

# Parliament of Owls

## Night Magnitude 8

### Performing the Ritual

Performing this ritual takes at least 2 minutes of roleplaying. During the ritual the casters must write a question on a piece of parchment that is burnt during the performance.

Out of character, a copy of the message should be given to the referee.

### Effects

This ritual allows a question to be communicated to the mystics at Ishal, and to all those who have studied there.

When the ritual is performed all contributors experience a roleplaying effect: they hear the sound of beating wings and the calls of owls. For up to an hour from the end of the ritual they will occasionally spot spectral owls flying overhead or perching nearby observing events.

### OOO Notes

The mystics of Ishal can be asked to look into some issue of current affairs that affects Wintermark. They will study the omens and report what they can find on the matter to the Raven Seer – regardless of who performed the ritual.

The mystics can only study the omens pertaining to one event each season. If the ritual is performed more than once a season then they will ignore any casting not performed by the Raven Seer. In the event they receive more than one message from the Raven Seer, they will ignore all castings of the ritual.

The mystics are not historians or researchers, they can only study the omens that are abroad in the winds of magic.

They have neither the means nor the inclination to perform historical research and any request to look into matters of historical record will be ignored. The mystics can only read the omens that they can see in Wintermark, so they can only look into matters that are currently affecting the nation in some way.

### OOO Note

This item is a ritual text.

Any character with the Night Ritual Lore skill can master this ritual. You must have a free slot or experience point to master a new ritual. After an appropriate period of roleplaying spent studying these pages, it should then be brought to a referee who will add the ritual to those you have mastered. Doing this does not ‘use up’ the ritual text.

This ritual cannot be learned by other means; it cannot be taught by a character who knows it unless the ritual is added to the body of Imperial Lore by the Conclave.

**Ribbon ID: 25605**



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# PARLIAMENT OF OWLS

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RITUAL OF THE REALM OF NIGHT

CODIFIED SUMMER 2049E AT THE LYCEUM,  
UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF EURAN SILVER  
STREAMS



# DEVELOPING THE RITUAL

THIS RITUAL WAS CODIFIED BY EUAN SILVER STREAMS, DEAN OF THE LYCEUM, FROM WORK ORIGINALLY PERFORMED BY TEUTEN OWLFEATHER OF ISHAL AND LÛSSA OF SUSIVARIS.

THE CODIFICATION OF THE RITUAL WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE THRONE, EMPEROR NICOVAR, AND FURTHER SUPPORTED BY THE CARDINAL OF VIGILANCE AS PART OF A LARGER PROJECT TO CREATE RITUALS THAT WOULD HELP THE PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE INVESTIGATE POTENTIAL THREATS TO THE SAFETY OF IMPERIAL CITIZENS.

## OWLS

BIRDS ARE SACRED TO THE WINTERFOLK, WHO BELIEVE THEY BRING A CHILD'S SOUL AT THE MOMENT OF THEIR BIRTH AND CARRY AWAY THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO HAVE DIED. ACCORDING TO THIS BELIEF, BIRDS FAVOUR SOULS OF THEIR OWN NATURE – SO A ROOK MIGHT BRING THE SOUL OF AN AMBITIOUS THANE, OR A MAGPIE THE SOUL OF A PROSPEROUS MERCHANT.



ALONG WITH RAVENS, OWLS ARE GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH WISE SOULS – WITH MYSTICS AND SEEKERS AFTER LORE. SOME TRADITIONS BELIEVE THAT RAVENS, AS CREATURES THAT ARE ACTIVE DURING THE DAY, BRING THE SOULS OF RATIONAL SEEKERS OF LORE – DIVINERS AND MASTERS OF DAY MAGIC – WHILE OWLS, AS BIRDS ACTIVE DURING THE NIGHT, BRING SOULS OF A MORE MYSTIC BENT WHO SEEK ANSWERS IN OMENS AND THE MASTERS OF NIGHT MAGIC.

