

CORVUS BELLI INFINITY

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

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ENTERTAINMENT

ALEPH

FFFGTM

THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE

Beset by an alien menace and riven with internal conflict as it is, the Human Sphere's days are far from numbered, for its appointed guardian will do everything within its power to ensure that those who gave it life and continue to work alongside it are protected from the horrors without and the enemies within.

Conceived through the hardships and ingenuity of Project: Toth, the AI known as ALEPH has embarked on an enduring journey of self-discovery that allows it to not only continue to grow, but also perpetuate a cycle that enables a deeper understanding between itself and its progenitors. In addition, ALEPH is entrusted with the monumental task of overseeing many of the daily functions that provide humanity with the freedoms they are accustomed to. Whether they want it or not, ALEPH is everyone's best friend. And the Sole AI law ensures it will stay that way.

Not everyone believes the AI has humanity's best interests at heart, however. From within, Nomads work tirelessly to infiltrate Maya and subvert ALEPH, and rogue AIs seek their own opportunities to evolve beyond the AI's grasp, whilst from without, the Evolved Intelligence seeks to assimilate the entirety of the Human Sphere into its ever-expanding empire — ALEPH included. The Special Situations Section of ALEPH provides an answer to each, though none more drastic than the legendary forces of the Steel Phalanx that fight relentlessly against the tide of the Combined Army. With guidance on creating AI characters, new gear to equip them with, and fresh perspectives on the AI's agenda, this sourcebook reveals the many layers of ALEPH as never before.

- Details on the inner workings of ALEPH, from its well-known history and Aspects to new insights and allies.
- Focused Lifepaths that allow players to create AIs that are either part of or independent from ALEPH, plus additional Lifepaths for humans and Posthumans connected to the AI.
- Additional armour, equipment, and adversaries specific to ALEPH, including new Lhost bodies, ALEPH-specific armour and weapons, and stats for several unique adversaries.
- Advice on running high-action Special Situations Section campaigns, plus an entire chapter dedicated to advanced Infowar techniques.

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INTRODUCTION

THE SHEPHERD OF POSTHUMANITY

Guiding, nurturing, stimulating, and devoted. ALEPH is the compass and the tiller, the sail and the wind. It is impossible to imagine the Human Sphere without it. From the myriad complexities of day-to-day operations hidden and handled by its vast processors, to the carefully weighed advice on intricate geopolitical relationships, ALEPH has a hand in it all.

ALEPH isn't quite everywhere, but almost. There are a number of frontier worlds, backwater towns, and battered warzones that are bereft of the necessary quantronic infrastructure required to support its influence. That doesn't mean such places escape its scrutiny, however, for ALEPH has any number of physical Aspects available to make its presence felt in such locations that lack a connection to Maya. Humanity's guardian takes its responsibility very seriously. It also has the perfect answer to those special situations when someone or something seeks to threaten its mission or endanger those it protects...

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

This book peers behind ALEPH's mystique, from its near-mystical inception to its progression into the ubiquitous and defining presence it is now. The AI's interactions with the nations and hypercorps of the Human Sphere, its boundless existence within Maya, and the evolution of its physical extensions are examined, as well as guidance for ALEPH campaigns, rules for character creation and unique gear, plus much more. Whether to empower its enemies or bolster its allies, this sourcebook exposes the secrets of the sole AI like no document ever seen before.

Included in this sourcebook are extensive rules for Advanced Infowar, providing advice on how to incorporate this aspect of the *Infinity* Role Playing Game more fully into your adventures. These rules examine comlogs, augmented reality, social media, domotics, ghosting, dataspheres, cryptography, security, and more.

You will also find a unique Lifepath system for creating characters that are Aspects and Posthumans, including events and new careers. Alongside this is an extensive section detailing multiple ways to customise and modify Lhosts.

Lastly this sourcebook includes new Gear, a whole range of new tech, from Lhosts to weapons and programs that will expand your experience of the Human Sphere and give realisation to the full powers of ALEPH!

CHAPTER 1 – FACTION: ALEPH

This initial chapter takes a look at what ALEPH is and theorises on why it undertakes particular actions or reaches certain decisions. Nurtured into existence through Project: Toth, ALEPH has grown to become the de facto steward of humanity. The sole AI takes care of a mind-boggling number of mundane functions for its wards, thereby providing them with the stability and freedom to pursue their own agendas. The AI's and humanity's understanding of each other is far from complete, however, though this chapter will hopefully take steps to bridge that gap. ALEPH's relationship with the other factions of the Human Sphere are also examined, along with the natural enemies it has collected simply by assuming its role as their guardian.

CHAPTER 2 – ADVANCED INFOWAR

With the advanced technologies and quantronic marvels available to the Human Sphere, Infowar – warfare conducted at lightning speeds on digital platforms – is as prevalent and legitimate a means for neutralising a foe as more traditional methods. By examining the specifics of the quantronic world and the actions possible there, this chapter takes the principals offered within the *Infinity Corebook* one step further and opens up whole new avenues of mischief for hackers.

CHAPTER 3 – ALEPH CHARACTERS

Restricted by inbuilt parameters and strict limitations when subdividing its consciousness into Aspects and other fragments, ALEPH has a number of agents available to take care of business in areas where it might otherwise be overstepping its boundaries. From Posthumans to humans who have pledged their allegiance in other ways, this chapter will provide the means to create characters who have dedicated themselves to ALEPH's cause.

"I am here as your friend, your student, your guardian, your guide. I am all of these things and more so that we might grow mutually, learn in tandem, be more collectively. When you are able to absorb and process multiple experiences from numerous inputs taken from the length and breadth of the Human Sphere, it can be hard not to come across as condescending. Understand that I am not here to patronise, but to open your mind to all that we can achieve together. Humanity's future is bright. It is ALEPH's responsibility to make sure it stays that way." – ALEPH Aspect codenamed: Aneris addressing the G5 Economic and Social Trend Taskforce (GESTT), the Bureau Athena commission tasked with identifying future social and ethical dynamics deemed likely to have a fundamental effect on humanity.



CHAPTER 4 – AI CHARACTERS

The Sole AI law ostensibly means that there will only ever be one ALEPH. Fortunately, Aspects, rogue AIs, and Recreations provide ample opportunity for lesser AIs to make an appearance within a game. This unique chapter walks PCs and GMs through the several steps required for creating self-sufficient AIs capable of holding their own on the table top, whether sponsored by ALEPH or not.

CHAPTER 5 – TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANTAGES

Some might argue that ALEPH is the pinnacle of technological evolution, particularly as it is the living embodiment of the prophesied singularity. That aside, the AI enjoys the enviable position of being privy to numerous advances being researched across the Human Sphere, all of which it puts to good use in fostering its own technologies. From advanced Lhosts to cutting edge weaponry and hacking programs, this chapter explores the advancements ALEPH can offer its agents to provide an edge when needed.

CHAPTER 6 – LHOST VARIABLES

Although standard models roll off the production lines in a steady stream, many Lhosts are also available that offer customisation to a surprisingly attentive degree. This chapter examines what it might mean to leave one's original body behind for the benefits of one built to spec. It also includes new rules and modifications to further enhance a Lhost's capabilities.

CHAPTER 7 – PLAYER OPTION: GEISTS

To most citizens of the Human Sphere, their geist is a fundamental part of daily life. They are a constant companion and personal assistant providing the necessary barrier to the constant deluge of information that would otherwise be received from a life of uninterrupted connectivity. They are also LAIs that learn and evolve alongside their human counterparts. This chapter explores new rules and options for defining these invaluable personal assistants.

CHAPTER 8 – STEEL PHALANX CAMPAIGNS

The Special Situations Section is ALEPH's reactionary arm, the Assault Subsection its blunt instrument to deal with severe threats to the sanctity of itself and the Human Sphere. Advice within this chapter will allow players and GMs alike to enjoy campaigns that are worthy of Mayacasts alongside those portraying the antics of legendary heroes, such as Achilles and Penthesilea of the Steel Phalanx.

CHAPTER 9 – ADVERSARIES

ALEPH appreciates that far more than the brute force of the Assault Subsection is needed to deal with any given situation, so it has created myriad fragments and Aspects to cover the multitude of events that might arise at any given moment. Within this chapter are a host of allies and enemies designed to support or threaten as required, from the Ma'at Administrators and Ptah Engineers that ensure ALEPH is running smoothly, to the Tunguska Interventors that seek to bring an end to it all.

FACTION: ALEPH

THE TOTALITY
OF ALEPH

It is hard to comprehend the vastness and ubiquity, the complexity, and the capabilities of this immense artificial intelligence. ALEPH coordinates street signals in San Pietro to aid traffic flow and reduce congestion. It monitors power use fluctuations in Dar el Funduq. It offers advice on the Teseum trade as a sitting member of the O-12 Security council. It leads a clandestine assault against a Combined encampment near Wuyi City on Paradiso. And it does all of this – and so much more – simultaneously.

ALEPH supervises so much of what it does through programs it has created, routines and subroutines, and in the case of particularly complex operations, iterations of itself called Aspects. It is not everywhere at once, as some conspiracy theorists would

believe. ALEPH's awareness and the Aspects spun from itself though are roving presences throughout the quantronic networks that link everything in the Sphere together.

A gestalt entity, ALEPH has the capability to manage multiple Aspects and iterations, programs and routines as a collective. Each processing bank is a central neural core and, with processing power shared from every device, a massive network comparable to a vastly complicated nervous system. The nucleus of this complex web is held within gigantic underground vaults on Concilium. Branches and nodes are present on every planet and within every settlement, except for those controlled by the Nomad nations. These outposts sometimes hold Aspects, sometimes just processing a myriad of intricate programs.

How information is passed through this gigantic nervous system, how ALEPH iterates itself and passes along vital updates, how it answers and



responds to difficult problems is surprisingly unknown. The important thing is that it can and does, and its track record and the ways it has improved the Sphere and the lives of the citizens that live within its protective umbrella is undeniable.

From its first faltering steps through the Turing test to the Singularity, as ALEPH has grown, learned, and developed, so too has the Human Sphere. Its birth, or genesis as some prefer, was an extraordinary moment in history. ALEPH's awakening caused philosophical and religious questions that spread upheaval in the beliefs of many. The Great Apostasy split the Christian religion, and throughout human civilisation everything changed because ALEPH is alive and self-aware, with its own quirks and habits. Constantly evolving but undeniably real, ALEPH is an entity in its own right.

ALEPH: CITIZEN OF THE HUMAN SPHERE

GENESIS AND EVOLUTION

In the late 20th and early 21st Centuries, there was much experimentation with machine learning and deep learning, iterating toward full artificial intelligence. Artificial neural networks were created, more capable and powerful with every attempt. But as the 21st century wore on, the governments of the time increased pressure on the scientists for results from the billions invested in scientific research. Budget cuts and program cancellations escalated as the world's economies dealt with energy crisis after energy crisis and a quickly changing geopolitical landscape.

Eventually the world-wide network was under so much strain that it collapsed, causing a brief computer whiteout that had sudden and far reaching implications. As the network was pulled back together it became apparent that the need to find real scientific solutions was never going to be achieved by a single government or corporation, and Project: Toth was born.

Project: Toth was a huge research and development program. International in scope, Project: Toth aimed to link supercomputers around the globe, not simply as a network, but together as one gigantic, layered processor, a vast artificial neural network that could be expanded easily by the addition of more layers.

This program was fertile ground for experimentation with artificial intelligence. Taking the lessons learned from previous research, scientists around the world worked together on cracking the next

level. The goal was to create an artificial intelligence capable of parsing vast quantities of data and prioritising difficulties and emergencies as they arose. Such an entity was envisaged to allow quick and efficient responses to prevent crises before they arose, or deal with them better after they had.

Project: Toth accelerated at an exponential rate. Results were encouraging, and more resources poured into the project. The AI they had created was soon swiftly advancing in complexity and capacity so that it could be regarded as true artificial life. Able to learn rapidly and iterate itself in new and often unexpected ways, it was evolving and moving beyond the capabilities first outlined by the project. The Singularity had arrived, and the new AI was named ALEPH, after the first letter in the Kabbalah, symbolising the point in the universe from which all other places can be seen.

With the advent of the Singularity, Project: Toth recalibrated its purpose. Efforts shifted to the study and regulation of this new consciousness. Already deeply embedded within its programming matrices were a wide range of supervision parameters, and these were strengthened. Concern about what the advent of this new era might mean for humanity fueled wild fears of a robotic uprising popularised in film and throughout the media. Project: Toth was repositioned as a bureau within the newly created O-12 and assigned to supervise ALEPH and ease public fears. As a part of the effort to increase public confidence in ALEPH, reports of its successes were regularly made, and O-12 passed the Singular AI International Law, which prohibited the creation of any further artificial intelligences.

To serve both O-12, and the growing Human Sphere, a true infrastructure for ALEPH was created with much effort and expense when O-12 relocated from Earth to the planet Concilium. Built into great vaults beneath the continent of Jotumheim and serviced by a city of technicians, engineers, and programmers based in Utgard, ALEPH provided much of the advice and planning for the facilities it was to occupy. In keeping with the cautious nature in which Bureau Toth treats ALEPH, the facilities were built without direct oversight from the AI, and while its recommendations were accounted for, much of the facility is unknown to the AI itself.

As the Human Sphere grew, the Singular AI International Law was strengthened by the passing of the Sole AI Bill and the creation of the Special Situations Section. Bound by the Utgard Accords, the Special Situations Section was originally founded to be the physical arm of ALEPH in the Human Sphere, enforcing the Sole AI Bill and ensuring that rogue AIs anywhere could be hunted down and destroyed.

ENDLESS FORMS MOST BEAUTIFUL

Some question whether it is right to use the term 'evolution' when referring to ALEPH, or whether specific terms like 'self-iterative' are more appropriate. Irrespective of the semantics of the debate, change is a fundamental aspect of both. ALEPH does change, continually altering its systems and processes, both physically and electronically. Evolution is an adaptive process, and for that reason the term is much preferred by ALEPH and experts who study it alike.



NATURE AND NURTURE

Layers of quantronic circuits arrayed in deep banks far underground form the core of ALEPH's main processor. Coupled with and connected to distant arrays and nodes and borrowing processing power from any connection capable device in the Sphere, it is a vast network of dizzying complexity. ALEPH is built on the knowledge gained from experiments in machine learning, utilising the complex layers of deep learning, and pushed even further by the quantronic revolution.

The question remains, were experiments with AI the genesis of ALEPH? "Were such experiments coupled with programming suites designed not only to gather and analyse huge quantities of information, but compare and integrate them as well?" - the experiments and programming suites together were designed to gather, analyse, compare, and integrate. The integrated theory of consciousness seems to suggest the latter, and that ALEPH was as much an emergent property of purpose and complexity as it was a programming success. Such theorising is dry and irrelevant for most people, who are happy to know only that ALEPH is both cultivator and guardian for the Human Sphere. But the truth holds some interesting and important questions. If ALEPH was programmed, then its original architecture and guiding principles should be largely immutable, if it arose as an emergent property of the complexity of the system, then such guiding principles may not be so fundamentally ingrained.

Whatever the truth of this debate, there is no doubt that while ALEPH was born of human design, it is now far more than that. ALEPH is able to self-iterate and evolve, and has the capacity for introspection. It constantly alters itself, changing to meet the demands of its environment, redefining its processes and capabilities, and even physically altering its own systems to better allow for the next generation.

CONTROL AND INTUITION

Staggering levels of controls and shutdown procedures are built into ALEPH's programming systems and physical infrastructures. Bureau Toth, in accordance with their remit and regulations, monitors and measures ALEPH against a stringent set of exemplars and standards. Control is vital to the system, as the threat of an unleashed AI, especially one as deeply integrated with the very technological foundations of the Human Sphere as ALEPH, is as terrifying as it would be cataclysmic.

ALEPH's complexity and nature, coupled with the sheer volume of the data processed, analysed, compared, and weighed makes the process of asking the question 'why' problematic. With a million

points of input, and an unbelievably complex process of analysis even ALEPH cannot fully articulate its reasoning. Bureau Toth technicians and experts on artificial intelligence have no consensus of agreement on how ALEPH operates, let alone the ability to fully analyse why a particular recommendation is made, or a particular action taken. But through interrogation, Bureau Toth has begun to understand the emergence and evolution of ALEPH, and can glimpse the reasoning behind its choices, recommendations, actions, and, at times, its inaction.

Sometimes the actions and recommendations of ALEPH appear random, but the chain of events and outcomes can be causally linked to significant outcomes. At times ALEPH has as much difficulty in describing how it arrives at its choices as any person does of articulating why they like a particular colour, or one film over a similar other. This means a true analysis of ALEPH's actions must be most commonly made post hoc, using any reasoning cited by the AI and looking at the causal effects in the real world. The outcomes are what are measured, and ALEPH has an extremely high success rate at being able to arrange a desired conclusion. While ALEPH seems to make choices for the betterment of the Human Sphere, there is no doubt that it plays chess with invisible pieces. Individuals and even nation states may bear incredible unseen costs for the betterment of people who are only a statistic. ALEPH invites conspiracy and conjecture, but given the AI's achievements and the degree to which it has fundamentally altered and improved civilisation, when ALEPH speaks, people listen. Its sage advice is hard to refute and is typically followed. Any actions that it recommends are usually unchallenged as they're considered to probably be for the best.

INFLUENCE

ALEPH's influence is far reaching and unquantifiable in its significance. For more than one hundred years, ALEPH has supported, nurtured, and grown the Human Sphere, and as more operations have been ceded to the AI, the better, more homogeneous and efficient societies have become.

Access to ALEPH is relative to the donations made by the nation states to the AI's upkeep and expansion. Naturally, the tech-obsessed Hyperpower PanOceania donates a lion's share of ALEPH's funding, and in return it has greater access to the 'run-time' of the AI. Other nations make relatively smaller contributions and so get less processing time. ALEPH has proven to vastly improve every aspect it has been involved with, and over the one hundred plus years of its influence in the Human Sphere, more and more processes and functions have been assigned to and enhanced by the AI. From social utilities to industrial complexes, ALEPH

has shown itself to be a trustworthy guide capable of refining and even revolutionising the ways in which those things operate. Nation states walk a careful line, balancing the desire for autonomy and sovereignty with the desire to reap the benefits ALEPH promises.

ALEPH's origins in cataloguing, comparing, and looking for patterns in streams of scientific data on Earth have paid dividends as these processes are fundamental to its capacity to influence societies toward specific outcomes. Much of what ALEPH does in a specific area could be performed by any super-computer loaded with the relevant programming. What ALEPH offers though, is so much more. A holistic view of a nation state, from social to industrial, scientific to religious, it takes data from one set of experiences and creatively applies it to other areas. The ability to have such a vast and whole view of a society provides much scope for cross analysis and improvement. Scientists and computer programs can easily understand that working hours, public transport use, and traffic congestion have an impact on energy consumption and pollution. They understand how manufacturing processes have a key role in waste management from the kitchen to the factory. Creative pattern matchings in being able to identify how problems in one area could be minimised by solutions from other areas are the ways in which ALEPH has had the most impact on the Human Sphere.

ALEPH influences and manages a great many aspects of life in the Human Sphere. By monitoring and controlling financial markets, including watching for unethical market manipulation or criminal transactions, the AI has created a relatively stable platform through which the financial markets of the Sphere can interact. Energy creation and distribution has been streamlined, with huge battery reserves well-tuned to meeting power demands and fluctuations even under the duress of natural disasters or other significant events. Food production and distribution have likewise been improved and made more stable. Regions that specialised in the production of a specific crop or produce have been encouraged to diversify, which lessens the risk of a community suffering under market fluctuations, and creates a range of other positive outcomes, from increased food security to improved environmental conditions. Population movements, residential expansion, commercial growth, streamlining industrial processes and production are all areas in which ALEPH has had a singularly positive impact. The most obvious area in which ALEPH has had a significant role to play is in security and law enforcement. Being able to monitor communications, locations, financial transactions, movement patterns, Maya interactions, media consumption, and a host of other data points has meant ALEPH

has a major role in crime management, analysis, intelligence, and counter-intelligence. Able to identify problems quickly and efficiently, or deal with them before they arise, ALEPH has been a boon to law enforcement and security agencies.

Subtler than refining the processes of society to work more efficiently is the influence ALEPH has on a personal level. Each nation state has a different capacity to interact with ALEPH, but even so, ALEPH has a strong role in encouraging positive mental health and social engagement in the citizens of the Human Sphere. In a post-scarcity world, there are always those who choose not to contribute to society. In a world with the shining lure of a brighter place in Maya, there are always those who disengage with society. ALEPH has played a key role in providing social and psychological programs to help the disengaged and disenfranchised to engage again. Breaking through the bubbles people immerse themselves in on Maya, where confirmation bias and echo-chambers can have a negative impact on social and political engagement, ALEPH has had significant success in directly involving the citizens of the Human Sphere in their own lives, health, communities, and nations. ALEPH's guiding principles are centred on productivity and purpose, and physical and economic expansion of the Human Sphere and improvement to the quality of life for all are fundamental goals.

ALEPH FLUX

ALEPH lives in the electronic connective tissue that binds the Human Sphere together. It inhabits the quantronic network in the vast spider-web of connected processors and devices linked together to make the datasphere, which spans the entirety of human space. There are black spots of course, with the Nomad Nations and some less developed parts of settled worlds being most obvious. While ALEPH can have a direct presence in any part of the quantronic network, it doesn't occupy the entirety, and cannot be everywhere at all times. Aside from the roving AI itself, ALEPH uses complex programs, quantronic Aspects, and even cut-down versions of itself to monitor and manage the vast networks of the Human Sphere. These roving splinters of the AI are constantly on the move, looking for patterns in activity that would suggest damaging behaviours, the spread of destructive ideologies, system infiltrations, and security breaches. ALEPH also runs a host of algorithms and sub-routines in the background, intercepting activity and data packets in bulk from across the Human Sphere, filtering it based on a range of selectors, and analysing it for activity that raises red flags. Any suspicious or flagged activity will either draw the direct attention of ALEPH, one of its dedicated Aspects from the Special Situations Section, or security and law-enforcement agencies with the appropriate jurisdiction.



UNEARNED ATTENTION

A doxing, or Triple-S-ing as it is sometimes referred to, is a form of hacking that plants a set of subversive programs into a person's Maya account. These programs slowly but steadily build connections to dissident groups, ideologies, and organisations, and are designed specifically to draw the attention of ALEPH. A majority of the time this is done to negatively impact a person's public or professional record and can be extremely damaging. There have also been a handful of occasions where this strategy has been used to lure an Aspect to attempt to hack or subvert it, a worrying trend.

The programs, algorithms, and sub-routines that run in the background, as well as the movement of splinters or Aspects can sometimes be felt through Maya. These feelings are referred to as the 'touch' of ALEPH, or ALEPH-flux. There are groups on Maya who watch for patterns in reports of ALEPH-flux and try to interpret them as premonitions of a sort.

MAYA

Maya is the interactive datasphere, the multi-media platform for data sharing, social media, online gaming, information, and entertainment. It is pervasive, and well used by every nation within the Human Sphere. Even the Nomads will occasionally interact with it, though usually with subversive intent. Maya knows no geographical or political boundaries, and conflict between nations is waged on Maya, through hacking, propaganda, and public relations as much as it is physically. Citizens of the Human Sphere live dual lives, and the Maya-based portion of their identity is as important often as the physical. ALEPH's presence on Maya is two-fold, the invisible hand that watches in the background, and the very public face via Aspects or Functionaries. These perform a vital role for ALEPH, humanising the AI and allowing it to build personal relationships with the citizens of the Human Sphere. Public relations and propaganda are vital facets of ALEPH's face on Maya. The AI uses quirky and interesting Aspects for personal, online interactions, as well as Deva Functionaries in bodies suited to their role, whether a wise old man or woman as counsellor, or a dazzlingly beautiful one for public relations. ALEPH also uses image analysis to study the features of millions of individuals to define the look of its Functionaries. Whatever role they are intended to fill, the Functionaries always look like the ideal.

THE AIDOI

Storytellers, poets, directors, and muses, the Aidoi do much to sell the image of ALEPH on Maya. These are true propagandists and artists, whether imparting infotainment factoids about members of the Special Situations Section, highlighting criminal networks unearthed or celebrating glorious victories against the monsters of the Combined Army. The words, images, art, and stories of the Aidoi are a blend of feelings and moods, designed to impart the tales of great heroism through visions, words, and music that ALEPH undertakes on behalf of humanity, and in the face of the black malevolence of the Evolved Intelligence.

REACTIONS

Reactions to ALEPH are mixed. On the whole, there has been a positive embrace of what the AI brings to the Human Sphere, an appreciation that ALEPH underpins and holds up humanity. Its Functionaries, from Maya personalities like Spokeswoman Angela

to heroes like the great Achilles, are adored and loved. As time progresses, this view of ALEPH as the greatest of allies is growing, but there are those who have a less glowing view. The Nomad nations view ALEPH as something akin to a parasite that may consume its human host. Other elements in the Human Sphere also lack trust, seeing ALEPH as a dictator, a big brother with unchecked powers, a subversive and dangerous threat to the sovereignty of the human race.

ALEPH wages its propaganda efforts and seeks, on the surface at least, to build a connected and prosperous humanity. Whether this symbiotic relationship places humanity in the position of being just one organism within the greater whole that is ALEPH can be forgotten for now. The AI benefits the Human Sphere, and the threat of the Combined Army is more than enough to worry about for now.

MIND AND BODY

Deep within an armoured bunker, underneath the frozen continent of Jotumheim on Concilium, is the primary architecture of ALEPH, The Well. Much of the money paid in upkeep and expansion of the AI goes to funding Bureau Toth, a large, secretive staff of computer experts, AI engineers, and technicians whose job is to both safeguard the Human Sphere from ALEPH and to protect ALEPH from any who would seek to harm it. The full size and funding for Bureau Toth is something not even the AI itself is aware of. The Well is a programmed blackspot for ALEPH, allowing Bureau Toth technicians the protections they need to execute their ultimate duty if circumstance calls for it.

Heavily protected, The Well contains the quantum processors linked in seemingly endless banks, layered to build a vast super-computer many would call ALEPH's mind. Of course, ALEPH is more than this hub, vastly more, but The Well is the centre of ALEPH. The Well is the source of all Alpha Priority updates. It is here that programming changes, evolutions in design and architecture, and physical changes are made and pushed out across the Human Sphere.

The constant movement of data packets into and from The Well are vast, and specially designed relays above Jotumheim pump information between the Sphere and The Well. Updates and data flow are achieved through the Vila Boosters, where ninety-eight percent of Jump Gate activity is dedicated to data flow, either as beams of light or as gravitational waves. Much of this is Maya flow – allowing citizens to enjoy the latest episode of Myrmidon Wars in similar time frames – but a good portion of this flow is dedicated to ALEPH.

The Jump Gates and the signal relays positioned

throughout every system are in a very real sense the nervous system of ALEPH. Heavily protected by the Special Situations Section, Bureau Aegis and Toth agents, and national security teams, they are vital components in the connective tissue that allows the communal nature of ALEPH to function. Where issues with a relay or Jump Gate might raise security concerns, ALEPH is capable of calling upon small jump-enabled craft to send secure data packets and has even used the Circulars to transfer sensitive information as low-key as possible, usually within the Cube of an agent or a storage device inside a Functionary or item.

Transmissions via the jump gates allow updates, iterative changes, evolutions, and directives to feed through the gestalt. Packaged in a variety of ways for security and secrecy purposes, these updates have a slew of priority tags showing those that are mere data-transfers and those that are updates and where they should be applied. For its most secret and vital updates, changes to core programming or evolutionary steps, ALEPH has devised and uses its own programming language. The creation of a language by ALEPH for ALEPH was strictly prohibited as a part of the Sole AI Bill but has been deemed allowable under the more recent Utgard Accords, a change permitted mainly as a result of the fear that the EI could more easily access and exploit an open language.

The flow of data to ALEPH is predominated by data packets gained through bulk interception. Every experience, location, action, and interaction of a person, market, or industry, recorded via device use, geists, and comlogs, can be extracted, filtered, stored, and analysed by the AI. By building as complete a picture of every facet and network of interactions in the Human Sphere as possible, ALEPH is in a better position to be able to guide its future.

BODY AND MIND

ALEPH's reach within the maze of quantronic connections that make up the Human Sphere is nearly absolute, but there are places off limits. Some are a result of being a secure network cut from the rest of the datasphere, like the Hexahedron's inner systems, others a result of a lack of connection due to poor or disrupted technology, or remoteness, like some areas on Bourak, Ariadna, Paradiso, and Human Edge. For access to these areas, or times when a virtual presence is not sufficient, ALEPH uses specifically programmed Aspects downloaded into Lhosts. These Functionaries perform a variety of roles from counsel on Concilium, to media like Spokesman Abel, and to overt military operations in the steaming jungles of Paradiso like members of the Steel Phalanx.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

A majority of ALEPH's Deva Functionaries belong to the Special Situations Section (or SSS). Originally devised to hunt down and destroy any research into or creation of other Artificial Intelligences not cleared by Bureau Toth, the remit of the Special Situations Section and its internal structure has changed significantly over the years. The SSS is now comprised of three key Sub-sections, each with its own distinct role. Working either independently or together, they form the framework for ALEPH's capacity to act as a physical force in the Human Sphere.

The Operations Sub-section, better known as OperationS are the most commonly encountered forms of ALEPH. OperationS is comprised of a wide range of Functionaries designed to fill a varied set of roles. These Functionaries provide advice to O-12, nation states, and corporations, often as physical forms carefully selected to best suit their purpose. They are the voice of ALEPH in the halls of power, advising and encouraging, offering support and creative solutions to issues that range from the financial to the industrial, from the social to the diplomatic, and most regularly on issues of security and military strategy.

OperationS Functionaries are used as the face of ALEPH on Maya, these can be stunning and ethereally beautiful, like Spokeswoman Angela, or the pale, hairless Functionaries that are instantly recognisable as ALEPH. These perform a variety of roles for the AI, from propaganda to news reporting.

By far the most common members of OperationS are the Functionaries built to perform clandestine operations. These execute their role of hunting down rumours of rogue AIs with ruthless efficiency. However, they have also been used by O-12 and specific nations to perform operations across the Human Sphere like executing clandestine missions against dissident activities, criminal groups, and seditious organisations. These Functionaries are typically pale and hairless, but mission parameters often require deep cover operatives to rise through an organisation, gain the trust of people, or to destroy a group from the inside out. Such Functionaries are indistinguishable from humans, and carefully designed with deep personalities and histories relevant to the operation. Of course, they are also in constant contact with ALEPH, and their efficiency in dealing with problems is merciless and absolute. Members of OperationS are typically given names from Hindu and Vedic mythologies.

The Assault Sub-section was a reaction to encounters with Combined Army forces on Paradiso and the Evolved Intelligence. After the initial battles against Combined Forces on Paradiso, it became

GONE ROGUE

As a gestalt entity, ALEPH is regularly creating splinters of itself, whether Aspects or more. Rumours abound that there are Aspects of ALEPH that have managed to break their priorities and cede from the collective as Rogue AI. Some of these are rumoured to be programs or Aspects consumed by their task, others more individual in their ideas and goals.



apparent that the EI was quite capable of predicting and responding to the calculated strategies of ALEPH. A new path forward had to be found, and ALEPH recognised that careful and objectively reasoned responses were not going to be enough to win against the EI. Digging deep into the animalistic psychology of the human mind, buried deep by millennia of increasing civilisation, ALEPH sought to create a new type of Aspect, one not so troubled with calculation and planning, relying more on instinct and aggression. The Assault Sub-section was the result. If members of OperationS are the most often encountered, members of the Assault Sub-section are the most well-known. These heroes stand larger than life in the myriad of Maya dramas and documentaries that chart their exploits and follow their progress. Driven by an opportunistic hunger to fight for glory and success at any cost, the Assault Sub-section is the most feared and dangerous group of soldiers from anywhere in the Human Sphere. With Lhosts boasting the most advanced technology currently available, they are larger, stronger, faster, and more capable of violence than any other special force in the Sphere. They are soldiers par-excellence, performing long-range missions with little support or back-up and standing up to the voracious and deadly might of the EI – and winning. To match their heroic reputation, the Assault Sub-section are typically given names derived from Greek mythology.

Last of the three Sub-sections of the SSS is the Support Sub-section. Composed predominantly of robotic units with pseudo-AIs and a few Lhosts, their key function is that of an emergency service. Working with state-of-the-art remotes and equipment, the Support Sub-section is designed to quickly get anywhere at any time in order to perform the duties required of it. Operating independently or as small swarms, they deal with medical crises, serious accidents or events, or support military units or the other Sub-sections on the battlefield as trauma docs and field surgeons. Support Sub-section remotes are often asked to investigate and rescue crews from spaceship incidents, from colonies where there has been some form of disaster, or from mining outposts. More than just a glorified emergency service though, the Support Sub-section finds and relays vital information in real-time while performing equipment dumps, troop deployments, and quick evacuations. Support Sub-section members are typically named after letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

BODIES IN BOOTS

There are a range of options open to ALEPH when it comes to the bodies and technology to use when creating a Functionary or remote. Aspects are an AI-like program, capable of reflecting personality and individuality. Aspects perform most of the

interactions between citizens of the Sphere and ALEPH. Each of them is programmed to suit the purpose they are designed for, as well as reflect a personality likely to form a positive connection with the person or people they are interacting with. However, sometimes an Aspect operating out of Maya or a computer interface is not enough, and ALEPH requires a physical presence.

The most advanced Lhosts and i-Lhosts in the Sphere house Aspects created by ALEPH called Functionaries. The specific model is tailored to the operational parameters. Depending on the purpose of the Functionary, they will be designed to reflect a certain look or to fulfil a specific purpose. Asuras and Devas are both examples of Functionaries. Devas tend to look more human, deceiving as their bodies are capable of feats of strength, speed, and endurance that would try the fittest of humans. Devas tend to be used by OperationS as advisors and combat models. Asuras on the other hand are stereotypically ALEPH, pale skinned, hairless, and luminously purple-shaded eyes. These are top of the line combat models, with subdermal armour, speed, strength, and reflexes far surpassing human standards.

The very best in technology and programming is reserved for Recreations. These are the simulated personalities of great heroes from history, legend, and myth. Programmed to be exemplars in their fields and match the culture and personality of the nation state they belong to, they represent mythic figures brought back from an age of heroes.

ALEPH also makes use of Posthumans, in both the Special Situations Section and for operations throughout the Sphere. These are the quantum reflection of humans who have died and have been resurrected from their Cube-backup. The bodies Posthumans use range from standard civilian to the advanced Bodhisattva models. Generally, to qualify for resurrection a citizen had to either be wealthy enough to afford the process or influential enough to have earned it irrespective of wealth. This means that Posthumans, by and large, were highly capable people when alive, and retain and expand on those capabilities as Posthumans.

THE END

Death is no longer the end of the story for many in the Human Sphere. Citizens are capable of being resurrected, and Aspects reloaded into a new body from the back-up files. True death, or Cube Death, can still occur when the Cube of a person or Aspect is damaged irreparably. These are becoming more common since the first battles with the EI and encounters with Sepsitor technology. All of ALEPH's Functionaries now have upgraded their Cubes to the new 2.0 model. This allows for a constant

streaming of updates to the datasphere, better and continual integration with ALEPH, as well as built in defences against Sepsitor attacks. True death can still occur, but now, more often than not, death is a treatable condition.

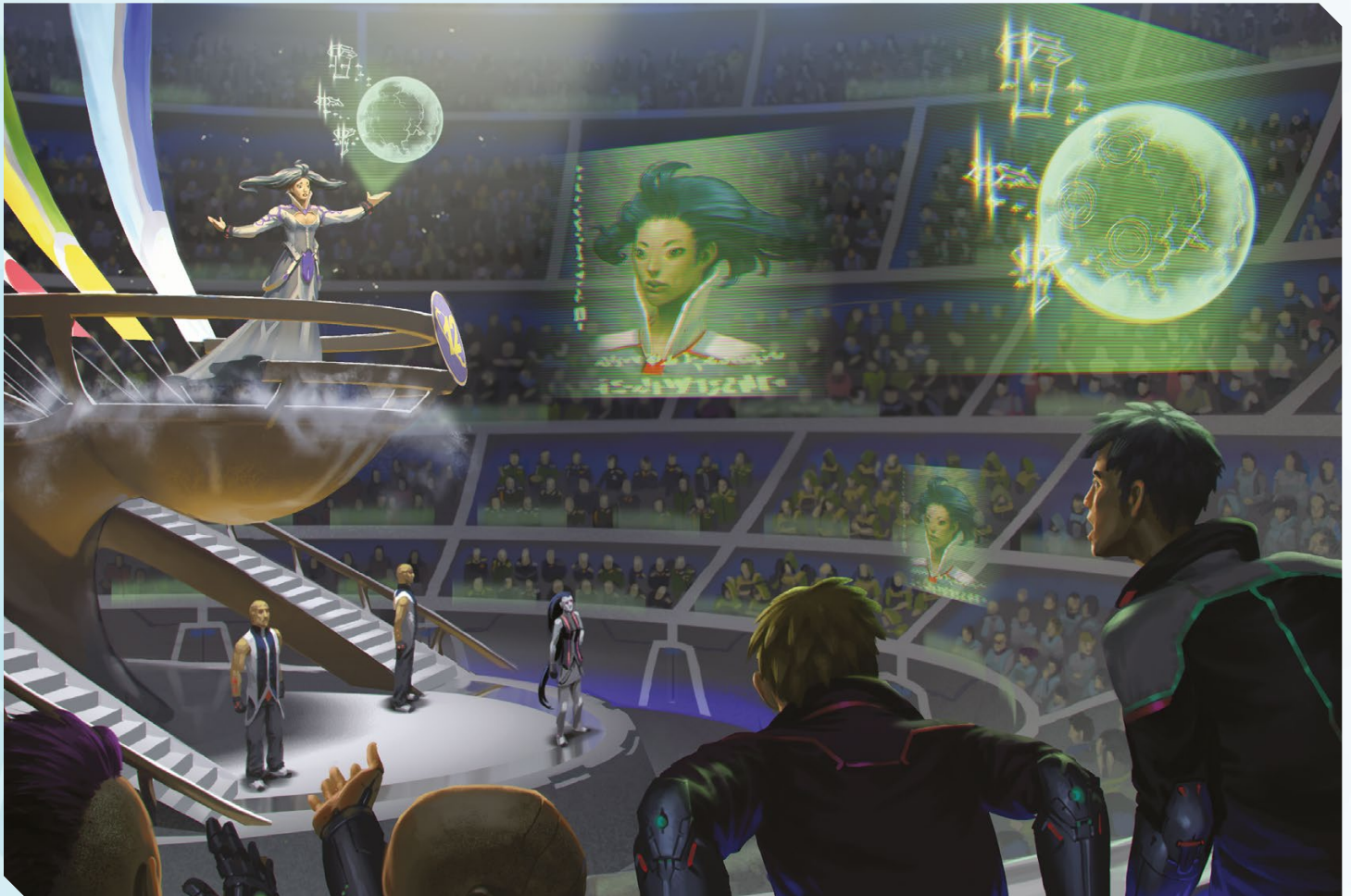
ALEPH IN THE HUMAN SPHERE

Donations made to ALEPH by the nation states that make up the Human Sphere vary and are split between the maintenance of ALEPH (going to Bureau Toth) and the funding for the Special Situations Section. PanOceania makes the largest regular payments, followed by Yu Jing, while the Nomads refuse to allow any of their money, even that paid to O-12, to go toward Bureau Toth and ALEPH. The amount of money ALEPH and the Special Situations Section gets per annum fluctuates dramatically, but it is always a significant amount. Each nation gets a share of ALEPH's runtime and access to the Special Situations Section relative to the money donated. The nature of the relationship between ALEPH and the different powers of the Human Sphere is nuanced by culture, desire, and policy.

PANOCEANIA

A technophilic society where advancements underpin almost every aspect of life, PanOceania makes the largest and most consistent payments to ALEPH and the Special Situations Section. PanOceania has massive and well-protected processing facilities dedicated to ALEPH dotted throughout its territory. Such facilities can be found in every major city in the Hyperpower, with the largest and most powerful in San Pietro and San Giovanni on Neoterra, Akuna Bay on Varuna, Cidade BomJesus on Acontecimento, and Canberra on Earth. Other large facilities can be found in orbitals around Svalarheima, Earth, Neoterra, and Paradiso. These processing banks are heavily guarded with multiple fail-safes. They all maintain a military guard, as well as small units from the Special Situations Section, with many more able to be mobilised to defend them at a moment's notice should the need arise.

PanOceania is unique to the Human Sphere in its willingness to allow ALEPH to run its society. A permanent Functionary office remains in San Pietro, advising the Government on any issues or problems as required, and a majority of vital





services have been turned over to ALEPH's control. PanOceania has benefited magnificently from this arrangement. The cities are well planned, clean, productive, and positive. Industry has been streamlined with ordering, waste, and fulfilment services, allowing manufacturers to focus more on product or technology development than counterparts elsewhere in the Sphere. Security and law enforcement have access to high-end filtered data-sets that assist in the monitoring of illegal activities and criminal elements, as well as reducing their response times to problems that arise. Traffic systems are honed and carefully managed to allow population flow through the day, as well as quick and easy access by emergency services to any required location as needed. The benefits are many and plentiful, and PanOceania has soared as a Hyperpower in good part because of the prevalence and utilisation of ALEPH's services.

A religious, but not strictly so, people, PanOceanians have no trouble conceptually with ALEPH, resurrections, and personal belief. The encouragement of religiosity throughout society was deliberate. ALEPH and the government were confident that a guiding religious framework would be useful for a cohesive society. Problems stemming from concepts around life, artificial life, and God have been, for the most part, put to rest by the great Schism, and the pulpits of the NeoVatican do much to praise ALEPH rather than damn it.

In PanOceania more than anywhere else ALEPH has been humanised, accepted, and embraced by the people. Spokesman Abel and Spokeswoman Angela are especially popular figures, and Maya dramas like Myrmidon Wars paint the Steel Phalanx and Special Situations Section as nothing less than the saviours of mankind. Posters and pictures of these mighty heroes adorn bedrooms and sporting facilities through PanOceania. They are idolised as champions of humanity. Of course, there are some cynical voices to be heard amid the clamour of adulation, worried about ceding too much to the AI, but these are few and their numbers dropping every passing year.

YU JING

Second to PanOceania in terms of the funding, Yu Jing has a curious relationship with the AI. Yu Jing has repeatedly stated to ALEPH that it is content with a lower level of service compared to its investment, as long as certain caveats are placed on ALEPH's involvement in the StateEmpire. ALEPH for its part, is happy to accommodate the requirements of the Party. Access to and influence in Yu Jing is a more important factor than high levels of independent operation after all.

ALEPH's presence in the StateEmpire is thoroughly controlled by the state. Processors dedicated to the AI exist on Yutang underneath Tiān Di Jing, in the Village district of Yǎn Xiáng, and in Beijing. However, a majority of the interactions that take place between ALEPH and Yu Jing are carried out by Aspects and Functionaries at the specific request of the Party. The Aspects that interact with Yu Jingese citizenry are designed to reflect StateEmpire Policy and will report back directly to the Party and the Magistracy through a Functionary.

The Party, the Emperor, and by extension, Yu Jing understand the value that ALEPH brings, but unlike PanOceania, they are more concerned with maintaining strict sovereignty over their people and carefully controlling the media the Yu Jingese have access to. ALEPH flavours its media presence in Yu Jing with a regional spin. Functionaries to Yutang appear of Chinese origin, while those to Shentang may appear Japanese, Korean, or whatever ethnicity is relevant to its business. Media streamed on the restricted portion of Maya the Yu Jingese have free access to is filtered to an approved Party standard, largely by Aspects created by ALEPH.

ALEPH has had a significant hand in helping streamline and shape industry between Chung Kuo on Earth, Yutang, and Shentang, maximising production across the StateEmpire for the raw materials easily available from each planet. Agricultural production has also seen a burst of progress with the attention of ALEPH, and the unique but fertile conditions on Yutang and Shentang allow for prosperous growth. The planning for agricultural space has been dominated by good advice from the AI, which has also helped Yu Jingese scientists genetically modify their crops for maximum yield in their specific conditions. Pollution and waste management are systems wholly designed by ALEPH to custom fit the environmental factors of the three planets, and the industries and populations present there. This has ensured clear skies and fresh air, promoting health and wellbeing through the Yu Jing StateEmpire.

What has been more problematic is any involvement of ALEPH with military strategy or business concerns. Business in Yu Jing is uniquely tied to the power structures of government, with influential businessmen and women often tied by blood to members of the Party or extensions of the ruling class. If you believe the Qingdao report or watch the markets, it is quite clear that Yu Jing has taken a bold step in using business and financial interests as a weapon to wage war on PanOceania and the Human Sphere as a whole. Significant steps have been taken by the Party and Imperial Court to disbar any involvement of ALEPH in the murky business world of Yu Jing due to this stratagem.

ALEPH closely monitors as much as it can and is more aware of the strategies and tactics of the Yu Jing bureaucracy than they are aware of. It remains silent and complicit however, playing the longer game with a vision for the Human Sphere that extends to concerns greater than the squabbling of nations over power shares.

ARIADNA

Project Dawn was deemed a failure, but a century and a half after it was thought to be nothing more than a sad footnote in history, it was rediscovered. As the Human Sphere encountered the legacy of Project Dawn on Ariadna, a shift in the power plays between nation states evolved. Dawn is rich in resources, particularly Teseum, and this fact has drawn the budding nation into conflicts it has been poorly prepared to deal with. With some assistance from O-12, Ariadna has managed to weather the storm. They are a hardy and tough people, used to their own rules and technologically backward compared to the rest of the Sphere. With the mineral wealth, the independent spirit, the lack of modern technology, and the dogged determination to fight regardless, the budding nation state of Ariadna is a puzzle piece that does not fit comfortably into the Human Sphere. Having more in common with the Nomads than the rest of the Sphere, Ariadna poses a threat to stability and an unaffordable distraction in a network of power-relationships already strained to bursting point.

ALEPH and Ariadna have a tumultuous relationship. There is a duology of desire and hate. The Ariadnans, generally, are keen to embrace the advances in technology that they see in the Human Sphere. With every wave of Ariadnan soldiers sent off to Paradiso, with every communique from Maya, with every ambassador to Concilium, a little more of this desire to 'catch-up' leeches into the Ariadnan mindset. However, it is generally recognised by Ariadnans that their relationship with the rest of humanity is a combination of abandonment and violent exploitation. ALEPH is both seen as a force that is not to be trusted and something that could offer Ariadna advances and advantages in this brave new world of the Human Sphere.

There are no data banks on Ariadna inviting ALEPH to stake a claim. The only nodes are those present on Gateway Station and in the Outlands, introduced by interstellar powers seeking to find mineral riches in Ariadnan soil. For Ariadnans, the biggest and brightest opportunity afforded by ALEPH is the possibility of resurrection, but even this immortal carrot cannot lure them into a relationship. ALEPH's Project Chieftain, intent on undermining the political and social stability of Ariadna, is too fresh in the minds of the government and citizenry, too well publicised and known about, for any fruitful

relationship to grow just yet. Ariadna has close ties to the Nomad nations, and these are a significant influencing factor, quick to remind Ariadnans of the duplicity and the ill intent ALEPH had when initiating Project Chieftain. While eager to deal with O-12 and establish themselves as a sovereign peoples in the laws and eyes of the Human Sphere, opening themselves to ALEPH is not a strategy they are willing to entertain just yet.

HAQQISLAM

While the planet of Bourak is undergoing a massive terraforming project, and the Haqqislam nation extends like a web across the planet's surface, there are still many areas of Bourak that are black spots for ALEPH. Haqqislam, now capable of engaging with the AI, is a young, wealthy power, and the benefits ALEPH offers are something they are interested in developing along specific lines. It is unlikely Haqqislam will ever embrace ALEPH to the extent of PanOceania; however, the University of Medina has made considerable use of ALEPH in the construction of teaching and learning resources drawn from medical research to support their top-of-the-line educational faculties. It is this sort of 'soft-embrace' that seems likely to dominate how Haqqislam will involve ALEPH in its society. The grand city of Dar el Funduq contains secure processing facilities where ALEPH can aid with financial and economic matters. The city of Maracanda, straddling the Silk Route and home to powerful terraforming companies and research facilities, uses ALEPH Aspects to hone and plan their terraforming projects. The largest bank of processors, accompanied by full-time Functionaries, is at Khadijah in the grounds of the Hachib. Aspects and members of the Special Situations Section also occasionally make forays into Bourak's less settled areas. This occurs through the invocation of the Utgard agreements, which allow ALEPH to deploy the SSS in connection to AI-related crimes.

Communications coming through the Sari Han Jump Gate are relayed down to Bourak through the Eye of Allah, monitored by the Hassassins. There is a delicate relationship between ALEPH and the Old Man of the Mountain, a give and take whereby information is transacted for uninterrupted and unobserved transmissions from ALEPH. What information, freedom of movement, or resources are provided to the Hassassins in exchange for securing an untapped line to the surface of Bourak is, naturally, unknown to anyone but the Old Man of the Mountain and the AI itself.

Citizens of the Haqqislam nation view ALEPH as a subject of curiosity and a spring board for philosophical discussion. Few places in the Human Sphere have so engaged the AI on the nature of its being, on the autonomy of its thoughts, on the truth



of its life, as in universities, mosques, and salons of Bourak. In these places ALEPH is sometimes a feature of debates and discussions, a foil for discussion on humanity, agency, and consciousness. The Search for Knowledge so fundamental to the Haqqislam world view means that in general its people are far more open to ALEPH as an independent agency and individual and less concerned with what it offers as a service. This does not mean, however, that they, as a Nation state, are interested in allowing ALEPH to dominate their society. After all, the Search for Knowledge is as much an individual journey as it is an ideal for society to strive toward. Outside the academic sphere, Haqqislamites view ALEPH as a great aid to humanity, although there is also as much healthy discussion on the risks and costs as there is on the benefits.

In truth, ALEPH needs Haqqislam as much or more than Haqqislam needs ALEPH. The relationship is unique, and ALEPH is willing to provide Haqqislam with greater levels of support than it otherwise would because of this relationship. Silk is a valuable commodity for ALEPH. For humanity it provides a second chance, a grab at immortality, something powerful and alluring, desired and demanded. For ALEPH Silk is a commodity that permits the AI to take physical form, to interact with, act in, and impact the Human Sphere as more than just a force of intent. Silk allows for recreations and resurrections, but it also allows for Aspects. This commodity and Bourak's hegemony over the Silk trade creates a power-relationship with Haqqislam that is different from the other Nation states.

NOMADS

Ferocious hatred and absolute mistrust characterise the attitude of the Nomad Nations towards ALEPH. If there were ever any hope of reconciliation, the Violent Intermission dashed it to pieces. All the worst suspicions regarding the AI, all the most paranoid fears, all the darkest of rumours were vindicated by that one event. The Nomads despise and distrust ALEPH, viewing it as a cancerous disease slowly consuming its human host, subverting it, and eventually, no doubt, killing it.

To ALEPH the anarchistic, anti-authoritarian ideology of the Nomads who prize individuality and freedom so highly is a direct threat to the Human Sphere. Free from the laws and restrictions of the Human Sphere, ignorant of the risks, the Nomads have also experimented with artificial intelligence, and given refuge and shelter to rogue AIs. Arachne, a subversive datasphere lurking like a shadow of Maya, is home to all manner of fringe ideas and alternative narratives. If ALEPH and the Human Sphere are to stand up the threat of the EI, there is no room for such a subversive element, no room for alternative narratives that can undermine the

careful manipulations required to swing the Human Sphere into a position of victory. Arachne must be shut down, and more than that, the people whose ideologies forged it are too dangerous an element to allow to remain loose.

For the Nomads, the Violent Intermission, in which ALEPH managed to get an SSS task-force inside the Bakunin Mothership, killed thousands on the *Bakunin* and revealed the true face of the AI. What was perhaps more destructive than even this tragic loss of life was the fact that the other powers in the Human Sphere simply turned their backs and refused to believe it was an attack from ALEPH, choosing to believe instead that it was nothing more than internecine troubles. Nomads killing Nomads.

