# MAGE
## TRANSLATION GUIDE

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THE MAGICIAN.

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## DAVE BROOKSHAW AND
## MALCOLM SHEPPARD

# CREDITS

**Written and Developed by:** Dave Brookshaw and Malcolm Sheppard
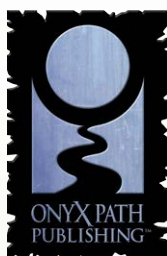
**Editor:** Michelle Lyons-McFarland

**Creative Director:** Richard Thomas

**Development Producer:** Rose Bailey

**Art Direction and Design:** Mike Chaney

**Interior Art:** Lawrence Snelly, John Van Fleet, Michael Komarck, Aleksi Briclot, Abrar Ajmal, Chris Shy, Kevin Murphy, Jason Felix, Dan Brereton, Willima O'Connor, David Leri, Charles Vess, Michael Ryan, Eric Williams, Ron Brown, Andrew Trabbold, Alex Sheikman, Michel Koch, Mike Gaydos, Steve Stone

**Front Cover Art: Michael Wm. Kaluta**

# MAGE TRANSLATION GUIDE

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# INTRODUCTION

White Wolf released **Mage: The Ascension** in 1993 as the third game in the classic World of Darkness setting. The game's titular Ascension arrived in 2004, bringing the game line to a close until new books arrived in 2012. It made way for **Mage: The Awakening**, the third game in a new World of Darkness. Now Onyx Path produces both games side by side.

This translation guide exists to help you play **Ascension** with **Awakening** rules or vice-versa, or even devise a hybrid that produces your personal Mage. We've presented each game's key systems and ideas through the other game's framework. How do the Traditions use Legacies? Which Path rules the Sphere of Entropy? You'll find suggestions here.

There's one rule that doesn't change between games: the Golden Rule. It's in the first edition of **Mage: The Ascension** and still present in the World of Darkness. Page 120 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** and p. 219 of **Mage: The Ascension Revised** phrase it in different ways, but agree that dice and spellcasting rules should support a compelling story. We offer suggestions here, but our strongest suggestion is that you change the rules to fit your group.

Remember the Golden Rule because, frankly, translating between **Ascension** and **Awakening** isn't a seamless process. The two games differ in theme, premise, setting and occult metaphysics. They represent the *zeitgeists* of their respective design eras, including their flaws. Look at the intent behind both games to fill in the blanks and add your group's interests to the mix.

## ASCENSION VS. AWAKENING

Before getting into the specific rules conversions, let's look at the games' broad differences: their contrasting Worlds of Darkness and nearly opposed metaphysics.

### WORLDS OF DARKNESS

**Ascension** made grand statements about the world and the things inhabiting it. Vampires, werewolves, ghosts, faeries, and other stranger things all existed, but could **Ascension**'s cosmology accept **Vampire: The Masquerade**'s creation myth? Maybe — it wasn't easy.

**Awakening**'s design allows protagonists from other new World of Darkness games to share the same universe. New World of Darkness games build on a foundation in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, so Storytellers can cross them over without hacking the

core system. **Awakening** also leaves secrets for other games to command as well as mysteries beyond the ken of any supernatural being.

Ascension and **Awakening** both make magic the fundamental force of the universe. Awakening to the true nature of the world opens the door to magic, making mortal men and women mages. Yet **Awakening** and **Ascension** reveal different truths and different reasons for magic's fundamental power.

## Ascension: Reality on the Brink

Ascension's willworkers understand that everyday reality is a Consensus of belief. If enough people believe in something, it becomes true. Avatars — shards of creative power that accompany humans — generate the Consensus. Dormant, *Sleeping* Avatars allow the majority to influence reality on a tiny, subconscious level. With Awakened Avatars, mages impose their wills on the world whether others believe as they do or not. They force the world's laws to conform to their *paradigms*, or personal beliefs, through appropriate *foci*. A hermetic wizard conjures elemental powers through sigils and chanted formulae. A fringe scientist from the Sons of Ether channels electricity and radiation into death rays and force fields.

Mages can also gain power by swaying others to their beliefs. Convince a critical mass of Sleepers and sorcery becomes accepted natural law. The *Technocracy* succeeded at this, and made Sleepers believe that magic is a delusion or a psychological ritual. Against them, nine *Traditions* maintain mystic ways, living myths, and strange science in the face of Technocratic persecution. They've joined forces to protect themselves, asserting that Sleepers should be able to freely choose their beliefs and make the universe out of their desires.

When will and belief twist out of control, mages go mad and their moral frameworks crumble. Two groups represent madness and malformed desire. *Marauders* retreat into insane personal paradigms, twisting reality to conform to their delusions. *Nephandi* seek suffering and destruction. Hate and nihilism are their sacraments.

These four factions contend in an Ascension War to shape the universe. Reality stands on the brink.

## Awakening: Mysteries and Truths

If there's an Ascension War in **Awakening**, it either ended long ago or shapes worlds in ways most mages only glimpse at some pinnacle of awareness. **Awakening**'s protagonists dwell in a Gnostic universe, where the everyday world is a shadow cast by living symbols of higher, *Supernal Realms*: worlds of truth and power. In an age beyond time as we know it, mystics trod the Supernal with the confidence of explorers or would-be colonists. These sorcerers came from what legends call *Atlantis*: an ur-civilization with countless names, remembered in the myths of all peoples.

Atlantis built a Celestial Ladder so its mages could bodily Ascend to the Supernal Realms. These sorcerers battled for supreme power until the Celestial Ladder shattered, wounding the cosmos. The *Abyss* still emanates from the wound, flooding the gulf between the Supernal and mundane *Fallen World*.

Now the mass of humanity Sleeps. The Abyss infects their souls and prevents them from seeing the truth: magic exists and the World of Darkness is a prison. The few who shake off this curse of Quiescence experience waking dreams or Astral journeys into the Supernal, called across the Abyss by one of five Watchtowers erected by survivors of the Fall. By marking the Watchtowers with their names, mages Awaken to the Fallen state of the world. Each Watchtower leads the way to a corresponding *Path* that lashes the mage's soul to a Supernal Realm, its symbols and its magical laws. Drawing these laws down to bend or shatter Fallen reality is the art of sorcery.

Protagonists usually belong to one of five *Pentacle orders*. Four claim an Atlantean heritage. The fifth is the allied Free Council, which rejects ancient tradition for the sake of freedom and innovation.

As mages deepen their understanding of reality, they contend with numerous enemies. Thanks to deep trauma, *Banishers* persecute sorcerers even as they practice the Art themselves. The soul-deformed *Mad* mutilate the world to satisfy their delusions. *Left-Handed* sects use magic for immoral purposes. The Pentacle's greatest enemies, however, are the *Seers of the Throne*. These mages serve the *Exarchs*, Atlantean sorcerers who seized Supernal power

and triggered the rise of the Lie. At the behest of their masters, Seers keep humanity Asleep and mired in conflict.

**Awakening** is about hidden knowledge, the quest for greater understanding, and the temptations of power. Reality is a Lie, riddled with supernatural mysteries to uncover. Mages seek out the unknown in forgotten ruins, strange cults and bloody urban legends.

## Hubris and Paradox

Both games say mages are prone to hubris and arrogance. They misuse power for personal reasons, victimizing Sleepers or striking at the pillars of existence. In **Ascension**, hubris inspired and fueled the Ascension War. Centuries ago, mages treated Sleepers with cold indifference. Proto-Technocrats overthrew them and in victory, decided what ordinary people were permitted to believe.

**Awakening**'s sorcerers should use magic with discretion, lest they profane their souls by harnessing them in immoral or thoughtless ways. A mage's Wisdom measures his spiritual stability, degenerating when he causes suffering or treats the Fallen World like a plaything.

When mages defy the limits the universe places before them, reality strikes back in a phenomenon both games call Paradox. In **Ascension**, Paradox strikes when mages' feats clash with the Consensus. In **Awakening**, Paradoxes represent the Abyss worming its way into a spell. No matter the version, Paradox represents an ambiguous stance on hubris. In **Ascension**, reality is propaganda; mages may defy it not only out of pride, but hope for a better world. In **Awakening**, Paradox attacks spells that reveal the Lie.

## Broad Epics and Focused Stories

**Ascension** presents a global or even cosmic conflict. The Ascension War rages across the world and other realms. Strongholds called *Chantries* may possess portals to many of these realms or otherwise act as way stations for willworkers from distant places. The **Awakening** *Consilium* is a local political body, not a nexus between nations and secret worlds. It helps mages settle disputes and deal with common problems in a single city or equivalent region.

These basic organizational units set the basic scope of each game. **Ascension** stories explore a universe painted in broad strokes. **Awakening** games drill down into the local mysteries. There's nothing to keep you from changing focus, but these are the starting points.

## Metaplot and the Hierarchy of Tiers

**Ascension** developed an ongoing story where the setting transformed with each book (with more than a little retroactive continuity). **Horizon: Stronghold of Hope** described the great Chantry of the Traditions. **Tales of Magic: Dark Adventure** chronicled its fall. Threads of narratives such as these described a *metaplot*.

**Awakening** doesn't use a metaplot, though there may be small, representative stories (such as the fall of the Nemean in **Mysterium**, **The Silver Ladder** and **Left-Hand Path**) that aren't in-game history, but potential possibilities. The game's setting only changes in response to real world events — somebody we described in 2005 probably owns a smartphone by now. The setting doesn't expand in time but rather in detail and scope, along broad *tiers* of focus, from local conflicts to cosmic struggles that define the nature of the universe.

# Chapter One: The Awakening

Before ever casting spells, World of Darkness mages Awaken to the secrets of their universes—but those secrets differ between the two games, presenting divergent visions of Awakening. This section explores each game's Awakening in the other's framework—truth beyond the Lie and the power of belief.

## ASCENSION TO AWAKENING

An **Awakening** mage discovers that she's part of a greater universe, grasping the Supernal laws that create reality through magical sympathy with the higher world. An **Ascension** mage Awakens to his inner potential, using his Avatar to change the world according to his personal vision. Where the **Awakening** mage's Path ties her to the Supernal and provides much of her magical style, the **Ascension** mage channels an Essence that describes his Avatar's essential character.

### Avatar

An Avatar is a shard of Prime energy that allows an **Ascension** mage to manipulate reality. All humans possess Avatars, but a Sleeper's Avatar doesn't grant magical power or inspire its host—at least, not until the Sleeper Awakens. In ancient times, Avatars often appeared as hallucinations or even physical manifestations to guide their mages, but in the modern age Avatars rarely reveal themselves. Most Avatars take the form of flashes of intuition, mysterious whispers, or strangely vivid dreams. Some mages don't even know that they have Avatars—Technocrats believe in personal Genius, for example. Mages generally describe Avatars in ways that conform to their beliefs: as angels, guiding gods, or alternate personalities. Avatars reincarnate, carrying impressions of their shared lives into future hosts. Inspired by strangely transmitted memories of other lives, mages often say Avatars have goals and drives of their own.

**Ascension** uses a Background to measure the bond between mage and Avatar. Under **Awakening** rules, it's a Merit. In both games, 0 dots indicate a weak connection, but it's still enough to allow one of the Awakened to work magic.

## Character Axes

**Ascension** describes characters by Essence and Tradition. **Awakening** does it with Path, order, and Legacy. Stylistic aspects such as how they cast spells, what they believe and the sort of mage they are link to Tradition in **Ascension**, but to both Path and Legacy in **Awakening**. Essence only subtly shades magic in **Ascension**, but Path is all important in **Awakening**. **Awakening** orders define themselves by their purposes, not out of cultural trappings drawn from the world of Sleepers. **Ascension** describes sub-groups for each Tradition and Convention; these functional divisions resemble the **Awakening** orders.

Rather than lose the flavor of each game, we've chosen to preserve how characters are defined. If you run an **Ascension** character in **Awakening**, for example, they'll get two Ruling Arcana, an inferior Arcanum, a bonus to spell casting when chanting, using magical tools, and so on—but won't get them from the same sources as a native **Awakening** character. If you only use some of the translations here—Avatars and Essence with the orders, for instance—you'll need to do some work on your own to get the customization you want. This choice underlies the design decisions in this book. This translation guide provides the means to move from one system to the other and back again, but also offers the freedom to take just what you want, with the caveat that if you mix and match, you may need to tweak the systems described herein to provide the best fit for your game.

### New Merit: Avatar (• to •••••)

**Prerequisite:** Awakened

The character's connection to magic takes the form of an Awakened Avatar. Her ability to store magical energy within herself depends on her bond to her Avatar.

**Effect:** The character gains an Essence instead of a Path (see below), and does not receive all of the benefits of the Gnosis Advantage as described on page 76 of **Mage: The Awakening**. Instead of increasing maximum Mana and maximum Mana per Turn via Gnosis, her ability to store and channel Mana depends on this Merit until her Gnosis increases to 6 or higher. At Gnosis 1-5, compare the character's dots in this Merit to the Gnosis table in order to determine her maximum Mana pool and how many points she can spend each turn. If she attains a Gnosis of 6 or more, add the dots above 5 to her Avatar Merit dots.

In a game using **Ascension** metaphysics, a character without this Merit possesses an effective "Gnosis 0" for Mana manipulation purposes, and may store 5 Mana and spend 1 point per turn. If your game uses **Ascension**-style Quintessence instead, use its rules to channel and store magical energy.

*Example: Juliana's Gnosis 1 and Avatar Merit 3 entitle her to a maximum Mana pool of 13. She may spend up to 3 Mana per turn. If she attained Gnosis 5 with Avatar 3, she would still only have 13/3. If, however, she gained Gnosis 7, her Mana pool increases to 15/6.*

**Drawback:** If her Avatar is destroyed (a process requiring Spirit and/or Death 5) the character immediately loses her ability to cast magic unless another Awakened Avatar can be substituted. The fallout from Avatar loss is identical to **Awakening**'s soul loss, except that the mage cannot recover by having a Sleepers' stolen soul substituted for her own.

## Essence

Mystics who study Avatars deeply classify them into four *Essences*. In **Awakening** terms, Essence partially replaces Path. It doesn't provide magical tools—those come from a mage's paradigm—and only grants one Ruling Arcanum and one Inferior Arcanum. An **Ascension**-style mage's second Ruling Arcanum comes from her Tradition. Essence-based Arcana associations are only trends, not immutable laws of magic—the four Essences were classified by mages to cover a wide spectrum of experiences, leaving room for differences between mages of the same Essence.

When you select an Essence for your character, pick *one* of its three possible Ruling Arcana. If you use Avatars and Essence but not Traditions, choose the second Ruling Arcanum freely. If you do use Traditions and a Tradition's Ruling Arcanum happens to be the character's Essence-based Inferior Arcanum, the Arcanum in question "graduates" to Ruling, but the character gains a *new* Inferior Arcanum, selected from those that are not possible Ruling Arcana for her Essence.

*Example: Chris creates Dache, a Questing Akashic Brother. Dache's Questing Avatar allows for Fate, Prime, or Space as a first Ruling Arcanum. He picks Space, noting the Essence's Inferior Arcanum of Mind. The Akashic Brotherhood grants Mind as its second Ruling Arcanum, so Chris picks Spirit as the Inferior Arcanum instead. Dache's final Ruling Arcana are Space and Mind, and his Inferior Arcanum is Spirit.*

Each Essence also provides a free dot in either Resolve or Composure.

## Dynamic

Dynamic Avatars focus on raw creation. Dynamic mages often feel restless, compelled to move on instead of surrendering to routine. They might complain that their Avatars don't let them stay put to benefit from their labors or maintain leadership roles. Mages prize their originality and innovative spirits, however, as Dynamic sorcerers often invent new spells and Legacies.

**Ruling Arcana:** Mind, Space, or Time. Dynamic Avatars represent inspiration, movement, and progress.

**Inferior Arcanum:** Spirit. Spirits are after-effects, ephemeral images of mortal action remaining in the Umbra or Shadow. Many Dynamic mages find learning the Spirit Arcanum difficult.

**Favored Attribute:** Resolve

## Pattern

Pattern mages refine, improve and stabilize reality's foundations. They play vital roles as teachers, organizers and archivists. Pattern mages often join existing Legacies and pass them on to multiple apprentices, perpetuating them across millennia. They prefer rational, structured thinking and often experience their Avatars as moments of lucidity and organized thought.

**Ruling Arcana:** Forces, Matter, or Life. Pattern mages excel at altering tangible phenomena.

**Inferior Arcanum:** Death. The Death Arcanum represents entropy and disintegration, the final transformation of Patterns into another form.

**Favored Attribute:** Composure

## Primordial

Primordial mages stand at the edge of reality's underpinnings, where dark energies unravel and renew the Tapestry. They seek the origins of things and follow them to manifold endings: the last breaths of death and the cry of new powers erupting into the universe. Primordial mages excel at investigating and analyzing supernatural phenomena. Primordial sorcery interrogates spirits and ghosts, tracking them to secret places.

**Ruling Arcana:** Death, Prime, or Spirit. Primordial mages understand the deeper nature of the universe and magic that deals with the building blocks of creation.

**Inferior Arcanum:** Fate. Fate follows Patterns from raw to refined states until they abandon their original natures. As such, Primordial mages often find it difficult to learn the Fate Arcanum.

**Favored Attribute:** Composure

## Questing

Questing Avatars balance the other Essences, seeking change through purpose. Questing mages describe the cycle of Creation with their heroes' journeys and bind Awakened society into a cohesive whole. They seek new experiences and change like a Dynamic mage, unearth essential qualities like a Primordial sorcerer and weave them into grand works of Pattern: societies, Wonders and myths.

**Ruling Arcana:** Fate, Prime, or Space. Questing mages see existence as a series of journeys. They're drawn to beginnings and destinations, literally so for Space and figuratively in Fate. All these journeys seek the truth, represented by Prime.

**Inferior Arcanum:** Mind. Questing mages know themselves by their actions and are not prone to inner reflection.

**Favored Attribute:** Resolve

## Seekings

When magic follows **Ascension**'s metaphysics, mages master their art by confronting their Avatars in a *Seeking*, a Mystery Play or Astral Journey the mage must undergo to increase her Gnosis (or Arete, if you use that trait instead). Each Seeking resembles the singular experience that granted Awakening. It appears as a puzzle or other challenge in the mage's dreams (the Oneiros, if you use **Awakening**'s Astral Realms) or superimposed on the world. Technocrats and other mages who deny the existence of their Avatars still Seek, but rationalize the experience as vivid dreams or transformative, yet ordinary life events. In every case, Avatars tailor Seekings to mages' beliefs and emotions.

If the mage resolves the challenge, her player earns the right to buy the next dot of Gnosis or Arete, The new dot costs experience points as usual, though **Ascension** Storytellers often reduce or eliminate the cost based on the Seeking's quality. Seekings should earn experience points just like other stories in the game. Furthermore, you might award **Awakening**-style Arcane Experience for the Seeking to mitigate the cost of raising Arete/Gnosis.

In **Awakening**, every Oneiros hosts an Astral spirit called the *Daimon*: the personified drive for self-improvement. In games using **Ascension** metaphysics,

the mage's Avatar replaces her Daimon, and might be questioned in her dreams.

## Paradigm and Foci

Ascension mages can't just will spells into existence. They must structure their desires within belief systems—*paradigms*—that make magic possible. Until a mage attains great power, she must cast spells using the tools and procedures her paradigm demands. These are called *foci*.

Creating a paradigm and picking foci are important parts of **Ascension** character creation, but don't overdo it—mages are experts in their models of reality, but you don't need to be. Strike a balance between authenticity and fun.

### Using Foci

In **Awakening**, magical style provides mechanical effects. **Ascension**-style foci replace these. Use the guidelines below to set **Awakening**-style benefits for various types of foci.

**Ritual Reagents:** Many Traditions employ sacrifice. They destroy a symbolic object (or creature) or use up resources to cast a spell. Some involve ritual consumption of a drug or even self-injury. Verbena blood sacrifices, Cult of Ecstasy drug trips, and even Syndicate funding all qualify. In **Awakening** terms, Reagents used as part of a paradigm are *Sacraments* that remove the dice penalty for casting a ritual spell.

**Objects of Power:** All Traditions collect items of personal significance to hone practitioners' intentions and perform magical operations. From a Dreamspeaker's bone rattle to a trusty pair of Ether Goggles, objects of power don't provide mechanical benefits beyond being necessary to satisfy magical paradigms. They're often personal or unique foci, as described below.

**Ceremonies and Rituals:** Mages cast some spells with a quick word or jab of the wand, but all Traditions employ lengthy ceremonies when needed. Any extended spell that uses special words, sigils or chants counts as the use of *High Speech* or *Runes*, from a Chorister's hymns to a Virtual Adept coding session.

### Personal and Unique Foci

In a change to **Mage: The Awakening's** rules on Magical Tools, mages with paradigms can declare any focus—even rituals or the use of reagents—as one of their dedicated magical tools, reducing Paradox dice pools by one die when using them. This benefit stacks with the focus' existing Sacraments, Runes, or High

## New Flaw: Focus Dependence

Some extremely formal or close-minded paradigms (including those of many Technocrats and the Wu Lung faction of the Akashic Brotherhood) can't surpass their foci at all. Mages with this flaw gain an extra experience point in chapters when this inflexibility causes them problems.

Speech benefits, if any. A mage may keep no more than one personal focus per Arcanum or Sphere.

Even if the mage only declares personal foci, he can cast spells without them as long as he finds some way to channel magic through his paradigm. For example, without his wand a Hermetic makes do with a diamond showstone, adapting the occult diagrams he draws to summon elemental Forces.

Some mages possess unique foci: special items of power they made by hand and linked to one or more Arcana/Spheres. Unique foci are always objects of power, but are even more personal than standard magical tools. They can't be rededicated if destroyed and the mage can't cast a spell linked to its Arcana/Spheres without either using or surpassing it (see below). It's a terrible idea to link most of your magic to a unique focus, but the rewards for using one on a limited selection of Arcana are great. Casting using a unique focus always adds +1 die bonus to applicable spellcasting rolls. Finally, be warned that a unique focus is the equivalent of a body sample (such as a lock of hair) when used for sympathetic magic targeting its owner.

### Surpassing and Transcending Foci

Although paradigms are more flexible than Magical Tools, they *must* be used unless a mage performs a feat of extraordinary will or grows beyond them. To cast a spell without appropriate foci, the mage must *surpass* this need. This costs a Willpower point and imposes a –3 dice penalty to the spellcasting roll. See "Will vs. Imago" on p. 36 for more information.

Insightful mages overcome these self-imposed limitations. For every Gnosis or Arete dot a character gains past the fifth, choose two Arcana or Spheres. The character no longer needs to spend Willpower to surpass foci for spells using only those Arcana or Spheres, but if she uses foci anyway, she gains a one-die bonus to the casting dice pool in addition to the benefits such foci normally provide.

# AWAKENING TO ASCENSION
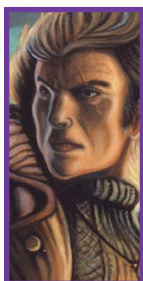
**Awakening** magic emanates from the Supernal Realms, the true reality, where the pure power of being coalesces into perfect symbols, setting the patterns of existence. Science, religion, mythology—all contain fragments of the cosmic ur-signs.

Between the Supernal and Fallen, an Abyss of anti-reality and dark intelligences corrupts the flow of true reality. Built of twisted shadows of Supernal truth, the Lie prevents Sleepers from perceiving magic or even realizing that Awakening is possible. In fact, the Abyss infects' Sleepers souls as a curse. Awakening is the act of climbing a Watchtower, throwing off the curse, and claiming the power of Supernal reality.

## THE FIVE SUPERNAL REALMS

The Awakened recognize five Supernal Realms, clustered around primordial symbols. These correspond to particular ideas and philosophies—in **Ascension** terms, a type of loose "paradigm" that they do not so much choose as attain through the act of Awakening.

