominent magical traditions in the Empire are [astronomancy](#), [blood magic](#), [dramaturgy](#), [rune magic](#), and [music of the spheres](#).

1.2 Traditions in the Empire

The prominent magical traditions represent different frameworks, common ideas that magicians have shared that help them to wield magic. It is very common for a coven of magicians to use the established motifs and themes when working their magic; while some magicians develop their own unique approach to magic, using different symbols and words of power, most employ the tradition or traditions they were trained with.

Traditions may take different forms in different lands. The League is famed for the dramaturgy of its League troupes, with complex mystical symbolism for different arcane elements, but this is far from the only way to use storytelling and performance to create magic as the [guisers](#), [mummers](#), and [cabalists](#) would be quick to point out. Individual magicians find their own way to use the traditions to inform their magic.

Some magicians choose to concentrate on a single tradition, devoting their lives to mastering that approach to magic; others prefer to dabble, adopting whatever devices seem to best suit the magic they need.

1.3 Other Traditions

The traditions commonly employed by Imperial magicians are far from the only magical traditions known; while the traditions of dramaturgy and astronomancy in particular are known all over the world in one form or another, many foreign magicians employ traditions entirely unfamiliar to the Imperial conclave. The Feni, for example, are known to use paint to create magical effects, using hides, the walls of caves and even people as canvas, while those who live in foreign lands beyond the borders of the Empire employ even stranger techniques.

It seems likely that the Thule, and the other barbarian orc nations have their own traditions, although little reliable information has ever been recovered and what little is known is confused and difficult to be certain of. The [Jotun](#) appear to invoke patron deities to perform miracles, while the [Asaveans](#) often invoke one of their dizzyingly wide variety of gods, demigods, household gods, and mysterious spirits when working their rituals. The [Druj](#) seem to make extensive use of complex herbal recipes to control their rituals, while the [Axou](#) apparently draw on the spirits of their dead ancestors to grant them power. In some cases, foreign magicians use entirely different names for the realms of magic themselves - for example both the [Faraden](#) and the [Grendel](#) - and disagree with Imperial magicians on the precise definitions of what those realms represent.

1.4 Game Design

The magic traditions primarily exist to give players a basis for their roleplaying expression when performing rituals. Without a context for magic, it can be difficult for players to find sensible ways to phys-rep the magic they are performing. The traditions exist to give players a medium to roleplay the magic they are performing.

The traditions are also useful for letting magicians talk to each other about magic. They provide a common language with elements for magicians to reference and discuss.

Ultimately traditions exist to enable roleplaying - we don't determine which traditions can or should be used with different magics. We don't mark rituals, so there is no wrong way to use a magical tradition. The right way to use them is anything that reflects the philosophy of the tradition and improves the game for those involved.

1.5 Further Reading

- Traditions
 - ♦ [Astronomancy](#)
 - ♦ [Blood Magic](#)
 - ♦ [Dramaturgy](#)

- ◆ Rune Magic
- ◆ Music of the Spheres
- ◆ Aspect Magic
- Ritual Theory
- Spellcasting

2 Ritual theory

2.1 Overview

Imperial magicians who have studied the **lore** of the **realms** can use **mana crystals** to manipulate a realm to create magic effects. The most effective way to do this is to master one or more of the formulaic rituals that are part of **Imperial lore**, but the outcome of these rituals is fixed. If a magician wishes to achieve an entirely new effect, something not contained in Imperial lore, then they will need to prepare an **arcane projection** to create the spontaneous ritual effect.

A good understanding of the theory of ritual magic is essential for creating effective spontaneous magic. There are the known laws of magic that govern the rules by which it operates, as well as its limits and the role of eternals in magic. This page summarises common Imperial knowledge about the power of the realms.

2.2 Resonance and Dissonance

Ritual magic is not limitless in scope and there are a number of fundamental **laws** that are common to all the realms, and certain **limits** that it cannot easily overcome. In addition to this, each of the six realms (**Spring**, **Summer**, **Autumn**, **Winter**, **Day** and **Night**) have strengths and weaknesses, referred to as *resonance* and *dissonance*. Where a realm is resonant with a theme, rituals that produce that outcome are easier to cast using that realm than any other. For example, the Spring Realm is resonant with healing magic, so rituals that heal the wounded are easier to perform using the Spring realm than any other realm.

Where a realm is dissonant with a theme, then it is much harder to create a ritual effect that produces that outcome, if it is even possible. For example, the Autumn realm is dissonant with healing magic, it can repair broken items and damaged buildings, but it has almost no ability at all to heal the wounded.

2.3 Laws

2.3.1 The Law of Intent

Sometimes called the first law of magic, the Law of Intent stipulates that a formulaic ritual can achieve only what the ritual was designed to do. Many magicians claim it is called formulaic magic for this very reason. The ability of **Rivers of Gold** to enhance the production of a business by 180 rings is the fundamental intent of the ritual. It is not possible to perform the ritual on a mine or a farm, nor to cast it with more mana crystals to get more money. The ritual can only be performed exactly as it was originally intended when it was formulated.

At first glance, spontaneous magic appears to offer a more flexible alternative, but the truth is that it is no more flexible than formulaic magic and often less so. Some variations can be part of a formulaic ritual, if the ritual is designed and constructed that way. When a magician creates a ritual projection to create a spontaneous effect, they must specify the intent of the ritual as exactly as possible. This can be much more demanding than an equivalent formulaic ritual - for example an arcane projection to divine the properties of a magical item would be useful only for that magical item.

