

A minimalist line drawing of a plant. It features a central stem with two flowers. The upper flower is larger and more open, while the lower one is smaller and partially obscured by a large, broad leaf that extends from the base of the stem. The drawing is composed of simple black outlines on a white background.

A Magical Primer

Compiled by E. Rhys of the Corvus Kindred

Overview

Our magic system is one that is based in sacrifice, a system of losses and gains. You can't make something from nothing, so you are only as powerful as what you are prepared to sacrifice. This idea is encapsulated by the common Latin phrase (and slogan of our little world): "Animam sacrificare elementis," which can be roughly translated into "Sacrifice the soul to the elements." From this phrase, we derive the three necessities of magic: the animus, the element, and the sacrifice.

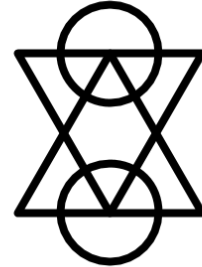
Animus

The animus is the first aspect, and without it, magic would be impossible to execute and control. "Animus" is a Latin term that can be variously translated as the soul, will, heart, or mind of an individual. As such, the animus has a two-fold existence: it is representative of your will and desire, but it is also the "physical" manifestation of your magical essence, or "core." Thus, the strength of your animus lies both in your mental fortitude and your innate abilities. The animus is then both something that you can control by strengthening your mental resilience, while also remaining outside of total control because you cannot change what gifts you were given at birth.

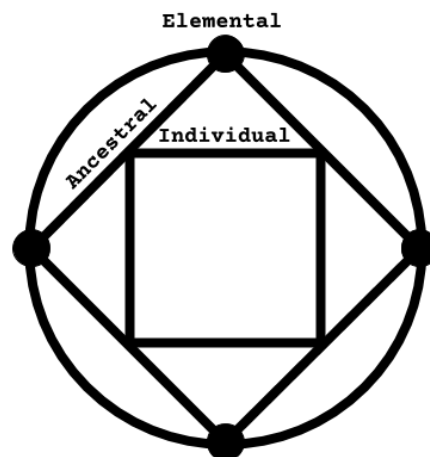
The mental aspect is important when performing and resisting magic. The stronger your mental fortitude and your desire for a particular outcome to happen, the more effective the result and the easier the magic will be for you to perform or neutralize. In a contest of mental fortitude against desire, your mental strength is ultimately more important because it is your will which powers your desire and your magic. The other aspect of this duality is your magical core, which represents the "physical" limits of your abilities. It is the culmination of your heritage, innate skills, and potential to manipulate and shape your surroundings. This half of the duality can be further divided into three aspects: the elemental, ancestral, and individual.

The Three Spheres

The first and "largest" section of your animus is the elemental aspect, which represents the lowest sphere of magic. This is the universal magical "soul" of the world that everyone can access. It is passive and inexhaustible in its purest form, however, your access to it is limited by your nature as a human. Other magical beings have a wider or narrower access to this "soul" depending on their construction and fortitude. As a human, the total amount that is available for you to use is fixed at birth and cannot be altered. However, at birth, your access to this complete quantity is limited and through training and practice, you expand your access to this aspect until you reach your threshold. This is a rare occurrence in one's lifetime and it usually only accomplished with extreme determination and sacrifice. Additionally, this aspect is replenishable, so if you exhaust your connection to the elemental "soul," it will return in time. The length of this waiting period varies depending on your mental fortitude (the stronger it is, the easier it will be for you to take damage and recover from it) and the amount used. The larger the amount of the elemental aspect that you use (relative to your access to this aspect), the longer it will take for it to replenish. In addition, everyone is born with an "elemental affinity." This affinity is a predisposition to a particular element, making magic related to this element easier for you to perform.