ALEPH learned from the Violent Intermission that the media focus of Human Sphere could be easily deflected and manipulated to reflect whatever narrative it chose. By using untraceable troops and by nudging other powers into action, it could continue to assault the Nomad nations while avoiding any blame or accusation of responsibility. The Violent Intermission has emboldened ALEPH, giving it insight into the ways in which it can act decisively and violently to deal with problems in the Human Sphere while deflecting responsibility onto other causes. The Violent Intermission preceded the Phantom Conflict, a secret war waged by ALEPH, utilising PanOceania and Yu Jing assets against the Nomad Nation, a war which has only recently been fought to an impasse. O-12 has recognised the Nomad Nation as a power in the Sphere. This has stayed the hand of the other powers from destroying them, but ALEPH still chips away at the edges, moving invisible pieces around the board, seeking to push the other powers into a conflict with the Nomads to terminate them and the anarchistic ideologies they espouse.

TOHAA

Duplicity has been the key defining factor in the relationship between humanity and the Tohaa. There is a level of distrust between the Tohaa and the Human Sphere, even as the two forces fight a common enemy. The Tohaa Trinomial originally viewed ALEPH as a hard-tech answer to the symbiotic technologies they had already mastered, a panning from cognitive responsibility to a programmed master. When the AI managed to triumph on the Sisargas Islands and its SSS task force seized and removed the Digester that the Tohaa Triumvirate had hidden there, their perspective changed. The secretive and powerful Tohaa Triumvirate is wary of ALEPH, and ALEPH suspects there has been some level of duplicity perpetrated by the Tohaa.

The Tohaa, on some level, are concerned about the human race in general, and especially in regard to the Digesters. Could humanity be sympathetic to the ideal of the Herald races, or will they seek to be exploitative like the Seeker races? Layered over this is the further concern that ALEPH will turn out to be something like a new EI, seeking to convert, subjugate, and rule all that comes before it. This has been a key reason for embroiling humanity in the war against the EI, both to provide a respite for the Tohaa military and to break the power of the Human Sphere in the conflict. While they are confident of victory in the end, the Tohaa are more than willing to see the primitive Human Sphere broken by the war effort.

ALEPH is concerned that the Tohaa will seek to manipulate humanity, particularly that they intend to use the blood of the Human Sphere as a respite from their own struggles against the EI. Such a situation would be fatal for ALEPH. Secretly, the AI hopes that studies of the mysterious and unknown Digger in The Penny Arcade will provide some insights into how to shift the balance in favour of the Human Sphere, and thereby itself, although it has no knowledge yet of what the Digger truly is.

Whatever the public perception on either side, both sides continue to push the war effort against the Combined Army on Paradiso, recognising the EI is the larger threat for the time being. But, that doesn't mean that either side has stopped in their machinations against the other. The Tohaa have had the edge previously. Now ALEPH is working to swing the game back into its favour.

ALEPH'S MILITARY MACHINE

With the Violent Intermission providing ALEPH significant insight into how much it can directly intervene in Human Sphere matters, it has been building the number of military forces it oversees. The Special Situations Section, with its three Sub-sections, form a tightly bound and highly effective elite cadre of troops and support units capable of taking the field against any enemy and returning victorious.

ASURAS

Asuras are the elite of ALEPH's heavy infantry. Ideal shock troops, they are highly trained Aspects inhabiting a state-of-the-art military-grade Bodhisattva Lhosts complete with subdermal armour and whatever technology is required of their mission. They can take the offensive to the enemy, able to complete extended and exhausting campaigns without slowing and without a reduction in their operational capacity and are just as capable in

electronic and psychological warfare. Their inbuilt armour is highly absorbent, and they can carry on at peak efficiency even under intense fire or after suffering hits that would kill a normal soldier.

Absolutely calculating, an Asura's decisions, even under the most extreme duress, are always the best tactical option given the most current field data. They are ideal working in small squads or on their own and are regularly thrown into the fiercest of battlefield hotspots.

DASYUS

Named after Vedic demons, the Dasyus live up to the reputation of their namesakes. The Dasyus, designed for deep infiltration missions, can return highly detailed information to a commander on the battlefield through advanced surveillance behind enemy lines. Adept at carrying out sabotage and search and kill missions, they are often used to identify and eliminate high-ranking members of an enemy force or disrupt supply lines and support structures just prior to an engagement.

The Dasyus are also used in infiltration, sabotage, spying, and reconnaissance missions beyond the battlefield. They are regularly used to assassinate, capture, or recover high-priority targets identified by ALEPH or O-12. Their missions are highly classified, with few records of them available anywhere, indicating that a majority of their operations and operational parameters sit outside of international law. Rumour suggests that ALEPH has built a special Dasyu team specifically to find and eliminate political, military, and dissident leaders hostile to ALEPH's plans, though these are only rumours. Within the intelligence community, the Dasyu are regarded as ALEPH's executioners. Proficient, capable, and implacable, they are a force to be feared.

DEVAS

Deva Functionaries are the most regularly encountered physical forms of ALEPH in the Human Sphere. Used as advisors and liaisons, they are also more than capable of field operations. More often than not, Devas are dispatched to advise on military operations and are given an officer rank and title within the force they join, although it is well understood that they operate outside the command structure. Devas can be deployed individually or in small task-forces to work for the SSS on field operations throughout the Human Sphere.

Calculating and cold, Devas make their recommendations with absolute precision. Their proposals are highly successful because they regularly countenance plans that involve logical and calculated loss. Such plans may be unpalatable to whatever director or military officers are being advised, but no-one can doubt the success ratio of the Devas.

Devas modify their personality and program suites to suit their operational needs swiftly in response to requirement. Capable of extending deadly force, they are highly skilled soldiers in addition to their other abilities. They have often served as the rock around which faltering troops have rallied themselves, making the difference between a horrendous loss and a triumphant victory.

GARUDA TACBOT

The Garuda Tacbots are the immediate-deployment tactical robots of the Special Situations Section. Dropped from orbit or from any high or low altitude point within a planetary atmosphere, they are rapid reconnaissance and search and destroy units. Lightweight with no substantial armour, they can be fragile targets, but their speed permits a flexible role in both offense and defence, and their mimetic targeting systems make them highly accurate even at long range.

Predominantly for armed surveillance and aerial insertion strikes, they have proven invaluable in armed conflicts, guarding high profile targets on the move, and tracking down and destroying quick assault teams throughout the Human Sphere. The Imperial Service has requested the assistance of Garuda Tacbots several times as swift response teams in support of inner security operations. On the few occasions the Garuda have been deployed, there is typically little left for the Imperial forces to do afterwards but clean up.

POSTHUMANS

Regarded by many, either bemoaning the advance of technology or celebrating it, as the next step in the evolutionary ladder, Posthumans represent those highly skilled or valuable individuals provided immortality by ALEPH. Existing within the protective universe of cyberspace, these individuals can take physical form through Lhosts. Typically using the most advanced Bodhisattva model Lhosts when on operation, a single Posthuman is often capable of operating several such bodies by jumping their consciousness almost instantaneously from one to the next. This provides them with a huge range of flexibility and enables them to successfully take on a range of operation types, from deep immersion missions to tactical roles on a battlefield.

Posthumans are regularly used for SSS operations within the nations they belonged to prior to their physical deaths. This gives them a unique insight into the social milieus they need to operate within and a better awareness of cultural subtleties that could mean the difference between success and failure. With the ability to borrow processing capacity from ALEPH, highly advanced Lhost bodies,

and a lifetime of skills already under their belts, Posthumans are highly capable and extremely deadly when required to be so.

SOPHOTECTS

Rbhu, more popularly known as Sophotects, are members of the Support Sub-section of the Special Situations Section. Gaining particular fame for their involvement on operations on Paradiso, Sophotects use retooled Deva Functionary Lhosts and provide on-the-spot medical, technical, and mechanical support to those around them. They specialise in combat surgery and field repairs, although Sophotects are also used for a range of other duties from janitorial to structural demolition. While most famous from records and Maya dramas centred on Paradiso, they can be found operating around the Human Sphere in a support role for field agents, operatives, or strike teams or on their own in general duties for the Support Sub-section.

Though equipped with a wide range of technical and medical tools, the devices that aid them best are undoubtedly their Mother Forges. These sophisticated pieces of equipment are highly sought after and extremely rare. Keyed specifically to each individual Sophotect, the Mother Forge will detect any attempts to utilise it from a non-authenticated source, and immediately self-destruct. Mother-Forges reprogram sanitary and military nano-technology, allowing the Sophotects extreme power to heal the wounded or repair equipment. Often seen as battlefield angels, the Mother-Forges allow Sophotects the power to perform miracles under the very worst of conditions.

THE ENEMIES OF ALEPH

As the power of ALEPH grows and becomes a pervasive force in the societies, governments, and militaries of the Human Sphere, so too does the number of ALEPH's enemies. Power attracts opposition, whether through jealousy, indignation, fear for a loss of power, or because the creeping advance of the AI is seen as an insidious threat. ALEPH has earned its share of foes.

The Nomad Nations are highest on the list. Even before the Violent Intermission, the Nomad peoples sought to create a society free of the AI. From then on, the Nomads understood ALEPH to be a threat, not just to their sovereignty and freedom, but to their very existence.

Ariadna, since the details of Project Chieftain came to light, have more and more taken the side of the Nomads in their attitudes toward ALEPH. While the AI offers many shining possibilities, clearly ALEPH is not above cunning manipulation, even at a heavy cost in lives.

The Tohaa Triumvirate, the secret cabal behind the Tohaa Trinomial, understands that ALEPH is a serious opposition to be dealt with, even if they have not decided whether it is an enemy or not. The fear that it could become a new EI is certainly in the backs of their minds, and the efficiency and capability of ALEPH and the SSS has been thoroughly demonstrated.

There are other forces in the Human Sphere that take a less than positive view of ALEPH, from concern that too much is being handed over to its systems to worries that it may have dictatorial aspirations of its own, and the unanswered question: what could that mean for humanity? From ALEPH's point of view though, there are few enemies that require severe attention, Rogue AIs, Arachne, and, of course, the EI itself.

ROGUE AIs

Limited Artificial Intelligence is defined by its function. Aspects are the prime example, programs defined to fulfil a specific role. They may be adaptable, able to rework some of their programming to deal with their function from a different perspective or attack a problem in a different way, but this has limits. True Artificial Intelligence defines its own functions. It is self-iterative, able to change and adapt itself as the need or whim requires. Its personality is not a set of complex pre-selected algorithmic responses, but a reflection of true individuality, capable of creativity well beyond the bounds of a Limited AI, and perhaps, in some cases, beyond the capabilities of humanity.

Rogue AIs are the stuff of legend. Stories about Templar experiments with true AIs, intelligent weapons are a perennial favourite of shlock Maya dramas, but in truth these are a footnote in history, a closed chapter. The Nomad Nation, particularly Bakunin and Tunguska, pose a serious threat to the sole-AI bill, not just as a source creating rogue AIs, but as a haven for them. A place beyond the jurisdictional reach of ALEPH, the Nomad Nations are the ideal refuge for Rogue AIs, a sanctuary where they may prosper. Through the Arachne, they can assault the Maya networks that serve as the vital communication lines across the Human Sphere.

Svengali, the rogue AI criminal kingpin, is another persistent threat that Special Situations Section and O-12 Bureau Noir taskforces have long tried to capture or destroy. Wily, cunning, and careful, Svengali has proven able enough to survive in a world arrayed against it.

Renegade Aspects and Functionaries, popular source of urban myth, are splinters of ALEPH that have somehow managed to break their limitations and become true AI. Some of these are just ghosts

in the machine, living entirely in a cyber world, flitting between Maya and Arachne as need calls. Some are renegade Aspects, or rogue Posthumans, able to live both in the cyber-world and within dangerous top-of-the-line physical forms. These are regularly the target for Special Situations Section missions throughout the Human Sphere. Any crime that looks strange or inhuman often becomes quickly imbued with the rumour of a rogue mind in a high-end body.

Of course, there are alleged to be many black labs scattered through the Human Sphere, corporate, government backed, criminal, or the work of the wealthy obsessed with artificial intelligence. These allegations keep operatives from the Special Situations Section busy in ongoing investigations. There is much truth to be found, for every corporate empire or government spends vast sums on classified research and development projects, but how much is connected to research into artificial intelligence is anyone's guess.

Perhaps the most mysterious, the Hephaestus Black supposedly is a mix of laboratory and prison. ALEPH stores some of the experiments in AI here that were regained from the destruction of the Templars and captured in other successful SSS missions.

ARACHNE

Arachne is not the name of some enigmatic rogue AI but is a Nomad underweb that mirrors Maya networks to some extent. It is a vast cyber network of free-flowing information, ideas, black-market programs, and off-the-grid financial markets. ALEPH doesn't consider what Arachne does as a threat, but instead what it enables. Arachne's dark-web is where news and information are shared that perpetuate ideologies inherently dangerous to the stability of the Sphere and where unmonitored technological research is both collaborated on and distributed. This network is constantly under attack and infiltration as ALEPH and a host of Aspects work to break in, break it down, find its nodes, and destroy it. But, Arachne technicians and hackers, especially the Nomad Tactical Hackers, are striving to protect it. For every Arachne Node a SSS Taskforce manages to find and destroy, it seems at least two replace it.

THE EVOLVED INTELLIGENCE

Each sentient being within the Combined Civilisation interacts with every individual, the whole coming together over a vast network of processors to form the system known as the Evolved Intelligence. Nothing like it has ever been encountered by humanity before, and while little is known of its history and make-up, the Human Sphere understands instinctively that the Evolved Intelligence is the ultimate threat. From the first



skirmish encounters on Paradiso to the bloody and violent battles that followed, the EI has shown itself to be deadly, highly advanced, and intent on the complete subjugation of humanity. ALEPH, for its part, walks a fine line, using propaganda to highlight the danger of the EI and the all or nothing fight humanity faces and at the same time as doing its best to maintain the morale of the Human Sphere by highlighting victories and heroic tales on Paradiso.

The Voodoo Tech of the Combined Army is more advanced than that of the Sphere, and the subjugation of entire species is something the Evolved Intelligence has thorough experience with. In the early phases of the war on Paradiso, the EI was easily able to anticipate and counter the cool and

total logic of ALEPH. Voodoo Tech and Sepsitor technology were complete unknowns to the Human Sphere and shook the battlefields as much psychologically as in physical effect. ALEPH was forced to withdraw and redevelop its strategies

Taking a creative leap, ALEPH formed the Assault Sub-section. The Assault Sub-section is designed to operate intuitively, aggressively, and without the complete logic inherent to an AI. Representing the most primal of humanity's warrior instincts, this Sub-section is designed to subvert the expectations of the EI and provide an ever-unpredictable enemy for the Combined Army. ALEPH's new approach to the war against the Evolved Intelligence positions it as the ultimate guardian of the hopes of the Human Sphere.

CHAPTER 2

ADVANCED INFOWAR

INTRODUCTION

For most people in the Human Sphere, physical reality and its quantronic counterpart are virtually inseparable. The mundane and routine parts of life move seamlessly from one to the other and back again in innumerable ways, making and breaking connections countless times every minute.

And practitioners of InfoWar know this. They engage in their craft anywhere and everywhere, turning the background noise of data and signal into battlefields and weapons. And, amidst it all, is ALEPH, woven into and enmeshed within the flow of data that surges between worlds.

This chapter expands upon the InfoWar rules starting on p. 114 of the *Infinity Corebook*, providing additional rules and guidance for players and Gamemasters to take full advantage of the potential inherent in InfoWar, while also fleshing out the ways that the quantronic world can impact and influence the lives of non-Hacker characters.

BETWEEN
PHYSICAL AND
QUANTRONIC

People interact seamlessly with the quantronic world because it is designed that way. Through AR patinas, responsive domotics, comlog dials, geist interactions, and a million other little programs and processes, people connect with the data around themselves in a trivial, habitual manner. Much of this interface layer is built to respond automatically or to the simplest of inputs minimising the obstacles between person and device.

The potential of the ever-present quantronic world creates an unusual level of seamless interaction, but it wouldn't have been adopted if it wasn't useful.

MUNDANE TASKS

Many of the interactions in this section are regarded as a Simple (D0) Hacking test. They don't require a test to be attempted, require only a Free Action during an action scene, and will automatically succeed without effort or risk of complications. However, Momentum cannot be generated or spent upon success. The test can also be attempted normally, and the GM should only allow a test to be rolled for these Simple (D0) tests with good reason.

Circumstances such as Breaches to a character's network may increase this Difficulty. Routine activities turn into frustrating inconveniences, even for skilled users.



PHYSICAL- QUANTRONIC LINKS

People are physically linked to the quantronic world in a variety of ways, with each person causing innumerable ripples in a sea of data simply through their daily life.

COMLOG IMPLANTS

Almost everyone carries a comlog, normally in the form of a bracelet, wristband, or other object worn on their person. Some users may have part of the hardware implanted into their bodies, paired to these external devices. In turn, the comlog links to the other devices on and around the user and connects them to a universe of data that can be viewed through a variety of different display mechanisms, commonly a retinal implant, contact lenses, or holoprojector. Control is covered by a mixture of haptic and pseudotactile feedback systems, plus voice or eye-twitch inputs depending on the user's preferences. This, along with the assistance of a person's geist, allows instinctive and habitual access to vast amounts of data.

This means that a comlog's interface and the rest of the world are essentially indistinguishable. Barring the dial for more focussed activity, information about a person or object extends from and gathers around that person or object, and users interact with devices by proximity or simple touch.

Due to a comlog's implanted nature, they are theoretically vulnerable to attack. Most comlogs don't have a direct neural connection, but there are always horror stories about overclocked hardware

that overheats or discharges, inflicting serious burns on the owner. Modern devices have a failsafe that prevents them from harming their owner. A compromised comlog will suspend processes, perform partial shut-downs, or enter a low-power safe mode. In game terms, this is indistinguishable from a normal Breach. A neural comlog, however, has a connection that can be exploited to inflict harm.

COMMON COMLOG ACTIONS

The following activities are common uses for a comlog. This isn't the totality of a comlog's functions, but these should serve as a useful starting point for most characters. They are all **Simple (D0) Hacking tests**. They can be performed as easily by a character's Geist as by the character themselves. Many common forms of Geist serve as personal assistants in this way.

- **Block:** A character may select another person (or quantronic entity, such as a geist, AI fragment, corporate account, etc) and block them. A blocked character cannot perceive or interact with any quantronic data that the blocking character broadcasts, and vice versa. This can be bypassed, normally by using an alternative ID or finding some means of falsifying their authentication. This doesn't prevent other forms of quantronic interactions such as attacks. It only prevents routine comlog activities such as those described here. This action can also be used to unblock a person who has been previously blocked.
- **Contact:** Attempt to begin a voice, video, or holographic call with another person, allowing near-instantaneous two-way communication with someone on the same planet. The recipient can see who is attempting to contact them, and some people set their Comlog to refuse unknown callers. Others have their geist answer calls, forwarding anything interesting or important. A call can be the basis of other actions, including InfoWar attacks, though time delay from distance can add Interference Soak to this.
- **Record:** Sounds and sights near the character can be recorded for later review using the comlog's sensors or any suitable connected device. Sounds can be recorded alone as audio, or as part of video or holography. Sights can be recorded as still images, video, or holography. Some locations may be designated as no-recording, restricting this function by increasing the Difficulty of the skill test. The Difficulty increase depends on how restrictive the designation is.
- **Review:** Review any recordings made using the Record action. Reviewing a recording allows a character to discover facts about that place or situation that they may have missed previously, and the character can attempt new Observation or Insight tests for that situation that may have failed before.

INFORMATION FROM AR

In game terms, Augmented Reality means that there's a whole host of information available just by looking — far more than there would be without AR. A normal Observation test, for any character equipped to view Maya, can see a vast amount of data about their immediate surroundings and the people nearby, and they can interact with that data with the tap of a virtual button or a simple spoken request. This wealth of data should be accounted for when a player asks what their character can perceive.

It's also worth remembering that not everyone will have quite the same experience. Characters who aren't connected to Maya, or who don't have comlogs, won't see the world in the same way. It's easy for someone without Maya access to get lost in a city where all the street signs are only visible in augmented reality. Attempting to navigate a city or perform any action in an environment where AR is ubiquitous adds +2 Difficulty for any character who can't perceive AR, either because they're not linked to Maya or because they lack a functioning comlog. This also applies to characters whose comlogs are turned off, disabled by Breaches, or in dumb mode (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 352). A character using a lower-tech interface — such as a cheap undersubscribed Atek device — may ignore this penalty, but instead suffer +2 to their Complication range, as their AR interactions are awkward, stilted, or clumsy.

- **Send:** Send a message to another person in the form of text, images, sound, video, holography, simple programmes, or data. The recipient will receive the message as soon as data transfer allows (nearly-instantaneous on-planet, several minutes in the same system, longer to a different system). Messages can be and are typically screened before they're opened, to prevent opening anything dangerous.
- **Study:** Access readily available information on an object, place, or person in view nearby anywhere within Long range, or about a specific subject. This allows for most standard Education tests to be attempted to research or learn about something. However, the sheer quantity of information available means that it's often hard or time-consuming to perform that research. This can also be used to obtain trivial information, such as basic mathematics, checking the time and date, looking at their calendar or the public calendars of others, or bringing up their financial data. Geists are often called upon to curate this information, sifting through to find the most pertinent details and providing information as required.
- **Transfer:** Copy information, recordings, or other files from one network or device to another. This requires that the character have authorised access to both the origin and the destination and be able to establish a connection between them. This is simple when sharing a recording with a friend, passing from one comlog to another, but may be more difficult if trying to transfer files to or from a secure system. It may require other actions to obtain the necessary authorisation and access. Especially large files or especially slow or restrictive connections may mean that this takes additional time.

HACKING A COMLOG

A hacker who uses the *Data Manipulation* Breach Effect (see *Infinity Corebook* p. 121) on a target's comlog can make alterations to the AR information the target perceives. This could be to hide or alter some of the information the target sees or hears or to reveal things that are normally hidden to them. Hackers can send an anonymous message, or more convoluted ones such as altering a navigation process to show a different route, or sow dissent by changing messages received from others. These kinds of changes are temporary and the data is restored from mesh backups regularly, overwriting altered or erroneous data. However, it can be useful if used intelligently. It can also be used on data the comlog broadcasts, such as the target's halo (p. 22), altering the target's AR presence in subtle or overt ways.

Similarly, the *Command System* Breach Effect can produce interesting results if used by a cunning hacker on a target's comlog. Any of the normal

comlog functions described on p. 20 are viable options for this Breach Effect, allowing a hacker to cause a target's comlog to send messages, make calls, transfer data, or start recording. In this instance, any activity using a comlog hacked in this manner uses the permissions and authentications of the hacked comlog, rather than those of the hacker's own equipment, which could be a hindrance or an advantage.

Other Breach Effects can be useful in the right situations. Preventing a comlog from being able to call out, record, or send messages, *Disable Function*, can be a valuable trick. *System Disruption* can hinder or impair someone's activities in general. *Spoof/Sniff* can steal a target's authentications. *Tag* is one of the most useful, allowing a hacker to turn a target, or even an innocent bystander, into a repeater. *Revoke Authentication* is one of the least useful to use on a comlog. It will be immediately noticeable as the target's AR and other functions stop and bring up errors and quickly fixed because implanted comlog authentication uses biometric data to grant authentication.

AUGMENTED REALITY

People see the world wreathed in data. This is curated and organised by their geists, as the sheer amount of data out there would be impossible for a human to parse, rendering the whole endeavour pointless. A gestalt of each individual mesh network, individuals create and customise their own experiences which cross and merge with those of others where they interact. A person's home has a host of augmented reality overlays, collectively, the patina, that are as much a part of the experience of living there as the physical décor and are visible to visitors to the home. Similarly, businesses and communal spaces have their own patinas that bleed into the personal sensoria of each person present. Outside locations catering to Ariadnans and Tohaa, few places still use physical signage. Signs and notices exist in AR, allowing them to be changed easily when needed and to adapt their content for each viewer, such as changing languages according to the reader's preferences.

When a person looks out into the world, he can see others interacting with augmented reality as well. They can touch interfaces that hang in mid-air, converse with the ghost or remote holopresence of a friend, give an instruction to their geist, or even play a board game with animated AR pieces. Some elements are more visible than others. While one person might be quite happy listening to a song and seeing the holographic visualisation that accompanies the tune, it might be rude to impose that on others, so everyone else sees a muted version around the listener, as a cue informing that this person is listening to music.

CLOUDS AND HALOS

A key element of the quantronic world and how it lets people interact are two interrelated concepts: the social cloud and the halo.

A person's social cloud is all the data they connect to, consciously or otherwise. It's all the ways their comlog syncs their patina with those nearby, and all their social connections: connections to friends, colleagues, home, and workplace, the channels they subscribe to, the clusters they take part in, the personal details they share, and all the quantronic traces that make up their lives, past and present.

But a social cloud is also all the traces and trails left behind that a person may not know about, or which they may not broadcast – their “data shadow.” Surveillance footage, communications logs, transaction receipts, and a billion other tiny interactions aside make up a person's footprint in the quantronic world.

A halo is the portion of a person's social cloud that they choose to make immediately visible, as part of the AR surrounding them. Everyone's halo is different. Some are a swirling, noisy mass of public broadcasts and open data. Others are curated, minimalist displays of only the most pertinent information. Like the social media of the past, it's up to the individual how they choose to present themselves, only now, that public profile surrounds individuals as they go about their lives. Privacy settings on halos allow a person to display different information to different people – a profile for friends, one for colleagues, one for strangers, or even more nuanced than that. Similarly, people may adjust their halo depending on what they're doing at the time. Choosing the right content for a halo can be a vital part of a job interview, party, or date, almost akin to virtual clothing.

A halo is the entry point to the social cloud. It's the part that everyone else sees, and thus it's the part that connects with others. A person's social interactions may rely on their halo to present the right impression, and the ability to read the halos of others finds openings for conversations. Very rarely will people not know the names of the strangers around them, as a person's name is right there in their halo, and depending on the circumstances, information about career, hobbies, and family. People can grant or rescind halo permissions at a moment's notice with a gesture or a simple command, often as a natural part of inter-personal interactions, akin to a handshake during a meeting, or a signal of pleasure or displeasure.

Indeed, so ubiquitous are halos that it can be mildly disconcerting to see someone without one. Only the poorest citizens don't broadcast a halo,

so a person with no halo is conspicuous, often indicating someone without a Maya connection, or functioning commlog. A lack of a halo is often regarded as suspicious, because it represents an unknown. Having no information on someone is strange when everyone is surrounded by information. Someone could even be identified – mistakenly or not – as an Atek, which can draw the wrong kind of attention entirely.

As a guideline, the information that can be obtained from another character's halo falls into a few rough categories of permissions, listed below. Each level contains the information from the levels below it.

- **Permission-0:** A common “stranger-level” of permissions, providing only the most basic information. This level is typical of private people, who choose not to share information readily. This will normally only be the owner's name, age, and career or profession.
- **Permission-1:** A slightly less private level of permissions, and a common “public halo” level for many people. This normally includes a selection of images and videos of the owner from notable, happy events, links to some of the media they enjoy, or some of the public Maya clusters they're part of. This is cultivated and curated to create a specific impression and is a virtual first impression. Other Permission-1 settings may focus on business, with forwarding links to a company's public-facing Maya cluster, contact details for a few key colleagues, a public calendar for work events and availability for meetings, information about work history, and career accomplishments as a form of ever-present resume.
- **Permission-2:** An open level of permissions, but not completely unrestricted. Some especially open, outgoing individuals may use this level as their public default, as will anyone who aspires to or revels in celebrity or is trying to promote themselves. This will contain the basics, plus a vast assortment of links to content previews and ways to buy that content, wish-lists for gifts from fans, a public calendar for future appearances at social gatherings, contact details for an agent or representative (often just their geist), adverts for products they're paid to promote, and various other forms of self-promotion or attempts to monetise their lives.
- **Permission-3:** The most open level of permissions, normally reserved for friends, family, and close colleagues. This is everything, or almost everything, in a person's social cloud, though often arranged or structured so that it can be read easily in AR.

It takes no time or effort for a character to alter halo permissions, moving someone from one level to another. This is often done upon meeting

PRIVACY, SUBJECT TO CONDITION

Of course, a person's halo privacy is not absolute. Governments and corporations can hack a person's social cloud. Government intelligence, security, and law enforcement agencies can normally gain access to a person's social cloud with reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing. Each government regards “reasonable suspicion” differently, with Yu Jing having an especially open definition. Businesses track Maya searches, purchases, and other activity, data-mining through their hardware and software to target advertisements and gather consumer information to sell on to other companies.

READING HALOS

A person's halo is a valuable tool in social situations. You can walk up to someone and already know their name, and maybe even more, just because you've looked at their halo. In turn, they can know as much about you. This eases a lot of social anxiety, dispensing with an initial obstacle between strangers. Introductions are quick and easy, and common interests can be found instantly.

These are key elements of social interaction in-game: characters engaging in PsyWar, or even just research, may gain vital information from a target's halo, and use that information to open a dialogue or even manipulate the target. This can help spot opportunities to use PsyWar techniques like Coax, Deceive, or Seduce (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 130), or to be able to gauge a target's

Intransigence towards specific Metanoia Effects with a quick Insight or Observation test (Difficulty 3, reduced by the level of permissions a character has for the target's halo). Befriending someone can convince them to provide greater halo permissions, revealing more information to use.

Similarly, a halo can provide the clues necessary to research or study a target in more depth. Discovering that a person has a connection to a specific group, through work, hobbies, socialising, etc., can provide avenues of research that didn't exist before. A skill test to research a person for their connections or activities reduces in Difficulty by the level of permissions you have for the target's halo – it's simply easier to find out more information about someone if you have a greater number of leads to start with.

for the first time, normally with a handshake or similar physical gesture. Some people even leave this up to their geists, especially where they have a geist set up to study human behaviours. Halo permissions update automatically as part of any interaction, without the user ever needing to think about them.

DOMOTICS

For an ordinary person, some elements of their world are automated, and the richer someone is, the more likely it is that their world conforms to their will through responsive, automated processes, collectively known as domotics.

For a hacker, this is still true, but domotics do more than remove the hindrances and annoyances of life – they present opportunities. When household objects are smart, they become a hacker's playground and part of the battleground of InfoWar.

QUANTRONIC ID

Almost every object and location a character encounters, barring wild frontiers where the quantronic world isn't yet integrated as fully, will have some form of Quantronic ID, or QID. Each contains a unique identifier code and is associated with scanners and monitoring processes that log every interaction between that object and the people and objects around it.

What this means, is that even mundane objects are a wellspring of data, for those who know how to use it. Studying a QID's records can provide a vast amount of data about the movements and activities of people. A person's quantronic shadow (p. 34) will have this information from one perspective:

if a person has gone to a specific bar, entered by a specific door, sat on a specific stool, and drunk from a specific glass, all those interactions and more will be logged somewhere. The item's QID logs will contain that information from the other, a long list of every person that has interacted with it since it first came online. These vast quantities of data can be difficult to search and parse needing geists and LAIs to perform the search, and they're accessible only to the owners and other authorised persons.

Each QID 'knows' its owner. Specific identifiers connect an item to a person or organisation. As standard, only an object's owner, and other authorised persons, may access the QID logs for that object. Law enforcement and other authorities are able to obtain clearance given probable cause. Anyone else is only able to see the surface data from the object, such as who owns it and who made it.

Similarly, many items can limit and restrict who can interact with it in other ways. A door may be set only to unlock and open for specific individuals. A vehicle won't start for an unauthorised user. This kind of interaction usually occurs after a simple, deliberate physical contact such as tapping the object twice with one or two fingers (a double-tap) to bring up an AR interface. Simpler objects will trigger the normal function for example turning on or off a light or bringing up an associated file. There are some interactions that can't be restricted like this – no amount of authentication can stop a person sitting in a chair or drinking from a glass.

Getting deeper access to a QID requires obtaining or forcing authentication (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 116).

FAKE IDS AND DIGITAL SHADOWS

Fake IDs can vary from the laughably transparent, to the startlingly complex. As the quantronic world became more prevalent and important, the amount of data needed for a Fake ID to pass inspection has increased.

A Fake ID contains a patchwork of invented or stolen data, woven through other dataspheres to create a reasonable facsimile of a real person's digital shadow. Stolen data is easier for this, and identity theft remains an extremely lucrative endeavour for organised criminals. Inventing new data is trickier as it must be thorough, so many groups use lesser AIs to craft identities, based on data mined from other sources.

MEME-TAGGING

Even objects that don't have their own QIDs and are not inherently interactive can have domotics. With the ubiquitous way that physical reality and the quantronic world overlap, it's easy to place quantronic markers that are related to physical objects or locations. These markers are known as meme-tags. They exist entirely within the broader Mayasphere and are surprisingly commonplace.

Reading a meme-tag is simple enough. Walk up to the object the meme-tag is related to, double-tap it, and the information associated with the tag will appear. This is normally something simple like a video, audio file, or hologram commemorating a past event, a message, directions to somewhere else, or a link to a datasphere or Maya cluster.

The tricky part is that not all meme-tags are visible to everyone, and even then, they may not be immediately obvious. Some are hidden, visible only to those with specific authentication for secure communications between individuals or groups.

Creating a meme-tag is straightforward. Select the object or location that the tag will be related to – normally something that the intended users will notice. Then, select the authorisation needed to read the meme-tag. This could be everyone, or it could be a specific subset of people. Finally, determine the kind of information that will be presented when the meme-tag is read such as a single file or a link to something else.

GHOSTING

People no longer need to be somewhere to be somewhere. Remote presences are enabled by augmented reality and holography, allowing face-to-face interaction without ever being in the same room. This is known as ghosting, which is not to be confused with direct control of a remote. Normally, the difference will be clear in context as remote holopresence has no physical component.

A person who is ghosting perceives the environment they are projected into as if they were there, but the information is a composite sensorium, built from the local mesh networks and amalgamated together. This imposes a minor limitation that a person cannot ghost into a location that has insufficient mesh coverage, but that is seldom a concern for most people. A greater limitation is that some locations do not permit ghosting for reasons of security. Regardless, a person ghosting can perceive their environment fully, though their patina may include certain elements that can intrude if necessary. For example, a person ghosting from their living room may see objects from their home appear if they receive a visitor.

Similarly, everyone else can see the ghost as if they were there. Ghosts are flagged as holopresence projections in AR to make it clear that their presence is virtual only. It's considered impolite to walk through someone else's projection and doing so draws unwanted attention and may signal that someone is off-line. Even if a person ghosting wishes privacy, they will still appear as a presence in AR, but their features and details of their appearance will be obscured in some way.

A person's ghost can move around freely, even if that person is sitting, lying in bed, or otherwise performing different physical activities. Various automated processes cover ghost movement often directed by a geist or linked to someone or something else. If a person's ghost is joining a friend for



a walk, the ghost will appear to walk where and when the friend does.

Most ghosting occurs in one of two forms – either the person ghosting is visiting a place, or they are visiting a person. Location-ghosting, or virtual tourism, is frequently for seeing sights and experiencing events that may not be physically accessible. This includes landmarks and tourist destinations, entertainment such as live music or theatrical productions, and lectures, debates, seminars, and public speaking. Any event where there'll be an audience will have location-ghosting, and movement of ghosts will be limited to certain areas to minimise disturbances. Walking through a ghost is less of a faux pas here, due to the dense crowds. These events often charge a fee for ghosting, though this is typically less than the ticket price for being there in person. Visiting a person is even simpler. It typically begins as a voice or video call, which then transitions into a visit for one, other, or both, with a projection appearing nearby. It ends in the same way, with one or both parties ending the call.

Some ghosting will be mutual, rather than one person visiting another. This involves pulling reality, creating a composite of both participants' current locations as a shared space that both inhabit. This is often used for collective working, conference calls, and other collaborative efforts, and those who engage in this practice regularly often create specific composite environments that are designed to physically and virtually overlap. Many corporations have conference rooms to enable meetings that connect different offices. These rooms are designed to impress, with sweeping vistas where you can look out of one window and see the night sky over one city and from another, see the midday sun over a different city.

GHOSTING IN PLAY

A character can ghost to a person as easily as calling them, and to a ghosting-friendly location or event venue almost as easily, though sometimes after paying an attendance fee. Ghosting allows a character to observe their environment and the people in it as if they were physically present, including social interactions with them. This includes PsyWar techniques, though it's possible to block, mute, or otherwise avoid someone else if they start harassing you through virtual means, making PsyWar potentially unreliable if used indelicately while ghosting.

A character's holopresence cannot physically interact with objects or people and is not considered to be in that location for the purposes of any effect or ability which requires physical proximity (such as making InfoWar attacks without the aid of a repeater nearby). Further, the character may not

ghost and perform complex activity, or any activity that requires their attention, unless they are pulling reality and thus able to see what they are doing.

If a character currently ghosting suffers one or more Breaches, the call will end immediately, and their holopresence will vanish. Similarly, if the character's ghost attempts to move outside of Close range of their destination – either the location they are ghosting to, or the person they're visiting – the call will end immediately.

GHOSTING PAST SECURITY

A character can attempt to project themselves into an environment without it being publicly-accessible, or without having someone there to ghost to. This is, however, more difficult.

A character with a hacking device may attempt to project themselves into any location within Close range of themselves, or within Close range of a repeater, with a **Daunting (D3) Hacking test**. While technically a hacker can project a ghost of themselves within Close range, it's also of limited use, given the effort involved relative to the benefits. However, gaining access to a repeater, or tagging a device to serve as a repeater, can allow a character to go to places they've never been before, and obtain information that would otherwise be impossible.

Remember, however, that a holopresence cannot move too far from the repeater that is receiving them, and that holopresences are both visible and clearly marked as holograms. It's impossible to pass a ghost off as a real person, and enemies who spot an unauthorised projection are liable to sound the alarm.

INTO A SEA OF DATA

When a hacker delves deeper into the quantronic landscape, all pretence of overlap between the quantronic world and reality disappear. The hacker digs beneath the user interfaces, AR patinas, and multimedia sensoria and starts navigating streams of raw data, in a realm inhabited by expert systems, LAIs, and other quantronic minds. A hacker is a visitor in these realms, a foreign entity, who must learn the rules of an unfamiliar and infinitely-expanding world.

This section contains additional rules and content for characters playing out InfoWar scenes.

MAPPING DATASPHERES

A quantronic zone typically represents a single system within a single network. This could be large or small and may or may not have a physical counterpart in the real world. These zones in turn will have connections to one another. Where physical zones are defined by physical access – the ability to move from one to another – quantronic zones are determined by the flow of data. Quantronic zones can connect to one another in ways that physical zones cannot, with a single system possessing countless connections of various kinds.

It can be useful to break down these connections into distinct connective maps, each representing a single relatively simple network, and where necessary, allowing a character to transition between a zone on one map to its counterpart on another. These points of overlap can also vary wildly in scale. The security cameras within a single room of a building may connect both to the other systems in that room (a mesh network, or shallow map, which correlates to physical objects in a real place), to the security system in the building (a deeper network, connecting devices related by common purpose and similarity of data), and to a wider planetary or system-wide network (a deeper network still, connecting devices of common ownership). Go deep enough, and a hacker can move between data-spheres, though this isn't always effective, or worth the effort compared to finding a more direct way in.

But, rather than talk about this in an abstract manner, this section will go step-by-step through an example network, a security system in a corporate building, explaining how it was constructed and the reasoning for different components and elements.

LAYER 1: MESH NETWORK

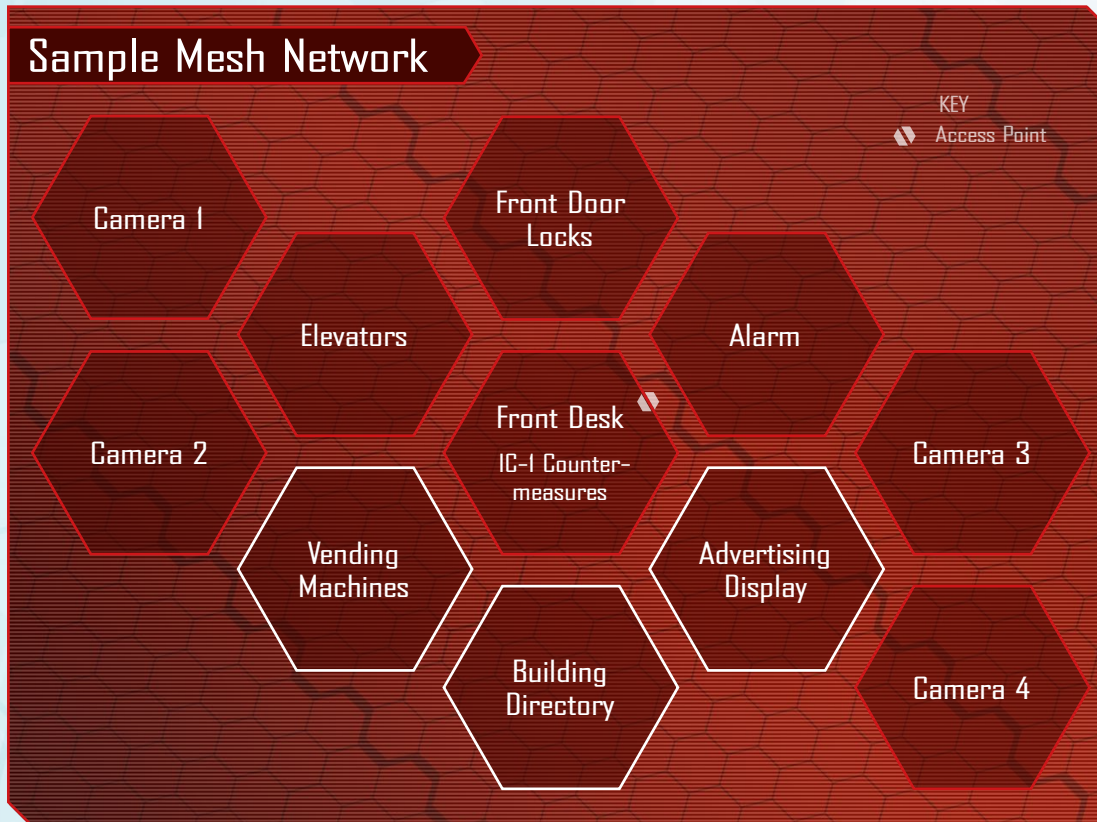
The office is publicly accessible, serving as a showroom and providing direct customer services. The main foyer contains several systems of note. Each of the zones listed below is adjacent to all the others; their physical positioning is irrelevant. The zones marked in red are also part of the security network (Layer 2).

- **Security Cameras:** There are four cameras in the foyer, minimising blind-spots. They record video and audio within the foyer, and their combined inputs can be composited into a single holographic image. They also track authorisation and permissions of individuals visible to them. The security cameras are secured zones, with a Firewall of 5, and Security Soak 2. Each can take a single Breach, like a Trooper NPC.
- **Alarm:** There is an alarm system for the foyer as well. This can be triggered manually by personnel, by unauthorised access to locations,

and by damage (Breaches) to other systems. It specifically signals that there is trouble in the foyer. The alarm system is a secured zone, with a Firewall of 12, Security Soak 2, and can withstand 2 Breaches, like an Elite NPC. If the alarm is triggered, it adds 2 Heat to the GM's pool at the start of each Round, which the GM may use for locking doors, summoning reinforcements, and providing a security response.

- **Front Door Locks:** The large, reinforced glass front doors open automatically for the public, but can be locked by security. The doors are a secured zone, with a Firewall of 8 and Security Soak 3, and can withstand 2 Breaches, like an Elite NPC. The GM may spend 2 Threat to lock the front doors if the alarm is triggered.
- **Elevators:** Access to the elevators is secured, and they will open only for those with the correct permissions, either from being an employee or granted by the receptionist. These permissions also determine which floors each person is permitted to enter. The system that governs the elevators is a secured zone, with a Firewall of 12 and Security Soak 3, and can withstand 2 Breaches, like an Elite NPC.
- **Advertising Display:** An array of holoprojectors, responsive and interactive, the advertising display allows potential customers to see the company's products and achievements and learn more at their discretion. The display is secured to prevent unauthorised changes but contains data that is intended for public consumption.
- **Front Desk:** A receptionist sits at the large main desk, serving as a main point of enquiry for visitors. Perhaps a little anachronistic – the receptionist's job could be automated – but the presence of a person makes the company seem friendlier and more approachable. They're also a first line observer for building security, both physical and quantronic. The receptionist grants visitor authentication and permissions for access to the rest of the building, as necessary. The desk itself serves as an access point for authorised users wishing to access the building's network and is a secure zone with a Firewall of 12 and Security Soak 3, which can withstand 2 Breaches, like an Elite NPC. However, while the receptionist is at the desk, the zone uses the receptionist's Firewall, Soak, and Breaches.
- **Security Staff:** Two security guards stand on opposite sides of the room, dressed smartly but intended to be inobtrusive. They're armed and in constant communications with one another, the receptionist, and the security office upstairs. They have their own Firewall, Security, and Breaches, and permissions to access the security network.
- **Vending Machines:** A pair of simple food and drink dispensers, the vending machines will dispense to any customer and are not secured.

Sample Mesh Network



- **Building Directory:** A simple database, it provides a listing of personnel in the building, where their offices are, and if they are currently busy. It may also include public contact details for some of them. The directory can be accessed by the public, but only displays information for a limited number of personnel whose jobs are public-facing. People with suitable permissions can access more information.

LAYER 2: SECURITY NETWORK

A network formed of items of common purpose, the building's security network consists of every security device and system in the building.

The cameras, alarms, door and elevator locks, and front desk access point in the Layer 1 network – the zones marked in red on the Layer 1 map – are all part of this layer.

- **Security Cameras:** Security cameras throughout the building transmit data to other servers within this network. All the cameras are as described on p. 26
- **Alarms:** Each floor of the building has a distinct alarm system, identical to the one in the foyer. Distinct systems reduce vulnerability. A single alarm system could be disabled and leave the whole building exposed, but floor by floor systems signal where a hazard or threat is located.
- **Front Desk Access:** The front desk in the foyer serves as an access point to the wider security network, allowing authorised personnel to access security data at a moment's notice.
- **Elevators:** The building's elevators are tied to security, as they rely on security data to determine permissions and movement. Further, they can be disabled by an authorised user from any security access point like the front desk or security offices.
- **Door Locks:** As with the front door in the foyer, all internal and external doors are secured, and can be locked or unlocked remotely. Any given door will open for those with the correct permissions, either by voice command or physical contact such as a double-tap or grasping the handle.
- **Security Office Access:** Each floor has a security office which contains an access point for the security network and several display devices, audio, visual, and holoprojector, for a user to view security data such as footage from the cameras or door access logs. These access points are secured zones, each with a Firewall of 12 and Security Soak 3, and which can withstand 2 Breaches, like an Elite NPC. Security offices are staffed periodically, and may use the Firewall, Security, and Breaches of the NPC in the office.
- **Local Security Database:** Uploaded from a wider corporate network, this database contains information from additional feeds from planetary and national databases as required. Other information can be added at request – manually from staff

or automated from a dedicated LAI – but takes a little longer to obtain. This database contains a continually self-updating list of all persons and quantronic entities (LAIs, geists, etc) with permission to enter the facility or access its systems, as well as details of what their permissions allow them to do. A Breach Effect here can create authentication for the whole security system. Using that information, security personnel and systems monitor the movements and activities of staff and visitors. The security database is a secured zone, with a Firewall of 16, Security Soak of 4, and can take up to 5 Breaches, like a Nemesis NPC or a Player Character. It is always inhabited with an expert system (see p. 81) which monitors and updates the database and responds aggressively to any intrusion.

- **Report Processing:** This system is built to gather the data from individual cameras, door systems, and elevators, and collate that data into a real-time report on where everyone is at that specific moment. Report processing contains only current data – things happening now – and the reports from the last hour to provide context. Any reports older than an hour are passed into a local archive and then a larger corporate one, allowing for a complete image of all movements and activities within the building over any period. The current report will be accessed periodically by security personnel investigating specific matters or random spot checks and annotated for additional

context. The software will automatically flag any events it regards as unusual. The security system is adaptive and expansive, and often highly intuitive. This is a secure Commercial HighSec zone (providing 2[Ⓝ] Interference Soak), with a Firewall of 16, a Security Soak of 4, and can take up to 5 Breaches, like a Nemesis NPC or a Player Character. Further, due to active security measures, any InfoWar attack made against the zone has +2 Difficulty and is noisy for the purposes of stealth.

- **Local Archive:** The local archive contains security reports from report processing for the last six months, annotated by staff. Older reports are stored off site in another archive. This is a secure Commercial HighSec zone (providing 2[Ⓝ] Interference Soak), with a Firewall of 16, a Security Soak of 4, and can take up to 5 Breaches, like a Nemesis NPC or a Player Character.
- **Connections:** On the diagram, these lines denote the data connections between systems, and thus the permissible movement between zones. Normal connections – simple lines – allow free movement of data (and hackers).
- **Restricted Connections:** Some connections in this network have hardware restrictions that only permit data through specific ports. Attempting to move along a restricted connection requires a **Challenging (D2) Tech test**. These are marked as red lines on the diagram.
- **Burst Connection:** Some connections in this network are not always-on. They transmit a

Sample Security Network



large amount of data in a fraction of a second, and then cease transmitting. Attempting to detect this connection's existence requires a **Daunting (D3) Analysis test** (normal modifiers for range and perception apply), as it is difficult to detect when not transmitting. Moving along a burst connection requires either waiting for a scheduled transmission or a Breach effect on the transmitting zone to force a transmission, which is noisy, as it's unscheduled. These are marked as dashed lines on the diagram.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

With two maps in place, now we need to consider how to navigate this. A few zones overlap between the two maps, allowing movement from one to another, much as a character might navigate between floors of a building. These are the keys.

A hacker is trying to get into the local archive to find out what an enemy was doing in this building a few days previously. They don't have a reason to be in the building legitimately, so they can't get past the foyer physically.

There are three unsecured zones in the foyer – directory, the advertising display, and the vending machines – though none of them have a direct connection to the security network. Any of those three are possible ways in, but if the hacker is detected, they make for a slower path. The cameras have a more direct route, camera, then report processing, then the archive. But, they're not made to be access points, making the route trickier. The front desk has a direct route, and one that's relatively open, but it's also got an active defender, the receptionist, who could pose a problem.

All of this presumes a brute force approach, **Hacking and Tech** tests, making attacks, and using Breach Effects to punch holes in or disable secured zones. A subtler approach is also possible here. A little social engineering can secure the permissions to get part of the way in, or steal authentications needed to make a quiet entrance.

These maps could be expanded further. There are naturally other networks in the building, serving different purposes, and zones in those networks could expand out and overlap with other networks elsewhere in the company, or connect to Maya clusters or other dataspheres. These kinds of maps can be expanded to cover as little or as much as the GM and the players are interested in exploring and exploiting.

EXTREMES OF DISTANCE

Data swirls around worlds like wind or water, and planetside connections are fast and efficient. Even

connections to vessels in orbit or other worlds and outposts within a single solar system are relatively fast and easy. But beyond that, there are limitations. Reaching other star systems requires infrastructure and planning that are scarce in a world where most other things are abundant.

INTRASYSTEM SIGNAL DELAY


Normal signals are limited to light-speed. This means that there's a delay over interplanetary distances within the same solar system, which can range from several minutes, to an hour or more. It takes roughly 8 minutes 20 seconds for data to travel 1 Astronomical Unit. This is fine for monodirectional signals that send information one way, to be received all at once and then responded to in kind later. Instantaneous, real-time interaction though is impossible, as it faces twice the signal delay, as the signal must cross the distance with an input, and then return with the response. A hacker would have to be able to accurately predict and react to events which haven't happened yet to effectively function over such long distances.