2.3.2 The Law of Presence

The magic of the realms is most effective on things that are present, and creating effects at range is much more difficult. Common spells such as **weakness**, or **heal** require the caster to be close enough to touch the target or else use an implement to deliver the spell. Ritual magic can overcome this limitation but only by drawing on other laws of magic to supplant the Law of Presence.

2.3.3 The Law of Dominion

The Law of Dominion is an important way to overcome the limitations of the Law of Presence when performing ritual magic. Authority over somebody or something creates a magical link that flows from the being with power to the subject of their authority. A general with command of an army, or any Imperial citizen who owns their own personal **resource** are both effective examples of the Law of Dominion.

A common use for this law allows rituals that are designed to enhance the production of a resource can be cast at Anvil provided the owner of the resource is present. Likewise a general can be used as to provide an arcane connection to the army they command, regardless of the distance. The **Imperial regio** is the most powerful expression of this law, providing as it does an arcane connection to every territory in the world that falls under the dominion of the Empire.

2.3.4 The Law of Bonds

The **create bond** spell commonly creates a magical link between an individual and their items. Such links are essential in most cases if the owner is to make use of the item, but they also come with a known risk. Magicians have created formulaic rituals that use the Law of Bonds, the link between the item and its bonded owner to affect the target (usually with a curse) even when they are not present.

Similar bonds are created between an individual and a **band** to which they belong. These bonds can also be used in formulaic rituals that try to employ the Law of Synergy to affect more than one target. Where a ritual has the right intent, it is possible to use the Law of Bonds to affect multiple band members present with a single casting.

2.3.5 The Law of Scale

Magical rituals operate on a natural scale, a size at which they are most effective. Although it is possible to reduce the magnitude of these rituals by making them less potent, doing so provides rapidly diminishing returns. Often there is a minimum threshold beneath which the magic simply stops working altogether.

For example, the 150 magnitude ritual **Quickening Cold Meat** calls a thousand spirits from the Winter realm to inhabit nearby corpses. An identical formulaic ritual to call forth only five hundred spirits might only be magnitude 140.

The natural scale for a ritual is usually set by the nature of the intended target. Rituals that target individuals or groups are much lower magnitude than rituals that target an army. The Law of Scale makes it increasingly difficult to create a ritual that affects an Imperial army that is lower than magnitude 70.

Magicians are usually more interested in creating more powerful versions of existing rituals, making them more potent or longer lasting. While this is always possible, similar penalties apply when attempting to exceed the natural scale of a ritual. A ritual that grants someone two ranks of endurance is always more than twice the magnitude of a ritual that grants a single rank.

2.3.6 The Law of Transience

The natural duration of most enchantments is a season. It is possible to create enchantments that last for longer than this time, but the difficulty and magnitude of the ritual rises exponentially as the duration increases. One of the few exceptions to this are the rituals developed by Marcher **landskneppers** to improve the productivity of farms. A year is the natural cycle of any farm, which is what allows the rituals to span this duration without becoming infeasible.

Enchantments with shorter duration are eminently possible, and are usually easier to create than an equivalent ritual that would last a season. However the difference is much less than might otherwise be expected, an enchantment that lasts only a day can be easily two thirds the cost of one that lasts three months. There are two common exceptions to this rule - both curses and effects that conceal (primarily found in the Night realm) regularly have a year duration. While it is possible to create enchantments that last for a year, they are significantly more expensive than those which last for only a season.

Only the inclusion of **ilium** in a ritual allows it to exceed this natural limitation of magic.

2.3.7 The Law of Synergy

The best way to make formulaic rituals more effective is to perform them on multiple targets at the same time. Rituals designed to take advantage of the Law of Synergy allow the ritualists to perform a single ritual that will affect more than one target for less than the cost to perform each individual ritual. The limits of the power that can be achieved using the Law of Synergy are thus set by the skill of the magicians attempting the ritual, rather than the inherent magnitude of the ritual.

The Law of Synergy often needs to be combined with the Law of Bonds to work effectively. Many formulaic rituals are designed so that they can be cast on members of the same banner, sect, or coven.

It is not possible to use the Law of Synergy with spontaneous magic. It is possible to create a spontaneous effect that covers a fixed number of targets, but you cannot make an arcane projection for an effect whose magnitude changes the more targets you add in. Only a formulaic ritual is sufficiently complete to allow the flexibility to affect a variable number of targets and take advantage of the Law of Synergy in this way.

2.3.8 The Law of Boundaries

Non-magicians are sometimes surprised that the boundaries drawn on maps can have an effect on magic. In practice it is more the case that the things that affect where territory and region boundaries are drawn, the course of a river, the eaves of a forest, or a range of mountains also affect magic.

Powerful formulaic rituals that target a wide area are often limited in their extent to a single region or territory. The power of the magic is constrained by these natural boundaries limiting its extent. The Law of Boundaries can also be important when combined with the Law of Synergy. The resources owned by Imperial citizens have an intrinsic connection with the territory they are situated in and it is often possible to use this link to create formulaic rituals that target one or more resources in a territory.

2.3.9 The Law of Essence

Everything that exists in the realms or in the mortal world has an **essence**, a set of essential qualities that make it what it is. Magic can relatively easily change the **accidental properties** of a thing, but the more fundamental the qualities of something are, the harder they are to change. For example, Spring magic can be used to heal an individual preternaturally quickly, provided that their wounds have been tended and they would have recovered anyway. It cannot heal a traumatic wound, because it is not in the nature of such wounds to naturally recover in time.

