

PYRAMID[®]



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THE LAWS OF MAGIC

ALTERNATIVE RITUAL PATH MAGIC

by Christopher R. Rice

RITUAL PATH SPECIALISTS

by Jason "PK" Levine

THOROUGHLY MODERN MAGIC

by Paul Stefko

THE AZURE DRAGON

by David L. Pulver

THE MATERIAL DIFFERENCE

by Sean Punch

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Article Colors

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

- Pale Blue:* In This Issue
- Brown:* In Every Issue (humor, editorial, etc.)
- Green:* Columnist
- Dark Blue:* *GURPS* Features
- Purple:* Systemless Features

COVER ART
Kirk Reinert

Play with the laws of magic!

IN THIS ISSUE

In the real world, breaking the speed of light isn't just a bad idea . . . it's the law. In fantasy realms, magic often has similar hard-and-fast rules that are not to be trifled with. This *Pyramid* looks at the fundamental forces of the cosmos and the rules that underlie them.

Test the laws of the mystical realm with *Alternative Ritual Path Magic*, one of the meatiest features ever in *Pyramid*! Starting with the foundation of *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic*, these optional rules explore numerous ways to combine Ritual Path magic with other reality-influencing systems, including Book magic, Divine Favor, effect shaping, realms, symbols, craft, and more. It also provides new perks and advantages.

The author of *Ritual Path Magic* – Jason "PK" Levine – reveals how you can take such versatile generalists and turn them into *Ritual Path Specialists*. Explore new abilities, limitations, perks, specialties, Talents, and techniques that can really help you to focus your energy.

Every occult-themed campaign needs more grimoires, and *GURPS Banestorm: Abydos* author David L. Pulver discusses another tumultuous tome in this month's Eidetic Memory, as he reveals the secrets of *The Azure Dragon*. Discover its history from the 1890s to the present, as well as a few rituals for Book magic contained therein.

In a world where enchanters are common, businesses might mass-produce extraordinary items with *Thoroughly Modern Magic*. Updated from David L. Pulver's industrial-enchantment rules from *GURPS Technomancer*, these guidelines bring such marvelous methods to the *GURPS Fourth Edition* rules – including a new magical style, template, and sample NPC for line enchanters.

Sean Punch – *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* designer – considers how to turn the normally ho-hum *GURPS* item-enchantment process into something filled with action and adventure. Give your quests *The Material Difference* with tips for resource farming, handling, and preparation, plus a list of sample materials and associated hazards.

The latest installment of Random Thought Table ponders the laws of magic, while Odds and Ends wraps up the issue with suggestions for industrial-enchantment adventures, rituals that have nasty aftereffects, and more.

Whether you want to bend reality in new and unexpected ways, fire up a occult assembly line, or build an arcane artifact from the privacy of your own lab, this issue of *Pyramid* has something for you. It's so magical, it's almost against the law!

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FROM THE EDITOR

RULES MADE TO BE BROKEN?

This issue of *Pyramid* deals with magic, especially as it ties into the laws of the universe . . . those universal rules that you need to be clever, daring, or daft to break. Curiously, this issue also bends one of the rules of the universe . . . at least, as far as *Pyramid* goes. This issue contains one of the largest articles to appear in these fine pages (*Alternative Ritual Path Magic*, pp. 4-14). It's reminiscent of the mini-supplements that used to appear in *Dragon* magazine – oh-so-many years ago – which were printed in the center of the magazine so you could unfold the staples and take it out separately . . . (Curiously, this issue comes on the heels of last month's *Pyramid* #3/65: *Alternate GURPS III*, which contained the third volume's largest assortment of shorter articles we've ever done.)

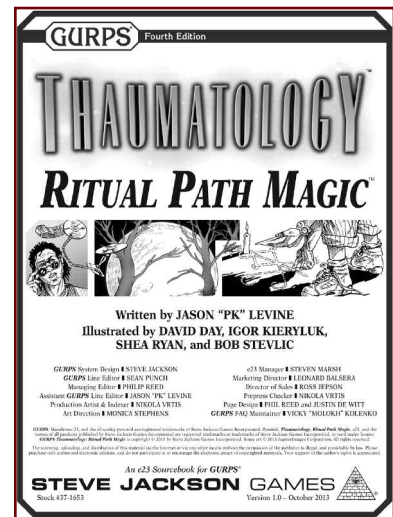
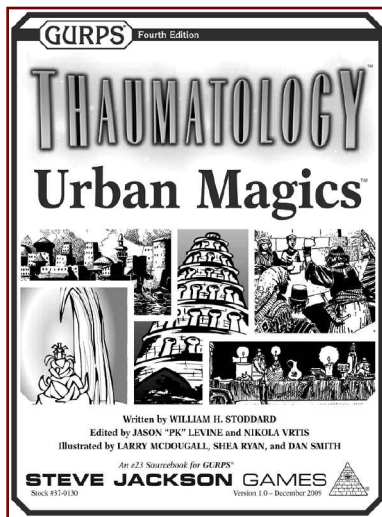
Of course, even if that oversized feature isn't your cup of tea, we tried to make sure the rest of the issue has enough interesting going on. There should be something in our bag of tricks for every armchair mage.

So, what's better for you? Bigger or smaller? Is an occasional "mini-supplement" cool, or do you like a crate of crazy ideas in each issue? Or do you trust us to surprise you? As ever, we want *Pyramid* to be the magazine you're *happy* to buy . . . and that includes presenting material that supports your campaigns and interest. *WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US?!* Oh, right; this is text. We can't hear your responses. So how *can* we hear from you? Perhaps if we wish hard enough, something magical will happen . . .

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Well, look what we have here! Information on how to contact us! Sorcery!

Was this issue magic for you? Or was it an explosion in the lab that unleashed something unto the world it ought not have? Let us know what you think about our mad experiments by telling us how were doing, either privately at pyramid@sjgames.com, or publicly among the world's coolest gaming fans at forums.sjgames.com.



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ALTERNATIVE RITUAL PATH MAGIC

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

The magic system found in *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic* is versatile, flexible, and balanced. So, given its chimerical origin, how *else* can it be expanded?

With the following additions and changes, you can merge Ritual Path magic with a wide range of systems, as

found in *GURPS Powers*, *GURPS Powers: Divine Favor*, *GURPS Thaumatology*, *GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles*, and *GURPS Thaumatology: Urban Magics*.

BOOK MAGIC

Instead of Paths – or concurrent with them – Ritual Path magic might use Books (*Thaumatology*, p. 163). The effects of a Book skill can be unrelated, eccentric, and arbitrary.

The GM will need to decide *what* each Book covers; this will usually be a narrower range than the average Path (e.g., Book of Hacking may cover anything computer-related). Ideally, he will define many of the rituals found in the Book, but this is not exacting; if a given ritual makes sense for the Book, he should allow it. To balance these limits, he may let Books contain “special” rituals that may not be possible using Path skills. Such rituals might be shortcuts allowing otherwise Greater effects to be treated as Lesser effects – but only when using the Book skill.

Books are bought as IQ/VH skills, but have *no* other prerequisites; they neither require nor are limited by Thaumatology. (The 12+Magery cap still applies.) A book may have no default, may default to Thaumatology at -7 (or worse), or may even default to a skill like Computer Hacking. If used at default, the usual skill limit of 12 applies.

Unlike Paths, each Book has an associated grimoire. This costs *30 times* (+29 CF) the listed price, because it covers *all* rituals used with its Book skill! A +10 grimoire might be *the* book that inspired the Book skill; anything less is someone’s treatise on it, a later edition, etc. The grimoire lets its reader study (p. B292) the Book skill: a Book granting a bonus from +2 to +5 allows the self-teaching rules; +6 to +9, the education rules; and +10, the intensive training rules.

WORKED EXAMPLE

The Book of Shadow Code is known to most as *The Ugly Red Book That Won’t Fit on a Shelf*. Its story begins in the late

1980s, when a hacker-turned-white-hat wrote a book about “hacking reality” and its “code.” The writer, who goes only by \$h@d0V\ (“Shadow”), gives bizarre instructions on how to tap into the “universal code of reality” to gain “superuser access.” It’s full of strange code, odd mnemonic exercises, and blueprints for building computers that “network” with reality. When a government agency began rounding up Shadow’s followers and destroying copies of the book, they hid the book in plain sight: inside the DOD’s “Rainbow Series” of books. Every once in a while a programmer will stumble upon the message hidden in the otherwise mundane books and unlock the magic within . . .

In game terms, the Book of Shadow Code covers rituals related to computers (hardware or software), information technology (codes, programs, etc.), electricity (but only as transmitted through manmade means), math, and cryptography. It defaults to Thaumatology-7, Computer Hacking-5, Computer Programming-8, Computer Operation-10, and Mathematics (Computer Science)-8. Additionally, thanks to the strange underpinnings of the Book skill, many things that would normally require Greater effects instead use Lesser ones.

Summon Code Monkey

Spell Effects: Lesser Control Book of Shadow Code + Lesser Create Book of Shadow Code.

Inherent Modifiers: None.

Greater effects: 0 (×1).

This ritual summons a monkey-like being that can help with or perform any computer-related task, such as programming, hacking, or repairing a computer.

For the purpose of doing so, it has DX 12, IQ 12, and relevant skills of 15. It also has Laziness, which manifests as a need to “wiki-walk,” play computer games, “troll” forums, and browse chat rooms. To determine if this happens, roll 3d: On a 12 or less, it does what it was told; otherwise, it finds a way to waste time. It can be properly motivated by yelling at it or offering it Fritos, Tab, or Mountain Dew.

It exists for the duration before returning from whence it came. Repeated summoning of the same code monkey might allow a caster to purchase it as an Ally.

Typical Casting: Lesser Control Book of Shadow Code (5) + Lesser Create Book of Shadow Code (6) + Duration, 1 week (9). 20 energy (20Y1).

Ugh, Hardcopy!

Grimoires are the go-to item for most casters needing a boost to their Path skills, but because they are so bulky, they’re typically not toted around on adventures. Grimoires for primitive casters are discussed in *Paleolithic Magic* (Pyramid #3/56: *Prehistory*, p. 33), but what about modern magicians?

Part of the reason grimoires cost what they do is that carrying them around *is* inconvenient, so if the GM allows digital copies of grimoires, there must be a fair trade-off. Digital grimoires cost 20 times (+19 CF) as much, as do the “magically resonant” devices required to read them; the latter may take the form of an “MPU” (Mana Processor Unit), special materials, spirits inhabiting the device, etc.

Regardless of the details, a further limit is that a digital grimoire cannot be loaded onto a device with an intrinsic value less than the grimoire’s! For example, a +3 digital grimoire that costs \$26,000 (\$1,300×20) would require a magically resonant computer or smartphone worth \$26,000+ (that is, worth at least \$1,300 *before* adding the Magically Resonant cost modifier).

Such grimoires may be programs, apps, strings of code, etc. If the GM is treating digital grimoires as programs,

each has a Complexity of (bonus×1.5), rounded down. This *replaces* the intrinsic-value rules above. Alternatively, a grimoire could be treated as a database, with each ritual taking up (bonus×100) GB at TL8. For playability, this should scale to the setting (e.g., at TL6, GB become KB, while at TL9, GB become TB).