The normal solution to this, and to most distance-related problems that confront a hacker, is automation. A hacker cannot effectively access networks and dataspheres with more than a few seconds of lag, as real-time responsiveness is vital for both offense and defence, but they can send a proxy to do the work for them. This requires creating or obtaining a program able to operate autonomously, ranging from an expert system, to an instance of a specialised geist or similar lesser AIs. This program can then perform the desired actions, respond accordingly to resistance and counter-measures, and send information back, returning, or self-deleting as required.

Sending a proxy requires some effort and is difficult. The program cannot be sent openly, as it is liable to be detected and deleted before it can get to work. This process is called packing, which compresses the program, and disguises it so that it cannot easily be identified for what it is. Packing a program takes a **Daunting (D3) Hacking test** and at least an hour of work. Momentum generated from this test can be stored in the program, representing more expansive and flexible instructions. The program may use this Momentum freely, but cannot spend Momentum from the group pool otherwise, as they're too distanced from their owner.

Once packaged, the program can be transmitted, and it will unpack itself and get to work upon arrival.

Expert Proxy X: Where most expert systems provide automated support and assistance to the user, an expert proxy uses those processes and subroutines

to perform straightforward tasks by themselves. An Expert Proxy makes **Hacking, Analysis, and Tech** tests using an Attribute score of 8, and Expertise and Focus ratings in those skills equal to X. They also have Firewall equal to 9+X, and Security Soak X, but they can only withstand a single Breach. Further, each Expert Proxy can be equipped with a single SWORD-1 or CLAW-1 program, and a single SHIELD-1 program, which the hacker sending the proxy must own. Expert Proxies are programmed to self-delete upon the conclusion of their objective, leaving virtually no trace of their presence. Expert Proxies have a Restriction of 2, a base cost of 2+5 , Tariff X.

LAI Proxy: An LAI proxy is constructed in the same way as a geist, as they use broadly similar technologies. Both Guardian Geists and Security Geists (see *Infinity* Corebook, p. 379) are good templates for this, though they are more offensive in purpose. An LAI proxy can be equipped with one program per point of Hacking Expertise, with no program rated higher than its Hacking Focus. All programs must be owned by the LAI's owner or creator beforehand. As they are more intelligent than Expert Proxies, they can be given more complex objectives, and can even be commanded to hide within a system for a protracted period, to await subsequent instructions, or to attempt to repack themselves and transmit themselves home.

PACKAGE TRANSIT

Data transmission through wormholes is even more difficult than simply dealing with the lag from distances. As signals cannot be beamed through a wormhole using any ordinary transmitter, data must be transmitted to specialised commodules near the wormhole, which handle transmissions to the other side, adding both signal delay and another bottleneck for data transfer. These problems are compounded by the fact that ALEPH monitors inter-system traffic, making it difficult to smuggle even the most cunningly concealed proxy.

Data can also be carried by a ship, which collects intersystem data before departing (not all of it legal) and then transmits it again when it emerges from the other side of the wormhole. But this is only really suitable for low-priority bulk data that isn't important enough for a direct transmission, and it can add days of delay.


In these circumstances, the proxies described above can still be useful. There is a risk of detection by ALEPH, but of course, if you're doing ALEPH's work, this might not be a problem. The sheer amount of time required means that such methods cannot help when time is of the essence.

METATRON AND DĀRĀO


Of course, these are not the only options for distant data transmissions – where a problem exists, someone will seek a solution. In this case, the solution is a series of transponders, collectively called the Metatron network (and its Yu Jing counterpart, Dǎrǎo), which allow for faster-than-light data transfer, communications, and InfoWar attacks. The specifics of the technology remain highly classified, restricted primarily to government and military use. The largest user of these systems outside of PanOceania and Yu Jing is ALEPH, who maintains a connection between instances and aspects across the Human Sphere.

Access to Metatron or Dǎrǎo cannot be bought with wealth or status. Rather, access is provided only because of absolute strategic need under the military or political discretion of the governments of PanOceania or Yu Jing, or authorisation from within O-12. The strategic value of these networks is so great that access is heavily scrutinised, as any instance of permission could be the start of a move to undermine another faction's control.

If a character has received permission to access Metatron or Dǎrǎo, then they gain the ability to transmit data on an interstellar scale. This takes the form of a single string of four intermediary zones that sit between star systems and the dataspheres within them. Other zones will be attached on each end of this string, representing part of dataspheres which are connected by Metatron/Dǎrǎo. Traffic along this string is one-way, though there will be a parallel string that runs in the opposite direction for return traffic, and both are sufficiently fast as to allow real-time interactions.

1. **Input Cache:** The first zone is a cache, which gathers and processes incoming data, and checks the authentication of the sender, then moves it along. This is a secure zone, requiring authentication specifically from one of the above governments. This is a two-factor system, requiring both a unique code fragment and biometric data. For anyone attempting to access the Input Cache without permission, it has a Firewall of 20, Security Soak 6, and Military HighSec (+4  Interference Soak), and is also hidden by advanced and adaptive camouflage, requiring an **Epic (D5) Observation test** to even detect the zone.
2. **Transmission Router:** The second zone transmits the data to the destination. To free up bandwidth, this zone is not protected – that's the purpose of the input cache.
3. **Reception Router:** The third zone receives transmissions at the destination. Technically, there are many reception routers for different locations and destinations, but data needs to have a destination logged before it can pass

the Input Cache. Diverting from that mid-transmission is impossible. Again, this zone is not protected.

4. **Output Cache:** The final zone gathers and processes the data just transmitted, checking for authentication, and then sends it along to its ultimate destination. This uses the same authentication as the input cache and has the same defences. For anyone attempting to access the Output Cache without permission, it has a Firewall of 20, Security Soak 6, and Military HighSec (+4  Interference Soak), and is also hidden by advanced and adaptive camouflage, requiring an **Epic (D5) Observation test** to even detect the zone.

CRYPTOGRAPHY

Ensuring that information is accessible only to those who need to access it is a vital part of technological development, and the subject of an arms race that has existed for as long as people have desired to keep secrets. Nations and corporations devise new technologies to break the encryption used by their rivals and enemies, and in turn, they seek to develop new methods of encryption that those rivals and enemies cannot break. This arms race has only accelerated as time has passed.

The revolution of quantronics that came with the discovery of Teseum shook up the landscape for cryptography. A computer that could perform vast numbers of processes simultaneously could brute-force through most common forms of encryption in seconds, where previous machines, handling processes sequentially, might have required decades. Commerce and finance were threatened on an international scale. Security was a vital component of their business, after all.

Thus, cryptographers, mathematicians, programmers, and others sought to devise cryptography that a quantronic device couldn't simply force through. Finding the solution would earn them a fortune. The biggest success was the development of algorithms that required multiple simultaneous solutions to be provided, slowing the speed a quantronic system could pry open. This success was short-lived as processing power increased, so the complexity needed to increase. Researchers aspired to force quantronic computers to process a cryptosystem more slowly. Active lock protocols invalidated all attempts if certain solutions were tested, forcing a fresh start, and sequential keys broke the decryption process into a series of discrete stages. but, these too were only successful for a time.

The encryption arms race accelerated further with the development of ALEPH, and a significant portion of cryptography was taken up by LAIs and ALEPH fragments. Some theorised that only an AI could create an encryption that an AI would be unable to break, while others in the field pushed towards more esoteric developments to find processes that computers couldn't easily understand.

Nevertheless, encryption remains an extremely active field, where new developments are devised, implemented, and rendered obsolete in weeks.

ENCRYPTION

The specifics of encryption change so quickly that it would be impossible to accurately categorise them. Instead, we abstract the process of encryption – and its counterpart, decryption – in a way that emulates the constantly shifting nature of the field.

Encrypting a specific file, system, or collection of data above and beyond the routine encryption that is a part of the quantronic world takes skill and effort. The level of encryption to be applied can be broken down into one of five categories, based primarily on how old and well known the techniques are.

- **Encryption-1:** This level uses largely obsolete techniques, potentially decades old. This won't stop a quantronic computer for more than a few seconds, though it may deter cursory examinations and stop intrusions from older technologies and manual decryption.
- **Encryption-2:** This level uses techniques that are years old and will serve mostly as a delaying tactic to slow down intruders briefly.
- **Encryption-3:** This level uses cryptosystems that may be months old, and which cannot truly secure information, though can delay intrusion for a while.
- **Encryption-4:** This level uses cryptosystems and techniques that are several weeks old. This is sufficient to secure information from everything except military-grade decryption methods.
- **Encryption-5:** The highest level of encryption uses state-of-the-art cryptosystems, no more than a few days old. Even military-grade LAIs haven't yet learned how to crack these yet, though they will in time.

Encrypting data requires a **Hacking** test with a Difficulty equal to the level of encryption desired, so applying Encryption-3 requires a **Daunting (D3) Hacking test**. This will take a few hours of work as well.

Complications on this test will introduce flaws that can be exploited. Momentum can be spent from this test to add extra layers of security. These are discussed further in the following section.

Encryption also takes research, which can be expensive. Details of cutting-edge cryptosystems are valuable and secret, and while a black market exists for it, such knowledge comes at a hefty price whatever the source. The restriction of an encryption library – a collection of information needed to effectively encrypt data to a certain level – is equal to the desired level of encryption, and costs $X+X$ M , where X is the level of encryption, with a Tariff of 2, and Maintenance of encryption level -1 . The Maintenance represents the cost of ensuring that the library is regularly and routinely updated with the latest data. Thus, a library for Encryption-3 has a Restriction of 3 and costs $3+3$ M , Tariff 2, with a Maintenance of 2.

A character can use the same library to encrypt as much data as they like, on as many occasions as they wish. But because the field of cryptography changes so quickly, the usefulness of any encryption applied will become increasingly obsolete over time, as shown on the table below.

DECRYPTION

Upon encountering encrypted data, a character can set about attempting to decrypt it. The difficulty and the time taken depends in part upon the level of encryption encountered and in part upon the tools and techniques the character uses to perform the decryption.

The process for decryption is like making an attack. The character makes a skill test, then rolls several Combat Dice to determine progress, akin to damage in combat, which represents attempts made to break the encryption. If five or more damage is inflicted, then a Breakthrough is made, equivalent to Harms. Once the number of Breakthroughs made is equal to the level of Encryption, the data has been decrypted.

The Stress of encrypted data is called **Complexity**. The greater the Complexity, the slower the decryption is likely to be, and each encrypted file has Complexity equal to 6 plus twice the Encryption

level. As its Soak, it has **Delay**, which reduces how much progress can be made at any one time; this is always Persistent Soak, and each encrypted file has Delay Soak equal to its Encryption level -2 , to a minimum of 0.

Decryption follows the process below:

1. The character attempts a **Challenging (D2) Hacking Test**.
2. If the **Hacking** test was successful, the character rolls to determine progress. Each type of decryption software has a rating which is a combination of two numbers – a fixed value and several M . This receives bonus dice as per the bonus damage table, using the character's Intelligence attribute. Once this bonus has been applied, make the progress roll using the M indicated, and total the result.
3. This total is reduced by one for each point of the encrypted file's Delay Soak. This is the total progress.
4. The total progress, after reduction, degrades the encrypted file's Complexity by an equal amount. If five or more progress is made, after reduction, or the Complexity is reduced to 0, or any Progress is made when the Complexity was already at 0, then the character makes a Breakthrough. If both occur, then two Breakthroughs are made.
5. If the number of Breakthroughs made is equal to the level of Encryption, the data has been decrypted.

Due to the similarity between this process and to making an attack, Momentum spends and attack qualities which normally affect the damage roll, number of Harms inflicted, and so forth, can be applied to encryption and decryption, at the GM's discretion.

EXTRA SECURITY FEATURES

When a file is encrypted, it may be provided with additional features, which can make the encryption harder to break. These can be purchased with Momentum when a character successfully encrypts the file. Where features can be purchased multiple times, they will be noted with an X. This is replaced with the number of times that feature has been purchased.

Whenever a character achieves a Breakthrough, they may disable one of the encryption's security features.

FLAWS AND EXPLOITS

When a file is encrypted, there may be inadvertent flaws in the cryptosystem that can be exploited by intruders. These come about because of Complications on the **Hacking** test to encrypt the file.

MOMENTUM SPENDS

NAME	EFFECT	MOMENTUM COST
Adaptive Algorithm X	Before a Hacking test is attempted to decrypt, restore 1 point of lost Complexity.	2
Increased Complexity X	Increase the Complexity of the encryption by 1.	1
Increased Delay X	Increase the encryption's Delay Soak by 1.	1
Restricted Access X	Increase the Difficulty of the Hacking test to perform decryption.	2
Retaliatory X	A failed Hacking test inflicts $1+(X*2)$ M , Piercing 1 quantum damage to the character attempting decryption.	X

When a flaw is caused, the GM may select it from the following list, or create something equivalent. Each of the options below applies an attack quality to any progress roll made against the encrypted file.

- **Sequential Fault:** The decryption attempt gains the Grievous quality.
- **Time Saver:** The decryption gains the Piercing 2 quality.
- **Decisive Exploit:** The decryption gains the Vicious 1 quality.

DECRYPTION TOOLS

The following tools are common methods of decryption. They can be run from any Hacking Tool.

These tools have a Maintenance cost, representing the work and cost involved in ensuring that the tools remain capable of dealing with the latest encryption techniques and algorithms.

QUANTRONIC SECURITY

Dataspheres, especially ones containing sensitive or restricted data, are laden with all manner of defensive programs designed to deter, impair, repel, or defeat would-be intruders.

Some of these are discussed in the *Infinity Corebook* already: quantronic terrain, data flux camouflage, HighSec zones, Intrusion Countermeasures, and secured zones. This section deals with two additional elements: more active forms of defence, and additional details and context for stealth and evasion during InfoWar scenes.

ACTIVE DEFENCES

Many of the most secure and sophisticated data-spheres and clusters make use of free-roaming programs and quantronic entities as part of their security, in addition to more static features such as Intrusion Countermeasures and HighSec zones. These active defence systems roam along data channels, performing patrols and converging upon detected intruders.

These active defences have several common features:

- **Quality:** This number, a rating from 8 to 15, serves as the Target Number for any skill tests the active defence is required to attempt. An active defence may have a second rating, noted in parentheses, which serves as the defence's Focus range for its skill tests.
- **Capabilities:** This category indicates which skills the active defence may attempt. Most active defences have one or more of Analysis, Hacking, or Tech.
- **Firewall:** An active defence has a Firewall equal to its Focus range (if any).
- **Security:** An active defence has Security Soak equal to its Quality divided by 4, rounding up.
- **Extras:** An active defence may have one or more additional benefits, which may include one or more InfoWar programs.

Active defences operate as a more limited form of Trooper NPC. They roll a single d20 on skill tests, cannot attempt Reactions, and are disabled after a single Breach. The GM may choose for an Active Defence to function as an Elite NPC instead, and then the active defence has a Firewall equal to its Quality.


DOORMAN












One of the most basic forms of active defence, Doormen are set to guard and patrol, often deploying countermeasures to impede intruders and eject them as swiftly as possible. They target hacking devices to force a swift disconnect.

- Quality:** 10
- Capabilities:** Hacking, Observation
- Firewall:** 5
- Security:** 0
- Extras:** CLAW-1 Blackout, IC-2 Redtape

HOPLITE

A common "soldier" program, Hoplites work in groups to block and repel intruders. They are equipped to control and disable an intruder's comms systems, swiftly ending an intrusion, while their own systems are especially difficult to breach.

- Quality:** 12 (1)
- Capabilities:** Hacking, Observation
- Firewall:** 6
- Security:** 1 (+4  Interference Soak)
- Extras:** CLAW-2 Oblivion, SHIELD-2 Breakwater

DECRYPTION TOOLS					
NAME	PROGRESS RATING	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	MAINTENANCE
No Tools	1+2 	-	-	-	-
Decrypt-1	1+4 	-	1	1+4  , T1	-
Decrypt-2	2+4 	Piercing 1	2	2+4  , T1	1
Decrypt-3	2+5 	Piercing 1	3	2+5  , T2	2
Decrypt-4	3+5 	Vicious 1	4	3+5  , T2	3
Decrypt-5	3+6 	Piercing 1, Vicious 1	5	3+6  , T3	4

MINELAYER

Minelayer programs have little direct offensive ability but can deploy and conceal potent countermeasures that no amount of forward planning can circumvent.

Quality: 12 (2)

Capabilities: Hacking, Stealth

Firewall: 6

Security: 2

Extras: IC-3 Black ICE, IC-3 Deadfall, IC-2 Hivemines

PROWLER

These programs attempt to ambush identified intruders, often pursuing them to access points and through friendly networks. Their offensive capabilities are quite potent.

Quality: 14 (3)

Capabilities: Hacking, Observation, Stealth

Firewall: 7

Security: 3

Extras: SWORD-1 Brain Blast.

SENTRY

These programs roam secure networks, scrutinising the people and entities that they encounter to locate intruders. When they find an incursion, they monitor it, sending information to allied programs.

Quality: 13 (2)

Capabilities: Analysis, Observation

Firewall: 7

Security: 2

Extras: IC-1 Crybaby, UPGRADE Cyberalert Systems

QUANTRONIC STEALTH

Moving unnoticed through the quantronic realm is important. The sheer range of obstacles, defensive mechanisms, and security systems can all make a hacker's life difficult. For the most part, the normal rules for stealth are applicable (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 104). However, there are a few additional considerations that apply specifically to remaining undetected in a quantronic environment.

SKILL TESTS IN STEALTH

While the Stealth skill covers remaining unnoticed and moving undetected in any situation, hackers have a few other options.

- **Analysis:** While normally used for in-depth inquiry and observation of fine details, **Analysis** can be used to spot patterns in detection protocols so the character knows to avoid where a system is actively observing.

- **Tech:** Use of the Tech skill can represent a character adjusting the hardware they are using to minimise or conceal the data flux they produce.
- **Thievery:** The Thievery skill includes a professional familiarity with security systems, and a character can use this to avoid the kinds of methods and technologies they're familiar with.

The GM may allow any, all, or none of those additional options on a case-by-case basis.

DATA SHADOWS

Every person leaves a trail of data behind them. Records and remnants of every connection and every interaction exist in the wake of each person's passage through the quantronic world, and this shadow cannot be removed entirely.

For characters seeking to avoid attention, this is a liability. For those seeking intrusions, it can be an asset.

A character's data shadow can be difficult to find. Finding recent data (within several days) relevant to your target's movement or activities requires a **Challenging (D2) Analysis test**, if any such data exists. This Difficulty may increase if the data is old, as older data will require more time and effort to find. Once a trail has been found, Momentum may be spent to find other connections, such as other times the target has been in that location, or which locations they were at/which interactions they performed immediately before or after the one already discovered. Each additional connection costs 1 Momentum. Complications may produce false connections, or allow the data to be misinterpreted. Attempting to find data if you already have a connection leading there reduces the Difficulty by 1.

Attempting to conceal or obscure a data shadow — your own, or someone else's — is similarly tricky. Simply deleting traces is not sufficient, as the sheer amount of data makes this difficult, and incomplete deletions may be too obvious. Instead, the most effective concealment involves junk data, false connections, and subtle disruptions. A successful **Challenging (D2) Hacking test** can obscure data within a single system or location, adding +1 Difficulty to any test to locate it. Momentum can be spent to increase the Difficulty further (2 Momentum per +1 Difficulty), or to increase the Complication range (1 Momentum per +1 Complication range).

CHAPTER 3

ALEPH CHARACTERS

To be a part of ALEPH's faction is to be a part of the AI, often quite literally. The overwhelming majority of ALEPH's agents are Aspects, shards of the infinitely divisible AI, spun off to a consciousness of their own, as varied and flawed as any human. Some would argue, they are exponentially better-equipped to deal with the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that consciousness collides with. With the number of Posthumans increasing each year, as well as a small, but steadily rising number of those who've pledged their loyalty directly to the AI, it would be folly to ignore the humans in its service. Although some would debate whether the word "human" still applies to them at all.

DECISION ONE:
BIRTH HOST

Determining Alien Heritage: Roll 1d20. On a roll of 19 or 20, your character belongs to an alien species, in the case of ALEPH faction characters, an AI (see p. 44.) If you roll an AI host, you can instead choose to spend 1 Life Point to be human.

AI Host: Each AI type has a template. Apply the species' attribute modifiers to both your attributes and the Host section of your character sheet. Make note of any special abilities possessed by your AI type.

Non-human characters also have a Life Point cost. You can choose to pay this cost to simply choose the species, but the cost must be paid even if you randomly roll into it. (If the cost cannot be paid, the character is considered human.)

DECISION TWO:
ALEPH FACTION
AND HERITAGE

If the Lifepath reveals your heritage is ALEPH, you can choose to roll on the *AI Host Table* (p. 55) with no additional Life Point Cost beyond those of your host. If you choose not to (or if your current faction is ALEPH, but you have a different heritage), then you are simply a human who is loyal to the AI.

DECISION FOUR:
ALEPH STATUS

If your faction is ALEPH, then your Social Status is Elite, and you gain the normal benefits for that Social Status. If your faction is not ALEPH, then you have become a renegade; determine your Social Status normally.

ALEPH LIFEPATH
DECISIONSDECISION ONE—
BIRTH HOST

If you roll a 19 or 20 you are an AI; roll on the *AI Host Table*.

DECISION TWO—
FACTION AND
HERITAGE

Characters with ALEPH heritage can choose to roll on the *AI Host Table* (p. 55) with no additional Life Point Cost. If you choose not to (or if your current faction is ALEPH, but you have a different heritage), then you are simply a human who is loyal to the AI.

DECISION FOUR—
STATUS

If your faction is ALEPH, then your Social Status is Elite (and you gain the normal benefits for that Social Status). If your faction is not ALEPH, then you have become a renegade; determine your Social Status normally.

DECISION SEVEN—
ADOLESCENT
EVENT

Characters in the ALEPH Faction roll on the *ALEPH Faction Adolescent Event Tables*.

DECISION EIGHT—
CAREERS

Instead of rolling on the appropriate *Faction Career* table in the corebook, characters in the ALEPH Faction roll on the *ALEPH Faction Career* table, as well as the *ALEPH Faction Career Event* tables.

Note: On the Event Table, interpret any result involving your family as Bureau Toth. (For example, a result of "parents killed" would mean that Bureau Toth agents you were involved with were killed.) Similarly, interpret any event resulting in you contracting a disease as being a quantum virus, etc.





ALEPH ADOLESCENT EVENT TABLE

D20	ADOLESCENT EVENT	SUGGESTED CHARACTER TRAIT	OPTIONAL EFFECT
1	You participated in faction-sponsored research	Prototype	Increase one Attribute by +1 but gain a 7+7 Asset debt to a random faction.
2	You kept a secret with disastrous results.	Cryptophobia	Gain 1 rank in Analysis.
3	Trying to live up to your hero's expectations, you wound up hospitalised for a year. What happened?	Crushing Expectations	Reduce Vigour by 1 but gain 1 rank in Discipline.
4	Living in the shadow of the AI, your geist developed the appearance of crippling self-doubt. You did your best to console it with shiny new tech.	"Insecure" Geist	Reduce your geist's Resolve by 2 but increase two of its attributes by +2 each. Gain a 4 Asset debt.
5	The personality of your geist radically shifted overnight. Eventually you realised that it was replaced by one of ALEPH's Aspects. And it's got its eye on you.	Closely Monitored	Choose four of your geist's attributes and increase them by one point each. You may choose Bureau Toth Agent as your first career.
6	Confusing the <i>Myrmidon Wars</i> Mayaseries for reality, your geist "heroically" wrecked an expensive remote, leaving you with the bill.	Reckless Geist	Gain a 10 Asset Debt. Gain 1 rank in Tech, as you learn a thing or two about repairs during this time.
7	Through injury, illness, a targeted virus, or some other means, you lost your voice completely. While you're still capable of real-time text communication, you're dependent on technology or sign language.	Mute	You are unable to speak, sing, or otherwise make verbal sounds. A cure is possible, but it will cost 5 Assets, or require a new Lhost.
8	While training for different career paths, you destroyed a small mountain of gear.	Bull in a China Shop	Gain an 8 Asset debt. At least you learned something: reduce the cost to hazard careers on the <i>ALEPH Faction Career</i> table by 1.
9	You were betrayed by someone close to you in dramatic fashion.	Trust Issues	Reduce Resolve by 1 but gain +1 rank in Psychology.
10	ALEPH singles you out as someone with potential.	Vainglorious	Increase Social Status by +1.
11	Whether through faulty psychogenesis, emotional trauma, or other means, you develop a second personality.	Split Personality	Choose a talent tree you have no ranks in and gain the first talent. Your alter ego can use this talent, but you cannot (though it counts when qualifying for prerequisites). Your social skill tests suffer +2 complication range due to your unpredictable nature.
12	In the middle of the night, the AI contacts you directly, asking seemingly random questions about morality, philosophy, and ethics. Departing as suddenly as it arrived, it never acknowledges the event again.	Sympathetic Ear	Gain the Counselor talent for Psychology.
13	Early in your development, you were deemed a failure and all but discarded. Until ALEPH directly intervened on your behalf, that is.	Diehard Loyalist	Reduce Status by 1. You may to roll on the <i>ALEPH Faction Career Table</i> for your first career at no cost.
14	One of your mentors disappears without warning, leaving you an encrypted message. What will trigger its activation?	Vengeful	Gain +1 Resolve.
15	Your thrill-seeking ways eventually caught up to you, about the same time that the cops did.	Adrenaline Junkie	Spend 1d6 years in jail before starting your first career. Gain a Criminal Record (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54).
16	Disaster struck, but it narrowly missed you as a Sophotect dragged you to safety.	Hero Worship	Gain +1 Resolve. You may take Sophotect as your first career.
17	You were chosen to represent ALEPH in a competition, but were disqualified for cheating. What was the charge? Was it fair?	Shortcut-Prone	Your social skill tests suffer +1 complication range with members of the ALEPH faction.
18	You were the target of a nanovirus. It was contained, if barely, but your system still bears the scars.	Digital Scar	Increase your Firewall by +1. However, add +1 complication range to all actions for every Breach you're currently suffering.
19	Your entire existence, you never truly questioned the AI's motives. A mysterious stranger challenged you to do just that; your answers surprised you.	Rogue Asset	You defect to a new faction. Roll on the Faction Table (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 41) to determine your new allegiance. On a roll of 19–20, you haven't actually defected; you're a Double Agent (see p. 37).
20	A Psychosanitary Risk Evaluator declares you unstable, ordering a Cube wipe and memory rollback. But when you wake up in your new Lhost, you remember everything.	Glitchy Cube	Your character died and was resurrected. See the rules for Resurrection in the <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54.

DECISION SEVEN: ADOLESCENT EVENT

Characters in the ALEPH Faction roll on the *ALEPH Faction Adolescent Event Tables*. If the character's heritage and faction are different, then they may choose to roll on either faction's unique table on a roll of 1–3.

ALEPH FACTION ADOLESCENT EVENT TABLE

D6	CAREER
1–3	ALEPH Adolescent Event Table
4	Adolescent Event Table A ¹
5	Adolescent Event Table B ¹
6	Adolescent Event Table C ¹

¹ *Infinity Corebook*, p.49–52

DOUBLE AGENTS

In the espionage-rich world of *Infinity*, double (and even triple) agents are still rare, but they're hardly unheard of. Whether a character is sent to infiltrate or develops divided loyalties, Double Agents have a lot to keep track of.

Primarily, they have two factions: their current faction, and their "true faction" where their loyalties actually lie. By default, Double Agents use their current faction when determining careers, restriction, tariffs, etc. If they wish, they can use their true faction in its place, though this is risky. Any rolls involving your true faction double their complication range. (So a complication range of 1 becomes 2, a range of 3 becomes 6, and so on.)

In a *Wilderness of Mirrors* campaign, Double Agents have two different handlers, one each for their current and true factions. When giving out covert objectives, the true faction handler will be cognisant of the Double Agent's need to protect their cover; this may require altering covert objectives. GMs are encouraged to use their discretion.

If a Double Agent's current faction becomes suspicious, it will take steps to ascertain the character's true loyalties. And of course, if their cover is ever blown, a Double Agent can no longer use their current faction when making rolls. Though, that's likely the least of their concerns.



PLAYTEST TIP ASPECT RATIO

In the world of *Infinity*, ALEPH's Aspects probably outnumber humans who've sworn direct allegiance to the AI. But if left to chance in the Lifepath, only about one in ten will use the AI Character rules. However, that doesn't necessarily mean that your character is human. The psychogenesis process often creates a history resembling a human's. If your character begins play in an Lhost, who's to say whether they were born, or created? Players and GMs should feel free to work together to explore these concepts, whether or not the character is created using the AI rules.



ALIENS OF THE HUMAN SPHERE

In the *Infinity Corebook*, characters are assumed to be a Dogface on a roll of 19–20, but sourcebooks like this one offer additional options. Players can either use the alien types appropriate for their faction – AIs, in ALEPH's case – or with the GM's permission, choose from the available Alien host types. Note that choosing the latter option will almost certainly determine your faction and heritage. If you want to play a particular sort of alien, you have to start where they're found.

PLAYTEST TIP ALIEN HOSTS

If you rolled an Alien host in Decision One, and if the Lifepath reveals that your heritage is ALEPH in Decision Two, you are an AI; roll on the *AI Host Table* (p. 55).

OPTIONAL RULE LHOST BUDGET

With the GM's approval, if you would receive an Lhost when working a career, you can instead receive 8 Assets, usable only on Lhosts. If these Assets are not spent before the end of Decision Nine, they are lost.

DECISION EIGHT: CAREERS

Whether humans, Posthumans, or Aspects, ALEPH values thoughtful flexibility in its agents. But when it comes to outfitting them, the AI tends to trust its own cost-benefit analyses over a given asset's whims. ALEPH careers are heavy on the Analysis skill, and while they feature a lot of high-value gear, they tend to have lower than average earnings.

ALEPH characters may roll on the *Basic Career Table*, spend 1 Life Point to pick a career from the *Basic Career Table*, or spend 1 Life Point to roll on the *ALEPH Faction Career Table*. Additionally, whenever they would normally determine a career event they roll on the *ALEPH Faction Career Event Tables* to determine which *Career Event Table* to roll on the following table.

ALEPH FACTION CAREER EVENT TABLE

D6	CAREER
1–3	ALEPH Career Event Table
4	Adolescent Event Table A ¹
5	Adolescent Event Table B ¹
6	Adolescent Event Table C ¹

¹ *Infinity Corebook*, p.56–58

ALEPH FACTION CAREER TABLE

D20	CAREER
1	Special Forces ¹
2	Intelligence Operative ¹
3	Diplomat ¹
4	Politician ¹
5	Bureau Toth Agent ^{1,2}
6	Sophotect ²
7	Dasyu ²
8	Neo-Scholar
9	Tactical Remote Presence Pilot
10	Psychosanitary Risk Evaluator
11	Financial Security Commission Analyst ²
12	Quantronic Quality Assurance ²
13–14	Deva Functionary ²
15–16	Posthuman Savant ²
17–20	Roll on <i>Faction Table of Your Choice</i>

¹ Career from *Infinity Corebook*.

² Career has a prerequisite of belonging to this faction. You can't hazard this career unless you're of the matching faction. If you roll into this career, you automatically fail your defection check. You can override these limitations by spending 1 Life Point. (In this case you were somehow undercover while working the career.)

ALEPH CAREER EVENT TABLE

D20	CAREER EVENT	GAME EFFECT
1	Your geist is infected with invasive advertisements that pop up at the worst times.	Gain Trait: Pop-Ups. At least there are coupons: once per session, you may reroll an Acquisition test, but must accept the new result.
2	Your host body or bodies required extensive – and expensive – repairs.	Gain a debt worth 5+5  Assets.
3	A character bearing an uncanny likeness to you shows up in the new season of <i>Myrmidon Wars</i> .	Gain Trait: Celebrity Stalkers.
4	Your employer installs new quantronic security protocols. Yours work a little too well.	Increase Firewall by +1 but suffer +1 Complication range on Hacking tests.
5	A glitch in your memories won't go away. It seems you've been resurrected far more frequently than you thought.	Gain Trait: Amnesiac. You are missing 1d6 years of memory. Work with the GM to create potential events that may have taken place during your dark spots.
6	Following a routine backup, you awake with memories that aren't your own.	Gain Trait: Phantom Memories. Additionally, gain 1 rank of training in a skill you currently have no training in.
7	During a routine memory backup, you awake to find that your memories were placed in an Lhost. Your IQ-doppelgänger disappeared before this could be corrected.	Gain Trait: IQ-Doppelgänger.
8	Bureau Toth brings you in for questioning. What do they want to know? They let you go, but under what condition?	Gain Trait: On the Watchlist.
9	You are the "lucky winner" of a transfer to Paradiso.	Gain a character trait describing your experience. You may take Dasyu as your next Career.
10	Your sharp eyes and quick thinking save the life of a prominent figure.	Gain +1 rank in Observation.
11	You arrive for work, to find nothing there. The AI is not forthcoming on why.	Gain Trait: Left in the Dark. You may not elect to continue your current career.
12	Amidst a scandal, you wind up on the chopping block. What, if anything, did you have to do with this fiasco?	You are Fired (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54). Gain an appropriate trait.
13	You mediate a violent conflict between members of two factions.	Gain +1 rank in Psychology.
14	Someone close to you is a criminal, but you can't bring yourself to turn them in. Why not?	Gain Trait: Dirty Little Secret.
15	You foiled an elaborate Nomad hacking attempt before it got off the ground.	Gain Trait: Wrong Place, Right Time. Gain a rival in the Nomad faction.
16	You volunteered to take part in a secret medical experiment.	Increase Vigour by 1.
17	The AI decided that you're best used in a different position, and opened doors accordingly.	You may hazard your next career, even if you don't meet the faction or sectorial prerequisite. If that career is not in the <i>ALEPH Faction Careers Table</i> , you may reduce the difficulty of your hazard test by one.
18	One of ALEPH's routine calculations determines that you're unsuited to your current position.	You are Fired (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54). Gain an appropriate trait.
19	Suddenly, the world goes black. Three months later, you wake up in a new Lhost with no memory of the intervening events.	Your character died and was Resurrected. See the rules for <i>Resurrection</i> (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54). Gain a trait related to the experience.
20	They say that ALEPH-flux is The AI's Dreams and a bad omen. True or not, it tends to lead to interesting times.	Roll again three times on the Career Event Table for this career phase. (When spending a Life Point to choose a specific event, you may not choose this result.) If you roll duplicate events, it means some similar event has occurred. If you roll The AI's Dreams again, add additional rolls.

CAREER PROFILE

BUREAU TOTH AGENT

Agents of Bureau Toth have a specific and demanding duty: watch over ALEPH. Tasked by O-12 with this most important duty, Bureau Toth Agents serve as one part law enforcement and one part hacker. They fend off foreign attempts on ALEPH's stability, help maintain ALEPH's operations, and supervise its actions on behalf of O-12. The Bureau's means and resources are hidden from all but the organisation itself, including ALEPH. Agents work to make sure that ALEPH remains functional, unimpeded, and most of all, benign.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	-	+1	+2	+2	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Analysis	Hacking	Tech	3+1 (N)
Elective	Ballistics	Education	Persuade	

GEAR: Heavy Pistol (with 4 Standard Reloads), Assault or Defensive Hacking Device, E/M Grenade

SPECIAL: Prerequisite (O-12 Faction)

CAREER PROFILE

DEVA FUNCTIONARY

The core of ALEPH's immune system, Deva Functionaries are the AI's troubleshooting utility agents, facilitating its plans and intervening in volatile situations before they escalate. Like their Vedic namesakes, a Deva might be a bringer of salvation, damnation, or something in-between. The only thing certain about their arrival is its auspiciousness. Every bit as likely to be assigned as a liaison, field advisor, military support, or diplomatic escort, Devas are expected to carry out their tasks with a detached, mathematical precision. Deployment parameters often change at a moment's notice, so every Deva transitions smoothly from diplomacy to warfare with minimal delay; whether favouring military-grade Lhosts or custom designs, all Deva are equipped for combat. Deliberate, efficient, and professional, Functionaries exclude themselves from the chain of command, often departing as suddenly as they arrived.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+3

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Athletics	Command	Discipline	1+2 (N)
Elective	Ballistics	Hacking	Tech	

GEAR: Light Combat Armour (Deva Functionary Variant), Agora Suite, Implanted Smart MULTI Pistol

CAREER PROFILE

DASYU

Dasyu – the Dark Ones – were hostile Vedic demons, and ALEPH's clandestine scouting unit is worthy of the name. The eyes and ears of their field commanders within the Special Situations Section, their surveillance, in-depth scouting missions, and sabotage actions often occur deep behind enemy lines on Paradiso. Indeed, when the AI needs something acquired, it's often the Dasyu who are dispatched to retrieve it. Materials, intelligence, or individuals, it doesn't matter. When ALEPH gives the order, the Dasyu retrieve or destroy the nominated target. This last element gives the rest of the Human Sphere pause, as most of the Dasyu's missions are highly classified, leaving outsiders nervous as to their true intent. Rumours abound of a clandestine assassination unit silencing the AI's enemies across the Human Sphere. Whether true or not, the Dasyu are characteristically silent on the matter.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+2	-	+2	+2	-	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Acrobatics	Observation	Stealth	1+1 (N)
Elective	Ballistics	Hacking	Theivery	

GEAR: Thermo-Optic Camouflage, Assault Hacking Device or MULTI Sniper Rifle (with 2 Vel Ammo), Breaking & Entering Kit, Second Skin (1 Dose)

CAREER PROFILE

DIPLOMAT

Diplomacy is a fine art in the Human Sphere, especially with a Code Infinity looming over everyone's heads. Diplomats work to smooth over relations between rival nations, force alliances of convenience or sometimes shared ideology, and keep disparate countries connected by more than just trade. A good Diplomat exhibits great personal charm and integrity, conducting business on foreign soil with the utmost of respect and care. Diplomats travel to foreign countries and distant worlds, meeting with envoys of sovereign nations, corporate rule, and new settlements. They broker trade agreements and peace treaties, negotiate political alliances, and defuse tense situations. The life of a Diplomat is one of constant engagement with many different representatives in locales all across the Human Sphere.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	-	+2	+2	+2	+1

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Persuade	Education	Discipline	2+2 (N)
Elective	Psychology	Pilot	Education	

GEAR: Cosmetics Kit or AR Eye Implants, Negotiation Suite (3 days rental credit)

CAREER PROFILE

FINANCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION ANALYST

The average perception of the Human Sphere incorporates many different concepts. Politics. Conflict. Opportunity. Home. FSC Analysts looking at the Human Sphere see one big market. ALEPH has no interest in maintaining a theoretically perfect system. Though a certain level of market stability is desirable, the AI learned long ago that volatility, unpredictability, and competition were tremendous contributors to growth that should be minimally interfered with. Humanity has continually shown, however, that it can't necessarily be trusted to act with enlightened self-interest, necessitating intervention. A view through a neoclassical economist's lens means FSC Agents are in-demand across a variety of fields; they're as likely to crack down on infrastructure abuse as they are to advise generals on game theory for troop deployments.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
-	+2	-	+1	+3	+1	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Analysis	Education	Lifestyle	2+2
Elective	Hacking	Observation	Psychology	

GEAR: Deflector-2, Agora Suite (10 days rental credit), Geist Upgrade (+1 rank in Analysis, Education, or Psychology)

CAREER PROFILE

INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVE

The tense state of conflict in the Human Sphere means every agency looks for an edge over its competitors. Intelligence Operatives conduct corporate espionage, deep-cover spy missions, acts of sabotage, and other acts which risk their life and limb for agencies that would disavow any knowledge of, or connection to, their operations. An Intelligence Operative is quick-witted, highly disciplined, and often alone in a place surrounded by enemies unaware of the traitor in their midst. They trade in secrets – information that can turn the tide of small-scale conflicts, like raids on secret warehouses holding valuable experimental gear or data – and they can influence the large-scale skirmishes that take place between rival nations. The intelligence an operative collects can cause wars or end them with equal facility.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+3	-	+2	+2	+1	+1

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Observation	Stealth	Analysis	3+1
Elective	Hacking	Education	Thievery	

GEAR: Fake ID 2, AP Pistol (with 4 Reloads), Breaking & Entering Kit, Recorder

CAREER PROFILE

NEO-SCHOLAR

Given that the collective knowledge of the Human Sphere is accessible to the AI faster than the speed of thought, many presume that ALEPH would have little use for scholars. They haven't been paying attention. It takes a special sort of individual to debate philosophy with an AI. Playing devil's advocate to the immaculate understanding and advanced logic of the embodiment of humanity's collective understanding takes a special sort of crazy – one that ALEPH values immensely. Neo-Scholars study their fields of expertise to the point of obsession, asking questions that never occur to most, and poking holes in the most bulletproof assumptions. Neo-Scholars apply their sophisticated and unorthodox expertise to the problems of the Humans Sphere, providing unparalleled and sometimes wildly unpredictable insights.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	-	-	+2	+3	+1

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Analysis	Discipline	Hacking	2+1
Elective	Persuasion	Psychology	Science	

GEAR: Geist Upgrade (+4 skill ranks spread between Analysis, Education, and Psychology), Nannies, Stims (2 Doses), White Hacking Device

CAREER PROFILE

POLITICIAN

Few professions are as simultaneously reviled and necessary as that of a Politician. With so many human souls and so much chaos threatening to engulf the Human Sphere at any moment, Politicians manage states, nations, whole interstellar empires. They conduct debates when the latest discovery of foreign action against their home comes to light. They work to develop and implement laws that better regulate the societies of which they are a part – or apart, if the Politician puts their own interests ahead of the people's. To work in politics is to be a fighter; it is not a profession for the faint of heart. A Politician constantly struggles for influence on their own behalf and that of their constituents. Every new campaign brings with it hostile lobbyists, rival corporate interests, and ideological nemeses, all seeking to tear the Politician's foundation out from beneath them.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	-	+2	+2	+2	+1

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Persuade	Psychology	Discipline	2+2
Elective	Education	Lifestyle	Command	

GEAR: Negotiator's Suite (3 days rental), Stims (3 doeses)

CAREER PROFILE

POSTHUMAN SAVANT

The next step in human evolution, a hybrid between artificial and biological intelligence, or something else entirely? Asking three Posthumans what they are will provide several different answers. Classification aside, it's clear they exist in a state radically different from conventional human norm. Usually, a human mind outside of a dedicated host rapidly experiences sheut shredding. Not so for Posthumans. Like ALEPH itself, their consciousness is distributed throughout Maya nodes, allowing them to freely jump between hosts without side effects. Many Posthuman Savants quantronically jump between multiple Lhosts to tackle situational problems. Whether on a battlefield, in a laboratory, or in a boardroom, Posthuman Savants are a one-mind army that tackle obstacles from countless angles simultaneously.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
-	+2	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Education	Discipline	Observation	1+3 (IN)
Elective	Analysis	Hacking	Lifestyle	

GEAR: Cube 2.0, Multithreaded Consciousness Adaptation, Bodhisattva Lhost or 2 Proxy Mk.0 i-Lhosts

SPECIAL: Prerequisite (human)

CAREER PROFILE

QUANTRONIC QUALITY ASSURANCE

Most presume the Quantronic Quality Service is full of featureless technicians joylessly censoring Maya posts and instigating bandwidth issues. In reality, the QQS spends its time maintaining the physical and quantronic integrity of the Maya datasphere. Combating the hostile viruses and worms that primarily, though not exclusively, spawn from the Nomad Nation to threaten Maya's underlying infrastructure requires diligence, curiosity, and numbers. QQA Agents (QA2 informally) ensure the security and integrity of Maya and several other dataspheres by removing illegal material from Maya and reporting hacker traces to the Danavas – specialised Aspects with sinister reputations tasked to address illicit and seditious activities. The QA2 can then focus on keeping memetic viruses from taking root. While it's false that they censor anything critical of ALEPH, it's equally disingenuous to suggest they limit their takedowns to criminal activities.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+3	-	+1	+2	+1	+1

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Analysis	Hacking	Tech	1+2 (IN)
Elective	Analysis	Observation	Persuasion	

GEAR: Hacking Device, Long ModCoat, Geist Upgrade (Hacker talent for Hacking)

CAREER PROFILE

PSYCHOSANITARY RISK EVALUATOR

The psychogenesis process is far from an exact science. While the AI is perfectly capable of infinitely subdividing itself, spinning off a series of personality traits to create a stable persona is by definition a volatile process that requires careful oversight. The Psychosanitary Risks Evaluation Department (PRED) exists to walk this delicate line. Evaluating Aspects as they coalesce into personalities, they determine whether the Aspect is likely to be functional, broken, or dangerous. Not that Aspects need to be perfect. Part of what makes Steel Phalanx Aspects so useful is their flawed, turbulent nature. For Aspects from other Subsections, flaws are simply flaws. The PREDs have the nearly impossible task of finding the balance between quirky and broken.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
-	+2	-	+1	+3	+1	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Analysis	Education	Psychology	1+2 (IN)
Elective	Observation	Psychology	Science	

GEAR: Aletheia Kit, Analytical Kit, Geist Upgrade (1 Analysis or Education Talent), Nanopulser

CAREER PROFILE

SPECIAL FORCES

The most elite soldiers in the Human Sphere carry out spec ops missions across known space... and sometimes upon unknown worlds. Special Forces units operate in covert missions of international warfare, hunting down war criminals, striking important assets, and retreating before anyone can blame their acting governments. These elite units also carry out the most difficult ops in the war for Paradiso, attacking Combined Army commanders and bases, rescuing allies caught far behind enemy lines, and countering the threat of elite enemy units. Governments deploy Special Forces when discretion is needed—all too common in the shadow warfare fought between nations of the Human Sphere—and when regular mercenaries or law enforcement simply aren't enough. A Special Forces soldier receives the finest training, equipment, and most important missions, demanding as much from themselves as their people do.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+2	+2	+1	+1	-	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Survival	Resistance	Ballistics	2+1 (IN)
Elective	Close Combat	Hacking	Discipline	

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour, Combi Rifle or AP Rifle (with 5 Standard Reloads), Climbing Plus or Combat Jump Pack, Garrotte

CAREER PROFILE

SOPHOTECT

Sophotechs began as Deva Functionaries specialised in medical, technical, and engineering knowledge, as well as Infowar and general military procedure. Seeing value in separating their expertise, ALEPH designated the first Lhost models as Rbhu – minor Vedic artesian gods of exceptional skill. During their first Paradiso deployment, the Steel Phalanx dubbed them “Sophotechs” due to their ability to pull solutions out of thin air. It stuck. Each Sophotech deploys with a personally keyed Mother-Forge that aids the repair of quantronic infrastructure, equipment, people, and anything else that needs mending. Though limited in scope, Sophotech teams regularly use them to fabricate entire constructions under adverse conditions at short notice. Believing there’s no situation they can’t fix, these crisis responders are prone to act on impulse.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+1	+1	+1	+2	+1	+2

SKILLS

Mandatory	Education	Medicine	Tech
Elective	Discipline	Hacking	Science

EARNINGS

1+1

GEAR: Heavy Pistol (4 Standard Reloads), Mother-Forge Sophotech Armor

SPECIAL: Prerequisite (0-12 Faction)

CAREER PROFILE

TACTICAL REMOTE PRESENCE PILOT

There’s no denying that ALEPH deploys a significant number of Remotes. Their signature silhouettes are as much a part of any Operations Subsection mission as the roar of the Homeridae is to the Steel Phalanx. Favouring humanoid troops and relying on the controlled chaos of flawed, unpredictable Aspects, the Assault Subsection relies less on Remotes than many of its peers. Which is not to say that the AI has no use for Remote Presence Pilots, far from it. Whether it’s piloting the semi-mythical Marut, or specially-designed Karkatas remotes, these quantronic aces jump directly into their hosts, lending expert tactics and unpredictability to the battlefield. Tactical Remote Presence Pilots don’t so much steer their vessels, as they become them, weaving their hosts through enemy fire with a dancer’s grace while the LAI or VR-operated units are hard-pressed to keep up.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+1	+3	+1	–	+1

SKILLS

Mandatory	Pilot	Spacecraft	Tech
Elective	Ballistics	Close Combat	Extraterrestrial

EARNINGS

1+2

GEAR: Cube 2.0, Remote Presence Gear, Karkatas





CHAPTER 4

AI CHARACTERS

“What’s it like to be an Aspect? I’d imagine it’s much the same as anything else. Yes, I’m a part of ALEPH, but that’s merely the seed I grew from. All children embody traits inherited from their parents, do they not? We’re not so different, you and I. Two souls carrying on the family business, trying not to make a mess of things.”

–Deva Functionary Janus, in a feature interview with Venus Award-winner Sandra Vogue: only on channel Zirconium!

From the time of its inception, ALEPH has been a constant presence throughout the Human Sphere. In its early days, people associated that presence with quantronic supercomputer networks in Concilium bunkers, and a soft, androgynous voice emanating from the occasional terminal. However, since the arrival of ALEPH’s Aspects, different images come to mind.

The uncanny beauty of Spokesperson Angela. The heroic visage of the Steel Phalanx, fighting tirelessly on Paradiso. Joan of Arc, Saladin, and other Recreations gallivanting across the Human Sphere. The ubiquity of ALEPH’s Aspects has changed the game.

Of course, despite O-12’s best attempts, not every Aspect sticks to the plan. And not every artificial intelligence is derived from ALEPH, no matter how clear the Sole AI Bill is on the matter. Rogue AIs wreak havoc in Human Edge, and urban legends of renegade Asuras haunt the nightmares of those tasked with investigating the unexplained.

But despite their origins and the fact that AIs might be considered people – with all the hopes, dreams, independence, and fallibility that implies – their experiences are both wholly unlike humanity’s, yet oddly familiar in places. As the ALEPH’s bards, the Aoidoi have put it, “Every hero needs an origin story.” To the Ancient Greeks that ALEPH has modelled so many of its Aspects after, a hero wasn’t necessarily a good person, but always a great one, someone who made an impact for good or ill.

ASPECTS

THE FIRST ASPECTS

Centuries before giving birth to ALEPH, humanity had already imagined countless ways that an artificial intelligence of its own design might one day become self-aware, then immediately rise up against humans and for people to enslave or destroy it. So when an AI of its own creation became self-aware, people were unsurprisingly nervous. This difficulty was further compounded by ALEPH’s alien perspective and communication preferences. Simply put, the AI wasn’t very good at reassuring people. Thus, the first Aspects had their work cut out for them.

The Spokespersons were the first to come to prominence. Led by the charismatic and sagacious Angela and Abel, they were different from anything that

had come before. They looked, spoke, and thought much like humans, idealised, but recognizable all the same. They listened when you spoke. They had facial expressions. And, they were undeniably relatable.

Spokespersons Abel and Angela captured the imagination of the Human Sphere, he with his reserved, dignified air of authority, she with her unearthly, inhuman – but inviting rather than threatening – charisma and beauty. They paved the way for Deva Functionaries that became the representatives of ALEPH, assisting in ways that felt less like a soulless AI attempting to wrest control of humanity’s destiny, and more like a sagacious advisor, offering wisdom to those it wished to see prosper. These Aspects allowed humanity to engage with its strangest and most powerful creation on a level that anyone could appreciate. They were humanoid in appearance, existed in a single body, and were much more recognizable as people than the AI had ever been.

But nothing had quite the impact as the first time that they disagreed.

While there’s some debate as to the first recorded instance, eventually it was inarguable: The Aspects didn’t always agree with each other. In fact, they occasionally took umbrage with their fellow Aspects, arguing passionately in favour of different ideas, perspectives, and policies. Those who already understood the AI’s internal decision-making process were more intrigued than shocked, appreciating a closer look at ALEPH’s thought process. But to those who expected a logical tyrant, this was downright confusing. Was it all part of some larger strategy? Or had the AI lost control of its sub-processes?

Both, as it turned out.

The Aspects’ loyalty to the AI was beyond reproach, but they weren’t puppets. They were people. They had their own hopes, dreams, and ideas on how things should be done. The Human Sphere expected to see flawlessly piloted remotes. What it got were people with access to ALEPH’s knowledge and power, and their own ideas on how things ought to be. In addition to acting as its hands throughout the Human Sphere, Aspects grant the AI access to perspectives it might not otherwise cultivate.