The Law of Essence is particularly important for some Night magic rituals that create a glamour to change the accidental properties of something but not the essence, but it is also important in other realms. Powerful magicians can influence chance, make things stronger or weaker, but they cannot make something do something completely outside its nature. They cannot make water burn, or stone float in the air, they cannot make a person fly or create a rain of fire. The Law of Essence is relevant in spellcasting as well - the **operate portal** cantrip targets a structure whose essential nature is that of a portal or gate. It won't affect any structure or object that doesn't have these essential qualities.

2.4 Limits

2.4.1 Restore Life

The Spring realm is powerfully resonant with healing magic, but no Imperial magician has ever been able to create a ritual that restores life to the dead. Some Winter magics allow a magician to contact the recently departed, or even summon back a shade that can be questioned, but like the Spring realm it appears to be powerless to help those who have passed on. In Empire, once a person dies, they are dead for good.

Many magicians have spent their entire lifetime searching for ways to cheat death. None have ever found a way to restore the dead to life, but a few have found ways to cheat death, or at least postpone it for a while. Although there are no rituals of this kind in Imperial lore at this time, anything like this would definitely need to be cast on the target while they were still alive.

There are rituals that allow a magician to give a semblance of life to a corpse, the most famous of which is **Quickening Cold Meat**. However these rituals work by conjuring creatures from the realms, usually drudges, to inhabit the corpse and cause it to move. The Winter realm has a strong affinity for magic involving dead bodies, but rituals of this kind make use of the body to house a spirit of the realm, they do not restore the body to life in any way.

2.4.2 Resist Effects

It is possible to use the Winter realm to create wards that harm those who cross them, and Night magic can hide the true nature of something, but beyond this there are few if any rituals that can offer protection to a subject. No magician has ever been able to create a ritual that allows the subject to **resist** a magical effect such as that caused by the **repel** spell. Nor is it possible to use ritual magic to make a subject immune to the blows of swords, bows, or other weapons. There are many rituals that make a subject stronger, allowing them to suffer more such blows before they are defeated, but none that make it so that the subject can resist or otherwise ignore the effect.

2.4.3 Mind Control and Silence

Many rituals create powerful emotions, feelings, or sensations in those that experience the effects, either as a side effect of the magic or as the main purpose such as with the **Chamber of Pallas**. These rituals can have a powerful effect on those that encounter them, but all serious magicians agree that the nature of the target's response is fundamentally set by them, not by the magician who performed the ritual. Magic is simply not powerful enough to control the mind of another living being, forcing it to act as the ritualist desires.

Of course there are ways to use magic to control your enemies, using it to threaten, cajole, and coerce people. However these methods are not intrinsically more reliable or powerful than a threat of violence. Skilled magicians can use ritual magic very effectively to **influence** others, but they cannot control them.

In the same way, magic cannot compel someone to speak the truth, and it cannot read minds. This means that there is no effective "truth detection" magic in the Empire. It is possible to create an urge to be forthright or plain speaking, but it is not even possible to create a roleplaying effect that makes a character want to speak the truth. Nor is possible to remove the ability to speak from a person using ritual magic.

2.4.4 Conjuring and Summoning

It is not possible to use ritual magic to force another being to appear before you, either a mortal or an inhabitant of the realms. There are Autumn rituals that allow you to send communications to another being, such as [Call Winged Messenger](#), but the target is free to respond as they choose. They are under no compulsion to respond and they would need to use methods of their own to appear if they were far distant at the time.

Likewise, there are rituals that allow you to contact certain named eternal, such as [Swim Leviathan's Depth](#). Some of these rituals create an opportunity to meet with the being at a regio later. Almost always, the eternal will appear as requested, but it is well understood that the ritual itself does not compel the being to appear, rather it is the nature of the eternal that causes them to act in this way. Having long ago agreed to respond if called, they are bound to do so for all time by their nature, not by the ritual itself.

It is possible to create rituals that request or invite inhabitants of a realm to enter the mortal world - albeit only with their agreement - but it is not possible to summon them. Rituals like [Knights of Glory](#) work because Eleonaris has agreed to release her knights into the mortal world when called. Likewise, rituals that attempt to create, conjure, or summon fortifications or structures from another realm will not work without the agreement of an appropriate eternal. [Frozen Citadel of Cathan Canae](#) works because Cathan Canae has many frozen citadels - which she sends to the mortal world in response to the ritual.

There are rituals that appear to breach these limits, such as [Forge the Wooden Fastness](#) or [Dripping Echoes of the Fen](#) where the eternal in question was not recorded for many years. Knowledgeable magicians knew that there must be an eternal in question - such a ritual cannot work without the assistance or involvement of one - but for whatever inscrutable reasons their identity had remained secret. In recent history, the eternal sponsoring those two particular rituals were uncovered by [scholars of the Unfettered Mind](#).

2.4.5 Teleportation

It is possible for magicians and others to move from the mortal world to a [chamber](#), but they cannot travel on from there: they must return to the mortal world through the same door they entered by. It is not possible to move onwards from a chamber, nor to re-enter the mortal world in a different location. This limitation is a fundamental restriction of the magic of the realms - it cannot convey a magician from one place to another.

A ritual like [Call Winged Messenger](#) will convey a message to a target, but this ritual works by literally summoning a winged messenger from the Autumn realm to carry the message. It takes time for the message to reach the target; it does not travel instantly.

Interestingly, this limitation *is* violated by the power of the Sentinel Gate. The Gate is a magical item, and as such it is a thing of the mortal world only and does not draw on the power of the realms. Whether it is this that allows it to exceed the limits of ritual magic is unknown, but certainly all attempts to reproduce the power of the Gate using ritual magic have always failed.