This flexibility does not come without a cost. Like regular grimoires, digital grimoires are mystically charged, which is why they give a bonus. Casters using pirated grimoires should experience *very* unpleasant side effects. This could be due to magical “pixilation,” digital degradation, or similar technobabble. Regardless, at the very least, the bonus from a pirated grimoire is divided by *three* (round down) and times to gather energy are multiplied by *five* (instead of the usual doubling) when using them. Quirks and botches should be meaner than usual, as well. The GM is encouraged to invent other side effects on the fly to make sure that PCs understand the perils of using illegally copied magical material! For instance, a ritual to summon a storm might summon *something* from the darkest heart of the Internet. Is it a demon, the embodiment of all YouTube cat videos, or a meme personified?

DIVINE FAVOR

What happens in campaigns that mix Divine Favor and Ritual Path magic when a paragon petitions their god for a spell? Alternatively, what happens when a paragon *also* knows Ritual Path magic? Most of the time a GM could simply say, “You get X, let’s move on” or “Take the normal amount of time to cast your spell.” Nevertheless, the GM wanting more detail can use these optional rules. (See also *Clerical Path Magic*, p. 7, for more ideas.)

Daily Devotion: Characters with both Divine Favor and Ritual Path magic can acquire additional energy via *Meditation, Holiness, or Study* (*Thaumatology*, p. 53). This allows patient “theurgic casters” to pull off *huge* rituals easily. The GM might even allow related Talents like Devotion (*GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents*, p. 9) to reduce the required time to generate energy as if the character were learning a new skill.

Cast This For Me: As a specific prayer, the paragon can petition his deity for a particular spell, even if he isn’t a caster himself. The required reaction depends upon the energy cost. First, determine the caster’s *safe threshold*, by consulting the *Quick and Dirty Charm Creation Table* (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 26),

using the higher of the petitioner’s Religious Ritual or core skill as effective skill. Spells using up to the safe threshold require a Neutral reaction. Spells using up to *twice* the safe threshold require a Good reaction. Spells using up to *four times* the safe threshold require a Very Good reaction. Spells using more than this (but seldom more than 10 times the safe threshold) require an Excellent reaction.

Help Me Cast This: Paragons who *do* know magic can cast the ritual themselves while requesting help from their gods. This aid comes in the form of a special external power source that you may tap using the normal rules. This is a specific prayer that grants up to 10 energy on a Neutral reaction, up to 20 on Good, up to 40 on Very Good, and the GM’s discretion (though rarely higher than your Divine Favor level × 20) on Excellent.

NEW LEARNED PRAYERS

If cast as specific prayers, these last for a “scene,” as determined by the GM.

Major Blessings

Minimum Reaction: Good

Invocation Mastery

Learned Prerequisites: Divine Favor 8 and Magery 0 (Ritual Path).

Learned Prayer Cost: 8 points.

You are treated as having Ritual Adept (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 6). If you already have that advantage, there's no benefit to learning or praying for this miracle.

Statistics: Ritual Adept (Divine, -10%) [36].

Mystical Battery

Learned Prerequisites: Divine Favor 9 and Magery 1 (Ritual Path).

Learned Prayer Cost: 11 points.

*Life is a spell so
exquisite that everything
conspires to break it.*

– Emily Dickinson

You have access to an additional energy source that bolsters your normal mana reserve. When calculating your mana reserve, add 20 to the *final* total. This additional reserve is treated exactly as if it were a part of your mana reserve for all purposes.

Statistics: Energy Reserve 20 (Mana Reserve) (Divine, -10%) [54].

Miraculous Power

Minimum Reaction: Very Good

Mystical Battery (Enhanced)

Learned Prerequisites: Divine Favor 12 and Magery 3 (Ritual Path).

Learned Prayer Cost: 22 points.

As Mystical Battery (above), except you add 40 to your mana reserve.

Statistics: Energy Reserve 40 (Mana Reserve) (Divine, -10%) [108].

EFFECT SHAPING

By default, Ritual Path magic uses the “accumulating energy” model to fuel its rituals. But what if a GM preferred to use Effect Shaping (*Thaumatology*, p. 122) instead? This requires *significant* changes to the system, including how Magery works, how Paths are calculated, and how spells are cast . . . but it is possible.

Having both Effect Shaping Ritual Path magic and regular Ritual Path magic can create some incongruities. It is suggested that the GM pick one or the other, and stick with that.

Magical Skills and Traits: Though Path skills still cannot exceed the caster's Thaumatology skill, there is no longer a Magery-based cap. Instead, Effect Shaping Ritual Path Magery *adds* to Path skills and the Thaumatology skill. It supplies *no* mana reserve; in fact, mana reserve does not exist in this variant. See *Effect-Shaping Traits* (p. 8) for other changes and additions.

Casting a Spell: Rituals no longer cost energy to cast; instead, they give a penalty to their associated Path skill. To determine this penalty, figure what the energy cost *would* be using normal Ritual Path magic, divide this by 10, round up, and make it negative. For example, a 12-energy, one-Path spell would roll against that Path at -2, while a 60-energy, three-Path spell would roll against the worst Path at -7 (-6 for 60 energy and -1 for using three Paths). Since rituals no longer require energy to accumulate, use the following to determine the results of the final skill roll:

- *Critical Failure:* The spell fails horribly – use the guidelines under *Gathering Ambient Energy* (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 20), based on the *full* energy cost the spell would have had in standard Ritual Path magic.

- *Failure:* The ritual fails! You can try again, but are at a cumulative -1 to skill unless you wait for the full, unmodified, casting time of the ritual.

- *Success:* As for standard Ritual Path magic.
- *Critical Success:* As for success, but the ritual is especially potent. The GM should add additional beneficial effects to the spell, making it up to 50% more effective: additional advantages, more dice of healing or damage, etc.

Casting Time: Total the number of Greater effects and consult the *Duration* column on the *Spell Modifiers Table* (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 18), reading the number of Greater effects as the “Added Energy” column; this is the casting time for that ritual. Rituals with no Greater effects can be cast in five minutes. For adepts, read “minutes” as “seconds,” “hours” as “minutes,” “days” as “hours,” “weeks” as “days,” and so on. This time can be reduced 10% for every -1 to skill, to a minimum of one minute for non-adepts or one second for adepts. If you instead take *more* time, each step you move down on the Duration line reduces the ritual's penalty by -1 (but cannot give a net bonus). For example, a five-minute ritual defaulting to Path of Body-4 can be raised as high as unmodified Path of Body if you take three hours to cast it.

Places of Power: These add their usual bonus (+1 to +5) directly to the casting roll.

Voluntary Sacrifice: Casters and their friends can still sacrifice FP and HP, but now it gives a bonus on the casting roll. The FP sacrifice for a bonus depends on the difficulty of the ritual: If the spell's penalty is -5 or easier, every 5 FP lost gives +1; otherwise, it takes FP equal to the size of the penalty for each +1 (e.g., 13 FP for a ritual cast at -13). Treat each HP sacrificed as 1.5 FP.

Multiple Casters: Coordinating multiple casters is difficult, and requires a roll against the appropriate Path skill by *each* caster at a penalty equal to (total casters)-1. Treat each roll as a complementary skill roll: The main caster's roll (which should be made *after* all of his assistants roll) gets +1 bonus per success, +2 per critical success, -1 per failure, and -2 per critical failure.

Other Systems

There are many “micro” systems in *GURPS* that would fit Ritual Path magic with little adjustment. Here are a few possibilities

Assisting Spirits: For the purpose of casting a ritual, a spirit can “lend” a caster Magery 0 and/or Ritual Adept as well as provide energy (for a ritual) up to *five times* the better of the caster’s Occultism or Thaumatology skills. (See *Thaumatology*, p. 90, for more.) At the end of the day, the caster checks for Spiritual Distortion, at -1 for each time he borrowed Magery 0, -4 for each time he borrowed Ritual Adept, and -1 for every five points (or fraction thereof) of energy borrowed that day. *Easy Spell Access* reduces all Path skills to IQ/A; *Complete Free Spells* does not mesh well with Ritual Path magic and is better represented by Divine Favor (pp. 5-6) for that spirit.

Clerical Path Magic: Power Investiture replaces Magery. Mana reserve is now called a “grace pool.” Ritual Magic is the core skill. Path of Magic becomes Path of Divinity. Clerics ignore the penalties for not having Magery 0, but their deity has the final say over any spells cast. Practitioners have access to *Meditation, Holiness, or Study (Thaumatology*, p. 53). See *Divine Favor* (pp. 5-6) for further ideas.

Corruption: Corruption (*Horror*, p. 146) can be used as is; every 5 points of energy gifted inflicts 1 point of Corruption. Ritual Adept can be “borrowed” for one ritual for 8 points of Corruption.

Ley Lines: Ritual Path magic can make use of nearby ley lines (see *Urban Magics*, p. 19, and *Thaumatology*, p. 53). The GM should first decide how he wants them to interact with magic. The simplest option is to treat them as places of power (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 32). Alternatively, they may reduce the energy cost of a spell, by 5% for a normal ley line, 10% for a strong ley line or node (where lines cross), 15% for a nexus (where *hundreds* of lines cross), or 20% for a super-nexus (where multiple nexuses meet). These stack with other energy reductions, like traditional trappings. Or he could instead allow mana reserve to regenerate automatically on a ley line: One point per 10 minutes on a normal line, per five minutes on a strong line or node, per minute on a nexus, or per *second* on a super-nexus. In *addition* to his choice above, the GM may allow spells whose subjects are in or on a ley line to use *Long-Distance Modifiers* (p. B241) to calculate Range costs.

Mandatory and Significant Modifiers: These can be used as-is and add a highly versatile and flavorful feel to Ritual Path magic. They are also exceedingly useful when offsetting penalties for *Effect Shaping* (pp. 6 and 8). See *Thaumatology* (p. 82) for more details.

Raw Magic: Raw magic can provide 25 energy for a given ritual; otherwise, it’s used as per p. 227 of *Thaumatology*. “Flavored” raw magic can be broken into concepts (e.g., death, weather) or Paths (e.g., Path of Energy). Work Raw Magic becomes a ritual whose parameters are Lesser Sense Magic + Lesser Control Magic, costing 7 energy.

The Raw Magic Store advantage becomes 25 points/level. This is cheaper than Energy Reserve because once raw magic is spent, it cannot be easily refilled – new sources of it must be *found*.

Sacred Architecture: Use the rules as per *Thaumatology* (p. 89) or *Urban Magics* (p. 21), but with the following changes. First, the bonus applies only to energy gathering attempts, not to *all* skill rolls. Second, instead of granting a bonus based on the construction skill’s margin of success, the bonus becomes +1 for a successful skill roll or +2 on a critical success. Double this if the dwelling only modifies a single aspect of magic (e.g., healing, hiding). Use the *full* margin of success only if it’s built to increase a particular, *specific* ritual.

Spirit Vessels: Casters may be able to temporarily become a vessel (see *Thaumatology*, p. 211) for a god or powerful spirit via a powerful ritual. The spell requires Lesser Sense Spirit (to contact it), Greater Strengthen Spirit (for the package), and Altered Traits equal to the final cost of the spirit vessel package (use its full cost, not 90%). Duration rarely exceeds one day. Traditional trappings are common! The GM can still allow packages to be bought with points, see *Ritual Powers* (pp. 12-13).

Child, magic exists. There are powers and forces and realms beyond the fields you know.