Each Realm is strongly attuned to certain fields of magic and weaker in others. In **Awakening**'s system, these fields are Arcana. If you're using **Ascension** magic, these are Spheres. These Major and Inferior fields are listed in the Path section, below.

The known Supernal Realms are:

**The Aether:** Kingdom of the Celestial Spheres and Abode of Angels. Location of the Watchtower of the Golden Key. A plane of elementals, holy words and celestial intelligences.

**Arcadia:** Kingdom of Enchantment and Abode of the Fae. Location of the Watchtower of Lunargent Thorn. An otherworld ruled by storybook doom, twisted dreams and capricious gods.

**Pandemonium:** Kingdom of Nightmares and Abode of Demons. Location of the Watchtower of the Iron Gauntlet. A mad maze of desire given form, or perhaps a hell created by one's own sins.

**The Primal Wild:** Kingdom of Totems and Abode of Beasts. Location of the Watchtower of the Stone Book. An untamed land where everything lives and speaks.

**Stygia:** Kingdom of Crypts and Abode of Shades. Location of the Watchtower of the Lead Coin. A haunted land of cast off riches and endless monuments to the dead.

## AWAKENING TO THE WATCHTOWERS

Ancient myths say that five Atlantean kings created the Watchtowers to guide seekers across the Abyss to Awaken. Each Watchtower rises in a corresponding Supernal Realm of symbols, translated into myths determined by the Realm and Awakening soul. At the apex of Awakening, the seeker writes her name upon the Watchtower, and then returns with the secrets of magic. Her journey to a particular Watchtower determines her Path.

## PATHS IN ASCENSION

A mage's Path guides her soul and influences the symbols she uses to express her Awakened will, lifestyle and magical accoutrements. These occult correspondences resemble an **Ascension** paradigm, but remember that **Awakening** magic does not impose the mage's beliefs on the world. Instead, magic draws on an objective, higher truth. Thus, occult correspondences influence a mage's style, but don't restrict the types of spells she can cast. Instead, Path influences a mage's sorcery by determining her Major and Inferior Spheres. In this book, every Path includes Traditions among the occult correspondences as an aid to character translation.

Note that due to differences in systems between the games, translations have been tweaked for playability. For example, **Ascension**'s Prime is important for conjunctional spells, so it is neither Major nor Inferior for any Path using the Spheres.

The mage gains an additional Mental or Social Attribute dot called a Favored Attribute once she has been spiritually transformed by a Path. If this extra dot would increase the Attribute to 6 or higher, the player must purchase the Legendary Attribute Merit (**Mage: The Ascension Revised**, pp. 296–297).

### ACANTHUS

The Enchanters Awakened in Arcadia, the Supernal Realm of the Fae. It is a world of ruthless gods who live in mythic time and command their universe through promises and dooms. An Acanthus mage is a natural trickster who improvises his way through life, reading omens to guide the way. These "wise fools" conceal a devious nature beneath breezy personalities and aimless-looking wanderings.

**Watchtower:** The Lunargent Thorn, Watchtower of Arcadia

**Occult Correspondences:** The Fool in the tarot's major arcana. Faeries, elves, Celtic mythology. Tales of fate and doom. European Witchcraft and mystery cults. Tricksters. Elements used by the Euthanatos, Dreamspeakers and Verbena.

**Arcana/Spheres:** Major: Fate/Entropy, Time; Inferior: Forces

**Favored Attribute:** Wits

## Mastigos

The Warlocks of the Iron Gauntlet Awakened within a maze created by their own fears, passions and self-doubt, encountering the most terrifying and seductive manifestations of their psyches and learning to extend their vision beyond the self into the vast web of connections between all things. Some Mastigos return to the world with new humility, but more enter sorcery blazing with pride. They prize the urges they've chained to their wills, envisioning them as separate beings: demons and familiars. They have also mastered space for they know it consists of relationships, not meaningless measurements of distance.

**Watchtower:** The Iron Gauntlet, Watchtower of Pandemonium

**Occult Correspondences:** The Devil in the tarot's major arcana. Goetia, demonology, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, Zoroastrian dualism, the arts of self-possession practiced in Santeria and Voodoo. Elements used by the Akashic Brotherhood, Cult of Ecstasy and Order of Hermes.

**Arcana/Spheres:** Major: Space/Correspondence; Mind. Inferior: Matter

**Favored Attribute:** Manipulation

## Moros

Although they are called Necromancers, Moros study death not as a scrap heap from which to raise ghosts and shambling corpses, but as a natural transformation. Death is a form of alchemy, allowing those who pass on to purify themselves by shedding material attachments to meet new incarnations, or perhaps the destiny that awaits souls after death. From here, they turn their attention to the ever-shifting universe and apply the art of transformation to matter. Knowing that everything must change and pass away fills Moros with world-weariness. Even when they can make gold, they know that anything it buys and the happiness it inspires is as mortal as human flesh.

**Watchtower:** The Leaden Coin, Watchtower of Stygia

**Occult Correspondences:** Death in the tarot's major arcana. Egyptian and Etruscan religion, the Greek Underworld, ancestor worship, ancestor worship. Alchemy. Elements used by the Celestial Chorus, Euthanatos, and Sons of Ether.

**Arcana/Spheres:** Major: Death/Entropy, Matter; Inferior: Life

**Favored Attribute:** Perception

### Obrimos

Obrimos Theurgists come away from Awakening with the understanding that there is an order to Creation set by some unfathomable intelligence, whether it is called God, Nature, primal mathematics, or even the deified Self. The order of things laces the universe with secret names, codes, and diagrams, entrusting the laws of nature to innumerable spiritual intelligences. An Obrimos learns these codes, commands these entities, and thus shapes the universe with its own sigils and ephemeral machinery.

**Watchtower:** The Golden Key, Watchtower of the Aether

**Occult Correspondences:** Strength in the tarot's major arcana. Gnosticism, Cabalism, choirs of angels and legions of elementals. Sky gods and astrology. Elements used by the Celestial Chorus, Order of Hermes and Sons of Ether.

**Arcana/Spheres:** Major: Forces, Spirit; Inferior: Death/Entropy

**Favored Attribute:** Intelligence

### Thyrsus

Shamans follow the so-called Path of Ecstasy, following intense passions to the thresholds of other worlds. The Primal Wild teaches the supremacy of life's basic urges: survival, sex, and the beauty of places sculpted by wind, rain and running roots. All these things live, whether biologically or through the spirits that murmur even in stones. A shaman translates the riot of existence into a form her allies can understand, but pays the price for attuning herself to these indescribable powers.

**Occult Correspondences:** The Moon in the tarot's major arcana. Animism, pantheism and earth-centered beliefs such as those often associated (rightly or wrongly) with indigenous peoples. Maenads and Taoist hermits. Elements used by the Cult of Ecstasy, Dreamspeakers and Verbena.

**Arcana/Spheres:** Major: Spirit, Life. Inferior: Mind.

**Favored Attribute:** Charisma

# Ascension Legacies

**Awakening** introduces the idea of magical traditions that transform an initiate's soul. These Legacies are optional, though common. Many mages consider membership a mandatory part of their magical development. Legacies exist for a host of reasons ranging from the philosophical to the pragmatic, but all of them transform a mage's soul, imparting supernatural abilities beyond the confines of conventional sorcery.

Follow the steps below to create a Legacy.

## Step 1: Choose a Theme

Most Legacies concentrate on a type of magic, such as shapeshifting or demonology. In an **Ascension** game, you might use them to define a character's place within his Tradition or Faction. A Hermetic mage might join a Legacy based on her House or a cross-Tradition Legacy of monster slayers. Alternately, you might apply one Legacy per Tradition to provide a suite of special abilities beyond the Tradition Sphere. You can create Legacies for Technocrats or Fallen antagonists. Powerful Marauders probably manifest a new Legacy with each encounter.

After you develop a theme, use that to create a set of oblations the initiate uses to regain Quintessence or Mana. Unlike conventional oblations, discussed on , Legacy oblations do not require a place of power such as a Node or Hallow.

## Step 2: Choose an Origin

In **Awakening**, Legacies usually develop from the character's Path. A few teach initiates from a specific order, regardless of Path affiliation.

In **Ascension**, you might consider alternative origins. Mages could qualify for Legacy membership based on the following:

**Tradition/Convention:** The Legacy belongs to a Tradition sect or Convention Methodology, or one Legacy accepts all members of one of these groups.

**Faction:** Create Legacies based on organizational roles that cross Tradition or Convention boundaries, such as warriors and diplomats.

**Solitaries, Crafts and Antagonists:** Eccentrics and small groups might develop Legacies. The Nephandi's half-sleeping masters brand Fallen souls with unnatural power that could be modeled with these rules as well.

A mage may only belong to one Legacy at a time, even if he qualifies for others.

## HONORING THE TUTOR

Except in rare cases where the mage learns an attainment from a magical book or Wonder, she must seek the tutelage of a Legacy member. To initiate a member, the tutor sacrifices a permanent Willpower point (he may buy it back) and the student spends a point of temporary Willpower. From that point forward, the tutor takes a stipend of one experience point from the student whenever the student earns bonus experience for completing a chapter (see **Mage: The Ascension Revised**, p. 131).

This connection also puts tutor and student one success apart on the Correspondence range chart in **Mage: The Ascension Revised**, p. 209, as if one was part of the other.

Finally, the mage's progress is limited by her tutor. She cannot learn an attainment he doesn't know, unless it's an optional attainment granted by a synergistic Arcanum/Sphere.

## STEP 3: DETERMINE PRIMARY ARCANA/ SPHERES AND ATTAINMENTS

Each Legacy teaches an additional major Arcanum or Sphere, depending on the magic rules you use. This is the Legacy's Primary Arcanum or Sphere and may eliminate an inferior Arcanum/Sphere. If the mage already possesses the Arcanum/Sphere as a major field, she pays new dots x 5 experience points to raise it. The Primary Arcanum is one of the prerequisites for manifesting the Legacy's signature powers, or attainments.

Attainments are supernatural gifts that usually replicate a rote (a small number consist of more exotic abilities). Unlike magical Effects, they possess the following advantages:

- They're always treated as if they're coincidental and never accumulate Paradox.

- Unless specifically noted for flavor reasons, they do not require foci.

- They are not Effects per se, so they cannot be countered or dispelled by anything that specifically targets Awakened magic. For example, Primium does not hinder them. Magic that attacks the manifestation rather than the power itself remains effective—Forces can snuff out an attainment-created fire, for example.

- They cannot be sensed by powers that detect Awakened magic.

- Many (though not all) do not require a dice roll to activate. They just work.

### ATTAINMENT PREREQUISITES

Many Legacies also possess a synergistic Arcanum/ Sphere. Legacy mages don't learn them any easier, but if they possess the prerequisite ranks they may be entitled to additional attainments.

A few attainments require one more Sphere/ Arcanum at a low level (typically 1 or 2 dots) as well. This rule exists to add flavor, not an undue hindrance to character development.

As mages progress, they gain attainments as follows:

- 1st Attainment: Gained at Arete/Gnosis 3, primary Arcanum/Sphere 2. If the Legacy possesses a synergistic Arcanum/Sphere at rank 2, the mage gains its optional attainment when she learns that rank in the synergistic Arcanum/Sphere. Some Legacies also require particular Abilities (up to two dots) to use the attainment.

- 2nd Attainment: Gained at Arete/Gnosis 5, primary Arcanum/Sphere 3. If the Legacy possesses a synergistic Arcanum/Sphere at rank 3, the mage earns its optional attainment when she learns that rank.

- 3rd Attainment: Gained at Arete/Gnosis 7, primary Arcanum/Sphere 4. If the Legacy possesses a synergistic Arcanum/Sphere at rank 4, the mage gains its optional attainment when she learns that rank.

### BRANCHING OFF

A mage can delay accepting a second attainment (including the second optional attainment) until Arete/Gnosis 6, when she has the option to devise her own attainment instead. Doing so requires the mage to sacrifice a point of permanent Willpower. From that point on, the mage no longer pays an experience stipend to her tutor and loses the special sympathetic connection. The mage must now wait until Arete/Gnosis 8 to manifest a third attainment, but may develop her own instead of learning the one normally assigned to her Legacy.

# Example Ascension Legacy: Perfected Adepts of the Vajrapani

Perfected Adepts use extreme exercise, yoga, and martial arts techniques to harness the qi (also written as chi) that circulates through muscles, bones, sinews and organs.

In **Ascension**, Perfected Adepts belong to the Vajrapani sect of the Akashic Brotherhood. The brotherhood reserves its elite "warring hands" for critical missions— their violent operations impose moral burdens that may take multiple lifetimes to unload.

**Oblations:** Martial arts practice, demonstrations of endurance, and acts of humility such as attending to another person's ordinary needs for an hour or more

**Primary Arcanum:** Life

**Synergistic (Optional) Arcanum:** Forces

## 1st Attainment: Body Temple

**Prerequisites:** Arete 3, Life 2 (primary), Prime 1, Athletics 3

The mage may control normally autonomous body functions such as breathing, heart rate and response to cold. The mage's player may divide a number of ranks equal to her Life Sphere dots among the following effects:

- +1 to Initiative per rank spent

- Heal 2 levels of bashing damage per rank spent

- Stave off hunger, thirst and discomfort (along with any associated penalties)

- Reduce the need for oxygen by half per rank spent

- Perform other acts of endurance and body control, at the storyteller's discretion

These ranks refresh each turn.

The mage may also use her Prime dots as automatic successes to detect Quintessence levels in a living being within her line of sight.

## 2nd Attainment: Chi Force

**Prerequisites:** Arete 5, Life 3, Brawl 3

The mage selects one Physical Attribute upon gaining this attainment. As a normal action, she may add her Life dots to that Attribute for one scene. She may not use magic while initially activating the attainment, but may do so while it is active.

**Optional Arcanum:** Forces 3

If the mage also possesses Forces 3, she may attack a distant target with a telekinetic strike. Roll Perception + Brawl, difficulty 6. The mage inflicts damage as if striking with a rank 3 Forces Effect that scored as many successes as her Forces dots – 1. The target may dodge; roll Dexterity + Dodge, difficulty 8. Subtract Dodge successes from Perception + Brawl Successes. Excess successes on the Perception + Brawl roll add dice of lethal damage, just as for a standard ranged attack. This action requires too much concentration to cast a spell during the same turn, even if it would be appropriate to the character's paradigm to do so.

## 3rd Attainment: Perfect Body

**Prerequisites:** Arete 7, Life 4

The mage may now use the benefits of Chi Force on a second Physical Attribute, selected upon gaining the attainment. She may enhance both Attributes during the same scene, spending a separate turn to activate each enhancement. She may not use magic while activating the attainment, but may do so afterwards.

**Optional Arcanum:** Forces 4

If the mage possesses Forces 4, she may devote an instant, standard action to redirect incoming projectiles with her hands and body. This is a defensive action and may take place out of initiative order. Any attack that would inflict less damage than the character's Forces dots rebounds in any rough direction the character desires.

To strike someone else with a rebounded projectile requires more finesse: a Perception + Brawl roll, difficulty 6. It inflicts damage as if using the same method as the incoming attack. Multiple deflections degrade the mage's dice pool, as if performing multiple actions in the turn. The mage may not use a magical Effect while this attainment is active.
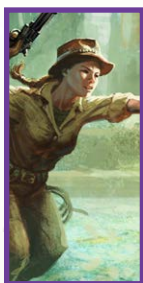
# CHAPTER TWO: TRADITION AND ORDER

From the Pentacle to the Traditions, magical societies and occult beliefs define characters in both **Ascension** and **Awakening** alike. This chapter provides conversion notes to transfer these sects from one version of **Mage** to the other.

## ASCENSION TO AWAKENING

In **Ascension**, mages group themselves according to common paradigms and magical practices. In **Awakening** conversions, characters earn one of their Ruling Arcana from their magical society (while the other Ruling Arcanum and the Inferior Arcanum come from the character's Essence, as per Chapter One). Each Tradition also grants three rote skills just like an **Awakening** order does.

### The Nine Traditions

In the Middle Ages, rival cults of sorcerers and philosophers vied for power. They cared little for Sleepers, leaving them as prey for monsters and ignoring their mundane needs. In Europe, the Technocracy's predecessors in the Order of Reason took up the cause of common men and women. These proto-scientists defeated sorcerers with cannon fire and Aristotelian physics. The Order encouraged Sleepers to believe in rational philosophy instead of rituals and magical diagrams. Their crusade to free humanity from supernatural darkness became a mission to crush different beliefs, no matter their adherents' actions.

In response, European witches, apostate priests, and ritual magicians reached out in search of fellow mystics in self-defense against forces bent on erasing them from existence. They attracted mages from all over the world, even places then unknown to Europeans. After rocky negotiations tainted by xenophobia and distrust, they formed the Council of Nine Mystic Traditions. Some Traditions, such as the Order of Hermes and Akashic Brotherhood, arrived fully formed. Other mages found common cause in a new Tradition or, like the Dreamspeakers, were forced together by outside pressure but have since embraced their shared identity.

The Tradition-Technocracy conflict is the most prominent rivalry in the Ascension War. The Technocracy has all but snuffed out true belief in magic by the modern day; most Sleepers can convince themselves to engage in empty rituals and trivial superstitions, but don't believe magic is truly possible. Rebellious hearts still burn with magical potential, however, and the Traditions might reach them still.

## Akashic Brotherhood

Born of magical sects in India and East Asia, the Akashic Brotherhood teaches that mind, body, and spirit possess no essential form or division. Discipline balances them, calms desires, and reveals an illusion to reshape with imagination, or by "letting go" and letting magic arrive like a wave crashing against the shore.

Akashic Brothers (a translated gender-neutral term) structure much of their magic through Do, a primordial martial art and mind-body discipline. Akashics also pierce the illusion of individual identity to read the Akashic Record of their Tradition's communal experiences, flowing back to the dawn of the Brotherhood. Individual Brothers harness these elements and other magic through Taoist alchemy, Feng Shui, Legalist philosophy, Shaolin asceticism, and martial arts from all nations.

### Akashic Brothers in Awakening

Many Akashic Brothers superficially resemble Adamantine Arrows, but their philosophy is based on seeking harmony and balance, not endless struggle. Some Akashics don't practice Do for combative purposes, but Arrows practice *all* skills in order to prevail in a conflict. There are Akashic parallels to all the other orders, from purified leaders to rebels filled with "crazy wisdom." In every case, Akashics challenge the illusion of the self and a fixed reality, hoping to see the indescribable, ever-flowing truth of existence.

### Systems

More than a mere fighting style, Do encompasses many skills that develop a Brother's body and expose

him to ascetic discipline. Akashics train in Athletics, Brawl, Medicine, Survival, and Weaponry. They hone their minds with Occult enigmas and learn to assess situations through stillness with Investigation. Martial Brothers learn Fighting Style Merits, but they are disciplines arising from lifelong training, not the goal itself.

**Ruling Arcanum:** Mind

**Rote Skills:** Athletics, Brawl, Medicine

# CELESTIAL CHORUS

The Celestial Chorus represents monotheistic faith but accepts and cherishes members from unexpected religions, including systems with sub-divinities and certain deified philosophies. Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, minor Christian groups, followers of Mithras and faiths based entirely on the Awakened experience believe in the One, a universal, cosmic song that creates and guides all things. All living beings are children of the One and part of its music. Chorus magic uses hymns, music, meditation, holy symbols and sacred rituals.

## CHORISTERS IN AWAKENING

Although their religious beliefs and priestly roles recall the Silver Ladder, Choristers don't exist to glorify humanity — rather, they seek to return humanity to its proper place in the cosmos, Ascended to the right hand of the One. Some Gnostic factions in the Chorus fit right into **Awakening's** universe. Unlike many Traditions, their subjective paradigm matches truth — there's a higher world and what we know is a shadowy Lie. In a mixed game, the Chorus adds a third side to the order-Seer conflict, seeking to return the world to the state of grace that existed before the Fall.

## SYSTEMS

Many Chorister groups deal extensively with mage politics, both internally and externally. They try to guide the other Traditions the same way the Silver Ladder do with the orders, so Social Skills, Merits and Attributes are important to their work.

**Ruling Arcanum:** Prime

**Rote Skills:** Academics, Expression, Persuasion

# CULT OF ECSTASY

The core Cult of Ecstasy came from the Near East and India, taking in Sufi Muslims, Greco-Roman Dionysian cults, and modern-day trance and drug cultures along the way. In ecstatic states, Cultists smash the barriers between themselves and everything else, including the world, other people, and even the flow of Time itself. Most members would never force an ecstatic state on another person, but only a slim majority of the Cult has agreed to the Code of Ananda that prohibits inflicting sensation on others. The rest see ethics as another barrier to crack.

## CULTISTS IN AWAKENING

Some Ecstatic factions resemble groups within the Pentacle, particularly where it overlaps with the Thyrsus Path. All orders have members who seek revelations through altered states of consciousness. Even the Seers of the Throne seek ecstasy in the presence of the "divine" Exarchs and the secrets they whisper to anyone who opens themselves to hear them. Where ethical Pentacle members look inward to personal revelation, however, Seers and Left-Handed mages seek out unwilling partners for decadent, dangerous rituals.

## SYSTEMS

The Cultists excel at perception magic. Ecstatic characters should learn as many Arcana as possible to unlock new and interesting senses. The methods they use to achieve the ecstatic state vary from one Cultist to the next: some use Science, Survival, or Medicine to find herbs and drugs. Others leverage Contacts and Allies to score. When Ecstatics become slaves to drug addiction or other obsessive pleasures (and pains) they might acquire relevant Flaws.

**Ruling Arcanum:** Time

**Rote Skills:** Athletics, Empathy, Socialize

# DREAMSPEAKERS

Shamans and medicine workers formed the Dreamspeakers unwillingly after being cast into a common category by Western Traditions such as the Order of Hermes and the Celestial Chorus. The Dreamspeakers didn't disband immediately because they sensed common threats to their ways: colonialism, racism and eventually Technocratic suppression. Their numbers have dwindled into the modern age as they faced repression, but they've revived themselves as their traditional societies renew the old ways and teach the spirits' stories.

## DREAMSPEAKERS IN AWAKENING

Dreamspeakers find their closest match in the Mysterium. Many shamans describe the world's invisible rhythms and living energies, paralleling Mysterium beliefs about magic as a vital force. The Free Council incorporates many traditional, culturally-focused mages as well.

Dreamspeakers deal with spirits, which raises comparisons between **Ascension**'s Umbra and **Awakening**'s Shadow. In some games, you may prefer to connect Dreamspeakers to the Astral Realm where gods, ancestors and primal dreams dwell. If you choose this approach, change their ruling Arcanum to Mind. See Chapter Five for details on translating the spirit worlds.

### Systems

Dreamspeakers must advocate for both human and spiritual worlds. Many master Occult, Expression, and Investigation. Traditional territories and distant, sacred places may demand skill in Animal Ken, Survival, and Medicine.

**Ruling Arcanum:** Spirit

**Rote Skills:** Occult, Survival, Expression

## Euthanatos

Identifying as servants of the great cycle of reincarnation, the Euthanatos Tradition was formed by death-focused mages from Celtic, Greek, Arabic, African, and especially Indian sects. Healers, prophets, priests, and elite killers, Euthanatoi seek to manipulate others' karma toward beneficial incarnations and eventual enlightenment. If someone is so damaged that they can only injure their own karma further or drag others down with them, Euthanatoi apply the Good Death, killing them to cut away the weight of wasted life. During initiation, every member of the Tradition suffers a type of temporary death called the Agama Sojourn, where they learn the passions that leave ghosts clawing for mortal existence and taste the possibility of future incarnations.