2.4.6 Invisibility

Although Varushkan folklore is replete with stories of wolves that are invisible, undetectable to the mortal eye, most magicians consider these tales fit only for a child. There have been countless attempts to use Night magic to render an individual invisible, but none have ever succeeded. The Night realm can mask a thing, change its shape or appearance, but it always leaves something in its place. There is no realm that can be used to make something invisible.

Although Night magic resonates with glamours that change the physical appearance of something, as well as rituals designed to baffle and divinations, it cannot hide itself. If an army is enchanted with a Night ritual to conceal it then a divination like [the Eye of the High Places](#) that is lower magnitude than the shroud will still reveal that there is a Night enchantment in place. Similarly, it is not possible to use Night magic to baffle a ritual divination so completely that it returns the wrong answer.

2.4.7 Enchanting Bourse Resources

Mithril, white granite, weirwood, and ilium are the most precious resources found anywhere in the Empire, so valuable that control of known deposits is closely regulated by the [Imperial Bourse](#). Countless attempts have been made over the centuries to develop ritual magic that can increase the production of these resources, but all have failed. Even attempts to scry for unworked deposits have proved unsuccessful.

Urizen magicians who have studied the problem for many years have concluded that materials of this kind have a degree of raw magical power inherent in them. This power appears to be a fundamental part of the mortal world, rather than having any connection with the realms. When the materials are in their unworked state waiting to be harvested, they create an interference that confounds any attempts to use the magic of the realms to locate or gather it. Sadly this natural resistance to magic is largely lost when the materials are removed and refined or processed.

So potent is this natural effect, that it has on occasion proved useful. The deposits of white granite in the Brilliant Shore were discovered centuries ago by a young icewalker who took shelter in the area while the region was assailed by a magical storm conjured by the Thule. When the magician noticed that the storm passed over the cave where they were sheltering, they realised that something in the area must be weakening the curse. Further investigation of the cave discovered the white granite deposits, and provided the Wintermark people with a valuable resource.

2.4.8 Supernatural Effects

Magicians can use the magic of the realms to change the mortal world, but it has an inherent tendency to resist this change. The more unnatural the change, the greater the resistance. One way that a magician can create a completely unnatural effect is to bring some force or object from the realms into the mortal world. Powerful rituals like Quickening Cold Meat summon Winter spirits to inhabit corpses so that they follow the magicians' will. The fortress "created" by Frozen Citadel of Cathan Canae is in fact one of the many that exists in the Summer realm and the ritual brings it into the mortal realm for a season.

Experienced magicians appreciate that the best approach is to create magical effects that work with the essential nature of the target rather than trying to create something unnatural. If a magician wishes to burn a forest down, it is infinitely easier to create a forest fire than it is to create a rain of fire.

2.4.9 Armies and Battles

It is possible to use magic that enhances the effectiveness of an army - either by requesting magical warriors from the realms to fight alongside them or by enhancing their strength, insight, or bonds. Cursing armies is possible, but is difficult and crucially requires a powerful arcane connection to the army in question - usually the general of the army or a similar figure.

It is **not** possible to curse an area or an army so as to impede army or navy movement in any way. Ritual magic cannot, for example, stop an army or navy moving into, out, or through a territory, nor restrict how far armies can move if they start in or move through that territory. It is not possible to use ritual magic to pin an army in place.

It is possible to use magic to affect a territory to increase or decrease the number of casualties that result in from any fighting. Rituals like Rivers Run Red and Rivers of Life affect everyone in the territory in a way that makes them more or less likely to die. What is not possible is to use magic *on a territory* to directly affect the outcome of a three month long campaign in that territory. Strategic outcomes are too complex and too unpredictable to be influenced by magic in this way.

You can create magic that influences the fighting - you might fill an area with storms for a season - but that does not affect the outcome of the campaign, i.e. it does not affect the victory points assigned to either side. No matter how potent the magic on the territory, it will be indiscriminate, and that means it will create effects that both sides are able to take advantage of based on whatever actions they take.

You can create rituals that enchant or curse armies - to make them more or less effective. But any ritual that attempts to enchant or curse a territory with the goal of positively or negatively influencing the outcome of a military campaign that takes place there will fail.

2.4.10 Economic Territory Effects

It is not possible to use ritual magic to duplicate the effect of a great work - that is, to create a pool of resources that are distributed between characters in a territory. While we experimented with this effect, it was too administratively burdensome to support at this time.

2.4.11 Seasonal Stacking

The ritual enchantments Blessing of New Spring, Strong Ox, Golden Sun, and Gathering the Harvest have a unique synergy that allows each to build on the other. It has proved impossible to duplicate this synergy with rituals intended to be cast on resources other than farms - the rituals remain peculiar anomalies.

2.4.12 Transmutation

It's not possible to turn most personal resources into a military unit using magic without the direct aid of an eternal. To be transformed, a resource must have some kind of innate magical power, either a mana site, a forest or a mine. You cannot transform businesses, congregations, farms, herb gardens, military units or fleets.

2.4.13 Imperial Citizenship

It is not possible to use ritual magic to sever the connection between a person and an egregore. The connection seems to be protected by the Law of

Essence. A person can voluntarily choose to give up their connection to an egregore, but this choice cannot be forced using magic.

2.4.14 Affecting Lineage

Purely mortal ritual magic cannot grant or remove lineage. It is possible to create such effects with the assistance of an appropriate **eternal**, but few are interested in providing their assistance. Some powerful enchantments can increase the likelihood that children born or conceived under their effects will manifest an appropriate lineage but it is impossible for mortal ritual magic to force or predict this. One ritual - **The Twilight Masquerade** - creates glammers that appear to grant or remove lineage, but they do not change the actual lineage of the character they are cast upon.

