

An Introduction to Magic

A Practical Introduction to Magical Theory and Research

Magic is the most powerful force in any known world. Through learned gestures, words and specially prepared objects a Mortal can call forth and command creatures from beyond our Plane, create element-like forces which can be used for attack or defense, and can manipulate the energies in organic matter both to heal and destroy. Skilled magical practitioners can even return life to the Dead or animate corpses to serve as slaves.

Yet with such power comes great commitment. Magic is not a force to be taken lightly- it is a power which requires great concentration and strength of Spirit. The study of magic and, later, Rituals takes so much mental energy that those who learn this delicate Art often dedicate themselves to the exclusion of other skills. Of course there are dabblers- the odd fighter or rogue who picks up a few spells or the jack-of-all-trade “Templars” and “Adepts” (as they style themselves) which claim to study magic with the facility of weapon-work and dexterous skills. Perhaps magic comes as easily for them as it does for those of us who focus solely on Magic and energy but they do not choose their path with impunity; they will almost never match our mastery of the Power and rarely our versatility.

Nevertheless I digress. I do not write this treatise to discuss the relative merits and pitfalls of combining magical study with another vocation. Rather I set these words as a means to record what I have learned in my centuries of study, my decades of travel and my lifetime of magical exposure. To put it simply I seek, within this treatise, to discuss not only the practice of casting spells but also the theories I have encountered regarding the source of magical power as well as the variations I have seen and researched for the delicate art of Rituals.

Sources of Power

Before launching into a discussion of power signatures, magical tools and spells it's important to establish an understanding of how magical power is not only created but also how Casters and Scholars access and direct this power.

For decades, nearly a century, I wandered the Mists studying and interacting with numerous cultures and magical traditions. While not my initial intention I became fascinated not only with the power that magic could offer but also with the legends, stories and theories which many people and teachers would relate in an effort to connect lessons in a logical manner and thereby ease the assimilation of magical knowledge by their students.

My first such experience was, of course, among my own people- the Agrobiata of the land known as Agrodom. I studied beneath a talented and powerful Healer named Pela Earahah learning the ways of the Earth and dutifully memorizing the incantations, motions and theories presented to me. Healer Pela was a fantastic mentor- her interest spread beyond medicine and healing into all areas of science, art and culture and in this I felt extremely lucky for unlike most Healing apprentices who learned solely of magic and medicines I was given instruction by many teachers in mathematics, arts, philosophy, law and divination.

Now I do not claim that I was a great student. I never managed to progress further than a basic understanding of mathematics and the Sciences. Yet Art come easily for me and therein I found the key I needed not only to unlock my full potential as a Healer and practitioner of Earth Magic but also to open my mind to seek a greater understanding of the Nature of Magic.

The teachings of the Agrobiata concerning magic revolve solely around those spells and effects which outsiders referred to as Earth. Initially my people had no word for “Celestial” magic having never encountered it before arriving as allies to the Kingdom of Vandlar centuries ago. We quickly learned, however, that while many of the abilities displayed by Celestial casters mirrored spells that we have known for millennia many others were well outside our understanding and, much to our alarm, caused us physical discomfort or outright pain. This has significant implications which I will discuss later in this manuscript.

It was the teachings of my people that all living creatures generate minute amounts of energy which they naturally radiate into the world. These tiny Motes of power are insignificant by themselves- it is only when they gather in larger quantities that they begin to take on more advanced stages of Power and become the source of Magic. It is taught that from hundreds perhaps thousands of these small “waves” interacting Lines of magical energy form.

Ley Lines have many behaviors- sometimes acting as natural water and at other times taking on the properties of a fire or the wind. In their natural state a Ley Line is relatively calm- a gently rippling stream of energy invisible to the naked eye. In general they “flow” gently across the world- unseen and permeating all things pulled and pushed gently by the movements of Life and the stars, sun, moon and Spells. Like a gentle storm or rain they also push and pull each other—flowing on “winds” of energy connecting them to each other in a great blanket of ever-shifting power. Spells and Rituals manipulate these larger collections of energy but the degree to which they affect them varies not only by the relative power of the effect sought but also the duration sought, nature of the effect and the caster him or herself. In its own way a Ley Line can react very violently—“flaring” with power causing Rituals to fail or spells to go awry.

Spell casters, I was taught, are those individuals who have learned to sense the small Motes of energy they produce and by doing so to sense the larger currents of magic as energy flows from one Line to another. Most of my early training revolved around memorization and mental exercises coupled with long periods of Meditation wherein I sought not only to detect the Motes of Energy but also to manipulate them. Like the wind Magic flows from areas of greater pressure to lesser pressure areas and therefore continues to move and prevent stagnation.