–The Phantom Stranger, in The Books of Magic: The Invisible Labyrinth

Threshold-Limited Magic: Instead of accumulating energy to fuel rituals, characters could be limited by a daily tally (*Thaumatology*, p. 76). This would let rituals be cast quickly, but also limit how many each caster could invoke. Once charms or conditional spells are created, they do not count against a caster’s tally. A suggested starting threshold score for casters is 150, with a daily recovery rate of 50. Non-mages divide both scores by three (round down). All threshold-related advantages other than Safe Magical Excess are unavailable. Instead of providing mana reserve, each level of Magery increases the caster’s threshold by 15% and recovery rate by 20% (in addition to raising Path skill and conditional spell caps). The GM might allow Unusual Background (Variable Access), which would allow a caster to switch between accumulating energy and using threshold energy.

Words of Power: Each Path skill and Spell Effect could have an associated Word (see *Thaumatology*, p. 178). For instance, Energy or Sense would each have a Word to represent them. Use the standard rules, but change the effects to Ritual Path magic rituals, charms, conditional spells, etc. The effects can be *anything* the GM desires, up to 1,800 points of energy. All such rituals are cast with an effective Path skill of 36 and Magery 24.

EFFECT-SHAPING TRAITS

The following traits are changed or added for this specific variant.

Ritual Adept

30 points

This is cheaper, as there is no need for a second level to reduce time.

Ritual Mastery

Prerequisites: Path skill 10+ and Rote Technique for that spell.

This perk indicates mastery of a specific spell. If you have levels of Rote Technique (below) “left over” after offsetting the penalty for energy cost, you *can* use them for a bonus, gaining up to +4 to skill. For example, if you know Rote Technique (Fireball) at Path of Energy+8, and the energy cost of the spell requires you to roll at -6 to cast it, you roll against Path of Energy at +2!

New Perk: Focused Aptitude

Prerequisites: Path skill 12+ and Ritual Mastery for that spell.

Your skill with a specific spell is such that when determining the time it takes to cast a ritual, reduce the total number of Greater effects by one. If it has no Greater effects, casting time becomes two minutes (two seconds for an adept).

New Technique: Rote Technique

Average

Default: Prerequisite Path skill.

Prerequisite: Path skill for that spell; no upper limit.

This is a separate technique for each ritual. It provides a bonus to Path skill when casting a specific ritual (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 19), but *only* for the purpose of offsetting the penalty from the calculated energy cost; you cannot get a net bonus. (In other words, apply that penalty to this technique, and then use

the *lower* of unmodified Path skill or effective Rote Technique.) Do this as the first step, applying all other modifiers afterward.

A caster can have as many rote techniques as he likes, but is best off spending points on only a few “signature” techniques and raising his Path skills for the rest.

WORKED EXAMPLE

The following is a typical Ritual Path magic spell, converted to Effect Shaping.

Spontaneous Combustion

Spell Effects: Greater Destroy Body.

Inherent Modifiers: Damage, Internal Burning (Cosmic, Multiple Incendiary Levels; Incendiary; Selective Effect).

Greater effects: 1 (x3).

This ritual makes one subject to spontaneously combust, causing 2d burning damage and treats the flammability class (*Making Things Burn*, p. B433) of the target as *two* steps lower than it actually is. You can also focus your ritual on a specific hit location; add the hit location penalty to your skill roll, if successful, normal wounding modifiers apply. Additionally, as a special effect, you can target any hit location that a tight-beam burning attack could.

Typical Casting: Greater Destroy Body (5) + Damage, Internal Burning 2d (Cosmic, Multiple Incendiary Levels, +50%; Incendiary 2, +20%; Selective Effect, +20%) (22) + Range, 20 yards (6) + Subject Weight, 300 lbs. (3). 108 Energy (36¥3).

Spontaneous Combustion (Effect-Shaping RPM)

Spell Effects: As above.

Inherent Modifiers: As above.

Skill Penalty: Path of Body-11.

Casting Time: 10 minutes.

As above.

Typical Casting: As above.

HIGH CRAFT

Thaumatology (p. 205) suggests that sufficiently skilled artisanship might be indistinguishable from some forms of magic. That system may be used as-is with Ritual Path magic, but the following rules truly merge the two. Note that “craft skills” are defined here as *any* skills that allow you to build or create something from raw materials.

Alternative Magery: Rather than buying Magery 0, the caster buys a special perk: Craft-Mage. This functions identically to Magery 0 (Ritual Path), but *only* for a specific form of craft-magic; it has a prerequisite of the relevant craft skill at 12 or higher. After buying this perk, the caster buys further levels of Magery with the special limitation High Craft Only (-60%). Ritual Adept is *not* available for craft-mages.

No Standard Paths: Craft-mages don’t buy Path skills. Instead, they purchase High Craft (IQ/VH), which requires

specialization: High Craft (Woodworking), High Craft (Masonry), etc. High Craft specialties default to each other at the same penalty as the associated skills; for example, High Craft (Woodworking) defaults to High Craft (Carpentry) at -3.

Skill Cap: High Craft cannot exceed the *lower* of 12+Magery or the relevant craft skill. However, for the purpose of this cap, the craft skill is at -3 if Easy, -2 if Average, -1 if Hard, and unchanged if Very Hard. For example, High Craft (Carpentry) cannot exceed the lower of 12+Magery or Carpentry-3.

Craft Magic: High Craft allows the craft-mage to cast any spell that would logically be related to his craft skill. For example, High Craft (Carpentry) would allow the casting of ritual related to preserving wood, creating a house’s frame, joining two pieces of wood together, and so on.

Craft-mages must cast spells into objects they've made; e.g., a carpenter could cast a spell to improve the HT of a home he built, but not one he had no hand in making. They *can* cast conditional spells, charms, etc. They cannot use *any* Greater effects unless their associated craft skill is 20 or higher.

Gathering Energy: Each High Craft roll to gather energy takes 10 minutes (one minute after a critical success) and may not be hastened. If the craft-mage will be casting right after creating the object, he can make a final roll against his craft skill to gain a modifier to energy-gathering rolls for each spell to be spell cast on that item: success gives +1, critical success gives +2; failure gives -1; and critical failure gives -2. Also, if the crafter takes longer than usual to make the item (*Time Spent*, p. B346), he may apply the bonus to his energy-gathering rolls for one ritual *instead* of to the roll to craft the item.

WORKED EXAMPLE

John the Toymaker has been commissioned by the Duchess of Dallman to create a replica of her estate as a magically animated doll house (for her daughter). John has Artist (Woodworking)-17, the Craft-Mage perk, High Craft (Woodworking)-17, and Magery 5 (High Craft Only, -60%). He succeeds at his Artist (Woodworking) roll, for +1 to his energy-gathering rolls for the Animate Toy ritual, and opts to take double the normal time when making the doll, giving him another +1. Once the doll is finished, he must roll against his effective High Craft (Woodworking) skill of 19. John's player rolls a 14 on his first roll, a 6 on his second (critical success!), a 16 on his third (at -1 as it's his third attempt), and then taps his mana reserve of 15. Finally, he rolls against his High Craft (Woodworking) of 17 to cast the spell, and succeeds. The spellcasting takes him 22 minutes.

Animate Toy

Spell Effects: Lesser Control High Craft (Woodworking) + Lesser Create High Craft (Woodworking).

Inherent Modifiers: None.

Greater effects: 0 (x1).

This spell causes a toy weighing up to 30 lbs. (or a set of related toys weighing up to 30 lbs.) to animate and play by itself or with nearby children. It has effective DX 11 and IQ 6, as well as skills or advantages appropriate to its shape or purpose; for example, a toy plane might have an Air Move of 4. It cannot do anything that its shape wouldn't otherwise suggest (e.g., a doll cannot fly). The toy remains capable of animation for up to a year, after which the ritual must be renewed.

Using standard Ritual Path magic, this would be a Lesser Control Matter + Lesser Create Mind ritual. The effects (Lesser Control and Lesser Create) remain the same here, only adapted to High Craft.

Typical Casting: Lesser Control High Craft (Woodworking) (5) + Lesser Create High Craft (Woodworking) (6) + Duration, 1 year (22) + Subject Weight, 30 lbs. (2). 35 energy (35¥1).

Charms 'R' Us

Charms are the perfect way to store a ritual you want to pass on to your allies or use yourself later. But what happens when you need multiple copies of a specific ritual? If you're carrying around a dozen charms of Fireball, you're already limiting your options quite a bit. As an optional rule, the GM might allow casters to "stack" multiple copies of the same ritual onto one item, which then counts as a single charm. This typically takes the shape of a wand or similar magic paraphernalia. A caster may only stack a number of spells equal to the maximum number of conditional spells he can have. Such items take a number of hours equal to (the number of rituals "stacked") \times 1.2 and might require a skill roll depending on what the item is. The GM might also require raw materials and a skill roll to *make* the item. For example, a typical wand might require an Artist (Woodworking) roll to create, and would hold up to 10 of the same ritual, while counting as only one charm.

MAGICAL STYLES

GURPS Thaumatology: *Magical Styles* brings a wondrous and flavorful tool kit to standard spell magic. But what about styles that use other magic systems? As noted in *Other Magic Systems* (**Magical Styles**, p. 32) it requires a little tinkering to make it work correctly.

- The guidelines for creating a style change slightly. It's even more important for the GM to set the "scope" of the style. For example, a style that covered the traditional elements might be too broad, but one that covered a *single* element would make sense. Because Ritual Path styles do not have spell lists, each one *needs* a concise description of what the style specifically governs.

- Every style must have Thaumatology as a required skill.
- Instead of Required Spells, styles have *Required Paths* and *Required Ritual Masteries*. The latter will contain a few Ritual Mastery perks to cover the "essential spells" of the style.

They do *not* count against the Magic Perk limit. Ritual Mastery perks could also be put in a specific order to create levels or tiers in a style.

- The required Magical Style Familiarity perk is essentially unchanged, but instead of broadening the stylist's Counterspell and Ward (a meaningless benefit with Ritual Path magic), this perk reduces the energy cost of any spell appropriate to the style by 5%.

- The limit on Magic Perks changes. Casters can purchase one "general" Magic Perk for every 20 points in Alchemy, Hidden Lore (any magical or supernatural), Occultism, Symbol Drawing, Thaumatology, and all Path skills. Campaigns using Herb Lore or Ritual Magic would also add those skills to the list. In addition to that, he may purchase one Magic Perk from those listed for the style for every 10 points he spends on style traits, as usual. Note that several perks are changed or no longer appropriate; see below.

EXISTING PERKS

Most Magic Perks can be used as is; simply replace spells for rituals or Path skills for colleges. Those discussed below require slight adjustments when used with Ritual Path magic.

The following perks are incompatible with Ritual Path magic and should not be used: Blood Magic, Combat Ceremony, Continuous Ritual, Enhanced Spell, Far-Casting, Fast Casting, Flexible Ritual, Huge Subjects, Kill Switch, Melee Spell Mastery, Missile Spell Mastery, No Gestures, No Incantations, Precision Recharger, Rote Alchemy, Spell Bond, Staff Attunement, Staff Bond, and Wizardly Dabbler.

Adjustable Spell†

For one Path, when adding enhancements to spells that cause damage, you may add +10% worth of enhancements for +1 energy, rather than +5% for +1 energy. You must specialize by enhancement, by Path skill, or by both, depending on which variant of this perk the GM is using.

Area Spell Mastery†

For one particular ritual, you may add more area or exclude targets after the spell is cast, *if* it also has the Duration modifier.

Blocking Spell Mastery†

When you cast a particular “blocking” spell, the penalty for being used instantly is reduced to -5 or *no* penalty if tapping an energy source. Non-adepts still suffer the extra -5 to all rolls, for casting quickly. You must specialize by ritual.