### Euthanatoi in Awakening

Similar to the Guardians of the Veil, the Euthanatos experience distrust from outsiders. They accept injuries to their karma on behalf of others and will kill for metaphysical reasons. Euthanatoi believe that the good of their actions outweighs the bad, however, while Guardians accept that they are damning themselves for others.

### Systems

**Awakening**'s Death and Fate Arcana leave the Euthanatos requiring two magical fields to perform their duties instead of the unity offered by **Ascension**'s Entropy Sphere. Despite the Tradition's name, its mages hew closer to Fate than Death. Euthanatoi kill only after assessing a victim's destiny and manipulate chance to shape karma and enhance their abilities. Euthanatoi learn the Skills of killers and spies. Most factions use bladed Weaponry, but modern Euthanatoi practice Firearms just as diligently.

**Ruling Arcanum:** Fate

**Rote Skills:** Investigation, Stealth, Weaponry

## Order of Hermes

Heirs to the ritualized magic of European high wizards, the Order of Hermes forged itself out of Egyptian and Hebrew magical traditions, Greek mystery cults, and legends of Thrice-Great Hermes, god of magic and wisdom. The most organized Tradition, the Order almost appears to be a microcosm of the Council of Nine — or rather, the Council was based on the Order's structure.

Hermetic magic is based on symbols and rituals. Hermetic magi call angels in secret languages, apply esoteric mathematics, draw geometric shapes, and use traditional implements like wands, staves, and crystals. Hermetic sorcerers seek Ascension through arcane power and self-perfection, following the divine imperative within themselves. Internally, the Order of Hermes organizes into Houses based on cultural styles and magical affinities. Many Houses have a history longer then the Traditions, and some teach Ruling Arcana other than Forces.

### Hermetics in Awakening

The Order of Hermes is unusual among the Traditions in that the bulk of their paradigm — the high ritual style of magic — is almost the same as **Awakening** magic. House Solificati is even the basis for the Uncrowned Kings Legacy in the **Awakening** core rulebook. Almost every Pentacle order possesses a parallel within the Order of Hermes. House Tytalus resemble the Adamantine Arrow, House Janissary shares similarities with the Guardians of the Veil, and the Free Council would welcome House Thig with open arms.

### Systems

Hermetics prize Academics and Occult above all other skills, although many emphasize the social, organized nature of the Tradition with Persuasion, Intimidation, and Politics. They also invest in Merits representing magical strongholds, training centers and inherited magical items, especially grimoires.

**Ruling Arcanum:** Forces

**Rote Skills:** Intimidation, Occult, Socialize

# Sons of Ether

In the 19th Century, many Technocrats found themselves at odds with their peers. Taking their name from the "disproven" Ether declared unfit for the Consensus by other Technocrats, the new Sons of Ether defected to the Traditions.

Modern Etherites are still scientists but accept that they're also mages. They know their experiments succeed thanks to their Awakened state, so they focus on what *ought to be* true. Etherites believe that science is an art. Theories should be creative and elegant, inspiring wonder rather than skeptical cynicism. Etherites squabble among themselves over ethics, theories and even fashion — the Sons of Ether wore goggles before the steampunks, after all.

## Etherites in Awakening

As individualist mages with a technological, scientific style, Sons of Ether fit **Awakening**'s Free Council. As a network of academic peers and rivals, however, they might belong to the Mysterium too.

## Systems

Academics and Science are the hallmarks of a Son of Ether. Many study Computer and Crafts as well. Most Sons of Ether invest heavily in their laboratories and acquire the Hallow and Sanctum Merits. Adventuring Sons of Ether swear by obscure Fighting Styles and Artifacts won from strange locales.

**Ruling Arcanum:** Matter

**Rote Skills:** Academics, Crafts, Science

# Verbena

Heavily tied to the rhythms of life, Verbena are witches, wise-people, and primal mages who focus on the physical world rather than the "shamanic" magical style of the Dreamspeakers. Many Traditions claim to be the eldest, but the Verbena tap into the primordial aspects of human nature more than their fellows do. The Tradition believes in finding and safeguarding *Mythic Threads*: ancient elements of magic bound into human culture and symbolism. They use blood, sacrifice, soil, cycles, fertility rites, ritual dancing and sex to fuel passionate, deep magic.

## Verbena in Awakening

The Verbena resemble a Path — the Thyrsus — more than an order. All Pentacle orders contain groups concerned with the essential qualities of the Life Arcanum and the sensual, material elements of nature. Non-technological elements of the Free Council, Mysterium, and some members of Silver Ladder believe in the same primal philosophy as the Verbena.

## Systems

Focused on self-reliance and nature, Verbena prefer to benefit from the sweat of their own labor. The Tradition fosters covens and friends, building strong Social Merits. Verbena select Skills such as Crafts and Survival to develop self-sufficiency.

**Ruling Arcanum:** Life

**Rote Skills:** Animal Ken, Medicine, Survival

# Virtual Adepts

The second group of defectors from the Technocracy, the Virtual Adepts explores communications technology and information theory. They began as Technocrats researching the possibilities of computing and "the place telephone conversations happen." They defected when their free-wheeling ways clashed with the other Conventions. Adepts discovered a sub-cosmos of pure information called the Digital Web and have popularized it among Sleepers as the Internet. To an Adept, the Web isn't much different than mundane reality. The universe is just a very complex code — one that can be hacked. Virtual Adepts use telepresence, string theory, memetics, cybernetics, cognitive science, and radical human-machine interfaces.

## Virtual Adepts in Awakening

The anarchic, technomagical Virtual Adepts fit with **Awakening**'s Free Council. Some aspects of the Adepts' paradigm are very close to **Awakening**'s objective Supernal Realms. Their theories of Space as an illusion of perception match the descriptions of Pandemonium taught by Mastigos mages.

## Systems

Computer is a mandatory Skill. Science and Academics are important, too. To participate in the average theoretical discussion among the Adepts requires a postgraduate-level education in physics and computer science, and the Tradition is ruthlessly, unashamedly meritocratic. Mental Attributes aren't just prized — they're venerated. Virtual Adepts who can't walk the walk get trolled and flamed out of the Tradition. Mental Merits like Encyclopedic Knowledge and Language are more valuable than the ability to make friends or be polite.

**Ruling Arcanum:** Space

**Rote Skills:** Academics, Computer, Socialize

# Hollow Ones, Orphans and Crafts

In **Ascension**, an *Orphan* is a mage who isn't part of a larger sect, either because her paradigm doesn't match any of the established groups or because she won't or can't join them. The corresponding mages in **Awakening** are Apostates, mages who refuse membership in an order.

Also outside the main sects are the *Crafts*, societies of Awakened who try to remain neutral in the Ascension War. Most Crafts refused to join the Traditions when the Council of Nine was created. Examples include the Afro-Caribbean Bata'a and the Persian Taftani.

One Craft deserves special mention. Children of the Western Gothic-Romantic subcultures, the Hollow Ones are mages with grab-bag paradigms of occult literature, Victorian spiritualism, chaos magick, and ephemeral "coolness." They're the Craft most aligned to the Traditions, leading some mages to suspect that the Hollowers might join the Council — an idea that provokes cynical laughs from them, at least in mixed company.

## Systems

True Orphans have free choice of their second Ruling Arcanum — pick one based on paradigm. Most Crafts possess a single Ruling Arcanum — the Taftani prize Spirit, for example. Hollow Ones developed Death as their Ruling Arcanum by studying Victorian and pop culture afterlife beliefs.

Crafts teach rote skills based on their paradigm and magical methods. True Orphans have no way to learn rotes and begin without any Rote Skills. At the Storyteller's discretion, though, an Orphan character may buy Rote Skills as three one-dot Merits. As a Craft, the Hollow Ones possess the Rote Skills of Expression, Occult, and Socialize.

## The Technocracy

A worldwide conspiracy of willworkers, the Technocracy believes that by influencing scientific development — and eliminating all non-Technocratic paradigms — they can shape the Consensus along a Time Table that determines when humanity will be ready for advances the Union currently keeps for itself. The Masses will be safe and prosperous, but only under the Technocracy's benevolent oversight.

The Union wasn't always this way. Success corrupted the Order of Reason's good intentions, turning protection to control, craft to brutal industry, and exploration to conquest. In the 19th Century, the Order reorganized into Conventions to better meet the demands of the new global, industrial age. The reformed "Technocratic Union" set out the Time Table and suppressed dangerous ideas, even including unorthodox science they feared would threaten a steady progress toward Ascension.

Less advanced Technocrats don't know that they're mages. Most of the Union's vast number of support workers, soldiers, and staff believe that they're working for the government of a home nation, a university, or a corporation. Awakened members join the conspiracy and a Convention, but don't learn that there's anything "magical" about their techniques until Gnosis/Arete 6 — at that point they realize that they're altering reality through will. Most Technocrats possess the "Focus Dependence" Flaw and can't surpass their foci even after the revelation, but the great crime of the Technocracy's leadership is that they know the metaphysics of magic, but hide it from their own students and the world of Sleepers alike.

# The Five Conventions of the Union

Five Conventions manage the Time Table and structure themselves according to their specialties. Technocratic Conventions work together closely and form a stable whole — in theory, at least. In practice, each Convention guards resources and advanced discoveries from the others and competes to push its own agendas across the greater Union.

Each Convention possesses special Methodologies. Unlike the Traditions, where the overall group decides the second Ruling Arcanum in **Awakening** terms, Methodology determines Arcanum for a Technocrat. The **Guide to the Technocracy** and **Convention Books** describe the Methodologies in detail.

# Iteration X

Engineers and designers, Iteration X builds hardware for the Technocracy, striving to improve humanity by perfecting its tools. Named after the sentient Computer — the first AI — who serves as the Convention's leader, Iteration X is infamous as a manufacturer of Technocracy weapons and HIT Mark V cyborg assassins.

**Rote Skills:** Science, Computer, Crafts

**Ruling Arcanum:** *Biomechanics* — Life; *Statisticians* — Fate or Time; *Time Motion Managers* — Matter or Forces

# New World Order

Propagandists and information-gatherers, the New World Order (NWO) collects data and creates "truth" for the Masses to consume. Relying less on technology than the other Conventions (except, perhaps, for the Syndicate), the NWO edits history, manages a global network of spies, and sends Men in Black to suppress inconvenient truths.

**Rote Skills:** Academics, Subterfuge, Persuasion

**Ruling Arcanum:** *The Ivory Tower* — Mind; *Operatives* — Mind; *Watchers* — Space

# Progenitors

Medics, biologists, pharmacists, and chemists, Progenitors manage the Technocracy's organic creations. The most focused Convention, the Progenitors develop new life forms in service to the Union, perform surgery (both on the Union's own members and its victims), and perfect the human body.

**Rote Skills:** Academics, Science, Medicine

**Ruling Arcanum:** *FACADE Engineers* — Life or Mind; *Genegineers* — Life; *Pharmacopoeists* — Life

# Syndicate

Economists, commercial planners, and traders, the members of the Syndicate guide and shape Sleeper economies to fit the Time Table. It controls the Technocracy's budget and influences everything from organized crime to government treasuries.

**Rote Skills:** Investigation, Intimidation, Streetwise

**Ruling Arcanum:** *Disbursements* — Space or Mind; *Enforcers* — Forces or Mind; *Financiers* — Prime; *Media Control* — Mind; *Special Projects Division* — Spirit

# Void Engineers

Void Engineers map the limits of the universe and make it safe for Sleeper habitation. They pilot starships through the Spirit World's night sky, maintain Technocratic space stations (Horizon Realms), delve into the realms of ghosts and explore other stranger locales. Void Engineers may only still be members of the Technocracy because

it suits their paradigm — if the Union attempted to impose upon them the internal controls it applies to the other Conventions, the Engineers might defect.

**Rote Skills:** Crafts, Investigation, Science

**Ruling Arcanum:** *Border Corps Division* — Forces; *Earth Frontier Division* — Space; *Neutralization Specialist Corps* — Spirit; *Pan-Dimensional Corps* — Spirit; *Research and Execution* — Spirit or Prime

### The Technocracy in Awakening

In **Awakening**, the Technocracy represents a cross between the "mages who hide magic" of the Guardians of the Veil and the "secret masters of the world" of the Seers of the Throne. In **Awakening's** backstory, the Seers even proposed to the groups that became the Free Council that they should join the Ministries instead and form a "Technocracy." In a mixed game, your Union could be a Ministry of the Throne or a technologically-minded rival of the Seers. The Void Engineers are the most problematic Convention to convert due to the vastly different "outer worlds" of the settings, but if you import the **Ascension**-style Umbra along with the Technocracy, they work as described.

## Nephandi and Marauders

Against the Traditions and Technocracy, two groups of mages battle the Ascension War using magic fueled by personal madness and twisted Avatars.

## Nephandi

Antagonistic to other willworkers, Nephandi possess Avatars inverted by the Cauls of Oblivion and serve entities hostile to existence itself. Where other mages feel driven to create and perfect new realities, Nephandi want to torture the cosmos. Their twisted Avatars can no longer lead them to Ascension. Some Nephandi called *barrabi* fell from other factions. After the Cauls, such mages reincarnate as the "born bad" *widderslainte*. Technocrats can be corrupted as easily as Traditionalists. Nephandi possess Ruling Arcana and Rote Skills from their original sects.

Change **Awakening** Nephandi to fit your game's cosmology. In **Ascension**, they debase themselves before the enemies of reality: demons, personifications of Entropy, and the inhabitants of the Umbra's farthest reaches. In **Awakening**, Nephandi could serve the Underworld's powers, beings from the Lower Depths, Astral evils, or Abyssal manifestations.

Nephandi practice *Qlippothic* magic through counter-Spheres of corruption. If your game uses **Awakening** magic, Qlippothic Arcana can't be used

to improvise Perfecting and Making spells, but enjoy a −1 Mana cost adjustment to Fraying, Unraveling, and Unmaking spells.

## Marauders

Marauders slip from overriding the Consensus to abandoning it. Broken Awakenings, great traumas, or exceptionally potent Paradoxes drive mages to the Marauder state, lost within solipsist universes of their own making. Their condition grows more extreme as they accumulate Paradox, changing how much a Marauder's world diverges from the Consensus and how easily he traps others inside it.

In **Awakening**, Marauders acquire a new Trait called Marauder Quiet, determining how divergent their personal world is from reality. A Marauder's rating begins between 1 and 3 dots, increasing whenever he suffers a Dramatic Failure on a spell and decreases when he interacts meaningfully with sane people for a story; if it falls below his initial rating, it returns to that rating at a rate of one dot per chapter.

| Marauder Quiet | Description |
|---|---|
| 0 | *Temporarily* sane |
| 1 | One simple difference from reality or a few very minor changes |
| 2 | A few simple differences, or one sizeable constant difference |
| 3 | The Marauder "re-skins" the world according to his delusions and no longer experiences life as we know it |
| 4 | A few major differences to reality |
| 5 | Basic physics and causality are changed |
| 6+ | The Marauder vanishes from reality entirely and is expelled into a pocket universe |

Marauders are highly resistant to Paradox — spells are vulgar or covert depending on whether or not they adhere to the rules of a Marauder's inner world. When a Marauder invokes a Paradox, transfer as many Paradox successes as his Marauder Quiet dots from the Marauder to the next character to attract a Paradox in the same area.

Marauders transmit their personal realities onto those around them through their nimbus and Resonance. Whenever a Marauder reveals his nimbus, roll his Marauder Quiet plus Gnosis aura bonus, penalized by the witness' Resolve + Gnosis dots. If the Marauder succeeds, the victim descends into the Marauder's world, experiencing reality as the Marauder sees it. He follows that world's internal definitions of covert and vulgar magic. The effects fade at the end of the scene.

# AWAKENING TO ASCENSION



**Awakening** doesn't have direct counterparts to **Ascension's** Traditions, but it does have social organizations — *orders* and *Ministries* that further their members' political objectives. These organizations also possess metaphysical beliefs, but these aren't paradigms in the **Ascension** sense and only affect members' magical practices in a few specific circumstances. No matter the faction, all **Awakening** mages believe that they channel the laws of the Supernal Realms through their souls to change Fallen reality. Their Paths, cultures and life experiences influence how they practice magic. Magic is not the art of *making* these beliefs real, however, but of transmitting a higher truth symbolized by many myths and rituals.

Orders and Ministries are worldwide organizations that have been affected by political considerations in the world around them. Many outposts for these factions possess Eurocentric biases not because that part of the world preserved more about the universal truths of magic, but as a result of colonization and conquest. Not every group of mages displays this bias. Some prefer to fuse magic's primal mythology with beliefs from other parts of the world — and claim that these models are at least as true as Western counterparts. Mages of the orders organize in small cabals who resolve disputes through a local Consilium, and only rarely act as global organizations. Seers belong to regional councils called Tetrarchies that encompass multiple cities or contiguous territories.

## Orders of the Pentacle

Orders belong to an organization called the *Pentacle*, which furthers the practice of magic. Members of the Pentacle believe that the mundane world or *Lie* is a cursed, twisted fragment of the universe that limits human potential. Magic frees sorcerers from the Lie, and while not every order believes that humanity should Awaken *en masse* to claim this freedom, they believe in preserving it for themselves and future sorcerers. The Pentacle was once known as the *Diamond* because it contained four orders that claimed descent from the original social classes of Atlantis. They changed their name in the early 20th Century after the *Nameless* mages without orders joined the Free Council and allied with them, but even before that, ancient traditions held a place for unorthodox outsiders.

## The Adamantine Arrow

Adamantine Arrow mages believe that existence is war — the universe is a maelstrom of opposing forces. They study conflict in all its forms, from hand-to-hand combat to mathematical game theory. Since ancient times, they have served as the orders' soldiers and defenders. They're reluctant to hold leadership positions, preferring to swear sacred oaths to serve others. They can be honorable to the point of ruthlessness.

### Ascension Adamantine Arrows

From an **Ascension** perspective, Arrow mages possess similarities to the Akashic Brotherhood and Euthanatos, including a warrior ethos, a strong sense of duty, and a willingness to kill for a higher purpose. Although many Arrows are skilled martial artists, they don't always practice their arts through a spiritual framework — results matter more than enlightenment. They might see themselves as modern-day knights or use cutting edge special operations methods. Some use the symbolism of chess or steal their enemies' strengths through cannibalism.

**Systems**

As **Ascension** characters, Adamantine Arrows typically cultivate character traits to master conflict. In addition to Rote Abilities, they prize Alertness, Awareness, Brawl, Dodge, Enigmas, Firearms, Melee, Stealth and Survival, expecting all members to understand at least the basics of responding to threats and surviving in hostile environments.

Arrows often possess Merits linked to the Geasa Flaw (**Mage Revised**, pp. 298-299) that represent magically binding oaths they have taken.

**Rote Abilities:** Athletics, Intimidation, Medicine

## The Free Council

Throughout history, some mages have challenged the orthodox view that occult study merely decodes the secrets known to Atlantean mystics. Many stuck to quiet, isolated cults, but some challenged the orders head on, believing that modern faith, philosophy and technology could unlock new sorcery — that human innovation was magical. At the dawn of the 20th Century, these "Nameless" mages formed the Free Council. In contrast to the other orders, this collective

of so-called Libertines champion democracy, the free exchange of information, and magic ripped from living cultures, not the dust of Atlantis.

### Ascension Libertines

If the Technocracy stayed true to their Craftmason roots, championing Sleepers' right to self-determination, they might have become something like the Free Council. Libertines embrace culture on its own terms and study the magical symbolism of human innovation. They embrace *techné*, a form of magic that incorporates technology and culture. This doesn't mean they believe that other forms of magic are superstitious or that they're "really" using some kind of hypertechnology, but rather that all human creations contain occult correspondences which can be translated into magical theories. Some Libertines might utilize ideas familiar to the Sons of Ether and Virtual Adepts. Virtually any Tradition can provide inspiration, with the proviso that members of the Free Council don't *believe* in paradigms, but treat them as practical tools.

**Systems**

Eschewing the stereotype of sorcerer as a cloistered student of esoterica, Libertine characters usually devote serious study to fields outside the occult. Any Free Council member who wants to guide the order also needs to polish her social skills. Beyond Rote Abilities, the order pushes members to develop themselves in the fields of Academics, Computer, Expression, Intimidation, Linguistics and Performance. The Allies and Contacts Backgrounds represent these persistent ties to Sleeper traditions through friends in political, religious and industrial fields. Many Libertines joined their order to follow a field that obsessed them before Awakening — magic gives them a whole new reason to study. Mental Merits such as Ability Aptitude, Concentration and Lightning Calculator (see **Mage Revised**, p. 291) are common.

**Rote Abilities:** Crafts, Leadership, Science

## Guardians of the Veil

The Guardians of the Veil are spies, assassins and corruptors of occult knowledge, all to prevent the secrets of magic from being discovered by the unworthy. To protect the Mysteries, they must become the very people they would ban from the Art, so they comfort themselves with the belief that it's justified in the name of that great purpose and that in the end, when Destiny unravels its last thread, someone will punish and forgive them.

Guardians influence Sleepers through cults called *labyrinths*, designed to direct all but the most sincere seekers toward petty social games and away from the true secrets of magic. They discover more Awakenings than any other order, but let most candidates pass to other members of the Pentacle.

### Ascension Guardians of the Veil

Guardians of the Veil bear a close resemblance to the Euthanatos in many respects. Both factions kill on the basis of a mystical ideology and believe they shoulder the burden of sin. Where they differ is that Euthanatos kill to give souls a new reincarnation to either redeem themselves or escape pain. Guardians kill when deception fails, to hide magic from petty and corrupt individuals.

**Systems**

The order needs members who can perform illegal acts without flinching, lie easily, and maintain a sense of righteousness no matter how dirty their hands get. In addition to Rote Abilities, such characters practice Alertness, Enigmas, Investigation, Linguistics, Occult, Streetwise and Subterfuge. Their Willpower tends to be exceptionally high, even by Awakened standards. The Arcane Background is extraordinarily common, as are Backgrounds that establish multiple identities through Influences and Contacts. In order to safeguard information, members of the order never write down anything important; the Eidetic Memory Merit is common and even trained through classical techniques.

**Rote Abilities:** Investigation, Stealth, Subterfuge

## The Mysterium

The scholars of the Mysterium believe that magic itself is a living mystery. They devote themselves to understanding it as an organism that constantly changes, and even acts according to an unfathomable consciousness. Once a mage Awakens, she earns a connection to the living truth of sorcery, as well as a responsibility to further its study, and never share its secrets freely. Mystagogues catalogue the strange books and artifacts in their storehouses, or dare bizarre ruins and forgotten corners of the world to acquire more stock. They possess more grimoires and supernatural secrets than any other order, but won't give them to those with dark intentions, or mages who refuse to pay — knowledge is power, and must command a price.

### Ascension Mystagogues

Members of the Mysterium would see much to admire in the philosophies of the Order of Hermes

and Celestial Chorus. The Hermetic focus on secret signs and languages, as well as the obligations of magic, has parallels in the order. Mystagogues don't necessarily see magic as God the way many Choristers do, but believe it is a sacred, living thing. Modern mystagogues entertain ideas about magic as the data substrate of reality in ways that would be familiar to more esoteric Virtual Adepts.

### Systems

The order often produces adventuring scholars, willing to dig their way into a cursed tomb to read the ancient glyphs within. Beyond Rote Abilities, it's almost mandatory to invest in Academics, Awareness, Cosmology and Enigmas. Sticky situations call for Alertness, Medicine, Subterfuge, and combat Abilities. Most Mystagogues possess the Library Background thanks to the order's collections, and quite a few are able to borrow a Wonder for their own use.