2.4.15 Sharing Ritual Lore

While rituals such as **Shared Mastery of the Magician's Guild** allow a **coven** to share **spellcasting** knowledge between its members it is not possible to do the same with **ritual mastery**. While ritual magic can remove mastery (as seen with **Infant Starts with a Blank Slate**) it can never grant someone mastery of a ritual.

2.5 Divinations

Normal divination rituals use the power of the realms to glean useful information. The Day realm with its emphasis on predictability, facts, and figures, provides measurements and known quantities. Divinations in other realms are usually similar, providing specific information of interest to that realm, such as the Autumn ritual **Ties that Bind** which lets a magician discover details about a bonded item they have an intimate connection with.

Divinations of the Night realm are unusual because the disordered chaotic nature of this realm means that divinations that draw upon it tend to provide unpredictable answers. Responses are often in the form of riddles and symbolic visions, as in the **Signs and Portents** ritual. These rituals tend to provide secrets and mysteries, or at least omens of them, as they have been detected by the Night realm. The realm itself makes no attempt to understand or prioritise these secrets, it only perpetuates them.

In neither case is it possible to create a ritual that asks a question of the realm itself. The realms are not sentient and they cannot analyse information to provide conclusions, opinions, or judgements. The only way to create such a ritual is by involving an eternal of that realm. There are only a small number of such rituals currently in Imperial lore, the most notable being **Swim Leviathan's Depth** which asks Leviathan to answer a specific question. Leviathan will answer the question, but can only do so based on the knowledge it has. Involving a sentient agent in this way makes it possible to achieve something that would not normally be possible, but at the risk of Leviathan not knowing the answer or even simply being wrong.

Arcane projections for spontaneous divination effects must specify very precisely the information that is wanted and the subject of the divination. Such projections cannot be used to glean other information or even be cast on a different subject. Only formulaic magic possesses this degree of flexibility. For example, it is easy to make an arcane projection that determines information about the history of a specific item; it is not possible to create an arcane projection that lets the ritualist perform that spontaneous effect on any item.

Divinations that deal with esoteric information are likely to only ever exist as spontaneous magic that targets a specific named item - one where we can be confident the desired information exists. Likewise it is only ever possible to use divination magic to gain information the referees have reliable access to.

2.5.1 Current Events

Divinations are only effective when looking at events and objects that are recent. This need not be current - you can divine things that happened in the last few days, the last few seasons, potentially even the last few years if their effects are still resonating. But you can't use ritual divination to obtain information about the past without a specific focus to the events of the past.

A spell like **Hand of the Maker** works because it is cast on the item in question. That item is the link to its own past, and so it is possible to use the item which currently exists and is in your hand to find out about how it was made. Or you can use **Skein of Years** to find the dramatic and important events from the item's history. Without the item in question, neither ritual would be remotely possible.

Rituals like **Swim Leviathan's Depth** work because they allow you to ask an eternal creature what it knows of the past. The ritual does not divine that information for you - it puts you in contact with an eternal that might know the answer.

This limitation of divinations exist to preserve the mystery and intrigue of the setting. The wiki in particular includes hundreds of descriptions of notable places that are associated with legends or mysteries. There is no current plot for most of these locations - they exist to inspire us to write plot with them in the future. The moment we do so, you will be able to use divination magic to investigate that mystery. That will work because the very fact that we are doing plot with it means that there will be contemporary events which can be the subject of divination. But if there is no plot to find out more information

about - if there are not current events to divine - then there is no more information to give out than is already on the wiki, and the divination will fail.

2.5.2 Maps

Maps are a powerful hearth magic, symbolic representations of a location that allow a magician to perform magic that will divine information about the place in question. All scrying rituals that operate at the territory level require a suitable map before they can be performed. Any attempts to create a ritual that scries an area without using a map will fail.

It is not possible to do the opposite - to use divination to create a map of an unknown territory. If such a thing were possible it would instantly circumvent the restrictions on scrying in general - magicians would simply need to create the map first, then use it for the following divination. This isn't possible - you can never create a map with magic.

2.6 The Role of Eternals

A number of formulaic rituals in Imperial lore carry the name of an [eternal](#) indicating that they involve the active co-operation of that creature. All eternals are sentient and able to communicate - in a way that the realms fundamentally are not. A formulaic ritual or spontaneous effect that involves an eternal allows magicians to perform magic with the active assistance of an intelligent power of the realm, rather than simply drawing on the realm's natural resonance. This cooperation allows magicians to create an effect that can exceed the normal limits of magic, so such rituals are especially valuable.

Eternals are not gods, but each eternal has a palette of abilities that come from an innate connection to the magic of their realm. Paradoxically, a coven of magicians is often capable of a wider array of magical effects than an eternal is, even when using the magic of that realm. For example, while Leviathan has a range of powers related to divination, it has little ability to purify venom or help a warrior to strike down their foes. Attempting to secure Leviathan's assistance to create a personal combat enchantment, for example, is doomed to failure.

The nature of eternals is such that once their agreement is procured it cannot be renounced, so most eternals are reluctant to agree to such arrangements. Imperial magicians who abuse these rituals will soon incur the wrath of the eternal whose patience they try. This means that eternals are often cautious about having rituals that secure their assistance entered into [Imperial lore](#).

2.6.1 Agreement

It is not possible to create a ritual that involves an eternal without their solemn agreement to be bound to that ritual. A magician who wishes to create a spontaneous effect involving an eternal must first procure their consent. The nature of this consent varies from one eternal to another - but in most historical cases, the eternal provided the mage with a token of some kind, an arcane symbol of their agreement.