Convenience Casting†

This perk must be specialized by spell; pick one that you could cast without exceeding your safe threshold using *Quick-and-Dirty Rituals and Charm* (**Ritual Path Magic**, p. 26). Follow all the other rules for this perk.

Life-Force Burn‡

When sacrificing your HP for energy, whether for your own spell or someone else's, every 2 HP you burn provides an *extra* 1 energy – but the total bonus energy per ritual cannot exceed the level of this perk. (The GM sets the maximum level; five is reasonable in most games.) For example, if you had Life-Force Burn 2, you could sacrifice 2 HP for 2 energy, 4 HP for 4 energy, 6 HP for 5 energy, 8 HP for 6 energy, and so on.

Limited Energy Reserve‡

Each level of this perk gives you an additional point of mana that can be tapped to fuel rituals, but *only* those in your style. Mana gained in this way is a part of your normal reserve and is not considered a separate source. You may not buy more levels of this perk than you have normal mana reserve.

Mana Compensation†

In games that use mana levels (**Ritual Path Magic**, p. 43), this perk can be used to offset some penalties. It works as described and you must specialize by style, Path skill, or Higher Purpose (Tradition).

Mighty Spell†

This perk can only be used for spells that have the Damage modifier. You must specialize by ritual.

Mundane Magic†

This perk essentially allows you to use a ritual as a skill. Eligible rituals must not exceed your safe threshold using *Quick-and-Dirty Rituals and Charms* (**Ritual Path Magic**, p. 26). You must specialize by ritual.

Power Casting†‡

For one particular ritual, you may add your levels of this perk (up to three levels) as a task bonus, just as if you had a Higher Purpose (Tradition) for it. Higher Purpose (Tradition) and Power Casting *do* stack, but the bonus may never exceed +3.

Psychic Guidance†

Pick a spell that causes external damage. For that one particular spell, you may substitute your Path skill for all attack rolls to hit with it (e.g., Innate Attack, DX, Brawling, etc.).

Quick and Focused‡

Each level allows you to ignore -1 in skill penalties when *Working Together* (**Ritual Path Magic**, p. 25).

Reduced Footprint†‡

For one particular Path, you may have an additional spell effect “on” for the purposes of *Stacking Spells* (**Ritual Path Magic**, p. 15). You must distinguish between Greater and Lesser effects. The GM sets the number of levels of this perk allowed in his campaign; up to two would be ideal for most games.

Secret Spell, Shortcut to Power†

Because *any* caster can attempt *any* ritual when using Ritual Path magic, the GM could just disallow this perk, *or* use one of the following for “secret” rituals:

- The spell might be harder to resist, if so, this perk gives a -2 to targets of this ritual.
- The spell might be overall easier to cast; reduce the final required energy of this ritual by 10%. This stacks with other reductions.

Spell Duelist

You gain +1 to rolls to accumulate energy when you are casting a ritual that is designed to dispel another ritual, create a ward against magic, and so on.

Stabilizing Skill†

Prerequisite: Thaumatology at 15+.

You may specialize by Path skill *or* in refilling your mana reserve. The former allows you to roll against a stabilizing skill to mitigate critical failures; the latter allows you to simply *ignore* botches when refilling your reserve.

Casters who wish to do this with all spells should instead take two levels of the Stable Casting enhancement (**Thaumatology**, p. 28) on both their Magery and Ritual Adept (if any).

Willful Casting†

Pick a specific ritual that is *not* a ward. When something would successfully dispel or displace it, your ritual gets a roll to resist equal to your Will-based Path skill.

NEW PERKS

These are aimed at Ritual Path casters, though some may be adaptable to other systems.

Accommodating Magic

When you cast a helpful ritual, its subjects won't instinctively resist it. They'll *know* if the spell is intended for their benefit (but not *what* it is) and may choose whether to resist.

Discreet Ritual†

Most rituals require a whispered word or a subtle gesture. This means if the caster is ever fully restrained, he cannot cast.

I Am a Place of Power

Some beings (notably demigods, arch-mages, and fae) are not just potent casters, but have harnessed magic to such an extent that they *are* magic.

Control (Magic)

see *Powers*, p. 91

Optionally, ambient magical energy may be as susceptible to Control as any other energy or force. If the GM allows this, magical energy is *very common*, the energy from a given Path or Spell Effect is *common*, the energy from a specific combination of effects (e.g., Sense Mind) or a narrow focus of a specific Path (e.g., all fire spells) is *occasional*, and that of one, specific ritual is *rare*.

This form of Control can provide *one* of the following effects at a time to any spell for which the *target* is in the area affected by Control (it doesn't matter where the caster is):

- Give a bonus or penalty equal to its level to energy-gathering rolls.
- Give a bonus or penalty equal to level/2 to Path skills for all purposes.
- For every *full* three levels of Control, reduce or increase the Greater effects multiplier for a ritual by one (e.g., one Greater effect would go from a multiplier of ×3 to either ×2 or ×4).

Because Control works only on *external* energy, it has no effect if the character is targeting *himself* (but see below); note that most Crossroads effects are assumed to be targeting the destination for these purposes. For example, Control Mind Magic 3 could give a -3 *or* +3 to casters using rituals to read the thoughts of anyone in the area *or* increase or decrease the Greater effects multiplier by 1. None of the other effects of Control (*Powers*, p. 91) are possible.

This version of Control first appeared (for psi) in *Infinite Teleportation* (Pyramid #3/20: *Infinite Worlds*, p. 4).

New Special Enhancement

Affects Self: You can affect yourself as well as others. This is incompatible with Affects Self Only. +50%.

New Special Limitations

Affects Self Only: You can affect only your own magic. This is incompatible with Affects Self. -0%.

Does Not Increase Area: Don't add your level of the Control advantage when determining the total area you can affect. -50%.

Energy-Gathering Only: You can use Control only to improve energy-gathering attempts. -20%.

Greater Effects Only: You can use Control only to modify the Greater effects multiplier. -20%.

Paths Only: You can use Control only to modify effective Path skills. -20%.

Mana Enhancer (Place of Power)

20 points/level

You radiate magical energy, exactly like a place of power (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 32). Each level (maximum of five), gives +1 to all energy-gathering rolls, though *not* to any other rolls (e.g., the final casting roll). This applies to you and anyone touching you with your consent. Use the modifiers for standard Mana Enhancer (p. B68) to change this.

Like regular Mana Enhancer, you cannot have Magic Resistance, and casters can use rituals to locate you just as if you were a Place of Power. Unethical mages might sacrifice you for your power! In such a case multiply the final amount of energy gained from such a sacrifice by your (Mana Enhancer level)+1.

New Special Enhancement

Preserver: When restoring a desecrated place (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 21), you may roll against the best of IQ, Occultism, or Thaumatology. Even better, you do it *quickly* – divide the time required by (Mana Enhancer level)+1. This is incompatible with Life-Draining. +20%.

New Special Limitations

Life-Draining: Your aura is powered by draining the life energy from the land around you (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 21), affecting a number of acres equal to your level. This gives you a -4 to reaction rolls against villagers, casters who abhor the practice of draining energy from the land, etc. -40%.

Preservation Only: You only get the benefits listed for Preserver. This is incompatible with Life-Draining. -80%.

Restricted Bonus: Your advantage affects a narrower scope of powers. If it only affects a given Path or Spell Effect, this costs -20%; for a specific combination of effects (e.g., Sense Mind) or a narrow focus of a specific Path (e.g., all fire spells), this costs -40%; a specific ritual costs -60%.

Casters who take this perk can ignore this restriction for a specific ritual. This replaces the No Gestures and No Incantations perk.

Casters who wish to do this with all spells should instead take two levels of the Easy Casting enhancement (*Thaumatology*, p. 28) on both their Magery and Ritual Adept (if any).

Object Channel†

One type of object you own can channel your magic, allowing you to use it to deliver spells that require contact. Each level lets you specialize in a specific class of item (all kitchenware) or class of weapons (all weapons used with the Broadsword skill). This replaces the normal rules for staves.

PATH REALMS

Giving each Path an associated Realm significantly changes how Ritual Path magic works. It makes casters more expensive, but also *much* more powerful. Note that this combination is *significantly* different from standard, standalone Realm magic (*Thaumatology*, p. 188). It gives casters access to a new advantage: Path Realm.

Path Realm

10 points/level

Each Path Realm corresponds to a specific Path skill; e.g., Path Realm (Energy). This advantage represents your talent and knowledge with that Path. You may buy up to five levels unless the GM rules otherwise (see below). A caster may ignore the penalty for lacking Magery 0 if he has Path Realm 1+ for all of the Paths involved in a given spell.

Your Path Realm level determines what spell effects you can easily invoke. All spell effects higher than your Path Realm level+2 are considered Greater effects, even if they would normally be Lesser ones. However, the counter to this is that, if your Path Realm *exceeds* the level listed for the highest spell effect you're using, you may treat the spell as having one fewer Greater effect for the purpose of the Greater effects multiplier. If it's three or more levels higher, you may treat it as having *two* fewer Greater effects!

Level*	Available Spell Effects	Level*	Available Spell Effects
0	None!	3	Restore, Create
1	Sense†	4	Control
2	Strengthen, Destroy	5	Transform

* The GM might allow higher levels, representing transcendental mastery. Six levels is reasonable in any game; further levels are *highly* cinematic and arguably call for an Unusual Background! The progression continues: If your Path Realm exceeds the level of the highest effect by five, you subtract *three* Greater effects; if by seven, you subtract *four*; and so on.

† Divination effects (Greater Sense Chance) are treated as level 3, not 1.

Get more power . . . for a price.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Cole is a Ritual Path magic caster with Path Realm 5 (Chance). He wants to perform a divination concerning the upcoming battle with the tribe of trolls from under the Brooklyn Bridge; specifically, where exactly the trolls' encampment is located. Like most divinations, this is a Greater Sense Chance effect. For the purpose of divinations, Sense effects correspond to Realm 3. Since Cole has Path Realm 5 (Chance), exceeding that by two levels, his spell would have a Greater effects multiplier of $\times 1$ instead of $\times 3$!

However, Cole's player asks the GM if he can add a Greater Control Chance effect to ensure that his answer is correct. The GM agrees. Because the highest effect (Control) corresponds to Realm 4, Cole only has one excess level of Realm. He gets no special benefit; this spell with two Greater effects has its usual multiplier of $\times 5$.

RITUAL POWERS

Most Ritual Path magic spells can be converted to advantages easily. The obvious benefit to doing so is that they can then be used without accumulating any energy. They're called *incantations* and are created using the following method:

1. Define the ritual you are going to convert, as per *Specific Definition (Ritual Path Magic)*, p. 19). Note the total energy cost, as this will be used later.

2. Recreate the ability, using advantages with suitable modifiers. **Powers** will be an invaluable resource in this regard. Then buy it as an Alternate Ability to Magery (Ritual Path) or Ritual Adept, whichever costs more character points.

3. Start with the total energy required for the emulated ritual, subtract the caster's mana reserve, and then look up this

number on the *Incantation Mandatory Modifiers* table (p. 13) to determine which modifiers the ability must take. The smaller the amount of energy required, the easier it will be to use, while higher-energy spells translate to harder incantations.