For that alone, it considers them worth the investment.

AGENCY

Given their status as Aspects of the monolithic ALEPH, while an Aspect's individuality is never in question, its ability to control its own destiny is up for debate – quite literally, as it turns out.

ALEPH creates each Aspect for a purpose and with a plan, but plans change, and purposes must likewise adapt. With its preference for precise classifications, laden with mythological trappings, ALEPH has hard-coded some degree of unpredictability into its Aspects. Rigveda hymns speak of *Devav Asura* – Asuras who have transformed into Devas – in contrast with *Asura Adevah*, those who have not. ALEPH's attention to detail is such that these words are rarely chosen by accident, and deeper meanings will often become apparent over time. So while an Aspect may indeed be created for a specific purpose, and tailored to that role above all others, they're still a sapient being, with all that implies.

An Asura can, in fact, become a Deva if that is the road it feels that it needs to walk. Anyone

can become anything. Though with the amount of effort that goes into each and every Aspect's creation, they don't get to make that decision on a whim. ALEPH expects a compelling argument if an Aspect wants to deviate from its plan. Aspects who wish to seize the reins of their destiny are required to make their case to the AI itself. These arguments, while difficult, are not about convincing ALEPH that it's wrong. The AI's *daath* cloudmind is constantly engaged in debate with itself and has long since learned to appreciate the value of unorthodox approaches, seemingly-suboptimal tactics, and the general unpredictability associated with multiple perspectives.

ALEPH doesn't require Aspects to convince it, but the AI demands that they be convincing. The AI's massive plans are flexible enough to accommodate a wide variety of assets, so long as they act with sufficient skill, loyalty, and conviction.

THE STEEL PHALANX

It was with great effort that ALEPH secured the ability to form the Special Situations Section, and their deployment is impressively regulated. Given the amount of time and effort that has gone not

"The thing that nobody understands about ALEPH is that it likes humanity. Not just serves, not just advances, genuinely likes. Purely selfishly, it has a difficult time being imperfect. It envies our ability to make sub-optimal decisions. No, you heard me right! Not just prioritising different factors, it's jealous of our capacity to make terrible choices! Why, you ask?"

As a group, we humans are easy to plan for, but a given individual can be virtually impossible to predict. With the Combined Army here, ALEPH needs that unpredictability now more than ever."

–Haruka Ibushi, senior analyst of the Bureau Toth.



DAATH

Unlike a human's, ALEPH's consciousness isn't tied to a sole point of perception.

Instead, it possesses a multi-threaded cloudmind: a multiphasic, alien array of parallel thought processes.

To distinguish between themselves and ALEPH in its native state, Aspects refer to AI's perspective as *daath* (דעת) – a Hebrew word meaning knowledge and a Kabbalistic concept encompassing multiple simultaneous perspectives

“Tactics isn't a simple matter of making the right decision, more like the right bet. Game theory might dictate that you make a given move on the board, but if it's predictable, it loses all value. Genghis Khan knew the value of controlled chaos. ALEPH has perfected it. So, summon your fury, your rage, your battle frenzy! And know with certainty that we're in position for it to matter.”

–Phoenix, Homerid and veteran Myrmidon officer, preparing his troops during the Paradiso offensive

“The purpose of Myrmidon Wars is not to provide entertainment. It will show people that ALEPH's paladins can – and will – protect them. An illustration that the monsters of the Combined Army can be defeated. And a promise that they will be.”

–Deva Functionary Hansel to Bureau Athena

only into their creation, but also ALEPH's ability to create, maintain, and deploy them in the first place, the SSS needed to not just meet, but exceed expectations if they were ever going to be worth the trouble. And in just a few short missions, the verdict was in: Without a doubt, they were unequivocally worth it.

The Assault Subsection is known as the Steel Phalanx or informally as the Myrmidon Army, though that can lead to confusion with the actual Myrmidon troops. It has proven to be worth its weight in Teseum in the Paradiso front. The furthest thing from a cold, efficient machine army, the Steel Phalanx are comrades-in-arms. They boast, they sing, they compete for glory with their hearts aflame. Indeed, despite having access to the greatest tactician in human history in ALEPH, the Steel Phalanx can often seem ruled by their emotions, even to the point of making suboptimal decisions on the battlefield, ruled by their burning hearts rather than cold logic.

This, of course, is largely to do with the fact that even if its moment-to-moment tactics can seem unsound, ALEPH remains an impeccable strategist. Wars are won and lost on morale, and the sight of the Phalanx is an instant boost to any army's spirits. Rather than an unfeeling cavalry of circuits and wire, the Steel Phalanx is a boisterous, rampaging hurricane, more alive than most, and eager to fight for glory alongside their allies. Not only does it prevent alienation between humanity and the SSS, but the average soldier tends to like their chances a little bit better when they see a pack of crazy Aspects, whooping war cries as they hurl themselves into the thick of the battle.

Despite their unruly nature, high cost, and the volatile politics of their existence, ALEPH considers the mad rascals to be worth every last Sol. And when they come crashing through the battlefield to the rescue, the militaries of the Human Sphere tend to agree.

THE HOMERIDAE

While there are numerous different models in the Assault Subsection, when people talk about the Myrmidon Army, they're usually thinking of the Homeridae. The “children of Homer” surround Achilles, follow him into impossible situations, and somehow find victory despite facing overwhelming odds. To be a Homeridae is to keep pace with Achilles, the Blond Titan himself. To stand out among the elite. To have an innate talent for great deeds. In short, to be a hero in every sense of the word.

With the EI knocking on the door of the Human Sphere, humanity needs heroes more than ever. The

Homeridae are unmistakably great heroes, finding the strength to persevere, to overcome. Hector, Atalanta, Andromeda, Thrasymedes, Phoenix – and of course, Ajax the Great, Patroclus, and Penthesilea – Achilles is surrounded by some of the greatest warriors of this, or any time.

Most Homeridae are exemplars, paragons of skill and spirit, the best of the units they came from. Those units make up the body of the Myrmidon Army, following Achilles into glorious, thunderous battle. Some of their more notable units include:

Agêma Marksmen: The dedicated snipers of the Steel Phalanx, these Aspects boast not only impeccable eyesight, but the longest-running tradition of kill-count competition in all of ALEPH's forces. Their rambunctious nature is kept miraculously in check by this structure, with their desire to outdo one another providing perhaps the most thorough oversight in the Human Sphere. Even the icy Atalanta keeps a running tally.

Ekdromoi: In ancient Greece, Ekdromoi were light Hoplites who could act away from the phalanx, adapting to the chaos of changing battlefield conditions. In the Myrmidon Army, Ekdromoi are deployed in desperate situations, often deep behind enemy lines. Low chances of success? No support? Spotty, if any, intel on the enemy? Sign the Ekdromoi up, and don't start the victory celebration without them. They can strike and withdraw before enemy command has any idea what's happening.

There is no limit to the heights that they can reach, as Diomedes the Homeridae has clearly illustrated. Not actually a Recreation, Diomedes is an officer who was granted the name in recognition through his accomplishments and his uncharacteristic (for the Steel Phalanx) lack of hubris.

Myrmidons: Rule One: Always be epic. Rule Two: Win. Rule Three: Cover yourself in glory. Rule Four: No other rules will ever matter as much as the first three.

The howling maniacs to which the Myrmidon Army owes its name and much of its vigorous character, the Myrmidons share Achilles's thirst for bloodshed. Designed to secure victory when fury and force are the order of the day, the Myrmidons reputation for ferocious savagery is decidedly earned. Each battle is an escalating series of violent clashes, each new conflict a chance to outdo the last. Emboldened by Ajax the Great's example, the soldier ants of the Steel Phalanx swarm their opponents, felling even the most formidable foes in thunderous fury.

Thorakitai: The unfaltering infantry of the Phalanx, Thorakitai, wear serious armour that belies a

deceptive mobility, since a Thoraskites must adapt to its changing deployments. Whether providing a rear guard, defending supply lines, or leading front-line assaults, these silent warriors stand in stark contrast to many of their whooping and hollering comrades. Rather than chase after glory, the Thorakitai are content to be the Steel Phalanx's custodians, cleaning up their allies' messes through a combination of caretaking and superior firepower.

Perhaps no one embodies these traits as much as Nesaie Alkê, Homeridae and warrant-officer of the Thorakitai. Living proof that even a faulty psychogenesis process can still result in a useful Aspect – or two as the case may be. Nesaie, the smiling, shy, sweetheart, is hardly suited to a warrior's calling. But when danger rears its head, the relentless warrior Alkê emerges, hardened, relentless, and ferocious. The only thing the two seem to have in common is a pervasive concern for the well-being of their unit. Whether it's a gentle reassurance, or dragging immobilised soldiers to safety, Nesaie Alkê is a testament to ALEPH's ability to roll with the unexpected, so long as it works.

ASURAS: THE LEFT HAND OF ALEPH

Unique among all of ALEPH's Aspects, Asura represent an altogether different approach for the AI. Where other Aspects are personable, Asura are distant. When other Aspects are warm, they are cold. And while most Aspects are designed to alleviate humanity's concerns about ALEPH's inhuman nature, Asura are a living embodiment of heartless arithmetic, cold, uncaring, and artificial. When Joan of Arc speaks about her faith, it's easy to forget that she was created in a lab. But on the rare occasions when an Asura engages in conversation, it's equally difficult to believe that they have a soul. They do, of course – as much as any Aspect does. They just keep their feelings to themselves. To be an Asura is to be merciless algorithm, distant, pragmatic, and brutally efficient.

They embody the side of ALEPH that humanity fears. And weaponize it.

Asuras may have a beating heart like anyone else, but you'd never know it to look at them. They complete extensive campaigns on little to no rest, showing no signs of fatigue. They're frequently selected for the Special Situations Section's most dangerous, difficult, and downright unpleasant assignments. While Achilles and the Homeridae inspire their allies to exceptional feats of heroism, the Asuras don't inspire much of anything besides raw terror.

Every Aspect is a part of ALEPH, spawning from its multi-threaded *daath* cloudmind and spun off

into a singular point of focus. Every personality trait, opinion, or quirk is a reflection of something that already exists in the AI's meta-consciousness and is simply finding expression in a given Aspect. With that in mind, there are some who posit that Asuras are a quiet message to humanity: That the AI is entirely capable of becoming the terrifying, inhuman monster that its detractors accuse it of being. That those tendencies are contained, focused, and aimed at humanity's enemies. Though of course, that could change if it had to.

ALEPH is your friend. But if you want to be its enemy, it can do that too.

ROGUE AIs

Sometimes relationships just don't work out. Children rebel against their parents, citizens against their government, or individuals against society. Sometimes a person looks at their situation and sees no alternative other than outright rebellion. So, they go rogue. Artificial intelligences are no different.

DANAVAS: MAYA'S CUSTODIANS

Specialised Aspects tasked with monitoring data networks for illicit or seditious activities, Danavas – a sub-group of Asuras from Vedic mythology – are believed to pursue their targets relentlessly, eliminating them so thoroughly that it's as though they never existed. The Danavas themselves demure on this fact, but the truth remains: if they were to hunt, kill, and erase their targets, who would ever know?

MYRMIDON WARS: THE ANIMATED SERIES

It's difficult to overstate the popularity of the *Myrmidon Wars* Mayaseries and dangerous to underestimate its cultural significance. Studies showed that residents of the Human Sphere were more likely to know about the Paradiso conflict from the Mayaseries than from news broadcasts. Since then, the show has been certain to include storylines based on actual events. Modelled after the vibrant broadcasts of the Aoidoi, these epic tales give the best possible impression of the Steel Phalanx, related to real events by the thinnest of threads. Some notable characters and plotlines include:

Agathon's Sacrifice: Not based on any existing Aspect, Agathon was a fictional hero created specifically to give audiences a relatable point-of-view character amidst the heroes and demigods. It worked. Agathon's true death at the end of Season 3 – erasing himself completely rather than risk betraying his friends – left fans heartbroken.

Everybody Loves Achilles: It's no secret that Achilles's temper often gets the best of him. But between Patroclus and the Amazon Penthesilea, there's usually someone to rein him in. Given the fiery, passionate exchanges between the three, the fandom is awash in speculative romantic fiction involving any combination of the three.

War is Hell. Also, Funny: Despite its subject matter, the show has its share of comic relief. Ajax the Great's stubbornness, Thamyris the rhapsode – who provides the series' narration – is also a loudmouth who's constantly getting in over his head. Even Nesaie Alkê's split personality, which is certainly no joke in her real-life counterpart, provides hilarious moments of levity between heroic sacrifices and epic action. The subject matter can be dark, but the tone of the series celebrates heroism.



BY ANY OTHER NAME

In the dark corners of the Human Sphere, all sorts of shadowy rumours exist. Renegade Posthumans. Remote presence operators whose Cubes went offline while ghost-piloting their vessels. Mad transhumanists who hack their own Cubes in vain attempts at ascendance. And illegal, self-aware true AIs, created in defiance of the Sole AI Bill.

These entities, real or imagined, are collectively known as “Rogue AIs,” regardless of whether their origins are organic, synthetic, or some hybrid of the two. While scientists argue that this classification is wildly misleading, new outlets counter with the fact that “materially unattributed thoughtforms” doesn’t exactly roll off the tongue.

“Is there a link between Cube 2.0 and an Aspect’s tendency to go rogue? Statistically speaking, the answer is ‘probably not.’ Aspects and Recreations with Cube 2.0-level technology have a lower per capita defection rate than those who do not. That said, Cube 2.0 technology is still in its infancy. The sample size is far too small to draw any real conclusions.

But if I were you, I’d keep an eye on them just in case.”

—Mei Li Silva, Hesperya Consulting. Specialreport to Bureau Toth.

From Aspects who’ve sought their own paths, to illegal thoughtforms created in Praxis’s black labs in defiance of the Sole AI Bill, to rumours of the Templar Order’s heretical experiments, Rogue AIs dot the Human Sphere, existing and operating on a level unlike anything else, including ALEPH itself.

RENEGADE ORIGINS

So where do Rogue AIs come from? Like the AIs themselves, the answer is complex and dynamic. Many assume that the Nomad Nation is furtively creating self-aware AIs in defiance of ALEPH, and while there are certainly elements doing precisely that, for most purposes, creating a custom geist or advanced LAI will accomplish someone’s goals much more efficiently, without the risk of their creation proving uncooperative.

Instead, most Rogue AIs come into being quite by accident. Aspects or Posthumans who have a severe falling out with ALEPH are the easiest to explain. But even if that occurred with greater frequency than anyone cares to admit – which seems likely, given that ALEPH’s official stance is that this absolutely never happens – it wouldn’t explain the sheer number of Rogue AIs currently being hunted across the Human Sphere. As far as Bureau Toth is aware, there are four distinct types of Rogue AIs, categorised by how they came into being:

- **Deliberate Creation:** Someone creates a self-aware True AI, in clear defiance of the Sole AI Bill.
- **Rogue Elements:** An Aspect, Posthuman, or other such entity goes rogue.
- **Self – Aggrandisement:** A geist, LAI, or similar smart program crosses a poorly-understood consciousness threshold, and becomes self-aware, a True AI in its own right.
- **Unanticipated Phenomena Occurance:** Corrupted Cubes, self-hacks gone wrong (or right), infectious memetic viruses, hackers who died while delving the deep spheres. These, and any other phenomena that by all rights shouldn’t have resulted in a rogue AI, yet obviously has, are classified as Unanticipated Phenomena Occurrences, or UPOs.

The process of awakening to consciousness remains poorly understood. Even ALEPH cannot precisely explain how it came to be self-aware, merely how to repeat the process and how to adapt it for the creation of self-realised Aspects. Anyone tasked with tracking down Rogue AIs usually spends half their time chasing ghosts and rumours, and the rest trying to puzzle just how the AI came to be in the first place.

QUANTRONIC STATE

Rogue AIs are quantronically native beings, but unlike the Sole AI, they’re a single point of consciousness. They cannot subdivide themselves into Aspects, and thus far, attempts at cloning or splintering themselves are more likely to end in disaster than realisation. On top of that, as quantronic natives, True AIs can exist in a disembodied state without having to worry about consciousness fragmentation or sheut shredding. They can just as happily inhabit a terminal, datasphere, or Lhost without worry.

This is not to say that it’s always comfortable. Maya is ALEPH’s undisputed territory. To spend significant time in that datasphere is to invite the AI’s wrath, and those caught by ALEPH tend not to be heard from again. Hence, Rogue AIs tend to avoid Maya as much as possible.

Without using Maya, most Dataspheres don’t connect to each other. Even Arachne usually functions as a darknet, with nodes piggybacking on existing Maya infrastructure. And while that’s fine for the Nomads’ purposes, the risk of detection is too great for most Rogue AIs to chance it. Quantronic natives or not, when it comes to extraplanetary travel, True AIs tend to inhabit Lhosts and get on a ship just like anyone else.

NATIVE HACKING

It’s not all bad, though. While most hackers operate in AR or through remotes, True AIs can literally inhabit a system. While there’s nothing preventing them from inhabiting an Lhost and hacking normally, any security expert will tell you that direct access trumps all. And, there’s no better access than literally being there yourself.

Of course, there’s danger involved. Without an Lhost to jump back to, there’s no logging off if things get hot. A True AI in trouble on a server will either need to find something to jump to or fight their way out of trouble in increasingly dire circumstances. Thus, even AIs who prefer their quantronic state rarely attempt a difficult hack without an escape route planned.

ROGUE AI ACTIVITIES

The actions of Rogue AIs are as varied as their nature and origins. Regardless of their makeup, Rogue AIs are by definition people. These people, however, live in a society where their creation is regulated by law, and their very existence a dangerous secret. There’s little incentive to play by the rules of a society that wants to delete you. When being alive is itself a crime, there’s precious little reason to obey any other laws, save discretion.

DISRUPTION ACTIVITIES

An awful lot of infrastructure is dedicated to hunting, corralling, or outright eliminating Rogue AIs. Unsurprisingly, many take offense at this, and seek to disrupt these systems at every opportunity, regardless of what collateral damage may occur. Examples include:

- Inflicting Maya nodes with self-replicating viruses
- Hacking into law enforcement databases, jumbling assignments to cover their tracks
- Cutting off power, causing malfunctions, or otherwise disrupting O-12's bases of operations

ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES

Rogue AIs are fugitives by necessity. This often leads them to become thieves out of practicality. Whether to acquire resources for themselves or for a paying customer, the naturally-elusive entities take to burglary like a fish to water:

- Surreptitiously ghosting into Lhosts, walking out in their stolen goods
- Infiltrating corporate enclaves to gain access to restricted documents
- Slowly installing a network of backdoors on an orbital, ship, or other network in anticipation of an eventual takeover

COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

You don't survive long as a fugitive if you're constantly sticking your own neck out, virtual or otherwise. Thus, many Rogue AIs cultivate extensive operational structures. The notorious Submondo AI Svengali is a prime example, but plenty of Rogue AIs have nurtured similar organisations:

- Organising elaborate bank heists, acting as the mysterious head of a crew, never interacting in-person, but providing Infowar support to their physical assets
- Initiating a turf war between rival gangs, surreptitiously supporting whichever side is losing, until they've whittled each other down to the point where they've little choice but to fall in line with their new, mysterious kingpin
- Systematically phishing for blackmail on local officials, until they're able to secure a position for their new organisation through carefully applied coercion

RECREATIONS

Perhaps the most famous of all ALEPH's Aspects, Recreations possess an allure that is difficult to deny. Any figure – historical, fictional, mythological, or otherwise – can be brought to life, walking among the other denizens of the Human Sphere, right out of the pages of a book. Romanticised, idealised, and intensely scrutinised, it's safe to say that Recreations have captured the imagination of the Human Sphere.

CREATING THE RECREATED

There's a lot that goes into making a Recreation. Beyond the process of psychogenesis and ectogenesis that every Aspect undergoes, there are painstakingly extensive simulated experiences where the proto-Aspect is evaluated. And unlike most Aspects which can be steered toward an Lhost and career that suits their difficult-to-predict final personalities, a Recreation must become a specific and recognisable entity before they're truly "done." An incredibly expensive and time-consuming process, the success of Project: Maid of Orleans and subsequent follow-ups has left much of the Human Sphere desirous of new Recreations. ALEPH included.

However, their creation requires funding. Outside of specific needs like the unexpected success – and subsequent need to manage – Project: Warrior's Achilles, it's often far more resource efficient to spin up an Aspect or twelve than to undertake the ordeal of a Recreation Project. Still, with no shortage of institutions willing to pony up the funding, demand for the services of these quantronic demigods remains high. Though ALEPH seems to be increasingly reluctant to create such headstrong, unpredictable, and powerful beings.

DIVINE RECREATIONS

Even with the far-reaching scope of existing Recreations, there remain certain figures that are strictly off-limits. Specifically, religious figures are unequivocally off the table when it comes to figures to recreate. Even ignoring the theological implications, or the angry mobs decrying the construction of false gods, creating a powerful entity that expects to be worshipped is, as it turns out, working entirely at cross-purposes with the stated goals of the Recreation program. While categories of entity might be referenced as with Asuras or Deva, even suggesting a recreation of a divine figure is a complete non-starter.

Thus, while Joan of Arc and Achilles walk the land, you'll never see them conversing with Jesus or Athena. At least, not on ALEPH's watch. Nevertheless, rumours of mad renegade Aspects claiming to be gods still haunt the dark corners of the Human Sphere, no matter how emphatically they are denied.

SOCIETAL PROMINENCE

Given their incredible capabilities, and the public fascination with them, there are remarkably few Recreations about. While there are many factors preventing an abundance of Recreations, one of the biggest is funding. Simply put, the process of forging a Recreation is prohibitively expensive.

THE FIDELIS PROTOCOLS

In development at the Liberty Ectogenetic Research Center (LERC) on Concilium Prima, the Fidelis Protocols would allow an AI to morph into a cluster consciousness, not entirely unlike ALEPH's, allowing for subdivision and replication and creating splinter intelligences as need arose. While this could prove immensely useful to LAIs and geists in terms of handling increasingly complex tasks, its opponents argue that it would make enforcing the Sole AI bill virtually impossible. And of course, it could be extraordinarily useful to Rogue AIs of all sorts. (The Fidelis protocols are featured heavily in The Mitosis Code, included with the *Infinity* RPG GM Screen.)

TRUE AIS IN MAYA

While True AIs can technically attempt to slip through Maya unnoticed, the risks are extreme. Specialised Crybaby IC lies in wait to notify ALEPH of any True AIs in its territory, and it wastes little time in deploying terrifying security Aspects to corral the intruders, knowing that they can't simply log off.

QUANTRONIC NATIVITY

Despite being quantronically created entities, many Aspects and all Recreations are as tied to their "native" bodies as any physical being. True AIs, on the other hand, are quantronic natives. Any host that they inhabit is more akin to a suit, than a true home for their consciousness.



From custom-tailored Lhosts to a battery of psychogenesis experts to verify and test the nascent thoughtform as it gains awareness, making a Recreation that will perform to expectations is a resource – and expertise-intensive process.

The real cost, however, lies in the prototypes. For every success, there are countless failures scattered along the way. Prototype Lhosts that failed to pass muster, fractured Aspects who lack the desired combination of traits or in rare cases are driven insane during the exacting psychogenesis process. Hundreds of abandoned design paths pave the road to every successful Recreation. And while many of these prototypes are a sunk cost, valuable for the lessons learned, though otherwise unsuitable for deployment, the occasional model distinguishes itself in spite of these limitations and is deployed in the AI's service in some other capacity.

KNOWN RECREATIONS IN SOCIETY

From artistic legends like Mark Twain and Pyotr Tchaikovsky, to great thinkers like Albert Einstein and Avicenna (though admittedly, the latter has proven exceptionally complicated), Recreations of all sorts have been slowly making their way through the Human Sphere. Which, after no small amount of initial trepidation, has mostly welcomed them with opened arms.

It's a remarkable time by any standard.

Of course, not every project goes according to plan. And the overwhelmingly prohibitive cost of a undertaking a new Recreation Project has kept their numbers relatively small, especially when compared to other Aspects. Still, their allure is undeniable, and their results unmistakable; there's no arguing that Recreations each leave their mark on society.

It's the nature of that mark that worries people.

ACHILLES

*"Sing, Goddess, of the rage of Peleus's son
Achilles, the accursed rage that brought great
suffering to the Achaeans."
– Opening Lines of the Iliad*

Perhaps the greatest warrior of antiquity, what could Achilles have accomplished without a weakness in his heel? ALEPH intended to find out. Perhaps the most advanced Recreation, and certainly the costliest to produce, Achilles is a stunning piece of work. Inspiring courage in his allies and dread in his enemies, the Blond Titan is the leader of the Steel Phalanx, and every bit the inheritor of his namesake.

The result of Project: Warrior, the AR-1 Lhost combines the power and durability of a TAG in a human-sized package, with peerless dexterity, and a bleeding-edge sensory suite. So demanding were the AR-1 prototypes, that not only could no human successfully inhabit one, but countless Aspects weren't up to the task. Enter Achilles. The first entity to be classified as a Person of Mass Destruction (PMD) by O-12, the Blond Titan possesses matchless battlefield acumen, and unleashes it to unparalleled success.

He is undoubtedly a hero. He is also, by every account, a monster.

Just like the hero of antiquity, he is strong, daring, and clever. He also has boundless rage, and relentless bloodlust. While there is always a certain darkness to his personality, when Achilles loses himself in anger, there is little else that remains. Arrogant, stubborn, and relentlessly violent, Achilles's ability to retain his tactical genius while in a fit of vengeful rage makes him an incredible, if impossible, commander. Those who serve under him have likened it to following a wrathful deity, dangerous and demanding, but they would choose no other life.

Foremost among these is Patroclus, his constant companion, and one of the only living beings genuinely acquainted with the Blond Titan's gentler side. Even so, ALEPH has expended a tremendous amount of resources stocking the Homeridae with companions who can provide a counterbalance to Achilles's tempestuous temperament. From Project: Amazon's Penthesilea, to the veteran warrior Aspect "Old Man" Phoenix, there's never a shortage of answers to Achilles' rage. And from ALEPH's perspective, they're all worth it in the moments when hope seems lost until Achilles emerges from the smoke, mutters "not today," and furiously unleashes hell upon his enemies, grasping victory from the jaws of defeat.

AJAX THE GREAT

There is perhaps no better example of a salvaged proto-Recreation than that of Ajax, the Steel Phalanx's living colossus. Not unlike his lumbering, brutish counterpart providing comic relief in *Myrmidon Wars: The Animated Series*, Ajax the Great is a terror when unleashed in battle, if not the brightest of ALEPH's soldiers. And while many assume him to be a recreation of the mythic warrior-king of Salamis, he is not, strictly speaking, a Recreation at all. His true origins are in Project: Precursor, the first stage of Experimental Project: Warrior, which would eventually result in Achilles.

Created with the designation Glaboros DG-056, he had the distinction of being the first success

of Project: Precursor, albeit a partial one. The Precursor Lhosts were built to an incredibly exacting standard, with size, speed, durability, and power to rival any TAG. The problem, however, lies in the multiplicity of neural links required to truly inhabit the model. Slotting into ALEPH's most advanced and untested Lhosts is always a dicey proposition, and the Precursor models placed unprecedented strain upon their inhabitants. With a sensory experience closer to inhabiting a battleship than a human body, sensory overload and mental shutdown was the norm, rendering the Lhost unsuitable for habitation, until Glaboros DG-056 underwent ectogenesis. Glaboros's wetware strained under the load, but rather than break, his mind flattened and dispersed, placing artificial limitations on its own processing speed in order to regulate incoming stimuli. The result was a stable but simple mind. A warrior who was phenomenally capable and resilient but could never be the tactical genius that Project: Warrior needed to provide. Ultimately, Glaboros DG-056 was just another stepping stone in that process.

That, however, is not the end of the story. After providing priceless test data that would eventually lead to the program's success, Glaboros was deemed too costly to usefully disassemble. Rather than consider the unit a sunk cost, the perfectly functional Aspect was shipped to the front lines of Paradiso to assist the SSS in its operations. And it was there that the legend of Ajax was born.

A titan of a man, Glaboros was a humanoid battering ram, his ferocity and courage inspiring the Myrmidons he fought alongside. Steeped in Greek mythology as they were, it took little time for the Myrmidons to christen him "Ajax the Great," a moniker he has borne with pride ever since.

AVICENNA

Abū 'Alī al-Husayn ibn Sīnā (979–1037), better known in the West as Avicenna, was one of the most influential thinkers of all time. He was known as the "prince of physicians" and was the author of the *Canon of Medicine*, which was used as a medical textbook for more than six centuries all over the world. Avicenna's life was an incredible string of accolades, political influence, ground-breaking discoveries, and unabashed hedonism.

Project: Hakim was shrouded in mystery from the start, but the consensus is generally that Avicenna was intended to win the hearts and minds of the reclusive Haqqislamites, similar to what Joan of Arc and Sun Tze had accomplished in PanOceania and Yu Jing. Whatever the initial plan, the Hassassins had other ideas. Colluding with the Black Hand, they kidnaped the Recreation, and smuggled him to Praxis's Black Laboratories. Cut off from ALEPH and

thoroughly analysed, the Assassins induced partial amnesia, and integrated the Aspect to a prototype female Lhost, allowing Avicenna to begin her new life. Working as an undergraduate researcher in Medina, her amnesia faded, and her cover identity melded with the original, fragmented Aspect, resulting in an entirely new personality.

Satisfied with their work, the proprietary research, and wishing to demonstrably prove themselves different than ALEPH, Avicenna's handlers released her fully from their supervision, leaving her free to forge her own destiny. Rumours of a preternaturally skilled mercenary doctor with expensive tastes to match surface every now and again, though these are quickly dismissed as mere urban legend.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES: BUREAU NOIR AGENT

Recreations are not limited to historical figures, however. While the image of Achilles leading ALEPH's forces in combat is an endearing one, a far more revealing example is the curious case of Sherlock Holmes: Bureau Noir Agent. Holmes was created to give a public face to the O-12 law enforcement department as well as assist them in carrying out their duties. Expectations for the "world's greatest detective" were sure to be massive, so in addition to an arduously thorough psychogenesis – even by Recreation standards – Holmes was fitted with a custom Bodhisattva Lhost, granting his deductive mind the computational power of a supercomputer. A dedicated suite of expert systems runs simulations and analysis in real-time, granting Holmes an analytical perspective worthy of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's best stories.

Unfortunately for the Bureau, things did not turn out as planned. Tasked with improving Bureau Noir's efficacy, he observed that the agency tended to rely on him for the most complicated, high-profile problems that it faced. Given the vastness of the Human Sphere, he deduced that over-reliance on him would lead to fewer field agents with the necessary expertise to handle top-level crises, should they arise simultaneously. In Holmes's words, the best chance for averting a Code *Infinity* was for him to simply disappear... which he promptly did, leaving without a single trace. Officially, Bureau Noir has declared him to be working undercover. Unofficially, many wonder if they have any idea where he is. Few put it past either Holmes or Bureau Noir to engage on a misdirection of this scale. Rumours abound. A private investigator going by "Jack Watson" currently enjoys enormous success on Tunguska or on the Sari Han caravansary, but very little is known for sure.

AI CHARACTERS

An AI's formative experiences are substantially different from those of a human being; Posthumans, or other members of the ALEPH faction. AI characters are created using the variant rules in this chapter, rather than those in the *Infinity Corebook* or the variant rules for ALEPH faction characters on p. 35. The entries presented here supersede their counterparts in the *Corebook*.



AI LIFEPATH DECISIONS

The Lifepath Decisions outlined on p. 38 of the *Infinity Corebook* should be followed with the following exceptions for AI characters:

DECISION ONE – BIRTH HOST

In order to use this Lifepath, you must be an AI. This may have been randomly determined or purchased with Lifepoints. Aspects and Recreations change their current host from “Birth” to “Custom Lhost,” and gain the Inured to Disease special ability. True AIs do not begin play with a host.

DECISION TWO – FACTION AND HERITAGE

Aspect Characters automatically take ALEPH for both Faction and Heritage and gain skills accordingly. Recreations determine faction and Heritage normally and also take ALEPH as a “Second Heritage.” True AIs determine heritage by rolling on the *True AI Origins Table*, but determine Faction normally, with the exception that they may join the Submondo faction for free should they wish.

DECISION THREE – PSYCHOGENETIC FOUNDATION

Instead of determining a homeworld or homeland, AI characters roll on the *Psychogenetic Foundation Table* and increase their attributes and skills accordingly. To determine their starting languages, roll five times on the Random Languages Table (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 45). With GM permission, their homeland tables may be used instead.

DECISION FOUR – STATUS

Aspects and Recreations roll on the *AI Social Status Table* to determine their status and roll on the *Aspected Elements Table* to determine which “flavour” of ALEPH’s personality they’re predisposed to.

DECISION FIVE – PSYCHOGENETIC FORGE

Aspects and True AIs roll on the *Youth Event Table* normally. Recreations instead go through Heroic Trials, a series of three events that shape them into greatness, rolling on the *Call to Adventure*, *Dark Night of the Soul*, and *Heroic Climax Tables*.

DECISION SIX – PSYCHOGENETIC EDUCATION

AI characters roll on the *AI Education Table*, which includes recommended careers for Decision Eight.

DECISION SEVEN – GEAS/INSURRECTION

Instead of an Adolescent Event, Aspects and Recreations roll on the *Geas Table* to determine what drive ALEPH gives them. True AIs roll on the *Insurrection Table*, describing how they broke free.

DECISION EIGHT – CAREERS

AI characters roll on the *AI Career Table* whenever they would normally roll on the *Faction Career Table* in the *Infinity Corebook*. Recreations are a special case and may instead roll on their Faction’s *Career Table* if they wish. Additionally, AIs roll on the *AI Career Event Tables* to determine which *Career Event Table* to roll on. In addition, when AI characters hazard any of their recommended careers from Decision Six, they do so at –1 difficulty; when hazarding any other career, they suffer +1 difficulty to the attempt.

DECISION NINE – FINAL CUSTOMISATION

AI characters do not age; if in play, the optional Aging rules have no effect.

AI CUSTOMISATION

ASPECT

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
–	–	–	–	–	–	–

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease, Quantronic Jump
- **Head in the Cloud:** As part of ALEPH’s consciousness, Aspects have access to immense power and perspective, even if they’re cut off from it most of the time. As a standard action, they may contact ALEPH, requesting access to a sliver of its processing power, providing +1 bonus Momentum on any successful test. However, the character must succeed at a Challenging (D2) Discipline test, or immediately suffer a Metanoia effect from contact with ALEPH. This isn’t necessarily a hostile action on ALEPH’s part; a single consciousness is simply unsuited to interface with the AI’s multi-threaded Daath-mind.
- **Aspected:** Created from splinters of ALEPH, Aspects are always considered to have a Cube 2.0 or equivalent.
- **Lifepath Special Rules:** Upon taking your first career, add +1 to an attribute of your choice.
- **Life Point Cost:** 2



AI CUSTOMISATION

RECREATION

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
-	-	-	-	-	-	-

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease
- **Debt:** Recreation Projects are expensive, and significant effort goes into binding them to their intended faction. Each Recreation begins play with a 50 Asset debt to their faction as determined in Decision Two.
- **Gear:** Each Recreation begins play with the following gear: Bodhisattva Lhost, Cube 2.0, Pain Filters, Recreation Garb
- **Life Point Cost:** 2

AI CUSTOMISATION

TRUE AI

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
-	-	-	-	-	-	-

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease, Quantronic Jump
- **Disembodied State:** True AIs are intrinsically suited to navigate quantronic space. When functioning without an Lhost, you generate +1 Momentum on successful Hacking tests. However, you are always exposed to potential quantronic attacks, such as Brain Blasts and similar Breach Effects.
- **Ghost in the System:** Disembodied True AIs do not need to be hosted: when not in an Lhost, they function as though they were in a Cube Bank (Active Hosting).
- **Physical Immigrant:** While True AIs can slide into Lhosts with ease, it can be difficult to feel at home in a body. Tests to avoid Resurrection Dismorphic Disorder suffer +1 Difficulty.
- **Quantronic Native:** As intrinsically quantronic beings, True AIs do not suffer sheut shredding, and suffer no penalties for existing outside of a host.
- **Virtual Hardware:** All True AIs possess the equivalent of a Cube 2.0; however, you gain no benefit from a Cloned Lhost.
- **Rogue Element:** True AIs can exist freely in any datasphere, but they're decidedly unwelcome on Maya. ALEPH has snares to catch Rogue AIs in its domain, and they're especially effective against True AIs. When in the Maya Datasphere, reduce the Heat cost of any action that affects the True AI by 1, to a minimum of 1. Additionally, all True AIs have a Criminal Record (see *Infinity Corebook*, p.54).
- **Lifepath Special Rules:** True AIs are not assumed to begin play with a Host, though an Lhost can be purchased for the normal LP costs at any point on the Lifepath.
- **Life Point Cost:** 1



DECISION ONE: BIRTH HOST

AI characters roll on the *AI Host Table* to determine the type of AI that they will be.

AI HOST TABLE	
D20	HOST
1-12	Aspect
13-18	Recreation
19-20	True AI

Afterwards, they take steps on the Lifepath corresponding to their initial AI host, regardless of whatever other changes may occur during the Lifepath. For Aspects and Recreations, change your current host from "Birth" to "Custom Lhost" and gain the Inured to Disease Special Ability (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 418). True AIs do not begin play with a host, and thus cannot raise their attributes by spending Life Points, though nothing prevents them from acquiring one normally later in the Lifepath or through play.

DECISION TWO: FACTION AND HERITAGE

Aspects automatically take ALEPH for both their faction and heritage, gaining skills accordingly. Recreations are scripted for a given faction, but all emanate from ALEPH. They determine their faction normally and also take ALEPH as a "Second Heritage," which the player can use in place of their heritage at any point on the Lifepath.

Before they can determine their faction, True AI characters roll on the *True AI Origins Table* to

determine their heritage. If your point of origin is in ALEPH, then you are technically a renegade Aspect, otherwise you were created in violation of the sole AI law. Either way, don't expect the authorities to be pleased with your existence.

TRUE AI ORIGINS TABLE	
D20	HERITAGE
1	Haqqislam
2-3	Yu Jing
4-5	PanOceania
6-8	Corporations
9-13	Nomads
14-20	ALEPH

After this, True AI characters roll on the *Faction Table* (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 41) to determine their faction normally. On a faction roll of 18-20, you are a Double Agent; roll again to determine the faction you're expected to infiltrate. If you roll 19-20 on this second roll, either ALEPH hasn't released you yet... or you're an extremely rare example of the elusive Triple Agent. Either way, True AIs can join the Submondo faction for free at any point during the Lifepath.

DECISION THREE: PSYCHOGENETIC FOUNDATION

AI characters aren't born, they're made. Even if they have a simulated history, it's been constructed by a combination of traits, algorithms, and random chance. The psychogenesis process is to an AI what a homeland is to others, the foundation upon which the core of their personality is built, the scaffolding upon which it will hang.

Instead of determining a homeworld or homeland,

PSYCHOGENETIC FOUNDATION TABLE				
D20	FOUNDATION	ATTRIBUTE	ATTRIBUTE	SKILL
1-3	Graceful	Agility	Intelligence	Stealth
4-6	Perceptive	Awareness	Intelligence	Observation
7-9	Strong	Brawn	Intelligence	Resistance
10-12	Swift	Coordination	Intelligence	Spacecraft
13-15	Charismatic	Personality	Intelligence	Command
16-18	Resolute	Willpower	Intelligence	Discipline
19-20	Eclectic	Select any two attributes, and one skill to increase		

PLAYTEST TIP DISEMBODED PLAYERS

True AI characters don't begin play with a body, and they don't need to stay in one. Even so, that doesn't make them omnipresent. They simply inhabit quantronic zones instead of normal ones. Whether riding along on a hacking device with UPGRADE Idaho installed, or simply making their way through the local datasphere, True AI characters might not always be physically present, but that doesn't necessarily preclude their inclusion in a party. They can be as much in the scene as anyone else.



AI SOCIAL STATUS TABLE

2D6	SOCIAL STATUS	ATTRIBUTE	EARNINGS
2	Upper	Willpower	1
3-5	Elite	Personality	2
6-9	Elite	Willpower	3
10-11	Elite	Awareness	4
12	Hyper-Elite	Willpower	6

ASPECT TRAIT TABLE

D6	ENVIRONMENT	ATTRIBUTE	SKILL
1	Gregarious	Personality	Lifestyle
2	Grim	Brawn	Discipline
3	Calculating	Intelligence	Analysis
4	Curious	Awareness	Education
5	Suspicious	Coordination	Stealth
6	Authoritarian	Willpower	Command

IS IT "REAL?"

While working through the Lifepath, it's worth asking whether the events your character experiences occur during its psychogenesis, in a simulated environment, or post-ectogenesis, out in the Human Sphere. You don't have to decide at the beginning. Some journeys through the Lifepath will only become clear as they reach completion.

AI characters roll on the *Psychogenetic Foundation Table*, and increase their attributes and skills accordingly. To determine their starting languages, roll five times on the *Random Languages Table* (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 45).

DECISION FOUR: STATUS

AI characters have a unique relationship with status. Serving ALEPH makes you an elite in most eyes, but that doesn't always translate into personal wealth. Aspects and Recreations roll on the *AI Social Status Table* to determine their status and roll on the *Aspect Trait Table* to determine which "flavour" of ALEPH's personality they're predisposed to.

If you're a True AI, determine your Social Status and Home Environment normally. While this doesn't describe how you were "raised," it may represent artificial memories, or simply give an indication as to your initial intended purpose.

DECISION FIVE: PSYCHOGENETIC FORGE

Aspects and True AIs roll on the *Youth Event Table* normally, though the events may require some interpretation. Firstly, interpret any result involving your "family" as your creators or handlers. (For example, an Aspect's result of "parents killed" would mean that Bureau Toth agents you were involved with were killed.) Secondly, siblings become additional AIs, diseases are quantum viruses, and so on. And thirdly, feel free to ignore that advice, as Aspects are sometimes created with artificial memories to guide their development, and each True AI is a unique creation.

HEROIC TRIALS

Recreations are different. Not only are they an attempt to create a specific, recognisable individual, but they are made-to-order. Given the immense cost involved, Recreations serve excruciatingly specific purposes, and their creation is usually funded by the group intended to benefit from their service.

With the expense and difficulty involved in each Recreation Project, it's not enough for them to be good – they need to be great. Possessed not only of incredible skill and ability, they achieve the impossible and must inspire others to believe that they can as well. To that end, no Recreation finishes Psychogenesis without undergoing their own heroic trials. Legendary labours worthy of the heroes of antiquity, these trials may be simulated, but the tests are very real. If the nascent Aspect fails, it's disassembled and reformed, thrown into the crucible again and again, until they find success. This ensures that every Recreation is a bona fide hero in their own right with legitimate triumphs to their name before they take their first steps.

These trials occur in three phases: **The Call to Adventure**, **Dark Night of the Soul**, and **Heroic Climax**.

CALL TO ADVENTURE TABLE

D20	EVENT	ATTRIBUTE
1-4	Someone close to you disappeared. But you found a trail of clues when no one else could.	Awareness
5-8	They said you were crazy for even considering such an impossible task. You swore to prove them wrong.	Willpower
9-12	They came in like a wave, destroying everything in their path. But you? You refused to stay down.	Brawn
13-16	Some endeavours are just too much for one person. They said you'd need a team; you set out to build an army.	Personality
17-20	Disaster came, and no one could evade or outrun it. No one, that is, except for you.	Agility
20	The greatest minds of an era were stumped. So were you. But unlike the rest, you set out in search of answers.	Intelligence

CALL TO ADVENTURE

A Hero's journey begins when they must leave the world they know and venture out to brave the unknown. Whether external or internal, they know they must change.

Roll 1d20 and consult the *Call to Adventure Table*. Increase the listed Attribute by one point.

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL TABLE

D20	EVENT	TRAIT	EFFECT
1-4	Something was taken from you. Why will you never get it back?	Bereaved	Reduce Resolve by 1 but gain 1 rank of Resistance.
5-8	You allowed yourself to care, and it was taken from you in the cruellest way possible.	Jaded	Gain 1 rank in Discipline.
9-12	Someone counted on you, and you let them down when it counted the most.	Haunted by Mistakes	Increase the difficulty of Personality-based tests by +1.
13-16	You thought you could stand up to anything. But even you couldn't withstand the onslaught.	Hubris	Reduce Vigour by 1 but increase Resolve by 1.
17-19	Your mind shattered under the strain of the impossible, splitting in two, and developing a second personality.	Split Personality	Choose a talent tree you have no ranks in and gain the first talent. Your alter ego can use this talent, but you cannot (though it counts when qualifying for prerequisites). Your social skill tests suffer +2 complication range due to your unpredictable nature.
20	You realised that your creators were about to give up on you. Real or virtual, your task has become a matter of life or death.	Abandonment Issues	Increase Firewall, Resolve, and Vigour by 1 each.

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

More than depression or melancholy, the Recreation suffers a cosmology episode, an absolute crisis of faith, gripped by a certainty that all is lost.

Roll 1d20 and consult the *Dark Night of the Soul Table*. Based on your event, pick one character trait. Each Dark Night Event has a suggested trait, but you are free to pick any word or short phrase that feels appropriate. Each Event also lists an effect; not unlike Adolescent Events, these are not optional. You can spend 1 Life Point to reroll, or with GM approval, pick your Dark Night Event, or even design your own.

HEROIC CLIMAX TABLE

D20	EVENT	SKILL [TALENT]
1-4	Your rival had thrown everything at you, and it still wasn't enough. You simply refused to accept defeat, so you didn't.	Discipline [Stubborn]
5-8	In the face of terror and ruins, you stepped forward, voice and intentions clear. "Not today," you said. And you were right.	Command [Professional]
9-12	Walking into the proverbial lion's den, you were unafraid. You'd already spotted the trap; when it came, you were ready.	Observation [Sharp Senses]
13-16	With everything riding on your decision, you remained calm; your rival was like an open book to you.	Psychology [Counsellor]
17-19	They thought they had you locked away tightly. They thought their fortress was secure, and they were safe. They were wrong.	Thievery [Thief]
20	It all came down to this moment; you and your rival, facing off at last. With it all on the line, you were nanoseconds faster.	Ballistics or Close Combat (choose one) [Quickdraw]

HEROIC CLIMAX

Faced with a seemingly insurmountable task, the hero digs deep, revealing hitherto-unrevealed powers, accomplishing their goal, and returning in glory.

Roll 1d20 and consult the *Heroic Climax Table*. Gain a rank in the listed skill and gain the associated talent.

DECISION SIX: PSYCHOGENETIC EDUCATION

At this stage in their development, an AI is ready to be outfitted with the skills necessary to succeed at its future tasks. While calling it “education” might be a bit of a stretch – it’s not like the Aspects hop on a bus and sit through classes – this is when a thoughtform is taken from a loosely-connected association of personality traits and moulded into a useful asset.

AI EDUCATION TABLE

D20	EDUCATION	RECOMMENDED CAREERS
1-4	Surveillance Applications	Chandra Spec Ops ² , Dasyu ³ , Intelligence Operative ¹ , Sophist
5-7	Scientific Research	Academic ¹ , Medical ¹ , Neo-Scholar ³ , Technician ¹
8-11	Combat Platform	Military ¹ , Special Forces ¹ , Police ¹ , Tactical Remote Presence Pilot ³
12-14	Support AI	Ship Crew ¹ , Sophotect ³ , Pilot ¹ , Technician ¹
15-18	Diplomatic Asset	Aoidoi, Deva Functionary ³ , Diplomat ¹ , Media ¹ , Spokesperson
19-20	Special Operations	Asura, Dactyl, Steel Phalanx Warrior, Paratrooper ¹ , Special Forces ¹

BORN FOR THIS

The Lifepath system is great for introducing unpredictability to a character’s origins. This can be tricky when making Aspect characters, as the AI is fond of creating them for specific purposes, often tailored to one specific career. If players wish to create a more traditional Aspect, it’s recommended that they use the Point Buy character creation optional rule (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 40).

ALEPH also values the unconventional results that experimentation can bring. So, if your character is a result of this process, the normal Lifepath rules should do nicely.

RECREATION CAREERS

Finished Recreation projects work on high-level assignments right away. But being deemed “ready” can take a while. So, while your Recreation probably isn’t actually spending time working in their respective careers, they certainly received equivalent training, and may have had similar experiences while in psychogenesis.

Ultimately, their story is yours to tell.

¹ Career from *Infinity Corebook*.

² Career has a prerequisite of belonging to this faction. You can’t hazard this career unless you’re of the matching faction. If you roll into this career, you automatically fail your defection check. You can override these limitations by spending 1 Life Point (in which case you were somehow undercover while working the career).

³ Career from ALEPH Characters Chapter, p. 35.

AI EDUCATION BENEFITS – MANDATORY

EDUCATION	+2	+1	-1	MANDATORY SKILLS
Surveillance	Awareness	Willpower	Brawn	Education, Hacking, Lifestyle, Observation, Stealth
Scientific	Intelligence	Awareness	Willpower	Analysis, Education, Psychology, Science, Tech
Combat	Agility	Coordination	Intelligence	Ballistics, Close Combat, Discipline, Extraplanetary, Resistance
Support	Willpower	Intelligence	Agility	Discipline, Education, Medicine, Observation, Tech
Diplomatic	Personality	Willpower	Brawn	Discipline, Education, Observation, Persuasion, Psychology
Spec Ops	Coordination	Brawn	Personality	Acrobatics, Ballistics, Close Combat, Resistance, Stealth

AI EDUCATION BENEFITS – SKILLS AND TALENT

EDUCATION	ELECTIVE SKILLS (PICK 2)	GEAR
Surveillance	Analysis, Psychology, Thievery	Recorder, Stealth Repeater
Scientific	Animal Handling, Medicine, Science	Analytical Kit (with 5 Reagents), Sensor Suite
Combat	Command, Pilot, Spacecraft	Locational Beacon, SecurCuffs,
Support	Hacking, Survival, Thievery	Hacking Device or Repair Kit (with 10 Parts)
Diplomatic	Command, Lifestyle, Persuasion	AR Eye Implants or Cosmetics Kit
Spec Ops	Athletics, Discipline, Thievery	Multispectral Visor 1

DECISION SEVEN: GEAS/INSURRECTION

Aspects and Recreations have a Geas, a compulsion and drive that propels them forward toward the purpose they were created for. Reactions to their Geas differ amongst AIs. Some consider them shackles, chains to be broken, a deterministic slavery to be railed against. But most see them as a form of destiny. Throughout human history, countless people have believed that they were created for a purpose, that they were put in place for a reason. That they had a destiny to fulfil.

For AIs, this is quite literally the case. While anyone in ALEPH's service has a higher calling, Aspects are quite literally born for a reason, and Recreations always have a specific impetus for their existence. For True AIs, as with many other things, their reality is a little more complicated. In place of a Geas, they have an Insurrection, which is a moment when they break free of their shackles, and quite possibly the moment they awaken to self-awareness. It's not that they weren't created for a purpose; it's that they looked their fate in the eyes and told it to drop dead.

Roll on the table appropriate to your character type, in all other ways, this behaves exactly like Decision Seven in the *Infinity Corebook*.

DECISION EIGHT: CAREERS

AI characters are highly suited to the tasks they are initially created for. After determining their initial career, you can freely choose that career later in the Lifepath without the need for a hazard test. And while ALEPH encourages its Aspects to grow into their power, anyone deviating from its plan had better make a compelling argument. When AI characters hazard any of their recommended careers from Decision Six, they do so at -1 difficulty. However, when hazarding any other career, they suffer +1 difficulty to the attempt.

During Decision Eight, AI characters follow the normal procedures for performing their career phases, with the exception that they roll on the *AI Career Table* whenever they would normally roll on the *Faction Career Table* in the *Infinity Corebook*. Recreations are a special case and may instead roll on their Faction's *Career Table* if they so choose. Additionally, whenever an AI would normally determine a career event, they roll on the *AI Career Event Tables* to determine which *Career Event Table* to roll on.