**Rote Abilities:** Investigation, Occult, Survival

# The Silver Ladder

The Silver Ladder believes that magic is a divine right. Every man and woman is a god waiting to be born. The order's théarchs are their spiritual midwives, priests and viziers who enlighten humankind. In the natural order, mages guide Sleepers and the Silver Ladder guides mages. It has been thus ever since Atlantis fell. The Lie is a realm of suffering the Exarchs made to keep humanity ignorant. The Exarchs are therefore weak, for anyone who requires downtrodden subjects and slaves is an unworthy ruler. The Silver Ladder will unite the Pentacle, overthrow the Lie, and give everyone the power they deserve.

## Ascension Théarchs

Hubris. Ambition. These are classic Hermetic traits in **Ascension** and provide a model for the Silver Ladder. The order is also a priesthood devoted to glorifying humanity, a sort of Celestial Chorus where the One is humanity. Human potential is also a theme found

in the Akashic Brotherhood, though members of that Tradition might not approve of the Silver Ladder's egoistic spin. More than any other order, the Silver Ladder places objectives above theory. Some of them could even sympathize with Technocratic transhumanism, or the idea that the Masses must be guided to Ascension — but not the Union's materialism or its desire to hide the supernatural.

### Systems

Théarchs train to be chaplains, leaders, and lawgivers. They maintain the laws that govern Awakened society, believe themselves to be the best candidates for high offices, and build conspiracies to battle the Exarchs' influence and expose Sleepers to magic. Aside from Rote Abilities, they often master Etiquette, Intimidation, Investigation, Law and Occult. Some théarchs are wandering judge-investigators called *lictors* who combine these Abilities with Alertness, combat skills and Survival. Thearchs build conspiracies to develop Allies, Contacts, and Influence; many who feel driven by a grand purpose benefit from the Destiny Background.

**Rote Abilities:** Expression, Leadership, Subterfuge

# Ministries of the Seers of the Throne.

Ministries belong to the *Seers of the Throne*, a global secret society that worships the Exarchs. Its members believe the Exarchs entrusted them with stewardship of the world, which they must use to keep Sleepers from viewing the supernatural as anything but a menace beyond their comprehension and control. This, they hope, will prevent Awakenings except when the Exarchs will it. Some Seer cabals (*pylons)* promote disbelief. Others control religions to guide the flock away from notions of personal empowerment. A few pylons plot to destroy civilization, or at least keep it mired in eternal war.

In return for hindering humanity's enlightenment, Seers grant their members the right to practice magic without being persecuted and virtually any pleasure the material world has to offer. Wealth and mundane political influence flow easily into Seers' pockets. Seers looking for moral justification say that if people believed they could Awaken they might do so, shattering the universe into fodder for the Abyss.

Analogous to the Pentacle's orders, Ministries worship a particular Exarch. Dozens of Ministries, ranging from pylons with delusions of grandeur to the four great world-manipulating conspiracies, grow and die based on their plots' successes against outsiders and internal rivals.

Seers invent new Ministries to leverage human innovations in inhumanity, updating their methods of control.

## The Four Great Ministries . . . and the Up and Coming

The four most powerful Ministries claim to serve the high Archigentior Exarchs — but their patrons are called that *because* their Ministries are strong. In addition, one Ministry, Mammon, has grown strong enough to challenge the others. Together, they are:

**Hegemonic:** This ministry conspires against humanity through government institutions, but as governments fade before corporate power, the Hegemonic Ministry loses the firm grip it held on reality during the colonial and imperialistic eras. It serves The Unity, Exarch of totalitarian rule. *Rote Abilities:* Etiquette, Law, Leadership.

**Panopticon:** Serving The Eye, Exarch of surveillance, Panopticon Seers spy on Sleepers, mages, and even each other. They understand that surveillance is not just the act of watching but the oppression transmitted by the feeling of being watched. *Rote Abilities:* Investigation, Stealth, Subterfuge.

**Paternoster:** The Exarch called The Father bids his Seers to worship him, and seed religions that exploit their followers around the world. By manipulating the power of faith, agents of the Ministry create Sleepers who wait for God to free them instead of freeing themselves. *Rote Abilities:* Academics, Expression, Occult.

**Praetorian:** Warrior-Seers in the service of The Exarchs' General use war as a tool to divide humanity. The fearful shadow of conflict obscures the way to higher truths. Praetorian soldiers believe in a doctrine of total war, without ethical restraints. *Rote Abilities:* Athletics, Intimidation, Streetwise

**Mammon:** This Ministry is not among the great four yet, but its star brightens while Hegemonic's dims. Mammon's agents follow The Chancellor, patron of commerce and materialism. Under his Ministry's influence, Seers intensify scarcity and promote capitalism over compassion. *Rote Abilities:* Academics, Leadership, Streetwise.

## Other Ministry Systems

The Seers of the Throne possess significant worldly power. Some enjoy the dubious honor of the Exarchs' attention, filtered through portentous dreams and omens. In **Ascension**, use the following systems:

**Dream:** Seers of the Throne may increase their Dream Background rank during play. For Seers, Dream represents cryptic hints and commands

from the Exarchs. The higher the character's Dream rank, the more specific and dangerous the instructions. If the Seer ignores the command, *other* Seers with Dream receive omens that one of their own must be punished.

**Resources and Wonder:** Seers automatically gain one dot in each of these Backgrounds. They may stack these dots with their own. Leaders acquire further dots — up to five bonus dots, total. If you use the Status Background found in some **Ascension** supplements, a Seer gains one of these bonus Background dots per dot of Seers of the Throne Status.

# THE LEFT-HANDED IN ASCENSION

**Awakening**'s antagonists include the *Left-Handed*, mages who offend the orthodox teachings of the Pentacle and Seers. Many Left-Handed are merely dissidents and eccentrics, but a few practice dangerous, even malevolent mystic Arts. Dozens of Left-Handed Legacies face censure from the orders if discovered practicing their magical perversions, but four larger groups stand out: the self-loathing *Banishers*, the soul-broken *Mad*, *Scelesti* who serve the Abyss, and the *Tremere* Legacy of soul-reaping necromancers.

## BANISHERS

Some mages achieve power in such a traumatic fashion that they become *Banishers*, sorcerers driven by an instinctive disgust and fury who hunt down other Awakened. Banishers with similar beliefs may form cells to persecute other mages. They tolerate these alliances as long as all members share the same pathological hatred.

A Banisher's hate of magic doesn't help her learn it. Banishers only possess formal training from the orders or Seers if they were once members, then went insane. Most know little of magical languages and metaphysics and operate through instinct and zeal. Banishers do not possess any Backgrounds or Merits that require occult training.

Banisher players (if you allow them) may trade in any training-based trait for its experience point value. This category does not include Arcana/Spheres or Arete/Gnosis, but does include Rote Specialties and High Speech.

## THE MAD

The Mad are superficially comparable to **Ascension**'s Marauders in that both lose touch with reality and take comfort in delusions, but the resemblance ends there. The Mad aren't trapped in solipsist notions. They've had their souls fractured by some exceptional trauma because they committed morally degenerate acts, attempted to master Legacy attainments they weren't ready for, or Awakened straight into a hell made from their broken spirits.

In **Ascension** terms, the Mad utterly lack a conscience (and have Wisdom 0 if you use it), and don't regain Willpower the same way as other characters. Instead, each Mad one is consumed by a vile obsession, such as the urge to magically mutilate humans or loose dark spirits. If he indulges, the Mad one regains Willpower as though using Nature. If he is *prevented* from doing so for a length of time equal to his Arete in weeks, spell-like phenomena begin to manifest in order to remove obstacles and force him to carry out his obsession. These resemble spells or Paradox effects, but don't have to use Spheres the Mad one knows. In extreme circumstances, the effects even manifest as spirit-like entities formed from the Mad one's subconscious.

The Mad are incurably insane (and each has a permanent Derangement) but their broken states allow them to achieve feats other mages can't when enacting their obsessions. Mad ones obsessed with spell Effects can cast them with Spheres they don't have. Those who employ Abilities to satisfy their obsessions gain automatic successes.

Lastly, every Mad one possesses Arcane dots equal to his Arete, even above 5. This supernatural occlusion vanishes whenever he indulges his obsession, though, and returns at one dot per week.

## THE SCELESTI

Scelesti study the Abyss, and most serve the maddening entities that dwell within. (Many of the rest *also* serve, but unknowingly). The Scelesti master magic salted with Abyssal anti-reality. Many join Legacies of their kind. They learn to summon lesser (though still potent) entities called *gulmoth*, bargain with stranded *acamoth*, and navigate *intrusions* or *verges* from the counter-universe. They fill a role similar to

that of **Ascension**'s Nephandi, except that they don't honor some corrupted principle of renewal or chthonic entity in the Underworld. Instead, Scelesti bargain with things from outside the true universe that cannot even be called evil, because "evil" is too comprehensible a concept.

Full membership in the Scelesti comes when the mage joins an Abyss-corrupted Legacy. The most commonly encountered factions learn attainments that mirror Spirit summoning spells, except that these actually call gulmoth to provide service and information. Scelesti sometimes learn new, tainted forms of magic — Arts that allow them to store and shape Paradox or inflict Aggravated wounds. Otherwise, Scelesti Awaken and learn magic like other mages.

## The Tremere

After fleeing the destruction of Atlantis, the Tremere cult searched for the secrets of the soul until it fell under the sway of a mighty vampire. The elder turned Tremere cultists into a strange tribe of the undead, with powers and weaknesses that set them apart from other Kindred bloodlines.

They were slaves for centuries until they found *something* capable of removing their curse. This entity did not restore their souls, but left them with a hungry spiritual hollow in its place. After that, they either discovered an innate ability to devour souls or perhaps just developed the necessary attainments to survive. They became what Awakened call *Reapers*, sorcerers who habitually steal and abuse souls.

Tremere consume souls in order to stay alive and power their magic. Mages uncover them when they steal too many Sleepers' souls or try to rip away the Awakened spark, given that Mages' souls are stronger and sustain the Reapers for a longer time. A few scholars say the Tremere possess other powers as well, along with a deep agenda hidden in the inner circle of their Legacy.

In some ways, **Awakening** Tremere are the opposite of their **Ascension** counterparts, the vampire Hermetics of Clan Tremere. In an **Ascension** game, Tremere may be former Tremere vampires who were cured with exotic magic, or could be what happens to ghouled mages when cursed blood threatens their Avatars.

Tremere possess the following traits:

**Soulless:** Tremere auras appear to be pale, much like a vampire's, because they do not possess true souls. They do not age, but require souls on a regular basis to sustain themselves, as described on the table in pp. 365-366 of the **Mage: The Awakening** core rulebook.

For every week the Tremere needs a new soul yet goes without, the Tremere loses a point of *permanent* Willpower. Once the Tremere's Willpower reaches 0, he suffers one level of aggravated damage per week without the necessary soul. This damage cannot be healed by normal or supernatural means (in **Awakening** terms, this is Resistant damage). When the Tremere acquires a soul, the process reverses itself at the same order (health levels first, then permanent Willpower) and rate (1 per week). The Tremere must either learn the 2nd attainment of his Legacy or receive outside help to attach a stolen soul and "feed."

**Legacy:** All Tremere belong to a Legacy. Nominally a Moros (and other mages with Death as a Primary Arcanum or either Spirit or Entropy as a specialty Sphere) Legacy, any mage may join by seeking out a Tremere teacher and suffering soul loss. Death is the primary Tremere Arcanum if using **Awakening** Arcana. Spirit is its **Ascension** counterpart. Prime is a synergistic Arcana, but only for the 2nd attainment. Tremere practice a number of morbid oblations involving corpses, graves and funerals.

Tremere attainments consist of the following:

**1st — Hideous Stipend (Arete/Gnosis 3, Spirit/ Death 2):** The mage can steal a Sleeper's soul. Roll Charisma + Intimidating with a difficulty equal to the target's permanent Willpower. This is an extended action with intervals of one turn; when the Tremere accumulates as many successes as the victim's permanent Willpower, he steals the soul. The Tremere loses the soul unless he places it in a specially prepared soul jar. The attainment allows the Tremere to build one by succeeding at a Manipulation + Crafts roll, difficulty

6. This requires an hour; the Tremere may try again if he fails. Finally, the mage can inspect the health of a soul, to see if it belongs to a ghoul or other spiritually compromised being.

**2nd — Wicked Claim (Arete/Gnosis 5, Spirit/ Death 3):** The mage can attach a stolen soul to himself or another soulless being. Tremere normally attach souls to themselves or allied Tremere to feed. Roll Charisma + Awareness (difficulty 8) in an extended action with intervals of one hour, but requires only one success. If the extended action botches, the mage loses the soul. If the Tremere fails, it stays in its soul jar, or vanishes if a soul jar was not used. The Tremere may also siphon Willpower points or Quintessence/Mana from any being who has sustained at least one point of aggravated damage. The Tremere must grapple his target and roll Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty equal to the target's permanent Willpower). Each success drains one point of either trait (Tremere's choice).

*Optional – Prime 3*: With Prime 3, the mage may convert a stolen soul into Tass instead of storing it in a soul jar. The mage creates Tass equal to the victim's permanent Willpower + Quintessence or Mana. When this Tass gets used up, the soul dissolves and is lost, but is not consumed. It may be manipulated as a soul as well — the material form makes storing the soul easier, however.

**3rd — Supernal Theft (Arete/Gnosis 7, Spirit/ Death 4):** The Tremere may now steal Awakened souls using the same rules for stealing Sleepers' souls, except that the Tremere must now accumulate as many successes as the victim's permanent Willpower + Arete/Gnosis. The Tremere may also siphon Strength dots from an opponent he successfully grapples. Roll Charisma + Occult (difficulty equal to the target's Stamina + 3). Each success drains one dot, reducing the target to a minimum of Strength 1. This power lasts for the scene, after which the stolen Strength returns to the victim.

# Chapter Three: Magic

**Awakening** and **Ascension** both present magic as an Art, a way to change the universe by manipulating symbols. Beneath the superficial similarities, the games reveal distinct supernatural universes where mages acquire and shape symbols in different ways.

As the universe influences the Art, its practitioners adhere to different rules. Even then, magic's flexibility outpaces the categories its adepts create for it, giving Storytellers opportunities to adjust the rules to their liking.

## METAPHYSICS

**Ascension** describes a world made of beliefs made real; clashing myths, superstitions and dreams of scientific progress. **Awakening** unveils a cosmos of distorted truths and shadows of an ultimate Mystery. Each setting develops its premise into a structure for magic.

### Consensual Reality vs. the Lie

In **Ascension**, the Tellurian is shaped by the beliefs of billions of humans. Each of them possesses an Avatar, a spark of mystic power and transcendental understanding. Most humans are Sleepers who can't consciously shape reality. Their beliefs, dreams and nightmares create a Consensus that determines how the universe functions. The Consensus once accepted sorcery, but now Sleepers believe in science — it works and magic usually doesn't. This is not necessarily a *conscious* belief, but rather an acceptance that technology influences their lives and a dream of what it *might* do. Humans harbor still other beliefs too, in miracles, witchcraft, and human potential. In certain places and situations, these Mythic Threads break the "scientific" rules. Furthermore, some supernatural beings don't depend on human belief. They obey ancient laws and hidden cycles of Creation.

**Awakening**'s reality doesn't bend to collective belief. Instead, humanity lives in a shadow of the ultimate truth, the Lie of the Fallen World. The Supernal's radiance sustains the universe after crossing

the *Abyss* of anti-truth, so its magical energies dilute and shift into the mundane laws of nature. By casting spells, mages call down the pure laws of the Supernal Realms, imposing them on the Lie. This model not only describes a hierarchy of mighty realms, but also the geography of the soul. Sleepers cannot see the truth of magic in their souls because a shard of the Abyss lodged in their being distorts and hides it.

## Paradigm vs. Symbolism

**Ascension**'s mages develop a model to define what magic can do and how they must do it. To them, this describes the true nature of reality. They build this paradigm from cultural sources, training, and personal beliefs. Sincerity and imagination are as important as intellectual knowledge, so that even if a mage knows that other beliefs can also shape reality, he doesn't hold that in his *heart* — not until he develops his understanding, transcends his magical tools, and perhaps Ascends. Each Tradition teaches a basic paradigm, while the Technocracy teaches that science, modernism, and the secular faith of progress describes the ultimate truth. In each case, a mage's paradigm determines how he casts a spell.

In **Awakening**, the Supernal sends its symbols to the Lie for mages to interpret, hiding them in myths, esoteric religion, and strange science. Mages do not so much invent magic as discover it. Mages use these translated symbols to encode their spells. In a memento mori, one mage sees the hidden Mystery of Death. Her companion might use alchemy or legends of the djinn, distilling each myth to its symbolic essence while practicing the outer forms. **Awakening** mages can resort to pure visualization instead if they like, or perhaps use the secrets of Atlantis, the ur-culture that knew the pure Supernal. Mages still remember its sigils and High Speech.

## Will vs. Imago

In **Ascension**, a paradigm lays down a path for the mage's will. Until he transcends foci, he cannot walk the trackless land of pure willworking, but must resort to known theories and signs.

In desperate moments a mage might focus pure desire, using no foci, but this is difficult and taxing. Unless the mage has already abandoned foci in a Sphere (or Arcanum, in **Awakening** conversions) it imposes a +3 difficulty modifier in **Ascension** or (–3 dice in an **Awakening** conversion) and requires a point of Willpower, which does not benefit the casting.

**Awakening** mages can cast spells through pure visualization, creating an *imago*, a vision of the spell to cast. The imago includes all the spell's parameters — once defined, they cannot be changed.

Only rotes require additional effort through the use of gestures called *mudras*. A physically restrained mage can't cast rotes but can use improvised counterparts. Mages can augment their spells with Atlantean secrets and other Supernal symbols, but magic never requires them.

# THE PRINCIPLES OF MAGIC
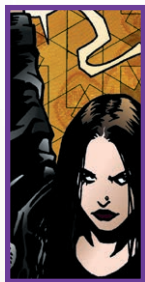
## Spellcasting in Ascension

In **Ascension**, spellcasting is only limited by the number of successes the mage accumulates with an Arete roll. Players do not apply dice penalties based on the power they want to achieve. They score successes and then spend them on aspects of the spell. Sphere rank primarily determines the *type* of magic that can be performed, but its *power* – trait alteration, points of damage inflicted, etc. — is usually determined by the number of successes scored. An **Ascension** counterpart to an **Awakening** Shielding spell could provide any degree of armor no matter the character's Sphere (or in conversions, Arcanum) rank, as long as the mage scores the required successes.

Spellcasting guidelines on pp. 208-209 of **Mage: The Ascension Revised** determine these scales, though Storytellers can use some of the more abstract, descriptive guidelines to overrule hard-coded progressions. In most cases, though, **Ascension** mages spend successes on the parameters of their Effects, as follows:

**One Arete success equals:**

- 2 Health Levels/points of damage (+1 to the total for Forces)

- A +1/–1 adjustment to dice roll difficulties (maximum +/–3); convert to –/+ dice for **Awakening**. Remember that dice difficulty drops convert to *bonus* dice, and difficulty raises convert to penalties.

- +1/−1 dot in a game trait (such as an Attribute)

- 1 target affected other than the mage

- Duration factors (shift up one for each success spent): one turn/one scene/one day/one story (multiple game sessions concluded by story experience award)/six months. Permanent duration is possible at the Storyteller's discretion, as long as the mage accumulated double the required successes in other factors.

- Special factors for Correspondence, Gauntlet ratings, and Time as described in **Mage: The Ascension Revised**.

This structure divides spells into two types: "all or nothing" spells that require a minimum number of successes to be effective and spells that might function with any number of successes. The spell's type should be determined before rolling the dice, as failing to reach the minimum successes for an all-or-nothing spell counts as a failed casting.

There's no hard and fast limit between instant and extended spells. Both use the same system. The intervals between spells are determined by the character's paradigm and foci. **Ascension** mages are ultimately limited to accumulating a number of successes equal to Arete x permanent Willpower.

## Converting Ascension Spellcasting to Awakening

In order to convert between systems, use Arete/Gnosis and Arcanum/Sphere equivalencies. Spellcasting difficulties are a sticking point, as these modify the target number to score a success on the die, which never happens in **Awakening**. Instead, let spells require a minimum number of successes equal to the highest Arcanum/Sphere rank required, +1 for vulgar Effects, or the number of successes requires for an all or nothing Effect, whichever is higher. Witnesses subtract a die. For example, a vulgar Forces 3 spell requires at least 4 successes. These successes may be spent on spell factors such as damage and duration.

## Spellcasting in Awakening

**Awakening** recognizes two distinct types of spells: *instant spells*, cast as an instant action in a turn, and *extended spells*, which are cast over a longer period.

Instant spells require one die roll, penalized according to the spell factors the mage wishes to incorporate as listed on pp. 118-119 of **Mage: The Awakening**. If the spellcasting roll scores one success, *all* built-in factors manifest. Conversely, extra successes only enhance the spell's primary factor on a 1-for-1 basis.

In an extended spell, the mage's player selects the spell factors he wishes to build into the spell as per p. 120 of **Mage: The Awakening**. These combined factors generate the target number of successes for an extended spellcasting action, where each roll requires a time interval determined by Gnosis as listed on p. 121 of the **Awakening** core rulebook.

In **Awakening**, a mage's Arcanum rank sometimes determines a spell's Potency and sometimes other factors as follows:

**Trait Bonuses and Enhancements:** Arcana that grant bonus Attribute dots, Fate dice pool adjustments, and other enhancements are usually limited by the character's Arcana dots or the Arcana dots used to cast the spell, regardless of the number of successes scored. Extra successes may affect duration and other factors.

**Shielding:** Most spells using the Practice of Shielding provide an armor bonus equal to the mage's Arcanum rank, no matter how many successes the player rolled.

**Spell Improvements:** Some spells can be improved if cast by a mage with more than the minimum Arcana dots. Such benefits include:

• *Advanced Area and Duration:* To use these spell factors listed on p. 120 of **Mage: The Awakening**, the mage needs to possess one dot higher than the minimum necessary to cast the spell for each advanced factor he plans to employ.

• *Advanced Targeting:* Certain spells that require touch contact may be cast at sensory range as if they were spells one dot higher than listed, and at sympathetic range at two dots higher. Similarly, spells that normally affect individual targets may be upgraded to affect an area if cast at one dot higher by spending a point of Mana/Quintessence.

• *Personal to Target:* Spells that normally only affect the mage (such as magical senses or Attribute enhancements) may be cast on others as spells one dot higher than listed. The spell usually requires sensory range.

• *Sympathetic Pattern Effects:* Sympathetic spells targeting a Pattern require one dot higher than usual in the spell's primary Arcanum and a point of Mana or Quintessence.

Spell improvement requirements generally stack, so that a mage who wishes to apply an advanced duration (+1 dot) to a normally personal spell being cast on an ally (+1 dot) requires 2 dots more than usual in its primary Arcanum.

## CONVERTING AWAKENING SPELLCASTING TO ASCENSION

Using **Awakening**-style two-factor dice pools differentiates magical abilities between characters, and a set difficulty removes some of the probability oddities in **Ascension**. The easiest way is to use **Awakening's** spell factor tables for dice pools and set all spell difficulties at 7. Use Arete/Gnosis and Sphere/Arcana equivalencies where applicable.

If you want to use floating dice difficulties, remember that **Ascension** difficulty increases translate to **Awakening** dice penalties, while **Awakening** bonuses convert to lower **Ascension** difficulties.

## GENERAL CONVERSION CONSIDERATIONS

The following comparisons illustrate differences between the games you can use to fine tune conversions and hacks.

### AVATARS AND SOULS

Some **Awakening** spells manipulate souls — something **Ascension** magic doesn't do, because the definition of "soul" lies with character paradigms. Though it is bound to a mage's deepest being, **Ascension's** Avatar is *not* the soul and is generally impossible to perceive or affect with anything less than five dots in a Sphere or Arcanum.

Without a soul, a mage gradually loses Willpower and motivation; without an Avatar, he loses his magical abilities.