4. Record the full ability as per the worked example on p. 13. Each incantation also has an associated IQ/Hard skill to use it that can be improved like any other skill. An incantation's skill defaults to its prerequisite Path-6. Alternatively, the GM might prefer to use *Power Techniques (Powers)*, p. 162).

The GM should keep in mind that not *all* rituals are going to be able to translate over easily and should freely forbid any convoluted builds. Additionally, incantations are going to vary from caster to caster depending on their own individual capabilities.

WORKED EXAMPLE

A “typical” Fireball ritual is a Greater Create Fire effect with no modifiers, for 18 energy. It does 3d damage and has Range 10/100, Acc 3, RoF 1, Shots N/A, and Rcl 1. Let’s say our caster has Magery 3 (mana reserve 15) and Path of Energy 11. For *him*, the effective energy cost (for the purpose of the table) is 18-15=3. So *his* version of a Fireball incantation might look like this:

Fireball: Burning Attack 3d (Magical, -10%; Requires IQ Roll, -10%) [12], bought as an alternative ability to Magery. 3 points.

The low energy cost means he can toss fireballs all day long, using his Fireball skill (an IQ/Hard skill that defaults to Path of Energy-6) to generate them, then (as usual) Innate Attack to target them.

Incantation Mandatory Modifiers

Energy Cost	Modifiers*	Prerequisite Path Skill†
9 or less	Magical (-10%)	10
10 to 19	Magical (-10%) plus your choice of Accessibility, Must be able to speak and make simple gestures (-5%) or Costs Fatigue, 1 FP (-5%).	11
20 to 29	Accessibility, Must be able to speak and make simple gestures (-5%), Costs Fatigue, 1 FP (-5%), and Magical (-10%)	12
30 to 49	Accessibility, Must be able to speak and make simple gestures (-5%), Costs Fatigue, 2 FP (-10%), and Magical (-10%)	13
50 to 100	Accessibility, Must be able to speak and make simple gestures (-5%), Costs Fatigue, 3 FP (-15%), and Magical (-10%)	14
+50 energy	As above, but increase FP cost by 1 (-5%/level)	+1

* If the base advantage does not require an IQ roll, you must also add Requires IQ roll (-10%). If it requires an attribute roll other than IQ, you must add Based on IQ, Own Roll (+20%) instead.

† For rituals that require multiple Paths, the highest Path skill must meet this minimum level; other Paths must be no more than one level lower.

RITUAL SYMBOLS

Ritual Path magic could have special symbols associated with each Path skill and each spell effect (e.g., nine Path symbols and seven effect symbols). Combining them produces a specific effect: a ritual. Using symbols has a mix of benefits and drawbacks:

- Symbol Drawing (Ritual Path) becomes the core skill. Though not a Very Hard skill, this is balanced due to increased casting times, reliance on writing materials, and so on.

- Each ritual requires casters to draw the required symbols – either traced in the air or written on a surface – which takes more time than usual. Alternatively, they may prepare symbol tokens in advance to get around this. Casting time may be reduced for the usual -1 per second or minute (as appropriate) of reduction, to a minimum of one second or minute. See below for details.

- Reduce the *final* energy required for a ritual by 10% if finger-traced, or 20% if written down or cast with symbol tokens. This stacks with traditional trappings, etc.

- The penalty to rolls to gather energy becomes -1 per *fifth* roll, not third, as the symbols stabilize the attempt.

FINGER-TRACED SYMBOLS

Casters can trace symbols in the air, water, sand, and so on. For adepts, this takes 10 seconds per gathering attempt. For non-adepts, this takes 10 minutes per attempt and all rolls are at -3! Finger-tracing requires no extra tools or objects to use.

WRITTEN SYMBOLS

Casters can write symbols in ink, paint on surfaces, etc. Rolls to gather energy take 10 minutes per attempt *even for adepts*. Casters with an appropriate Artist skill (Calligraphy, Drawing, Painting, etc.) can roll that skill before they make any gathering rolls. Success gives +1 to all gathering attempts; critical success gives +2; failure gives a -1 to all gathering attempts; and critical failure gives a -2. If the caster wishes, he may reuse symbols he has already created as long as he is casting the exact same ritual. (*Exception:* He may vary the Duration, Range, and Subject Weight modifiers if he wishes.) Reusing symbols like this reduces gathering times from 10 minutes per attempt to *one* minute per attempt.

Charms can also be created in this manner; they use the standard rules, but take *two hours* to create, not 30 minutes. Most charms made this way are drawn on paper or similar portable surfaces. Instead of being destroyed when used, the symbol disappears from the surface it was drawn on.

SYMBOL TOKENS

Casters may carry a collection of tokens, each inscribed with the symbol for a particular Path skill and Spell Effect. To cast a ritual using symbol tokens, the caster must pick out the correct symbols and arrange them appropriately; see *Symbol Tokens (Thaumatology, p. 174)* for the time and effort involved in trying to do this quickly! Once they’ve been drawn, this method takes no additional time; use the standard rules.

Casters must handcraft their own set of tokens; others cannot use them. Creating a token takes ten hours and requires an appropriate skill roll depending on how they are being made (e.g., carving a symbol token in wood might call for an Artist (Woodworking) roll). Lost or damaged tokens must be

replaced normally. Damaged tokens *can* be used, but at -2 for each used, as they “leak” energy.

Imbued Tokens

Optionally, a caster can imbue his tokens with magical energy. After crafting a single token, he uses Path of Magic to gather energy for this purpose. Treat this as gathering energy for a ritual, except he doesn’t suffer the normal cumulative penalty for every fifth attempt *and* he can stop this process to sleep, eat, rest, and so on without any energy or time being lost, so long as he keeps the token on his person. Each token requires 625 points of accumulated energy to become active.

Unlike mundane tokens, imbued ones are often made of precious materials and/or highly decorated because it makes it easier to store energy. A token with an intrinsic value equal to one month’s pay (based on the setting average; see p. B517) gives +1 to effective Path of Magic skill when activating them; one worth six month’s pay gives +2. This does not affect later spellcasting in any way (except for certain divinations, as noted below), just the initial roll to imbue the tokens.

Once active, imbued symbol tokens give the following benefits:

- Anyone with Symbol Drawing (Ritual Path) can use them, not just the caster.
- If all the tokens used for a ritual are imbued, energy-gathering times are *halved* (round up).
- When used for divination rituals, *expensive* imbued tokens give a bonus to the final casting roll equal to the Path of Magic bonus discussed above. Always use the lowest bonus of all tokens involved; if you want +2 to divination, you’ll need to split a year’s pay between the Chance and Sense tokens.

I, Spellslinger

Casters who focus on combat and battle spells may want the following new variant of Gunslinger. This advantage is geared specifically for Ritual Path magic, but could be adapted to other magic systems.

Spellslinger

25 points

Prerequisites: Magery 0 and Ritual Adept (or Ritual Adept 2 (Time)).

You are a battle-hardened caster who can toss spells with unerring accuracy or block attacks with magic with ease! Whenever you attempt to deliver a spell via throw, touch, or some other form of attack, you get a bonus equal to the *lower* of the attack’s Accuracy or your Magery. In addition, you may attack using a *DX*-based roll against your effective Path skill, if that would be better than your Brawling, Innate Attack, etc.

For “blocking” spells, you may *ignore* the -5 penalty to tap a source instantly, while the penalty for gathering energy is reduced to -5. If you have Blocking Spell Mastery (p. 10), these effects are additive: you gain +5 bonus to tap a source instantly and *no* penalty to gather energy instantly.

You may use a variant of *Mighty Blows* (p. B357) to increase the damage your spells do; this functions identically to *Mighty Spell* (p. 10), but can be used with *all* your damaging spells.

Finally, when casting a ritual that requires an attack roll, you may attack on the *same turn* in which you finish casting the spell. However, both the final casting roll *and* the attack roll (Brawling, Innate Attack, etc.) are at -6 – analogous to a *Rapid Strike* (p. B370). The GM must decide whether *Flurry of Blows* (p. B357) can halve this penalty

FINAL THOUGHTS

Not all the various systems from *Thaumatology* mix well with Ritual Path magic. In fact, most of the ones that have been excluded were done for that exact reason. The variations presented here were also purposefully kept “separate,” so that gamers could combine their favorite systems. The GM should keep in mind that some combinations may break the game or cause an overlap that should be avoided. Some variations combine wonderfully; for example, Ritual Path magical styles (pp. 9-12) actually work *better* with Effect Shaping Ritual Path magic (pp. 6 and 8) than the standard system, and Clerical Path Magic (p. 7) and Divine Favor (pp. 5-6) were made for each other! Experiment to see for yourself.

Some variations combine wonderfully!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

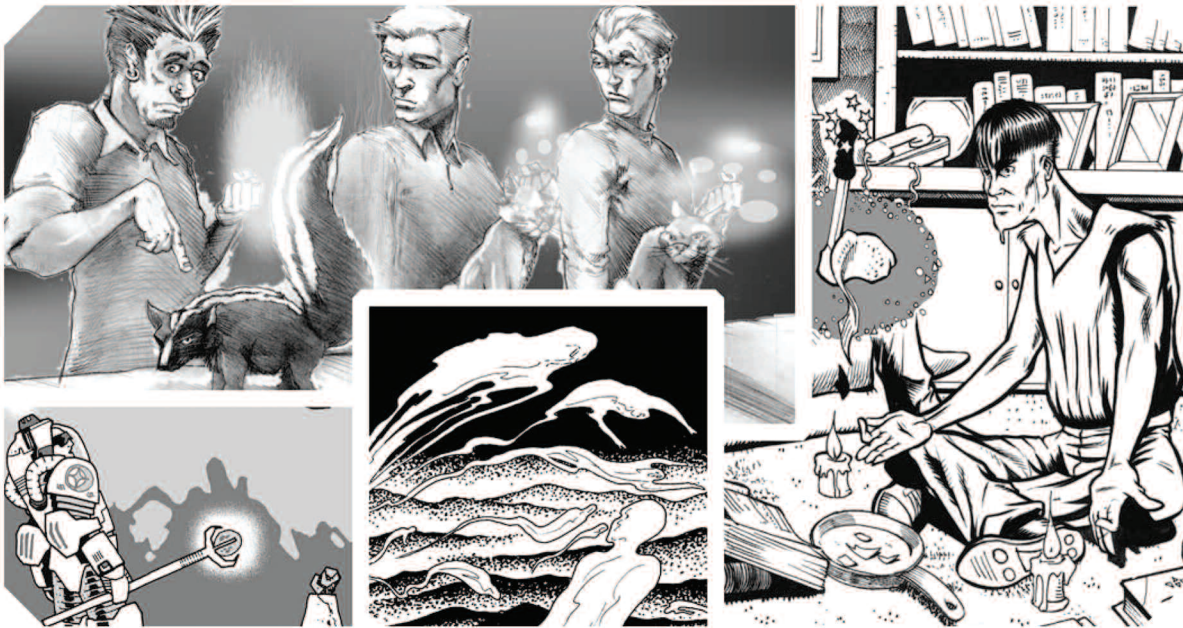
Christopher R. Rice is fascinated by magic; don’t worry, he knows it isn’t real. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he dreams of being able to write full-time, or at least eke out a living doing it. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse, as well as the rest of his gaming group; Antoni Ten Monrós, the “Mad Spanish Rules Lawyer”; Beth “Archangel” McCoy, the “Sith Editrix”; Jonathan “Dataweaver” Lang; Douglas Cole; Emily “Bruno” Smirle; and Rory “Reflace” Fansler, for being most excellent sounding boards. Additional thanks to Timothy “Humabout” Ponce and John “johndallman” Dallman for inspiring the rules for Control (Magic) and Craft Magic; as well as to Jefferey “Langy” Head for letting me purloin his working-together rules for Effect-Shaping Ritual Path magic. Special thanks to Jonathan Coulton for allowing the use of his song “Code Monkey” as inspiration for the Summon Code Monkey ritual.