When choosing to summon your powers your hands and claws glow with what most races refer to as “Aura” and this is in all honestly an imperfect connection to magic. In essence Aura manifested around an object, a hand or visible as a spell represents a small locally created Magic Pool which is less focused and allowing its energy to “bleed” in the normal visual range as colored lights.

Therefore the study of Magic among the Agrobiata is the search for a perfect Flow of energy created by manipulating your own Energy Motes in such a way that they create an area of moving energy therefore pulling energy from nearby Ley Lines and

sources into and through your body. You are less a receptacle for magic than you are a facet stitched to the magical landscape. In an ideal situation you are releasing small Motes of Energy at an equal rate to your Absorption- a perfectly balanced equilibrium which is difficult to maintain and easily thrown off by spell casting or the presence of powerful Magic Items.

When a caster or area is unable to maintain an adequate Flow of Energy excess magic will “Pool” forming areas of stagnation much like a pond with no outlet will foul. Stagnate magic is sullen, solid and slow in “feel” and distasteful at first to many who touch it. It is the source of Necromancy and Chaos- a void which absorbs Energy but only radiates Energy back in non-harmonious ways. Unfortunately a Spell Caster, as a sentient being, can learn through study not only how to create a Flow of magic through his body but can also create these stagnations within their Auras. Such creatures are known as Necromancers.

Because I was instructed in these teachings and have used them every day of my life for nearly two centuries I know that they are sound. However in my travels I encountered many other races, cultures and societies who all practiced Earth magic as I recognized but which held vastly different theories. Therefore through much thought I have created two categories for Magical Power which all theories tend to fall into.

The first is what I would call “External Power”. The methods I was taught as a child would fall under this heading. In essence The External Power Theory states that magical energy is drawn from sources outside of the Caster himself. In some cultures they believe that energy flows from the Stars (and this is a theory that I have heard many times used to explain “Celestial” effects) while others share a modified version of that held by the Agrobiata that the Earth is the source of power for all spells.

The form that this energy takes varies from culture to culture of course. Among the Elves I learned of the “Blanket Theory”—in essence the same as the Ley Lines of the Biata theory though rather than collecting in greater Lines the tiny motes of energy, created by living creatures remain as a fine “cloud” of energy invisible to the naked eye. Rather than flowing the energy continues to build much like snow or fog would thicken until places in nature spontaneously take on magical nature or the power is channeled by a Spell Caster. Whether the power was first subsumed into the caster or merely manipulated by mental projection was a source of debate among the learned Scholars I was speaking with and thus I believe that both systems must have some validity to support them.

Another theory I have commonly encountered is the “Extraplanar Theory”. It is common knowledge among the most powerful spell casters that creatures composed of the eight elements (Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Life, Order, Death, Chaos) can be summoned to our plane. Therefore, it is theorized, all magical energy connected to these forces in fact originates in these planes and “leeks” or “bleeds” into our own home plane. Some say that this is a continuous process: that areas which evidence powerful Elemental alignments serve as Gateways for Power (such as a Cemetery radiating Death energy or a Volcano radiating Fire). Others, however, hold that the spells and Rituals themselves open portals to these extra-planar realms allowing casters momentary control of a tiny fragment of another plane which they manipulate to their will.

Extraplanar theories seem to be equally divided between whether or not a magic using creature in fact channels this energy (implying it was once incorporated into their own) or merely hones their mental abilities to such a degree that they are able to telepathically or telekinetically affect the Magical Energy and cause effects to occur. The implications of either usage are great. If this energy is channeled do casters subconsciously learn to absorb the energy latent around them or flowing to them either storing it for later use or channeling it immediately? If in fact the energy never comes under the control of the casters body could effects be produced that do not originate from the caster (as all spells I have experienced do).

Support for this theory lies in the nature of “structured magic” itself- there are a limited number of effects and abilities that skilled casters can ever learn to control and only a few dozen spell variations implying a limited variety to the energy used in their casting. External power also easily explains extended and preserved magical items- without needing to rely on the power of a caster they are, via the ritual, connected to the greater web, sea or gates of energy and draw the magic they need to power themselves. However this theory does have a few detractors most notably that it does not explain adequately a distinction between Celestial and Earth magic. Obviously such a distinction does exist- if nothing else the Biata are living proof that these energies are not the same as we do not react violently allergic to Earth Magic where we do to Celestial effects. If indeed the External source of power is a SINGLE source that implies that Celestial, like Necromancy, is some perversion of the basic magic of the world. However this theory does not imply any definition of the sources of magic and cannot supply a definition in and of itself—speaking to dozens of spell casters both Celestial and Earth I heard nearly a dozen responses to the actual source of magic. In essence we currently do not know where magic truly originates beyond a shadow of a doubt and while this theory does explain some aspects of spells, magic and spell casting it is by no means complete enough to be the final word on the subject.