The length and nature of the negotiations are likely to be dependent on the nature of the eternal. Some will request payment from the magician creating the ritual. Others may ask for political favours from the organisation that backs them. It is common for the magician to create a ritual in such a way that the power of some of the mana crystals used to cast it is tithe to the eternal involved, as ongoing payment.

Once the participation of an eternal is secured, the magician can create an [arcane projection](#) for the spontaneous effect they have agreed. Anyone who possess the ritual projection can use it normally, including the [Dean of the Lyceum](#) or [Master of Ice and Darkness](#) creating a formulaic version of the ritual. Eternals who understand the nature of the Empire and the workings of the Conclave are likely to discuss whether a ritual is to be added to [Imperial lore](#) or not before they agree to be bound to it.

For example, the ritual [Swim Leviathan's Depth](#) allows a magician to ask [Leviathan](#) a single question. The question must ask why something has happened or is happening, but provided that condition is met, the Leviathan will answer the question to the best of its ability based on what it knows. It would be impossible to create such a ritual without the cooperation of an eternal - the Day realm can be used to cast a number of important divinations but you cannot query the realm directly, nor ask for its opinion.

2.6.2 Eternal Nature

An eternal can specify certain actions or conditions that will form the basis of the ritual - the obvious example is the precise method used for creating a [Missive for Sadogua](#) (the five-by-five grid and the inclusion of a rune). The eternal is free to ignore any attempt to perform the ritual without these components; in some cases the ritual will not function at all without the appropriate conditions being met.

Eternals may insist that certain conditions be met to secure their co-operation. For example, it is widely believed that the magicians who secured the co-operation of [Ephesis](#) in the creation of [Ephesis' Scale](#) agreed that the Empire would always support free commerce. If the Empire were to abandon this principle, Ephesis would be free to renounce the contract and this ritual would cease to function. If this happened, the ritual would fail without any effect or mana used.

In almost all known cases, the eternal stipulates behaviour by mortals that will void the agreement, generally referred to as an *assurance*. No eternal has created a ritual that they themselves can choose to break. No matter what is said, the eternal is bound to the ritual once they agree to it, while the magicians who negotiate with them are free to act as they wish - if they are prepared to allow the eternal to end their association.

The eternal cannot later withdraw from the agreement should they change their mind or become dissatisfied with the other party. A spontaneous ritual projection has power only until it is performed, but if it becomes a formulaic ritual then the agreement is binding for as long as the ritual is practiced. For these reasons most eternals do not enter into these agreements lightly.

2.6.3 Communication

Communication with an eternal is no different from any other ritual that involves that eternal. Such rituals require the binding agreement of the eternal involved - otherwise they cannot be performed either spontaneously or as a formulaic ritual. In Imperial lore, only the Night eternal Sadogua - *often called the brother of wizards* - and the Summer eternal Meraud have agreed to be bound in such a way. Any Imperial magician may perform the formulaic rituals *Missive for Sadogua* or *From the Mouths of Babes* respectively to contact these eternals.

No other eternal has thus far been persuaded to make themselves available to any magician who wishes to make free use of their time in this way. Most others prefer to use ad hoc methods to communicate with those they favour; providing magical items or other means to allow more limited contact. Alternatively, if a magician is able to convince an eternal to come to an appropriate regio at an agreed time then they can use the *operate portal* cantrip to allow the eternal to meet with them there.

Before the recent conjunction it was possible to use spontaneous magic to force a message or a package on an eternal. There was no evidence that such messages were well received, or even read. Now that the conjunction has passed, and its wake has altered the nature of spontaneous magic, it is no longer possible to manage even this.

Imperial magicians who wish to communicate with an eternal are best advised to seek them out. Either their heralds, when they are about their business in the Hall of Worlds or the mortal realm, or the eternal themselves if they enter a chamber. Most eternals that have business with the Empire will make themselves available to the *archmage* - if they are friendly. Some archmages take it upon themselves to facilitate communication between eternals and Imperial magicians, others prefer to control contact to ensure that these powerful agents are treated appropriately by having them deal only with their equals.

2.6.4 Response

Ritual magic involving an eternal almost always involves a response of some kind from them. If the response is an item or set of items, such as the Autumn ritual *Ephisis' Scale*, then the response usually comes within the hour. More complex rituals such as *Challenge the Iron Duke* may not bring a response for many months or longer as the *Master of Challenges* contemplates what task to set the challenger. An eternal named in a ritual cannot delay their response but neither can it be rushed - they must take the time needed to give it their full attention.

2.6.5 Rituals that deal with Eternals

The following formulaic rituals are known to deal directly with an Eternal. Rituals in *italic* with an asterisk are part of *Urizen lore* rather than *Imperial lore*. Rituals that are defunct - either withdrawn by the eternal or no longer functional - have a line through them.