GURPS

Fourth Edition

THAUMATOLOGY™

Magical Styles



Written by SEAN PUNCH

*BECAUSE NOT EVERY WIZARD
NEEDS TO THROW FIREBALLS*

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



RITUAL PATH SPECIALISTS

BY JASON “PK” LEVINE

GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic tends to produce versatile magicians, limited only by their imagination, skill level, and willingness to risk terrible botches. That doesn't mean that every caster is a generalist, of course! Because Path skills are a Very Hard investment, sensible spellslingers will skip any that don't appeal to their needs. And magical traditions exist as a carrot to that stick, rewarding those whose rituals stay within specific parameters. However, it's possible to make the system even more specialist-friendly, allowing casters to adjust their focus anywhere from “lantern” to “laser.”

TRADITIONAL VALUES

Higher Purpose (Tradition) (*Ritual Path Magic*, p. 5) is the most straightforward way to specialize in a particular style of magic, which may raise the temptation to “uncap” it by allowing more than three levels. However, this can unbalance all but the highest-power campaigns. The bonus from Higher Purpose usually applies across several Paths and ignores their “level caps” while doing so – a huge benefit!

Instead, consider giving “teeth” to a tradition by allowing its adherents to take traits that *expand* the ways in which that style aids spellcasting. Customize these power-ups to fit each tradition. The following example can be adapted to any style most comfortable in a certain environment; e.g., “Deathly Ambiance” could allow a necromancer to treat graveyards, battle sites, etc., as consecrated ground.

Druidic Turf

5 or 7 points

Prerequisite: Higher Purpose (Druidic) 1 for Druidic Turf 1; Higher Purpose (Druidic) 3 for Druidic Turf 2.

You automatically treat areas of pure, pristine, unspoiled nature as consecrated space. You do not take the extra -5 to cast, you have no need to spend a minute on a “hasty consecration,” and so on.

Druidic Turf 1 [5] gives you this benefit only when invoking Druidic rituals. Druidic Turf 2 [7] applies to *all* of your spells cast in such places.

There is no need to take this trait if you are a full adept.

Statistics: Ritual Adept (Space; Accessibility, Only in unspoiled nature, -30%; Limited Scope, Druidic, -20%) [5] or Ritual Adept (Space; Accessibility, Only in unspoiled nature, -30%) [7]. See p. 17 for Limited Scope.

Not All Are Created Equal

Some traditions have a broader scope than others. In some settings, “elementalists” who command all natural forces coexist with “heirs of breath” who are limited to doing the windy thing. To address this, traditions can be divided into three categories, each with a different cost via special modifiers.

The decision of how to categorize a tradition will often depend on the setting. For example, whether Demonology is a narrow, standard, or broad tradition depends almost entirely upon how common demons are in the game world.

Several traits expand the ways in which a style aids spellcasting.

Narrow

The tradition is focused around an extremely small niche. Alternatively, it may have a broader purview, but its nature is such that all rituals will come from a few effects of a single Path or a single effect among a few Paths. Buy this as Higher Purpose (Narrow Tradition, -40%) [3/level].

Examples: Divination, which has a broad concept but is usually limited to Sense Chance and Sense Crossroads (for clairvoyance, etc.) effects. Warding, which is limited to a few specific Lesser Control effects.

Standard

Any tradition that fits the description in *Ritual Path Magic* is bought as simply Higher Purpose [5/level].

Examples: Druidic, which is limited to a fairly tight concept but can take a wide range of actions in the name of protecting nature. Pyromancy, which has a specific subject but no limits on what it can *do* with that subject.

Broad

The tradition has an unusually wide-reaching scope. This typically means that it targets a broad range of subjects – but it also applies if the tradition focuses on a narrow concept that reaches across the majority of the Paths and effects. The GM should *first* consider whether such a tradition will unbalance the campaign; if it won't, take it as Higher Purpose (Broad Tradition, +40%) [7/level].

Examples: Elementalism, which can affect a wide range of matter and energy. Self-Defense, which focuses on a specific concept, but can entail spells cast from nearly any Path.

THE LIMITS OF MAGIC

On a more fundamental level, some casters focus on certain approaches because that's all they can do! With GM permission, both Magery and Ritual Adept can take any of the following limitations; for details on what this *means*, see *Limited Magery* (p. 18) and *Limited Ritual Adept* (p. 18).

In addition to the special limitations below, the GM may allow casters to take Dance, Dark-Aspected, Day-Aspected, Musical, Night-Aspected, Solitary, and Song, from p. B67. He may also allow Cyclical Magery and Easily Resisted Magery from *GURPS Thaumatology* (pp. 23-24) – cutting “Magery” from the name when applying it to Ritual Adept. If Easily-Resisted is taken, it must be taken on all levels of Magery and Ritual Adept, and applies to every resisted spell the magician casts; it never affects mana reserve in any way.

In all cases, the GM has the right to declare that certain limitations are a campaign feature, and not worth any additional points. For example, it might best fit a given setting if charms are the only form of magic, with Charms Only as a ubiquitous feature *instead of* an optional limitation.

Charms or Elixirs Only

-20% or -25%

You cannot cast spells on the fly; you require extra time and a decent workspace or lab. This is worth -20% if you can create either charms or elixirs, or -25% if you can make only one type. This does not change or interfere with your ability to refill your mana reserve.

If the campaign features only one type (e.g., charms exist but not elixirs), then this limitation is a flat -20%. If it features more than two types of lengthy, equipment-limited conditionals (e.g., charms, elixirs, scrolls, and tattoos), then this limitation remains -20% if you can create multiple kinds or -25% if you are limited to just one.

If this limitation is taken on Magery, it must be applied to *all levels*, including Magery 0. It is incompatible with Restricted Conditionals.

Limited Scope

Varies

Your Magery or Ritual Adept applies only when casting specific rituals and when refilling your mana reserve. Don't take this limitation more than once; if your scope involves multiple aspects, interpolate a reasonable value. Common examples include:

-80%: One spell.

-70%: A handful of related spells.

-60%: Spells for which you have a Ritual Mastery perk.

-50%: Spells for which you have a grimoire at hand (even if you aren't actively using it to cast); spells that include only one specific effect/Path combo (e.g., Control Energy).

-40%: Spells for which you have either Ritual Mastery or a grimoire; spells that include only either of two or three specific effect/Path combos.

-30%: Spells that include only one specific Path; spells that include only one specific effect (e.g., spells that use only Control).

-25%: Spells that include only either of two specific Paths; spells that include only either of two specific effects; spells befitting a narrow tradition (p. 16).

-20%: Spells that include only any of three specific Paths; spells that include only any of three specific effects; spells befitting a standard tradition (p. 16).

-15%: Spells that include only any of four specific Paths; spells that include only any of four specific effects; spells befitting a broad tradition (p. 16).

-10%: Spells that include only any of five or six specific Paths; spells that include only any of five specific effects; spells that use only Lesser effects; spells that use only Greater effects.

-5%: Spells that include all but one Path; spells that include all but one specific effect.

The examples based on a certain number of Paths assume the standard nine Paths. If the campaign involves fewer Paths, this should be *less* of a limitation; with more Paths, it should be a *greater* one. For example, in a game with only five Path skills, being restricted to three Paths is worth about -10%.

With GM permission, this limitation can be applied to Energy Reserve (Mana Reserve).

New Perks

These perks can help casters specialize in various ways. All are *optional* and require GM permission. Those marked with † require specialization, while those marked with ‡ are available in multiple levels.

Easy Refill: You use Thaumatology skill, rather than Path of Magic, to refill your mana reserve. This makes it easier to focus on other Paths, as Magic is no longer essential for maintaining your personal stores.

Improved Cap†‡: Add your level of Improved Cap to your Magery and Thaumatology levels for the purpose of determining the cap for *one* Path skill. For example, if you have Magery 3 and Improved Cap 2 (Spirit), your Path of Spirit is limited to the lower of $12+(3+2)=17$ or Thaumatology+2. This is a potent benefit; see *Path Specialties* (p. 20) for one suggested limit.

Natural Alchemist: You can craft elixirs with no equipment at only -2, or with improvised equipment at no penalty.

Natural Thaumaturge: You can create charms with no equipment at only -2, or with improvised equipment at no penalty.

Ritual Mastery‡: As an optional rule, the GM may allow Ritual Mastery as a leveled perk. However, each level past the first gives a further +1 (not +2) to rolls to cast the spell. The GM must set the limit; three levels (+4) is recommended.

Restricted Conditionals

Varies

In *Ritual Path Magic*, conditional spells fall into one of three categories: hung spells (the standard conditional casting), charms, and alchemical elixirs. Some campaigns may change this, eliminating existing options or adding new ones (such as tattoos from *The Old Ways*, in *Pyramid* #3/56: *Prehistory*). If you cannot cast conditional spells from all of the categories available in your setting, this is a limitation.

The value depends on how many categories of conditional spells exist:

One: If there is only one type of conditional spell in your game, and you cannot cast it, this is worth -20%.

Two: If you can only cast one type, this is worth -10%; if you cannot cast any conditional spells, it's -20%.

Three: If you can cast two kinds, this is -10%; one is -15%; and none is -20%. This is the default in most games that use **Ritual Path Magic**.

Four to Six: Three types is -5%; two is -10%; one is -15%; none is -20%.

Seven or More: From three to (half of the total categories available, rounded up) is -5%; two is -10%; one is -15%; none is -20%.

If this limitation is taken on Magery, it must be applied to *all levels*, including Magery 0. It is incompatible with Charms or Elixirs Only.

Rushing Things

The following *optional* technique gives casters another way to specialize in casting a particular spell. It can work either alongside or as an alternative to expanded Ritual Mastery (*New Perks*, p. 17).

Speed-Casting

Average

Default: prerequisite skill.

Prerequisite: Appropriate Path skill (see below); cannot exceed prerequisite skill+10.

You have trained to cast *one particular ritual* faster than others; raising this technique has no effect on any other spell. Base this technique on the appropriate Path skill for that ritual, as per *Choose the Skill* (**Ritual Path Magic**, p. 19).

When taking a penalty for fast casting, apply the penalty to this technique, then roll against the *lower* of Speed-Casting (with the time penalty) or your normal Path skill (without the time penalty). In other words, raising Speed-Casting will reduce penalties for casting quickly, but it will never provide a net *bonus*.

Speed-Casting can offset the penalties for non-adepts using adept times (casting in seconds instead of minutes), for gathering ambient energy in fewer than five seconds, and for casting "blocking" spells. It has no effect on any other penalties (such as the cumulative one for gathering ambient energy).

At the GM's option, similar techniques *may* exist specifically to allow non-adepts to ignore penalties for connection or consecrated space for a single ritual; however, these would be expensive compared to the cost of simply buying limited Ritual Adept.

Limited Magery

In effect, these limitations turn Magery "off" when the conditions or restrictions are not met. If all of the caster's Magery has the limitation, then he is treated as a non-mage for all purposes: His Path skills cannot exceed 12, he has no mana reserve, and he takes -5 to all casting rolls for lacking Magery 0.