The second theory I have developed from my travels I call the Internal Power theory. It is not less obscure or unique than the External Power theory and I have encountered nearly as many who believe that their power functions in a way that would be parallel to this idea. In essence the Internal Power theory is exactly what it says: magical energy is created within the caster himself and only this energy can be used to create magical effects.

Exactly how would this work? Much like within the Ley Lines and Motes of my early tutoring living creatures create within their bodies Magic energy which rather than flowing on an “alternate dimension” through their bodies and into the world remains within their bodies and blood for their use alone. Some I have spoken to claim that to memorize and cast spells they require several hours of quiet contemplation while they “gather” their energy stores and ready it to be projected beyond their body by the correct spells. The words, gestures and items of a spell or ritual only have bearing in the fact that they alter the mental state of the caster allowing them to focus their minds on the effect they wish and via this focus channel their own power into the magic.

Other casters who believe their power originates as an internal force claim that the energy is stored in their bodies much like a static charge- its is generated by their bodies and flows through unique channels and systems much like blood building in strength

until such time as the caster calls it forth as a tangible magical effect. Proponents of this explanation are often the most body conscious of casters—their physical well being is directly tied to the power they can generate and control.

Within this Internal Energy theory as well there are both supporting facts and information which gives me pause to reflect. Do all creatures generate magical energy within their bodies? How would creatures which are no longer living or objects which never were alive generate and use magic (such as a sword with a spell effect useable once per day)? While this theory does explain why two casters may produce wildly different colored Aura and variations in appearance to their spells it does not explain why magic is so restricted in the elements it allows casters to use yet remains so uniform (in that all casters use the same Eight Elements). Logically the argument that Celestial and Earth energy are different could be easily extended to the Internal Energy Theory as I have presented it. Perhaps Celestial magic is created more by the Mind and generated within personal casters own thoughts while Earth magic is generated within the body and fueled by emotions.

Another thing which is difficult to explain via this theory is the creation of Magical Items and many Ritual magic effects. If magical power is created solely within the body how then can items which exist outside of the caster and last for years or even last permanently be created? Must a caster sacrifice a small portion of their Spirit to each item so that it, too, has the ability to regenerate its magic every day? Further, Rituals which summon creatures from another plane do so external of the caster and provide no control over the creature once summoned beyond what the caster can diplomatically negotiate or bargain for. This seems at odds with a power that is created, stored and channeled by a specific being- that the effect produced can function without that being and has no innate connections to it. Magic, it would seem, has no ability to carry “impressions” or personal energy with it if that is the case.

Finally my last question regarding this theory concerns the generation of power itself. From some I have heard that only by practicing and exercising your “magical stores” will they grow in power allowing you to learn and cast more powerful spells. This seems logical as no caster has ever (within my knowledge) been able to master a powerful spell without having numerous lesser spells in their repertoire. Others teachers, however, claimed that the potential to cast the most powerful spells lies within ever person and its not the amount of energy you learn to store that dictates what you can cast but rather the amount of energy you learn to control and release through mental discipline.

In essence while answering the question “where does magic arise from” this theory does not adequately to my mind explain the variations of magic and the presence of items such as Scrolls and Potions and provides no insight into why magic, even in traditions that evolve on opposite ends of the world, use the same formula for casting, achieve the same results and have little to no variation even if the casters in question have never heard of each other.

So what does this prove? In reality: nothing. The entire preceding discussion was nothing more than a compilation of the knowledge I have garnered from speaking with countless healers, Celestial mages and scholars. In practice I still cleave to the methods I was taught by my beloved Master centuries ago as they have always held true for me and

have, over the years, allowed me to grow in power and strength and learn manifestations of magic I had not achieved when I was but an apprentice. The purpose of this discussion was to allow the reader to question what he believes magic represents. The truth of the matter is as it has always been- there is no definite answer to either where magic originates or how it is wielded. Many through the ages have claimed to understand the innermost secrets of the Universe and Earth and the power they wield but to my knowledge and research not a single “unified theory” has held true. The sheer number of opinions implies that perhaps there is no one true answer to the source and use of magic—perhaps some wielders simply do generate energy within their body and mentally direct it through their hands. Perhaps others draw energy from Extraplanar sources and bind it through runes, words and gestures to their will. It could be that magic is both External and Internal energy working together to create spell effects and only our inability to recognize this keeps us from fully understanding it.

Perhaps after all is said and done none of these theories and no caster has come close to the true answer- magic may be so far beyond our current understanding that the theories and ideas we generate to explain it cannot possibly cover the complexity (or pure simplicity) of the Power. Progress is not made by those who choose ignorance, however, and only by seeking answers will we ever learn what the correct questions are. And our research, theories and practical experiments today may lead to a breakthrough for our descendants of such profound magnitude it will rival the discovery of the first spell itself. It is in this hope; that should I not find the answers those who read my works will carry on, that I write this treatise.