Ritual	Eternal	Explanation	Realm	Mag.
<i>Before the Throne of Estavus</i>	Estavus	Swaps raw materials for Autumn mana.	Autumn	4
<i>Ephisis' Scale</i>	Ephisis	Allows trade with the eternal Ephisis	Autumn	4
<i>Balanced Scales of Lann</i>	Ephisis	Grants one rank of Autumn lore for a season, and allows the trade of metal for magical power.	Autumn	20
<i>Fire on the Water</i>	Estavus	Draws on a contract with the House of Fire and Flame to gain their aid	Autumn	120
<i>Wellspring of the High Peak*</i>	Ossegrahn	Trades measures of ambergelt with an eternal to produce Spring vis	Spring	6
<i>Fire in the Blood</i>	Arhallogen	Grants 1 rank of spring lore, and additional prowess with venomous rituals for a season, at the cost of lasting venom	Spring	20
<i>Forge the Wooden Fastness</i>	Irra Harah	Creates a temporary supernatural fortification in a forested region	Spring	100
<i>Noble Mien of the Hawk Lords</i>	Meraud	Grants one rank of Summer lore for a Season and additional prowess when performing powerful rituals	Summer	20

Ritual	Eternal	Explanation	Realm	Mag.
<i>Raise the Dragonsworn Cohort*</i>	Adamant	Provides a powerful military unit for a season in return for a mine	Summer	20
Challenge the Iron Duke	Barien	Binds an Eternal to provide a challenge and a reward	Summer	30
<i>Hook of the Hoarfrost Guardian*</i>	Cathan Canae	Grants four strikedowns a day with a pole-arm for a season	Summer	40
Golden Ramparts	Meraud	Summons servants of Meraud to defend a fortification. It increases the defensive strength of a fortification by 1500 points.	Summer	75
Frozen Citadel of Cathan Canae	Cathan Canae	Creates a temporary supernatural fortification in mountainous region in a territory	Summer	100
<i>Stone's Unyielding Defiance*</i>	Adamant	Enchants a fortification, repairing it and increasing the combat strength by 1,500 for a season	Summer	90
Knights of Glory	Eleonaris	Summons supernatural troops to enhance a campaign army	Summer	120
<i>Treacher's Quill*</i>	Agramant	Sends a message to the eternal Agramant	Winter	2
Tribute to the Thrice-Cursed Court	The Thrice-cursed Court	Trades crafted items for Winter mana	Winter	4
<i>Mark of Agramant*</i>	Agramant	Places an enduring magical mark on a target that can only be detected with detect magic	Winter	4
Pallid Flesh of the Dead King	Tharim	Grants three ranks of endurance for a season at the cost of persistent venom.	Winter	13
<i>Unleash the Beasts Within*</i>	Agramant	grants significant strength to a military unit that supports an Imperial army	Winter	13
<i>The Crimson Feast*</i>	Agramant	Target gains three ranks of endurance for a season.	Winter	15
Clarion Call of Ivory and Dust	Kaela	Conjures unliving winter troops to greatly enhance the rank of a military unit when fighting in support of an army.	Winter	20
Sorin's Rite of Agony	Sorin	Grants 1 rank of winter lore for a season, and additional prowess with curses, at the cost of an unhealing wound	Winter	20
<i>Thirst of the Devourer*</i>	Agramant	Grants a target the ability to heal themselves when they successfully deliver an IMPALE	Winter	24
<i>Loosen the Shackles*</i>	Agramant	Enchants a campaign army, changing its quality and filling soldiers with murderous intent	Winter	80
The Basalt Citadel	Sorin	Creates a temporary supernatural fortification in ruined region in a territory	Winter	100
Quickening Cold Meat	Wise Rangara	Creates a force of animated corpses that enhance the fighting strength of an army by 1000 for a year.	Winter	150
The Celestial Library	Phaleron	Delivers book or scroll to Eternal for possible destruction	Day	4
Gift of Knowledge	Phaleron	Delivers book or scroll to Phaleron in return for prismatic ink	Day	4
Swim Leviathan's Depth	Leviathan	Asks a specific question of the eternal Leviathan to divine a past cause or event that has led to a present-day state of affairs or consequence	Day	18
Kimus' Glaring Eye	Kimus	Grants the ability to use repel on two targets at once	Day	19
Combing the Beach	Roshanwe	Provides guidance from the eternal Roshanwe	Day	20
Crystalline Focus of Aesh	Kimus	Grants one rank of Day lore for a Season and additional prowess when performing divination rituals	Day	20
Missive for Sadogua	Sadogua	Sends a message to an Eternal	Night	2
Tithe of Bats	Sadogua	Exchanges measures of iridescent gloaming and dragonbone for Night vis	Night	10
Whispering Shadow Courtiers	Whisper Gallery	Enables limited communication with the Whisper Gallery	Night	8
Clear Counsel of the Everflowing River	Sung	Seeks aid from the eternal Sung in solving a mystery	Night	20
Distill the Serpent's Stone	Azoth	Creates a unique consumable alchemical item.	Night	100
Dripping Echoes of the Fen	Sadogua	Creates a temporary supernatural fortification in marsh territory.	Night	100
Sorin's Chastising Touch	Sorin	Grants a magician the ability to repeatedly call CLEAVE with a rod.	Winter	14

2.7 Further Reading

- Ritual theory
 - ◆ Spring magic
 - ◆ Summer magic
 - ◆ Autumn magic
 - ◆ Winter magic
 - ◆ Day magic
 - ◆ Night magic
- Spellcasting
- Rituals
 - ◆ Formulaic Rituals
 - ◆ Spontaneous Magic

3 Spellcasting



Magic can heal or harm with equal facility.

3.1 Overview

A magician is any character that purchases the **magician** skill. Becoming a magician allows a character to cast spells, and with additional study they can master the **realm lores** that allow them to perform powerful and versatile **rituals**. Like artistic ability, command of magic is both a talent and a skill - some people are born with a natural knack for working magic, while others develop their ability to weave spells through hard work and long hours of study. Even a natural talent needs help channelling and honing their power, however - there are many stories of prodigies who lack the ability to control their magic properly causing minor magical mishaps.