His existing mana reserve does not drain or disappear, but he cannot tap into it, and cannot refill it unless the limitation explicitly allows him to (as the three modifiers above do).

If only *some* of his Magery is limited, he is treated as though he had reduced Magery for all purposes. Any Paths known higher than 12+(reduced Magery level) immediately drop to that level. His mana reserve is reduced to its new level – and if it was partially full, the "full" part is locked away first! He can refill his mana reserve, but only up to its current, reduced level (unless the limitation states that it doesn't interfere with refilling).

Example: Mei has Magery 2 [25], Magery +3 (Limited Scope, Sense effects, -30%) [21], and Thaumatology-17. Her Magery 5 gives her a mana reserve of 15 and her Path skill levels range from 13 to 17. However, she's at this peak only when using spells restricted to Sense effects (of any Path) . . . and right now she needs to create fire. Her Path skills are now capped by her Magery 2, so any Path at 15+ is reduced to 14.

Her mana reserve also drops from 15 (Magery 5) to 6 (Magery 2). It was partially full, with 11 energy, so 9 of that energy is now locked away; for now, she has a mana reserve of 6 with 2 energy actually in it.

Limited Ritual Adept

Limiting Ritual Adept – or its component parts, if the GM is breaking it down into (Connection), (Space), and (Time) – will always be simpler than limiting Magery. In play, the only question is whether the caster uses the adept rules or the non-adept ones. Because this is so much *easier*, the GM might rule that only Ritual Adept, not Magery, can take these limitations.

A TALENT FOR THE ARTS

Ritual Path Magic (p. 12) included Natural Caster, a 15-point Talent that benefits every Path (plus several related skills). It's believable that a true "Talent for magic" would help across the board like that. But it's *also* reasonable to assume that some people may have a knack for a much smaller subset of Paths . . . and skills related to those Paths, if not necessarily to magic in general.

The Talents below follow these guidelines:

1. Each is a 5-point Talent that includes exactly two Paths and three related skills. This is arguably more interesting than a "one Path/one Talent" approach, as it allows for the exploration of what the intersection of those Paths means.

2. In addition to the five listed skills, each Talent adds its level to Thaumatology (or whatever core skill you use), but *only* when the two Path skills or the concept of the Talent is involved. For example, Introspection would aid Thaumatology rolls involving Mind or Spirit rituals, but also those for general questions about dream magic, inner strength, etc. This bonus *does* raise effective Thaumatology for the purpose of limiting the

two Paths' skill levels.

3. These Talents do not grant a reaction bonus. As a trade-off, they instead add to the caster's effective Magery level for the purpose of limiting the two Path skill levels. See **GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents** (pp. 18-19) for more on alternative Talent benefits.

4. Each Talent gives the standard reduction in learning time for its associated Paths and skills. This does not apply to Thaumatology.

As a consequence of #2 and #3, each Talent raises the caps on its associated Path skills for all purposes. This makes them a great deal, particularly if the caster were to maximize every Talent that included his favorite Path skill; e.g., taking four levels each of Conduit, Crafter, and Tempered by Fire for +12 to Path of Energy above and beyond the normal Magery/Thaumatology limit! To avoid this, and to help preserve dramatic niches, a limit of one such Talent per character is recommended.

Use the *Path to Talents Table* (p. 20) as a quick reference to find a Talent for the Paths you're interested in.

Anatomist

5 points/level

You have an instinctive knowledge of the body, whether the subject is alive, dead, or "something else."

Forensics, Path of Body, Path of Undead, Physiology, Surgery.

Conduit

5 points/level

The raw *energy* of magic is yours to command, which gives you an edge when working with mundane energy as well.

Alchemy, Electrician*, Innate Attack, Path of Energy, Path of Magic.

* At low TLs, this is functionally equivalent to Hazardous Materials (Electricity).

Crafter

5 points/level*

Whether conjuring forth objects or making them by hand, you are particularly skilled at simple creations.

Artist, Machinist, Path of Energy, Path of Matter, Smith.

* This 5-point Talent is comparable to the other options. However, a 10-point version ("Craftmaster") might better represent its scope: add Armoury, Carpentry, Jeweler, Leatherworking, Masonry, and Sewing.

Dark Walker

5 points/level

Whether for good or ill, you explore the dark, hidden places to deal with the monsters that humanity would rather pretend did not exist.

Exorcism, Hidden Lore (for spirits or monsters)*, Path of Spirit, Path of Undead, Urban Survival.

* Or Expert Skill, if appropriate – whichever of the two is used in your setting to identify monsters and their weaknesses.

Insight

5 points/level

You tend to know what's going to happen, whether due to supernatural intuition or simply an ability to observe and extrapolate from the present.

Fortune-Telling, Gambling, Meteorology (or Weather Sense), Path of Chance, Path of Magic.

Introspection

5 points/level

You can retreat into a carefully crafted world within your own mind, drawing upon it for strength or inspiration.

Dreaming, Meditation, Mind Block, Path of Mind, Path of Spirit.

Mentor

5 points/level

You've mapped out the mind – not only how it works, but the potential within it, just waiting to be unlocked . . . or *used*.

Brainwashing, Path of Magic, Path of Mind, Psychology, Teaching.

Mortalist

5 points/level

You're not necessarily a bad person – you just understand death and dying, and are adept at working with cadavers in any capacity.

Expert Skill (Thanatology)*, Path of Matter, Path of Undead, Poisons, Professional Skill (Mortician)*.

* In a setting with undead, Expert Skill (Thanatology) includes knowledge of how to put them down for good, while Professional Skill (Mortician) can identify the difference between a person, corpse, and zombie – or disguise one as the other.

Mystic

5 points/level

Regardless of whether you're an active practitioner, you understand the link between magic and religion.

Esoteric Medicine, Path of Crossroads, Path of Spirit, Religious Ritual, Theology.

Neuromancer

5 points/level

Every twitch, every breath, every heartbeat – you truly understand the connection between mind and body.

Body Language, Expert Skill (Neurology)*, Path of Body, Path of Mind, Pharmacy.

* Can stand in for any medical skill to answer questions about the nervous system, including autonomic responses, chemical disorders of the brain, and so on. At low TLs, this skill represents a knack for telling when someone "just ain't quite right."

Nourisher

5 points/level

You understand the cycle of sustenance, from the methods necessary to keep crops alive to which of those plants will best feed the hungry.

Cooking, Farming, Naturalist, Path of Body, Path of Matter.

Pararchaeologist

5 points/level

Ancient magical mysteries are your domain.

Archaeology, History, Occultism, Path of Crossroads, Path of Magic.

Some people have a knack for a small subset of Paths.

Tempered by Fire

5 points/level

You have come to terms with the risks of working with dangerous energies and materials – if you're fated to be burned to a crisp, so be it – which helps you remain calm and focused.

Explosives, Hazardous Materials, Path of Chance, Path of Energy, Professional Skill (Firefighter).

True Traveler

5 points/level

You are familiar with other dimensions, and have learned to adapt and thrive in a wide range of bizarre environments.

Area Knowledge (any other realm or dimension), Path of Chance, Path of Crossroads, Physics (Quantum Physics or any esoteric specialty), Survival.

Path to Talents Table

Path	Talents That Aid It
Body	Anatomist, Nourisher, Neuromancer
Chance	Insight, Tempered by Fire, True Traveler
Crossroads	Mystic, Pararchaeologist, True Traveler
Energy	Conduit, Crafter, Tempered by Fire
Magic	Conduit, Insight, Mentor, Pararchaeologist
Matter	Crafter, Mortalist, Nourisher
Mind	Introspection, Mentor, Neuromancer
Spirit	Dark Walker, Introspection, Mystic
Undead	Anatomist, Dark Walker, Mortalist

IT'S MY SPECIALTY

Allowing magical skills to take optional specialties (pp. B169-170) provides yet another way to give casters some focus. It's up to the GM whether magicians can specialize their core skill, Path skills, or both.

Core Specialties

A core skill like Thaumatology can be specialized by Path. Doing so turns it into an IQ/H skill rather than IQ/VH . . . but

only for the purpose of that one Path. For all others, its effective skill is at -2. These effective skill levels (standard for one Path, -2 for all others) apply not only to rolls, but to Path limits.

Example: Ada and Bob both have IQ 14 and Magery 4. Ada learns Thaumatology (VH) IQ+1 [8]-15. She can now learn any Path skill as high as 15. Bob spends the same points on Thaumatology (Mind) (H) IQ+2 [8]-16. He can now learn Path of Mind as high as 16 or any other Path as high as 14.

If the GM wants to make specialized core skills a better deal, he can rule that the Path being specialized in may exceed the Magery limit by up to two levels – like a weaker version of Improved Cap 2 (from *New Perks*, p. 17). This would, for example, allow Bob to raise Thaumatology (Mind) to (H) IQ+4 [16]-18, then raise his Path of Mind to 18 and his other Path skills to 16. In effect, it lets him maximize his normal Paths without compromising the benefit given to his “focus” Path, Mind.

Path Specialties

Path skills can take optional specialties, usually either for one narrow subset of the Path (e.g., Path of Energy (Fire) or Path of Mind (Lust)) or for one specific effect (e.g., Path of Matter (Create)). Doing so drops the skill to IQ/H instead of IQ/VH, but in only that one specialty – for all other purposes, its effective skill is at -2.

See *Simplified Specialties* (above) for a “grab-and-go” take on this.

With GM permission, a caster may be able to *double-specialize* in a Path; e.g., Path of Energy (Create Fire). This makes it into an IQ/A skill, but effective skill is at -2 if only one of the two specialties is involved (e.g., a spell involving fire or a Create Energy spell), or at -4 if neither is! As this adds significant complexity, it's a poor fit for some campaigns.

Because a specialized Path ends up at a higher level than it otherwise would have, specialization has natural synergy with Improved Cap (*New Perks*, p. 17). One way the GM can cement this bond is to rule that *only* specialized Paths can take Improved Cap (up to two levels, or four if double-specialized). This allows the penalized, “general” version of the Path to be bought up to the normal limit – while the specialized, unpenalized aspect exceeds it. Alternatively, the GM may allow a level or two of Improved Cap for everyone, but let specialized Paths take a *further* two (or four) levels.

Simplified Specialties

For groups who find optional Path specialties (above) a bit too complex, here's a simple “power-up” version which can be easily added to any caster.

Path Focus

6 points

Choose a Path skill and a narrow focus for that skill; e.g., Path of Energy (Fire). When using your Path for a spell within that focus, it is at +2 for *all* purposes. This +2 *can* push effective Path skill past the normal Magery/Thaumatology limit. A Path can have only one Path Focus.

Statistics: Improved Cap 2 [2] + the Path skill becomes specialized *and* raised an additional level [4]. For example, Path of Energy (VH) IQ [8] becomes Path of Energy (Fire) (H) IQ+2 [12].

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Though Reverend Pee Kitty meanders across the astral plane each night, during the day he masquerades as Jason Levine, the Assistant *GURPS* Line Editor. In the latter capacity, he has written *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic*, the *GURPS Monster Hunters* series from which it spawned, and several other works. But this article was only partially his; he'd like to thank the members of the Steve Jackson Games forums (forums.sjgames.com) who provided the questions – and in some cases, the answers! – that this article attempts to address and canonize. When not virtually hanging out with these fine people, he enjoys the sights and spectacles of Chattanooga with his wonderful wife and assorted friends.