The next section is the ancestral aspect, which is "smaller" than the elemental aspect, but "larger" than the individual aspect. It also represents the intermediate sphere. This is the collective "soul" of every deceased individual. At its closest, it consists of your immediate (deceased) relatives, then your extended family, all the way back to the first practitioner of magic. This aspect is peculiar in that it is constructed from the cumulation of every individual's remaining *individual* aspect upon their passing (more on the construction of the







individual aspect later). Thus, the less you sacrifice your individual aspect, the more magical ability you transfer into the ancestral aspect upon your passage into the afterlife. Due to its unique construction, the power that you draw from the ancestral aspect is not your own, so it can only be used if the deceased agree to sacrifice it for you. It can then be used to bolster your power as you perform magic, often allowing for greater results. Your access to this aspect depends entirely on your deceased ancestors; they can either give it freely without prompting, or you can implore them for it. As it often happens, the further separated you are from a particular family, the less likely they are to share their power with you. This is not always the case, as the deceased sometimes make exceptions for relations who are prodigies, or for those of whom they have an investment in.

The last and "smallest" section is the individual aspect, which also represents the highest sphere of magic. This is your "soul" and your life-force. Its limits are set at birth and remain unchangeable. This aspect is what keeps you alive, and if you exhaust the entirety of it, death will quickly follow. Doing this is heavily looked down upon because if it occurs, your "soul" will never enter the ancestral animus upon your passing, depriving your living relatives of an additional source of power. Furthermore, your presence in the ancestral aspect allows living individuals to contact and talk to you in the afterlife. Since it is impossible to contact those who exhaust their individual aspects, we do not know what happens to them when they die. Despite this stigma, it is also the most powerful of the three due to its scarcity. As a result, it may be used to produce monumental feats of magic at the cost of your mental and physical well-being.

Elementum

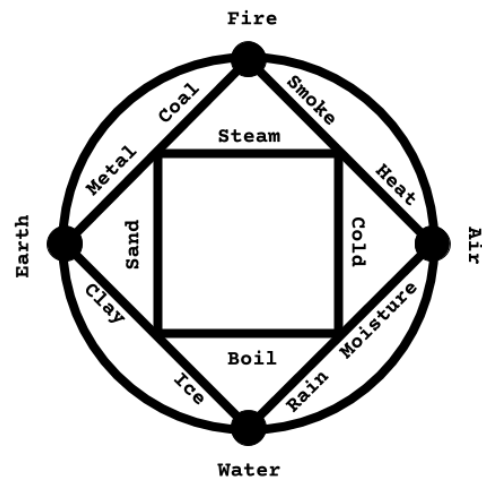
This encompasses the four elements: fire, air, earth, and water. These elements (and their various combinations) make up everything in the universe, and everything, no matter how complex, can be reduced to these four elements. In you, this forms your "elemental affinity," which typically becomes the primary element you utilize because magic of this type is easiest for you to perform and it only requires a minimal sacrifice. Your affinity might be reflected in your personality, although this is not always the case, as it may manifest as an

attraction to this element or activities related to it. Your elemental affinity is important when performing magic because it determines what magic will be the easiest and the hardest for you. For example, if you possess a fire affinity, magic related to fire will be the easiest, earth magic the next easiest and air magic slightly harder, while the most difficult will be water-based magic (see table directly below and the elemental tables at the end for a more detailed breakdown).

	Fire	Air	Earth	Water
Symbol				
Complementary	Earth	Fire	Water	Air
Neutral	Air	Water	Fire	Earth
Antithetical	Water	Earth	Air	Fire

The Three Spheres

The lowest sphere manifests in the pure elements: fire, air, water, and earth. In the intermediate sphere are the earthly combinations, which are coal, smoke, heat, moisture, rain, ice, clay, and metal. Finally, the highest sphere manifests as the antithetical combinations: steam, cold, boil, and sand.



These three spheres are most significant when you directly manipulate the elements, or when you perform more complex magic (such as rituals or potions) that directly incorporate the physical manifestations of the elements. In most castings, magic is typically derived from one of the four pure elements, so your elemental affinity will determine the relative ease of performing these types of magic.