In the Empire it is common for a magician to learn their art studying with a more experienced mentor. It is theoretically possible to be "self taught" however - there are libraries and tomes that lay out magical law in all the nations.

Every magician, no matter where in the world they originate, learns three common spells (sometimes called *cantrips* in the Empire): **detect magic**, **operate portal**, and **create bond**. These versatile utility spells allow a magician to perform a number of functions, and serve as the foundation for all other magical ability. These spells are only the beginning however - with additional study a magician can master more incantations that allow them to channel their personal magic to **heal** their allies, **repel** their foes, and even **grant the recently departed the ability to speak to the living**.

In addition, every magician knows how to wield **wands** and **rods**. These implements are to the magician what swords and axes are to the warrior, or medicines and bandages to the **physick**. Their main use is to channel and unleash martial incantations, but even the most peaceful magician can benefit from bonding a magical implement to enhance their ability to work magic.

Finally, some magicians focus their magical study towards battlefield applications. These brave individuals are called **battle mages** and they learn to channel their power through **staves** and attune themselves to special **armour** designed specifically to protect magicians while leaving them free to perform magic. This last is especially valuable to magicians who go into dangerous situations; mundane armour prevents the casting of even the simplest spell.

3.2 Spellcasting

- Every magician starts with four personal mana every day
- You must expend personal mana or a mana crystal to cast a spell
- You cannot cast spells while wearing armour other than a helmet
- All spells require vocals clearly audible to everyone within a few metres

Any character that purchases the magician skill has four personal mana and is able to cast **create bond**, **detect magic** or **operate portal**. Each time a character purchases an **extra spell** they must choose one additional spell from the spellcasting list.

Your character may also use crystallized mana to cast spells; a single **mana crystal** can be used to cast any single spell.

Your personal mana replenishes overnight.

If you have the **battle mage skill** then you can cast spells while wearing **mage armour**, but you cannot cast spells while wearing regular **armour**. The only exception is a helmet: helmets do not interfere with spellcasting in any way.

All spell vocals require appropriate roleplaying which must include spell vocals in a clear voice audible to everyone within a few metres of you. All spells are one of two types, regular spells or offensive spells.

Regular Spells	Mana Cost
Create bond	1
Detect magic	1
Operate portal	1
Heal	1
Mend	1
Night pouch	1
Purify	1
Restore limb	1
Voice for the dead	1

3.3 Regular Spells

- **Require at least thirty seconds of appropriate roleplaying**
- **You must be capable of touching the target with the casting hand throughout the casting of the spell**
- **The spell fails if you or your target are hit or attack another character during spellcasting**
- **You can choose to *swift cast* a regular spell**

To cast a regular spell you must complete at least thirty seconds of **appropriate roleplaying** including spell vocals, and the use of one hand. These requirements do not mean you must chant or speak for the entire thirty seconds; you must include some vocal component but your appropriate roleplaying can also involve tracing magical signs or **runes** in the air, using props such as scrolls or powders, shaping magic with mystical passes, and the like.

You must be able to touch the target with your casting hand throughout the casting of the spell. Even if you do not touch the target you must be close enough to easily do so - you cannot cast a regular spell on a target who is only close enough to touch with an implement (but see **swift casting** below).

If you or your target attacks another character or either of you are hit then the spell fails. Your mana is not lost but you must begin the spell again.

3.3.1 Swift casting

- **Any regular spell can be cast with a few words of appropriate roleplaying instead of thirty seconds**
- **Swift casting a spell costs 2 mana rather than 1**
- **The effects of some spells change when they are swift cast**
- **If you are in combat, you must touch your target with an implement - a wand, rod, or staff**

Any magician who knows a regular spell can choose to swift cast it. Swift casting effectively allows the regular spell to be cast as if it were an **offensive spell**, but at the cost of an additional mana.

Some spells such as **purify** and **heal** have different effects when swift cast. You must make clear to the target what the effect is.

Magic items, rituals, and similar abilities do not provide the ability to swift cast a spell unless they explicitly say they do. For example, a wand may say that it allows you to cast or swift cast the purify spell, or a rod might allow you to swift cast the heal spell as if you knew it. An item that allows you to cast a spell as if you knew it without spending mana never allows you to change how it is cast.

3.4 Offensive Spells

Offensive Spells	Mana Cost
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Empower	1
Entangle	1
Paralysis	2
Repel	1
Shatter	2
Venom	1
Weakness	1

- **Require a few words of appropriate roleplaying**
- **Require you to hit the target with an implement - a wand, rod, or staff**

To cast an offensive spell you must utter a few words of appropriate roleplaying including spell vocals while you strike or touch your target with a wand, rod, or staff. You cannot cast an offensive spell without using a suitable [implement](#).

If you deliver an offensive melee strike to touch the target with your implement then the target also loses one global hit. You should always assume that your opponent has wounded you in this way unless their roleplaying clearly indicates otherwise.

Offensive spells are not interrupted or lost if you are attacked. For spells other than [venom](#) or [weakness](#) you do not lose the mana if it is clear that the [target has not taken the effect](#).

3.5 Further Reading

- [Overview](#)
- [Spellcasting](#)
- [Rituals](#)
 - ◆ [Formulaic Rituals](#)
 - ◆ [Spontaneous Magic](#)
 - ◆ [Battlefield Rituals](#)
 - ◆ [Enchantments](#)
 - ◆ [Curses](#)
 - ◆ [Ilium](#)
 - ◆ [Ritual Theory](#)
- [Magic Items](#)
- [Herbs & Potions](#)
- [Cosmology](#)
 - ◆ [Eternals](#)
 - ◆ [Realms](#)
 - ◆ [Regio](#)