Casting Spells

All spell casters begin the same way- they learn to read and write. Regardless of the language, alphabet or tradition they seek to study all spell casters learn to set ink to paper and record their notes, spells, ideas and thoughts as well as read the works of others. Magic is inherently an “intellectual skill”. From there the type of power you wish to wield dictates the other skills you must learn. While many people, especially those with Nobility or power, learn to read and write as a matter of course those who learn Magic rely on these works not only to learn more powerful spells but also to learn about our world. We spell casters are often representatives of the Scholars, Sages and most intelligent of our race and therefore often become the most well-read and thoughtful members of society. Our brains are our strength.

Celestial Casters go on to study “Scrolls” created by more powerful Celestial users in a unique “magical language” of sorts. Many allude to the ability to “Read Magic” which for some reason they do not feel necessary to differentiate from the ability to read normal writing or Ritual scrolls (which is in truth a unique skill). I’ve seen these scrolls and they are written much like any other writing. Some were truly spectacular illuminated documents while others were plainly in the crabby often sloppy hand of the Celestial caster himself. Though I could understand the words on the Scrolls and in many cases they were spells that I myself could cast from memory for some reason I was unable to touch the papers themselves without discomfort and I never succeeded in summoning magical energy from these words. Yet common though the writing was several Celestial casters I came to trust were able to pull magic from these relatively plain items even when their own ability to cast spells had been exhausted for the day.

Earth casters, however, learn spells which deal more directly with the body and a basic knowledge of anatomy, health, medicines and herbs is necessary. To understand how to heal a body you must understand how a body naturally heals itself. To understand how to cure poison, cure weaknesses and restore damaged limbs you must understand how the body naturally would work without impairments as well as how it is affected by them. This basic knowledge can be distilled into magical Potions which, unlike Scrolls, anyone with a metabolism can benefit from. These creations allow magic users to distill their knowledge of herbs, poisons and various humors into a potent liquid which immediately take effect once imbibed.

The reason that Celestial magic is bound into Scrolls which only those who have studied Celestial magic can use while Earth magic is bound into Potions which any layman can use remains another of those “magical mysteries”. Personally I see it as a failing of Celestial magic though it may represent a more “specialized” application of Celestial energies- it may be that not everyone has the potential to channel Celestial energy.

Regardless of the origin of magic and the distinctions between Celestial and Earth spells all “Battle Magic” (as it is commonly called) has only two requirements: that the caster speak a verbal component and that the caster designate a target with somatic components. In lay terms: a caster must speak and then either touch or gesticulate toward his target “throwing” his Aura as a manifested energy form at this target.

Beyond these simple requirements the variations are much more random. For example once while in a small coastal village I was helping to train a small group of local recruits to work with their Healers in preparation of a potential attack from a local barbarian group with which relations had soured. Two additional Healers were present as well- an elderly Elf female and a young ambitious Hobling adept. One of our primary concerns was to acclimate the fighters to hostile Earth magic and to this end we were casting Pins, Binds and Webs in an effort to train them in avoidance and neutralization. They were, as expected, abysmal at this and in short order we three healers had the entire group of twenty trapped by our Binding effects. Something encouraging did come from this, however.

The binding spells I cast appeared in my hands as they always had- a thin dark green mist with which I was able to lash out to my victim wrapping their arms to their sides, holding their foot to the ground or cocooning their body in a forest-green glow of light and energy. When the “battle” was ended however and I spoke to the recruits they informed me that while they saw all three casters using the same energies the energies they described universally did not match what I was used to seeing. Some saw our spells as a blue or red glow, others described more detailed manifestations such as “ropes” of light about them and a few said that they could not see any visible effects at all beyond a faint flash as we called up the spell.

Since that time decades ago I’ve made a habit of researching how different people perceive magical effects. It is an undisputable fact that different people, looking at an effect, are able to see the same effect. But is the visual signature they are responding to the same or have they simply learned what the unique signals they are seeing represent? Over the years I’ve discovered that this does not just apply to Sight but also affects Hearing, Smell, and Touch (presumably Taste as well though I’ve not found a way to

reliably taste a spell). Healing, to me, feels like a warmth spreading from the point of spell contact throughout my body and focusing warmth on the wounds I have suffered. I have, however, interviewed others who I've healed who reported cold sensations, numbness and in one case severe pain.

