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# QUAREIA—THE INITIATE

## Module I—Core Initiate Skills

### Lesson 6: Geography, Geology, and Culture

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# WELCOME

*Welcome to this lesson of the Quareia curriculum.*

*The Quareia takes a magical apprentice from the beginning of magic to the level of adeptship and beyond. The course has no superfluous text; there is no dressing, no padding—everything is in its place and everything within the course has a good reason to be there.*

*For more information and all course modules please visit*

[www.quareia.com](http://www.quareia.com)

*So remember—in order for this course to work, it is wise to work with the lessons in sequence. If you don't, it won't work.*

*Yours,*

*Josephine McCarthy*



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### Module I—Core Initiate Skills

#### Lesson 6: Geography, Geology, and Culture

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*Looking at the land and the people in the exploration of magical roots*

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Why is this subject so important in magic, and particularly why is it in the core skills section? Because understanding the land and the way it interacts directly with humans is a cornerstone of magic. Understanding why a certain magical system developed as it did on a certain landmass will teach you how to adjust your magic and develop it in union with the powers of the land around you. It will also teach you how to make informed decisions as to what styles of magic to work, which will depend on the land you are on and the circumstances of your present life situation.

So many people skip over this aspect of knowledge when they study magic. They think that learning how to copy seals from 17th century books is what will teach them magic. Wrong. Learning how to discern and then work with the specific powers in the right magical context will teach you magic.

You have already done quite a bit of work on the land with magic, and have communicated with various land features. Starting that learning process at ground zero, the land beneath your feet, triggers a deep process of recognition between you and the land itself. That changes you at a 'spirit' level, so when you step into another land, you are visible to the spirits and consciousness of the land there. This can be good or bad, depending on how you relate to the new land and how you conduct yourself upon it. Being 'nice' or 'responsible' is not enough once you become visible: you also have to have basic wisdom. That wisdom comes from knowing about the different lands, how cultures developed on them, and what magic grew out of that interaction.

For many of you, particularly if you have studied anthropology, this lesson will turn a few things on their heads. The modern world has the opinion that a tribal religion or ancient spiritual belief system develops from the culture and mindset of the people. This is only half true...and is also a misunderstanding.

The spirits and powers of a particular land act in a particular way, which in turn dictates the relationship between those spirits and the humans. How the land affects a human in terms of weather, altitude, and the mineral content of the water and food will also dictate that human's emotive responses (what affects the brain affects the emotions, which in turn affect actions and reactions) which in turn will affect the human/spirit relationship.

Out of this recipe comes a system that is created to act as an interface: a religion or a magical spiritual practice. The humans do not create the spirits from their imagination based on inspiration from the landscape; rather humans meet spirits who flow out of the landscape. How the spirit appears depends largely on the mind of the human and the features the spirit is trying to display. How that spirit affects the human determines the style of magic the human develops in order to thrive. If the spirits are hostile, then magic develops to deal with that. If the spirits are friendly but unpredictable, the magic develops to navigate that. Each system of magic develops at source according to the relationships between the humans and the land powers.

Knowing how to spot this in old magic takes a variety of skills, one of which is knowing the land, the land features, the culture, the weather, and so forth. For a magician to truly unlock the secrets of ancient magic and work with them, they first have to understand where that magic came from and why it is as it is. It is no use standing about in a fancy robe and waving a colourful stick in an attempt to create magic if you are standing on a turbulent land that is ready to destroy you.

We can learn a great deal by studying a land, its weather, and the spiritual/magical expressions of the people in response to that land: these tell us why a particular stream of magic is as it is. This is crucial if you wish (as a mature magician) to access magic from different lands and cultures: know what it truly is that you are dealing with. It also teaches you a lot about your own magic, your own self, and why you are as you are. Both magic and ourselves do not develop in a vacuum: we and magic are the result of a lot of influences, and we need to be aware of what those influences are.

The best way to learn this is to look at different landmasses, look at their magic/religion, look at their weather, their foods, and the various aspects that make up their land (minerals, plant life, etc.).

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### *Peeling the onion*

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In your practical work, you are going to choose two very different lands, and you are going to look at them in outer and inner depth. To make this task easier, here is a list of things you will need to look at in order to gain the information you need:

**The general geography.** The land's height, climate, flora, fauna, and weather patterns. Pay particular attention to rivers: what are their sources and where do they go?