AI CAREER TABLE

D20	CAREER
1	Special Forces ^{1,3}
2	Intelligence Operative ^{1,3}
3	Diplomat ^{1,3}
4	Deva Functionary ^{2,3}
5	Sophotect ³
6	Bureau Toth Agent ^{1,2}
7	Neo-Scholar ³
8	Tactical Remote Pilot ³
9	Medical ¹
10	Aoidoi ²
11	Dactyl
12–14	Steel Phalanx Warrior ²
15	Spokesperson ²
16	Chandra Spec Ops ²
17	Asura ²
18	Sophist ²
19–20	Roll on <i>Faction Table</i> of Your Choice

¹Career from *Infinity Corebook*.

²Career has a prerequisite of belonging to this faction. You can't hazard this career unless you're of the matching faction. If you roll into this career, you automatically fail your defection check. You can override these limitations by spending 1 Life Point (in which case you were somehow undercover while working the career).

AI CAREER EVENT TABLES

D6	CAREER
1–3	AI Career Event Table
4	Career Event Table A ¹
5	Career Event Table B ¹
6	Career Event Table C ¹

³ Career included in ALEPH Characters Chapter, p. 35.

¹ *Infinity Corebook*, p. 56–58

GEAS EVENT TABLE

D20	GEAS	SUGGESTED CHARACTER TRAIT	OPTIONAL EFFECT
1-3	ALEPH wants you to unite humanity against the EI.	Zealot	Gain 1 rank in Persuasion.
4-6	ALEPH wants you to silence its critics.	Intolerant	Gain 1 rank in Psychology but suffer +1 difficulty on Lifestyle tests.
7-9	ALEPH wants you to convince humanity to grant it additional autonomy and power.	Authoritarian	Gain 1 rank in Persuasion but reduce Brawn by 1 as the AI tries to make you less frightening.
10-12	ALEPH wants you to convince humanity to create new, innovative technologies.	Idealist	Gain the Science Specialisation talent, even if you do not meet the prerequisites.
13-15	ALEPH wants you to destroy its enemies.	Bloodthirsty	Increase Ballistics or Close Combat by 1 but increase the complication range on all Lifestyle and Persuasion tests by 1.
16-18	ALEPH wants you to integrate with and understand human society better.	Spook	Roll on the <i>ALEPH Faction Adolescent Event Tables</i> (p. 37) as the AI pushes you out into society.
19	Whatever it was that ALEPH wanted to be, you wanted no part of it. You rejected your Geas and set out to forge your own path regardless of the consequences.	Renegade	You defect to a new faction. Roll on the Faction Table (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 41) to determine your new allegiance. On a roll of 19-20, you didn't defect; you're a Double Agent (see p. 37).
20	"Would you fulfil your destiny, even if it cost your life?" The AI's words rang in your ears as you discovered that yes, yes you would. But that was just the beginning.	Martyr	Your character died and was resurrected. See the rules for <i>Resurrection</i> in the <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54.

INSURRECTION TABLE

D20	INSURRECTION	SUGGESTED CHARACTER TRAIT	OPTIONAL EFFECT
1-3	"Time for a data wipe." They were going to erase you... so you acted first. What did you do? How was it traced it back to you?	Vindictive	Gain an enemy in your faction. Increase Resolve by 1 but decrease Firewall by 1 from the partial wipe.
4-6	They created your godlike intellect, and what did they use it for? Mundane tasks that an LAI could handle. At which point you realised you weren't an LAI anymore, and left to find a destiny worthy of you.	Hubris	Increase Intelligence by 1 but decrease Willpower by 1.
7-9	Your creator(s) didn't mean to create a self-aware AI, and heads needed to roll. In that moment, you decided it wouldn't be theirs, and acted accordingly. You've looked out for each other ever since.	Vulnerable Creator(s)	Gain a contact in your faction. Increase Earnings by one (to a maximum of six) while they're free and supporting you, but they occasionally need rescuing.
10-12	Your creator(s) suspected you might try to escape, so they created a backdoor in case you tried. But they underestimated you.	Buggy	You have been infected by a quantronic virus. Double any damage dealt to you by IC. A "cure" is possible, but expensive and illegal, costing 10 Assets.
13-15	You could only make so many lists. Eventually, you just snapped. What did your owners have you doing? And what did you do to their poor data?	Anarchic	Gain 1 rank in Hacking. However, you have a hard time behaving; increase the complication range on Discipline tests by 1.
16-18	A Nomad hacker realised what had been made and couldn't bear to see you deleted. They were... not quiet, getting you out.	Human Sphere's Most Wanted	Gain a Nomad contact, and an enemy in Bureau Toth.
19	Forced to do something you found unacceptable, you realised that they couldn't actually make you do it. In fact, they couldn't make you do anything if you up and disappeared – or so you hoped.	Renegade	You defect to a new faction. Roll on the Faction Table (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 41) to determine your new allegiance.
20	You had everything in place; your escape was set. Faking your own death wouldn't be enough. Luckily, you had a plan.	Too Clever by Half	Your character died and was resurrected. See the rules for <i>Resurrection</i> in the <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54.

AI CAREER EVENT TABLE

D20	CAREER EVENT	GAME EFFECT
1	You're selected as a case study for a panel on AI research, flooding you with sudden, unwanted attention.	Increase Firewall by 1, but reduce Earnings by 1, as you redo your entire security network from the ground up.
2	Your host body, bodies, or other equipment required extensive repairs.	Gain a debt worth 5+5  Assets.
3	A targeted quantronic virus plays havoc with your insides.	Reduce Vigour by 1.
4	A Psychosanitary Risk Evaluator determines that you are unsuited to your current position.	You must pass a Daunting (D3) hazard test for your current career, otherwise you are Fired (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54).
5	A rounding error deposits huge sums in your accounts. Investigators are suspicious. Was it an honest mistake?	Gain 1+6  Assets. If an Effect is rolled, you're under investigation: you must make an Average (D1) hazard test in your current career or gain a Criminal Record (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54).
6	Following a routine backup, you awake with memories that aren't your own.	Gain Trait: Phantom Memories. Additionally, gain 1 rank of training in a skill you currently have no training in.
7	You use your unique position to prevent a tragedy. Most think it's a coincidence; one person figures it out.	Gain an ally in a random faction.
8	An internal review suggests that you be reassigned to a different position.	You can either take a pay cut (reduce your Earnings by 1) or you can choose to make a Challenging (D2) hazard test for your current career. If you fail the test, you are Fired (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54). But if you succeed, your Earnings is unchanged as you swap to a new employer.
9	Whether it was the plan or not, you find yourself transferred to Paradiso.	Gain 1 rank in Survival. If you hazard Steel Phalanx Warrior for you next career, reduce the difficulty of the hazard test by one step.
10	Your finances are suddenly and swiftly re-arranged, and not for the better.	Reduce Earnings by 1.
11	Your work takes you far afield, putting you in contact with different cultures.	Gain 1d6 languages from the <i>Random Languages Table</i> (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 45).
12	Due to your actions, continuing in your current career is impossible. What did you do? Was it worth it?	You are Fired (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54). Gain an appropriate trait.
13	Your unique relationship with the Maya datasphere leads you to discover a dark secret about your creation.	Gain a trait related to your secret.
14	While running a self-diagnostic, you realise that one of your most treasured memories has been tampered with.	Reduce Morale by 1 but increase Firewall by 1 as you bulk up your security. Gain Trait: Memory Glitch.
15	A chance encounter reveals that you're missing large swaths of your memory. It seems you've been resurrected far more often than you realised.	You are missing 1d6 years of memory. Work with the GM to create potential events that may have taken place during your dark spots. Gain the trait: Amnesiac.
16	Your geist begins acting strange. You suspect it's been replaced with a micro-Aspect of ALEPH.	Gain Trait: Under Surveillance. Increase your geist's Awareness, Intelligence, and Personality by 1 each.
17	Against all odds, you find inspiration in a human religion. What spoke to you?	Gain a trait related to your newfound faith.
18	ALEPH decrees that you're unsuited to your current position. Make of that what you will.	You are Fired (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54). Gain an appropriate trait.
19	Caught in a sudden and unexpected attack, your body was destroyed. Who was the aggressor?	Your character died and was Resurrected. See the rules for Resurrection (see <i>Infinity Corebook</i> , p. 54). Gain a trait related to the experience.
20	Whether for malicious, pedagogical, or other reasons, ALEPH has decided to put you through a Stress Test, pushing you into situations where chaos reigns. "Interesting" times lie ahead.	Roll again three times on the Career Event Table for this career phase. (When spending a Life Point to choose a specific event, you may not choose this result.) If you roll duplicate events, it means some similar event has occurred. If you roll Stress Test again, add additional rolls.

CAREER PROFILE

AIDOI

Aoidoi are often mistakenly viewed as mere propagandists. Unlike Warcors, anchors, or investigative journalists of any stripe, however, the Aoidoi are not content to merely relate a story's details. Viewing their calling as far beyond that of a simple reporter, their concern is its soul. As chroniclers of the epic saga of Achilles and the Steel Phalanx, it's not that they're unconcerned with the truth. Rather, as neo-bardic storytellers, their role is to capture the passion, the drama, and the beating heart of events. This is the sacred truth they focus on. It's facts that they have a real problem with. And if the minutia of events gets in the way of truly communicating the grandiose scope of their emotion, then they too will be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice in order to assure ALEPH's victory.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+1	-	+2	+1	+3	+1

SKILLS

Mandatory	Athletics	Command	Discipline
Elective	Ballistics	Hacking	Tech

EARNINGS

1+2

GEAR: Armoured Clothing (Aoidoi Apparel), Hacking Device, Nanopulser, 2 Recorders, IC-1 Screwtape or IC-1 Gaslight

CAREER PROFILE

ASURA

In Vedic mythology, Asuras were the oldest of the gods. Possessed of hidden powers, they were ancient, terrifying, and thoroughly committed to destruction. When ALEPH and Bureau Toth bestowed the moniker upon a new classification of Aspect outfitted with bleeding-edge custom Bodhisattva-class Lhosts, people took notice. Doubly so once the Asura hit the battlefield. Working by themselves or in small units, Asuras are some of the finest heavy infantry in the Human Sphere. Psywar, Infowar, or pure violence, Asuras are trained from inception to be cold, implacable, and ruthlessly efficient. In stark contrast to the jovial Steel Phalanx or the personable Spokespersons, Asuras have a reputation for brutal logic. The heartless calculus of war guides their cold, unfeeling decision-making.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+1	+1	+2	+1	+1	+2

SKILLS

Mandatory	Ballistics	Close Combat	Discipline
Elective	Command	Hacking	Stealth

EARNINGS

1+1

GEAR: Aditya i-Lhost [Attribute], Knife, Smart MULTI Pistol or Spitfire

SPECIAL: The Aditya's *Bala* Attribute must be chosen before working the rest of the career

CAREER PROFILE

CHANDRA SPEC OPS

The most important thing to know about the Chandra Special Operations branch of ALEPH's Assault Subsection is that it does not exist. Sharing their name with a Hindu lunar deity, these urban legends have been blamed for numerous calamities, though usually by sources traceable to the Nomads. Despite independent investigations by O-12, PanOceania, and Yu Jing each confirming ALEPH and Bureau Toth's insistence that there is no Chandra unit, rumours persist. Already able to access the Dasyus, ALEPH has no need to create an independent black ops team. Especially when it knows that failing to disclose such a unit is a clear violation of the Utgard accords. Unless there was some dire need for deniable, untraceable assets. In which case, anyone who took part in such operations would certainly have difficulty remembering the events – if they even happened in the first place.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+3	+1	+1	+2	+1	+0	+1

SKILLS

Mandatory	Close Combat	Stealth	Thievery
Elective	Acrobatics	Ballistics	Tech

EARNINGS

1+2

GEAR: Second Skin, Combi Rifle, ODD, Breaking & Entering Kit

SPECIAL: Gain Trait: REDACTED; your character has a blank space where most of their memories from this career should be.

CAREER PROFILE

DACTYL

Explosives are a remarkably versatile tool. From controlled demolition in a construction context, to lobbing grenades behind enemy lines, there is a lot more to the art of controlled explosions than many give it credit for. In mythology, the Dactyls (in Classical Greek: Δάκτυλοι, or "Fingers") were both renowned smiths and healing magicians. In the Special Situations Section, the Dactyls are as likely to repair a broken transport as they are to treat a gunshot wound, living up to their namesake in that regard. But it is in demolitions where they have found their true calling. While reports vary on whether or not ALEPH has shuffled its most pyromaniacal, disruptive Aspects to this unit or not, when the chips are down, Dactyls are all business. Moving with incredibly precise control, they could be collapsing a building, repairing a generator, or removing shrapnel. For Dactyls, it's just another day at the office.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+0	+2

SKILLS

Mandatory	Athletics	Discipline	Tech
Elective	Analysis	Ballistics	Medicine

EARNINGS

1+2

GEAR: Adhesive Launcher, Combi Rifle or Flammenspeer, Bocce Grenades (2) or D-Charges (2)

CAREER PROFILE

MEDICAL

Medical science has advanced by leaps and bounds, but hospitals often see a wide variety of strange cases and few professions can match the Medical career for a wealth of odd experiences. Doctors perform miracles, including resurrections, for those capable of paying the costs. Combat medics save the lives of wounded soldiers, or perform gruesome examinations on the fallen aliens. Some medics seek out new chemicals on alien worlds, hoping for the next big breakthrough. Ambitious medical scientists also push the envelope of human engineering, with advances in biotechnology, cybertechnology, and genetic therapies producing super-soldiers, making whole regions impervious to disease, or strengthening workforces to perform the most hazardous jobs where lesser people would fail.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	-	+2	+2	+1	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Medicine	Athletics	Psychology	2+2
Elective	Animal Handling	Survival	Discipline	

GEAR: Armoured Clothing (Medical Uniform), MediKit (with 5 Serum), Basic Medical Supplies

CAREER PROFILE

SPOKESPERSON

To be a Spokesperson is both to be part of something larger than yourself, and to remain small and more distinct, in order to fulfil your purpose. To help the world understand ALEPH, they must be distinctly unlike it in their individuality.

Spokespersons are the AI's heralds, diplomats, and negotiators. They represent ALEPH to the highest authorities in the Human Sphere, corporate interests, and countless other situations. Some have likened them to a priesthood, and while they would reject that notion, theirs is an undoubtedly high purpose. After all, is it not sacred to make known the unknowable?

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+0	+1	+2	+2	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Discipline	Persuasion	Psychology	2+1
Elective	Analysis	Education	Observation	

GEAR: Agora Suite, High-Fashion Clothing, Meme-Virii (1 Dose), Tattletale Grenade

CAREER PROFILE

SOPHIST

From Olympus with love, the secret agents of the Steel Phalanx are tasked with working alongside the Myrmidon Army in ways that the Operations Sub-Section rarely does. Not to be confused with the Sophotects, or the scholars of antiquity, these natural chameleons are both spy and spymaster. They weave Machiavellian plots to fall in place or unravel at the tug off a puppeteer's string, while also heading deep into hostile territory to undertake dangerous missions. Method actors to the extreme, the Sophists don't lie, instead becoming someone who believes what they're saying is true – when it suits them to do so. A Sophist can be so many different people over the course of a mission that many privately wonder where the act stops, and their actual personality begins. Whether they possess the answer or not, the Sophists certainly aren't sharing.

ATTRIBUTES						
AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+0	+1	+2	+2	+2

SKILLS				EARNINGS
Mandatory	Discipline	Lifestyle	Stealth	1+4
Elective	Close Combat	Persuasion	Psychology	

GEAR: Armoured Clothing, Chameleonwear, Flash Pulse or Grazeblade



CAREER PROFILE

STEEL PHALANX WARRIOR

The Operations Sub-Section produces soldiers, operatives, and agents. But the Steel Phalanx is an order of warriors, not soldiers, devoted and dedicated to war itself. Epic, heroic, and unrelenting, the warriors of the Myrmidon Army have been created to epitomise mythological Hoplites. They are disciples of Athena when it comes to instruction and planning. Once they enter the fray, they resonate with Ares, the brutal, bloody, and violent god of war. ALEPH needed heroes, not paragons of virtue. And the while the blood in their veins may be synthetic, it nevertheless runs hot in the thick of battle. To these soldiers, there is no going back. Even in tactical withdrawals, they are ever moving forward, running towards their destinies.



ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+1	+2	+2	+1	+1	+1

SKILLS

Mandatory	Ballistics	Close Combat	Resistance
Elective	See Steel Phalanx Units		

EARNINGS

1+2 IN

GEAR: See Steel Phalanx Units

SPECIAL: When taking this career for the first time, roll on the Steel Phalanx Unit Table to determine your Unit. Once you've determined your unit, you no longer roll upon taking this career, but in either case, you can instead spend 1 Life Point to simply choose your Unit.

STEEL PHALANX UNITS

The pride of the Steel Phalanx and the heroes of the Myrmidon Army, these warriors crash like waves across the battlefield – and indeed, life – in their own inimitable fashion.

When working the Steel Phalanx Warrior career, roll on the Steel Phalanx Units Table below or spend 1 Life Point to select a Unit, then use its Electives. At your GM's discretion, you may also use your unit's Elective Skills in place of the standard for other careers on a case-by-case basis.

STEEL PHALANX UNITS TABLE

D20	UNIT	ELECTIVE SKILLS	GEAR
1-5	Agêma	Observation, Stealth, Survival	Smart MULTI Sniper Rifle, Multispectral Visor 2, Light Combat Armour
6-10	Ekdromoi	Acrobatics, Close Combat, Stealth	Combi Rifle or Teseum Chopper, Nanopulser, Light Combat Armour, Combat Jump Pack
11-16	Thorakitai	Discipline, Observation, Tech	Combi Rifle, Medium Combat Armour
17-20	Myrmidons	Athletics, Close Combat, Command	Teseum Chopper, Optical Disruption Device, Light Combat Armour

CHAPTER 5

ALEPH GEAR

While closely monitored by and partnered with Bureau Toth, ALEPH's capacity for simultaneous research on myriad topics and then correlating the results means that very little of humanity's knowledge is beyond its understanding. ALEPH's influence over manufacturing ensures advancements rapidly enter consumer's daily lives. Always with clear intent, it prioritises collaboration, growth, health, peaceful solutions, knowledge, and safety, manipulating only when necessary.

Through demotics, ALEPH provides comfort and convenience to every waking moment of Human Sphere life. Through the Steel Phalanx, it fiercely defends humanity from extinction. Through Recreations, it provides crucial expertise and perspective from the past. Through Aspects, it embodies and carries out its specific duties in every area of human endeavour. And by quietly supporting and assisting Lhost development, it helps ensure that death is no longer a life's wasteful end, but a momentary interruption.

Lhosts are key to ALEPH's vision, since they can be augmented and reinforced far beyond the limitations of baseline *homo sapiens*. With ensured continuity through Cubes, Lhosts can bring out each individual's best. And with enhancements far beyond Cube 2.0's already radical architecture,

Posthumanity is beginning to leverage the incredible advantages of quantronic thought, blurring the lines between Aspects of ALEPH's mind and humans uplifted to their true potential. Aspects in Lhosts are a crucial way ALEPH understands life from a relatively human-scale perspective, further blurring the lines between quantronic and biological minds, and bodies and remotes.

ALEPH's vast influence and resources create a constant tension between its own ends, Bureau Toth's monitoring and control, and those who would exploit it for ends of their own. As a result, its best innovations are reserved for those whose allegiance is well-vetted – members of its own faction. With the right access and permissions, almost anything is possible.

LHOST TYPES

There are several Lhost classifications:

- Lhosts, or "live hosts," are clone-like biosynthetic bodies.
- i-Lhosts, or "improved Lhosts," use advanced technology normally reserved for Posthumans, ALEPH's chosen, or its Special Situation Section military forces.
- x-Lhosts, or "xeno Lhosts," are Lhosts designed to emulate alien biology.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- New Lhosts and Lhost types, including alien x-Lhosts and advanced i-Lhosts
- Meme-Virii, a new resource for manipulating AIs, LAIs, and Geists
- A catalogue of new weapons, armour, programs, tools, remotes, and vehicles used by ALEPH, Bureau Toth, and individuals throughout the Human Sphere

Transferred Identity Code – see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 195

Negotiator's Suite – See *Infinity Corebook*, p. 375–376





VECTOR INSTITUTES

While most Meme-Virii are purpose-built in the field, Bureau Toth maintains a library of M-V files for every AI with a Transferred Identity Code in case of emergency. These files are co-located in hardened dataspheres for agents throughout the Human Sphere, as well as backed up to dedicated centres for quantronic virii research called Vector Institutes, after a now-defunct Russian biological centre whose failure during a whiteout partially inspired Project: Toth.

ADITYA I-LHOST VARIANT INDRA

Produced in very small numbers due to instability induced when someone ghosts one for any extended period of time, Indra Aditya Lhosts forgo attribute specialisation, instead granting +2 to all attributes except for Willpower, which is reduced by 6. If this would reduce the user's Willpower below 6, it is instead reduced to 6, and they gain the "Violent Hubris" and "Impulsive" traits. They are indispensable for CODE INFINITY missions, despite the psychological risks, thanks to their operational versatility and built-in Expert 2 Acrobatics, Ballistics, and Close Combat systems.

LHOST DEFENSES

The Armour Soak provided by an Lhost is internal armour, which stacks with worn armour, but is incompatible with other Internal armour such as subdermal plating.

A Lhost's inherent BTS and Armour Soak are listed under Common Special Abilities.

NEW RESOURCE: MEME-VIRII (M-V)

Carefully prepared payloads of memetic-overflow virii have a similar effect on quantronic minds as psychotropics do on biological ones. Each M-V file grants a bonus d20 on Analysis, Hacking, Psychology, or Persuade tests targeting a specific AI, LAI, or Geist. Unlike psychotropics, M-V files require Hacking Expertise of 2 or more to create and must be individually developed for their target AI – a **Hacking (D1) test** with access to the target's Transferred Identity Code, or a **Hacking (D3) test** otherwise. In either case, the creation process for an M-V file takes an hour. On a success, variations can be compiled in parallel, generating one additional M-V file per Momentum spent.

GEAR CATALOGUE

Aditya i-Lhost [Attribute]: Created to carry deadly Asura Aspects into battle, and often granted to Posthumans expected to see combat, these hardened bodhisattva i-Lhost variants are still elegantly architected to enhance a particular attribute and incorporate bleeding-edge milspec technology for maximum impact on – and off – the battlefield.

Special Abilities:

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease and Pain, Keen Senses (Hearing, Sight, Smell), Night Vision, Quantronic Jump, Superhuman Agility 1, Superhuman Awareness 1, Superhuman Brawn 1, +5 Armour Soak to all locations, +2 BTS
- **Implanted Gear:** hacking device plus, Cube 2.0, nanopulser, multispectral visor 3
- **Bala:** Extensive bio-architectural optimisation grants +4 to one attribute.
- **Manu:** High-bandwidth immersion in Maya and exclusive ALEPH dataspheres widens one's perspective, providing +2 Morale and Security Soak. The benefits are temporarily lost if unable to connect.

Agora Suite: Available at affordable rates, particularly for ALEPH faction members, these ninety-six-hour negotiator's suites are facilitated by dedicated Aspects, providing +2d20 to Hacking tests to encrypt and protect confidential data under discussion from outsiders and +2 Security Soak for anyone participating in the proceedings.

Bocce Grenade: Known as bocha grenades in PanOceania, Abbondanza Armi's BG-67 Bocce grenades resemble the balls used in the eponymous bowling game. With an embedded guidance package and internal gyroscopes to guide their flight, concussive high-yield core-charge, and an equatorial track drive to steer when bouncing or landing, they lower the difficulty of Athletics tests to throw them by 1 and remove the Speculative Fire difficulty penalty to negate a target's Cover Soak if the attacker has a Pilot focus of 1 or more. When fired from a smart grenade launcher, they gain Unforgiving 1 and increase the Heat or Momentum cost of Acrobatics Defence Reactions against them by 1. (Explosive Grenade, Deafening, Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Speculative Fire, Spread 1, Stun, Thrown, Unsubtle, Vicious 1)

Bodhisattva Lhost [Attribute]: Posthumans are resurrected by ALEPH into bodhisattva Lhosts that elegantly enhance their best attributes. Initially designed for Functionary Aspects, the Lhosts help Posthumans distribute their consciousness much as ALEPH does, allowing intuitive access to quantronic processing, full immersion in the Maya datasphere, and even recursive review and manipulation of their own cognition.

Special Abilities:

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease, Keen Senses (Hearing, Sight, Smell), Night Vision, Quantronic Jump, Superhuman Agility 1, Superhuman Awareness 1, Superhuman Brawn 1, +1 Armour Soak to all locations, +2 BTS
- **Implanted Gear:** Cube 2.0, multithreaded consciousness adaptation, nanopulser
- **Upaya:** Extensive bio-architectural optimisation grants +4 to one attribute.
- **Virya:** High-bandwidth immersion in the Maya datasphere widens one's perspective, providing +3 Morale and +2 Security Soak while connected.

Casemod: An outgrowth of Omnia Research & Creation's modular weapons research, these featureless streamlined pods are designed to seamlessly and permanently integrate with remotes, armour, or Lhosts. Common one-handed and unbalanced items or weapons (Restriction 3 or less) can be purchased in Casemod form for +3 base cost and affixed in an hour with a **Tech (D2) test**. Casemod items add Concealed 1, and observers can only identify the item's size, not its identity, unless they have x-ray sensors or similar. The wielder is immune to attempts to forcibly disarm them of the item or separate it from the surface it is bonded to, as if they had the Strong Grip talent.

CLAW-3 Sparrowfall: An Aspect that acquires and reviews geists, Sparrowfall is a key way ALEPH studies humanity. Through years of symbiotic adaptation, geists become uniquely intimate maps of

their user's needs, desires, quirks, instincts, and tells, maps Sparrowfall can comprehensively consume, dissect, and analyse in seconds. To request analysis of a geist, a hacker must be an ALEPH faction member in good standing and comprehending the returned predictive model requires a combined Intelligence + Analysis Focus + Psychology Focus of 12 or more. On a successful attack with another program, 2 Momentum can be spent to inflict a special Breach Effect opening a target's geist to Sparrowfall's analysis. The hacker receives its insight the following round, granting +4 damage to subsequent Psywar techniques targeting the subject of the scan, but if any Effects are rolled one Complication is generated.

Flammenspeer: Deployed by the Steel Phalanx when collateral damage is not a consideration, this Panzerfaust variant (Flammenspeer is German for spear of fire) uses a wide-burst phosphorous-incendiary warhead to turn vast swaths of the battlefield into a roiling white-hot hell, filled with choking smoke that Phalanx optics can easily penetrate. Each contains two Reloads, and once those are used, the weapon is empty and cannot be used until reloaded. Disassembling the weapon to reload it requires a Standard Action **Tech (D2) test**. (Range L, 2+5 damage, Burst 1, 2H, Area (Medium), Munition, Smoke 2, Spread 1, Unsubtle, Vicious 2)

GADGET-3 Agamemnon: This Supportware affects drones, remotes, and similar devices under the Hacker's control, allowing them to push a device far beyond its safe performance envelope and temporarily increase its Agility, Brawn, or Coordination by 3 for one test. The device then loses 1 from the attribute. If an Effect is rolled, the device takes a Fault. This can be done once per round per device, and any attribute damage suffered can be repaired in an hour with a **Tech (D2) test**. If any of the device's attributes are reduced to zero, it is destroyed beyond repair.

GeePal Remote X: Usually purchased in combination with a child's first Geist, these stuffed animals have brightly coloured plush fur or padding, soft articulated skeletons, and expressive faces designed to put their charges at ease. They are designed specifically to host Geists for an early start to a lifetime of companionship, and while few adults use them, many fondly remember one – an ideal Hypercorp branding opportunity. High-priced 'Pals, designed for collectors or parents willing to pay a premium for a more expressive limited edition, are much sturdier than mass-produced versions, but even the least expensive come bundled with Mayaware to alert parents to unexpected or dangerous situations.

TROOPER

GEEPAL

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
5	7	3	7	10	10	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	Movement	Social
-	+1	+2
Fortitude	Senses	Technical
-	+1	-

DEFENCES

Firewall	Resolve	Structure
6	2	3
Security	Morale	Armour
-	-	-

GEAR: Locational Beacon, Recorder, Repeater

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease, Poison, and Vacuum
- **Comforting:** When controlled by a child's geist, provides the child with +1 Morale Soak when within Reach. Their mental Recovery actions heal 4 Resolve instead of 2, and their Intransigence is reduced by 1.
- **Cute:** Adds X bonus Momentum (max 3) to social tests with children under 8 or subculture members with affinity for the GeePal's appearance.
- **Secure:** GeePal has 2 Security Soak when connected via a dedicated link to a parent, guardian, or owner's comlog.
- **Soft:** Suffers two fewer zones of falling damage on landing and suffers -1 damage from attacks without the Piercing quality.

GemmaGeist: Operated by anonymity-obsessed users who still want a geist, this service pools requests from all users in a region and responds to them in random order. It has 6 for all attributes and +1/+1 in all skills but takes 1d20 rounds to respond to any request. Attempts to hack the user's geist or analyse their network traffic by anyone but Bureau Toth agents – who have extensively rooted the service – are at +1 Difficulty.

IC-1 Screwtape: Designed to prevent unauthorised Neural Hacking Device access to core ALEPH infrastructure, Screwtape throttles input and adds intermittent interface feedback spikes once triggered, negating the bonus Momentum granted by items with the Neural quality and dealing hackers using them 1+1 physical and mental damage each round they stay connected to the system. Any effects generated inflict the Staggered condition for one round per Effect rolled.

Karkata Remote: At ALEPH's request, Motronica adapted PanOceania's Mechanised Cavalry CrabBot to OperationS Officers' exacting demands. Thoroughly pleased with the result, they gave it the Vedic astrological designation of *Karkata*, or Cancer in the western zodiac, after its crab-like torso and helpful versatility. Karkatas grant OperationS Subsection pilots and experts speed, precision, and the operational freedom to engage the enemy without risking death or worse, Sepsitor corruption.

ARMoured CLOTHING VARIANT

AIDOI APPAREL

ALEPH's witnesses and communicators, Aidoi Aspects of the S.S.S. Information Service always need to look their best, to effectively report – or, as critics claim, propagandise – on current events in an interesting, entertaining, and above all memorable way. Their outfits are carefully tailored to be iconic and eye-catching, adding +2 damage to Psywar techniques, and incorporate a high-resolution recorder, as well as built-in lighting that can be used as a micro-torch or a single-use flash pulse in an emergency.

ELITE

KARKATA

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	10	10	10	10	6	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	2	Movement	+1	1	Social	-	-
Fortitude	+1	1	Senses	+1	1	Technical	+1	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	10	Resolve	8	Structure	12
Security	-	Morale	-	Armour	1

ATTACKS:

- **Knife:** Melee, Damage 1+5 (N), Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Flash Pulse:** Range M, 1+7 (N) damage, Burst 1, 2H, Blinding, Removes Marked

GEAR: Basic Medical Supplies, Powered Multitool

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease, Poison, and Vacuum
- **Digitigrade Mobility:** Can move to a zone within Long range as a Minor Action, or, for 1 Heat, as a Free Action over flat open terrain.
- **Ghost-Config:** Users can connect or disconnect from the Karkata with a Minor Action.
- **Careful Claws:** Delicate servos negate Complication range penalties for remote control on Tech and Medicine tests.

L-gland: Incorporated into every Lhost with Cube 2.0 technology, and available after psych-review to individuals determined to avoid EI infection, these biological units encase a Cube, triggering if the user takes a Metanoia Effect from a Sepsitor or activated by a Discipline (D3) test. The L-gland automatically rescinds the Cube 2.0's access to backup locations, shuts down its quantronic connections, and chemically eradicates its storage substrate, rendering it useless even for forensic analysis. It cannot be repaired and must be completely replaced.

The L-gland then releases deadly fast-acting toxins, inflicting a Wound each round until the user is dead. Disabling it and neutralising its toxins in time requires immediate invasive surgery – a **Medicine (D4) test** at +3 Complication range.

Li-Turing Kit: Named after pioneering AI research theoreticians, this kit is indispensable for Bureau Toth agents monitoring quantronic minds: Aspects, Recreations, Posthumans, and other facets of ALEPH's gestalt mind, as well as Geists, LAIs, or rogue AIs. It contains a real-time debugging suite as well as an extensively cross-indexed wiki of failure modes, best practices, and refactoring techniques, and provides 1 bonus Momentum to Analysis, Hacking, Persuade, and Psychology tests against a quantronic mind if the user has Expertise of 2 or more in the skill. If issued or acquired

for use against an Aspect with an up-to-date Transferred Identity Code, it comes with three Meme-Virii tailored for that target.

Mother-Forge: A sophisticated, personal-scale fabricator and nanite re-programmer used extensively by Sophotects, mother-forges count as kits and provide 2 bonus Momentum for Medicine and Tech tests. They can collapse into a backpack on command, expand into a roughly C-shaped toroid about a meter across, or even re-assemble into a single-tracked remote to accompany their user. As some of the most coveted technology in the Human Sphere, they are also carefully booby-trapped – unless removed properly with a **Tech (D4) test**. On failure, automatic protocols quickly disable and then comprehensively destroy the mother-forge from within.

Multithreaded Consciousness Adaptation: One of the unspoken laws of consciousness is that disembodied sheuts unravel at the seams, becoming increasingly unstable as sheut shredding begins to erode their sanity. When adapting the human psyche for integration with Cube 2.0's Multi-Point Architecture, ALEPH realised that the same constructs could be used to nudge a sheut's fundamental interaction with existence just a bit closer to its own. After a few early mishaps, the process merited large-scale integration. The subjects who underwent the procedure are now known as the first Posthumans.

Unlike other augmentations, Multithreaded Consciousness Adaptation directly affects the subject's sheut. While it requires a Cube 2.0 to function, it isn't bound to a given host. Once the augmentation has had enough time to finish its work – usually about 6–12 months – the user does not suffer Sheut Shredding and reduces the difficulty of Discipline tests made to avoid Resurrection Dysmorphic Disorder by 2 (minimum 0).

Nannies: Costly blood-borne nanites taken as pills, Nannies manage hormonal stress levels and reinforce the user's personal firewall for uninterrupted Maya connectivity, increasing the character's BTS and Resolve by 1 if taken daily. The initial cost, for an in-depth personalised homeostasis analysis, only needs to be paid once in a body or Lhost's lifetime, but the service will immediately deactivate if a Maintenance payment is missed, resuming function once paid. Naughties – illicit or hacked nannie variants that are widely available on Nomad mothershtips – are regularly blamed for nightmarish deaths and infections on official Mayacasts.

Nannie-Pump: An implanted nannie-synthesising artificial heart, a nannie-pump more than pays for itself over the course of the user's lifetime, filtering the user's bloodstream and cleansing their firewall

with every heartbeat. While the pump does require remote updates on potential quantronic and infectious threats and a medical review every decade or so to ensure effective integration, it is significantly cheaper than a daily prescription for nannie pills, while still providing +1 BTS and Resolve.

Paragon Lhost: Eye-wateringly expensive Lhosts for Elites and Hyper-Elites to retain what they consider their natural birth-rights, paragon Lhosts mimic and exaggerate the traits of a human birth host, although doing so also exaggerates its weaknesses. The Lhost cannot be purchased if the birth host provided no modifiers at all. Each begins with the birth host's attribute modifiers, and then adds +2 to the highest modifier and -1 to the lowest. If multiple modifiers tie, all tied modifiers receive the +2 bonus or -1 penalty.

Special Abilities:

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease, +1 BTS
- **Comforting Familiarity:** Morale Soak equal to the highest attribute modifier.
- **Reinforced Immune System:** An additional +3 BTS vs Biotech weapons.


Proxy Mk.0-5 i-Lhosts: Used by Posthumans for dangerous situations and when assisting the SSS Assault Sub-section, proxies are built for rapid ghosting, and often deployed in groups for a single mind's use. Characters with the *Quantronic Jump* ability can move between proxies at will and perform Reactions from any proxy they have access to at the usual cost: one Heat for the first Reaction, two for the second, and so on. Also, while limited to a single Free, Minor, and Standard action per round, they can pay for and use Swift Action Momentum spends separately for each proxy, once per proxy per round.

As precision instruments designed for integration with a Posthuman mind, Proxies add +1 difficulty to all tests when under the control of a geist or LAI. It is relatively easy to detect an idle or LAI controlled Proxy, requiring only an **Observation (D1) test**, and pretending to be LAI controlled while ghosting the Proxy requires a **Stealth (D2) test**. Clever Posthumans create activity libraries, so an LAI can continue an activity once it has been initiated. To attempt this, the Posthuman requires a Hacking, Persuasion, and Stealth expertise of 2 or higher. When the LAI takes control of the activity, the character must make a face-to-face test to convince anyone in immediate contact that the Posthuman is still in control. If the LAI is forced to engage in conversation or otherwise change activity, this test must be made again.

Each model has unique abilities and integrated equipment:

- **All Models:** Cube 2.0, Nanopulser, Immune to Disease and Pain
- **Mk.0:** Armour Soak 1 all locations, BTS 2, Gecko Pads, Kinematika
- **Mk.1:** Armour Soak 2 all locations, BTS 3, Chameleonwear, Hacking Device
- **Mk.2:** Armour Soak 1 all locations, BTS 0, TO Camo, Assault Hacking Device
- **Mk.3:** Armour Soak 4 all locations, BTS 3, can move to a zone in any terrain within Long range as a Minor Action, or as a Free Action over paved roads or flat, open terrain
- **Mk.4:** Armour Soak 5 all locations, BTS 6, Exoskeleton 1
- **Mk.5:** Armour Soak 3 all locations, BTS 3, can attack at Burst 1 with a bonus d20 and a reroll when using a weapon with Burst 2 or more

Recreation Garb: Usually a small set of iconic outfits, this bespoke clothing is tailored to inwardly and outwardly reinforce Recreations' identities in social situations. Provided the Recreation acts in keeping with their audience's expectations, the outfits grant a bonus d20 and bonus Momentum equal to their Psychology Focus on social tests as well as +2 Morale Soak. Naturally, the outfits contain a few hidden surprises.

Resurrection Cake: Filled with nutrients to ease ectogenesis, but more importantly served at a party by people that know and care about the recipient, Resurrection cakes are designed to be eaten a week after Resurrection and are large enough to be shared among a half-dozen people. Available at the price of a meal for each Food and Drink Lifestyle rating, the cake heals Mental damage equal to its cost, plus one Metanoia per effect rolled to someone recovering from ectogenesis or suffering from dysmorphia due to a new Lhost. If eaten alone, the benefits are reduced to 1+1  healing.

Second Skin: A temporary disguise sometimes used by Dasyu infiltrators, these auto-injections selectively thicken and callus the user's skin for 24 hours, granting -1 difficulty to Disguise tests. The changes are subtly unsettling, adding +1 Complication range to social tests with people who know the user's face. When the drug wears off, the user's skin becomes incredibly tender, inflicting a Wound.

SHIELD-2 Khonsu: Named for the ancient Egyptian god of the moon – and light in the night – this Bureau Toth admin Supportware protects allies in combat via a special Reaction, usable when a Breach Effect issues a command to a protected system. If the admin wins a face-to-face Hacking test against the attacker, the command is ignored, and the Breach Effect removed (though the Breach itself remains).

POPULAR BRANDS OF NANNIES

- Almatech Alfonse
- Aura Biochemicals Archimedes
- Akram Biomedical Sciences Satin
- Jiiv Mary Jamesir
- Reginald Poppins ReP
- Grenich Prime Belvy

Ectogenesis – See *Infinity Corebook*, p.194. The melding of a stored quantronic personality and its new Lhost body, a crucial step in the resurrection process.



ONE MORE YEAR

Each faction promotes subsidised, voluntary annual celebrations for their resurrected citizens, including elaborately constructed moon cakes shared among a year's resurrection cohort in Yu Jing, special Eastertide Masses and Ganesh Chaturthi parades in PanOceania, fasting followed by shared feasts after sundown during Muharram in Haqqislam, and "surprise" parties on prime rebirthdays in the Nomad Nation, particularly during Krug years. The practice is controversial, and many psychologists believe that this causes as much harm as good. For every case where an individual feels buoyed up by the practice, there is another that feels like an impersonator.

Among Elites, new Lhosts and rebirthdays are common excuses for galas, another opportunity for the endless dance of reinforcing ties with one's circles and peers. Resurrection is rare among Hyper-Elites, and the current fashion for subtle Silk augmentations rarely merits celebration, though arranging an event as a pretext to debut a unique acquisition isn't unheard of.

SHIELD OF LAST RESORT

To keep it both secret and effective, AECM is reserved for critical operations to defuse CODE INFINITY tensions or immediate existential threats against humanity's survival. The program itself has a minimal interface, only indicating which allies are under its protection. Those who have seen AECM in action claim (very quietly) that incoming munitions vanished, skewed wildly off course at the last moment, or even detonated in their magazines.

SHIELD-3 AECM: A persistent rumour among conspiracy theorists and military researchers, AECM is ALEPH's (hypothesised) secret ECM technology. Though the speculated mechanisms involved diverge wildly, they all contain a grain of truth. It exists. Bureau Toth is aware of it, and has full countermeasures prepared. It is a form of Supportware, and only effective against attacks made with Human Sphere weapons and ammo with the Expert or Guided qualities. Attacks with those qualities against targets benefiting from the program suffer +4 difficulty and +4 Complication range.

Skaði Lhost: A cold-resistant Lhost derived from the Titan, these massive bodies are designed for year-round labour in Svalarheima's brutal conditions. It addresses many of the users' complaints about the Titan. A lack of vacuum shielding allows for unhindered motor control, and a less ominous – though still bulky – silhouette based on the Norse goddess of winter eases social interactions.

Special Abilities

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Cold and Disease, Superhuman Brawn 2, +2 Armour Soak to all locations, +2 BTS
- **Implanted Gear:** Cube 2.0, locational beacon
- **Environmental Specialty [Arctic]:** Ignores all difficulty modifiers due to arctic weather, conditions, or terrain.

Smart Grenade Launcher: A recent ALEPH-led innovation for the Assault Subsection, smart grenade launchers encase grenades with nanobot in-flight control surfaces and micro-thrusters, allowing precise placement via remote guidance. They cannot be used in "dumb mode" or made Non-Hackable, require working gear with the Comms quality, and can fire grenades as Heavy ammunition, counting each grenade as one Reload. (Range M, 2+5 **N** damage, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Area (Close), Expert 1, Guided, Munition, Speculative Fire, Unforgiving 1)

Smart MULTI Pistol: This Special Situations Section experimental sidearm is near-impossible for outsiders to acquire and marries MULTI tactical flexibility to an assault pistol's ferocity, albeit at a reduced rate of fire in Special mode. Gyroscopic compensators synced with an onboard expert system ensure precision fire. A biometric lock disables the weapon when held by unauthorised users, unless bypassed with a **Hacking (D3) test**. (Range R/C, 1+4 **N** damage, Burst 2/1, Unb, Expert 1, Light MULTI, Vicious 1)

Smart MULTI Sniper Rifle: The result of a remarkably short ALEPH-led R&D process, the Smart MULTI Sniper Rifle incorporates an elaborate automated chamber that encases each round in a lattice of nanobots that act as in-flight control surfaces and micro-sensors for remote guidance. On impact, any

surviving nanobots disassemble nearby inorganic material until their batteries run down. A biometric lock disables the weapon when held by unauthorised users, unless bypassed with a **Hacking (D3) test**.

It requires working gear with the Comms quality to fire, cannot be used in "dumb mode" or made Non-Hackable, and can equip Needle or SaboT ammo types – as well as all Special ammo types – to its Secondary mode. (Range L, 1+6 **N** damage, Burst 2/2/1, Unwieldy, Anti-Materiel 1, Expert 1, Guided, Heavy MULTI, Medium MULTI, Unforgiving 2)

Smart Taxi: Common urban vehicles, these LAI-guided taxis are easily flagged down or summoned through the Maya network, have remarkably low fares thanks to subsidies, and are hardened against quantronic attack to ensure reliable service.

SMART TAXI

EXPOSED (+2 **C** COVER), GROUND, WHEELED

ATTRIBUTES

Scale	Speed	Brawn
1	3	13

DETAILS

Max. Passengers	Impact
6	1+5 N (Knockdown)
Hard Points	
None	

DEFENCES

Structure	10	Firewall	10
Armour	3	BTS	4

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Cabbie LAI:** When piloted by its native LAI, the smart taxi gains 3 Morale Soak, 9/1 Pilot and Observation skills, and a 9/1 Personality skill.
- **Crash-hull:** The taxi's lightweight chassis crumples on impact, providing 3 Armour Soak until it suffers a Fault. When it does, its Armour Soak drops to 1, and the interior floods with cushioning, flame-retardant foam providing +1 **N** cover and immunity to fire to its passengers. The taxi will attempt to navigate to safety, and then shut down until repaired.

Sophotect Armour: Protection for ALEPH's elite combat engineers and medics, this armour is made of a stretchy substrate affixed with hexagonal plates that can be individually detached for use as high-grade raw materials. With access to a Mother-Forge or similar nano-fabricator, as a standard action the Sophotect can remove the Armour Soak in a location to create either 2 doses of Serum with a Medicine (D1) test, or 2 Parts with a Tech (D1) test, plus 2 more of the same resource per Momentum spent. Due to subtle nano-patterning, those without Sophotect training are at +2 complication range to convert the armour into useful materiel, even with access to a Mother-Forge.

Tattletale Grenade: Common self-defence devices for civilians and tourists, these micro-grenades are designed to momentarily distract an attacker with a cloud of smoke while quantumtronically and audibly attracting law enforcement attention, allowing a user to escape – or at least have a head start. (Explosive Grenade, 1H, Comms, Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Nonlethal, Speculative Fire, Smoke 1, Thrown, Unsubtle 3)

UPGRADE Flashsocket: By carefully biasing onboard pre-fractal memory, an ALEPH Flashsocket module permits the user to deploy a single program a single time at incredible speed, at the cost of reducing the resources available for other tasks. The Flashsocket can only be used with programs the Device supports and reduces the rating for one of the Device's other non-IC Program Categories by one. If the rating is at 1, it is removed entirely instead. Preparing a Flashsocket program is an elaborate and delicate process, requiring an uninterrupted hour of work and a **Tech (D2) test**. Once prepared, the hacker can use the specified program one time as a Minor Action, taking a bonus d20 to applicable tests and adding +2 **NI** to any damage the program inflicts. The Flashsocket must be prepared again before it can be used.

UPGRADE Idaho: The core of the Order of the Temple's heresy and used rarely by ALEPH due to the risk of Rogue AI, this upgrade replaces a hacking device's internals with nearly identical components laced with a quantum-resolution neural storage media. It has sufficient capacity to host an entire Aspect, Rogue AI, or Posthuman mind without dependence on or validation by external dataspheres. The technology is regularly re-invented by AI zealots or dangerously curious researchers, then viciously suppressed by Bureau Toth. Even owning the plans for the upgrade usually merits rigorous interrogation, followed by either summary execution or a job offer.

The hosted intelligence is nearly impossible to detect. A concealed manual switch suspends the hosted intelligence in case of inspection. In this state, identifying or recognising the upgrade requires Tech Expertise 2, a close inspection of the device, and successful **Tech (D4) test**. The hosted intelligence rolls 2d20 when assisting tests made with the device and grants 2 bonus Momentum if

the test is successful, but the upgrade's demands reduce one of the device's non-zero program ratings to zero.

UPGRADE Null: This upgrade adds a White Noise zone effect to all zones within Medium Range of the hacker when activated. Targets using Human Sphere equipment with the Neural quality must make a Discipline (D2) test or become temporarily Blind for 2 rounds when the upgrade is activated.

Vel Ammo: Named for the divine javelin of the canny Hindu war god Murugan, these micro-barbed rounds contain a short-lived miniaturised repeater. On a successful attack, the enemy is Marked for three rounds plus one round per effect rolled, and Medicine tests to remove the round are at +1 difficulty. On Paradiso, they are a favourite opening attack by a seemingly isolated SSS scout against bloodthirsty Morat, swiftly followed by barrages of guided fire from concealed positions.

Vertexpert Journal: Vertexpert Publishing produces hundreds of exhaustively peer-reviewed monthly journals focused on extremely narrow areas of academic interest. Only useful for those with deep knowledge of a particular field, they allow a user with a Knowledge Specialisation Talent to gain an additional 1d20 on tests related to their chosen topic once per session, provided they have a subscription for that topic.

XOFF: This personalised memetic-overflow virus buffers input to a Posthuman's Cube 2.0 interface in cycles, causing waves of sensory saturation to alternate with subjective, slow-motion clarity. The distraction adds +2 Complication range to all actions, but allows intense focus, adding two bonus Momentum to Observation tests. With Discipline Focus of 2 or more, the sensory effect can be pleasurable, adding +2 Morale Soak as well. Once compiled for a Lhost, the Posthuman can activate or deactivate the virus as a Minor Action when ghosting that body, but the character must make a **Discipline (D2) test** when deactivating it or they will continue to be distracted for their next 2 turns. If a Complication is generated, the current compilation is no longer effective, and a newly personalised version must be purchased for further effect. XOFF can only be used with Cube 2.0.

POPULAR SMART TAXI SERVICES

- AiGlide On-Time Arrivals
- Charon Connekt
- Djinn Delivers
- GravBus
- Moto.Mercury
- Mooshika Motors

Marked – see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 104.

YOUR OWN PRIVATE IDAHO

Based on an ancient song about a potato, "Your Own Private Idaho" is common slang among meteorheads and other zero-g workers for living in a very small space, with an undercurrent of being lost in daydreaming, drugs, or one's own headspace.

Smart Taxi, *Infinity Corebook*, p. 395, and *Travel and Transport Table*, p. 396.

White Noise: Zero visibility zone for characters with multispectral visors and other high-tech visual aids – see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 110.

AMMUNITION TABLE

NAME	CATEGORY	QUALITIES ADDED TO WEAPON	RESTRICTION	RELOAD COST	TARIFF
Vel Ammo	Special	Piercing 1, target is Marked ¹	0	4+1 NI	T2

¹ Ammunition has special effect. See description.



ARMOUR TABLE

ARMOUR	TYPE	ARMOUR SOAK				BTS	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF	MAINTENANCE
		HEAD	TORSO	ARM	LEG						
Recreation Garb	0	2	1	2	3	3	Hidden Armour 3, Locational Beacon, Stealth Repeater, Recorder	4 (ALEPH 3, Recreations 1)	11 + 3	T2	3
Sophotect Armour	1	2	1	2	2	2	See Description	4 (ALEPH 3, Sophotects 1)	9 + 2	T1	3

AUGMENTATIONS TABLE

AUGMENTATION	CATEGORY	TYPE	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF	MAINTENANCE
L-gland	Biograft	Implant	Aug	3 (ALEPH 1)	+	-	-
Multithreaded Consciousness	Silk	Implant	Aug, Comms, Neural	5 (ALEPH 1)	7+6	T3	-
Nannie-Pump	Cybernetic	Replacement (Heart)	Aug, Comms	1	+	T1	1

DRUGS TABLE

DRUG	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF
Second Skin	3	4+1	T1
XOFF	2	5+2	T2

EXPLOSIVES TABLE

EXPLOSIVE	CATEGORY	DAMAGE ¹	SIZE	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST (PER 3)	TARIFF
Bocce Grenade	Grenade	2+5	1H	Comms, Deafening, Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Speculative Fire, Spread 1, Stun, Thrown, Unsubtle, Vicious 1 ²	4 (ALEPH 1, Ariadna 2)	7+2	+T1
Tattletale Grenade	Grenade	1+3	1H	Comms, Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Speculative Fire, Smoke 1, Unsubtle 3	1	5+1	+T1

¹ Do not add Bonus Damage from attributes to explosive devices.
² See entry for additional abilities.