Based on this information I have come to a conclusion and that is that Magic, as previously stated, is not in perfect alignment with the mortal world. It can bleed over and be used by those trained in its use but the effects themselves and the signatures they produce are not at a very basic level "real". Rather it can be said that the effects you see and respond to- both Feeling and Sight- are "masks" of sorts applied by your mind over the often misunderstood power of Magic allowing us as Mortals to attempt to understand that which is beyond our grasp at this time.

Therefore every person- whether they cast or not- appears to create subconsciously a set of "magical effects" that they apply basically at a non-conscious level to mask Magical effects and make them into something that can be processed by our minds. Perhaps this is a function of evolution or natural selection- a means of preventing us from going mad when confronted with the incomprehensible. In a way it could be said that knowing what a spell can do or how others perceive it affects how you yourself will understand it as evidenced by the Celestial spells dealing with Flames, Ice, Lightning and Stone. While the visuals of these spells have varied from interviewee to interviewee the Feeling generated- that of being burned, frozen, shocked or pummeled- has invariable remained the same for everyone I've spoken to or read about.

For all of this, however, conscious control of these "Masks" seems to be a pipe-dream. After years of study and research I've made no progress in manipulating my own perceptions though I have seen evidence of someone exposed to a new effect being influenced by pre-conceived notions contrary to popular opinion. Apparently, I am forced to conclude, once your mind, body and/or spirit create a magical Mask that Mask will remain permanently in place.

Ritual Magic

Ritual Magic represents, for many, the epitome of Magical Power and the highest level of skill that most Spell Casters will ever manage to master. That is not to say that all with master Ritual Magic and most will not gain more than a low to moderate understanding of the power that is available to those who truly dedicate themselves.

Many study Rituals (or Formals as some call them) in a very limited sense- learning the theories and practice of the most basic castings and, by so doing, learning to read the enigmatic Ritual Scrolls. These Scrolls, unlike those previously discussed, are not written in any common tongue but rather become legible to those who dedicate their skills and time to understanding them. Also unlike the Scrolls mentioned under the Battle Magic section these Ritual Scrolls come in three different varieties- those which only Celestial casters can understand, those which both Celestial and Earth practitioners can understand and, of course, those which only Earth casters can read. Further Earth Ritual Scrolls actually appear in two forms- commonly called "Earth" for benevolent or general effects and "Necromantic" for those affects dealing with Chaos, Necromancy and Death.

Ritual Scrolls are highly enigmatic creations. No person I have ever heard of, read of or spoken to has created a Ritual Scroll. Neither has anyone truly seen one in

creation or been able to present more than theories as to where these items originate. Some claim they are remnants of ancient civilizations much more advanced in magic than our current societies. Others say they are simply produced by powerful wizards and dragons in due course but the skill is kept quiet by those who practice it. You can search your entire life and discover no information about the origins of these nearly indestructible and highly prized items. For my part until a more reliable source steps forward and presents clues to research and follow up on I will refrain from presenting my own theories as I do not have any facts or proof to validate my ideas and therefore at this time they have no place in a serious discussion about Magic. In all honesty I cannot say that the thought of such powerful knowledge- both for the prestige it would bring as well as the magical abilities it would grant- is not highly attractive.

Rituals can only be attempted when a caster is in possession of a Ritual Scroll which he must follow the instructions of to successfully trigger the correct magical results. However to do this all scrolls require “energy sources” if you will—further items which must be gathered according to the wording of the scrolls else failure and possible catastrophic results will inevitably happen.

There are two classes of “energy sources” required by Ritual Scrolls. The first are called Reagents of which there are ten identified varieties. Reagents represent natural objects which have been, according to my ancient teachers, imbued with magic by the lucky chance of being located at the intersection of two or more Ley Lines. Depending on what you’ve decided your opinion of how magic functions this may or may not make sense to you but it is as good an explanation as any based on the near chaotically random nature with which they are found. As no caster can effectively follow Ley Lines or detect their intersections it is no use in locating Reagents.

All Rituals require Reagents to be successfully cast and the relative power of the ritual will dictate the quantity you will need to gather. Reagents, unlike Ritual Scrolls, are not permanently charged with magic. Usually they last two, perhaps three years before the magic within them corrupts or drains and they are rendered useless for successful Ritual castings. In addition not every Ritual will require more than 2, perhaps 3 types of Reagents so that while you’re required to gather 20, 30 or more of these items they may all have to be of the same type which greatly increases the difficulty of locating, securing and using these components in a timely manner (ie before they “go bad”).

Below is a list of the ten Reagents used in Rituals. There is no distinction between Celestial, Earth, and “General” ritual Reagents and even two Ritual Scrolls of the same Aspect and identical in all ways may require vastly different Reagent components. In addition Components can be used as a basis for designing unique Ritual elements which add not only to the ambiance of your Ritual (which, if you choose to cast commercially, may increase your business) but also seem to have a great effect on the Tactile and Visual effects experienced by those who watch or participate in the Ritual.