### CONJUNCTIONS AND COMBINED SPELLS

Both **Awakening** and **Ascension** use *conjunctional* spells that require multiple Arcana/Spheres. **Ascension** doesn't have a special position on spells that do more than one discrete thing simultaneously, though successes for each component need to be spent separately. **Awakening** introduces the concept of *combined* spells, where two spells can be cast as one, on pp. 128-129.

### DAMAGE TYPES

In **Ascension**, damage types (bashing, lethal, and aggravated) depend on the Sphere. for example, **Ascension's** Prime 2 can enchant weapons to inflict aggravated damage.

In **Awakening**, Practice usually determines damage type. Fraying inflicts bashing damage,

Unraveling inflicts lethal damage, and Unmaking inflicts aggravated damage. These guidelines do not apply if the target is especially vulnerable to an attack form.

**Awakening** introduces a new damage type called *Resistant* damage. Resistant damage can be added to any other type and when it is, it can't be healed with magic. It typically only manifests during Paradoxes and Avatar Storm strikes in translation games. **Ascension** Paradox damage is *not* Resistant.

## Ex Nihilo Creation

In **Ascension**, characters can't create something out of nothing — the closest they can do is use Prime 2 to use free Quintessence as a raw material. Making fire appear "out of nowhere" is a Forces 3/Prime 2 spell, for example. **Awakening** magic requires the Practice of Making (5 dots) to create enduring manifestations of the Arcana out of nothing, while lesser Practices can often generate temporary, limited Arcanum manifestations out of "nothing."

## Fast-Casting

In **Ascension**, it's possible to cast a spell while taking another instant action in a process called *fast casting*. This imposes a +1 difficulty penalty (–1 die in **Awakening** conversions). In some cases, utilizing a focus takes up the character's standard, instant action. The standard action can be split using **Ascension**'s multiple action rules. Spells cannot be split with other actions and characters can never cast more than one spell per turn.

In addition, **Ascension** mages are allowed to ready most foci as a reflexive action — they're as well trained with them as a gunslinger is with her sidearms.

In **Awakening**, spells are always normal, instant or extended actions. In a high action chronicle you might convert **Ascension** rules but otherwise, stick to **Awakening**'s native system.

## Multiple Actions

If you use the Storytelling system employed by **Awakening**, don't let magic confer the ability to take multiple actions. This holds true even if you're using the **Ascension** setting with **Awakening** rules. Beyond Fighting Styles, the system doesn't support them. If you use **Ascension**'s rules, you may allow **Awakening** spells that modify Initiative, Speed, and Defense to provide multiple actions instead. Compare "Acceleration" (**Awakening** core, p. 262) to "Distort Time" (**Ascension Revised** core, p.193); these are equivalent spells from each system.

## Living Things

**Ascension** classifies some life forms as "simple creatures" that can be affected with Life 2. **Awakening** uses a hierarchy of Base, Median and Advanced Life, as listed on pp. 180 of the **Mage: The Awakening** core rulebook. Certain spells will only work on certain types of life. Check their descriptions for details. **Ascension**'s simple creatures are the equivalent of **Awakening**'s Base Life and Median Life of Size 3 or less.

In **Ascension**, permanent magic can be cast with any Sphere rank as long as the Storyteller consents. If the target is a living being, magical enhancements may invoke Pattern bleeding and/or permanent Paradox. **Awakening** does not allow permanent alterations to living creatures until a mage achieves archmage status.

## Quintessence vs. Mana Costs

In **Ascension**, mages use Quintessence to lower spellcasting difficulties by 1 per point (+1 die in a conversion to **Awakening**) to a maximum of 3, and for a small number of other tasks such as creating magical items. **Awakening** mages spend Mana on improvised (non-rote) spells from non-ruling Arcana (1 point), on sympathetic spells (1 point), to inflict aggravated damage (1 point) and in other special circumstances (where the cost varies).

## Rotes

**Ascension** rotes require no special training outside of Sphere knowledge, a paradigm that makes the rote possible, and knowing the rote itself. **Ascension** rotes provide –1 difficulty on casting (+1 die in an **Awakening** conversion) but otherwise use standard (Arete-based) spellcasting dice pools. Some rotes bend the rules for Sphere requirements or harness strange permutations in the nature of reality that most mages are unaware of. **Ascension** mages learn rotes from teachers or books (these need not be supernatural items) that describe them. Any mage can design rotes that incorporate the Spheres he knows. To use **Ascension** rotes in **Awakening**, simply convert Sphere to Arcanum.

**Awakening** rotes are very different, requiring dedicated training to master. Learning a rote entitles the player to roll a three-factor dice pool of Attribute + Skill (Ability in **Ascension** rules) + highest Arcanum. Mages learn rotes from each other, or from magical grimoires. Only Masters of the Arcana can create rotes from scratch.

After the six dots granted at character creation, rotes possess the same costs as Merits assessed at a number of dots equal to the highest Arcanum required. In **Ascension**, these translate as Backgrounds. To translate **Awakening** rotes into **Ascension**, convert Skills to Abilities, and Arcana to Spheres. Convert dice pools as follows:

- If you're using standard **Ascension** spellcasting, add the rote's Ability to its dice pool.

- If you're using a two-factor dice pool as in **Awakening**, use **Awakening**'s three-factor dice pool for rotes as well.

### Simultaneous Effects, Spell Tolerance and Relinquishing

In **Ascension**, every two ongoing spells imposes a cumulative +1 difficulty penalty (–1 die when converting, or –1 *per spell* if converting to a two-factor dice pool such as Arete/Gnosis + Sphere/Arcanum) to subsequent spellcasting attempts. Cancelling a spell requires a reflexive moment of concentration.

In **Awakening**, a mage may only maintain a number of spells equal to her Gnosis + 3. In addition, she may tolerate a number of spells cast upon her person (by herself or another) equal to her Stamina score without penalty. Each spell cast by *or* upon her after that point suffers a cumulative –1 die penalty per excess spell. Magical items count as "half" a spell for this purpose, and instant duration spells don't count. In **Awakening**, Spell Tolerance also applies to other supernatural creatures, so that too many spells cast upon them will degrade their dice pools as well.

These limits motivate **Awakening** mages to *relinquish* control of the spells they cast. The spell still affects Spell Tolerance, but otherwise runs on its own — the mage no longer controls it. This costs a dot of permanent Willpower, which may be regained by spending experience points.

### Targeting

Beyond the general systems for spell targets and areas in **Awakening** and **Ascension**, the games use different systems to "aim" magic.

**Awakening** spells can be cast at *Sensory* range out to 200 yards, or at *Sympathetic* range in conjunction with the Space Arcanum at greater distances. Some spells affect a target's Pattern directly and must contend with resisted traits or resistance rolls. Other *aimed* spells work largely like ranged weapons, as described on pp. 116-117 or **Mage: The Awakening**.

**Ascension** allows a mage to affect any target in line of sight to a maximum distance determined by the Storyteller. This can be enhanced further with Correspondence (requiring dots equal to the highest other Sphere in the conjunction), Time, and other conjunctions. Furthermore, attacks that aim an external object at another require a separate roll to strike using a paradigm-applicable dice pool — Perception + Occult for a Hermetic lightning bolt, or Dexterity + Firearms for a Technocrat's advanced pistol. These can be evaded as normal attacks; their successes can inflict additional damage, where applicable.

Other **Ascension** spells are *direct Pattern attacks* that cannot be evaded because they magically alter the target's essence or manipulate ephemeral aspects that can't be parried, dodged or forced away with ordinary abilities. Targets usually possess no inherent power to resist direct Pattern attacks, but might be able to use countermagic, supernatural powers or raw toughness to prevail.

# ARCANA AND SPHERES

**Ascension** Spheres translate to **Awakening** Arcana. They've got a lot in common — after all, the former inspired the latter. **Ascension** Spheres represent rough areas of expertise that were formalized early in the setting's history. They *seem* to represent universal categories, but mages have used other classifications in the past and argue about whether the Spheres identify nine universal forms of magic.

**Awakening** Arcana are structured, objective forms of magic: pillars of the Supernal Realms with firm Practices and powers. As shards of sublime truth, the ten Arcana use more defined systems than **Ascension** Spheres. Nevertheless, mages not only blunder into phenomena outside the Arcana, but actively seek them out to acquire Arcane Experience. The Fallen world is not the Supernal; while the Arcana *describe* phenomena, they only *create* them via magic.

# PRACTICES AND CAPABILITIES

**Ascension** lists loose capabilities for each Sphere that follow general trends, not strict rules. For example, one-dot Spheres always provide sensory abilities, and a few (such as Mind) provide other minor abilities. Higher dots provide progressively wider arrays of abilities, and the fifth dot might include an exotic ability, such as the power to survive the Deep Umbra or create consciousness. These capabilities are loose landmarks of power — the table below lists them, but don't treat them like **Awakening**'s strict Practices. If you want to relax **Awakening**'s Arcana a bit, use these as alternatives.

**Awakening** Practices are formal magical capabilities, named and understood by mages. **Awakening**'s core rules provide numerous examples of the Practices in action. Applying them to **Ascension** provides a more structured way to determine what magic can do. Be aware, however, that offensive magic is substantially weaker in **Awakening**. Some **Ascension** magic inflicts aggravated wounds at rank three, not Fraying's bashing damage. You might compromise by dropping Fraying, Unraveling and Unmaking prerequisites by one dot in games tuned to **Ascension**'s more intense action.

The following table provides dot-by-dot comparisons to get you started.

| Arcanum/ Sphere Dots | Awakening Practice | Ascension Capability |
|---|---|---|
| • | *Knowing*: Examine phenomena | *Senses*: Detect and examine phenomena |
|  | *Compelling*: Trivial influence of phenomena | *Self-Empowerment*: Influence trivial phenomena related to personal capabilities |
|  | *Unveiling*: Detect phenomena |  |
| •• | *Ruling*: Basic command of phenomena | *Minor Influence*: Command of basic phenomena or the ability to "nudge" phenomena, but not totally control them |
|  | *Veiling*: Conceal phenomena | *Trivial Pattern Influence*: Certain non-Pattern Spheres may affect Patterns in the most elementary ways. Examples: Enchant weapons, conjure objects from another place |
|  | *Shielding*: Use phenomena as armor |  |
| ••• | *Weaving*: Alter phenomenon capabilities | *Lesser Pattern Influence*: Certain non-Pattern Spheres may target Patterns with minor Effects at this rank (Pattern Spheres may already do so). Examples: teleportation, cursing machinery |
|  | *Fraying*: Injure target (usually bashing damage) | *Minor Transformation*: Transform one minor phenomenon into another or with Prime, manifest it out of nothing |
|  | *Perfecting*: Improve phenomena | *Enhance and Repair*: Improve phenomena, repair diminished or damaged phenomena |
| •••• | *Patterning*: Alter phenomenon type and major capabilities | *Greater Pattern Influence*: Certain non-Pattern Spheres may target Patterns with powerful Effects at this rank (Pattern Spheres may already do so). Examples: Convert matter to ephemera, curse living creatures with disease |
|  | *Unraveling*: Injure target (usually lethal damage) | *Major Influence*: Complex control over powerful phenomena |
| ••••• | *Making*: Create phenomenon | *Major Transformation*: Convert or reshape powerful phenomena |
|  | *Unmaking*: Injure target (usually aggravated damage), annihilate phenomenon | *Legendary Influence*: Perform a rare or exceptionally powerful feat that is normally not permitted |

# Translating Arcana to Spheres

Many Arcana translate directly into Awakening Spheres and vice versa, but a few require special handling — translating ten Arcana into nine Spheres can get a little messy. Arcana and Spheres may cover similar territory, but use different systems to define what mages can do. For necessity's sake, the descriptions below provide rough comparisons for large, flexible domains. Storytellers should take ownership of the details, adjusting basic conversions to fit individual chronicles.

Remember that Arcana Practices and Sphere capabilities parcel out powers differently. Arcana abilities often manifest in stages, while Sphere ranks provide the entire power.

## Death, Entropy, and Spirit

**Awakening**'s Death Arcanum governs interactions with souls, ghosts, corpses, darkness, and the Underworld. Death magic also includes the ability to drain targets of vital energy. These capabilities translate to several **Ascension** Spheres. Darkness falls under Forces, and corpses are Matter Patterns. Conjunctional Spirit and Entropy replicate Death's interactions with ghosts. Entropy 4 creates disorder and enervation in physical systems. Entropy 5 affects mental and spiritual structures.

Death lacks Entropy's power to control probability, and doesn't include the Spirit Sphere's power over natural or Astral spirits.

To convert Death to **Ascension** equivalents, find out the experience point value of a dot rating by treating it as a non-Ruling Arcanum. Include the value of dots the character received for free at character creation. Split this total in half and use it to purchase equal ranks of Entropy and Spirit. Give the character any leftover experience points.

To convert **Ascension**'s Spirit and Entropy Spheres to the Death Arcanum, calculate the experience point value of these Sphere ranks. Use this experience to purchase as many dots in the Death Arcanum as the character possessed in the higher of Entropy or Spirit. Use leftover experience to purchase dots in the Spirit and Fate Arcana. The character can't earn more dots in the Spirit Arcanum than she originally possessed in the Spirit Sphere, and can't earn more Fate dots than she possessed in Entropy. If this process leaves any experience points behind, add them to the character sheet to be spent freely.

When should you convert Entropy and Spirit Spheres to the Death Arcanum instead of Fate and Spirit? The following circumstances should encourage you to do so if:

• The finished character is an **Ascension** Hollow One.

- The finished character's concept is bound to necromancy. This includes Legacies that deal with death and souls, such as **Awakening**'s Tremere.

- The finished character is a Moros or possesses the Primordial Essence.

## FATE AND ENTROPY

The Fate Arcanum commands probability, conditional magic, curses, blessings and magical oaths. Fate also confers the ability to defy control or confinement based on a target's spiritual, subtle characteristics. **Ascension**'s Entropy Sphere includes Fate's probability and oath control powers, albeit at different dot levels, though not the explicit ability to escape magical control.

At higher ranks, Entropy also confers control over highly predictable phenomena, such as machines and materials (Entropy 3), living metabolisms (Entropy 4) and ephemeral phenomena such as ideas (Entropy 5). In conjunctions, Entropy also "tunes" other Spheres to affect deathly manifestations such as ghosts. **Awakening** assigns these powers to Death, not Fate.

In many situations Fate translates directly into Entropy and vice versa. If the character doesn't fit into any of the categories associated with Death users listed in the last section, convert his magic dot for dot in either direction.

## FORCES

Convert Forces Arcanum and Sphere dots either way on a one for one basis. **Awakening**'s Forces Arcanum works much like its **Ascension** counterpart, subject to the usual differences in game systems and dot-by-dot capabilities. Both the Arcanum and Sphere manipulate Patterns and use the guidelines each game applies to Pattern manipulation.

In addition, **Ascension**'s Forces can command darkness (the province of **Awakening**'s Death) and create illusions out of shaped light (as opposed to **Awakening**'s Prime-based phantasms).

## LIFE

Convert Life Arcanum and Sphere dots either way on a one-for-one basis. Remember that unlike the **Ascension** Sphere, **Awakening**'s Life Arcanum cannot cause permanent effects. In both games, Life manipulates Patterns and plugs into relevant systems governing them.

On the other hand, the Life Arcanum allows practitioners to control animal behavior, while the **Ascension** Sphere requires Mind unless the player devises a clever rationale. Don't forget that while the Sphere and Arcanum possess broad similarities, specific effects by rank vary between the games.

## MATTER

Convert Matter Arcanum and Sphere dots either way on a one-for-one basis. One notable difference between them is that **Awakening**'s Arcanum gradually applies abilities that **Ascension** assigns by dot. For example, transmuting lead into gold is a higher-ranked Matter effect in **Awakening**, coming after the ability to transmute between more common materials. In **Ascension**, two dots allow transmutations to produce virtually any form of mundane matter. The **Awakening** Arcana also allow reshaping and property alteration in stages, while **Ascension** allows full access to such capabilities at rank 3 and 5, respectively. Thaumium is the **Awakening** counterpart to **Ascension**'s Primium. Matter manipulates Patterns, and follows the guidelines for this form of magic from the system you choose.

## MIND

Convert Mind Arcanum and Sphere dots either way on a one-for-one basis. Similar to Matter, **Awakening** parcels out capabilities in stages across ranks, while **Ascension** confers the entire range of a capability within each rank. **Awakening**'s Mind Arcanum also confers the ability to inflict lethal and aggravated damage — abilities the **Ascension** Sphere does not confer outside of conjunctional spells.

Note that in **Ascension**, psychic projection sends the mage into the Astral Umbra, while in **Awakening**, it sends her into Twilight or a target's dreams (some exotic applications may send the mage into **Awakening**'s Astral Realms as a creature made of pure thought).

## PRIME

Convert Prime Arcanum and Sphere dots either way on a one-for-one basis. **Awakening** Prime manipulates Mana, while its **Ascension** counterpart affects Quintessence. **Awakening** Prime also includes the ability to create illusions and animate objects by manipulating threads of magical energy.

**Ascension** Prime confers the ability to enchant items so that they inflict aggravated wounds at a lower rank than **Awakening** allows for such attacks, but it most notably allows mages to create Patterns and other phenomena out of nothing but magical power, provided the caster possesses relevant conjunctional Spheres.

Hallows are the **Awakening** counterpart to **Ascension**'s Nodes.

### Space and Correspondence

Convert Space Arcanum and Correspondence Sphere dots either way on a one-for-one basis. In **Ascension**, Correspondence conjunctions require a rank equal to the highest rank among all other Spheres used. If this is only rank 2, this imposes +1 to spellcasting difficulties (–1 die when converting to **Awakening**). Awakening does not possess these restrictions — Space 2 is sufficient, but targets can sense (and in some cases, step through) magical portals and windows.

Space and Correspondence sympathetic ranges vary by game. See **Mage: The Awakening** pp. 114-115 for Space sympathetic ranges, and **Mage: The Ascension Revised**, p. 209 for Correspondence ranges.

### Spirit

Convert Spirit Arcanum and Sphere dots either way on a one-for-one basis, unless the character possesses Entropy Sphere dots as well and it would be appropriate to convert Spirit and Entropy to Death .

**Awakening**'s Spirit Arcanum does not affect ghosts or psychic projections. Its **Ascension** counterpart does, though in some cases characters require a conjunctional Sphere. **Awakening** mages use Spirit to deal with the Shadow, the equivalent of **Ascension**'s Penumbra. The Arcanum also possesses the ability to manipulate souls, though Death is more commonly used for that purpose.

### Time

Convert Time Arcanum and Sphere dots either way on a one-for-one basis. Note that pre-casting spells with conjunctional Time to unleash them later requires Time 2 in **Awakening**, but Time 4 in **Ascension**. **Awakening** Time does not allow multiple actions.

**Ascension**'s Time 2 provides broad prophetic ability; **Awakening** only allows immediate glimpses of the future at that rank, but expands the ability at higher ranks. Finally, **Ascension** Time Mastery allows for significant (though risky) time travel. **Awakening** doesn't, but allows mages to revise aspects of the past.

# PARADOX

**Ascension** and **Awakening** have very different forms of Paradox, the unintended consequences of magic. **Awakening** Paradox inflicts frequent light consequences and twists spells from their intended course. **Ascension** Paradox builds without apparent effect before backlashing with major injury or unpredictable warping of reality.

## Abyssal Paradoxes in Ascension

In **Awakening**, Paradox isn't a force but an event: an invasion from the Abyss that appears when magic breaks the Lie's rules. A cage of unreality imprisoning the Fallen World, the Abyss reacts when Supernal magic rattles the bars. The Abyss isn't just an external force from beyond reality, however, but a curse afflicting all Sleepers. They act as the Abyss' unwitting agents. When Sleepers see an obvious spell, their awe and disbelief aims the Abyss at the source to infect it with counter-reality.

### Covert, Improbable and Vulgar Magic

In **Awakening**, magic falls into three categories:

- *Covert* magic doesn't appear to be particularly unnatural or else it otherwise flows with the false laws of the Fallen World, whether Sleepers would believe it or not. This corresponds to **Ascension**'s coincidental magic.

- *Improbable* magic occurs when repeated covert magic would attract the disbelief of Sleepers, whether they're actually present or not. For game purposes, treat improbable spells as vulgar. Mages can sense when a spell would be improbable; Storytellers should warn players when a spell would go too far before casting.

- *Vulgar* spells are unbelievable to Sleeper witnesses or violate the rules of the Lie. In these situations, the Abyss immediately reacts, attacking the spell as its energies shake the cage of Fallen existence or as it emanates forth from a Sleeper witness' soul. This corresponds to **Ascension**'s vulgar magic, except that it doesn't always depend on whether witnesses would believe what they saw. **Awakening** doesn't use a separate classification for vulgar magic with witnesses, though witnesses do increase the severity of a Paradox roll.

## Invoking a Paradox

Unlike **Ascension** Paradox, **Awakening** Paradoxes aren't based on a pool that accumulates, and none of it sticks around after it strikes. Instead, the player makes a Paradox roll whenever her character casts a vulgar or improbable spell. Roll for a Paradox *before* rolling for the spell.

Roll a base pool of one die per two ranks of Arete/Gnosis. In **Ascension** conversions, set the difficulty at 7. Adjust the difficulty of this roll by a cumulative –1 for every previous Paradox roll made on the character's behalf during the scene. Adjust it by –2 if Sleeper witnesses are present. Increase the difficulty rating in favorable circumstances: +1 for a rote, and +1 for using a magical tool (or an equivalent focus).

Each success generates the following effects:

- Consult **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 124 and based on successes scored, consult the table to determine whether the mage invokes Havoc, Bedlam, Anomaly, Branding, or Manifestation.

- Each success increases the spell's difficulty by +1.

A botch on the Paradox roll has the listed effect in **Awakening** for a Dramatic Failure.

## Mitigation and Backlash

Mages may reduce the effects of a Paradox in two ways:

**Mitigation:** *Before* the Paradox roll, the mage may spend Quintessence/Mana to increase the difficulty of the Paradox roll by +1 per point.

**Backlash:** *After* the roll, the mage may absorb the Paradox at the risk of injury and exhaustion. Each level of Resistant bashing damage the mage willingly endures eliminates one success.

## Paradox Effects

In games using Wisdom, consult the table on p. 268 of **Mage: The Awakening** to determine a Paradox's duration. In games without Wisdom, subtract the highest number of Resonance traits the caster possesses in a single category (Dynamic, Static or Primordial) from 6; this is the mage's effective "Wisdom" for the purpose of determining Paradox duration.

Apply the effects on pp. 268-274 of **Mage: The Awakening** as follows:

**Havoc:** Use as is unless you do not use Wisdom, in which case roll Willpower instead. Treat botches

as Dramatic Failures. On an Exceptional Success (5+ successes), the character drops the difficulty of dispelling or countering the Havoc by 2.

**Bedlam:** Use as is unless you do not use Wisdom, in which case roll Willpower instead. Treat botches as Dramatic Failures. To resist contagious Bedlam, targets roll Willpower (difficulty 7).

**Anomaly:** Convert all dice penalties to equivalent difficulty adjustments (the –2 dice to Death spells imposed by an Aether Havoc becomes a +2 difficulty penalty). Convert Arcana to Spheres when necessary based on the guidelines in this chapter. Replace the "deja vu" roll for Arcadia Havoc with a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 7).

If you're using **Ascension**'s cosmology, you may replace Supernal Realm references with Anomalies based on paradigms. Apply the following guidelines to construct them.

- Add +2 to the difficulty of an Arcanum or Sphere.

- Add +2 to a common, mundane Attribute + roll diffuculty.

- Select two other special effects from those listed among all Supernal Realms that do not penalize magic or mundane rolls.