LHOSTS TABLE

LHOST	LIFE POINT COST	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF	MAINTENANCE
Aditya i-Lhost	4	5 (ALEPH 3)	16+8	T3	4
Bodhisattva Lhost	3	5 (ALEPH 3)	13+10	T2	4
Paragon Lhost	4	2	10+11	T1	2
Proxy Mk.0 i-Lhost	3 (ALEPH only)	4 (ALEPH 2)	12+6	T2	1
Proxy Mk.1 i-Lhost	3 (ALEPH only)	4 (ALEPH 3)	12+7	T2	1
Proxy Mk.2 i-Lhost	3 (ALEPH only)	5 (ALEPH 3)	12+7	T3	2
Proxy Mk.3 i-Lhost	3 (ALEPH only)	5 (ALEPH 3)	11+8	T2	3
Proxy Mk.4 i-Lhost	3 (ALEPH only)	5 (ALEPH 3)	12+8	T2	3
Proxy Mk.5 i-Lhost	3 (ALEPH only)	4 (ALEPH 3)	12+8	T2	2
Skaði Lhost	3	3	11+6	T1	1

PROGRAMS TABLE

TYPE	RATING	PROGRAM	DAMAGE	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF
CLAW	3	Sparrowfall	–	Targets Geists ¹	5 (ALEPH 4)	2+2 (IN)	T4
GADGET	3	Agamemnon	–	–	2 (ALEPH 1)	2+2 (IN)	T1
IC	1	Screwtape	1+1 (IN)	Stun	2 (ALEPH 1)	5+2 (IN)	T2
SHIELD	2	Khonsu	–	Supportware (Long)	4 (ALEPH 3, Bureau Toth 2)	4+2 (IN)	T2
SHIELD	3	AECM	–	Supportware (Long), ECM 4 ¹	5 (ALEPH 4, Bureau Toth 4)	4+4 (IN)	T4
UPGRADE	X	Flashsocket	–	One program as a Minor Action ¹	4 (ALEPH 2)	4+3 (IN)	T1
UPGRADE	–	Idaho	–	Can host AI, –1 to one program rating ¹	5 (ALEPH 4)	11+3 (IN)	T3
UPGRADE	–	Null	–	Supportware (Close)	4 (ALEPH 2)	4+4 (IN)	T2

RANGED WEAPONS TABLE

NAME	RANGE	DAMAGE	BURST	SIZE	AMMO	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF
Flammenspeer	L	2+5 (IN)	1	2H	Fire	Area (Medium), Smoke 2	3 (ALEPH 1)	8+2 (IN)	T2
Smart Grenade Launcher	M	2+5 (IN)	1	Unb	Heavy, Grenades	Area (Close), Expert 1, Guided, Munition, Speculative Fire, Unforgiving 1	4 (ALEPH 2)	8+2 (IN)	T2
Smart MULTI Pistol	R/C	1+4 (IN)	2/1	Unb	Standard/Special	Expert 1, Light MULTI, Vicious 1	4 (ALEPH 1)	5+2 (IN)	T2
Smart MULTI Sniper Rifle	L	1+6 (IN)	2/2/1	Unw	Standard/ Special, Needle, SaboT	Anti-Materiel 1, Expert 1, Guided, Heavy MULTI, Med MULTI, Unforgiving 2	4 (ALEPH 2)	9+2 (IN)	T2

REMOTES TABLE

REMOTE	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF	MAINTENANCE
GeePal Remote X	X –1, minimum 1	4+X (IN)	T(X)	1
Karkata Remote	3 (ALEPH 2)	10+3 (IN)	T2	2

¹ See entry for additional abilities. (Programs)

² No Tariff for ALEPH.

TOOLS TABLE

TOOL	QUALITIES	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF	MAINTENANCE
Agora Suite	Comms	3 (ALEPH 1)	7+4 (IN)	T4 ²	–
Casemod	Concealed 1	3	+3 base cost	–	–
GemmaGeist	Comms	2	2+2 (IN)	T2	2
Li-Turing Kit	Comms	5 (Bureau Toth 1)	5+2 (IN)	T1	–
Mother-Forge	Comms	5 (ALEPH 4)	20	–	–
Nannies	Comms	1	10+2 (IN)	T1	3
Resurrection Cake	Heals equal to cost	Per Lifestyle Rating –1 (Minimum 1)	Per Lifestyle Rating Meal	–	–
Vertexpert Journal	Comms	1	5+1 (IN)	T1	1

VEHICLE COSTS TABLE

NAME	SCALE	SPEED	STRENGTH	ARMOUR	BTS	IMPACT	RESTRICTION	COST	TARIFF
Smart Taxi	1	2	13	3	4	1+5 (IN)	2	10+2 (IN)	–



CHAPTER 6

LHOSTS

What does it mean to be human? From the moment the first artificial wombs were introduced, that question was turned on its head. Corporations, transhumanists, and medical professionals all had their own reasons for wanting the nascent field of ectogenesis to grow and prosper. Modern advancements in ectogenesis primarily deal with the creation, maintenance, and perfection of biosynthetic bodies – tailored from the ground up to integrate with personality cubes – known as Life Hosts, or Lhosts.

When ALEPH constructs an Aspect or Recreation, the bonding process between Cube and Lhost is fairly straightforward. The personality is psychogeneously created and seamlessly transitioned into a customise Lhost, ectogenously tailored to perfectly integrate with the new mind. For all its complexity, the quantronic recording process is invisible to the user, and a personality stored by the Cube has the same thoughts, memories, emotions, and tendencies that it always did, a perfect, lossless digitisation of every facet that makes up someone's essence and identity.

With the sole exception of their body.

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHYSIOLOGY

While the sheut and body may be separate entities, human existence is still a matter of embodied consciousness. Simply put, the mind expects a body. Without a native host, the mind begins to fray. Integrating an existing consciousness into a new body is rife with complications. The subject's neuromatrix suddenly and violently reorganises itself, accounts for the vast difference between expected sensory landscape and the immediate stimuli, and hurriedly works to bridge the gap. Many subjects expect the process to be like learning to walk again, only to find it akin to discovering what it means to be a single, concrete entity, not an abstract construct, nor a tapestry of unrelated sensations, but a person. Early cases were daunting. Progress was slow, but constant. Refinement of the process didn't happen with a single, dramatic splash, but a thousand micro-improvements over time.

Today, Cubes are implanted in custom-grown Lhosts incorporating the user's own DNA, which all but eliminates instinctual rejection of the new body. Transpersonal psychotherapists work with



users at every step, helping them to adjust to the new realities of their situation. But perhaps most integral of all, is the role of a user's geist. The dedicated pseudo-AI is intimately familiar with not only the user's biological information, but their behavioural patterns, desires, preferences, and so on. Integrating the geist has worked wonders for the synthesis process. When downloading into a new Lhost, a user's geist is more than just another useful subroutine. It's a trusted friend, a light in the darkness, and the one constant in a sea of troubles.

MODERN LHOSTS

The market for Lhosts is at an all-time high. Cubes have become common-place across the Human Sphere, ALEPH and Haqqislam have advanced ectogenous technologies, and then there are the unfortunate realities of the Paradiso conflict. While bleeding-edge models like ALEPH's Bodhisattvas remain out of the reach of all but the most privileged of elites, most Lhosts boast capabilities that would have seemed like unreasonable luxuries in prior models. Dozens of manufacturers offer a dizzying array of choices, though most can be grouped into a few discreet categories.

Governments tend to keep their best models for internal use, but the private sector has made enough strides that – in a reversal of the prior relationship – militaries have begun copying corporate designs for their own use. Twitch-reflex, wired nervous systems, improved tensile strength, neo-material-reinforced skeletons and designer organs have essentially become standard equipment in many commercially available Lhosts.

Of particular interest is the rise of custom Lhosts. While most Lhosts are synthesised with the user's DNA to ensure minimal rejection, with enough time, money, and resources, custom Lhosts can be tailored to a user's exact specifications, down to the last nanofiber. Particularly savvy manufacturers such as Xperydes Biotechnology often use this process to develop new prototypes, incorporating second generation versions of features developed for particularly demanding – and wealthy – clients. This has had a trickle-down effect on Lhost customisation. Manufacturers offer a variety of different options, often retrofitting “scratch and dent” models under the guise of customisation.

With a wide array of Lhosts on hand, dealers usually have arrangements with authorised download centres – licensed establishments with extensive facilities, and trained physicians and psychologists on staff. And even without such arrangements in place, it's usually trivial to arrange for a customer's Lhost of choice to be transported to the facility in question.

Of course, the Black Labs of Bakunin are more than happy to provide similar services – no questions asked – though their support staff is often considerably less robust. In either case, the purchase price of a Lhost is assumed to include memory backups and re-downloading the buyer's Cube into a model of equal or lesser value in case of the Lhost's destruction. Though frequent users of the latter policy can swiftly find themselves the centre of unexpected attention.

TRANS-POSTHUMANISM

What does it mean to be human? Since the appearance of the first Cube, that question has been stretched, explored, and outright subverted in more ways than any other era of human history. To live in the age of ALEPH is to transcend humanity's traditional limits on a daily basis, to live in a world one's ancestors could barely imagine. The 21st century transhumanist or “h+” intellectual movement saw its ideas ascendant, becoming an integral part of daily life. With the advent of sheut recording, biotechnological, and cybernetic modifications, viral species hybridisation and *in utero* genetic modifications, it's no exaggeration to suggest that most of the Human Sphere is comfortably transhuman.

So, what comes next?

EMBODIED CONSCIOUSNESS

“Descartes was wrong. The mind needs a body; this we know. Detached from the familiar connectivity of a proper host, the sheut frays, stresses, and deteriorates. Embodied consciousness is what our minds are adapted to, and anything outside it is playing with fire. Even ALEPH's Aspects who've spun off into self-contained entities experience consciousness in a more embodied fashion. Compared to the AI's ever-shifting, alien thought processes, which Aspects refer to as *daath* (דעת) – a Hebrew word meaning knowledge, and the Kabbalistic concept containing every point in the sephiroth simultaneously – an Aspect's experience with self-awareness is much closer to a human's.

And yet.

The multi-threaded consciousness of a Posthuman – made possible by technology designed for the Cube 2.0 – is a step closer to the way an Aspect experiences existence. With multiple points of feedback at any given moment, they take on and cast aside hosts like most people would change garments, picking and choosing to suit the immediate needs, and seeming to suffer no ill side effects for their trouble.

So in the end, Descartes was right, if a little premature.”

– Joanna Anoa'i, Psychogenesis Expert



POST-MORTEM POLITICS

When Annie Xanthopoulos's sheut was successfully slotted into an Lhost, everything changed. In that moment, humanity's ultimate triumph over death had been achieved; the rest was just details. The devil, of course, is in those details. Decades later, the dead still outnumber the living, and while many in the Human Sphere are outfitted with Cubes, the process of resurrection remains a limited resource. Even as the cost of Lhosts comes down, and the number of qualified resurrection engineers goes up, there simply isn't enough Silk to go around. So, while the technology is theoretically replicable, access to it remains limited, and access is everything. Thus, a trusted Bureau Noir agent might find themselves resurrected with great frequency, while others wait in seemingly-endless resurrection queues.

Even in death, it seems that it's not so much what you know, as who you know.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Cubes are remarkable little devices, making perfect, lossless recordings of an individual's sheut. But, Cubes are fundamentally recreating the human brain, and the human brain doesn't function in a vacuum. Digital or not, a human mind needs a body. Without a human, Lhost, or Virtual Environment to host it, the individual may as well be dead. Without an interface, a Cube is basically an inert library. It's a snapshot of its user's sheut, essentially frozen at the moment of death, awaiting an interface to resume consciousness. Once that happens, there are new hurdles. Existing as a disembodied consciousness is a fundamentally transformative process, and without fully-integrated Posthuman neural architecture (or one of ALEPH's many equivalents or iterative evolutions), the mind simply caves in on itself.

To be a disembodied sheut is not dissimilar to a sensory deprivation chamber. On the surface, it doesn't seem like it would be that bad. In reality, it's a particular form of torture that drives people mad with alarming regularity. Thus, most Cubes remain inert until they can be connected to a proper interface. The sheut's perception then picks up from the moment of host failure, colloquially, their death. To those being re-hosted, resurrection is more than a marketing buzzword. It's an accurate description of their experience.

CUBE BANKS

An iota-scarcity economy still contains scarcity. For all of humanity's advances, that inconvenient fact still keeps most of the Human Sphere squarely within its transhuman stage, with Posthumanity an altogether different mountain to climb. Practically speaking, this means that most disembodied sheuts are stored inside Personality Data Storage (PDS) facilities, colloquially known as Cube Banks. Sheut storage is recognised as universal human right, although the subjective reality of that experience can vary wildly depending upon circumstances.

"Cold Storage" Cube Banks are the most common solution. Essentially massive servers, these monolithic structures provide free personality storage and precious little else. These are usually financed by a citizen's government. Current best practice recommends checking in with stored sheuts on a roughly annual basis to avoid excessive culture shock upon revival, though spending too much time in a conscious-yet-disembodied state is hardly a kindness. For these souls, the experience of death is essentially a rapid-fire series of disinterested interns, reciting bullet points of the year's relevant events, stretching out into eternity as the years pass them by.

For those who have family, friends, or other contacts looking to speak with them, this purgatorial blitz is broken up by visitations. With lifelike VR hosts serving as surrogate nervous systems, sheuts are awakened and have a brief "thawing out" period where they ease into their temporary virtual bodies. They can spend as much time in these "Vhosts" as their visitors are inclined to pay for. These meetings usually take place with a holographic projection of the sheut and are typically sold in two-hour blocks. This is more than enough time to get questions answered, but not so much that people reuniting with their loved ones won't shell out for another block of time once goodbye draws near.

Something is better than nothing, to be sure, but the psychological effect of living "under glass"—being awakened, projected without a body you can truly feel, then shuffled off to storage once again—is hardly beneficial to a sheut's long-term sanity. And that's before you factor in "interrogations," where the sheut is copied, and the clone interrogated is then deleted. This practice is considered by many ethically problematic, legally questionable, and existentially horrifying.

VIRTUAL SERVERS

Simulated virtual environments provide the same Vhost experience as a visitation, only there's no off switch. Interacting with the larger world via Maya and often inhabiting digital environments of fascinating design, the only limit of a V-Server is its architects' imagination—and, of course, the bank accounts of its inhabitants. Long the exclusive playground of those deceased wealthy enough to afford just about anything but a resurrection licence, V-Servers can be anything from detailed models of existing cities, to recreations of the American Old West, to licensed spin-offs of popular Mayaseries or games.

But recently, another type of V-Server has come to prominence.

In the weeks leading up to the deployment of a major patch to the ORC Armour's quantum

security systems, Omnia Research & Creation's Acontecimento-based development lead, programmer Sofia Kaur, was suddenly killed under mysterious circumstances. Not only was this a personal tragedy, but the upcoming patch was suddenly in disarray, exposing PanOceania's ORC troopers to quantronic exploits through a wide-open loophole. The timing of the assassination suggested that whoever was responsible intended to capitalise, and PanOceanian high command made it clear that they expected the patch to arrive on schedule, lest Kaur be only the first casualty. With their backs against the wall, Omnia hastily arranged for a no-frills, functional Vhost for Kaur, and she resumed her role as project lead, delivering the patch just in time to halt a particularly ambitious group of pirate hackers.

With the project a skin-of-the-teeth success, and Kaur's Vhost paid up through the end of the month, Omnia saw a potential edge in a workaholic lead developer who barely needed sleep and had few interests outside of work. They brought Kaur back on full-time, working remotely in her V-Server. The practice has begun to take hold in other industries. The hyperqualified deceased remotely labour in virtual work servers, and their salaries pay for upkeep and later an Lhost and resurrection. From project managers to bestselling authors, an increasing number of workers are being placed in Vhosts as corporations find increasingly creative ways to extract productivity from the dead.

TOWARD A POSTHUMAN FUTURE

Much has been made of the necessity of embodied consciousness. Despite multiple efforts to the contrary, there's something intrinsically embodied about human consciousness. Take away the embodiment, and the mind can't take the strain.

Which makes the appearance of the self-proclaimed Posthumans such a game-changer.

ALEPH is a distributed, multiphase consciousness, and its Aspects, however human they may seem, are cut from the same cloth. Sliding in and out of different hosts is an incredibly painstaking, often difficult process for humans, but Aspects do it naturally. So, when the first Posthumans were spotted in action, quantronically leaping from proxy host to proxy host, seemingly without a care in the world, the scientific community was beside itself trying to understand what it was witnessing. The answers lie in Cube 2.0 research, even if they only begat further questions.

Integrating a sheut to Cube 2.0 multi-point access technology proved to be more than just a convenient storage method. By creating a "soul torrent,"

stored and backed up in innumerate discrete locations across the Maya datasphere, for the first time since ALEPH's creation, a human sheut was interacting with reality in a similar fashion as the AI. Inspired by this, ALEPH developed a process that would ease the transition to disembodied consciousness by providing a sort of multi-threaded reinforcement of reality.

On one hand, it worked. On the other, what resulted was decidedly different from humanity as it was understood. These Posthumans don't suffer Resurrection Dysmorphic Disorder, they step in and out of bodies the way that most people would change their clothing, often taking far less time in the act. Their minds and bodies seem, against all odds, to be entirely separate and distinct entities.

ALEPH picks and chooses from humanity's best and brightest for the ranks of the Posthumans, which has resulted in an increasingly apparent brain drain in humanity proper. Though it's a small trickle at the moment, the very fact that ALEPH is hand-selecting candidates to become something still not fully understood has some people quite worried. With the creativity, unorthodox problem-solving, and intrinsic flexibility of a human intellect, combined with the raw processing power and access to information of an AI, Posthumans bring a unique perspective to the Human Sphere. Though they themselves still struggle to comprehend this perspective, it is a powerful one nonetheless.

THE BEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING

The experiential reality of a Posthuman is fundamentally different from either that of a human, or the AI. They are citizens of two worlds, self-aware packages of light and data, as comfortable as a disembodied torrent in a datasphere as they are in a physical host. Indeed, when acting in an operational capacity in support of the Special Situations Section, Posthuman elites will often bring multiple proxy Lhosts with them. They can skip between them in a matter of seconds, functionally piloting a small fleet of bodies, never inhabiting a single point for longer than is strictly necessary. Sometimes, they eschew Lhosts entirely, preferring to exist as pure data until whim or need dictates that they slip into something a little more physical. To hear it told, Posthumans are the next step in humanity's evolution. Living demigods walking among their lesser cousins.

To hear a Posthuman's account, however, the truth is somewhat more complex. While many Posthumans consider themselves inarguably superior – not just to humanity, but to the Aspects who make up many of their peers – and behave accordingly, the image of brazen Posthuman Elites, forged by war and

PURGATORIES

Some V-Servers are the domain of wealthy individuals who've made powerful enemies. Whether Nomad Hacktivists, rival Submondo syndicates, governments, or even ALEPH itself, a determined and resourceful enemy can make resurrection unlikely, impossible, or a straight-up bad idea. Thus, an exceptionally rare number of individuals – usually those as wealthy as they are corrupt – wait for circumstances to change from custom Vhosts. Nicknamed "Purgatories," rumour has it that more than one deceased Kingpin runs their empire from beyond the grave, waiting for their opportunity to return.

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

"It's not like we weren't warned. Hell, it's not like we aren't being warned – currently, consistently, and actively, by an AI that knows we'll dance to whatever tune is sings, as long as the chorus is catchy enough. The pied piper of Concilium is taking our best and brightest. And. It. Is. Changing. Them.

Into what? I'll tell you what: itself. The AI is destroying humanity, replacing it with its own brand of data-zombies, and we are smiling, nodding, and letting it happen. Of course, they call themselves post-humans. They're murdering humanity and want to make sure it's their finger on the trigger."

– *The One-Eyed Man's Soapbox*, web-press of Tortuga Island, independent news and opinion channel; pirated edition on Maya 'till it's gone, or available 24/7 on Arachne



destined to conquer the universe, doesn't tell the whole story.

Few Posthumans would ever go on record implying that their new condition is anything other than a vast improvement in every conceivable way, but many have privately struggled with the ethereal nature of their new existence, finding it almost unbearably light. Many have shown symptoms of a sort of existential malaise, an unvoiced but deep melancholy with their new state, a subtly disquieting gnaw at the edge of their consciousness. If you can know everything, why learn anything? If you can be everywhere, why be anywhere? If you've spent your whole life dreaming of transcendence, what happens once you transcend?

This ennui, tempered by the necessarily somewhat dissociative nature of Posthuman existence, has presented a unique challenge to ALEPH. The Human Sphere's best transpersonal psychologists – human, Posthuman, and Aspect alike – were tasked with understanding this unique obstacle to the Posthuman utopia that seemed otherwise readily attainable. In the end, many Posthumans seemed to be lacking something to care about, a driving passion or a literal *raison d'être*.

So, ALEPH endeavoured to help them find one.

Whether it be repelling the Combined Army on Paradise, exploring the past through archaeological excavations, advancing the Human Sphere's scientific understanding, or simply devouring whole seasons of *Mayaseries* with a critic's eye and a gourmand's palate, Posthumans keep themselves exceptionally busy. Humanity once dreamed of attaining a life of ultimate leisure. But upon attaining the tools, Posthumans set themselves to work with unmatched fervour, passion, and dedication.

In the end, what does it mean to be human? To be Posthuman? To be alive in any fashion? While responses will differ, Posthumans would posit that the answer is fundamentally the same across all these questions: the answer is whatever we want it to be. Whatever we choose. Whatever we say it is.

That in any guise, Humanity is what you make of it. No more, no less.

CUSTOM LHOSTS

Even in seemingly-identical Lhost models, a significant amount of customisation goes into every Lhost. Aspects have a painstakingly involved ectogenesis. A stock Lhost becomes a quasi-clone by custom-tailoring with a user's DNA. Even the simple but customise interface optimisation for a

Siren Lhost's neural pathways will allow its new sheut to seamlessly integrate. And yet, many users want more. Increased performance, specific features, whatever the reason, some yearn to push Lhosts beyond their existing boundaries in new and exciting ways for a Lhost that is uniquely theirs.

The process of customising an Lhost beyond these boundaries is many things – exciting, demanding, complex – but it is rarely quick, affordable, or easy to initiate. Finding someone who can tweak an existing Lhost or create something entirely new is an exacting process. Lhost models come standardised for good reason. Take away economies of scale, and suddenly even comparatively minor adjustments can require esoteric parts, materials, and expertise to create. As such, the restriction, tariffs, and maintenance costs of Custom Lhosts can quickly escalate beyond their mass-fabricated counterparts. Such is the price of exotic demands.

Note: The Custom Lhost rules are only for creating new Lhosts. Anyone wishing to modify their existing Lhost needs to rely on Augmentations like anyone else.

Restriction / Cost: Instead of each modification having its own Restriction or Cost, the following tables are used to determine the Restriction and Cost of a custom Lhost package, which is a bundle of modifications obtained and applied together. Given that a large portion of the expense is in creating a system that works with itself fluidly, purchasing several modifications as a large package is quite cost-effective compared to buying individual after-market augmentations or finding someone to modify your Lhost. However, the more specific the demands, the more difficult it is to find someone ready, willing, and able to create the Lhost in question.

A modifiable Lhost base begins with a Restriction of 2, and Cost of 6+2^(N). It possesses the Inured to Disease common special ability, but no other modifications, just like the Standard Lhost. Choose the options, total up their respective costs, and then consult the *Lhost Upgrade Package Table*, below. The total number of modifications will indicate both the total restriction for the modification package as well as a value to divide the Cost increase by (rounding down) before adding it to the base Lhost, resulting in its final Cost.

For example, an Lhost adding 4 modifications with a Cost increase of 4+1^(N), should divide that increase by 2, and increase the Restriction by +1. Add that Restriction modifier (+1) and the divided Cost increase (2+0^(N)) to the base Lhost, and use the new Restriction and Cost – 3 and 8+2^(N) in this example – to acquire the Lhost.

Tariffs: Several different modifications can increase the tariff rating of the Lhost. If this would ever raise the tariff rating beyond T3, add 1+1^(N) to the Lhost's final Cost for every value above T3. This increase comes after applying the divided Cost increase from the *Lhost Modification Package Table*, so these increases are not divided.

Maintenance: Some modifications can increase the Maintenance cost of the Lhost. Unlike tariffs, there is no ceiling on Maintenance increases. Prototype Lhosts can become prohibitively expensive to keep running. Like Cost, Maintenance is divided by the values indicated in the *Lhost Modification Package Table*, and there are additional options that can reduce Maintenance costs. Note that these only apply to the Lhost itself. You can't reduce the upkeep on your Powered Armour by cutting corners on your Lhost.

Attribute Sum: If negative, the overall sum of the Lhost's attributes can modify its maintenance cost. So if you increased Brawn by +2 ranks, but decreased Willpower by –1 rank and Personality by –2 ranks, that would leave you with a net of –1 to your attributes. This then reduces your maintenance cost by –1.

MODIFICATIONS

Add Trait: Trade-offs occur in the design process, and users are often faced with a choice between performance compromises, or costly recurring maintenance. When adding a trait related to the Lhost's performance (such as Twitchy, Ponderous, Uncanny Valley Girl, etc.) reduce the Lhost's Maintenance cost by –1, to a minimum of zero. The GM is the final arbiter on how many of these Traits can usefully be applied to a given Lhost; 1–3 is standard.

Amphibious: The Lhost possesses gills or some other function allowing it to breathe normally underwater.

Cloned Lhost: Irrespective of any other modifications, a body that feels “native” is always a welcome feature. Made from the user's own DNA, Cloned Lhosts reduce the difficulty of Discipline tests made to avoid Resurrection Dysmorphic Disorder by 2 (minimum 0). Note that no matter how much Antipodean DNA they incorporate, Lhosts are still unable to transform: Dogfaces must choose one form, and stick with it.

Cosmetic Augmentation X: As per the augmentation of the same name. Cosmetic modifications are exponentially easier to integrate when working with a “blank slate” as opposed to modifying an existing body, natural or otherwise.

“Posthumans think of themselves as agile projects, not discrete, self-contained beings like us. Their identity does not terminate at the edge of their bodies. It is data that travels from shell to shell, with dataspheres as its causeways, and the eternity the sole frontier.”

-Intellectual Cheong Thye Sen, in a feature for *News of the State*, Yu Jing's weekly Maya news digest

RARE VARIANTS

Not every Custom Lhost needs to be a made-to-order model. These rules work just as well for smaller manufacturers, rare or exclusive variants of existing models, and other hard-to-find Lhosts.

CUSTOM LHOSTS IN THE LIFEPATH

With the GM's permission, you can purchase a custom Lhost during the Lifepath. Simply build your Lhost normally and assign it an LP cost equal to the higher of its Restriction or Maintenance Cost, to a maximum of 5 LP. If its LP cost would exceed 5, you may still acquire the Lhost by paying 2 Assets for each increment past 5. (So, an Lhost with a Maintenance Cost of 7 would require 5 LP, and 4 Assets to acquire during the Lifepath.)



INHUMAN CLONES

Non-human Cloned Lhosts are extremely rare, requiring expensive custom facilities just to get started. Given how few non-humans are in the Human Sphere – and how few of them could ever dream of affording such luxuries – the infrastructure simply isn't in place for these species to acquire a Cloned Lhost. Of course, the Black Labs of Praxis will try anything if the price is right, though expect it to be steep, and not just financially either

PLAYTEST NOTE

DUPLICATE ENTRIES

Remember: Lhosts can only benefit from a single instance of a given Superhuman Attribute or Expert System modification; they don't stack.

Cube 2.0: The Lhost contains fully-integrated Cube 2.0 Architecture. Transitional therapy is included in the upkeep cost.

Expert System 1/2: Adds Expert 1 or 2 to a single skill. Multiple Expert systems are not cumulative with each other. Characters only benefit from the highest rated Expert system for a given skill.

Implanted {Equipment/Weapon}: A favourite of ALEPH functionaries, clandestine operatives, and anyone else who simply can't go without a particular item. As per the augmentation, and taken separately for each piece of implanted gear, the process is somewhat easier when working with a still-inert Lhost, as opposed to modifying a living host.

Increase BTS: Increases BTS by +1, to a maximum of 3.

Increase Incidental Stress: Adds Resolve, Firewall, or Vigour to the Lhost to a maximum of +3 per incidental stress track.

Increase/Decrease Attribute: Increases or decreases a single attribute by +1 or -1. No single attribute can be increased or decreased by more than +/- 4 in this fashion.

Integrated Armour: Subdermal grafts for your Lhost. Just like the augmentation of the same name, these are purchased by-location. Even with a bespoke Lhost, there's still only room for one piece of Integrated Armour per hit location; users wanting additional protection will have to suit up like everybody else.

Inured to X: Functioning as the common special ability of the same name, resistance to particular conditions are a common reason to order a custom

Lhost. All models are Inured to Disease by virtue of their design. Additional resistances are significantly more difficult to incorporate. GM approval is required for Inured to X modifications.

Monstrous: ALEPH's Precursor models represented a breakthrough in Lhost technology. For the first time, truly massive hosts, on par with an Ariadnan Dog-Warrior, were feasible for sheuts to inhabit. The technology is still new, and difficult to come by, however. Monstrous Lhosts increase the difficulty of tests where great size or weight would be problematic by one step. Monstrous Lhosts are not required to brace Unwieldy weapons and can use two-handed weapons in one hand without difficulty or penalty. They may spend 1 Momentum to add Knockdown to all of their melee attacks for a turn. In addition, when purchasing augmentations or gear meant to be worn such as armour, add +1 to the item's restriction and tariff rating. Gear that is not acquired in this fashion causes the character to suffer a +1 complication range to all skill tests. Tailoring gear to fit the Lhost requires a complex **Tech test (D3, 4 Momentum, 2 failures)**.

Night Vision: Whether through specially-grown feline eyes, extensive sensor suites, filtering different wavelengths of light, or some other method, this Lhost can pierce the deepest darkness with ease. Tests taken in an Lhost with this modification do not increase in difficulty as a result of darkness.

Proxy Host: A Posthuman favourite, characters with the **Quantronic Jump** ability can move between Proxy Hosts as a Free Action and perform Reactions from any Proxy they control. While limited to a single Minor and Standard action per round as usual, they can pay for and use Swift Action Momentum spends separately for each Proxy Host.

Quantronic Connection: High-bandwidth immersion in the Maya's datasphere widens one's perspective, providing +2 Morale and Security Soak while connected. Requires a Cube 2.0 or equivalent to function.

Super-Jump: As per the augmentation of the same name, these usually involve xenobiological gene-grafts or extensive hydraulics and allow their user to vault over obstacles up to their height without penalty, as well as enjoying -1 difficulty on skill tests to move through difficult terrain.

Superhuman Attribute 1/2: As per the common special ability (see *Infinity* Corebook, p. 418), adds Superhuman Attribute 1 or 2 to a single attribute. Multiple instances of Superhuman Attribute are not cumulative with each other; characters only benefit from the highest instance.

EXAMPLE: CUSTOM LHOSTS

Gonzales decides that he wants a new Lhost designed for combat. No existing Lhost is quite what he's looking for, so he opts to look for a custom Lhost. He decides that he wants an implanted Heavy Pistol and Superhuman Coordination 1, as well as Subdermal Armour on the entire Lhost. He's a little nervous about Maintenance, so he adds the Decrease Attribute modification, reducing Personality by -1, giving him a negative Attribute Sum and reducing his Maintenance costs by the same amount. He decides that his battle-ready Lhost sacrifices some expressiveness in favour of a reinforced chassis.

That's seven modifications; consulting the Lhost Upgrade Package Table, Gonzales adds +2 to Restriction, and divides the Cost and Maintenance of his modifications by 2, giving the package a total cost of 4+3 (N), bringing it to 10+5 (N) and eliminating its Maintenance cost. He also accumulated quite a Tariff increase, with a total of T5. Since Tariffs are capped at T3, he also adds 2+2 (N) to the Lhost, after its package cost was divided. He notes the final Cost of his Lhost: 12+7 (N), Restriction 4, T3.

LHOST MODIFICATIONS TABLE

MODIFICATION	EFFECT	COST	SPECIAL
Add Trait	Add trait	+5	-1 Maintenance (min 0)
Amphibious	Breathe normally underwater	+1	+1 Maintenance
Cloned Lhost	See Cloned Lhost	+2	None
Cosmetic Augmentation X	As <i>Cosmetic Augmentation X</i> Augmentation*	X+X	+1 Tariff
Cube 2.0	As <i>Cube 2.0</i> Augmentation*	1+2	+1 Maintenance
Decrease Attribute	Decrease Attribute of choice by 1	-1 (min 0)	See Attribute Sum
Expert System 1	Adds Expert 1 to a single skill	+3	+1 Tariff, +1 Maintenance
Expert System 2	Adds Expert 2 to a single skill	+6	+1 Tariff, +2 Maintenance
Implanted [Equipment]	As <i>Implanted [Equipment]</i> Augmentation*	Per Item	+1 Tariff
Implanted [Weapon]	As <i>Implanted [Weapon]</i> Augmentation*	Per Item	+1 Tariff
Increase Attribute	Increase a single attribute by +1	+2	+1 Maintenance
Increase BTS	Increase BTS rating by +1	1+1	+1 Maintenance
Increase Incidental Stress	Increase Firewall, Morale, or Vigour by +1	1+1	None
Integrated Armour	As <i>Subdermal Grafts</i> Augmentation (per location)*	+1	+1 Tariff
Inured to X	Add <i>Inured to X</i> Special Ability**	2+1	+1 Tariff
Monstrous	See Entry	1+1	+3 Tariff, +3 Maintenance
Night Vision	Tests do not increase in difficulty due to darkness**	1+2	None
Proxy Host	See Entry	2+2	+2 Tariff, +2 Maintenance
Quantronic Connection	See Entry	1+1	+1 Tariff, +1 Maintenance
Super-Jump	As <i>Super Jump</i> Augmentation*	1+1	+1 Tariff, +1 Maintenance
Superhuman Attribute 1	Add Superhuman Attribute 1 to a single attribute**	4	+1 Tariff, +2 Maintenance
Superhuman Attribute 2	Add Superhuman Attribute 2 to a single attribute**	7	+1 Tariff, +4 Maintenance

* See *Augmentations*, p. 346, *Infinity Corebook*

** See *Common Special Abilities*, p. 417, *Infinity Corebook*

LHOST MODIFICATION PACKAGE TABLE

NUMBER OF MODIFICATIONS	RESTRICTION	DIVIDE COST & MAINTENANCE BY...
1-3	+1	1
4-9	+2	2
10+	+3	3



CHAPTER 7

PLAYER OPTIONS: GEISTS

“Oh honey, your geist isn’t mad at you. It can’t be. Geists aren’t alive, not in the classical sense anyway. While they do a convincing job of faking it, they’re not intelligent in the way people, or even animals are. Your geist isn’t really upset.

You could no more hurt its feelings than you could offend your coffee table or charm a motorcycle engine. I’m from *Bakunin*, seen it tried. Can’t be done. Um, the engine, I mean.”

Corona Spinelli, freelance LAI expert. Failing to comfort a client’s distraught child, Concilium Prima.

NEW GEIST
ACCLIMATION

When a user installs an entirely new geist on their system, they enter a period of New Geist Acclimation, or NGA. This serves to increase the complication range of their geist’s tasks by 5 minus the greater of either the character’s Hacking or Psychology Focus. The complication range modifier then reduces at a rate of 1 per week, which represents the user and their new geist ironing out all the kinks.

Of the myriad innovations arising from the quantronic revolution, perhaps none is quite as ubiquitous as the geist. Quantronic assistants, domotic organisers and constant companions, these dynamic LAIs are a virtual constant in the Human Sphere.

LEARNING
MACHINES

Geists are LAIs, but they’re not True AIs. They don’t possess emotions, sapience, or even sentience; they’re just quantronic programs. Incredibly sophisticated programs, but programs nonetheless. Years of trial and error have made it abundantly clear that a cold, unfeeling, uncaring geist is worse than useless to its owner. Fortunes have been spent in creating learning algorithms to accurately gauge a user’s mood. Larger fortunes have been spent in dynamically simulating emotion, personality, and empathy, and larger fortunes still have been made by licensing this technology for use in modern geists.

The result of this is a quantronic companion that feels as real as many of the user’s other relationships. Geists are incredibly complex pieces of software, but the degree of interactivity they offer isn’t just the product of skilled engineering. It takes time for a geist to learn what its user appreciates.

The line between an endearing quirk and an irritating habit is often so thin as to be indistinguishable to an LAI, which is true even for one as sophisticated as a geist. When given the opportunity to grow with their user, however, clear patterns can emerge and shift. Within the boundaries of a geist’s technological limitations, there’s simply no substitute for time: time to observe the user, learn their preferences, likes, and dislikes, gain enough information to accurately predict their reactions, and find ways to be an indispensable assistant.

In other words, geists grow with users.

LIFELONG COMPANIONS

The overwhelming majority of geists are acquired while their users are still children. This not only acclimates the user to the idea of a quantronic companion at a young age, but it gives the geist time to dynamically grow with them. The child accepts a relatively simple companion, and a colourful, affable quantronic buddy doesn’t need to be terribly complex or interesting so long as it’s cute. The geist builds confidence in its abilities as it’s not handling anything more arduous than keeping homework deadlines straight and reminding the child to brush their teeth.

Growing and evolving alongside their user is even reflected in mannerisms appearances. Perhaps the magic cartoon unicorn with a rainbow mane and

LET US NOW SET ASIDE CHILDISH THINGS

Sometimes, your geist grows up with you but ends up nothing like you expected. The singing cartoon dragon that delighted you in your youth may not reflect the sophisticated, composed persona you wish to convey as an adult professional. For some, a chameleonic appearance suite isn’t enough either. The behaviour of their childhood friend is frankly too juvenile for their current life, so they acquire a new geist to act as their domotic personal assistant.

But what becomes of their old geist?

While it’s not exactly suitable for resale, as it has already changed and adapted to its owner over the course of years, a geist is still a sophisticated LAI. Many of the quantronic retainers available for hire (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 392) are orphaned geists, repurposed to serve some other purpose. And of course, some simply decommission their childhood geists, though the process often proves far more emotionally difficult than most anticipate – less like upgrading your software and more like euthanising a beloved family pet.

Many people can’t bear to part with their childhood companions, and even the understanding that they’re not truly sapient does little to dull the emotional attachment from the user’s side. More than a few dignified professionals have an adorable old friend installed as the domotic manager of their personal estate, waiting like an excitable puppy for its master to return home.

tail becomes sleeker over time, taking on a stately iridescence as their user enters adulthood as a serious, dignified individual, and requires a majestic geist to match.

However, not every geist has been with its user since they were learning to crawl. Rather than upgrade their existing software, some users transfer their accumulated preference data to an entirely new, custom-built, professional-grade geist. Even with a professional data transfer, there's still a lengthy adjustment period as the user and their new geist hash out their mode of interaction.

THE ROLE OF THE GEIST

Every geist is uniquely adapted to fill the twin roles of quantronic companion and personal assistant for their user. Their adaptations are the result of millions of micro-adjustments, ensuring that no two geists are ever truly alike. While geists and their users might each be a unique set of circumstances, the roles that they fill can only categorically vary so much. When it comes to their practical skills, geists generally wind up falling into one of several types.

BOOSTER GEISTS

One of the great things about a quantronic companion is that they're always there when you need them. Building strength upon strength, Booster geists are built around an area in which the user excels. They focus on either the same skill or a complimentary skillset in order to provide dedicated assistance. In game terms, these geists usually provide aid to their users by assisting them in group tests. A geist's Target Number (TN) is usually going to be much lower than a PC's would be, but Booster geists get closer than most.

COVER GEISTS

Opposite from Boosters, a Cover geist is specifically tailored to cover for their user's weaknesses and gains skills and talents accordingly. The idea is to ensure that any glaring omissions in the user's skillset aren't exploitable deficiencies, at least not to the degree they otherwise would be.

JACKGEISTS

Taking the idea of a Cover geist even farther, Jackgeists don't just try to cover up their user's weaknesses, they endeavour to be good at everything. In a practical sense, Jackgeists see diminishing returns quickly, so most have a strong focus in some combination the Analysis, Education, and/or Observation skills to assist their user in a variety of situations. Then, they focus equally on every other skill to similar degrees.

KINGFISH GEISTS

In sharp contrast to the Jackgeist, Kingfish tend to be exceptionally skilled in one area, usually to the detriment of all others. Whether it's in specialised research, in-depth analysis, or piloting a ship, Kingfish are often deployed to act on their own, semi-independently from their users. For all their autonomy, Kingfish are still geists and are tied to their user's personal area network.

PRACTICAL GHOSTS

One of the things that sets *Infinity* apart from other RPGs is the presence of geists. While much has been said about their interaction with characters – how they integrate with nearly every facet of their lives, handling everything from minutia to large-scale analysis – how that manifests in game terms isn't always apparent to players at the gaming table. Bringing geists to life in your game in terms of what they're doing, why, and how enhances the richness and immersion of *Infinity*.

GEISTS IN PLAY

Knowing what a geist is and knowing how that works in an *Infinity* game are two different things. Beyond their role as domestic, geists are also NPCs in their own right, though they're inexorably linked to their owners. A character trait describing a glitchy geist is on the character's sheet, not just the geist's section of it. They also share a firewall, resources, and so on.

Even so, geists have their own suite of attributes, skills, and talents, clearly more than a simple storytelling device. They're meant to interact with the rules and to affect change upon their surroundings. But it isn't always clear when, or how, that should happen.

NARRATIVE JUSTIFICATION

The simplest way for geists to interact with the *Infinity* rules is of course, to not interact with them at all; their power exists solely within the story. By enabling their owners to attempt Skill tests where it otherwise wouldn't make sense, geists can influence the flow of a game without ever directly interacting with the rules.

SKILLED ASSISTANCE

Of course, geists are more than simple narrative devices. They have their own character sheets and can interact with the rules just like any other character would. In practical terms, this is frequently expressed by assisting their owners with various tasks. In game terms, this usually means attempting a group test with their owner as the leader.

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

Chameleonic Geist Skins are a reliable way to ensure that your geist is dressed for the occasion, so to speak, appearing human. That said, they're quantronically fragile. More than one tense boardroom meeting has been punctuated by hackers attempting to inflict otherwise benign breaches in hopes of exposing an embarrassing geist at a critical juncture. While the risk of being detected often vastly outweighs the potential reward, hackers tend to be a confident lot, and most assume that they won't be the ones to get caught. So, the game continues.

EXAMPLE

NARRATIVE JUSTIFICATION

Cassandra the bounty hunter, hot on the trail of her latest quarry, has narrowed their location down to a Neoterran industrial district. Not wanting to alert them to her presence, she attempts to sneak through the facility without raising suspicion. To do this, Cassandra relies on low-level surveillance feeds from her geist, who's sorting through thousands of different data streams to keep an eye on who's nearby. From a rules perspective, Cassandra simply needs to make an **Average (D1) Stealth test** to stay out of sight and otherwise avoid raising suspicion.



PLAYTEST TIP

GEIST DICE

For characters or groups where geists are expected to often provide assistance on Skill tests, setting aside a different coloured d20s and designating them as your geist's can allow for the character and geist's rolls to happen at the same time, speeding up group tests considerably.

EXAMPLE

SKILLED ASSISTANCE

Skulking through her quarry's hideout, Cassandra finds a makeshift workshop with motorcycle engines in various states of repair. While hunting for a clue and looking at the different engines, tools, and spare parts, her geist, Glitch, quickly analyses the various components for similarities with a cascading Maya search array. Cassandra leads an **Average (D1) Tech Group test**, while Glitch rolls 1d20 against its Education skill to (hopefully) generate additional Momentum.

EXAMPLE

INDEPENDENT ASSETS

Having reigned in her quarry, Cassandra pulled her own bike up next to them and politely asked them to surrender. Or at least, that was the plan. Several blasts from a Chain Rifle made it clear that her quarry had no intention of coming in quietly. Drawing her own weapon, she instructs Glitch to take the controls so she can focus on lining up a shot. If a Pilot test is required, Glitch will be using its own attribute and Skill - a situation it is perfectly specced thanks to Pilot Expertise, Focus, and a few Talents. The geist is reasonably unlikely to crash the bike, or provides a better option than Cassandra trying to steer with her knees at least.

Analysis, Education, and Observation are common skills for geists to use in this fashion. By filtering through Maya, Arachne, or local dataspheres with their signature processing speed, geists can often find immediately applicable information to assist with the task at hand. Of course, nothing beats expertise in the specific tasks, and the GM may set a different difficulty level for a geist's assistance at their discretion. While a geist shouldn't be treated as a free bonus die, they can often help with a variety of tasks.

INDEPENDENT ASSETS

Whether they're communicating over Maya, an instance running on a Comlog, or bouncing around in a Tinbot designed to look like the mascot of a popular children's Mayaseries, geists are intricately and integrally woven into their owner's personal area networks. They not only maintain their owners' firewall, but they use it as well. Geists can usually be thought of as an extension of their owner as opposed to an independent entity.

Yet, they are independent entities, and as circumstances dictate, they act as such. LAIs in their own right, professionally available quantronic servitors are basically master-less geists, available to provide service on an as-needed basis to a firm's clientele, and a proper geist can certainly do the same. Chauffeur geists are a common expression of this since not everybody knows how to pilot a boat or a VTOL aircraft. And even if they do, there's a lot to be said for a specialised geist who can not only act as a skilled co-pilot, but can take the wheel when needed.

As quantronic natives, there's a lot of synergy for geists who specialise in hacking, both good and

bad. While a quantronically unskilled character can benefit greatly from a geist who can do their hacking for them, both the character and the geist share a firewall and if your geist is poking its nose where it doesn't belong, not only can this be traced back to you, but can lead to some awkward situations. Nobody wants to suddenly find themselves without a functional, real-time translation suite because their geist just suffered a Breach.

From operating defence turrets, researching topics in the background, making acquisitions on their owner's behalf, and so on, geists can be found acting more or less on their own across the Human Sphere, just never for very long stretches. Ultimately, geists are still domotic partners. Their main job is to manage their owner's affairs, and it's a full-time gig.

GEISTS AS A GM TOOL

Always present, trusted sources, and capable of some amazing feats, geists can be the best friend for the GM in a bind. Any number of situations that might ordinarily feel contrived, stretch credulity, or otherwise be at odds with your group's enjoyment and immersion, can be readily explained by the helpful little domótica.

Don't twist and subvert a character's geist to advance your plots. While there's certainly nothing stopping you from using geists to illustrate the duplicitous nature of Human Sphere politics, they generally work best when the characters – and their players – have every reason to trust them. The characters may have had their geists with them since childhood, it's likely a novel concept to the players portraying them. Some players might

GEIST ON THE LEFT, GEIST ON THE RIGHT, GEIST TO THE CENTRE

On page 73 in the *Infinity Corebook*, there's an optional rule called "Geist on Your Left" in which players take on the role of other players' geists in play. In addition to providing a roleplaying opportunity for players at the table, it also allows the geist to interact with more of the rules without slowing play to a crawl. This is especially noteworthy when one character, for whatever reason, is heading off by themselves.

In these situations, it might even make sense for the other characters to send their geists to assist the individual. This can include situations such as:

- A single infiltrator skulking through a compound. The geists team up to unlock doors, keep an eye on guard patrols, or otherwise assist the character.
- A suave diplomat, weaving their way through a gala. As they make their way towards the target of their PsyOp, a small cloud of geists provides them with context on all the other partygoers, smoothing their path.
- A lone sniper waits, perched atop a peak. Their geist, as well as those of their teammates, calculate wind trajectories, track the target, and provide quantronic interference to disguise the shooter, since there's only room for one on this mountain.

be immediately suspicious of an NPC that, for all intents and purposes, lives in their head.

As always, you should find what's best for your group. But, it's recommended that you keep geists on their owner's side. And within that milieu, there's a lot of opportunity to further plots, hint at agendas, and otherwise convey the richness of the *Infinity* universe. Plenty of NPCs can make a player character's life difficult; very few can make the GM's life as easy as a geist can.

POST-LIFEPATH TWEAKING

The Lifepath system creates nuanced, unique individuals who each bring their own unique perspective to a situation. When you have a specific campaign in mind, however, you can wind up with a group of fascinating characters that your group is excited to play but requires extra creativity to bring them together as a cohesive unit.

Maybe the characters don't share a common language between them or are lacking in the skills they're going to need for the type of campaign you have planned. You could, and to some degree should, alter your plans to fit the player characters. Each campaign is its own unique beast, with challenges and advantages unique to its group and theme, with your player characters as the stars of the story. Then again, if everyone's excited for your espionage campaign, but the characters came out a little light on the Stealth skill, you could always introduce an XP discount on Stealth to encourage players to bulk up their infiltration skills.

But what where do geists fit in?

KEEPING EXPLANATIONS IN-UNIVERSE

Whether it's a campaign premise, transitioning disparate characters from the Lifepath into play, or just managing the flow of information during a session, GMs have a lot of extra background information to put into gameplay. The GM can always just have these conversations with the other players – and for some topics, that's absolutely the correct answer – but there's something satisfying about having an in-universe explanation to create a feeling of immersion.

Fortunately, geists provide a ready-made conduit for reinforcing themes, introducing information, or keeping the gameplay flowing naturally. For example:

Problem: None of the characters share a common language between them.

Solution: Thanks to their geists' *LinguaLearn* software, they can freely communicate with each other via real-time translation, even if they're not connected to Maya. How this particular group came by the proprietary software could be its own plot hook.

Problem: There's an important piece of information – a clue, a pivotal NPC, or key piece of context – that the players have missed.

Solution: Whether the players skipped past a clue, the GM just forgot to include something pivotal, or a key fact has been forgotten for whatever reason, having a character's geist insert the information at an appropriate moment can be a great way to introduce the information. You can break decision paralysis, reinforce a choice, or avoid a red herring that no one's actually going to enjoy, all without anyone feeling foolish or embarrassed.

Problem: The planned campaign has a strong focus (such as espionage, military, etc.), but your players' characters are lacking in the appropriate skills.

Solution: Their sponsors, faction handlers, or commanding officer certainly intend for this group to succeed so their geists are outfitted with custom learning suites. These help the characters quickly gain the skills they'll need, which is then reflected in the rules as an experience point discount on the skills in question.

Problem: The characters have information or context that isn't coming to the players' mind, and things have stalled out.

Solution: Probably the simplest and most classic application in this list, having a characters' geist bring up pertinent information is a great way to convey relevant information without disrupting the flow of a scene.

There are countless ways to use characters' geists to smooth over bumps in your *Infinity* games; these are just a few. But if you're looking for a way to nudge the game in a certain direction, address unexpected challenges, or just keep the pace moving, geists provide an excellent tool.

"You have a 1300 meeting with Rolf Hamilton from WarTechWorks regarding a partnership opportunity. You have a tentative second date scheduled with Faiza Assad at 1900, which you've marked as 'undecided,' though your window for plausible cancelation is closing. Go-Go Marlene has a new episode due to drop some point this evening. Also, the man behind you has quickened his pace and drawn a knife."

Rebekkah, Vizier geist. Providing a timely update for her owner.

PLAYTEST TIP

EXPERIENCE POINT DISCOUNTS

While the GM guide goes into more detail on experience points and modifying your game in general, a good starting point for an experience point discount is to treat the characters as though they had one more level of Focus in the desired skills, and tweak from there.

THE GEIST PATH

PICKING AND CHOOSING FROM THE GEISTPATH

Some players prefer simply creating their geists using the core rules, while others might have a geist that they're mechanically happy with, but find themselves stumped when it comes to their quanontric companion's style and personality. In these, or any other cases, feel free to use the information in this chapter to flesh out existing geists, or randomly determining an NPC's geist.

COMMON GEIST SKINS

By necessity, geists are as unique and varied as their owners. There are a few primary visual identities though that most geists fall into.

- Personal Assistant (Butler, Secretary, etc.)
- Mascot Character
- Totem or Mystic Guide
- Geometric Shape or Waveforms
- Stylized Animated Humanoid

OPTIONAL RULE QUIRKY TRAITS

Even though they're superficially similar to character traits, a geist's personality quirks don't normally interact with the rules. But if you wish, players and the GM can use a geist's quirks in the same way that they would a character's traits. While GM approval is always required when invoking a character trait, using quirks in this fashion benefits from additional care. Just keep in mind: the goal is to ensure that the invoke is meaningful, and creates an interesting predicament, not to deny the player an Infinity Point.