Cariosus- Cariosus is the essence of Death. It is a black substance found in many “states” from liquid to gas commonly gathered from corpses and animated undead creations. When used in a Ritual it tends to create a dark, cold feeling and darker visual energies than most other components would. As it is commonly found on

dead creatures oftentimes Rituals using a lot of Cariousus include skulls and black elements to represent Death—and unlit candle, a spilled glass of wine, etc.

Fangtooth- Fangtooth is the tooth of a predatory animal imbued with magic. Fangtooth is the essence of Animal in the ritual system- wild, untamed and powerful. In large quantities Fangtooth can make rituals seem highly emotional and impart phantom sounds of barks, howls and other “animal” noises. Rituals which require a lot of Fangtooth are often cast with furs, skins and animal bones in an effort to increase the power of these Reagents.

Feyander- Feyander is the essence of Plant. Feyander can grow on any plant as a flower, leaf, twig or even just a stretch of bark. Feyander is like pure Nature distilled- the solemnity of a great forest, the darkness of a deep jungle and even the airiness of a mountain meadow. Depending on the source of the Feyander different effects can be witnessed and experienced in rituals using great quantities of these plants.

Heartstone- Heartstone is the essence of Earth and would be considered, if it weren't as valuable as a magical item, one of the most precious gemstones in the land. Heartstone can be any color and almost always appears as crystal clear gemstone or natural glass which, when used in rituals, often sparkles and shines brightly creating brilliant colored lights. Despite the brightness of its nature, however, Heartstone is still very grounding and many who are targeted by Rituals using its power report feelings of stability, grounding and peace.

Jetsam- Jetsam is the essence of Water and may make targets feel wet or chilled as if currents of water and ice are around them when used in excessive quantities. It can appear as any water born object- a shell, a piece of driftwood, or even a chunk of coral. Jetsam is said to be created during great storms when lightning lashes the seas with fire and many researchers I have spoken to reported greater results when they incorporated water- whether as liquid or ice- in their Rituals. .

Nightshade- Nightshade represents the essence of Poison and appears as mushrooms, fungus or even delicate yet poisonous plants such as Belladonna and Monks Hood. Nightshade is often unpleasant to work with in great quantities as it has a tendency to make those who interact with it as caster or target feel ill or mentally clouded. Nightshade is often handled with care even though as a magical object it is rarely poisonous- the plants and objects it is gleaned from can cause serious harm to those who treat with them unprotected.

Penna- Penna is the essence of Air and is often created from Feathers. Penna is extremely chaotic to work with and as difficult to define as a zephyr- the energies conjured with multiple Penna often appear cloudlike or as faint Electrical charges around objects and creatures. Some even report a feeling of light headedness or dizzy spells when excessive amounts are invoked in a Ritual together.

Pyrotis- Pyrotis is the essence of Fire and may inspire feelings of heat, sweating and flames in those who are the target of its energy. Pyrotis is often found after great fires whether the burning of an entire woodland to a forest fire or the funeral pyre of a local Lord. Pyrotis is easy to work with in that the energy is quick to be invoked and willing to spread easily however controlling, directing and especially ceasing the energy can prove very difficult for those inexperienced in handling large quantities of Pyrotis during Ritual castings.

Truesilver- Truesilver is the essence of Metal and is a metallic or stony (containing only traces of silver) component that is second only to a Wand in its abilities to channel magical energy especially energy associated with Penna (air and electricity) and Pyrotis (fire and heat). Truesilver in great quantities lends an air of rigidity and feelings of weight and cold to a ritual. It can also, in large quantities, make other Reagent feelings and visual effects much more prominent.

Wands- Wands are the Essence of Magic itself. Wands are natural objects which are imbued with a strong magical field allowing them to serve as channels for great magical powers or other Reagents. Rituals that call for great quantities of Wands almost universally feel “heightened” more than other Rituals would in a way that’s often difficult to describe. At the very least they, like Truesilver, have a tendency to increase the potency of the visual/tactile experiences of other components though they will work equally powerful with all of the other Reagents.

The second type of Component required for casting a Ritual is much more difficult to obtain due to rarity but has the benefit not expiring much like the Ritual Scrolls themselves. These components are known as Catalysts- powerful magic tools which in some cases are natural, in others harvested and in some crafted which are essential for casting some of the most powerful Ritual.

Catalysts can be anything though unlike with Reagents two Ritual Scrolls which produce the same effect will always have the same Catalyst requirement as well. In essence its almost like the strongest magical effects are recorded on two Scrolls and only by completing them through bringing the Catalyst and Ritual Scroll together does the final procedure become comprehensible and with the correct Reagents castable. From a research standpoint the nature of Catalysts is similar to the nature of Ritual Scrolls themselves- their creation is obviously intelligently steered and their requirement on some of the most desirable effects surely not chance yet the manner in which they were designated remains a mystery.