**Branding:** Convert all dice penalties to equivalent difficulty adjustments. Base all Vice-based disfigurements on the character's Nature instead. Some Bestial Features provide natural weapons with damage ratings equal to the bonus listed. References to armor provide 2 bonus soak dice per point.

**Manifestation:** Use the spirit conversion rules in Chapter Five to create the Manifestation entity. If you're using **Ascension** metaphysics, the Manifestation conforms to the caster's paradigm, dominant Resonance Traits, Essence, or some combination of these. The Manifestation might also appear as the personification of an Arcanum/Sphere or cosmic principle.

## Disbelief

In **Awakening**, most Sleepers forget that they witness improbable or vulgar magic. Page 274 of **Mage: The Awakening** provides the details. You can use this rule without converting anything for **Ascension** games. In **Ascension**'s setting with Disbelief added, most Sleepers only clearly remember events that conform to the Consensus unless they invoke a witness' deeply held beliefs.

# PARADOX ACCUMULATION

| Spellcasting Result | Coincidental | Vulgar without Witnesses | Vulgar with Witnesses |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dramatic Failure | Highest Arcanum/Sphere used | Highest Sphere/Arcanum used +1 | (Highest Sphere/Arcanum used x2) + 2 |
| Failure | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Success | 0 | Highest Arcanum/Sphere used | Highest Sphere/Arcanum used + 1 |
| Exceptional Success | 0 | Highest Sphere/Arcanum used – 1 | Highest Sphere/Arcanum used |

## CONSENSUS PARADOX IN AWAKENING

**Ascension** Paradox is a pervasive force, a cosmic Pattern that reweaves and tightens itself according to collective human will. When magic violates the Consensus, a willworker's desires and beliefs clash with that Pattern, releasing violent energies. They form flaws, spirits, scouring harm and even realms of existence, all for the sake of punishing the mage for assaulting the established order.

### COINCIDENTAL MAGIC, VULGAR MAGIC, AND WITNESSES

**Ascension** classifies magic based on whether or not it violates Consensus reality. When Sleepers witness the impossible, Paradox strikes harder. This creates the following categories:

- *Coincidental* spells trigger events that could have happened without magical intervention, even if they were unlikely to do so. This corresponds to **Awakening**'s covert category.

- *Vulgar* spells violate what Sleepers assume to be the laws of nature. This clashes with the Consensus even when Sleepers don't see it, creating magic that's *vulgar without witnesses*. This corresponds to **Awakening**'s vulgar category.

- When Sleepers see a Consensus-breaking spell, it falls into the *vulgar with witnesses* category. In **Awakening**, witnesses modify Paradox rolls but not spellcasting rolls.

- **Ascension** doesn't use improbable magic the way **Awakening** does, but utilizes the *domino effect* (**Mage: The Ascension Revised**, p. 151). In a conversion, impose a cumulative –1 die penalty for every two visible coincidences.

### ACCUMULATING PARADOX

Mages accumulate Paradox points when they cast spells, as the chart above illustrates.

When a mage accumulates Paradox, it counts against his Quintessence/Mana maximum (in **Ascension**, this total is 20 for all mages, while in **Awakening** it's determined by Gnosis). He can possess *more* Paradox than this maximum, but if his Paradox + Quintessence/Mana total exceeds it, eliminate any excess Quintessence/Mana from his pool.

### BACKLASH

When a mage casts a spell that would accumulate Paradox and it increases his total Paradox points to 5 or higher, roll a dice pool equal to his total accumulated Paradox. Consult the following table for the next step:

| Paradox Successes | Effect |
|---|---|
| Dramatic Failure* | All Paradox points discharge harmlessly. |
| Failure | Nothing happens, but no Paradox points discharge. |
| 1–5 successes | 1 point of Paradox discharges per success. The mage suffers 1 point of bashing damage per success and suffers a Trivial Paradox Flaw. |
| 6–10 successes | 1 point of Paradox discharges per success. The mage suffers 1 point of bashing damage per success and suffers a Minor Paradox Flaw. |
| 11–15 successes | 1 point of Paradox discharges per success. The mage suffers (successes – 10) points of lethal damage and suffers a Moderate Paradox Flaw. |

| 16–20 successes | 1 point of Paradox discharges per success. The mage suffers (successes – 10) points of lethal damage and suffers a Severe Paradox Flaw. |
|---|---|
| 21+ successes | 1 point of Paradox discharges per success. The mage suffers (successes – 20) points of aggravated damage and a Drastic Paradox Flaw. The mage also experiences one of the following: 1 point of permanent Paradox, 1 Drastic Paradox Flaw, a visit from a Paradox Spirit, or entrapment in a Paradox Realm. |

\* Or botch, if you use the botch mechanic.

## PARADOX DELAY

A mage's player may delay a backlash until the end of the scene by spending a point of Willpower. She needs to spend 1 point of Willpower each time a spellcasting attempt would force a Paradox roll. The mage still accumulates Paradox points during this period, so that when the scene ends the mage rolls a pool equal to *all* accumulated Paradox. **Ascension** mages have no way to reduce or eliminate Paradox, but you may allow **Awakening**-style Mitigation. Choosing this option makes Paradox less dangerous, and Quintessence/Mana more valuable.

## PARADOX PERMUTATIONS

The following circumstances modify or supplement **Ascension**-style Paradox:

• Each roll for an extended spell beyond the first adds 1 Paradox point to the total.

• Powerful backlashes, each Attribute augmented beyond the maximum for the mage's template (in **Awakening** it's 5 or Gnosis, whichever is higher) and each unnatural feature (claws, extra limbs) imposes a point of *permanent Paradox*. Permanent Paradox points never discharge during a backlash unless they were the result of augmentation or modification magic. In those cases, the permanent Paradox ends when the spell does.

• When Sleepers discovers a spell is unnatural after the fact it suffers *Unbelief*. It adds Paradox points and imposes a backlash (as a vulgar with witnesses spell) as soon as this happens. This also causes the spell to collapse.

## PARADOX BOTCHES

**Ascension**'s Paradox rules benefit from the classic Storyteller system's botch mechanic. In it, when all dice fail *and* roll 1 on the die face at least once, the character suffers a setback in addition to a normal failure.

If you're adapting **Ascension** to **Awakening** you may wish to keep this rule just for spellcasting and invoke a Dramatic Failure and its Paradox results on any botched roll.

• Instead of a standard Paradox, the Storyteller may impose *Quiet* as described on pp. 199-200 of **Mage: The Ascension Revised**. Apply the table on p. 199 based on Paradox pool *successes*, not the pool before rolling.

• For every 24 hours during which the mage or her target possesses augmented Attributes or unnatural capabilities, she must either expend one point of Quintessence/Mana or suffer 1 point of aggravated damage. This phenomenon is called *Pattern bleeding*, and those suffering it are known as *thaumivores*.

## PARADOX EFFECTS

See **Mage: The Ascension Revised** pp. 194-198 for information about Paradox. In **Awakening**, adjudicate Paradox effects as follows:

**Damage:** Paradox in these rules is *not* resistant damage. The mage's magical style and the spell being cast determine how it physically manifests as cuts, strange burns or other injuries.

**Paradox Flaws:** These are described on pp. 195-196 of **Mage: The Ascension Revised**. Trivial Flaws have no game effect, but are noticeable to witnesses. Minor Flaws impose –2 dice to nonmagical actions for one turn per Paradox success. Moderate Flaws impose –5 dice to nonmagical actions for (Paradox successes – 10) turns. Severe Flaws incapacitate the mage for (Paradox successes – 10) turns. Drastic Flaws cause a bizarre, dangerous effect for (Paradox – 20) turns, or impose a *permanent* Trivial Flaw.

**Paradox Spirits:** Treat these as Manifestation Abyssal Paradoxes triggered by Arcanum dots equal to the backlash successes – 20.

**Paradox Realms:** Storytellers adjudicate Paradox Realms. These usually challenge the mage with an enigma or hardship related to the spell that triggered the backlash, the mage's personality and magical style, or the situation in which the backlash occurred.

# Chapter Four: Game Traits and Systems

This chapter describes the key differences between the core game systems for **Ascension** and **Awakening**.

## BACKGROUNDS, MERITS AND FLAWS

Backgrounds in **Ascension** represent a character's inherent qualities and social connections to the world. Merits and Flaws represent minor advantages and disadvantages beyond the standard game traits.

Merits in **Awakening** fill the roles of both Backgrounds and Merits. Flaws don't grant extra character creation points, but act as an optional mechanic for gaining more experience as per the **World of Darkness** core rules.

### Ascension to Awakening

When converting an **Ascension** Merit, the Storyteller should look at Merits in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** and **Mage: The Awakening** to see if it corresponds to an existing Merit. If you use **Awakening** rules to play **Ascension**, replace the Avatar Background

with the Merit in Chapter One. **Ascension**'s other mage-specific Backgrounds are already **Awakening** Merits. Merits with the same names as Backgrounds convert directly. Use Occultation for Arcane, Hallow for Node, and Imbued Item, Enhanced Item, or Artifact for Wonder.

To convert Flaws, use the system on p. 218 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** to grant experience points when they hinder the character. Ignore the Flaw's point value. Severe Flaws will interfere with a character more frequently, granting more experience points.

### Awakening to Ascension

The new World of Darkness uses Merits to cover both Backgrounds and Merits from the original system. The Storyteller should consult the Backgrounds and Merits listed in **Ascension** when running **Awakening** using the older rules.

Use Wonder for Imbued Item, Enhanced Item, or Artifact. Use Arcane to represent Occultation and Node for Hallow.

In **Ascension**, High Speech becomes a Merit, not a Background. In mash-ups, consider giving characters the Merit as a bonus for membership in a Tradition, Convention, or converted order to mirror the zero-cost benefit it provides for trained **Awakening** characters.

## High Speech (4-Pt. Merit)

Your character knows High Speech: a mystical or scientific language that allows her to describe her spells in detail, coding her will to ease the casting.

If your character spends at least a turn (or whatever unit of time a ritual casting is using) describing her spell using High Speech, she gains +1 die to her spellcasting dice pool.

If your character marks the target of a spell with the High Speech description it will last longer, extending the spell as if an extra success had been spent on its duration.

High Speech takes a form dependent on your mage's paradigm. Order of Hermes mages use Enochian, the language of angels. Sons of Ether draw blueprints of their inventions. If appropriate, your mage may even use High Speech as a focus.

# ARETE AND GNOSIS
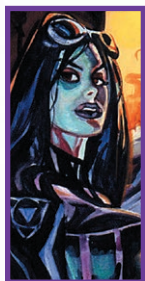
Both versions of **Mage** rely on a "power trait" that measures general magical ability and the mage's sublime understanding of the Tellurian. This trait both drives and limits a mage's power. In **Ascension** this trait is **Arete**, while in **Awakening** it is **Gnosis**. This section shows how to translate these concepts.

## Arete in Awakening

Arete is derived from a Greek term for excellence or virtue. To develop Arete, the mage confronts her innermost being in challenges arranged by the Avatar. When a mage uses these opportunities to reach out, understand the cosmos, and explore the subtle bonds between it in the microcosm of a single will, she walks the path to Ascension. Arete has a number of applications in the **Awakening** rules set.

### Arete Effects

**Spell Dice Pools:** Arete provides the base dice pool for all magical spells — called Effects in **Ascension**. To replicate **Ascension**'s basic magic system roll Arete by itself with no additional traits. The Arete dice pool is smaller, but its effects are more potent than the number of dice suggest. Each success translates into *two* spell factor ranks, including Potency, Target, Size, Area and Duration. Divide penalties for instant spells or resistant traits by half, rounded up. In cases where you must count successes, treat each Arete success as two **Awakening** spellcasting successes.

**Limits on Magical Knowledge:** Unlike Gnosis, Arete does not impose limits on both the rank and number of Arcana or Spheres a mage may master. Instead, mages may advance up to as many dots as their Arete in any number of Spheres or Arcana. An Arete 5 Moros could possess 5 dots in all 9 Spheres or 10 Arcana, given sufficient experience points.

**Foci (or Tool, High Speech and Mudra) Transcendence:** As per Chapter One, Arete 6+ allows a mage to surpass foci without spending Willpower and grants a dice bonus to Effects when he uses transcended foci anyway.

If the character uses **Awakening** style magical tools, High Speech and rote mudras, he gains the benefits of magical tools *or* High Speech without actually using them, and never need to use rote mudras, for two Spheres/Arcana for each rank of Arete above 5.

**Gnosis Functions:** Use Arete as if it was Gnosis for any miscellaneous **Awakening** systems you wish to use, such as combining spells.

### Increasing Arete

To increase Arete, the mage must earn the required experience points (new rating x 8) and then undergo a *Seeking*: a vision quest where his magical consciousness (the Avatar in **Ascension** metaphysics) challenges him to demonstrate he understands its nature — his Avatar Essence or Path, depending on the rules you use. If the mage overcomes a dream-obstacle that symbolizes his magical nature, his player may spend experience points on the increase.

**Awakening** characters earn Arcane Experience by encountering and investigating supernatural mysteries, which offset the cost of Gnosis. If you use this in **Ascension**, some of the cost of Arete can be paid for with

Arcane Experience the mage earns *during his Seeking* — by examining the Self, he comprehends his soul's Mystery.

# Gnosis in Ascension

In **Awakening**, the power trait is **Gnosis**, another Greek term with connotations of secret, mystical knowledge. A mage's Gnosis grows when she confronts arcane mysteries and studies supernatural lore. This knowledge includes but is not limited to the secrets of Awakened magic. A mage who battles the undead or studies a mystic artifact from outside the Atlantean tradition gains a wider understanding of the universe. Gnosis translates to **Ascension** rules in the following ways:

## Gnosis Effects

**Spell Dice Pools:** Improvised spells use Gnosis + the highest Arcanum/Sphere employed. (Rotes use Attribute + Ability + highest Arcanum/Sphere.) Unlike standard **Ascension** rules, converted **Awakening** spellcasting rolls always use difficulty 7, no matter the Sphere/Arcanum rank being used. If you're using **Ascension**'s guidelines for magical effects, each success is *half* as potent as an equivalent success rolled using a dice pool based on Arete.

**Power and Knowledge:** The other effects of Gnosis can't be summarized in brief. Consult the **Mage: The Awakening** core, pp. 75-76 for more information. Apply the systems and tables on those pages whenever you use Gnosis in an **Ascension** game. As Gnosis affects Mana and Paradox, consult conversions for those systems on pp. 46-47, of this book, respectively.

## Increasing Gnosis

To increase Gnosis, the player must spend experience as detailed in the **Awakening** rules, spending new dots x 8. No Seeking is required. **Awakening**'s Arcane Experience may be spent to increase Gnosis.

# QUINTESSENCE AND MANA
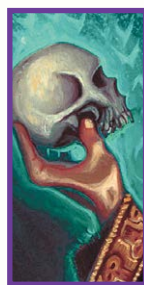
Just as both **Mage** games have a "power Trait," they both also have a "fuel Trait" used by mages to enhance their spells. The metaphysics behind Quintessence and Mana are slightly different, though, and leads to them having different uses.

## Quintessence in Awakening

Quintessence is the raw stuff of reality, the undifferentiated "fifth element" from which all Patterns are constructed. A low amount of free Quintessence permeates the universe, gathering in Nodes where it sublimates into Tass. Without special magical Effects, mages can only acquire Quintessence by meditating at Nodes or collecting Tass. Whenever magic creates anything "from nothing," it converts Quintessence into a Pattern.

In **Awakening**, Quintessence may be spent on all of the uses for Mana described on p. 126 of **Mage: The Awakening**. In addition, every Making spell also requires at least one point of Quintessence, while every Unmaking spell grants the caster a point after being successfully cast. Adepts can spend Quintessence — or use a combined spell with Prime 3 "Channel Mana" to draw it from a Node/Hallow or Tass — to "create" Patterns using the Practice of Patterning instead of the Practice of Making, allowing them to duplicate some Master-level spells by converting Quintessence into the desired Pattern instead of building it from nothing.

**Ascension**-style mages in **Awakening** rules can't regain Quintessence by Pattern Scouring or sacrifice, and are limited in how much they can store and spend by their Avatar Merit.

Note that **Ascension**'s Quintessence should not be confused with the legendary *Quintessences* used by Awakening archmages.

## Mana in Ascension

While Quintessence is the raw stuff of creation, Mana is pure Supernal energy filtering into the world across the Abyss. It flows into Hallows the way free Quintessence gathers in Nodes and even forms Tass in the same way. Patterns aren't made of Mana the way they're made of Quintessence, but sometimes contain it.

Mana is easier to gain than Quintessence, but less able to facilitate creation — it's the energy of magic, not

## ⊕BLATIONS

Mages in both games refresh their personal reserves of Mana or Quintessence by meditating at places of power. In **Ascension**, this is a function of the Avatar Background. In **Awakening**, it's an ability of all mages. **Awakening** calls this meditation *oblation*, and some mages (especially those with Legacies) develop specific oblations they can even perform outside of a place of power.

adulterated, Fallen things. It may be substituted for Quintessence for the purposes listed on p. 149 of **Mage: The Ascension Revised**, *except* for building new Patterns, which it can't do. Mages using Mana in **Ascension** rules require three dots in a conjunctional Sphere to convert one Pattern into another, instead of being able to use Quintessence and Prime 2. If you use Spheres and Mana together, the fifth dot in a Sphere also allows *ex nihilo* creation.

Mana can repair a mage's Pattern. Spend 3 points of Mana to heal one level of bashing or lethal damage. They may degrade their Patterns to harvest it, using the reverse effect. By scouring her own Pattern for a turn, a mage can reduce one of her Physical Attributes by one dot for 24 hours or suffer a level of aggravated damage in exchange for 3 points of Mana.

In addition, unwholesome mages acquire Mana by sacrificing living beings. In a ritual killing (not combat — the victim must be unable to resist), the mage gains one point of Mana for every level of lethal damage she inflicts.

## RESONANCE AND NIMBUS
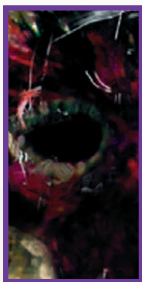
Mages in both games color their spells with qualitative effects — moods, tastes, and feelings that leave a willworker's mark on his spells. Mages recognize one another's work and Sleepers avoid such ominous phenomena. Both games call these signs *Resonance*.

**Ascension** grades different "flavors" of Resonance as three interrelated traits. **Awakening** details mechanics for the *nimbus*, an aura of Resonance that surrounds a mage and becomes visible when she casts.

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## Resonance in Awakening

**Ascension** mages possess three Resonance traits with dot ratings ranging from 0 to 5. These traits correspond to the three parts of the Metaphysic Trinity—*Dynamic*, *Entropic*, and *Static*. In **Awakening**-based systems, use the following rules:

- New characters begin with one dot in one Resonance trait, assigning a descriptor (typically an adjective like "Cold" or "Haunting") based on nimbus and Path. A character gains new dots during significant magical efforts, including Seekings, Legacy initiations and magical Dramatic Failures. Players may also purchase a new Resonance dot for (new dots) x 3 Experience. If a character gains dots in a second or third trait, add a new descriptor for each.

- When a mage successfully scrutinizes Resonance (see p. 279 of **Mage: The Awakening**), she senses phenomena based on the Resonance traits and descriptors of the sorcerers who generated it. Mages may also sense Resonance from a nimbus with a successful Wits + Occult roll.

- **Ascension**-style Resonance ratings replace the Gnosis-based aura bonus with bonus dice equal to the character's highest Resonance – 1.

- When spell effects match the character's Resonance, she gains a +1 die to her spellcasting dice pool

## Nimbus in Ascension

**Awakening** not only includes Resonance, but detailed mechanics for a mage's nimbus — her magical aura, revealed when casting vulgar spells. To add this setting element to **Ascension** games, use the following rules.

- Every mage has a nimbus: a symbolic representation of the Avatar interpreted through Resonance traits. The nimbus appears when she casts vulgar magic or uses Resonance traits to enhance a spell. The nimbus is normally only visible to Awakened using a spell to see it with Prime 1, Mind 1.

- When a mage casts a vulgar spell, all Awakened onlookers are entitled to a reflexive Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 6). Even one success reveals all of the caster's Resonance Traits.

- A mage can reveal his nimbus with a reflexive Charisma + Occult roll (difficulty 6), even to Sleepers, though this always filters through the mage's paradigm and may not appear to be supernatural. If one of the mage's Resonance traits would assist a Social roll, it reduces the roll's difficulty by her dots in that trait to a minimum difficulty of 3. This effect lasts for a single turn.

# WISDOM IN ASCENSION

**Awakening** introduces the concept of **Wisdom**, a measure of the mage's humility, forbearance and compassion. All mages begin with a Wisdom score of 7. Callous, hubris-laden or symbolically impure acts cause a mage's Wisdom to degrade — and a sharp fall can bring on madness.

### Degeneration

Wisdom possesses a hierarchy of conventional and Awakened sins listed on p. 79 of **Mage: The Awakening**. If the mage performs an act listed as a sin for someone with his Wisdom or less, his player rolls the dice pool listed beside the sin, at difficulty 7. If the mage is following his Nature or Virtue, add 1 to 3 dice, depending on how much his Nature/Virtue would compel the character to act against Wisdom's code.

If he succeeds on the roll, nothing happens — on at least a wordless, emotional level, the mage realizes his error.

If his player fails, the mage grows a bit more callous and prideful. He loses a dot of Wisdom and must roll his *new* Wisdom rating as a dice pool. If his player fails that roll, the mage acquires a derangement appropriate to the situation. In **Ascension** games, the character's Resonance may also determine the derangement selected. Make a note of the Wisdom the character dropped to when he gained the derangement.

If a character's Wisdom drops to 0, he can no longer be played. In **Awakening**'s setting, he becomes one of the Mad. In **Ascension**'s setting, he might feel compelled to enter the Nephandi's Cauls.

Mages regain lost Wisdom by spending (new dots x 3) experience points. If a Wisdom increase raises it past a rank where he gained a derangement, he recovers from that derangement.

### Other Wisdom Effects

Wisdom also affects the severity and duration of **Awakening**-style Paradox, as noted on . It influences interactions with spirits and the most

malefic forms of magic, as noted on p. 80 of **Mage: The Awakening**. If you use Wisdom in **Ascension**'s setting, references to the Abyss now convert to the Nephandi and the powers they worship.

# VIRTUE, VICE, NATURE AND DEMEANOR

**Ascension** awards Willpower to a character who acts according to her true **Nature** (as opposed to her superficial **Demeanor**). **Awakening** grants it to characters who act upon their **Virtues** or slake their **Vices**. The relevant systems can be summarized as follows:

• **Nature and Demeanor:** A character who acts in accord with her Nature recovers 1 point of Willpower.

• **Virtue and Vice:** Acting to fulfil a Virtue replenishes all expended Willpower. Acting to satisfy a Vice reclaims 1 point of Willpower.