IN SOME PARTS OF WINTERMARK, OWLS ALSO HAVE A SLIGHTLY FEARSOME ASPECT. THEY FLY IN SILENCE, WITH LAMBENT EYES, SWOOPING OUT OF THE DARKNESS WITHOUT WARNING TO CARRY AWAY THEIR PREY. IN SOME POEMS AND SONGS, THEY ARE ALSO FIGURES ASSOCIATED WITH DEATH ESPECIALLY SUDDEN DEATH. AS THE MYSTIC ISHAL IS RECORDED AS SAYING IN THE *SAGA OF THE MOUSE* "TO THE MYSTIC THE OWL BRINGS AESH ON ITS WINGS; TO THE MOUSE THE OWL IS THE END OF ALL THINGS."



THIS ASSOCIATION WITH WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE IS NEARLY UNIVERSAL WITHIN THE EMPIRE.

ASTRONOMANCERS HAVE NOTED A MARKED TENDENCY FOR THE CONSTELLATION OF THE KEY – WHOSE LAW IS “THINGS ARE REVEALED” – TO MANIFEST AS BIRDS ESPECIALLY OWLS. SOME URIZEN HAVE SPECULATED THAT THE WINTERMARK TRADITION OF DIVINING THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE BY WATCHING THE FLIGHT OF BIRDS IS ROOTED IN A COMPLEX UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF THE KEY.

NOT EVERY IMPERIAL CULTURE ASSOCIATES THE OWL WITH WISDOM AND REVELATION. TO THE NAVARR, THE OWL IS OFTEN SEEN AS A DEADLY HUNTER – AN ASPIRATIONAL FIGURE FOR SOME NORTHERN THORNS WHO SEEK TO EMULATE THE SUDDEN AND UNAVOIDABLE SILENT STRIKE FROM THE DARKNESS. IN VARUSHKA, THE BIRD IS SOMETIMES SEEN AS A CREATURE OF ILL-OMEN – A SERVANT OF DARK POWERS WHO HUNT THE NIGHT – BUT IT IS ALSO CARVED ON WARDING POLES OR INTO THE BOLES OF TREES AS A CREATURE THAT GUARDS AGAINST THREATS THAT COME AT NIGHT. IN STORIES IT IS OFTEN A SYMBOL OF UNSEEN THREATS, AND WHEN IT HELPS THE PROTAGONIST ITS MOTIVES ARE OFTEN UNCLEAR.

SPIRIT MASTERS – THOSE WHO PRACTICE TOTEM MAGIC – USE THE OWL MOST OFTEN IN RITUALS OF DIVINATION BUT, AS REFLECTS ITS COMPLEX NATURE, IT IS ALSO EVOKED IN RITUALS THAT BRING DEATH, OR EMPOWER STEALTHY MOVEMENT. IN SOME TRADITIONS FOR EXAMPLE THE OWL IS EVOKED DURING WORDS OF ENDING TO TEAR AWAY THE MAGIC OF THE TARGET ITEM AND BEAR IT INTO THE DARKNESS; OR WHEN CASTING TURNS THE CIRCLE THE OWL BEARS AWAY THE SPIRIT OF THE DECEASED; AND WHEN CASTING ECHO OF LIFE REMAINS, A SPECTRAL OWL IS SUMMONED TO WHISPER THE NAME OF THE CORPSE INTO THE EARS OF THE RITUALISTS.

# THE MYSTICS OF ISHAL

ISHAL STANDS IN SOUTHERN SKYMARK, ACROSS THE FRIGID WATERS OF SOVEVANN FROM RUNDHAL. THOSE WHO SEEK WISDOM COME TO ISHAL TO STUDY – THEY LEARN THE SECRETS OF DIVINING THROUGH THE FLIGHT OF BIRDS AND TO WATCH THE SKIES FOR OMENS. ALONG WITH MASI, WHERE THE DEAD HEROES REST, AND RUNDHAL, WHERE THE SCOPS TRAIN, IT IS ONE OF THE OLDEST PERMANENT SETTLEMENTS IN THE ENTIRE NATION. ITS PRESTIGE HAS WAXED AND WANED OVER THE YEARS, BUT IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PLACE ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRACTICE OF MYSTICISM.