Collecting them often seems straight forward. In my time I’ve encountered scrolls calling for an “Ancient Quill” or the “Last Breath of a True King”. Rare? Perhaps. However not just any old quill will do and the method of collecting the Breath is noticeably absent from the Scrolls. Much like Reagents, Catalysts are special and rare examples of their kind regardless of how common or rare the equivalent mundane items would be. In reality there may be a method for tracking and determining how some (but

surely not all) Catalysts will form but in my years I've never seen anyone produce a theory which proves to be unconditionally true or even remotely valid.

In a practical sense casting a Ritual is a function of gathering the required Reagents, possessing the correct scroll and putting the magic and time into creating an effect. However this does nothing for the Art of the Ritual and the Art of Magic itself. While some disagree that adding additional elements will have any bearing on the outcome of a Ritual it cannot be denied that by associating the Ritual with tools and items not explicitly called for by the Ritual Scroll yet identifying with the components a new level of craftsmanship, showmanship and quality can be reached.

Rituals, much like Battle Spells, will have effects that appear differently depending on who casts them and who or what the target is. In some cases there is a lot of show with mirrors, altars, incense, skulls, candles, lights and silks used by "Showman Casters" who often make their living casting spells and Rituals for others. Some other casters however seek a more "Pure" casting style and calmly summon the forces of Magic into their Ritual Circle and seek to subjugate and eradicate "extraneous shows of power" as signs of sloppy casting.

There is little debate on the subject from a necessity standpoint- Rituals do not need flashy methods and tools to be successful. Some traditions, however, teach their students otherwise and many Ritual casters choose to personalize their rituals for many reasons such as creating a comfortable system for themselves or advertising their work to others and attracting clientele. One of the hardest things for a Ritual caster who dedicates any amount of study to this field to accomplish is to keep himself supplied with Reagents and Ritual Scrolls. These cannot be created and must be acquired either through barter or random luck and often have a significant value to even non-spell caster who recognize their value and the value of the effects that can be summoned or created with them.

Casting a Ritual even with all the components however is far from guaranteed success. Even the most learned Ritual casters always have a chance to fail not from their own failings but from imperfections in the Ritual Scrolls themselves. These "flaws" and "backlashes" as they are commonly known are unique to each Scroll and often produce effects unachievable by any other means such as restricting the usability of an item to a single race or making the caster immune to physical attacks for a short time. While some of these effects are beneficial and may accompany the successful production of the desired Ritual effect most are not and are the result of failure to successfully cast the Ritual.

Rituals cast in the "normal" matter can only be successfully used within a Circle of Power. In Battle Magic a Circle is the ultimate protection- preventing all physical and magical intrusion while the caster maintains the spell. I was taught long ago that a Circle invoked with an incanted spell effectively separates the caster from the greater Flow of Energy. The line drawn or laid down gives your mind a focus and the energy invoked creates a "wall" of sorts appearing spherically both above and below the ground which effectively separates the internal energy space from the external greater Ley Lines of energy. What does this mean? According to my Masters a Circle is the greatest protection possible but comes with the condition that you are now limited in the amount of energy available within the circle to cast future spells. However as the incantation can only be maintained for, at best, slightly over an hour I've not myself not spoken with

anyone who has found their ability to channel magic hindered by a sudden lack of Power within a Circle.

A Ritual, however, pulls its energy not only from the latent energy within the Circle but also from the Components, caster and in some cases targets so that though they require much greater power than a Battle spell they can be successfully cast even in succession within a Battle Circle of Power. One must theorize that if the power of these Reagents and Catalysts could be unlocked successfully without the structured words and diagrams of a Ritual Scroll they would become invaluable (rather than merely highly valuable) items able to increase the energy manipulation power of any Caster exponentially.

There exist, also, Rituals which transform the Circle in which they are cast into a permanent creation which gains a limited form of sentience and becomes able to recognize those who created it or who are, at a later time, Ritually “Invested” in them allowing these individuals to enter and exit the horizon of power at will and allow others who may not be Invested to be acknowledge. Because of this recognition and the ability of an Invested member to successfully allow a non-Invested individual into a Circle that they themselves are not within or at a distance from (yet still within sight of) the mechanism of this awareness must in some way be connected telepathically between the rudimentary “mind” of the Circle and the mind of the member.

In the “Invested” this has no effects beyond their ability to allow entrance or exit from what is known as a “Limited Circle” among Ritual casters. There exist, however, a more powerful Ritual Circle called (unimaginatively enough) a Greater Circle. These manifestations take on no greater sentience but actually grant powers to those who are Invested in them while they are within the confines of the Circle itself. Because the nature of these abilities does not extend beyond the Horizon of the Power delineating a Circle from the greater energy flows of the world they must be inherent in the Circle itself and therefore this also explains why the Ritual to Invest an individual into an advanced Circle does not leave a mark on the Spirit.