Sacrificium

This is the sacrifice required to power your magic and it is the quantifiable connection between the caster and the effect. There are several factors that determine what kind of sacrifice you will need to produce your intended result. First, is your animus. The relative "size" of your animus becomes important because the smaller your animus, the bigger a sacrifice is required. Additionally, if this sacrifice is a piece of your animus, the smaller it is, the more likely you are to risk magical exhaustion by using too large of a portion. Furthermore, your elemental affinity also affects the degree of sacrifice needed. When performing magic related to your element, you will need a less significant sacrifice than if you were performing magic of your antithetical element. The farther you progress down the elemental correspondences from the table above, the larger a sacrifice you will need to perform magic of that type (at the same strength as someone with that affinity). If you do not scale your sacrifices to match the relative difficulty of the magic, you will either have a weaker result or there will be no effect. Finally, your surroundings also affect the type of sacrifice required. For example, if you are performing earth-based magic while surrounded by manufactured substances, you will need a bigger sacrifice to offset the negative impact of your surroundings. This would also be true of fire-based magic performed on a rainy or damp day, water-based magic on a hot or dry day, or air-based magic performed underwater.

The Three Spheres

The lowest sphere of sacrifices are those that are renewable or of minor importance. This would include sacrifices such as hair, saliva, nail clippings, or the elemental aspect. The next sphere is the intermediate sacrifices, which include minor non-renewable things or things of personal value. Some examples (in order of increasing significance) would be animal blood, animal bones/hide, animal life, human blood, human bones, human organs, and the ancestral aspect. The highest sphere represents the extremes to which people will go in order to fulfill their desires, and as a result, these sacrifices are the most valuable and are permanent. This includes the human life, memories, and the individual aspect.

Performing Magic

Magical Techniques

There are three broad categories in which the practice of magic can fall. These are (in order of decreasing power): rituals, potions, and castings. Rituals are stationary, typically performed at a symbolic location or an altar, and involve more materials, preparation, and time than the other categories. While they take longer to perform, they have the longest-lasting effects and are generally the strongest form of magic. Next are potions, which are mixtures of ingredients that produce an effect when consumed or applied externally. The time span for creating a potion depends on the intended effect, where potions with longer brewing times (months, instead of a couple hours) have the strongest effects. A benefit of potions is that they can be stored for a period of time before use, where rituals and castings begin to take effect as soon as they are finished. Finally, castings are the most immediate of the three techniques, but as a result, they are also the weakest. Castings are typically enhanced with the use of a physical focus, which might take the form of a staff, dagger, deck of cards, crystal or stone, or another item of personal significance. This focus often relates to the primary element that you use (typically your elemental affinity), but it may be different if you primarily practice magic of another element. When casting, the sacrifice tends to be a piece of one's animus because this sacrifice does not require you to incorporate a physical object. However, one's blood is often used to enhance more powerful castings. While you could use a physical sacrifice, this tends to be rare because castings are mainly used in situations (such as combat) where there is not enough time to perform a ritual or make a potion.

Magical Triads

These triads must be adhered to in order to successfully perform a ritual, potion, or casting. Skipping one of them will either decrease the efficacy of your result, or it could cause your magic to become unstable and backfire on you.

The Three Intentions

The first triad is the three intentions: produce, protect, or destroy. These intentions determine the general outcome of your magic. Magic that is intended to create an effect (whether it is a physical, mental, or illusory product) falls under the first category. This includes the practices of transfiguration, conjuration, illusion, enchantment, and divination. The next intention involves protection magic, which encompasses all magic that is used to protect the caster or someone else without causing harm. The general practice of defense falls under this category, as well as healing (a specific subsection of defensive magic). The last intention is destruction, which involves any magic that is used to destroy, harm, kill, or control (without their consent) someone or something. This encompasses the practices of destruction, necromancy, and occasionally enchantment.

The Three Spheres

The second triad is the three spheres of influence: low, intermediate, and high. These spheres determine whether your magic will have a larger or smaller impact on your surroundings. The lowest sphere deals with the laws of nature and the control of natural forces. This generally includes all elemental magic whose intention is to manipulate the elements and any attempts to control mundane animals. Next is the intermediate sphere, which deals with the laws of beings and how to influence them. This magic is focused on manipulating humans or numinous beings. Finally, the highest sphere deals with universal laws and how to control them. Magic of this type would manipulate the laws of gravity, space, time, etc. The highest sphere is rarely practiced due to the scope of the sacrifice required to perform this magic, however, it is possible in extreme circumstances.