IN THEIR LATER YEARS, MANY KALLAVESI RETREAT TO ISHAL TO SPEND THEIR FINAL DAYS STUDYING AND PREPARING FOR THE MYSTERY THAT COMES AFTER LIFE ENDS. ACCORDING TO LEGEND, IT WAS THE SEERS OF ISHAL WHO FORETOLD THE COMING OF THE STEINR, AND THE UNION OF THE THREE PEOPLE THAT LEAD TO THE FORMATION OF WINTERMARK IN PRE-IMPERIAL TIMES.

WHILE MANY MYSTICS SEEK TO DIVINE POTENTIAL FUTURE EVENTS, THE PRACTICE OF OMEN READING IS AS MUCH ABOUT UNDERSTANDING THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING IN THE PRESENT OR RECENT PAST. PEOPLE WHO HAVE STUDIED AT ISHAL ARE SPREAD ACROSS WINTERMARK, AND MANY REMAIN IN REGULAR COMMUNICATION THANKS TO THE USE OF MESSENGER BIRDS. AS SUCH, THEY ARE OFTEN ABLE TO SEE PATTERNS NOT ONLY IN THE FLIGHT OF BIRDS BUT IN THE ACTIONS OF HUMANS AND EVEN ORCS THAT SPEAK OF IMPORTANT EVENTS THAT ARE HAPPENING, OR ABOUT TO HAPPEN.

THIS IS THE PRINCIPLE BEHIND THE PARLIAMENT OF OWLS – THAT BY SENDING MESSENGERS TO THE MYSTICS THEY MAY READ THE OMENS AND SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE, AND LEARN A LITTLE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD, AND SHARE WHAT THEY HAVE DISCOVERED WITH THEIR FELLOWS THROUGH VARIOUS MEANS.



## SILENT MESSENGERS

THE RITUAL CALLS UP AND DISPATCHES SILENT MESSENGERS – SOMETIMES PERCEIVED BY THOSE PERFORMING THE RITUAL AS SPECTRAL OWLS.

THE OWLS SEEK OUT MYSTICS WHO HAVE STUDIED AT ISHAL, AND BRING THEM NEWS OF THE QUESTION THE RITUALISTS HAVE ASKED. HOW THIS NEWS IS DELIVERED VARIES; AN OWL MAY APPEAR IN THE DREAM OF A MYSTIC ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY SEEK VISIONARY EXPERIENCES THROUGH INFUSION OR RITUAL. ALTERNATIVELY THE MESSAGE MAY BE WHISPERED TO A MYSTIC DURING A QUIET MOMENT – INVARIABLY WHEN THEY ARE ALONE. THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE MESSAGE ARE LEFT IN NO DOUBT AS TO ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND MAGICAL ORIGINS – AND WITH THE CODIFICATION OF THIS RITUAL THE NEWS OF ITS CREATION HAS ALREADY BEEN WIDELY COMMUNICATED TO THE STUDENTS OF ISHAL.

THE PROVENANCE OF THESE SPECTRAL BIRDS IS UNCLEAR; THE MAGICIANS WHO CODIFIED THE RITUAL AGREE THAT THEY TAKE FORM AT THE POINT THE MESSAGE THEY ARE TO DELIVER IS BURNT. MANY CONTRIBUTORS AGREE THAT THEY SEEM TO FORM OUT OF THE SMOKE CREATED WHEN THE PARCHMENT IS CONSUMED.