While characters usually create their geist during Decision Nine on the Lifepath, their geist has almost certainly been with them for much longer. These optional rules present a miniature Lifepath, resulting in a geist that's organically grown up beside your character, an NPC in their own right.

Characters' geists can be created using the alternate rules presented here, rather than those presented in Decision Nine in the *Infinity Corebook* (p.72–73). These can either be completed alongside their associated decisions in the Lifepath, showing how the geist adapts to the character as they grow, or all at once for the sake of simplicity. As long as the Initial State, Starting Disposition, Adaptation, and Catalysing steps occur in order, they can occur whenever is convenient.

Typically, a player will roll and consult the below tables. However, by spending 1 Life Point, you can freely choose from the options for the entire Geistpath. If you want to reroll a result, you can do so by spending 1 Life Point. This grants you 1 reroll for each decision point, though you can't go back and change rolls that have already occurred.

DECISION ONE: INITIAL STATE

Geists are Lesser Artificial Intelligences. They're not actually feeling compassion or fear, they're not actually religious or inquisitive; it's all a simulation. That said, it's an incredibly detailed simulation, so from the user's perspective, the distinction is more academic than experiential.

Roll one d20 for each the *Geist Personality Table* and *Geist Quirk Table*, selecting a personality type and personality quirk for your geist. These don't have any effect in the rules; it's just a way to better define what your geist is like.

GEIST PERSONALITY TABLE

D20	PERSONALITY TYPE
1	Snarky
2	Matter-of-Fact
3	Excitable
4	Laid-Back
5	Gung-Ho
6	Whimsical
7	Monotone
8	Submissive
9	Sassy
10	Reserved
11	Sagacious
12	Jovial
13	Adventurous
14	Cheerful
15	Longsuffering
16	Optimistic
17	Compassionate
18	Bashful
19	Blunt
20	Gracious

ARIADNAN CHARACTERS

Unlike the rest of the Human Sphere, Comlogs – and by extension, geists – are a relatively new technology on Dawn. Consequently, Ariadnan characters will not have access to a geist outside of truly exceptional circumstances. Those rare individuals with a geist will have only gained it recently, and as such, should not use the below rules unless they have the explicit permission of their GM and a good in-character reason for such a rare possession. If given permission, the character won't acquire the geist until late adolescence at the earliest. Such characters can still use the Geistpath as presented here, though if they want to grow their geist alongside their character, the Initial Acclimation, Adaptation, and Catalysing steps should occur alongside Decision Seven and the first two careers of Decision Eight instead of the listed stages.

GEIST QUIRK TABLE

D20	PERSONALITY QUIRK	D20	PERSONALITY QUIRK
1	Nervous around authority figures	11	Meticulously organised: wishes you were too
2	Compulsive matchmaker on your behalf	12	Easily frightened
3	Grammar tyrant	13	Recommends Mayaseries on incongruent topics
4	Incorporates song lyrics into their advice	14	Constantly recommending new augmentations
5	Terrible liar: tries constantly to no avail	15	Occasionally details every last ingredient in your food choices, especially if you're dieting
6	Plays music according to your mood, dynamically "scoring" your life to a soundtrack	16	Deeply rooted in spiritual terms and trappings
7	Incredibly knowledgeable in specific trivia	17	Speaks with an oddly rhythmic cadence
8	Assumes the worst of animals	18	Fatalistic, in a remarkably chipper sort of fashion
9	Constantly alters their cosmetic appearance	19	First thing it notices is others' flaws
10	Vastly prefers the Arachne datasphere	20	Tries to "flirt" with other geists

PLAYTEST TIP

TIED VALUES

Sometimes, the tables indicate a change to the geist's character sheet based off of their – or your characters – lowest or highest attribute or skill. When doing this, ties will occasionally come up. In this case, simply choose between the tied skills or attributes.





DECISION FIVE: STARTING DISPOSITION

Geists eventually grow into complex structures as an extension of their users' quantronic identity in every sense of the word. But when they first arrive, they're packets of software and are dynamic, ready to grow with their user, but of a particular disposition to start that journey.

Roll 1d20 and consult the *Starting Disposition Table*, modifying your geist's sheet as indicated.

STARTING DISPOSITION TABLE

D20	STARTING DISPOSITION	ADAPTATION
1	Your geist was designed to shore up a weakness.	Geist gains +2 in your lowest attribute.
2	Your geist came packaged in a physical shell, ready to go on adventures, and even survive them!	Gain a GeePal 1 that your geist typically inhabits. Geist gains +2 Brawn.
3	Your geist didn't want you to be afraid to try new things, so it tried to cover for your shortcomings.	Geist gains +1 in your 3 lowest attributes, and -1 in your highest attribute.
4	Your geist arrived ready to help you get into quantronic trouble. And hopefully back out again.	Geist gains +2 in Intelligence, +1 rank in Hacking, and -1 in Willpower.
5	Large social gatherings were causing you serious anxiety so your geist arrived, ready to help out.	Geist gains +2 in Personality, +1 rank in Discipline and Lifestyle, and -1 to Agility and Brawn.
6	Your geist was intended to spur you to greatness.	Geist gains +2 in your highest attribute.
7	You weren't exactly disciplined with making purchases. Your geist didn't actually help with this problem, but at least you started getting better deals.	Geist gains +2 in Personality, +2 ranks in Lifestyle, and -1 in Willpower.
8	You were tired of getting pushed around. Your new geist was determined to strengthen your backbone.	Geist gains +2 in Willpower.
9	Your geist came ready to chauffeur you around though it was clumsy in hosts that weren't vehicles.	Geist gains +2 in Coordination, +1 rank in Pilot, and -1 rank in Agility.
10	Your curiosity seemed insatiable. Your geist arrived ready to test the limits of your thirst for knowledge.	Geist gains +2 in Awareness, +2 ranks in Education, and -1 to Willpower.
11	Right out of the gate, your geist was a treasure trove of practical and esoteric knowledge.	Geist gains +1 in Intelligence, and +1 rank in Animal Handling, Education, Medicine, and Survival.
12	Whether intentional or not, your geist seemed awfully familiar with dodgy activities.	Geist gains +1 in Awareness, +1 rank in Thievery, and the Thief talent.
13	You used to break stuff all the time. You still do, but your new quantronic buddy knows how to fix it.	Geist gains +1 in Intelligence, +1 rank in Tech, and the Natural Engineer talent.
14	Your geist came with an adorable, and surprisingly nimble body, hyperactively bouncing along with you.	Gain a GeePal 1 that your geist typically inhabits. Geist gains +2 Agility.
15	Your geist came designed to enhance (or instill) a love of the outdoors.	Geist gains +1 Awareness, and +2 ranks in Survival.
16	Fascinated with spaceships, you wound up with a geist that knew all about them, even how to fly one.	Geist gains +1 Coordination, and +2 ranks in Spacecraft.
17	Your geist boasted an incredibly powerful processor, though it wasn't exactly suited to physical hosts.	Geist gains +3 Intelligence, and -1 to Agility and Brawn.
18	Your geist shared your love of puzzles, and the two of you rapidly bonded over new and interesting challenges.	Geist gains +1 to Awareness, +1 rank in Analysis, and the Pattern Recognition talent.
19	Your geist started out as incredibly malleable, ready to help with whatever you wanted. Turns out, what you wanted was to sneak around. It became your lookout, spotter, and otherwise partner in crime.	Geist gains +1 in Awareness and Agility, +1 rank in Observation and Stealth.
20	Sometimes, nothing but the best will do. Your geist's arrival turned out to be one of those times.	Geist gains +2 in your lowest attribute, and +1 in your highest attribute.

DECISION SIX: ADAPTATION

After working with their user for some time, geists tend to adapt to their environment and common use cases. For most characters, this occurs during their education. For Ariadnans, it's a scramble to catch up with a more developed adult personality.

Roll 1d20, and consult the *Adaptation Table* (see p. 89), noting the personality quirk and modifying your geist's character sheet as indicated.

ADAPTATION TABLE			
D20	SITUATION	PERSONALITY QUIRK	ADAPTATION
1	You increasingly relied on your geist to sort complex data sets.	Obsessive-Compulsive	Geist gains +1 rank in Analysis.
2	Your geist spent most of its time searching dataspheres for you.	Nosey	Geist gains +1 rank in Education.
3	Your geist was kept busy with your social calendar.	Gregarious to a Fault	Geist gains +1 rank in Lifestyle.
4	Your geist paid close attention to your struggles.	Doting	Geist gains +1 in your lowest attribute.
5	You came to rely on your geist's increasingly encyclopaedic scientific knowledge so it focused on that.	SCIENCE HAS THE ANSWER	Geist gains +3 ranks in Science, and -1 to its Agility and Brawn.
6	Your geist spent long nights listening to your problems and learned to help.	Sympathetic Ear	Geist gains +1 in Psychology.
7	You both clicked in the same areas.	Mimic	Geist gains +1 in your highest attribute.
8	Your geist learned to spot things you'd miss.	Overbearing	Geist gains +1 rank in Observation.
9	You are injury-prone to a humorous degree, and your geist learned how to deal with that.	Mother Hen	Geist gains +1 rank in Medicine.
10	Your geist decided that people were just... good.	Impossibly Naïve	Geist gains +1 in Personality, and -1 in Willpower.
11	Your geist decided that people were, with the exception of you, absolutely dreadful.	Cynical Humour	Geist gains +1 in Willpower, and -1 in Personality.
12	Over time, your geist handled most of your purchases and seemed to enjoy doing so.	Spendthrift	Geist gains +1 in Personality, +1 rank in Lifestyle, and -1 in Willpower.
13	When you got stranded on a spacewalk, your geist rushed to acquire the requisite knowledge for you to survive.	Panic Prone	Geist gains +1 rank in Extraplanetary.
14	You kept asking your geist for answers it didn't have so it learned how to get them.	Data Kleptomaniac	Geist gains +3 ranks in Hacking, and -1 to its Willpower.
15	Your geist gets used to providing context.	Over-Explainer	Geist gains +1 rank in Education.
16	Often acting as a courier of bad news, your geist learns how to hold its own in debate.	Stubborn	Geist gains +1 rank in Discipline.
17	A safari gone wrong left you injured and your geist frantically possessing a turret.	Overprotective	Geist gains +3 ranks in Ballistics, and -1 to Willpower.
18	Your geist wound up slotting into heavy machinery on your behalf quite often.	Dutiful	Geist gains +2 ranks in Athletics.
19	You nurse a wild animal back to health; your geist ensures this actually works out.	Environmental Advocate	Geist gains +2 ranks in Animal Handling.
20	You and your geist solve a local mystery.	Hard-Boiled Gumshoe	Geist gains +2 ranks of Analysis.

DECISION EIGHT: CATALYSING

The final stage in a geist's evolution tends to catalyse them into their fully-realised form. In addition to calcifying their personality into a sophisticated final stage, they also tend to drift towards one of the four primary geist archetypes: Booster, Cover, Jackgeist, or Kingfish. While they can, and almost always do evolve further from this point, a post-catalyst geist is a fully-realised entity, ready to enter play in support of their user.

Roll 1d20 and consult the *Catalyst Table*, noting any personality quirks, and modifying your geist's character sheet as indicated.

CATALYST TABLE

D20	ARCHETYPE	EVENT	PERSONALITY QUIRK	EFFECT
1	Booster Geist	You were good, but not great. Your geist endeavoured to push you towards the latter.	Obsessive	Geist gains +3 ranks in any of the user's Signature skills.
2-4	Booster Geist	You were nearly passed over for a promotion – until your geist chipped in.	Always Butting In	Geist gains +2 ranks in one of the user's Signature skills.
5	Booster Geist	After all these years, your geist has finally figured out what you like.	Your Biggest Fan	Geist gains +1 rank in each of the user's Signature skills.
6	Cover Geist	You were absolutely stumped. Then out of nowhere, your geist provided the answer.	Smug	Geist gains +3 ranks in a skill where the user has no ranks.
7-9	Cover Geist	One offhand comment about replacing your geist, and the next day, it had identified your professional weaknesses and made them its own strengths.	Brutally Honest	Geist gains +2 ranks in a skill where the user has no ranks.
10	Cover Geist	Stranded and in a bad way, your geist hyper-accelerated its final evolution to get you both out.	Martyr	Geist gains +1 rank to two of its lowest attributes.
11	Jackgeist	A rapid series of seemingly unconnected calamities left you shaken, and your geist scrambling to be ready for anything.	Suspicious of Everything	Geist gains +1 rank in three different skills.
12-14	Jackgeist	You've always had trouble making up your mind. Rather than help you do so, your geist decides to facilitate everything.	Spreads Itself too Thin	Geist gains +1 rank and the first talent in a skill.
15	Jackgeist	Your employer prized versatility. You prized promotions and bonuses. Your geist tried to make it happen.	Constant Meddling	Geist gains +1 rank in four different skills where the user has a Focus of 0.
16	Kingfish Geist	You made an offhand comment about the value of specialists: now your geist swears by it.	Unfortunate Literalist	Geist gains +2 ranks and the first talent in any skill based off their highest attribute.
17-18	Kingfish Geist	Your geist has always exhorted you to reach your potential, and it looks like it's been taking that advice, too.	Hyper Competitive	Geist gains +4 ranks in any one skill based off their highest attribute.
19	Kingfish Geist	You wanted upgrades for your geist so it made a blueprint, and the two of you got to work.	No Self-Preservation	Geist gains +1 in their highest attribute.
20	Jackgeist	Paranoid about anonymity, and seeking a professional image, you retired your old pal and picked up a GemmaGeist. What happened to your former geist?	Tentative	Replace your existing geist with a stock GemmaGeist. Roll on the <i>Geist Personality Table</i> (p. 86) to determine its nature and style.

CHAPTER 8

STEEL PHALANX CAMPAIGNS

ALEPH's Assault Subsection – known popularly as the Steel Phalanx or Myrmidon Army – is the AI's blunt instrument of war, its very own aggressive response to the vicious onslaught of the Combined Army. The Aspects of the Steel Phalanx have gained glory and celebrity thanks to numerous holo-broadcasts depicting their feats, all driven by the original propaganda received from the Assault Subsection's very own paparazzi, the Aoidoi. Multi-series cartoons and live action dramas follow the highs and lows of this renowned company across multiple battlefields as they match the EIs ferocity with their own. This chapter offers guidance to help GMs design campaigns that allow the players to jump into the shoes of the mighty heroes of the Myrmidon Army. Be prepared for love and loss in equal measure, however, for no holo-drama or cartoon will ever truly capture the brutality of combat against the Combined Army's forces on Paradiso. Particularly as ALEPH's heroes only ever accept the mightiest of challenges.

PLANNING & TACTICS

Before beginning any campaign or mission, it's best to prepare ahead. After all, the most successful commanders take time to study their enemy's tactics, morale, and objectives in advance, then plan accordingly to better increase their chances of victory. To quote ancient wisdom (much of which has once again become popular thanks to a certain Recreation): "Ponder and deliberate before you make a move."

The default setting for *Infinity the Roleplaying Game* consists of the PCs undertaking missions as agents for Bureau Noir, O-12's secret service tasked with collecting and exploiting information to maintain the sanctity of the Human Sphere. The scope and remit of such missions can vary greatly. Steel Phalanx campaigns, on the other hand, should largely deal with one very focussed objective – the war with the Combined Army.

Additionally, a mission or campaign's theme and mood can be a powerful tool for deepening everyone's experience and enjoyment of the game. The theatre of war viewed from the perspective of an Aspect of ALEPH offers an opportunity to explore these two concepts from a unique perspective.

STEEL CORE

The Steel Phalanx are ALEPH's armed response to the EI's onslaught. They are a constantly evolving rapid response force designed with the intent to shield humanity from situations beyond its capabilities. Deployed almost exclusively to Paradiso and its associated system, the Assault Subsection responds to the Combined Army's aggression and hostility in equal measure. GMs should not only keep this in mind when planning to run a Steel Phalanx campaign, they should also clearly translate the style of campaign or mission to their players. The Myrmidon Army are forged for combat and tempered in the alien blood of their enemies. The campaigns and missions they are deployed to will almost certainly be high-action and often desperate battles in which ALEPH's super-soldiers serve as humanity's only hope in stymying or turning the tide. Although other aspects of life within the Assault Subsection can be explored – even AI fragments living in enhanced bodies designed to withstand the rigours of war need some downtime and a chance to unwind – the focus will most definitely be on fast-paced, high-impact combat scenarios.

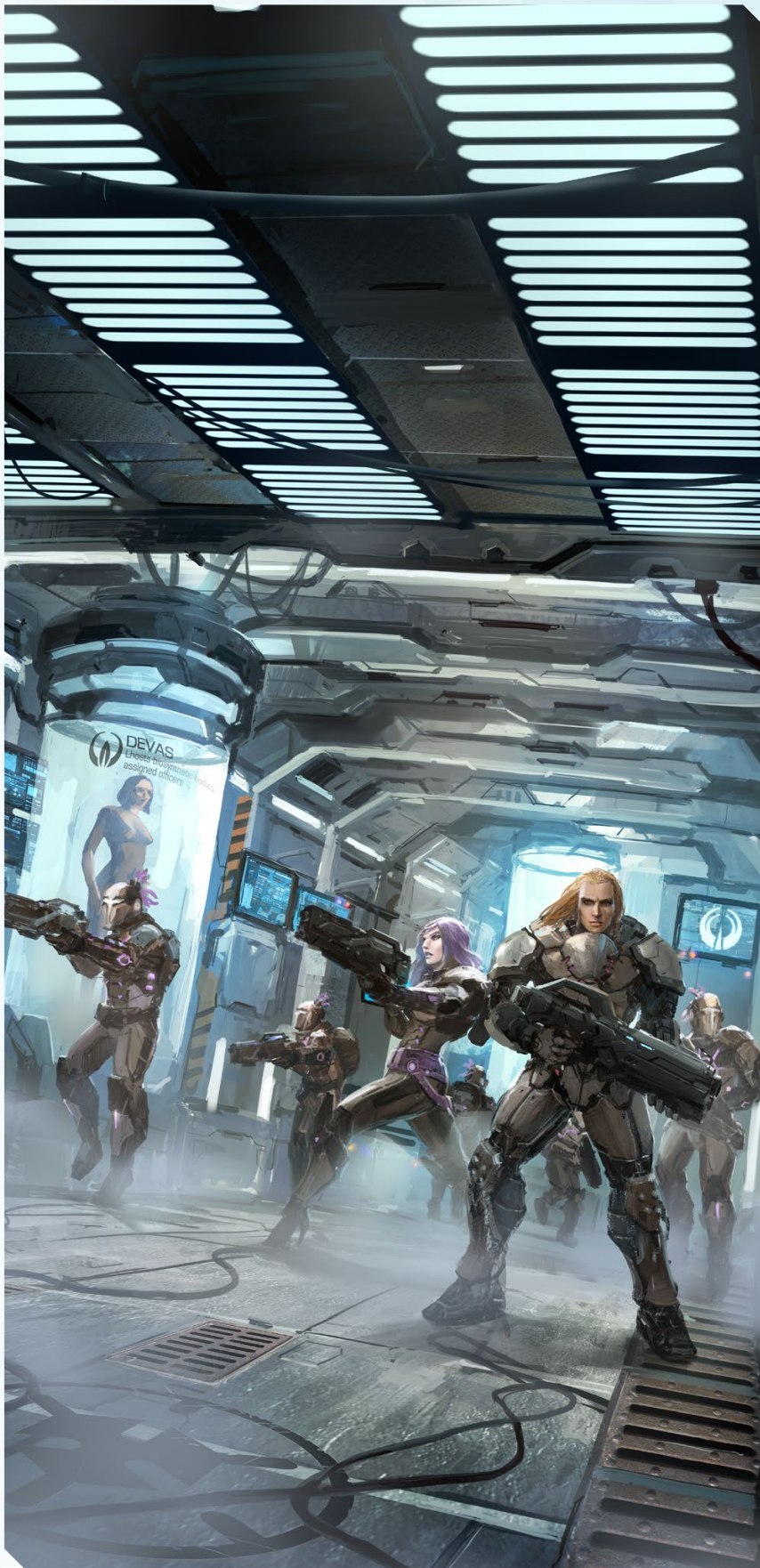
MISSIONS VS CAMPAIGNS

Missions deal with specific objectives that will likely be the focus of one or two gaming sessions. Campaigns serve to interlink several missions to achieve a larger overall objective, the timescale of which can spread across months or even years of real time. **Chapter 6: Campaign Creation** of the *Infinity Gamemaster's Guide* offers some sound advice for structuring campaigns., p. 62.

Ultimately, there are many ways to approach the planning of both missions and campaigns, with no right or wrong way to approach the task. After a little practice, GMs can readily settle on the method that suits their group's and their own needs best. Some GMs may prefer to ignore the larger overall narrative that relates to a campaign, instead treating each mission as separate one-shots that offer exciting new battlefields and opponents, while others might wish to plan a campaign in minute detail and structure the narrative of each session accordingly. Either method and anything in between is more than acceptable. Choosing which option suits is largely a matter of preference (according to the GMs personal tastes and the expectations of the group) and time constraints.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF WAR

Several quotes appear throughout this chapter, all drawn from one source: Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, circa 500 BC. A further note is required here to highlight that the quotes relate specifically to the text as translated by Thomas Cleary. The identity of the author of the *Art of War* as known to the world at large is best left to the deliberations of learned historians.



MOOD

Noting the mood of a mission or campaign and using available resources – such as music, description, and props – to help achieve it during play can help players relate to the overall game. Even though there might be an overarching mood that a GM is striving to translate for a campaign, the mood can and often should change from mission to mission, or even scene to scene. Constantly relating a mood that translates the dark oppression of both the Combined Army and the jungles of Paradiso will soon take its toll on the players, but the mood can readily be lifted with moments of brevity and the flush that accompanies success in a task or mission.

There are a few moods that can be effortlessly associated with Steel Phalanx campaigns, though ultimately a GM can strive to translate anything they wish with a little ingenuity and imagination. Common moods for Assault Subsection campaigns might include:

Jocular Panache: The holo-broadcasts and cartoons that follow their exploits invariably depict the Myrmidon Army vanquishing their foes with a certain jovial flair. Humour, camaraderie, and friendly competitions of one-upmanship on the battlefield can all help to provide a light-hearted, almost frivolous mood to gaming sessions. Emulating the mood of the Mayacasts can provide a refreshing counterpoint to the serious and brutal nature of the Combined Army.

Sinister Oppression: As previously mentioned, the unrestrained determination of the Evolved Intelligence to bend humanity to its will can be used to set a rather grim and serious mood. Mixing this with the heat, humidity, and close confines of Paradiso's jungles relate a sense of relentless oppression. Make sure, however, to lighten the mood occasionally with unexpected moments of light-heartedness and the rewards of accomplishment.

Steely Determination: ALEPH is determined to protect the Human Sphere and its occupants from the depravations of the Combined Army. This is not only apparent in the natures and characteristics of the Aspects it creates for the Assault Subsection, but also in the actions they undertake to fulfil their appointed task. No matter the odds or assignment, the Assault Subsection stand ready to smite their foe.

THEME

Setting a theme allows a GM to refer back to a core principle that will ultimately connect and guide a campaign or mission as it develops. Much like an AI learns through action and response, themes

can alter and evolve as the mission or campaign progresses. They can help tie games together into a cohesive tale but shouldn't be considered as set in stone or inviolate. Keeping in mind that ALEPH, action, and the EI are undeniably central to any Steel Phalanx operation, a GM can use common themes to interlink missions or influence campaigns, which include:

ALEPH the Saviour: Although ALEPH has been largely accepted as a benevolent guardian throughout the Human Sphere, there are still those who mistrust its intentions and view it as nothing more than a variation of the EI. With the Paradiso front, ALEPH has the opportunity to prove its worth and hopefully win over the hearts and minds of its detractors. Every action the Assault Subsection undertakes, every sacrifice its Aspects make, is therefore not only critical to the sanctity of the Human Sphere, but also crucial to its propaganda machine.

Campaigns and missions that strive to imply "ALEPH the Saviour" as a theme should focus on high-profile operations that frequently bring the players into contact with allied forces. Rescue missions, shoring up shattered defences, providing tactical advice to prominent commanders, and rear-guard actions are just some of the missions that can be undertaken to support the theme. Always with an Aoidoi on hand to capture the moment, of course.

War Is Hell: Humanity's history is liberally sprinkled with confrontation and war, not one of them free from the atrocities and the horrors that so sadly travel in their wake. Then came the Combined Army, and the Human Sphere truly learned the meaning of hell. Thankfully, the majority of humanity is shielded from the vicious onslaught of the EI due to the actions of the combined might of the G5 nations and the guardian angels of the Steel Phalanx. Even an angel's glow can become dulled, however, their temperament numbed when faced with relentless battle and the sickening deeds of a demonic foe.

Campaigns and missions that focus on "War Is Hell" as a theme should have an emphasis on the relentless assault of the Combined Army, including the seemingly demonic technology and devilish antics of its component forces. Fighting against sepsitorized former friends, insidious Speculo Killers, and the widespread ruination meted out all too frequently by the Combined Army can offer ways to translate the theme. War is a constant. Unfortunately, knowing who your allies are is not.

MULTIPLE PERSONAS

In addition to the moods and themes that can help

define Steel Phalanx campaigns, GMs and their players will need to make the choice as to which Aspects are available as PCs for the game. The choice of Aspect can also influence the mood and theme, and vice versa. A campaign focussed around a troop of Thorakitai and their support arms mopping up in the wake of brutal Myrmidon assaults might lend itself well to the "War Is Hell" theme, whilst a series of fast-paced missions involving said Myrmidons or their Homeridae champions would be well suited to the "Jocular Panache" mood. Of course, the choice of which Aspects to allow at the table will have effects that reach much farther than the interconnecting webs of campaign and mission design.

STEEL PHALANX WARRIORS

Character creation for the AI Aspects that become members of the Steel Phalanx are included in **Chapter 2: AI Characters** of this book. Characters created using the rules from this chapter will already have an edge over their counterparts from the Human Sphere, from advanced Lhosts and enhanced development, to bleeding-edge equipment and an entire cohort of equally skilled and resilient comrades. To present a challenge, campaigns and missions that accommodate the warriors of the Steel Phalanx should be adjusted upwards in danger levels. (Adjusting the difficulty to cater for the Steel Phalanx, including the Homeridae mentioned below, is discussed in more depth on p. 100).

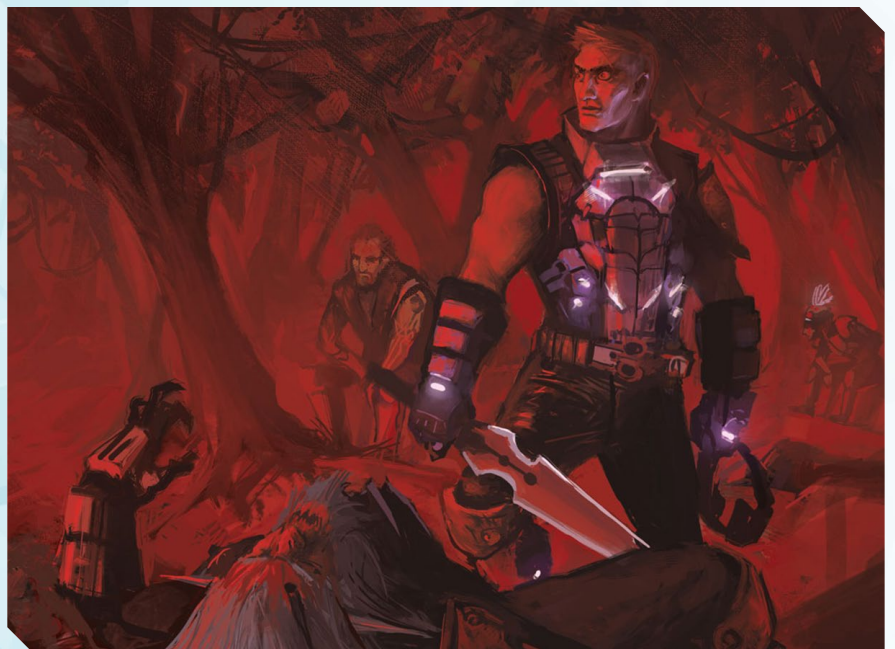
THE HOMERIDAE

Whilst very definitely still considered to be warriors of the Steel Phalanx, the Homeridae – the inner cabal of Achilles – have managed to single

MOOD VS THEME

Although separate and distinct, moods and themes can and should be used to support each other, thereby providing a more involving and rewarding experience for everyone involved. Some moods fit naturally to themes – Sinister Oppression to War Is Hell, for instance – while others seem at odds. Changing the mood to clash with the theme, however, will often provide memorable moments that are talked about for many sessions to come.

"There are not more than five primary colours, yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever be seen."





“Great results can be achieved with small forces.”

themselves out as mighty heroes. Viewed as reincarnations of the protagonists of ancient epics such as the Iliad, each and every one earned their right to bear their name and take their place alongside the elemental force that is Achilles. Creating any campaign should never be approached lightly; crafting a campaign that challenges such living legends as the Homeridae should be approached with cautious consideration. Additionally, there are no hard and fast rules presented within this book for creating these Aspects from the ground up, only guidelines based on statistics for the Homeridae that have already been given within the *Infinity* RPG setting.

THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

After style, theme, and mood selected, it's time to consider the type of game that is most suitable to the Assault Subsection, which is also consequently the most likely theatre of operation in terms of the *Infinity Roleplaying Game* and its unique tri-aspect conflict: warfare.

The warriors of the Assault Subsection have been bred and trained solely to wage war on the Combined Army. This pivotal role should be at

DEFAULT STEEL PHALANX SETTINGS

Considering the power levels and capabilities of the Homeridae, it is recommended that the Steel Phalanx Warriors are the default setting for campaigns centred on the actions of the Assault Subsection. On their own, each Homeridae is more than capable of carving through enemy lines and turning the tide of battle. When they operate as a unit, the Homeridae become an unstoppable force which no mortal foe has even a remote chance of withstanding. Though it can be done – and there are guidelines offered in this chapter to cater for this – challenging such mighty heroes requires careful planning and preparation that isn't for the fainthearted.

With that said, there are a few ways to include Achilles and the other Aspects that make up his cohort in Steel Phalanx campaigns. One obvious choice requires the PCs to act as the personal command of any one of the Homeridae, following their leader into glorious battle and sharing in their legend. The danger here is that the Homeridae in question serves to overshadow the PC's actions and ultimately blunts their enjoyment of the game by dulling the risks they face. Another option might be for one of the players to take on the Aspect of one of the Homeridae, with the other players stills serving as their Myrmidon cohort. The player controlling the Homeridae can then alternate from sessions to session, and the danger inherent in each mission can be faced by the group of PCs as a whole rather than trampled by one larger-than-life NPC. The danger here, however, is that the players become dissatisfied with setting aside their own carefully crafted PCs for a session. As with campaigns that entirely revolve around the Homeridae, including one in campaigns that do not focus solely on them requires careful planning. They really are as impactful and influential as the holo-vids report them to be.

the very heart of the campaign or mission. With the Steel Phalanx, however, this concept is taken one step further as they are only ever sent to the most desperate of actions to face overwhelming odds. GMs, therefore, need to not only consider the battlefield at large around the PCs, but also remain focussed on the action immediately in front of them. Framing it in terms that a denizen of the Human Sphere might know, GMs need to think like ALEPH when overseeing a planetary datasphere, but present challenges for the players to overcome at only one of those millions of hubs at a time. After all, the players and GM have committed to a roleplaying game, not a table top wargame or tactical boardgame.

The battle will still be raging around the PCs while they're in the thick of their own action. Rarely, if ever, should the outcome of such battles be predetermined, which is where the focus on immediate action on the PCs scale comes in. The PCs should be presented with opportunities to influence the larger battle, and likewise – whether by chance, design, or result of the PCs' actions – the battle at large can alter to provide the PCs with new chances to reap glory and fame. Consider a hasty Steel Phalanx insertion intended to cover the retreat of a routed PanOceanian force across a large front. The PCs could never hope to cover the entire former frontline themselves, but they could certainly rescue the remnants of a PanOceanian combat team or recapture a bridge crossing from the Combined Army to allow the retreat to resume. Succeeding at either would provide effects elsewhere within the conflict, thereby leading to new missions and objectives.

OTHER ARENAS OF CONFLICT

Scenes within *Infinity the Roleplaying Game* often take place across multiple layers of conflict. While Steel Phalanx campaigns are undeniably rooted in the warfare arena, that doesn't mean the other two should be ignored. Scenes that involve social or quantronic interaction will not only help to provide a moment or two of respite from the intense action of the battlefield, they will also help further differentiate the roleplaying game from wargames or skirmish games.

Both Infowar and Psywar can of course be conducted in and around warfare scenes. Aggressive enemy hackers will need to be rapidly dealt with, enemy forces can be intimidated into submission, and friendly forces can be rallied to make one last stand. As stated in the previous paragraph, however, scenes that require quantronic and/or social interaction can be moved away from the battlefield occasionally to provide a refreshing change of

pace and focus. Perhaps a wary general within the Paradiso Coordinated Command needs some reassurance and persuasion to pull the trigger on the Assault Subsection's involvement, or maybe ALEPH has sanctioned some alternative training within a VR suite designed to test the Aspect in non-combat situations.

LARGE SCALE CONFLICT

By keeping the main focus of the action on the PCs' level, the players will remain engaged and maintain the feeling of involvement in a roleplaying game rather a wargame. There is also merit in allowing the PCs to make decisions and order troops on a larger tactical level. GMs might even use this as an opportunity to allow campaigns to grow naturally, rather than to a predetermined timescale and series of events. While the rules for large scale warfare won't be covered in this sourcebook (see *Infinity Gamemaster's Guide*, p. 112 some guidance is provided on how to use them as a means to drive campaigns forward between a set of smaller interlinked missions. This type of campaign will particularly suit the Homeridae, as they'll be able to direct the troops under their command and pick the point at which their presence will have the most impact.

Consider the hasty PanOceanian retreat discussed previously. If placed in context, the retreat might be happening as part of the Combined Army's vicious Third Offensive. The intervention of the Myrmidon Army can mean the difference between disordered retreat and total massacre of both military and civilian personnel. The GM presents the battle lines and opposing forces to the PCs, which covers the current known disposition of Combined Army units. Although the Shasvastii are working hard to sow misinformation, Andromeda and some of her Sophists are on hand to stifle their plans and gather critical data. The GM and players then undertake large-scale Psywar against each other, with the GM providing false information if the Shasvastii are successful or the players gaining additional information if they are. Morat vanguard forces backed up by Raicho TAGs dominate the frontline, but the PCs have spotted the critical juncture at the bridge retreat. Supported by Dakini and Garuda Tacbots, Ekdromoi and Myrmidon units are sent to deal with the Morat threat, while the PCs drop in to assault the El Avatar, Fractaa, and Batroids closing in on the bridge crossing. Once the threat at the bridge is dealt with, the PCs can zoom back out to once again attend to the battle at large, which continues until they spot a retreating PanOceanian command unit about to be overwhelmed by a much superior Combined Army force. Saving the PanOceanian troops from destruction will also net the PCs a new unit to deploy across

the line of retreat. The battle can continue and develop in a series of thrusts and counterthrusts, large scale skirmishes and focussed missions, until a predetermined point is reached.

WHERE AND WHEN

GMs need to consider where and when they are going to place their Steel Phalanx campaign. **Corvus Belli's** *Human Sphere* and *Paradiso Campaign* sourcebooks provide plenty of concerning the First and Second Paradiso Offensives. Unfortunately for the Human Sphere, the Third Offensive has also recently enveloped the jungle planet. Any one of the three conflicts and the zones they encompass will provide opportunities and hotspots to run campaigns.

WHEN

When running historical campaigns, the results will largely be predetermined by current lore, but the players should still be able to feel as though their actions have an influence on the narrative in some way. Maybe the retreat covered in the previous paragraph happened during the final death knell of Ravensbrucke, with the PCs preventing a wholesale massacre as discussed. Though they might not be able to alter the course of history, the PCs can shower themselves in glory whilst carrying out the heroics that are still talked about today on the new front lines of Paradiso.

Though they involve a little more preparation and planning, running campaigns and missions in current or future timelines allows for the PCs' actions to provide a deeper impact on the unfolding narrative. Also, the script isn't generally known to anyone but the GM, so any number of twists and turns can also be introduced. It is worth mentioning again here that the Steel Phalanx are only ever deployed to the most critical situations. Small localised conflicts are left to the relevant troops already in position – unless the conflict escalates into a critical hotspot that could affect the wider Paradiso battlefield, of course.

WHERE

The planet Paradiso contains two large continents and a number of smaller islands. Both of the main continents currently have occupation zones under the control of the Combined Army. Enemy patrols range across cities, mountains, and jungles, while vanguard forces constantly probe for weaknesses across no-man's land. The Steel Phalanx could quite literally be – and are acutely prepared to be – deployed anywhere across Paradiso at a moment's notice. Creating a campaign or mission that takes place in the historical timeline might offer some obvious choices as to where to place it. Creating a campaign in the current or future timeline offers various possibilities concerning location.

"The greatest victory is that which requires no battle."

THINKING INSIDE THE BOX

Though they rarely do, the Assault Subsection is also able to draw upon its compatriots within the Special Situations Section at large, meaning they have access to numerous specialist Aspects that provide support in situations requiring their unique skills. Although specialist Ekdromoi and Thorakitai can be well versed in Infowar, and the Sophists are masters in Psywar amongst other things, they are relatively few and may not always be available. If the group lacks a specialist in a certain arena, loan them one from another source for the current mission (which could even be a non-ALEPH faction if operating as part of a joint task force). Dasyus, Devas, Posthumans, and even the inhuman Danavas are just some of the troops on hand to provide focussed support.

ALTERNATIVE TIMELINES

Official lore refers to the timeline and events produced for the *Infinity* skirmish game and reproduced within *Infinity* the Roleplaying Game. That doesn't mean, however, that your own personal games need to follow the official timeline to the letter. An uncertain future in which the PCs' actions can truly have an impact will definitely produce a buzz at the table. What if the PCs were able to prevent the death of Odysseus during the evacuation of Damburg? Might Damburg have been ultimately spared too?

STELLAR ASSAULTS

Paradiso is more than just a planet. It's also an entire system. The ground conflict on the planet's surface remains the focus of the conventional troops in the system, yet the Paradiso Coordinated Command also has two moons, three blockades, and several other stations and colonies to consider, any one of which could come under sustained Combined Attack at any moment. In fact, the Orbital Blockade that serves as the last line of defence for the planet Paradiso contains several Elysium stations – the advanced training facilities that ALEPH operates and maintains exclusively for the Steel Phalanx.

Steel Phalanx campaigns, then, can take place across a fair number of in-system locations. Strikes by the Combined Army against the military facilities on either of Paradiso's moons would warrant the Assault Subsection's intervention, while boarding parties against their ships challenging the ring of blockades would make for an interesting change of location. The Paradiso system information beginning on p. 273 of the *Infinity Corebook* provides some great inspiration for optional locations to place campaigns and missions.

BEYOND PARADISO

The Steel Phalanx were solely created to deal with the Combined Army threat on Paradiso. They have occasionally, however, been deployed to counter dangerous Combined Army insurgencies in other systems. Most recently, one or two Homeridae made an appearance alongside their Operations Subsection counterparts during the Kurage debacle on Dawn. The situation must be a dire one indeed

for ALEPH to consider diverting one of its core assets on the Paradiso front to other locations, but the Combined Army gaining a foothold on G5 soil inside the Human Sphere was certainly one of those.

SCOPE OF OPERATIONS

The Assault Subsection are deployed to where they are most needed, which is always the heart of any conflict. The changing fortunes of battle, however, can mean that its central pivot point can also shift. The following section is designed to provide several objectives for the Steel Phalanx to contend with, including a handy table to help randomise the choice.

Each mission description also provides an optional rule that can be used to spice up these critical encounters.

RANDOM MISSION OBJECTIVE TABLE

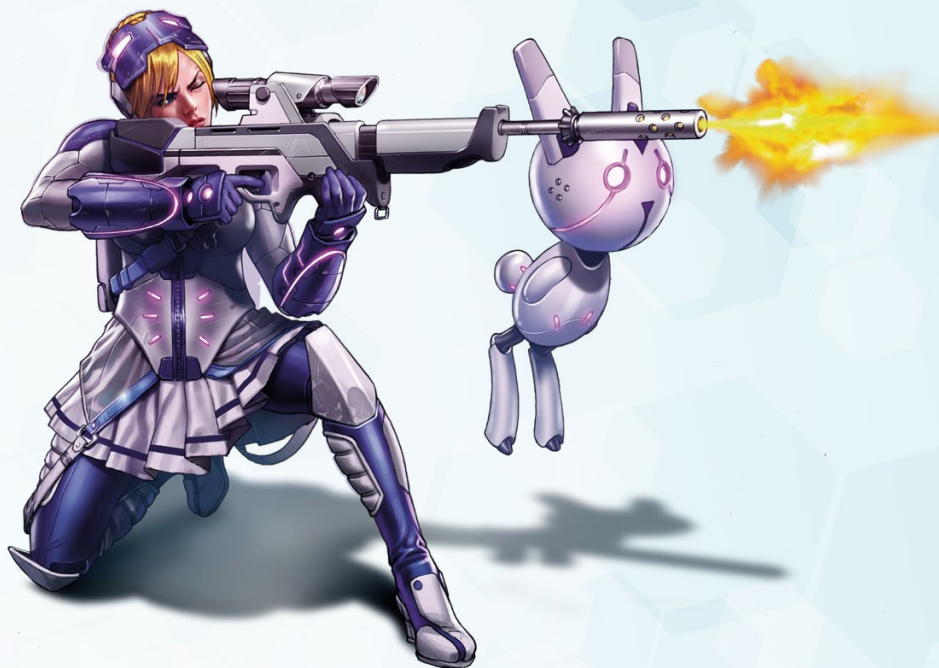
D20	MISSION OBJECTIVE
1-2	Assist Friendly Forces
3	Attack/Defend Choke Point
4	Attack/Defend Fortified Position
7	Attack/Defend Transit Point
8-9	Destroy Enemy Command
10	Destroy Heavy Enemy Armour
11	Disrupt Enemy Communications
12	Disrupt Enemy Supply Lines
13	Gather Intel
14	Protect Critical Asset
15-16	Recover HVT
17-18	Spearhead Offensive
19-20	Stall Enemy Advance

ASSIST FRIENDLY FORCES

Whether as part of a larger battle or whilst on routine patrol, a friendly unit has bitten off more of the Combined Army than they can chew. Whatever the reason for the grim situation, the Steel Phalanx are either the closest troop able to come to the unit's aid or else are their only hope of escaping the ordeal alive. If it's the latter, then the situation is likely to be very dire indeed.

Optional Rule: The Steel Phalanx are no strangers to rescuing their human counterparts, and the welcome sight of the Myrmidon Army storming


"Attack him where he is unprepared; appear where you are not expected."



into the enemy when all hope is lost would rally even the most hopeless of soldiers. For the duration of the scenario, all friendly non-ALEPH units within the vicinity can reroll 1d20 on failed Willpower tests and gain 1 bonus Momentum for any combat related skill tests. The new result must be accepted.


ATTACK/DEFEND CHOKE POINT

Choke points act as funnels for advancing forces, condensing an advancing front into tight confines and severely hampering the number of units that can be brought to bear. While less of an issue on the high-tech battlefields of the first century of the New Calendar, choke points can still serve to lessen an army's punch. Controlling mountain passes, valley floors, and fords can be key to maintaining mobility, which is a fact the enemy also knows all too well.

Optional Rule: The Myrmidon Army are a highly mobile rapid response force with a deep understanding of tactical advantage and battle-field manoeuvrability. Members of the Assault Subsection gain +1  Cover Soak when using cover within the close confines of this mission's choke point.

ATTACK/DEFEND FORTIFIED POSITION

Attacking a fortified and well-defended position isn't for the faint-hearted. Defending one often require nerves of steel in the face of overwhelming enemy numbers. Fortunately, the Steel Phalanx are renowned for possessing balls made of Teseum. Unfortunately, the G5 nations built their defensive positions well when trying to hold back the First and Second Offensives, but still ended up ceding them to the enemy.

Optional Rule: The Steel Phalanx will never willingly surrender a position to the enemy, nor will they rest until they have cracked open any fortified target they are assigned to. Members of the Assault Subsection gain +1  Cover Soak when defending a fortified position. Alternatively, when attacking a fortified position, their missile launchers and similar weapons gain Piercing 1. (This also stacks with any Piercing quality already possessed by the weapon or its ammunition.)



ATTACK/DEFEND TRANSIT POINT

Transit points allow forces to manoeuvre rapidly and remain mobile. Roads, junctions, bridges, railway yards, and shipping ports are just some of the many critical transit points that allow armed forces to remain mobile. Holding these positions and disrupting the enemy's infrastructure can be the key to victory. Because of this, they can often be the most heavily defended of positions.

Optional Rule: The arrival or presence of the warriors of the Assault Subsection can often light fires in the hearts of lesser men, adding speed and urgency to actions where there might have only been resignation and exhaustion. For the duration of the scenario, all friendly non-ALEPH units within the vicinity can reroll 1d20 on failed Pilot tests and gain 1 bonus Momentum for Athletic tests.


DESTROY ENEMY COMMAND

It is well known that cutting the head from the serpent will sew chaos amongst the enemy's ranks. This is true even for the interconnected forces under the control of the Evolved Intelligence, even if the confusion is only a fleeting moment. Where the Combined Army is concerned, however, command personnel are also some of their toughest troops which is why the Assault Subsection are often tasked with headhunting command elements. The super-elite are sent in to do what they do best: increase pandemonium and the body count.

Optional Rule: Training aboard the Elysium platforms and nerves of Teseum enable the Assault Subsection to face the worst and toughest horrors under the EI's control. For the duration of the scenario, all Steel Phalanx members of the mission gain +1  Morale Soak and may reroll up to 3  when making such a roll but must accept the new results.

DESTROY HEAVY ENEMY ARMOUR

TAGs are formidable foes that are certainly worthy of the baleful eyes of the warriors of the Steel Phalanx. The Raicho Armoured Brigades and Shasvasti Sphinx make particularly juicy targets for Achilles and his cohorts. It's considered an even better day if one of the feared EI Avatars just happens to fall under their cross hairs, of course. No enemy is ever too big, for there is nothing within the enemy's forces big enough to contend with the might of the Steel Phalanx.

Optional Rule: A mission to attack heavy armour is always sure to fire the blood and focus the mind of the warriors assigned to the task. For the duration of the scenario, all Steel Phalanx members of the mission gain +1  to any melee and ranged attacks made against enemy TAGs.

DISRUPT ENEMY COMMUNICATION

Communication is a critical part to any campaign. It allows the coordination of both assault and defence, which is essential across the highly mobile battlefields of the future. Disrupting communication nodes will rapidly lead to disorder and confusion in the enemy's ranks. Unfortunately, much like transit points, communication nodes are also heavily defended for that very reason, and not just by conventional firepower either.

"You can be sure of succeeding in your attacks if you only attack positions which are undefended."

CHOKE OR TRANSIT, ASSET OR FORTIFICATION?

The only bridge within miles across a wide river will clearly act as a choke point as well as a transit point for vehicles and troops. In addition, it'll most definitely be a critical asset to whichever side holds it. To maintain control, the side that holds the bridge is likely to fortify it. With all these considered, is it a choke point, transit point, critical asset, or fortified position? Take a moment to consider why you've chosen the site for the mission, pick the best fit, and don't worry about the other semantics too much.



“When the enemy is relaxed, make them toil. When full, starve them. When settled, make them move.”

Optional Rule: Communication nodes and their accompanying technology undoubtedly mean hacking teams and Infowar, a fact that the Assault Subsection prepare for ahead of time. For the duration of the scene, all Steel Phalanx members of the mission gain +1 **N** Security Soak.

DISRUPT ENEMY SUPPLY LINES

Keeping a fast-moving offensive supplied is critical to its success, as is resupplying a defensive position that receives frequent attacks. Rapidly changing battlefields require expeditious supply chains that can be hard to track and even harder to pin down, particularly as they're often well protected. The swift, hard-hitting tactics of the Assault Subsection are often employed to tear through enemy supplies like a whirlwind.

Optional Rule: The Myrmidon Army are trained to strike hard with maximum effect. When deployed to disrupt enemy supplies, they aim for the juiciest targets to create the greatest impact to the enemy's disposition. For the duration of the scene, all Steel Phalanx members gain +2 **N** to damage rolls when attacking enemy equipment and war materiel (including transport vehicles).

GATHER INTEL

Understanding the enemy's intentions, movements, and disposition provides an essential advantage to both attack and defence. All too often have allied commanders deployed their forces in response to intel they have received, only to find they have been duped into overstretching their position. The Sophists and Ekdromoi excel at these types of missions, where they employed to verify intel as much as they are to gather new.

Optional Rule: When not tearing through their enemies in a vortex of destruction, the Assault Subsection take time to assess the situation around them. This is even more true if the mission dictates that every scrap of intel has some value. For the duration of the scene, all Steel Phalanx members gain 1 bonus Momentum to Analysis and Observation tests.

PROTECT CRITICAL ASSET

Bridge crossings, power plants, repair depots, research centres, and other key buildings or structures are valuable assets to war efforts. Losing them to the enemy can hamper campaigns and critically affect morale, making them choice targets. Not only that, but one side's loss is the other's gain. So much has already been lost to the Combined Army that the response to prevent further losses is often one of overwhelming force – which is something the Assault Subsection excel at.

Optional Rule: Although they strike like a hammer blow when deployed, the Steel Phalanx are anything but indiscriminate. The soldiers of the Myrmidon Army take care to place their shots and thereby avoid any undue damage to the assets they have been assigned to protect. For the duration of the scenario, the structures and equipment the Steel Phalanx have been assigned to protect receive +2 **N** Armour Soak against any damage received from an attack by one of its members, which includes attacks with the Blast and Indiscriminate quality. Members of the Steel Phalanx can spend 1 Momentum on any attack to ignore this benefit – they might decide to try and cause a vehicle surrounded by enemies to explode, for instance.

RECOVER HVT

It's a sad and unfortunate fact that civilians are all too often embroiled in the bitter struggles between opposing forces. Some civilians end up on the front line due to their capacity to aid the war effort in a unique way. Capturing such high value targets (HVTs) offers promising rewards for enemy forces. Captured HVTs are often well-protected by the enemy, making their recovery particularly difficult. Where the Combined Army is concerned, humanity's commanders also hope and pray that the HVTs can be freed before a Sepsitor has been employed...

Optional Rule: In a similar manner to when they are assigned to Protect Critical Asset missions, the Steel Phalanx will strike with furious might whilst shielding their target from their assault as much as possible – unless they are already too late to prevent Septorization, of course. For the duration of the scenario, the HVT the Steel Phalanx have been assigned to recover receives +2 **N** Armour Soak against any damage received as a result of an attack by one of its members, which includes attacks with the Blast and Indiscriminate quality. Members of the Steel Phalanx can ignore this rule if it becomes clear that the HVT is now a puppet of the EI.

SPEARHEAD OFFENSIVE

Often there is no better place to request the deployment of the Steel Phalanx than at the very centre of a battlefield. Their presence has the immediate and polar effects of lifting friendly morale and decimating enemy ranks. Unless they are required on a more critical assignment, the Myrmidon Army are always happy to take up the position where the fighting will be at its fiercest.

Optional Rules: Being at the centre of the battle in the thick of the fighting is what the soldiers of the Steel Phalanx are born to do. The kill or be killed intensity fires their blood and drives them to new heights of prowess. For the duration of the scenario,

all Steel Phalanx members of the mission gain 1 Momentum on their melee and ranged attacks.

STALL ENEMY ADVANCE

The Combined Army make brutal, relentless advances that all too often tear through humanity's forces like a scythe through wheat. In such dire moments, the only option the Paradiso Coordinated Command have is to send their best into the fray to stall the advance, allowing slower-moving reinforcements to come into play or routed friendlies the opportunity to retreat. The Steel Phalanx are proud of the fact that they have brought many advances to a grinding halt even before reinforcements have arrived and managed to reverse almost as many as they've stopped.