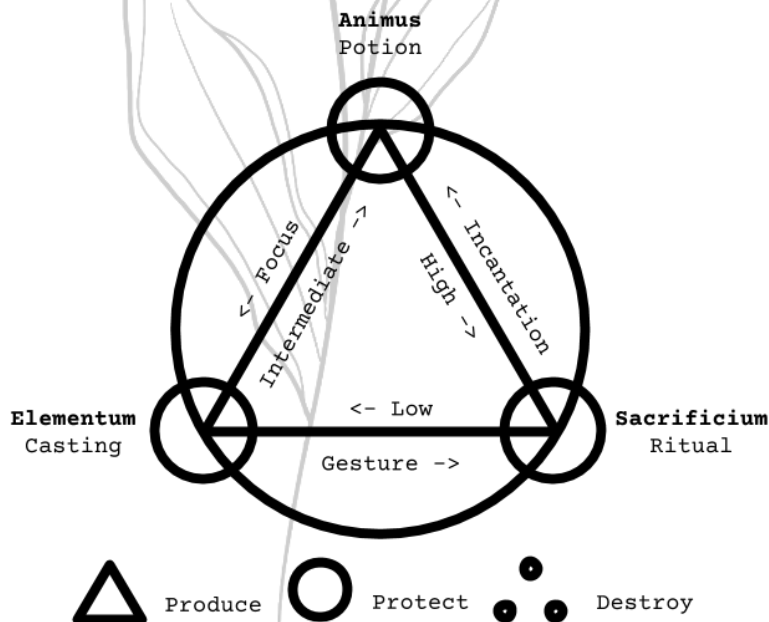
The Three Components

As discussed earlier, the three components of magic are: animus, elementum, and sacrificium. Here, the animus represents your mental fortitude and all-consuming desire to perform the ritual, potion, or casting. The elementum aspect involves your harnessing of the primal strength of the elements to power your magic, and it represents the primary element of the magic that you are performing. Last, the sacrificium is the cost of

performing the magic. See the earlier discussion for examples of common sacrifices, but the general rule of thumb is that the greater the sacrifice, the more powerful the result.

The Three Mediators

Finally, the last triad is the three mediators: incantation, gesture, and focus. These mediators are used to channel and focus your magic so that it does not overpower your control. The incantation refers to the words or chant that calls to the elemental powers. This is typically spoken or sung, but in some cases (such as mutism or the need to be quiet) it can be written down instead. Next, the gesture is the movement which draws the elemental power to the ritual, potion, or casting. Depending on the requirements of the magic, this movement might involve manipulating your body, hand, or focus. Finally, the focus is a device through which the magic is channeled and where it gathers before being released. In castings, this is usually your standard focus (staff, dagger, deck of cards, wand, crystal, etc.), but in potions or rituals, the focus may be your focus or a different object(s) of significance (such as the stirring rod when making potions or an object of significance that belongs to the individual you are targeting with your ritual).



Summary of the Steps

1. **Determine your intention** - what do you want to happen?
 - a. **Produce:** make someone or something appear, disappear, or change
 - b. **Protect:** heal or defend someone or something
 - c. **Destroy:** destroy, harm, kill, or control someone or something
2. **Determine your sphere of influence** - what do you want to effect?
 - a. **Low:** affecting elemental phenomena and mundane animals
 - b. **Intermediate:** influencing humans or numinous beings
 - c. **High:** affecting universal phenomena
3. **Determine the technique** - what is the most effective physical manifestation of your intention?
 - a. **Casting:** best for temporary or minor magic, or for immediate results
 - b. **Potions:** best for magic affecting the body or for storing effects until needed
 - c. **Rituals:** best for long-lasting or more powerful magic
4. **Prepare the components** - what is needed to produce your intention?
 - a. **Animus:** your need for the magic to work and your mental fortitude
 - b. **Elementum:** the predominant element (or combination of elements) of the magic
 - c. **Sacrificium:** the cost of the magic
5. **Select the mediators** - what is needed to bind the components together?
 - a. **Incantation:** correlates with animus; the spoken/written words that state your intention
 - b. **Focus:** correlates with elementum; the device that will channel and hold the magic
 - c. **Gesture:** correlates with sacrificium; the sacrificial movement(s) (literal or figurative)
6. **Perform the technique**
 - a. **Ritual:** assemble the physical objects at your altar (or on an altar cloth/portable altar or at a significant site); create the warding circle which will contain the magic within the circle until it is broken or the effect has been performed; focus on your intention and the predetermined sphere of influence;