In essence any other ritual which can be cast on an item or place takes up a portion of the energy of the target and no one person or object can sustain more than a twenty Ritual effects (a well known fact recorded by many researchers). However an individual can be unable to accept any further Ritual augmentation or abilities and still can be targeted by the Investment Ritual successfully. Investments, I submit, exist beyond the natural delineations of Body, Mind and Spirit and reside therefore in the Aura or Motes generated by the individual. They are not so much part of the Individual as they are coterminous with the energy and Magic created by it.

Finally there are creatures both bestial in appearance and “evolved” from more common races who learn to control and understand these powerful Rituals as most magic users learn and understand Battle Spells. First encountered in Dragons- immense beings of pure power and magic- many records exist of “Shadow Mages” and “Dragon Mages” who are trained by these creatures sometimes for centuries to read Ritual Scrolls and imprint the incantations, formulae and methodologies on their minds. This allows them to, while still consuming Components, cast a Ritual Scroll multiple times from memory as easily as a Healer calls for Earth energy to bind a minor wound or a Celestial caster conjures Eldritch Flames.

Presumably only the requirement for Components limits the potential of these casters for the rarity of a particular Ritual Scroll no longer restricts their abilities to cast and the time a common Ritual caster would need to properly execute an effect is reduced to a simple incant. I personally have seen these Dragon Mages inscribe Glyphs, conjure Weapons of Eradication (called simply Stakes of Woe by most of the population) and freely use many other enchantments which would take a normal Ritual Caster several minutes of casting at least after possibly years of gathering materials.

The level of Power and control of the Magic is awesome and awe inspiring yet does bring up concerns. There are many extremely powerful creatures in the world but most are limited by natural forces or by being created, summoned or forced into our Plane by magical means. The most powerful warrior is limited by the range of his weapons and the most powerful Dragons are rare by birth and nature. Yet the only real restriction, it seems, on Dragon Mages is the willingness for powerful creatures (creatures that innately understand Ritual Scrolls to a degree far surpassing our own and innately use effects which mirror Ritually produced magic) and the intelligence and dedication of the prospect student. It is not within the scope of either my nature or this treatise to discuss the ethical or moral ramifications of magic use. Thus I leave it to each individual to decide for themselves the implications of Dragon Magic and what, if anything they feel concerning it.

The bottom line for anyone who seeks to become a “Ritualist” (one who specializes in non-Battle magic) is that your greatest asset is your own Power. Spend the time to understand what it is you cast, how you cast it and how others will see what you do. Make yourself memorable and give those seeking your services reason to trust you and to come to you in the future. This is not only a source of components and gold but also and invaluable research method for you.

Finally never forget that Rituals are not cast without risk. No matter how powerful you become there is a small chance that you will fail at a ritual and failure can range from simply not getting the effect you desire to (several) deaths. Some effects can last forever or until you can find a magical way to have them removed.

Remember this when you agree to cast a ritual whether for yourself or for someone else. Always read the Ritual Scrolls thoroughly as they will contain information about the possible dangers of using them to cast a Ritual. If failure could include summoned creatures employ or ask a few fighters to stand guard and assist you if they appear. If it could result in death have another powerful caster on hand to grant you life.

The point here is this: Ritual Magic is exceptionally powerful and has powerful consequences for failure. If you cannot accept this think hard about whether you truly want to learn to cast Rituals.

Conclusion

I hope that the theories, ideas and information present in this manuscript give you the urge necessary to further the research and Art of magic. Much remains undiscovered and there will always be questions that need answers. While I have strived to refrain from coloring my theories with only the education I received it is difficult if not impossible for those formally trained in magic to think beyond the rigid class structures

they have been given and “unlearn” (if you will) the methodologies and ideals of your Masters.

Nonetheless true magical research requires a caster to not only practice and contemplate the powers they already command but also to seek greater knowledge, strength and variety in the effects that they are exposed to. In addition every one of the most valuable resources for any magically inclined individual is the sharing of knowledge with others who command magical abilities from the weakest of spells to the mightiest of “natural magic”.

To that end and with every well mannered intention I have set forth these words in the belief that they will inspire others to formulate, record and share their own ideas with the world as well and in doing so grant access to hundreds perhaps thousands more over the generations. Remember that a successful researcher not only pursues the unknown but records what she has found for future researchers. Knowledge for knowledge sake is a noble goal and far be it from me to pass judgment on the morality of choices you may make regarding my own theories or those that you yourself evolve.