**The land's geology.** This is really important: it has a direct bearing on what land beings and powers will express in an area. Look at what minerals, what metals, what crystal structures and rock types are prevalent in the area, and also see if they figure into the magic/religion/culture. When you have identified certain prevalent rocks/crystals that figure in the land and the magic, look up their qualities.

**The people who populate the land.** Where do they come from? Have they been local to the area for thousands of years, or are they relative newcomers?

**The oldest mythology** of the land that you can find

**The oldest form of religion** that you can find on that land.

**The magic** that has come out of that land, both in its earlier form and its present form.

**The taboos and controls** that flow from that culture. Are there taboos that limit population growth, use of resources, uses of magic, i.e. taboos that encourage balance? Or do they have taboos that are controlling without balanced application?

**Lastly, look at the culture's traditional diet.** How and what they eat also has a deep impact on how they relate to various dynamics of power in the land. Often we can learn a lot about the inner powers that influence a people by looking at how they compensated through diet. Certain plants and herbs have protective and medicinal qualities. Certain meats block certain powers. Look closely at what food was available to the people, what they actually chose to eat, and what they chose to avoid.

By looking at these various layers, starting with the land itself, you will slowly begin to piece together the 'how' and 'why' behind a magical system. This will teach you a great deal about any magic that has flowed out into the world from that land and culture: you will be able to use that knowledge to tap into (should you wish to) the raw undercurrent of a magical system while bypassing the modern overlays which are usually imbalanced and adapted for a Western market.

This is one of those skills that when you are learning it, you tend to think that it is probably a waste of time. But there will come a time in your future in magic when you will be thankful that you did this work, as the rewards are numerous when it comes to magical development.

Let me give you a bit of an example—without giving too much away in case you choose this area of the world for your practical work. Let us look at the Tibetan Plateau. From that area, a vast repository of magic has flowed into the West. Both the formalised magic and the shamanic magic that is part of Tibetan culture and spirituality is very powerful indeed. Even in its watered-down, sanitised form that is now marketed in the West, the real power beneath still shines through. It is magic that developed from a very specific landscape; yet it also travels well and works anywhere.

But because it is so powerful, just diving in and experimenting is likely to blow you up: you need to know what you are doing, why you are doing it, and what you are really working with. That information cannot come from Tibetan texts: what is put out into the world is unbalanced, heavily edited, and manipulated. So the magician has to go to the roots of where that magic developed and why it developed as it did. By doing this, the

magician can then spot, from looking at Tibetan history, what mistakes were made, what degeneration set in, and why. The start of this is looking at the land and powers themselves.

The land of and around Tibet is very special to us all. It is the source of many different rivers and glaciers which in turn feed and water a large chunk of the world. Each of those rivers has a powerful consciousness, and they all flow from this one area. It is also a place of high, powerful mountains that are also still very young in mountain terms: they are full of youthful, vital force. The plateau is still rising, bit by bit, so the land is volatile, powerful, and full of energy. The whole range of the Himalayas is the same: young, vital, powerful, the source of many vast and powerful rivers, and still pretty wild. It has a low human population compared with other places around the world, and it also has a long history of powerful shamanic and temple-based magic.

If you have ever been on or around powerful mountains, you will know that this is not always a good thing for humans: the deity powers that flow through such mountains are vast, energetic, and often hostile destructive beings. So the magic has to adapt to deal with that. Surrounded by such powers as the mountains, the rivers, and the frozen lakes, a lot of the magic would have to be defensive, and understanding this steps you a little closer to understanding Tibetan magic. It is full of defensive and suppressive magic, full of rituals to dampen and placate 'demon' spirits, to bind or pin them, and to force one set of spirits to protect the humans against other, more dangerous spirits.

Such magic would have no purpose on a landscape that is gentle; such magic can only develop in the face of constant struggle. Rather than simply taking up Tibetan magic, copying it and using it, which would be folly, it is better to look at the magic with a full understanding of why and how it developed, then see what you can learn from its methods and techniques. Those more technical aspects of the magic can then be redeveloped and reapplied in a different landscape effectively, without the inherent, localised issues that magic such as Tibetan magic has.