Speak the incantation while performing the accompanying gesture(s); depending on the complexity, these steps may need to be spaced out or repeated multiple times; after the ritual, perform a basic cleansing ritual on yourself and your surroundings

- b. **Potion:** gather and prepare the necessary physical ingredients; perform a basic ward over the cauldron; follow the provided instructions - incorporating the sacrifice and elemental objects (ingredients), saying the incantation, and following the stirring movements when directed (in this case, the stirring rod serves as the focus)
- c. **Casting:** focus on your intention and intended sphere of influence while saying the incantation and moving your focus in the proper gesture; when performing this type of magic, you make the sacrifice at the moment of casting (your animus or blood are the most common); optionally, prior to casting, you can prepare a sacrifice in order to increase the general efficacy of your magic for a period of time (such as sacrificing an animal life before combat)

Intention	Sphere	Technique	Components	Mediators
Produce, Protect, or Destroy	Low, Intermediate, or High	Casting, Potion, or Ritual	Animus, Elementum, and sacrifice	Incantation, Gesture, and Focus

Magical Practices

"The Eight" refers to the broad magical practices into which all magic is divided. Each of these practices has a corresponding element, or a combination of elements, which determines the level of difficulty for an individual depending on their elemental affinity. The four main practices (associated with the pure elements) are: destruction, enchantment, defense, and transfiguration. The other four practices (associated with the combinations) are: illusion, divination, conjuration, and necromancy.

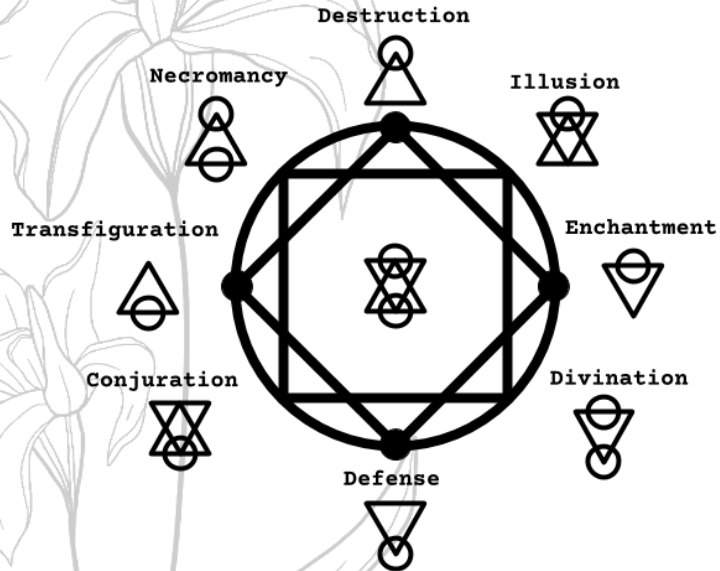
Focusing on the pure elements, the first practice is destruction, which is associated with fire and is used to destroy, kill, or cause harm to someone or something. This practice is taught, but it is restricted to specific uses and careers (such as mining or sanctioned combat). The next practice is enchantment, which is associated with air, and is used to

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manipulate how others see you (charms), or to force someone to do something (compulsion). Defense is associated with water and it is used to protect someone or something, either physically or mentally. It also includes techniques that neutralize active magic and healing magic. Finally, transfiguration is associated with earth and is used to alter the physical properties of someone or something.