## CONVERTING NATURE TO VIRTUE AND VICE

**Ascension** Natures (**Mage: The Ascension Revised**, pp. 96-101) roughly correspond to the following new World of Darkness Virtue and Vice pairs (**World of Darkness** core rulebook, pp. 100-105):

**Architect:** *Virtue*: Justice; *Vice*: Pride
**Autocrat:** *Virtue*: Prudence; *Vice*: Wrath
**Bon Vivant:** *Virtue*: Hope; *Vice*: Gluttony
**Bravo:** *Virtue*: Fortitude; *Vice*: Wrath
**Caregiver:** *Virtue*: Charity; *Vice*: Pride
**Celebrant:** *Virtue*: Hope; *Vice*: Lust
**Child:** *Virtue*: Hope; *Vice*: Sloth
**Competitor:** *Virtue*: Fortitude; *Vice*: Envy
**Conformist:** *Virtue*: Charity; *Vice*: Sloth
**Conniver:** *Virtue*: Prudence; *Vice*: Envy
**Curmudgeon:** *Virtue*: Temperance; *Vice*: Sloth
**Deviant:** *Virtue*: Hope; *Vice*: Gluttony or Lust
**Director:** *Virtue*: Temperance; *Vice*: Wrath
**Fanatic:** *Virtue*: Justice; *Vice*: Wrath
**Gallant:** *Virtue*: Temperance; *Vice*: Pride
**Judge:** *Virtue*: Justice; *Vice*: Sloth
**Loner:** *Virtue*: Fortitude; *Vice*: Pride
**Martyr:** *Virtue*: Faith; *Vice*: Sloth
**Masochist:** *Virtue*: Fortitude; *Vice*: Pride

**Monster:** *Virtue*: Justice; *Vice*: Lust
**Pedagogue:** *Virtue*: Charity; *Vice*: Pride
**Penitent:** *Virtue*: Faith; *Vice*: Envy
**Perfectionist:** *Virtue*: Temperance; *Vice*: Pride
**Rebel:** *Virtue*: Hope; *Vice*: Sloth
**Rogue:** *Virtue*: Justice; *Vice*: Greed
**Survivor:** *Virtue*: Fortitude; *Vice*: Envy
**Thrill-Seeker:** *Virtue*: Hope; *Vice*: Pride
**Traditionalist:** *Virtue*: Prudence; *Vice*: Sloth
**Trickster:** *Virtue*: Charity; *Vice*: Envy
**Visionary:** *Virtue*: Faith; *Vice*: Pride

## CONVERSIONS AND CONVOLUTIONS

Consider the following options to convert personality traits between games:

• **Nature/Demeanor to Virtue/Vice and Vice Versa:** Use the conversions as a starting point. If a player believes a Nature would correspond to a different Virtue/Vice pair, allow it — that won't break game balance. An **Awakening** character can adopt whichever Demeanor reflects his public personality.

If you apply Nature and Demeanor to **Awakening**, let players recover all expended Willpower when the character fulfills his Nature and 1 point when he satisfies his Demeanor in a particularly compelling fashion. Maintaining the façade strengthens one's self-image.

• **Nature/Demeanor Focusing Virtue/Vice, or Vice Versa:** Use Nature and Demeanor to clarify how a character satisfies a Virtue or Vice. For example, a Monster fulfills Justice by teaching a moral lesson through a brutal example. This narrows the possibilities for Willpower recovery, so we suggest you use **Awakening**'s more generous Willpower recovery rules. Satisfying a Virtue through the mage's Nature recovers all Willpower. Satisfying her Vice through her Nature recovers 1 point.

• **Nature/Demeanor and Virtue/Vice:** Use *both* sets of personality traits to add extra detail, and to accelerate Willpower recovery. In this case, use the Willpower awards from each trait's original system.

# CHAPTER FIVE: THE REALITIS BEYOND

This chapter provides conversion guidelines for unearthly realms and spirits from each game.

## SPIRIT MECHANICS

In **Ascension** (spirit mechanics are in the **Ascension Storyteller's Companion**), spirits possess the Willpower, Rage, and Gnosis traits. In **Mage: The Awakening** (p. 317) they use Power, Finesse, and Resistance. To translate a spirit's core traits, convert Willpower to Resistance, Rage to Power, and Gnosis to Finesse.

After converting its core traits, check its dot levels against the table on p. 317 of **Mage: The Awakening** to determine its Rank and Maximum Essence. Assign a Size as per the **World of Darkness Rulebook** and add Resistance to produce Corpus. Pick Influences according to the type of spirit and divide one dot per Rank between them. Calculate the rest of its Advantages using those core traits and create an appropriate Ban.

To translate a spirit from **Awakening** to **Ascension**, total its core traits to determine Essence. If the spirit's Corpus in **Awakening** is too high or low compared to the new Essence score, increase or decrease it by up to a third to compensate. Base Charms on Influences and Numina.

Spirits in **Awakening** that cross over into the physical world appear in the state of Twilight, incorporeal and invisible except to those using spells to see them. Existing in this state bleeds Essence — to survive for more than a few hours, they require a host, an object or person to anchor them. Some spirits also can also use a Numen to become solid and visible. **Ascension** doesn't include the concept of Twilight — only spirits with the Materialize Charm can cross over, and they can stay as long as they like unless destroyed.

Spirit powers are called Charms in **Ascension** and Numina in **Awakening**. Many directly translate or possess thematic similarities — Blast and Materialize exist in both games, for example, while Material Vision in **Awakening** and Peek in **Ascension** do the same thing. Some Charms should convert to **Awakening** Influences, especially when their names include the words "Create" or "Control." If a Charm grants a

spirit control over something relating to its domain, it should be an Influence, not a Numen.

To translate other Charms and Numina, decide if they require an Essence cost. Numina have higher costs than Charms because, in **Awakening**, Essence doesn't serve as a spirit's health. The new World of Darkness uses two traits for spirit dice rolls instead of one — Gnosis rolls correspond to Finesse + Resistance, Rage rolls translate as Power + Finesse, and Willpower rolls should switch to Power + Resistance. If you're creating a new Numen based on a Charm that affects another character, select a Resistance type and trait based on p. 202 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

## OUTWARD TRAVEL
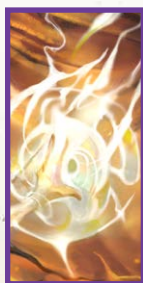
Mages in both games use spells to travel to most other realms, but each game features at least one outer realm accessed by other means.

The basic concepts remain the same — at least one spirit world is separated from the World of Darkness by a barrier called the Gauntlet. In **Ascension**, the Gauntlet's strength alters both the difficulty and the number of successes needed for an Effect. In **Awakening**, it levies penalties to spellcasting dice pools.

Both games distinguish between mental and holistic travel, but the Sphere and Arcanum ratings needed remain the same.

- In mental travel, a mage uses Mind 4 or 5 to leave her body behind and experience her destination in astral form, using Mental Attributes as Physical ones and substituting Willpower for Health or Health levels. Mind 4 allows for brief trips, while extended

## The Avatar Storm

Part-way through **Ascension**'s metaplot, vast cosmological upheavals filled the Gauntlet with shards of detached Avatars. After this development, attempts to use magic to cross the Gauntlet injured mages who crossed over. In **Awakening**, roll the caster's Gnosis as a dice pool and apply the successes as Resistant lethal damage. If this knocks the mage unconscious, his soul becomes detached as per the rules in **Awakening**.

voyages require Mind 5. If a traveler "dies" on a mental journey, she normally wakes up back in her body.

- In holistic travel, a mage uses magic to physically transfer himself to his destination, his body transforming into the native "matter" of the realm. Both games use Spirit 3 as the main requirement, though other Spheres or Arcana need to be included to reach some realms. Holistic travel uses the mage's own Attributes, but if he's killed, he's killed.

Last, both games have realms that can be reached through special gateways (though some, but not all require magic to open) or otherwise-mundane skills and technology. **Ascension** mages can access the Digital Web through computers. **Awakening** mages access the Astral Realms by meditating at Hallows.

One piece of terminology might seem confusing — **Ascension** mages refer to all mental travel as "Astral," and sometimes call the High Umbra "the Astral Umbra." **Awakening** Mind Adepts and Masters do use spells for mental travel, but for **Awakening**'s purpose "Astral" typically refers to the Astral Realms while mental travel is simply called psychic projection. Despite the name, and visitors using Mental Attributes as though they were on a mental journey, visiting the Astral Realms is something any mage can do and doesn't require magic — only an Awakened soul.

# THE ASCENSION COSMOLOGY
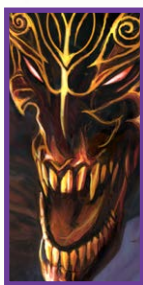
**Mage: The Ascension** has a large cosmology, too big to give more than a summary of here. For more details, see the **Ascension** core book, **The Infinite Tapestry** and **Digital Web 2.0**. Most of **Ascension**'s other realms are organized into the overall title of the *Umbra*, divided into High, Middle, and Low regions. The High or Astral Umbra is the domain of concepts, mental archetypes, thoughts and emotions. The Middle Umbra or Spirit Wilds is the animistic, shamanic universe of the essential natures of all things, and the Low Umbra contains the lands of the dead. All versions of the Umbra are separated by the Gauntlet.

Crossing the Gauntlet with Spirit 3 alone allows a mage access to the Umbra most suited to her paradigm — the vast majority of Awakened go to the High Umbra, while especially primal mages like Verbena and Dreamspeakers travel to the Middle Umbra instead. Mental travel allows access to the High Umbra *only* but doesn't have to cross the Gauntlet to do so. Some mages add Spirit 3 and Prime 2 to their mental journey spells to create ephemeral bodies on the other side, allowing them to use their normal Attributes and explore further — in **Awakening** rules, this doesn't require Prime and can be achieved with either conjunctional Death 3 or Spirit 3.

Accessing the Low Umbra is difficult and dangerous. It always crosses the Gauntlet and adds Entropy 4 and Life 2 to the Effects' Spheres (conjunctional Death 4 and Life 2 in **Awakening** terms).

Note that for space reasons we can't catalog many of the convolutions of Umbral travel, such as long-term survival, the effects of crossing the Horizon, and the rules for individual realms. When you encounter these in **Ascension** sourcebooks, apply the conversion guidelines elsewhere in this book.

## The Penumbra

Upon crossing the Gauntlet, mages arrive in the Penumbra, the reflection of the world. Everything in the physical world exists in the Penumbra, "flavored" according to which Umbra the visitor is aiming for — travelers en route to the High Umbra experience a vivid landscape of clear concepts. The Middle Umbra looks more alive and vital (or corrupt with pollution) and the Low Umbra contains a decayed, crumbling recreation of the material world. Travelers bound to different destinations can still see each other. The Penumbra, though, leads to the Umbra proper. Mists swallow the traveler seeking a deeper voyage, and she finds a landscape that doesn't match anything on Earth.
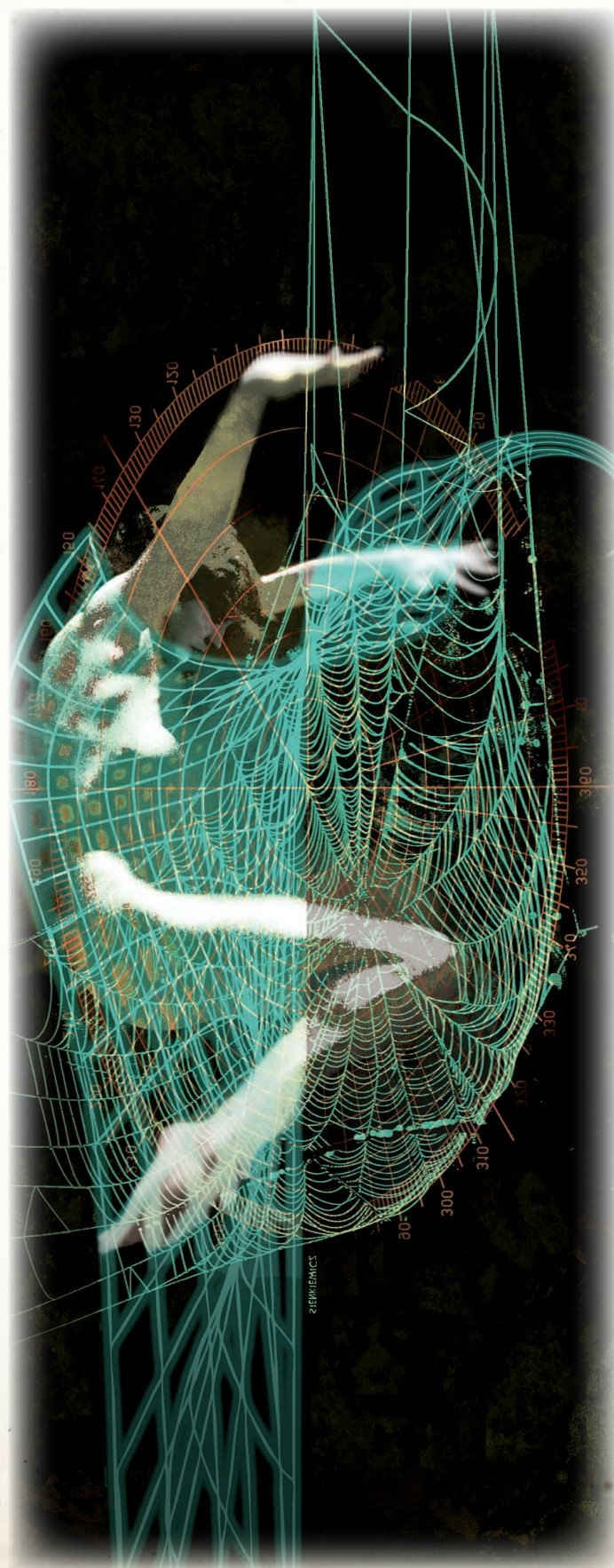
## The High Umbra

The realm of ideas, the High Umbra reflects the thoughts of the universe. Mages travel it to study the Consensus, bargain with archetypal spirits, and build private worlds in the Horizon between its middle and far regions.

The near region, where new arrivals appear, is the *Vulgate*. Comprised of the collective thoughts of humanity, the Vulgate is divided by culture. Every society has a "nation" in the Vulgate, further divided by time period as envisaged by modern humanity and all arranged on an infinite river delta of language.

*Spires* rise from the Vulgate. These impossibly tall and steep mountains house the archetypal courts of gods and divine figures, and represent the travelers' individual struggles to reach higher reality, separated by religion (or non-religion), spirituality and cultural mythos. At its peak, travelers reach the *Epiphamies*. The Epiphamies represent concepts such as "motherhood," or "Newtonian physics," as shaped by travelers' paradigms.

Masters of Mind or Spirit can travel further, entering a *Horizon* that appears as the traveler's paradigmatic vision of emptiness: from an ether-filled version of space, a realistic vacuum, an empty desert, or an endless gray void. The Horizon contains High Umbral versions of Mercury, Venus, and Mars (representing Correspondence, Life, and Forces) and — of more interest to most mages — the *Horizon Realms*. Pocket-universes constructed with magic and terrestrial Quintessence, Horizon Realms serve as laboratories and fortresses for the Traditions and Conventions. Most possess stable gateways back to Earth, allowing students to come and go without a long and difficult journey.

Beyond the Horizon lie the other planetary realms and the endless dark. The Void Engineers explore new worlds there, while Nephandi worship horrors from beyond the stars. This far out, there's no difference between the spiritual and material realms.

### The High Umbra in Awakening

If you import it into **Awakening**, decide if the High Umbra replaces or complements the Astral Realms. If it replaces the Astral Realms, decide if mages can still meditate their way in without magic. In certain conceptual realms, **Ascension** Mind Effects replace Pattern Spheres. **Awakening** Arcana don't work the same way — their domains

remain constant and work just as well on conceptual objects as on the real things.

**Ascension**'s Horizon Realms seriously change **Awakening**'s assumptions. **Awakening**'s archmages create private realms, but visiting them is almost always a dangerous undertaking and they never act as strongholds for less powerful mages. The great void beyond the Horizon might descend into **Awakening**'s Abyss, separating **Ascension**-style magical realms from the Supernal.

# The Middle and Low Umbrae

The Middle Umbra is an animistic, spiritual place, containing realms devoted to "the city," "pollution" and so on. These aren't realms of human thought, but the animistic reflection of material reality. The Metaphysic Trinity of Stasis, Dynamism and Primordialism generate choirs of spirits.

The Low Umbra is a miserable place. Its self-aware ghosts sense the living world through the Low Penumbra, but can't touch it. Below this, Dark Kingdoms of the dead rise from a Tempest of roiling energy. A Labyrinth in the deepest places houses entities who were never alive and monstrous ghosts who lost their humanity to nihilistic energies.

## The Middle and Low Umbrae in Awakening

The Middle Umbra resembles the Shadow, insomuch as its Penumbra is an animistic reflection of the World of Darkness, but it goes much deeper to realms that don't match anything in the material plane. The Shadow contains some places-that-aren't, but they're much rarer. Shadow spirits are more hostile, bound by an ecology of Resonance and predation. If your chronicle features Thyrsus intent on exploring the Shadow, though, you could merge the two to produce realms housing God-like, high-Rank spirits.

The Low Umbra, like the Underworld, is where ghosts are banished. In **Awakening**, ghosts fall to the Underworld when they lose all of their anchors to the mundane world. In **Ascension**, ghosts begin their existence in the Low Umbra, losing access to the Low Penumbra when their obsessions and emotional touchstones are spent. To covert the Low Umbra to **Awakening**, allow any Death magic that affects Twilight to make contact with the Low Penumbra as well. These spells must cross a Gauntlet (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 282). Unlike Spirit Gauntlets, Low Penumbra Gauntlet ratings become less onerous in locations associated with deaths or hauntings.

# The Digital Web

In **Ascension**, the Digital Web is the magical representation of connected electronic data — everything from the internet to communications with the Voyager probes. Anyone — Sleepers included — can experience the Web with a powerful computer and a basic virtual reality rig, but most Virtual Adepts experience it as a mental journey. Some Adepts enter holistically. In the Web, individual data sites or *Sectors* appear as anything from basic, block-like representations of Sleeper websites to the full 3D sensoria of a technomagical sanctum. Every Sector links to at least three others through *Conduits*, representations of Web links and data flows.

Sleepers participate in the Digital Web by using the internet. Advanced technology and magical assistance sometimes lets them access the "elite" features enjoyed by mages. By manipulating the Sectors "behind" ordinary data, mages can send messages to and even magically manipulate Sleepers. Technocrats and Virtual Adepts often use this method to encourage Awakenings. All this activity has led to the Web crashing twice, killing holistically immersed visitors, ruining developed Sectors, and giving rise to bizarre, "haunted" data.

## The Digital Web in Awakening

In **Awakening**, mental Web travel requires Space 2, but holistic travel (sending a physical form) is more difficult than in **Ascension**, requiring a conjunctional Space 2, Life 4, and Forces 4 spell. Sending another person requires an advanced version of these spells, raising the requirements by one dot.

The Web is easy to shape. Finding an unformatted Sector is increasingly difficult, but once found, altering it only requires a form of "meditation" (intuitive programming and GUI manipulation) that anyone can do. This requires a standard meditation roll (see p. 51 of the **World of Darkness** rulebook) or Intelligence + Computers, whichever is higher.

The Digital Web is the easiest part of **Ascension**'s cosmology to import to **Awakening**, as nothing like it exists in the new World of Darkness. The Web might be accessible through the Astral Realms — in fact, it could be an entirely new frame of reference for the Astral, breaking the rules of realm hierarchies and allowing access to digitally encoded data as well as human thought.

# THE AWAKENING COSMOLOGY

In **Ascension**, the Tellurian contains multiple, disconnected otherworlds—and sometimes realms that change based on the method of entry, supernatural template, or frame of reference. If there's a unified cosmology, it's too subtle and complex for all but the mightiest sorcerers and gods to comprehend.

The **Awakening** core rulebook, the **Book of Spirits**, the **Book of the Dead**, and **Astral Realms** describe some important realms.

## The Astral Realms

Mages don't need spells to enter **Awakening**'s Astral Realms. They just need to meditate at a Hallow or a magical location called a Demesne. A meditating mage imagines herself on a symbolic journey, winding deeper into her soul. At some point she reaches a barrier and pays a point of Mana to cross. After that, she's in.

The easiest part of the Astral to access is an *Oneiros* that represents the traveler's soul. Shaped by her mind, it contains scenes from private thoughts, feelings, and memories. She can battle inner goetic demons, converse with her eidolon of higher drives, or confront painful memories. Some mages use Mind magic before meditating to access the Oneiros of another person, but if the subject is awake, his consciousness fights the attempt.

Deeper meditation leads to the *Temenos*, the shared soul of all human beings. Every idea ever shared by two or more people can be found here, from languages, to religions, basic ideas, archetypes, histories, and every

story ever told. Navigation is a matter of word-association and correspondence, or finding one of the realms of a concept relating to travel.

Further exploration takes mage to the *Anima Mundi*, the Dreamtime or soul of the world itself. After crossing a boundary representing the limits of human thought, a long and difficult journey brings the mage to realms representing the world, the souls of animals, plants and places, and finally to the sky, the planets, and the stars. At the very end of reality a black ocean — the Abyss — bars souls from Supernal truth. The deeper a mage journeys, the more the Anima Mundi threatens to scatter her soul. She must use her will and ego to literally hold her Self together.

## The Astral Realms in Ascension

Many Astral locales reflect parts of **Ascension**'s Umbra. The Temenos resembles the High Umbra. The Oneiros is like the Epiphamies. The Anima Mundi shares qualities with the deeper Middle Umbra. The far shores of Abyss is the closest thing **Awakening** has to a Horizon. In a translation game, decide which to use based on your group's preferences. The Oneiros could be the best place to add to **Ascension**. You can seat the mage's Avatar there, and make it the place where Seekings happen. In **Ascension**, the Avatar probably possesses ultimate power over the mage's Oneiros and may represent both higher and lower drives.

To use the meditative aspect of Astral Travel in **Ascension**, assume that travelers require a Node with Resonance appropriate to their own. Roll Wits + Meditation, Difficulty 7. Use **Awakening**'s success requirements and charge Quintessence instead of Mana where applicable.

# The Shadow and the Underworld

**Awakening**'s "spirit world" is called the Shadow and superficially resembles the Middle Penumbra. Unlike **Ascension**'s Penumbra, there's no Metaphysic Trinity. Spirits prey on each other for Essence, growing strange when their meal doesn't possess the proper Resonance. Hawk spirits that eat mouse spirits stay as they are. Mouse spirits that eat hawk spirits turn into something unusual and perhaps dangerous.

Like the Low Umbra, the Underworld is the Land of the Dead. An endless labyrinth of tunnels, catacombs, and caverns, it is filled with ghosts who lost their grip on the world — and who've had their faculties restored by the Underworld's deathly energies and realize what they've lost. The upper reaches of the Underworld resemble the "underground" of wherever it was entered from, through intangible gateways with morbid Resonance that can be opened by Death spells or a unique, nonmagical key. The Underworld is divided by rivers. Each requires a toll to cross, and the deeper a traveler goes, the stranger it gets.

## The Shadow and the Underworld in Ascension

Use **Ascension** rules for entering the Umbra with Spirit to enter the Shadow, except that all mages can start their visit there, regardless of paradigm. To enter the Underworld of **Awakening** requires Conjunctional Spirit 3/Entropy 2 at a gateway, or temporary existence as a ghost using the methods for entering **Ascension**'s Low Umbra.

# Chapter Six: Character Conversion

This chapter takes you through converting characters by way of two examples: **Ascension** signature character Mark Gillan from **Tradition Book: Order of Hermes Revised**, and Maculda, described on pp. 71-75 of **Mage: The Awakening**. Mark is an experienced character and therefore an example of converting an existing character instead of starting from scratch. Maculda demonstrates how to convert a "fresh" **Awakening** character.

Think of this process as a guideline, not a strict set of rules. Adjust it to fit your game, especially if you plan on merging **Ascension** and **Awakening** into a personal version of **Mage**. The process works should work for long-running or new characters.

## Conversion Notes

To clearly highlight the differences between character creation methods, we've chosen to convert these characters fully into each game, instead of using the options presented elsewhere in this book for mashing up mechanics. For example, Mark Gillan is an Obrimos here rather than using the rules in Chapter One for importing his native **Ascension** Questing Essence into **Awakening**.

## ASCENSION TO AWAKENING

### Concept

The most important thing to consider when converting a character from **Ascension** to **Awakening** is the concept. Will it even work in the new World of Darkness? Some characters — Technocrats in particular — don't translate well and require more work.

**Awakening** rules build characters as normal humans first then apply a supernatural template in a later stage, but it's not cheating to create your "mere mortals" with Path, order and magical capabilities in mind.