In your practical work you are going to choose two separate and different places. You will look in depth at both places and the magic that developed from them, then compare the two. Later as an adept you will do a similar exercise, but looking at the actual magical power and deities themselves, and seeing which approaches are necessary and which are not.

In Tibet's case, the magical approach to the destroying female powers

in the land is to suppress, pin, and control them so that the people can survive. They suppress the destroying aspect in favour of the creative aspect, or they control and focus the destroying aspect on other beings who may threaten the populace.

We cannot judge such behaviour unless we have lived in that landscape ourselves for a long while and had to deal with such powers. But there are other, less extreme methods of working with destroying goddesses in a difficult landscape that do not need such oppressive behaviour. It will be up to the adept student to identify which other methods would potentially work which would be more compatible with the goddess power and the people combined. The fact that the priesthoods who did such suppressive magic have now been driven off the land by the Chinese speaks volumes.

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*Task: Investigating the magic of two cultures*

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Look at a world map. Choose two very different landscapes/cultures that you can look at. Use the listed questions in this lesson and look at the land, its weather, what types of rocks lie under the land, what types of metals or minerals the land is rich in, how active the land is in terms of volcanoes, earthquakes, etc. Also look to see if any heavy mining has been done upon the land, and that is likely to have stirred up aggression in the land spirits.

Then look at the earliest cultures on the land that you can find. Look at their mythology, their spirituality, their magic, and see what the defining aspect of that magic is. And look further than just the surface.

Say, for example, that you looked at Ancient Egypt. Many writers will say that the culture there was obsessed with death. This is an incorrect assumption and displays a lack of understanding of the development of the sacred magic that defined that culture. That culture was about keeping balance: Ma'at was the defining impulse in that culture, and the focus on death was to allow priest-kings to stay on the land as an inner contact *to help maintain balance*.

There is also a deeper mystery about the 'obsession' with death. Learning to walk the complex path of the challenges of death while still in life is not only the signature of an adept, it also ensures that upon death you do not have to deal with such challenges: you did your homework



and development while still in life. That is a major achievement in the Mysteries.

If you look at the early Old Kingdom texts, you will see this clearly. But if you only look at the end of the New Kingdom, it will indeed look as if they focused on death and the Underworld.

As you look at the geography of Ancient Egypt, you will see it was indeed a land of stability and plenty. What happens when you have everything you need all the time? You begin to want more and to become unbalanced. Hence the development of Ma'at. They lived on a balanced, stable land, and to stay in harmony with that balance they too had to be balanced so that they did not become greedy or complacent—which did happen in successive periods of Egyptian history.

If you contrast Ancient Egypt with the Hittite Kingdom, which we now know quite a bit about, you will see that the Hittite culture was based in a harsh landscape and their overarching driving force was control and conquest. Which culture lasted longer? Which produced magic that is still viable to this day?

Sometimes harsh lands create harsh people and tough magic: it is the only way they can survive. So do not judge what you find from a moral standpoint; simply look and learn. Then think about the ramifications of such magic if it were plucked out of its context and used in a wider sense on another land. Also, think about if it would actually work...

For example, in gold-rich countries there are often tales of dragons and dragon magic. These beings are heavily connected with certain metals that come out of the ground—indeed they are the inner consciousness of those metals. The interaction of the land, the metals, and the people who use those metals developed dragon magic in a certain way. This magic has no power on lands that do not have those metals in them. But on lands that do have metals such as gold, copper, etc., the dragon magic will work, depending on what the magician is doing with it. (Another reason why you need this knowledge of lands.)

*A note of warning: the internet is full of misleading, badly-researched websites, particularly when it comes to magic and cultures. Use a variety of sources to gather your information. The educational sites for geography and geology are usually straightforward. Once you come to religions, cultures, and magic, you have to be a bit more careful. If you can find epic stories, legends, and myths in direct translation, they should be a good source of information. When you come to look at religions, tribal culture, tribal magic, or sacred/ritual*

*magic, tread carefully and use your common sense. Look at academic papers, and overlook their conclusions as they are often wrong, but do look at the details they outline.*

Also, a culture’s artwork, architecture, statues, and iconography will tell you a great deal if you look closely from a magician’s standpoint. Draw on everything you know so far about magic when you look at images. Some cultural images you will find easy to understand magically and will give you lots of starting points for research; others you will have to think sideways a bit.