The first of the elemental combinations is illusion, which is associated with both fire and air, and it is used to create a false object, image, or sensation. This can be performed on an individual (glamor), on an object to hide or disguise it, or to create a mirage of something. These illusions are not

physical and will not often withstand detailed inspection (some divinationary practices can detect illusions). The next practice is divination, which is associated with both air and water, and is used to learn about the future, scry, read someone's thoughts, or to uncover information. Conjunction is associated with both water and earth, and it is used to create something physical "out of thin air," summon/banish something, or to teleport. Lastly, necromancy is associated with both earth and fire, and it is used to manipulate the dead (ghost, corpse, bones, etc.). These practices manipulate death, unlife, and the life force of an individual. Additionally, practitioners of necromancy also tend to be more adept with sacrifices that fall in these categories, making their associated magic stronger. These abilities are highly regulated due to their implications, but basic techniques will be taught in schools.



Elemental Tables

Fire

	Combination	Product	Practice
Pure	Fire/fire	Fire	Destruction
Primary	Fire/earth	Coal	Necromancy
Secondary	Fire/air	Smoke	Illusion
Antithesis	Fire/water	Steam	—
Inverse Primary	Earth/fire	Metal	—
Inverse Secondary	Air/fire	Heat	—
Inverse Antithesis	Water/fire	Boil	—
Complementary	Earth/earth	Earth	Transfiguration
Comp. Neutral	Earth/air	Sand	—
Comp. Antithesis	Earth/water	Clay	Conjuration
Inverse Comp. Neu.	Air/earth	Moisture	—
Inverse Comp. Anti.	Water/earth	Ice	—
Neutral	Air/air	Air	Enchantment
Neu. Antithesis	Air/water	Cold	Divination
Inverse Neu. Anti.	Water/air	Rain	—
Antithetical	Water/water	Water	Defense

Air

	Combination	Product	Practice
Pure	Air/air	Air	Enchantment
Primary	Air/fire	Heat	Illusion
Secondary	Air/water	Cold	Divination
Antithesis	Air/earth	Moisture	—
Inverse Primary	Fire/air	Smoke	—
Inverse Secondary	Water/air	Rain	—
Inverse Antithesis	Earth/air	Sand	—
Complementary	Fire/fire	Fire	Destruction
Comp. Neutral	Fire/water	Steam	—
Comp. Antithesis	Fire/earth	Coal	Necromancy
Inverse Comp. Neu.	Water/fire	Boil	—
Inverse Comp. Anti.	Earth/fire	Metal	—
Neutral	Water/water	Water	Defense
Neu. Antithesis	Water/earth	Ice	Conjuration
Inverse Neu. Anti.	Earth/water	Clay	—
Antithetical	Earth/earth	Earth	Transfiguration

Earth

	Combination	Product	Practice
Pure	Earth/earth	Earth	Transfiguration
Primary	Earth/water	Clay	Conjuration
Secondary	Earth/fire	Metal	Necromancy
Antithesis	Earth/air	Sand	—
Inverse Primary	Water/earth	Ice	—
Inverse Secondary	Fire/earth	Coal	—
Inverse Antithesis	Air/earth	Moisture	—
Complementary	Water/water	Water	Defense
Comp. Neutral	Water/fire	Boil	—
Comp. Antithesis	Water/air	Rain	Divination
Inverse Comp. Neu.	Fire/water	Steam	—
Inverse Comp. Anti.	Air/water	Cold	—
Neutral	Fire/fire	Fire	Destruction
Neu. Antithesis	Fire/air	Smoke	Illusion
Inverse Neu. Anti.	Air/fire	Heat	—
Antithetical	Air/air	Air	Enchantment

Water

	Combination	Product	Practice
Pure	Water/water	Water	Defense
Primary	Water/air	Rain	Divination
Secondary	Water/earth	Ice	Conjuration
Antithesis	Water/fire	Boil	—
Inverse Primary	Air/water	Cold	—
Inverse Secondary	Earth/water	Clay	—
Inverse Antithesis	Fire/water	Steam	—
Complementary	Air/air	Air	Enchantment
Comp. Neutral	Air/earth	Moisture	—
Comp. Antithesis	Air/fire	Heat	Illusion
Inverse Comp. Neu.	Earth/air	Sand	—
Inverse Comp. Anti.	Fire/air	Smoke	—
Neutral	Earth/earth	Earth	Transfiguration
Neu. Antithesis	Earth/fire	Metal	Necromancy
Inverse Neu. Anti.	Fire/earth	Coal	—
Antithetical	Fire/fire	Fire	Destruction