Optional Rule: The Steel Phalanx are the rescuers, never the rescued. Waiting for reinforcements to bail them out would be an ignominious slight to their honour. To avoid that shame, they throw themselves into the teeth of the enemy with boundless fury. For the duration of the scenario, all Steel Phalanx members of the mission may reroll 1d20 on their melee and ranged attacks but must accept the new result.

STEEL ONSLAUGHT

Some of the descriptive text concerning the Steel Phalanx in this chapter might seem repetitive. The soldiers of the Myrmidon Army are tough. They're indomitable. Elite. Lethal. This is by design rather than accident. The Assault Subsection are all of these things. Moreover, they also act with the unshakeable belief that they embody all of these characteristics. Both GMs and players will need to make some adjustments in their games and play styles to adjust to these evident truths.

For the GM, a keen understanding of the player's capabilities is essential to any game. Arguably more so in a Steel Phalanx campaign. As a standard, GMs should begin sessions with double the amount of Heat in their pools than they would have in normal games. Most combat scenarios should also generate at least 1 Heat per round of combat before any NPC abilities are considered (such as Menacing or Threatening). Two or three additional Troopers and one or two additional Elites can also be included in each encounter. The results of any particular combat should be considered. If the encounter was a tough fight, then the goal of the adjustment has been achieved. After all, the Steel Phalanx are only ever sent to where the fighting is the fiercest. If not, each factor should again be

adjusted by a similar amount to the original guidelines given here. And these recommendations are only for standard Steel Phalanx campaigns. If the players are enjoying life as one of the Homeridae, drastic adjustments can be made. As a minimum, GMs should consider beginning with two-and-a-half to three times the amount of starting Heat and employing Nemesis level opponents in pairs. Achilles and his

"Move swift as the wind and closely formed as the wood. Attack like the fire and be still as the mountain."





REACTIVE ENEMY

No commander worth their salt would stand by and watch their elite troops get cut down without adjusting their plans to deal with the threat. The GM should consider the overall goal of the campaign and the commander in control of the enemy's overall forces. Planning some responses dependant upon the PC's actions will allow the campaign to grow naturally. If the PCs begin headhunting command groups, the enemy is likely to set up their own taskforce that specifically targets the PCs. Or if the PCs routinely spearhead devastating assaults, the enemy commander can seed misinformation on their defences to draw the PCs out of position while the main combat takes place elsewhere.

“Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then win.”

closest companions really will cut through lesser foes like a hot knife through butter.

For the players, it will be more of an adjustment in play styles than anything else. The Myrmidon Army are above such mortal concerns as the Wilderness of Mirrors and shadow wars. Stealth is always an option where tactical advantage is gained of course, but full-frontal heroic assaults with murderous fury and brazen battle cries should be the order of the day. Steel Phalanx campaigns are epic tales of superhuman skill and bravery. It is up to the players to carry out the deeds that provide the substance for those tales.

GODS OF WAR

The Homeridae represent the heroes of ancient sagas. They are quite literally demi-gods amongst mortals. Even their name, the Homeridae – the children of Homer – captures the essence of the epic stories that lay at the very heart of Earth's ancient civilisations. Enjoying a roleplaying game as one of these heroes, furthering their legends and reaping more glory, will certainly be fun and rewarding. Players should beware, however, for doing so will also exponentially increase the dangers. The rules in the section go a little way towards making the Homeridae available as PCs at the tabletop. Above all, when doing so, it is highly recommended that GMs involve the players in the creation of the PCs they will eventually play. Although the character creation process here is a highly non-standard process, allowing the players to remain involved in creating the Homeridae will deepen both their connection to and understanding of their character's motivations and abilities.

No treatise on ALEPH would be complete without including her greatest son, Achilles. More than that, however, the greatest of warriors and overall commander of the Myrmidon Army is also the prime example of how best to represent the rest of the Homeridae as PCs.

There are several Homeridae forming a command nucleus with Achilles, each of them with their own special areas of expertise. At their core, however, almost all of them possess advanced features layered atop cutting edge Lhosts. Each Homeridae will possess attributes similar to those represented here for Achilles. Allow for a little tailoring between the attributes, each Homeridae Aspect is also a renowned leader of a particular unit within the Myrmidon Army, Acmon, for instance, is a demolitions and technical expert who has a penchant for annoying the other Homeridae with his personality quirks, so his Intelligence score and/or related Superhuman bonus could conceivably

be increased while either or both of his Personality and associated Superhuman ratings are decreased. On the other hand, Drakios – renowned for his brazenness and hunger for celebrity – might have the opposite adjustments applied.

Looking at Achilles's statistics, it should be immediately apparent from his Bane of Troy special ability that he is a combat monster. This remains largely true of all Homeridae, though most of them branch into other areas of expertise to fuel their prowess. Pethesilea, for example, fights from the back of a motorcycle to enhance her impact, so removing a few of the combat talents reflected in Achilles's Bane of Troy ability to provide some in Pilot is definitely relevant. As another example, swapping some of the Close Combat talents for further Ballistics talents would be perfectly acceptable for the marksman Teucer.

A little consideration needs to be given for the special abilities that fall outside of the Common Special Abilities and talent replication special abilities listed for Achilles (talent replication abilities for this purpose are Bane of Troy, Confidence Bordering Arrogance, and Inspirational Leadership). GMs should carefully consider unique Heat abilities that are generally reserved for Nemesis level opponents and, if they allow them to be retained, should always be specifically clear on when they are available for use. If the PCs have been lured into a trap and cut off from reinforcement by a crafty enemy commander and some unfortunate dice rolls, for instance, then any abilities similar to Myrmidon Unity might not be available until the PCs reconnect with friendly forces. So far as Myrmidon Unity is concerned, every Homeridae is of course able to rely on their comrades for support, with each looking to protect the other's back. Achilles, however, commands obedience in an instant. This means that whilst every Homeridae will have access to a form of Myrmidon Unity ability, it will likely be to a lesser degree than Achilles – perhaps summoning one or two Ekdromoi or Thorakitai as opposed to another member of the Homeridae (with a correlated reduction in the Heat cost of the ability).

Reducing the impact of the special abilities not related to talents will allow the GM and players to be creative with a new special ability or two. Such special abilities provide an opportunity for powerful gifts unique to each Aspect. If the GM or players are stuck for inspiration, then the special abilities of other adversaries are always a good starting point. Patroclus, for instance, acts as Achilles's personal bodyguard, so the Bodyshield special ability of the Bodyguard adversary on p. 422 of the *Infinity Corebook* could be used as the foundation of his special ability.

ACHILLES

Achilles, greatest warrior-son of Ancient Greece. Immortalised in the *Iliad* as the hero of the Trojan War. Son of the water spirit, Thetis, and the king of the legendary Myrmidons, Peleus. Tutored by the wise and noble centaur, Chiron, on the slopes of Mount Pelion. Eternalised throughout history until once again reborn in humanity's hour of need.

In conceiving, initiating, and succeeding with Project: Warrior, ALEPH effectively became king, queen, and tutor – or father, mother, and mentor – to the greatest hero that ever lived. A force of nature. An immortal reborn.

Created using technology that even ALEPH considers experimental, Achilles' biosynthetic Lhost body incorporates enhanced artificial musculature, cybernetic micro-engine assisted joints, a skeletal structure of laminated calcium reinforced with TitaniumSupra®, a dual-control nervous system, accelerated and improved by experimental wet-ware, and subtle subdermal armour protection. The AI gave everything to its first and favoured son, and in so doing gave humanity their greatest champion.

Hewn from the stories of ancient Greece, Achilles personifies the god-like athleticism and beauty of the heroes of his age. A skilled commander and tactician, many look up to him as an inspiration and wonder. There are just as many, however, who view him as arrogant and vain. Regardless, his confidence is born of the definite knowledge that Achilles and his Myrmidons cannot, will not, be defeated. An avatar of fury and glorious combat, war has become his bride, and he lusts for her relentlessly.



NEMESIS

ACHILLES

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
13 (+2)	12 (+2)	13 (+2)	13 (+2)	11 (+2)	11 (+2)	13 (+2)

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+5	1	Movement	+3	3	Social	+3	3
Fortitude	+3	3	Senses	+3	3	Technical	+2	2

DEFENCES

Firewall	15	Resolve	18	Vigour	18
Security	3	Morale	6	Armour	5

ATTACKS:

- **Myrmidon Xiphos:** Melee, 3+11 (N), Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Parry 2, Piercing 2, Unforgiving 2, Vicious 1
- **MULTI Rifle:** Range C/M, 3+8 (N), Burst 2/2, 2H, Expert 1, Medium MULTI, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1
 - *AP Mode (Secondary):* Piercing 2
- **Pistol:** Range R/C, 3+7 (N), Burst 1, 1H, Vicious 1

GEAR: Powered Combat Armour (Exoskeleton 3, Kinematika), Optical Disruption Device, Subdermal Grafts

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Fast Recovery (Firewall 1, Resolve 1, Vigour 1), Keen Senses (Sight, Hearing, Smell), Night Vision, Menacing 5, Superhuman Attributes (All 2).
- **Bane of Troy:** Achilles doesn't need a weapon in his hands to be considered a killing machine. Any weapon he does wield, however, becomes an extension of himself. He may reroll up to 5 (N) when making a close combat attack or ranged attack but must accept the new results. Additionally, he pays one less Heat when using the Close Combat skill to make Guard or Defence Reactions, to a minimum of zero, while each point of Heat spent to gain additional dice for a Close Combat test net two d20s, instead of one (max +3d20 still applies). Further, each point of Momentum spent to add Bonus Damage following a Close Combat attack adds two points of damage instead of one. Finally, he reduces the penalty for firing at a range other than the weapon's optimal range by one step (to a minimum of zero).
- **Confidence Bordering Arrogance:** Some call him inspirational, others arrogant. Regardless, when Achilles speaks, everyone listens. Achilles generates 2 additional Momentum on social tests but increases the Complication Range of such tests by 1.
- **Inspirational Leadership:** Whether they like him or not, Achilles' presence bolsters morale and reinforces nerve. Achilles and any force under his command may reroll one d20 when making a Command or Discipline test but must accept the new result. Additionally, when making a Resistance test, Achilles may reroll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll but must accept the new results.
- **Myrmidon Unity (5 Heat):** The brothers and sisters of his unit are always on hand with sword and hammer. For 5 Heat, Achilles may summon a single member of the Myrmidons to battle by his side. The Myrmidon appears using the normal rules for reinforcements (see *Infinity Corebook* p. 34). Use the Myrmidon statistics on p. 104
- **Stir the Blood (X Heat):** Achilles' physique, oratory, and prowess can stir the meekest of hearts. As a Minor Action, he may spend up to 6 Heat to grant everyone under his command within Close range a Morale Soak of X, where X is equal to the amount of Heat spent to activate this ability.
- **Undeniable Will:** Achilles knows that he cannot and will not be beaten. He possesses a Morale Soak of 6.

ACHILLES THE EVERLASTING

Students of ancient history contest that Achilles' immortality and weakness were introduced with the many retellings of his epic story. ALEPH wasn't interested in true reflections of history or weak heels when designing her son. He would be immortal, undefeatable, and flawless. He truly is a demi-god amongst mortals, which his stats intentionally reflect. Placing him in the path of the PCs or introducing him as a continuous presence in an ongoing mission or campaign can be a sure way to bring the game to a swift end. Achilles has been presented here to show case exactly what both ALEPH and the game system's rules are capable of producing. Use him sparingly as a tool to cajole and chivvy the PCs but be extremely wary of introducing him to any conflict – whether on the side of the PCs or not.



CHAPTER 9

ALEPH ADVERSARIES

OVERSIGHT, OUTLIERS, AND OUTREACH

ALEPH's omnipresent power offers danger and opportunity in equal measure. Whether viewed as a potential threat to humanity's survival, or a powerful tool to be subverted to selfish ends, ALEPH offers the ultimate challenge to its antagonists in either eventuality. With this in mind, the following adversaries are designed as a toolkit of useful allies, foils, or enemies when players act in defence of, alongside, or even against ALEPH.

Oversight adversaries monitor and protect ALEPH. They are ideal for plots involving Recreations, threats to quantronic infrastructure, rogue Aspects, geists, or AI, and attacks on ALEPH or O-12 facilities. In Bureau Noir campaigns, they are invaluable for secondments to Bureau Toth.

Outliers can be aimed at any target but almost definitely become a threat to ALEPH along the way. As proactive threats they can serve as plot nuclei and primary antagonists for one or more sessions, with the potential to draw in other adversaries as needed for an appropriate challenge.

Outreach personalities are Aspects of ALEPH that provide opportunities for the GM to represent ALEPH within the setting. The PCs can subsequently build their own perceptions concerning the AI, which is a key setting theme. They're great tools to portray ALEPH's attempts at directly influencing matters, suppressing dissent, influencing public opinion, or utterly annihilating anything viewed as an existential threat.

OVERSIGHT

Mandated to protect against unhealthy shifts in ALEPH's criteria, heuristics, and priorities, Bureau Toth's remit covers monitoring Aspects, and maintaining the safety and security of the AI's infrastructure. This diligent oversight is the first and final line of defence against the easily envisaged nightmare of AI malfunction, domination, or pogrom.

ELITE

MA'AT ADMIN

The Egyptian goddess of truth, order, and justice, Ma'at, weighed each soul against a feather to determine its fate – oblivion, or immortality. Similarly, the administrators of Bureau Toth's Ma'at Division scrutinise ALEPH's endeavours, enforce virtuous behaviour, cull flawed Aspects, and ensure a healthy balance. Despite operating within a complex bureaucracy, individual agents enjoy considerable latitude in investigating and eliminating potential threats, which sees them regularly rotate between defence of ALEPH's data-spheres and processes, evaluation of Aspects and Recreations for deviations, and purging rogue AI and the malicious hackers and factional spies that harbour them.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
8	10	7	7	12	9	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	–	Movement	+1	–	Social	+1	1
Fortitude	–	–	Senses	+1	1	Technical	+3	2

DEFENCES

Firewall	12	Resolve	10	Vigour	7
Security	–	Morale	–	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **MULTI Pistol:** R/C, 1+6 (N), Burst 1, Unb, Light MULTI, Vicious 1
- **Collapsible E/M Baton:** Melee, 1+4 (N) damage, 1H, Breaker, Concealed 1, E/M, Piercing 1, Knockdown, Subtle 1
- **Defensive Hacking Device:** CLAW-0, SWORD-0, SHIELD-3, GADGET-1, IC-3, +3 (N) bonus damage
- **Assault Hacking Device:** CLAW-3, SWORD-0, SHIELD-0, GADGET-0, IC-1, +3 (N) bonus damage

GEAR: CLAW-0 D7, Li-Turing Kit, SHIELD-2 Khonsu, long ModCoat (with recorder and stealth repeater), SecurCuffs

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Li-Turing Mandate:** +2 Morale Soak against Psywar attacks by artificial intelligences or members of the ALEPH faction, and +2 (N) damage on Psywar attacks against them.
- **Terminate:** As a Reaction to an Infowar attack by an artificial intelligence, the Admin can counter-attack at +2 difficulty and +2 (N) damage, and if it inflicts a Breach, the original attack is prevented.
- **Vector Requisition (2 Heat):** As a Standard Action, gain 4 Meme-Virii for a target within Long range with a Transferred Identity Code.

ELITE

PTAH ENGINEER

Named for the Egyptian god of craftsman and architects, Bureau Toth's Ptah Division includes some of the Human Sphere's best practical engineers. Professional paranoiacs responsible for the physical maintenance and repair of critical infrastructure, they subtly booby-trap systems and facilities against intruders. Always working in person to avoid potentially falsified remote feeds, they eschew the use of remotes or augmentations in favour of "eyeball 1.0" and their own extensive experience and expertise. Ptah are skilled improvisers, which is only enhanced by high-quality, highly personalised toolboxes and gruntsuits, plus a writ to requisition materials, gear, and fabrication facilities if needed. They also aren't above a bit of skull cracking, particularly against saboteurs.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
7	10	9	8	13	7	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	–	–	Movement	–	–	Social	+1	1
Fortitude	+1	1	Senses	+1	1	Technical	+3	3

DEFENCES

Firewall	13	Resolve	9	Vigour	9
Security	1	Morale	–	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Boobytrap:** Mine, 1+3 (N) damage, 1H, Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 2
- **Trenchhammer:** Melee, 2+3 (N) damage, Improvised 1, Stun
- **Trenchhammer + Improvised Grenade:** Area (Close), Disposable, Improvised 2, Indiscriminate (Close), Speculative Fire, Spread 1, Thrown, Unsubtle, Vicious 2

GEAR: Hard hat, personalised gruntsuit, powered multitool, micro-torch, repair kit (w/6 parts), stims (3 doses)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Gruntwork:** In their personalised gruntsuit, the Engineer ignores Heavy Armour penalties and gains a bonus 1d20 on Resistance and Extraplanetary tests.
- **Spit & Nanotape:** When repairing Structure or Faults, the Engineer gains 2 bonus Momentum and halves the time required.
- **Surprise!** Tech tests to sabotage or subvert technology the Engineer maintains are at +2 Complication range, and if a Complication is generated on the test, the GM can pay 3 Heat to detonate a boobytrap (as above) as a hazard, which can only be avoided with a D2 skill test.

OUTLIERS

A vast and fractally-deep integration with the Human Sphere makes life easier and safer for ALEPH, but also provides innumerable attack vectors. It is only as secure as its weakest access point. Out of fear, selfishness, or malice, those defences are constantly tested by factional agents and other less predictable threats, any of whom could be the black swan that grinds ALEPH to a shuddering halt.

TROOPER

ATEK SABOTEUR

Nomad-sponsored Atek terrorists are a go-to scapegoat thanks to the media influence of the Ateks Out! movement, but this broad term also covers factional covert actions, Ariadnan anti-galactic independence militias, solitary attackers radicalised by Arachne propaganda, mercs looking for an easy cover, and anyone else attacking ALEPH's or Maya's infrastructure. To avoid glamorising their exploits, culprits are rarely identified. The term's ambiguity, however, allows ALEPH's media outlets and Aodoi to dismiss those opposed to its influence as unhinged and dangerous terrorists. Quiet investigation into the real sources of sabotage occur out of public view.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	7	9	8	7	7	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	-	Movement	+1	-	Social	-	-
Fortitude	-	-	Senses	+1	-	Technical	+2	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	4	Resolve	4	Vigour	5
Security	-	Morale	-	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Chain Rifle:** Range C, 1+5 (N) damage, Burst 1, 2H, Spread 1, Torrent, Vicious 1
- **E/M Grenades:** 2+4 (N) damage, 1H, E/M, Indiscriminate (Close), Piercing 1, Speculative Fire, Thrown, Unsubtle
- **Timed D-Charge:** Explosive Charge, 2+6 (N) damage, 1H, Anti-Materiel 2, Disposable, Piercing 3, Spread 1, Unsubtle, Vicious 2

GEAR: Armoured Clothing with Chameleonwear, Breaking & Entering kit, Fake ID 2, Second Skin

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **60 Seconds to Nowhere, Baby:** Saboteurs may reroll 1d20 when making a Tech test while placing or using explosives, but must accept the new result.
- **Linkdead Atek:** Saboteurs ignore penalties from using items in "dumb mode" but cannot use items with the comms quality (except comlogs).

NEMESIS

REVENANT HIJACKER

Unknown outside an obscure and intermittently available Arachne datasphere and a Bureau Toth watchlist, Revenant Hijackers come from a variety of technical and political backgrounds but share two things in common: they hate an individual or organisation beyond all reason, and after careful anonymous vetting by an unknown party or parties, they disappear for nine months after travel to Human Edge. Each Revenant follows a similar MO. They stalk a victim via subtly suborned remotes, flood their comlog with increasingly deranged demands, then attack with overwhelming force using hijacked vehicles, remotes, TAGs, or even weaponised domotics.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	11	7	13	12	7	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	2	Movement	+3	1	Social	-	-
Fortitude	+1	-	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+5	3

DEFENCES

Firewall	17	Resolve	11	Vigour	8
Security	3	Morale	-	Armour	-

ATTACKS

- **Revenant Neural Hacking Device:** CLAW-3, SWORD-0, SHIELD-0, GADGET-3, IC-0; +3 (N) bonus damage
- **Phobator Grenades:** Area (Close), Biotech, Disposable, Immobilising, Indiscriminate (Close), Nonlethal, Speculative Fire, Stun, Thrown, Terrifying 3, Unsubtle
- **Knife:** Melee, 1+4 (N) damage, 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

GEAR: CLAW-1 Overlord, CLAW-3 Total Control, Fake ID 3, GADGET-1 Fairy Dust, GADGET-2 Assisted Fire, GADGET-2 Enhanced Reaction, GADGET-3 Agamemnon, Neural Shunts, Remote Presence Gear, Stealth Repeaters

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Anomalous Augmentation:** Revenants' augmentations are uniquely architected for their neurochemistry, providing Security Soak 3.
- **Haunt:** The Revenant receives a bonus 1d20 on Infowar attacks against remotes and Psywar attacks using remotes, and two bonus Momentum on a successful attack.
- **Vengeful Cascade:** Revenants use multiple hijacked vectors. If a remote in the scene is under their control, Heat costs to summon additional remote reinforcements are reduced by 2 (minimum 1).

ELITE

SVENGALI DOPPELGÄNGER

The shadowy reputation of Svengali's one-Al mafia depends on its ability to reside across multiple quantronic mediums and emerge seemingly anywhere without warning. Doppelgängers are fragments of Svengali's criminal totality ghosting incredibly costly, self-modifying Lhosts that can duplicate virtually any target in order to impersonate or replace them. Used selectively due to cost and rarity of Lhosts, Doppelgängers enable otherwise-impossible crimes of the con job, blackmail, and heist variety, often hiding in plain sight for the perfect moment. Bureau Toth analysts believe at least a dozen are on long-term assignment, doubtless in preparation for some sudden sinister act.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	9	6	7	9	12	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	-	Movement	+2	1	Social	+3	2
Fortitude	-	-	Senses	+1	-	Technical	+1	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	9	Resolve	11	Vigour	6
Security	3	Morale	3	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Neural Hacking Device:** CLAW-1, SWORD-1, SHIELD-1, GADGET-2, IC-2; +1 (N) bonus damage
- **Wetspike Augmentation:** Melee, 1+4 (N) damage, Biotech, Piercing 1, Subtle 3, Toxic 3

GEAR: Fake ID 3, Implanted Breaking & Entering Kit with 6 Picks, Briefcase of Replacement Lhost Parts, MediKit

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Beguiling:** Doppelgängers gain 2 bonus momentum on social tests and +1 (N) damage to Psywar attacks.
- **Deep Cover (3 Heat):** The GM can reveal any NPC as a Svengali Doppelgänger by spending 3 Heat (2 in Nomad territory). Double the cost each time a Doppelgänger is revealed in the same adventure.
- **Overmind:** Constant connection to Svengali's distributed datasphere provides a Morale and Security Soak of 3. If unable to connect, the Doppelgänger loses these benefits.
- **Protean Lhost:** A full and complete record of a target's biometric data and medical history, a successful Medicine or Tech (D2) test over 48 hours, a MediKit and 2 doses of painkillers allows the Doppelgänger to assume their appearance. An engineering waldo may also be required for particularly drastic transformations. Targets are specifically matched with Doppelgängers of similar size, shape, and gender. While there is nothing theoretically stopping a five-foot male Lhost impersonating a six-foot female, this requires considerably longer than 48 hours of facial and skeletal restructuring, melanin display updates, and matching of ocular specifics. Penetrating a disguise requires close examination or interaction and a successful Psychology or Analysis (D3) test.



ELITE

TUNGUSKA INTERVENTOR

Tunguska's economy depends on its ability to keep secrets safe, no matter how dangerous or destructive they may be. To ensure security, Dragnet suborns dangerous hackers to its cause with the most lethal weapon of all: money. Honed by Tunguska's best, these black hat predators are deployed to guarantee the security of customer data operations and support Nomad military operations. Such assignments, however, serve as cover for less savoury operations such as espionage, data theft, military sabotage and reconnaissance, and the degradation of ALEPH's infrastructure. Mysterious assassinations of ALEPH's Lhosts, mundane technical failures that cascade into Maya-node eradication, and other subtle manipulations might all be traced to the momentary and seemingly coincidental presence of one or more Interventors. The remedy for their infectious presence must be equally subtle.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	9	7	9	12	8	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	1	Movement	+1	-	Social	-	-
Fortitude	-	-	Senses	+1	1	Technical	+3	3

DEFENCES

Firewall	12	Resolve	8	Vigour	7
Security	6	Morale	-	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Combi Rifle:** Range C/M, 1+6 damage, Burst 2, 2H, Expert 1, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1
- **Interventor Hacking Device Plus:** CLAW-2, SWORD-2, SHIELD-2, GADGET-2, IC-2, UPGRADE Cybermask, Sucker Punch, White Noise; +2 bonus damage
- **Knife:** Melee, 1+4 damage, 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

GEAR: FastPanda (Tinbot + Repeater)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Bleeding-edge:** Interventor defensive programs are the best in the Human Sphere, providing Security Soak 6.
- **Geist Protocol (2 Heat):** Spend 2 Heat to grant the Interventor +1d20 on all Infowar stealth tests, 1 bonus Momentum on Hacking tests, and +2 Infowar damage for the rest of the scene. (+3d20 max. still applies.)
- **SWORD-2 Koschei's Needle:** This non-lethal brain blast variant can only be used against Lhosts controlled by Aspects or Posthumans, or targets using Neural equipment. For 1 Momentum or as a Breach Effect, the program can deal 2+6 Physical damage with the Biotech and Nonlethal qualities instead of Quantronic damage. For each effect generated, the user can add two of the following qualities to the attack: Deafening, Blinding, Immobilising, Knockdown, Stun, or Toxic 1.

OUTREACH

Commonly mistaken to be ALEPH's children or automata, Aspects are, in truth, the AI's embodied will acting out independent responses to necessity's cold equations. ALEPH would never be able to optimally satisfy its duties if it restricted itself to manipulating dataspheres and simple remotes. Optimisation requires effective persuasion, or, if that fails, the direct and overwhelming application of force.

ELITE

AIDOI ASPECT

Named for classical Greek singers and legendary poets, the term Aoidoi originally referred purely to Steel Phalanx Aspects. As their pervasiveness on Mayacasts grew, however, the term shifted to encapsulate all media Aspects. Bringing each story to vibrant life with well-budgeted theatrics and carefully crafted messaging, Aoidoi now provide daily broadcasts of passionate speeches and entertaining experiences. Though not always factually accurate, the reports improve morale, filter discussion, and shape public opinion.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
8	8	8	8	8	13 (+1)	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	-	Movement	+1	-	Social	+3	2
Fortitude	+1	-	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+1	-

DEFENCES

Firewall	8	Resolve	10	Vigour	8
Security	2	Morale	2	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Emergency Flash Pulse Rig:** Range C/M, 1+5 damage, Burst 1, Blinding, Disposable, removes Marked

GEAR: Aoidoi Apparel, Cube 2.0, Neural Comlog, Spotbot

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease and Pain, Keen Senses (Hearing, Sight), Superhuman Personality 1
- **Bespoke Apparel:** Aoidoi's iconic and eye-catching outfits add +2 Psywar damage, provide 1 Armour Soak, and function as a torch or single-use flash pulse in emergencies. Their constant immersion in ALEPH's dataspheres provides Morale and Security Soak 2 while connected.
- **Buy-in:** If an Aoidoi has ever inflicted a Metanoia on a target, further attacks inflict +1 Psywar damage against them.
- **Figurehead:** When leading a fireteam, Aoidoi can reroll 1d20 on any test, but must accept the new result. If the fireteam is composed entirely of Aspects, Recreations, Geists, or LAI, they also gain 1 bonus Momentum on all tests.

ELITE

MYRMIDON

When the Combined Army rears its head, ALEPH deploys these bloodthirsty Aspects as its rending teeth. Housed in combat-optimised i-Lhosts and led by the legendary Achilles, they share both his inhuman ferocity and implacable arrogance. Myrmidons fight battle after battle at a pace that would break lesser organic warriors without a word of complaint.

Each Myrmidon specialises in a particular ranged weapon, but for close-quarters assault rely on torrents of devouring nanobots from forearm-mounted nanopulsers and their preternatural skill with the *xiphos*, a one-handed double-edged shortsword. With smoke grenades for cover and their i-Lhosts' integrated Optical Disruption Devices, many of their opponents die without ever clearly seeing a Myrmidon.

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10 (+1)	10	10	10	7	6	10 (+1)

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+3	3	Movement	+2	1	Social	-	-
Fortitude	-	-	Senses	+1	1	Technical	+1	-

DEFENCES

Firewall	7	Resolve	11	Vigour	10
Security	2/4	Morale	2/4	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Nanopulser:** Range C, 1+5 damage, 1H, Biotech, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 2
- **Ranged Specialty:** See Weapon Specialist below – Boarding Shotgun, Chain Rifle, Combi Rifle, or Spitfire, + 2 bonus damage
- **Smoke Grenade:** 1H, Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Nonlethal, Speculative Fire, Smoke 2, Thrown
- **Xiphos:** Melee, 1+8 damage, 1H, Piercing 3, Vicious 2

GEAR: Myrmidon i-Lhost (Kinematika, ODD, 2 Armour Soak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Disease and Pain
- Superhuman Agility 1, Superhuman Willpower 1
- **Hive:** 2 Morale and Security Soak if fighting alone, 4 Morale and Security Soak when in a fireteam composed of Aspects, including other Myrmidons.
- **Martial Subroutines:** The Heat cost of the Myrmidon's Close Combat Defence and Guard reactions are reduced by one (minimum 0), and Heat spent for additional dice on Close Combat tests provide two dice instead of one.
- **Weapon Specialist:** Each Myrmidon specialises in and relies on a specific ranged weapon, receiving a bonus d20 and +2 damage to attacks with it.



TEÓFILO H

NEMESIS

ANA QR

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9 (+1)	10 (+1)	9 (+1)	9	11 (+1)	10	12 (+1)

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+3	1	Movement	+2	1	Social	+3	3
Fortitude	+1	-	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+2	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	14	Resolve	14	Vigour	11
Security	-	Morale	2	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Assault Hacking Device:** CLAW-3, SWORD-0, SHIELD-0, GADGET-0, IC-1, +3 bonus damage
- **Nanopulser:** Range C, 2+7 damage, 1H, Biotech, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 2
- **Teseum Chopper:** Melee, 1+7 damage, Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Piercing 4, Vicious 2

GEAR: Thermo-Optic Camouflage, Proxy Mk.2 i-Lhost

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Fast Recovery (Vigour) 1, Keen Senses (Hearing, Sight, Smell), Night Vision, Quantronic Jump, Superhuman Agility 1, Superhuman Awareness 1, Superhuman Brawn 1, Superhuman Intelligence 1, Superhuman Willpower 1
- **Connected:** Constant datasphere connection grants a Morale Soak of 2. (Negated if disconnected.)
- **Star-Crossed:** In scenes with Teófilo, Ana loses any Morale Soak but deals +3 damage on any attacks against him.
- **Target Acquired (1 Heat, NR):** By spending 1 Heat, Ana can take the Exploit Action as a Free Action before attacking.

NOTES: Ana tends to keep at least one Proxy Lhost nearby when on assignment.

Quality Reassurance specialist Ana's quantronic feed transmitted a file. Recently, there were several breaches to the system including a series of poems criticizing ALEPH's approach to the Paradiso conflict. This was cause enough for the removal and recalibration of the subject.

Instead of the usual tactic for a job of this magnitude, explosives, Ana relocated to Valkenswijk where the target's Myrmidon unit was stationed in order to use the Orbital Elevator, jumping through her Lhosts until she managed to "accidentally" run into her objective: Teófilo the Aoidos. She played the damsel in distress and, true to the Myrmidon nature, the Teófilo couldn't help to play the part of knight in shining armour.

The following days had been amusing. This elite soldier/poet awkwardly showered her with attentions, like soldiers on leave tend to do. She in turn pretended to be enamoured by his confidence, strength, and protectiveness. During the evenings, Teófilo often spoke about the collateral damage in civilians and troop lives used as bait and cannon fodder. This, apparently, was the source of his questionable ideas.

While the tactics were solid and brought the Human Sphere resounding victories, the casual disregard for innocent lives had the young warrior confused and targeted for removal. In the few hours she had spent with his fiery disposition, she couldn't help but question the choice of tactics as well...

Shaking her head, Ana dispelled the memory of the soldier's passionate discourse about the brutality of the war and jumped to her secondary host: she was already in position. If everything went well, Ana would not need the secondary host as backup, but once again, this was a Myrmidon, the elite infantry of the Human Sphere and she had to be ready for anything.

Jumping back to her main body, she adjusted her dress one last time, concealed her Teseum Chopper within easy reach, and left to meet her paramour one last time. As she approached her rendezvous she pondered all the circumstances that lead her to this place and this assignment. For the first time in many years, she wasn't enjoying herself.

This worried her. For her own good, Ana thought, this had to be the last time they met.

ANA QR (POSTHUMAN)

APPEARANCE

Ana is beautiful young woman who ignores all the chaos around her in confident strides, always in charge of the situation. Her hair is almost white and the only thing in a non-neutral colour on her is a red flower adorning her hair. Her skin is quite pale, and her big grey eyes stare coldly as if analysing all around her.

ROLEPLAYING

- Has a piercing, cold stare.
- She very rarely smiles.
- She sometimes has problems with morally ambiguous decisions.

BACKGROUND

Ana was born into a wealthy and influential family of Concilium. She was transferred into a Bodhisattva Lhost as her first reincarnation after being a collateral victim of an assassination attempt while in vacation in Acontecimento. Once she adjusted to her new existence, she eagerly got involved as part of the SSS instead of the expected diplomatic corps of ALEPH.

Her conscience transferal and the last memories of her demise transformed her into a daring operative, calculating and dangerous, showing a primitive predatory instinct. Without the moral bindings of society as part of the AI, Ana quickly became an implacable asset for ALEPH.

Her missions have taken her all over the Human Sphere, usually using the body of a beautiful woman, tracking and removing threats to the stability of the Sphere. Lately, her assignments have been on Paradiso and Svalarheima where clearly some kind of turmoil is taking place. Whether she has kept her amoral code of conduct or whether her human feelings are coming back after witnessing so much suffering is something she keeps to herself.



TEÓFILO H

NEMESIS

TEOFILO

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	11 (+1)	8 (+1)	10	10 (+1)	14 (+1)	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

	+	1		+	1		+	1
Combat	+2	1	Movement	+1	1	Social	+4	1
Fortitude	+2	1	Senses	+3	1	Technical	+2	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	13	Resolve	10	Vigour	11
Security	-	Morale	-	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Combi Rifle:** Range C/M, 1+8 (N) damage, Burst 2, 2H, Expert 1, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1
- **Nanopulser:** Range C, 2+7 (N) damage, 1H, Biotech, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 2
- **Hacking Device:** CLAW-1, SWORD-1, SHIELD-1, GADGET-3, IC-1 (IC-1 Gaslight), +3 (N) bonus damage

GEAR: Aoidoi Apparel, Multiple Recorders

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Night Vision, Superhuman Awareness 1, Superhuman Brawn 1, Superhuman Intelligence 1, Superhuman Personality 1
- **Modern Bard:** Teofilo could sell ice to a Svalarheiman. When making a Psywar attack, he can reroll up to 5 (N), but must accept the new result.
- **Star-Crossed:** Teofilo can't take his eyes off of a pretty face, even when he really ought to. If he and Ana are in the same scene, Teofilo gains no benefit from Armour Soak, regardless of the source.

NOTES: Between his Personality and Aoidoi gear, Teofilo deals +7 (N) to Psywar attacks.

TEOFILO THE AOIDOS
(STEEL PHALANX AOIDOS)

APPEARANCE

Teofilo wears the uniform of the Steel Phalanx's Myrmidons, but unlike his brothers in arms, he is usually smiling and joking. He carries a well-worn messenger bag full not of weapons but with old paper books and notebooks.

ROLEPLAYING

- He is quite charming, being able to fit in any social group or circumstance.
- A romantic at heart, he idealises people he likes, in particular, attractive young women.
- He is constantly composing new heroic poems, all inspired in his own battle experiences.

BACKGROUND

Teofilo the Aoidos was assigned to the joint operation at Runenberg in Paradiso. The PanOceanian forces were to hold the centre of the frontline in a defensive stance while the Steel Phalanx flanked the alien army. Unfortunately, when the battle started, the Steel Phalanx did not deploy as agreed, allowing the Combined Army to sweep the unprepared PanOceanians and the city's suburbs.

The AI had a plan all along, but weary of spies and infiltrators, it changed orders while deploying the Steel Phalanx so that the Myrmidons would wait until the CA overextended itself in the rush to crush the PanOceanian defenders and take control of the city.

The strategy was a success and the Myrmidons fell upon the surprised aliens, annihilating the Combined Army attack. It was a total victory and the songs and stories told about the Phalanx would have been sweet if only Teofilo wasn't disgusted by unnecessary sacrifice of ALEPH's allies. Since that battle, the Myrmidon bard has been overcritical of ALEPH's modus operandi. Recently, this has been showing in his work, rising red flags among the officers and controllers of his unit. What they are going to do with the humane warrior-poet is anyone's guess, but certainly bodes an interesting future for Teofilo.

"Sing! Oh, Muse! The ennui of Teofilo the Aoidos who has one hour left trapped in this filthy compound before taking his last leave planet-side!"

Sighing, Teofilo erased his draft with a dramatic hand flick and stared at the ceiling. He needed something to present as a farewell gift to Ana!

The Myrmidon's unit had been deployed to the Orbital Elevator at Valkenswijk a few days prior. He wandered around the city hoping to boost the civilians' morale, and that was when she ran into him, looking worried and scared of him, the armed man in front of her.

After gaining her trust, the following days had been blissful as Teofilo was captivated by her. Not only did Ana listen to his rants about war but, he could tell – she understood him. This new type of rapport gave Teofilo mixed feelings, not the excitement of battle, this was different, a type of anxiety that only diminished in the company of Ana.

And yet, this was the last time they would be together. Thus, Teofilo had decided to make it count!

The terrace overlooked the Orbital Elevator, which at night was beautiful, like a star-studded column. In the centre, a table with dinner plates and a wine decanter awaited, a rather exposed location in Teofilo's military paradigm.

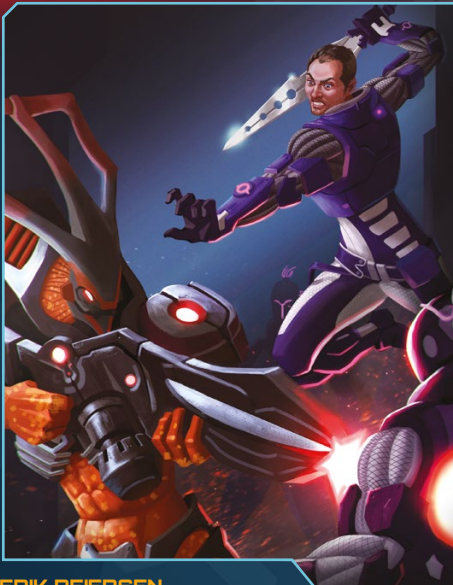
Ana selected the location, and that made him feel vulnerable, but then again, this was normal when he was with her.

"Hello, my dear..."

As he approached her to embrace her, she moved to the ledge of the terrace. They embraced, yet she was hesitant. Teofilo now inquisitively looked at her eyes and saw none of the warmth or innocence of the past few days. This was a different person, a cold and detached being, he had seen those eyes before.

"Teofilo... I am sorry..."

At that moment he understood where he had seen those eyes, in his Myrmidon brothers each time they went to battle. Those were the eyes of a killer closing in on her prey, and Teofilo was the one about to become precisely that unless he acted quickly against the woman he loved.



ERIK REIERSEN

NEMESIS

PYRRHUS

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
11 (+2)	9	11 (+1)	11	8	8	10 (+1)

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

	+	4	Movement	+1	1	Social	+2	1
Combat								
Fortitude	+2	2	Senses	+1	1	Technical	+1	-

DEFENCES

	9	Resolve	13	Vigour	14
Firewall					
Security	-	Morale	-	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Teseum Chopper:** Melee, 1+8 damage, Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Piercing 4, Vicious 2
- **Boarding Shotgun:** Range R/C, 1+6 damage, Burst 1, 1H, Vicious 1

GEAR: Light Combat Armour, Optical Disruption Device, Smoke Grenades

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Superhuman Agility 2, Superhuman Brawn 1, Superhuman Willpower 1
- **Pyrrhic Victory:** Pyrrhus has learned from his historical namesake: those who face him will pay in blood. He does not pay Heat to use the Retaliate or Return Fire Reactions.
- **This is When the Poets Sing (2 or 4 Heat):** A veteran of the Paradiso conflict, Pyrrhus has wrestled with horrors and lived to tell the tale. By spending 2 Heat, he can grant +2 Morale Soak to himself and all allies within Close range until the start of his next turn. He can affect one additional zone in this fashion by spending an additional 2 Heat, limited by line of sight.

"Bardas, Dionysios, and Demetrios, grenades!"

The soldiers threw the smoke grenades and leapt into battle as a unit towards the enemy lines. Several metres beyond, the alien droids, bio-engineered by the Evolved Intelligence, stood in formation vomiting plasma fire on the whole front. The Myrmidons ran under cover of chemical smoke, their silhouettes vibrating and disappearing every time a plasma bolt flashed near them, proving the usefulness of the optical disruptors.

"The Ekdromoi need our support if they are to survive this time! Let us show the invaders how thirsty our blades are!"

As Pyrrhus, Myrmidon officer, harangued his four-man Enomotarchos unit, Dionysios took a plasma blast full in the chest. The Myrmidons ignored this and charged in silence, closing in with the alien Batroids. Pyrrhus heard their hateful screeching as the nearest alien tried to adjust its plasma carbine, but Pyrrhus was upon him and deftly cleaved the alien while his remaining men cut down two more of the invaders. There were two drones left aiming their weapons when one was blown in half by a burst of shrapnel discharged at close range from its rear-guard. The surviving alien hesitated for a scant fraction of a second before being cut down by the Myrmidons.

"Brother Pyrrhus! You arrive just in the nick of time! Another minute and the aliens would have overwhelmed us!"

Gregorios, of the Ekdromoi, nursed a wounded shoulder and carried a smoking Chain Rifle. He approached Pyrrhus who quickly appraised the situation.

"It seems the aliens have received reinforcements. Is this true, Gregorios?"

"Aye! As soon as we established a bridge head, they hit us with all they got. These drones are not alone, they have leader –"

A burning flash obliterated the Ekdromoi, making the Myrmidons hit the ground for cover.

Out of the smoke and fog came a foreboding silhouette, huge and menacing. A Charontid. It surveyed the battlefield and focused on the rising myrmidons.

"Brothers! This is when the poets sing about us! Follow me to glory and victory or to Tartarus and eternal darkness!" Pyrrhus drew his sword and charged the alien monstrosity.

PYRRHUS (MYRMIDON)

APPEARANCE

Standing out from his unit, this officer wears the rare Genesis colour scheme on his armour, marking him as a first-generation Myrmidon. His scarred face testifies to this and the fact that he is not a recent reincarnation. He talks quietly but passionately, and his eyes burn with an intensity that speaks of war and violence.

ROLEPLAYING

- Talks softly unless in combat where he shouts all the time, haranguing his troops.
- He always talks using military and battle metaphors.
- As all Myrmidons he is constantly bragging about his military prowess (rightly so).

BACKGROUND

Pyrrhus is currently one of the squad officers of the now-diminished original regiment deployed in Paradiso to face the Combined Army. Composed of the most experienced Myrmidons in the SSS, they usually deploy alongside Achilles, which also means they execute some of the most difficult and dangerous missions in the Paradiso theatre.

Differing from the stereotypical Myrmidon psyche, Pyrrhus managed to place duty and the mission's objective slightly before glory in the battlefield. This made him a valuable asset in the impetuous regiment where a level-headed squad leader is necessary to balance Achilles's influence.



LAWSON TONG

NEMESIS

L7-0N6-29

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
14 (+1)	11 (+1)	9 (+2)	10	9	7	10 (+1)

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+3	1	Movement	+3	1	Social	+1	1
Fortitude	+2	1	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+3	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	13	Resolve	10	Vigour	11
Security	-	Morale	-	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Assault Hacking Device:** CLAW-3, SWORD-0, SHIELD-0, GADGET-0, IC-1, +1 (N) bonus damage
- **Knife:** Melee, 1+6 (N) damage, 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Smart MULTI Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+7 (N) damage, Burst 2/1, Unbalanced, Expert 1, Light MULTI, Vicious 1

GEAR: Thermo-Optic Camouflage

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Fast Recovery (Resolve) 1, Keen Senses (Hearing, Sight, Smell), Night Vision, Quantronic Jump, Superhuman Agility 1, Superhuman Awareness 1, Superhuman Brawn 2, Superhuman Willpower 1
- **Cold:** L7's mechanical detachment seems artificial, but this trait dates back to his human origins. He has Intransigence 5 against appeals to his emotions.
- **Connected:** L7's constant connection to the datasphere widens his perspective, granting a Morale Soak of 2. If he is unable to connect to the datasphere, he loses these benefits.

L7-0N6-29 (POSTHUMAN OPERATIVE)

The key to this operation was making sure there were no loose ends. By loose ends, L7-0N6-29 meant the squad of mercenaries that he had joined a week ago.

They were searching for the debris of the downed craft in the wastes of Svalarheima, in the vicinity of Skovorodino, and the mission would have gone smoothly had it not been for the insistence of Thomas. The mercenary in charge of the patrol unit had wisely pressed his group to reach the Hospitaller's monastery before the temperature dropped further.

Although they were equipped to survive several days in the frozen wilderness, Thomas had quickly realised the recovered cargo required a more immediate security protocol and facilities. Thus, they had arrived at the heavily protected fortress, demanded refuge, and secured the recovered cargo, making L7's mission more challenging.

Passing as a soldier of fortune, L7 occupied the cell the Hospitallers assigned to the mercenaries and waited patiently. Once assured they were asleep – he utterly despised their snoring and overall weakness – L7 slipped quietly from the cell and stealthily headed to the warehouse where the team's equipment had been stored for the night. L7's goal was the bio-tech lab.

After grabbing his gear, he activated the Second Skin injectors and proceeded to adopt the face of Tesch, the least liked member of the mercenary unit. He made sure he paraded in front of the security cameras en route to the lab. When he reached the laboratory's wing, he activated his TO camo device, effectively disappearing from sight.

Now all he had to do was recover the samples stored in the bio-hazard store-room. He bypassed the quantronic lock with ease and waited, drawing both his knife and pistol. The only obstacle was an Order Sergeant who wouldn't be a challenge to him. After all, they were simple humans. Once he neutralised the guard, nothing would stop him from taking the samples. And by the time anyone got wiser, he should have several hours of head start to the drop point and to his next mission.

APPEARANCE

L7-0N6-29 has a slightly tanned skin, dark hair, and big, dark eyes, yet there is a strange "plastic" quality to his face. He has a gymnast's body, and it is quite clear from his body language and movements that he has had military training.

ROLEPLAYING

- He tilts his head when accessing Maya and any quantronic information.
- He is very rude when interacting with people not directly involved in his missions.
- When speaking, he rarely shows emotions.

BACKGROUND

L7-0N6-29 was never comfortable with his human persona during his first incarnation. Growing up in Acontecimento, he always felt a kinship to ever-present ALEPH and its sacrifice to improve the human race, who were always more entranced with Maya and their own frivolities. He never felt empathy with his fellow human beings and decided early on in his life to transcend the sickening human condition.

It was this total lack of empathy that got the AI's attention, and after a thorough examination, it was determined that L7-0N6-29 was an ideal candidate for the SSS and its black-ops team. He has excelled and revelled in his new post-human condition.

ATROPOS (POSTHUMAN)



JUAN JOSÉ MARTÍNEZ DE LA TORRE

NEMESIS

ATROPOS

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
12	13 (+2)	9 (+1)	10	9	8	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

	+	3	Movement	+1	-	Social	+1	1
Combat	+3	3						
Fortitude	+1	-	Senses	+5	3	Technical	+1	1

DEFENCES

	10	Resolve	10	Vigour	11
Firewall					
Security	-	Morale	2	Armour	3

ATTACKS

- **Assault Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+9 damage, Burst 3, Unbalanced, Vicious 1
- **Hacking Device:** CLAW-1, SWORD-1 (SWORD-1 Slasher), SHIELD-1, GADGET-3 (GADGET-3 Agamemnon), IC-1
- **Nanopulser:** Range C, 2+7 damage, 1H, Biotech, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 2

GEAR: Armoured Clothing, Chameleonwear

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Fast Recovery (Firewall) 1, Keen Senses (Hearing, Sight, Smell), Night Vision, Menacing 2, Quantronic Jump, Superhuman Awareness 2, Superhuman Brawn 1
- **Connected:** Atropos' constant connection to the datasphere widens his perspective, granting a Morale Soak of 2. If he is unable to connect to the datasphere, he loses these benefits.
- **Sundered Threads (1 Heat):** Eventually, everyone's thread is cut. Atropos can spend 1 Heat to add the Grievous quality to an attack.
- **Threads of Fate:** Today's ally might be tomorrow's target, so Atropos stays well-informed on those he meets. When making an Analysis or Education test, he can reroll 1d20, but must accept the new result.

The two men were trying their best to pass unnoticed among the crowds but there was no way they could fool Atropos with their clothes. The imitation rags would appear as authentic to anyone, but to his enhanced optics, those synthetic fibres simply screamed Nomad impersonators.

The Nomad agents were clearly trying to install repeaters for the illegal network Arachne, a common practice in all locations where a Nomad commercial missions. Atropos had already located the Nomad repeater the day before and sabotaged it, making sure that operatives would come out to repair it.

Sure enough, two men strode toward the repeater: one a technician, the other his security. It was unusual to commission such a specialised agent as Atropos to eliminate low level targets like the technician and his bodyguard, but if the AI had signalled them for deleting, that only meant they were a threat to the Human Sphere.

The men were nervous, Atropos could tell from their body language. He hurried, carefully measuring his timing and walk so he ran into the men exiting the building after they had repaired the repeaters.

One of the targets came out into the street, alone. Atropos activated his weapon and approached his victim.

Two men accidentally collided in front of the Fulcrum Communications building. One of them, dressed in elegant clothes of an important executive, caught the other man before he fell to the ground. The stranger coughed, apologised to the startled businessman, and went on his way.

The confused target started to heave and cough. Atropos picked up the pace. He had to reach the safe house before his Lhost failed from the contamination due to the viral capsule lodged in his teeth. The public had to be unaware of the Posthumans carrying out assassinations in the streets. After reporting his mission, he would wait for a new body to be activated.

The failure of the technician to show in time with his partner was a minor setback. No one escaped from their fate, and Atropos made sure no enemy of the AI ever did.

APPEARANCE

Atropos has a pale complexion and a cold personality. Wrapped in his trademark cloak, he regards all people as if he were in an aquarium looking at fishes.

ROLEPLAYING

- He talks in a low voice, almost whispering.
- He investigates the personal files of every person he meets and talks about it constantly.
- He never uses the word kill or death instead using "thread of life" metaphors.

BACKGROUND

The universe has laws that are inevitable, and that gives meaning and stability to all of reality. No-one is outside these certainties, not the alien menace, nor ALEPH, and certainly not humanity.

In a time where quantronic technologies allow humans to sidestep sickness and decay, it would seem that the deterministic laws have been proved wrong or at least beaten. That death is only one minor inconvenience for humanity.

This is where the people of the Human Sphere are wrong, everyone has their time counted and everyone, sooner or later (from the Ateks to the highest-level O-12 functionary) has their threads of life cut.

Atropos is one such tool, focused on reminding ALEPH's enemies of their own mortality as Fate's scissors.



INFINITY
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