For example, here is a photograph of modern Altai hunters who work with eagles. Using this image a starting point, you note that eagles and horses are central to their survival. When you look at the geography of the Altai, you see why. From this image, you would then search for standing stones and the images on them scattered around the Altai region, and then search out their stories, songs, legends, and history. What unfolds is an astonishing magical legacy that survived interference from both the Russians and Chinese. It is a magical legacy that can teach us much today about how to work with the land and the spirits of the land.



Figure 1: Altai hunters.

Create two files, one for each culture you are going to look at. List their geographical, geological, and cultural historic backgrounds as a summary. List the overall emphasis that the legends and myths have (survival? conquest? protecting something?) and look at some of the magical/religious/spiritual patterns that the cultures use. Are they

historically polytheist? Monotheist? Do they work with Underworld and star powers? Do they work with land spirits, ancestors? Do they work with weather spirits, animal and bird spirits?

Sit back and think about what is the driving force behind their spirituality and magic. Once you have identified that, look to see if their magic/spirituality has reached the West and if it is one of the waves of magical/religious fashions that swept up on Western shores (i.e. Tibetan, Siberian Shamanism, Amazonian Indian tribal spirituality, Hinduism, Kemetite magic, Sumerian magic, and so forth). If the magic of the cultures you are looking at have come to the West, think about the root driving force behind that magic. What do you think that magic would do in a Western experimental magic setting?

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*Task: Observing one of the cultures in vision*

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Set up your working room and get all the powers and directions going (this is for your protection). Go in vision to the Inner Library with the intention of looking at one of the cultures you have chosen. Ask the librarian to take you to a place where you can observe the magic of that culture in action. Do not have preconceived ideas: you may find that what you observe and what you have read about that culture are very different and do not compare.

Do this visit a few times. If you feel confident and you have observed the same people more than once, step from the safety of the viewing area into the time and space you are viewing. It is very likely that one of the priests/magicians/shamans will pick up on your presence. If so, conduct yourself with caution and with respect. Introduce yourself to the protective beings around the magician/shaman/priest.

Let them know you are there to learn and that you pose no threat. If they are trying to achieve something that is vital, and you know you can help, then offer that help. Do not impose your help if they do not respond. But if they do, and you go ahead with helping them, tread sensibly—and don't overreach yourself.

What will happen will largely depend on what time and culture you have stepped into. The inner librarian will take you to a place and time that is the peak of that culture, that most expresses who they are/were. If the culture is in a powerful landscape, it is likely that the powers of the mountains/rivers/features will be present as deities or spirits. Be very

careful if they communicate with you: do not make promises you cannot keep, and stay as neutral as possible.

Use all the information you learned from your research to make sense of what you are seeing. If any ritual action is being conducted, watch it very carefully in order to understand what they are doing.

If by any chance you are dropped into a time and place that is about to be destroyed (if you recognise the time and place, this can happen...) then you know that you have been timed in with an event in order to warn the people. This does sometimes happen. The inner worlds are very good at using time, power, and beings to achieve more than one thing at once. You may think you are simply going on a research exploration, but the librarian could dump you in a place just before something terrible will happen. Since you know the local priest/priestess/shaman will see you and you recognise the time and place (or you see the inner impulse of the danger awakening), you can warn the person who can see you about the disaster that is about to happen.

Most of the time, though, it is not so dramatic: you simply sit or stand and watch things happening, taking note of their magical actions, what powers they work with, what spirits are around them, and so forth.

Once you have been in vision a few times and observed the same people/magic in action, go back again and research those people and their magical/spiritual beliefs. Your understanding of what you are reading may have massively changed as a result of your direct experiences in observation.

This method of research followed by inner exploration/observation is an important skill to learn as a magician. It opens up the world vista of magic to you, and brings into sharp focus the amount of fake and pretentious magic flooding the modern world. This skill lets you spot fake magic straight away, and it also helps you get to the roots of old magic for yourself. You can learn different forms of magic, different approaches, and applications because you have a better understanding of how a thread of magic developed, why it developed, and what powers are behind it.

Type up your notes from your exploratory visions and put them in the same computer file as the research on the culture.

QUAREIA

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