THEY MAY BE MINOR CREATURES OF THE NIGHT REALM – PERHAPS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSCIENCE-OF-KINGS. THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE ANY ETERNAL ELEMENT TO THIS RITUAL HOWEVER – CERTAINLY IT DOES NOT DRAW DIRECTLY ON THE POWER OF LASHONAR. OTHERS ARGUE THAT, AS WITH CALL WINGED MESSENGER, THE RITUAL EMPLOYS THE SERVICES OF POORLY UNDERSTOOD CREATURES THAT ARE NATIVE TO THE MORTAL REALM. DURING THE CODIFICATION, SOME OF THE MAGICIANS OF A MORE MYSTICAL BENT WERE ADAMANT THAT THE RITUAL EVOKES THE ACTUAL GHOSTS OF DEAD OWLS AND BINDS THEM TO SERVICE ALTHOUGH THIS THEORY IS WIDELY CONTESTED BY THOSE WHO ARGUE THAT DEALING WITH GHOSTS – EVEN WITH THE GHOSTS OF BIRDS – WOULD SURELY BE WINTER MAGIC.

MOST LIKELY, AS ARGUED BY PORTIA OF CANTERSPIRE,



THE RITUAL CRAFTS MAGICAL CONSTRUCTS OUT OF THE THOUGHTS OF THOSE PERFORMING THE RITUAL, BINDING THE MESSAGE THAT IS TO BE DELIVERED INTO THE FABRIC OF THEIR BEING, AND DISPATCHES THEM TO DELIVER IT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE A PARTICULARLY STRONG MENTAL BOND TO ISHAL (EXPLAINING WHY NOT EVERYONE WHO HAS STUDIED AT THE PLACE RECEIVES THE MESSAGE), AFTER WHICH THE MAGICAL CONSTRUCTS UNRAVEL.

THERE DO APPEAR TO BE SOME LIMITATIONS TO THE REACH OF THE MESSAGE – IT IS MOST EFFECTIVE AT COMMUNICATING WITH MYSTICS IN WINTERMARK, AND THE FURTHER FROM KALLAVESA THE MYSTIC IS THE LESS LIKELY THEY ARE TO RECEIVE THE MESSAGE.

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## PERFORMING THE RITUAL

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A KEY ELEMENT OF THE RITUAL IS THE MESSAGE THAT WILL BE DELIVERED TO THE MYSTICS. IT IS GENERALLY WRITTEN ON A LONG STRIP OF PARCHMENT – AS MIGHT BE TIED AROUND THE LEG OF A MESSENGER BIRD – AND IS CEREMONIALLY BURNT AT THE CLIMAX OF THE RITUAL.

THE FIRE USED TO BURN THE MESSAGE MAY BE FED WITH THE FEATHERS OR BONES OF OWLS. SOME MYSTICS HAVE REPORTED THAT FEEDING SCRAPS OF PAPER WITH THE RUNES AESH, DIRAS, OPHIS, SULAR, AND WUR INTO THE FLAMES BEFORE THE FINAL MESSAGE, OR IGNITING THE FIRE WITH THESE PARCHMENTS, CREATES A POWERFUL RESONANCE WITH THE RITUAL.

WEARING OWL MASKS IS RECOMMENDED BY ICEWALKERS, MYSTICS, AND TOTEM MAGICIANS ALIKE. INVOKING THE NAME OF LASHONAR IS APPARENTLY VERY RESONANT WITH THE MAGIC ACCORDING TO GOETICISTS, EVEN IF THE ETERNAL IS NOT DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE MAGIC ITSELF.

FOR A DRAMATURGIST, THE INSTRUMENT OF THE LANTERN, ESPECIALLY IN THE HANDS OF THE WITCH, WILL WORK WELL. USING THE FIRE OF A LANTERN TO CONSUME THE MESSAGE IS AN OBVIOUS WAY TO EMPLOY THE RESONANCE OF THE INSTRUMENT IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THE RITUAL.