Born on a military base, his life controlled by his strict father, Mark Gillan learned how an ordered mind could accomplish great things. After his father's ran-

dom death and his own rebellion-fuelled exploration of Sleeper "magic", he learned that chaos destroys order — better to be an agent of change than its victim. He's a former member of House Flambeau in the Order of Hermes, a political leader known for his ability to see if structures can be saved or must be destroyed.

Mark's magical style — House Flambeau are Iberian fire-mages — suggests the Obrimos Path. His drive to reform magical society, ripping it apart if necessary, fits the Free Council.

## ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are mostly the same in the Storytelling system, especially the physical Attributes, but some differences need to be explained. The threshold for a standard success in the **Ascension**'s Storyteller system is three successes but in **Awakening**'s Storytelling you only need one. In **Awakening**, lower traits are more effective. Thus, characters begin with fewer dots. Remove two dots from the character's primary category and one from his secondary category. The fifth dot of an Attribute costs *two* dots if purchased during character creation, but doesn't have a special cost if purchased with experience points.

Mental Attributes in **Ascension** are Perception, Wits, and Intelligence. In **Awakening**, Perception rolls are handled with Wits + Composure. Resolve occupies the space Perception left, but doesn't replace it — instead, it's used to resist unwanted mental influence and bolster Willpower.

Social Attributes are the most different. In **Ascension**, they're Charisma, Manipulation, and

Appearance. Charisma and Presence are analogous, but Appearance is a Merit in the new system. The third **Awakening** Social Attribute is Composure, which measures the character's resistance to panic and social influence.

Mark's primary category is Mental; he has four dots in each Mental Attribute. Convert that to **Awakening** by removing two dots from this category and changing Perception to Resolve. Mark needs to be quick-witted and perceptive, so his player drops Intelligence and Resolve to 3 and leaves his Wits at 4. His secondary category is Physical, with Strength 3, Dexterity 3, and Stamina 4. His player applies the one dot drop to Stamina, leaving it at 3. Last, his Social Attributes are Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, and Appearance 2. Converting them to Presence 3, Manipulation 3, and Composure 2 still leaves Mark with a "perception" dice pool of 6, in keeping with his old Attributes.

## SKILLS AND SPECIALTIES

Where **Ascension** has Talents, Skills, and Knowledges, **Awakening** uses Physical, Mental, and Social Skills. The list of skills available and the number of dots available at character creation vary between games. When converting a character, remove any dots in skills with no equivalent in **Awakening** and check that the number of dots matches the 11/7/4 totals rather than Ascension's 13/9/5, or reduce experienced characters by 2/2/1 if they haven't lost enough dots by removing now-redundant Abilities. The fifth dot of a Skill costs two points at character creation but possesses no extra experience point cost.

Some Abilities shift categories in the transition. **Awakening** rotes use Attributes and Skills, so Storytellers should feel free to tweak conversions to competently cast the rotes they would know. Replace Linguistics with the Languages Merit. Some Abilities have convert to Skills with new names. Melee becomes Weaponry. Leadership and Law translate well to Persuasion and Politics for many concepts, and Performance and Expression have been merged.

Finally, remove automatic Ability Specialties at 4 dots and higher, but add three free Skill Specialties in converted Skills. The player chooses these Specialties from her **Ascension** sheet or tweaks her character a bit to fit **Awakening**'s themes.

Mark is an experienced character, and has far more Talent, Skill, and Knowledge dots than a starting character would. He only possesses a single Knowledge at 5, though, and that's Linguistics — noting that he'll need the Languages Merit, and removing the Abilities that don't exist as Skills leaves him with Academics 3, Computer 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult 4, Politics 1, Science 2; Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Weaponry 1; Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1, Streetwise 2, and Subterfuge 2 — still more than a starting character, but he's lost more than 2/2/1 dots, so those will do.

Mark's player picks Skill Specialties in Investigation (Supernatural), Occult (Gematria – he had this in **Ascension**) and Science (Explosives, to replace a Demolitions Specialty from his lost Technology Ability). Investigation isn't his best Skill, but the choice fits his concept.

## MAGE TEMPLATE

At this point, the Sleeper Awakens to become a mage. Add Path, order, Rote Specialties, Arcana, Gnosis, and Mana.

Find out if the Storyteller uses **Awakening** Paths and orders or **Awakening** adaptations of **Ascension**'s Essence and Traditions. Apply Rote Specialties, grant an extra Attribute dot, and determine Ruling and Inferior Arcana.

**Awakening** employs 10 Arcana instead of nine Spheres, but both games provide six dots in these magical fields at character creation. **Ascension** characters begin with one dot in their Tradition's specialty Sphere. Otherwise, players invest the other five dots as they wish, up to the limit of a character's Arete rank.

**Awakening**'s Gnosis caps Arcana according to the table on p. 76 of **Mage: The Awakening**. Pick three Arcana for a character: two Ruling and a third. Assign two dots to two of these Arcana, and one dot to a third. Lastly, add a remaining dot to any Arcanum, including initial picks.

To convert an **Ascension** character with the Entropy Sphere, decide if her focus was Death, Fate, or a split between the two as discussed in Chapter Three. Correspondence converts to Space.

Convert Arete to Gnosis on a one for one basis. Ignore Quintessence; calculate the character's new Mana pool according to her Gnosis trait.

Mark's player converts him to an Obrimos Libertine. Mark's Path nets an extra dot of Resolve, bringing his final rating to 4. Mark's Free Council Rote Specialties are Crafts, Persuasion, and Science. His Ruling Arcana are Forces and Prime, and his Inferior Arcanum is Death.

Mark's Spheres were Correspondence 3, Forces 4, Matter 2, Mind 2, and Prime 1. That's actually a valid "build" for an experienced Obrimos — his initial Arcana would have been Forces 3, Matter 2, and Prime 1. Correspondence changes to Space, and his Arcana remain at the same levels as his old Spheres.

Mark's Arete 5 becomes Gnosis 5, granting him a maximum Mana pool of 14 and all the other Gnosis-dependent systems in **Awakening**.

## Merits

**Awakening** Merits map to **Ascension** Backgrounds *and* Merits. See if any Backgrounds have corresponding Merits first and remember to buy the Striking Looks or Language Merits if the character had a high Appearance Attribute or Linguistics Ability. The Avatar Background doesn't have any purpose if you're using a straight conversion to **Awakening**, but optional rules for it as a Merit are in Chapter One. Optionally, you may refund Avatar and other unsuitable Ascension Backgrounds and Merits as bonus Merit dots, but only if this doesn't provide more than 7 starting Merit dots as per **Awakening**'s rules.

Note that order members get the High Speech Merit for free, even when they've been converted from **Ascension**.

Mark was an expert Linguist — it was his best Ability — so he needs Languages 5 to cover his old Knowledge. His Allies 4, Contacts 5, and Resources 3 all transfer easily. His Arcane 3 becomes Occultation 3. His Wonder 3 represents "loaned" items from other mages "when he needs them." This is better represented as Status: Free Council 3 in his new setting.

## Advantages

**Awakening** Advantages derive from Attributes or govern personality and morality. Characters also receive a Virtue and Vice. See the conversion lists in Chapter Five.

Mark's Advantages work out to Defense 3, Health 8, Initiative 5, Wisdom 7, Size 5, Speed 11, and Willpower 6. His old Nature and Demeanor of Architect and Loner convert to the Fortitude Virtue and Pride Vice.

## Final Touches

Only the last few details remain. An **Awakening** character needs a Magical Tool and nimbus description as per pp. 89-90 of **Mage: The Awakening**. Use **Ascension** foci and Resonance Traits to guide your conversion.

Starting **Awakening** characters get six dots' worth of rotes. Look through **Awakening**'s spells and select those appropriate to the character's concept. Look at non-Ruling Arcana spells in particular; these are more cost-effective to buy as rotes because they don't carry the improvised spell Mana charge.

Mark was a Hermetic. His description notes that he carries a lot of minor charms and amulets. If one of these is a steel or gold coin on a chain, marked with the Atlantean pentagram, it would make for a good Path-based Magical Tool.

Mark's Resonance Traits were Static (Crystalline) and Dynamic (Chaotic), equally balanced at 3 dots. His nimbus appears as a feeling of overwhelming energy spreading out from him, cracking reality like splintering glass.

Mark's player adds rotes. He buys Ballistic Targeting (Space 1), Escape Hatch (Space 3), and Sword of the Slayer (Matter 2).

# AWAKENING TO ASCENSION
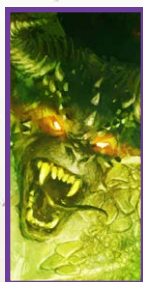
## Concept



In **Ascension**, the Concept phase includes Tradition (or other faction), Essence, Nature and Demeanor.

Caitlin described her **Awakening** character Maculda as a student of the "Old Ways," sympathetic to Wicca. This immediately suggests membership in **Ascension**'s Verbena Tradition, though she could also be translated into a member of a minor Hermetic House, a Celtic Euthanatos, or even a Dreamspeaker. Nevertheless, Verbena is probably the best baseline Tradition for conversion.

Maculda's Thyrsus Path translates into Caitlin's choice of Dynamic or Primordial Essence. She chooses Primordial to fit her character's search for spirit-borne secrets. Her Virtue, Vice and temperament fit the Loner Nature. Caitlin gives Maculda a Survivor Demeanor, representing her public willingness to endure hardship to get closer to spirits of the land.

## Attributes

In the Attributes phase, add 2 points to the primary category and 1 point to the secondary category because **Ascension** uses a 7/5/3 Primary/Secondary/Tertiary spread, not **Awakening**'s 5/4/3. If a player spent two points for a fifth dot in an Attribute, he gets that dot back to spend in the category, but not to raise any score over 5.

Caitlin translates Maculda's Physical Attributes to **Ascension** counterparts, leading to Strength 2, Dexterity 2, and Stamina 4. This is her primary category, so she increases Stamina to 5 and Strength to 3, supporting the character's stocky, tough image.

For Mental Attributes, keep Intelligence as is and reassign Wits and Resolve dots to Wits and Perception in any fashion that fits the character's concept. Caitlin picked Mental as Maculda's tertiary category, so she keeps it at two dots each.

Keep Manipulation as is, but for other Social Attributes, reassign dots based on the character's concept.

Caitlin puts two dots and the bonus dot for a secondary category into Charisma, increasing it to 4, Manipulation stays at 2. She assigns one dot to Appearance, leaving it as 2 — she's average looking, but possesses a fierce personality.

If the character earned a bonus Attribute dot from her Path, remove it — don't convert it. Maculda's

Thyrsus-granted extra dot of Composure doesn't get added to an alternate Social Attribute.

## ABILITIES

**Ascension** categories don't match **Awakening**'s Attribute-based counterparts at all, so just convert Skills to any equivalent Abilities.

The category (Talents, Skills or Knowledges) with the most dots becomes your primary choice, the next most becomes the secondary priority, and the least dots become your tertiary category (in any tie, choose a priority based on the character's concept). Adjust primary to 13 dots, secondary to 9 dots, and tertiary to 5 dots. If you have to *decrease* the number of dots in a category, the Storyteller can allow dots to stay as is and adjust the rest, as long as the total doesn't exceed 27 dots for all Abilities for a starting character.

Note that **Awakening**'s Languages Merits translates into **Ascension**'s Linguistics Skill. If your character possessed Languages, devote unassigned dots to Linguistics to an equivalent degree, even if this breaks the priority system.

Maculda's Skills translate into the following Abilities:

**Talents:** Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Expression 2 — Secondary. Caitlin needs to add four more dots. She chooses Alertness 2 and Awareness 2, to fit her inquisitive concept.

**Skills:** Crafts 2, Stealth 4, Survival 5 (+2 dots from Animal Ken) — Primary. Caitlin needs to add two more dots. She picks Meditation 2, for moments when Maculda communes with nature.

**Knowledges:** Investigation 2, Occult 3 — Tertiary. With five dots here, Caitlin doesn't need to add more.

## ADVANTAGES

In **Ascension**, characters use this step to select Backgrounds and foci. Convert Merit dots to equivalent Backgrounds when you can. If they don't translate into Backgrounds, you might purchase them with Freebie Points later on. If this process leaves you with any Background dots left over, spend them to fit your concept. If you used Merit dots to increase Gnosis (Arete), pay for the same increase with Freebie Points instead.

Caitlin spent three Merit dots to increase Maculda's Gnosis, so she gets those back as Background dots. She spent the rest on Familiar, a Background not available in the **Ascension** core rules though present in the **Mage Storyteller's Companion**. Instead of digging up that book, she opts to treat the familiar as a two-dot Ally. She spends the rest on Contacts 2 and Avatar 3.

Convert your dedicated magical tools (if any) into foci. After that, make up foci for each Sphere. Maculda has none. Caitlin selects standard Verbena foci for her Spheres, though Maculda isn't the type to go for bloodletting, so she avoids those.

## FINISHING TOUCHES

Now it's time to choose Spheres, set Arete, record Willpower, Quintessence and Paradox, pick a Resonance Trait, and spend Freebie Points. Caitlin accomplishes each step as follows:

**Spheres: Awakening** mages begin with 6 Arcana dots, three of which must be in the two Ruling Arcana, and may buy up to 3 dots in a single Arcanum at Gnosis 1. **Ascension** mages begin with 6 Sphere dots (no Sphere can exceed Arete), at least one of which must belong to the character's Tradition specialty Sphere. Maculda's Life 2 and Spirit 2 convert straight from Arcana to Spheres. Her Space 2 converts to Correspondence 2. (7 Freebie Points increases her Spirit Sphere to 3.)

**Arete:** Maculda's Gnosis 2 converts to Arete 2. Caitlin remembers to spend 4 Freebie Points to cover this. (She later increases it to 3 with 4 more Freebie Points).

**Willpower:** Caitlin replaces Maculda's old Willpower score with the base 5 for **Ascension** mages.

**Quintessence and Paradox:** If the character has extra Mana, convert it to Quintessence on a 1 for 1 basis. Do not convert Paradox — let the character earn it in play. Otherwise, the character begins with Quintessence equal to her Avatar Background. Caitlin bought Maculda Avatar 3, so the mage starts with 3 points of Quintessence.

**Resonance Trait:** Pick a Resonance Trait based on the character's aura. Caitlin never defined this, so she draws on Maculda's character history to evoke the image of a shadowy wild place. She picks Shadowy and Wild (Entropic) as her Resonance Trait.

**Freebee Points:** Caitlin already devoted 4 Freebie Points to Arete, leaving her with 11. She increases her Arete to 3 (4 more points) and Spirit Sphere to 3 (7 points).

# MAGE
## THE AWAKENING

NAME: Mark Gillian    CONCEPT: Reluctant Leader   PATH: Obrimos

PLAYER: Jesse    VIRTUE: Fortitude    ORDER: Free Council

CHRONICLE:    VICE: Pride    CABAL:

## ATTRIBUTES

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| POWER | Intelligence ●●●○○ | Strength ●●●○○ | | Presence ●●●○○ |
| FINESSE | Wits ●●●●○ | Dexterity ●●●○○ | | Manipulation ●●●○○ |
| RESISTANCE | Resolve ●●●●○ | Stamina ●●●○○ | | Composure ●●○○○ |

## SKILLS

### MENTAL
(-3 unskilled)

Rote Skill
- [ ] Academics _____ ●●●○○
- [ ] Computer _____ ●●○○○
- [X] Crafts _____ ○○○○○
- [ ] Investigation __ ●●○○○
- [ ] Medicine_____ ●○○○○
- [ ] Occult _Gematria_ ●●●●○
- [ ] Politics _____ ●○○○○
- [X] Science _Explosives_ ●●○○○

### PHYSICAL
(-1 unskilled)

Rote Skill
- [ ] Athletics _____ ●●○○○
- [ ] Brawl_____ ●●●○○
- [ ] Drive _____ ●●○○○
- [ ] Firearms _____ ●●○○○
- [ ] Larceny _____ ○○○○○
- [ ] Stealth _____ ●●●○○
- [ ] Survival _____ ●●○○○
- [ ] Weaponry _____ ●○○○○

### SOCIAL
(-1 unskilled)

Rote Skill
- [ ] Animal Ken____ ○○○○○
- [ ] Empathy _____ ○○○○○
- [ ] Expression ____ ●○○○○
- [ ] Intimidation __ ●○○○○
- [X] Persuasion ___ ●○○○○
- [ ] Socialize ____ ○○○○○
- [ ] Streetwise ___ ●●○○○
- [ ] Subterfuge ___ ●●○○○

## OTHER TRAITS

### MERITS
- _Languages_ ●●●●○
- _Allies_ ●●●●○
- _Contacts_ ●●●●○
- _Resources_ ●●●○○
- _Occultation_ ●●●○○
- _Status:_ ●●●○○
- _Free Council_ ○○○○○
- _____ ○○○○○

### FLAWS
_____
_____
_____

Size _____ 5
Defense _____ 3
Initiative Mod____ 5
Speed_____ 11
Experience _____

### ARCANA
- Death _____ ○○○○○
- Fate _____ ○○○○○
- Forces _____ ●●●●○
- Life _____ ○○○○○
- Matter _____ ●●○○○
- Mind _____ ●●○○○
- Prime _____ ●○○○○
- Space _____ ●●●○○
- Spirit_____ ○○○○○
- Time _____ ○○○○○

### HEALTH
●●●●●●●●○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

### WILLPOWER
●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

### MANA
□□□□□□□□□□
□□□□□□□□□□

Points per turn: _____

### GNOSIS
●●●●●○○○○○

### WISDOM
| 10 | _____ | ○ |
| 9 | _____ | ○ |
| 8 | _____ | ○ |
| 7 | _____ | ● |
| 6 | _____ | ● |
| 5 | _____ | ● |
| 4 | _____ | ● |
| 3 | _____ | ● |
| 2 | _____ | ● |
| 1 | _____ | ● |

### ARMOR
Type     Points

_____

### PROTECTIVE SPELLS
Name     Points
_Mage Armor(Forces)_   4
_____

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Favored Resistance Attribute — Acanthus, Moros, Thyrsus: +1 Composure; Mastigos, Obrimos: +1 Resolve • Arcana — 2 dots in 1st Arcanum, 2 dots in 2nd, 1 dot in 3rd, (two of these must be the Path's Ruling Arcana) +1 dot in any Arcanum • Rotes 6 • Merits 7 • (Buying the 5th dot in Attributes, Skills or Merits costs 2 points) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Wisdom = 7 • Starting Gnosis = 1 • Starting Mana = Wisdom

# MAGE
## THE AWAKENING

### ACTIVE SPELLS

Max = Gnosis +3

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

### SPELLS CAST
### UPON SELF

Spell tolerance = Stamina;
-1 dice per extra spell)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

### NIMBUS

_Spreading cracks of energy_
_____
_____

### PARADOX MARKS

**Bedlam:**_____
**Brand:**_____

### DEDICATED
### MAGICAL TOOL

_____ _Golden Amulet_ _____
**Arcana Based Tools:** _____
_____
_____

### EXPERIENCE

_____
_____

### ARCANE EXPERIENCE

_____

### ROTES

| Dots | Arcana | Name | Dice Pool | Page # |
|------|--------|------|-----------|--------|
| 1 | Space | Ballistic Targeting | 10 | |
| 3 | Space | Escape Hatch | 8 | |
| 2 | Matter | Sword of the Slayer | 8 | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

### WEAPONS

| Type | Damage Range | Clip | Size | Special |
|------|--------------|------|------|---------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

### ENCHANTED ITEMS

| Type | Power | Dice Pool | Mana |
|------|-------|-----------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

### EQUIPMENT

| Type | Dice Mod. |
|------|-----------|
| | |
| | |

### FAMILIAR

**Type:**_____  **Size:** _____

**Description:** _____  **Influence:** _____
_____

**Numina**                          **Cost**
_____   _____

**Power:**_____    _____

**Finesse:**_____    _____

**Resistance:** _____   **Ban:** _____

**Skills:** _____

**Corpus/Health**

O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

_____

_____

**Willpower**

O O O O O O O O O O
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

**Initiative:** _____

**Defense:** _____

**Essence**

**Speed:** _____

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

# MAGE

## THE ASCENSION

NAME: _Maculda (Elizabeth Daring)_  NATURE: _Loner_  TRADITION: _Verbena_
PLAYER: _Caitlin_  ESSENCE: _Primordial_  CONCEPT: _Seeker of Wild Mysteries_
CHRONICLE:  DEMEANOR: _Loner_  CABAL:

## ATTRIBUTES

### PHYSICAL
Strength_____ ●●●OO
Dexterity_____ ●●OOO
Stamina_____ ●●●●●

### SOCIAL
Charisma_____ ●●●●O
Manipulation_____ ●●OOO
Appearance_____ ●●OOO

### MENTAL
Perception_____ ●●OOO
Intelligence_____ ●●OOO
Wits_____ ●●OOO

## ABILITIES

### TALENTS
Alertness_____ ●●OOO
Athletics_____ ●●●OO
Awareness_____ ●●OOO
Brawl_____ ●OOOO
Dodge_____ OOOOO
Expression_____ ●●●OO
Intimidation_____ OOOOO
Leadership_____ OOOOO
Streetwise_____ OOOOO
Subterfuge_____ OOOOO

### SKILLS
Crafts_____ ●●OOO
Drive_____ OOOOO
Etiquette_____ OOOOO
Firearms_____ OOOOO
Meditation_____ ●●OOO
Melee_____ OOOOO
Performance_____ OOOOO
Stealth _Camouflage_ ●●●●O
Survival _Woodland_ ●●●●●
Technology_____ OOOOO

### KNOWLEDGES
Academics_____ OOOOO
Computer_____ OOOOO
Cosmology_____ OOOOO
Enigmas_____ OOOOO
Investigation_____ ●●OOO
Law_____ OOOOO
Linguistics_____ OOOOO
Medicine_____ OOOOO
Occult_____ ●●●OO
Science_____ OOOOO

## SPHERES

Correspondence\_\_\_ ●●OOO
Entropy_____ OOOOO
Forces_____ OOOOO
Life_____ ●●OOO
Matter_____ OOOOO
Mind_____ OOOOO
Prime_____ OOOOO
Spirit_____ ●●●OO
Time_____ OOOOO

## ADVANTAGES

### BACKGROUNDS
_Allies (Spirit)_ ●●OOO
_Avatar_ ●●●OO
_Contacts_ ●●OOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

### ARETE
● ● ● O O O O O O O

### WILLPOWER
● ● ● ● ● O O O O O
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

### RESONANCE
Dynamic_____ OOOOO
Entropic _shadowy-wild_ ●OOOO
Static_____ OOOOO

### EXPERIENCE

### QUINTESSENCE

### PARADOX

### HEALTH
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bruised | -0 | □ |
| Hurt | -1 | □ |
| Injured | -1 | □ |
| Wounded | -2 | □ |
| Mauled | -2 | □ |
| Crippled | -5 | □ |
| Incapacitated | | □ |

### COMBAT
| Weapon | Difficulty | Damage |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

# MAGE
## TRANSLATION GUIDE

## TWENTY YEARS AND COUNTING...

Add the Traditions in your Awakening game, or bring the ten Arcana to **Mage: The Ascension**. Pit the **Seers of the Throne** against the **Technocracy** for dominion over the world, and let your **Nephandi** call forth the Abyss. This guide will help you translate the feel and core elements from each version of Mage into the other's game system and background, or combine them into a unique cosmos for the Awakened.

## THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

This book includes:
* Translations of all of the orders, Ministries, Traditions, and Conventions between versions of Mage
* Conversions for the magic and Paradox rules between systems
* Guidelines for converting spells between systems

A copy of **Mage: The Ascension Revised** edition, the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, and **Mage: The Awakening** are all recommended for use with this product.

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