EIDETIC MEMORY

THE AZURE DRAGON

BY DAVID L. PULVER

The Azure Dragon is a rare Victorian/Edwardian grimoire. It can serve as a MacGuffin in an occult-themed adventure that uses Book magic (*GURPS Thaumatology*, pp. 121-165). Several variations exist, permitting it to show up any time from the 1890s to the present day. The book takes its name from the cover of the printed edition, which depicts the Azure dragon, one of the Four Symbols of the Chinese constellations. The actual title is *The Celestial Traveler* by Anonymous.

ACADEMIC VIEW OF THE WORK

The following excerpt from a recent scholarly work summarizes what is commonly known (by mundane academics) regarding the grimoire.

The Azure Dragon is an Edwardian-era grimoire that has acquired a significant reputation given its relatively recent vintage.

The grimoire is dedicated to the Society of Leng, a loose fraternity of expatriate British orientalists, theosophists, and magicians that was active in Hong Kong, Singapore, and India in the period from 1890 to the 1920s. Surviving letters of Society of Leng members make it clear that *The Azure Dragon's* author was none other than the group's co-founder, Sir Arthur Gordon Sykes Runciman (1862-1913). He was an explorer, archeologist, womanizer, astronomer, mathematician, and occultist who wrote, or possibly dictated, the work whilst holding a position at the Tsim Sha Tsui observatory at Kowloon, Hong Kong (later the Royal Observatory of Hong Kong).

The grimoire, apparently mainly written between 1899 and 1913, mixes a personal narrative of enlightenment with magical instruction, detailing the author's quest for cosmological knowledge and occult mastery. Its early sections attempt to fuse Western ceremonial and astral magic with higher mathematics, Chinese astrology, and Sino-Tibetan mysticism. These are interspersed with a travelogue in which the author espouses grandiose claims (likely influenced by theosophical writings) regarding the "mystical Tibetan" origins of his magical system. However, these chapters are a mere prelude. Its unnamed author, who refers to himself in the third person as *The Traveler*, details a complex ritual system for

the manipulation of celestial matter, astral clairvoyance, and traveling bodily to other worlds. Interspersed with these mechanics are bizarre descriptions of phantasmagoric journeys to extraterrestrial worlds (perhaps drug-induced) and reams of arcane and abstruse mathematical formula.

Arthur Runciman fell ill toward the end of the process of writing *The Celestial Traveler*, and did not live to see publication. Shortly after his death in 1913, Runciman's friend and fellow Society member, the occultist and publisher Cecil Widmore, assembled the final manuscript papers and produced a privately printed edition, *The Azure Dragon*. Aside from some abstracts, which omit the actual rituals, no more than two dozen authentic copies were published. Plans for a larger press run were scuttled when Widmore perished in the sinking of the liner *SS Persia* (torpedoed by a German U-boat in 1915). Today the work is very hard to find; no copies remain in public or university libraries, although several are believed to exist in private hands.

– Melinda Chang, *Orientalist Appropriation in Victorian Occult Theory* (Hong Kong University Press – Columbia University, 2013)

EDITIONS OF *THE AZURE DRAGON*

Bibliographic research may turn up the following additional information. Several versions of the manuscript exist, most incomplete.

The Leng Society Letters

Some three dozen letters were sent between 1895 and 1912 to a six Society of Leng members scattered across the British Empire who were close friends or correspondents of Sir Arthur Runciman. This correspondence contains fragments of Runciman's narrative, detailed below, but only partial descriptions of the rituals, insufficient to allow any to be used. Over the last century, several of these letters have been quoted or paraphrased in various occult journals and historical works. Originals sometimes appear in public auctions, private sales, or collections of Edwardiana; they command prices of \$500-1,500 each.

The main utility of finding one of these letters would be as a goad to adventurers to seek out a complete manuscript.

The Celestial Traveler

The original handwritten manuscript is believed to have been in the possession of Cecil Widmore when *SS Persia* sank in 1915 (with 343 dead). The ship was also carrying a fortune in jewels and gold (belonging to the Maharaja of Karputhala). In 2003, it was located off Crete in 10,000' of water. Attempts to salvage the treasure have only met with partial success; if the manuscript was in a watertight strongbox, which Widmore was believed to have owned, it may have survived.

According to occult legend, the original contains not only the complete manuscript, but also extra annotations by Runciman that did not make it into the final version. (The extra annotations in the manuscript may provide a bonus to the user's Book skill if carefully studied, or contain an additional lost ritual . . .)

The Widmore Abstract

This lengthy 1913 letter is a summary of the narrative text of the book that was prepared by Cecil Widmore. It was sent to a financial backer in London shortly before Widmore's ill-fated voyage, and detailed his plans to publish a larger edition of the work. It contains no occult rituals. The original letter exists in the British Library archives, as part of a collection of Widmore's letters to various authors he published. The Widmore Abstract has been quoted in a half-dozen or so occult and scholarly works.

The Azure Dragon

This clothbound edition (96 pages, several arcane diagrams) was printed in Hong Kong in the spring of 1913. It is recognizable by the blue Chinese dragon on the frontispiece. Twenty-one copies were ordered by subscription and sent to British and French occultists. Many failed to reach their destination, as the First World War had just begun, interfering with the mail. At least one copy remained in Hong Kong, a gift to a friend of Runciman at the Royal Observatory. After the friend passed away in 1919, it was donated by his estate to the City Hall Library in Hong Kong. However, records show it was misplaced or pilfered when the collection was moved following the demolition of the old City Hall in 1933.

Various people have claimed to own copies of *The Azure Dragon*. In the 1960s, the infamous Parisian black magician Pierre Valdek boasted of acquiring one from a Foreign Legionnaire who had found it in Saigon. He supposedly used it to visit Mars, the moon, and a bizarre metal world orbiting Sirius (a graphic-album version of this was published in 1983 by the artist Pierre Pallisy). Valdek disappeared mysteriously in the 1970s. The fate of his copy remains unknown, unless it was the one that turned up in a private estate auction in Edinburgh in 1990. That one sold for £65,000 to an anonymous bidder, described by witnesses as "a wealthy Chinese gentleman" later identified as suspected Hong Kong triad leader Xiao-Wen Chang.

Today, copies are likely valued at \$200,000 (or more) among serious collectors, and may be priceless among those who believe in their occult potency. *The Azure Dragon* edition contains the complete narrative and all known rituals.

The Tokyo Copy

A blurry 1970s-vintage photocopy of *The Azure Dragon* turned up as part of a Tokyo estate auction lot in 2012. It was acquired by an anonymous American bidder for 1.4 million yen (approximately \$72,000). The purchaser was later identified as retired NASA cosmologist Dr. Steven Shrewsbury (see *The Cosmologist*, p. 24). The Chinese embassy later protested the sale, claiming the item was likely looted from Hong Kong by Japanese soldiers and should be returned to China. Since it was a copy rather than an original, the Japanese authorities refused to recognize the claim and chose not to investigate further.

READING THE AZURE DRAGON

Should adventurers acquire any of the rare copies of the book, the abstract, or the letters, they will find that it contains all or part of a narrative (detailed below) and – if they have *The Celestial Traveler*, *The Azure Dragon*, or the "Tokyo Copy" – a series of rituals embedded in the narrative. The book is in English.

The first chapter focuses on the author's spiritual growth. It records his training as an astronomer and mathematician, and a spiritual awakening while working at the Royal Observatory in Cape Town that led to researching astrology, linguistics, spiritualism, astral projection, past-life regression, and magic. These came to include mediumistic experiments in 1880s in which, with the help of theosophical teachings, he reawakened memories of a past life. He was once a Tibetan temple scribe named Rabten, in the service of the ancient magician-high priest Kumchen-Choegyal, the Divine Thunderbolt of Nam and All-Knowing Dharma King, the Guardian of the Gates Beyond the World.

A desire to test the reality of this experience led him to leave Cape Town and embark on quest into "the Orient" in search of his spiritual heritage. A lengthy series of travels and adventures ultimately led him to Gansu Province, China, where he traveled for a time in the company of the famous archeologist Sir Marc Aurel Stein. At the Dunhuang oasis, Stein's party met with a Taoist priest named Wang Yuanlu, master of the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas (the Mogao Grottos). The priest informed his guests that, a few years ago, he had discovered an ancient sealed secret library cave housing a huge trove of sacred and historical manuscripts, some dating as far back to the 11th century.

While assisting Aurel Stein in reviewing these esoteric documents, the author recognized one scroll as written in the now-extinct Sino-Tibetan language of Nam, the language his past incarnation Rabten had been fluent in. Finding himself able to decipher its secrets, the author kept his own council and parted company with Stein. He then made plans to fund and launch his own expedition into the mountains of Tibet.

The book goes on to relate how, from 1907 to 1910, the author and a few companions (founding members of the Leng society?) followed clues gleaned from the Mogao Scrolls and his recollections of a past life. These ultimately led to the ruins of an ancient monastery high in the Himalayas. After avoiding a number of deadly traps and a pack of odoriferous man-apes, the survivors passed through a "emerald door that was no door" and entered the "lost Plateau of Leng."

The author deciphered the “mathematics of madness” written on its walls under cave paintings far older than Mankind. The provided revelations that would serve as the basic inspiration for the rituals recounted later in the book, Evocation of the Falling Star, the Astral Telescope, and the Radiant Bubble of Tsang.

The third chapter relates how the author returned to Hong Kong and then spent most of 1911 and 1912 perfecting the rituals. In a brief interlude, he discusses an experiment in which Evocation of the Falling Star was used to rid himself of a Triad gangster that was attempting to extort money from his landlady (of which there are hints of a brief romantic connection):

That a small meteorite was observed to fall from the heavens and strike the very location where I had subtly drawn the sigil – the window of the insufferable Wei Shen, cannot be put down to chance, although, of course, being 8 October, it was the peak period for the Dragonids shower. In any event, the experiment killed, as they say, two birds with one stone. I expect the lovely Qiu will be pleased.

However, while such “parlor tricks” honed his skill, they were not the focus of his work. Rather, he began by using Astral Telescope to view progressively distant locations and then attempting to visit them via experiments in extraterrestrial transposition: the “great rite” of the Radiant Bubble of Tsang. After a sequence of failures that nearly drove him insane, he recorded how, in 1911, “assisted the mathematical insights of my dearest daughter,” he streamlined the rituals of the Radiant Bubble of Tsang into a procedure he called the Celestial Coachman, finally succeeding in bodily transporting himself beyond the spheres of Earth. His first trip was “to the mansions of the moon.” He arrived in an air-filled cavern “in which my weight was like a feather” he encountered a talking crystal monolith and witnessed a “Selenian star-ghost born from the dust of Eons” that was “simultaneously akin to an amoeba, a nymph, and a twisting coil of red-hot wire.” It rose hissing from a pit and attempted to embrace him before collapsing into a puddle of rust.

From then on, the author recounts the further refinement of the ritual (in late 1912) and his conveyance via the Celestial Coachman in a series of ever-longer journeys across the gulfs of space. He visited “an icy planet on the outermost fringe of the solar system” referred to only as “the quintuple-mooned ninth planet.” Based on decrypting a sequence of symbols and words inscribed in the “language of Pnoth” on a maze of black ice pillars haunted by three-eyed bat things, the author deduced the existence of a “River of Stars” that led to another cosmos beyond our own.

Some weeks later, after being treated for a brain fever brought on by his exposure to the bats, the author then summoned the Coachman into the “Constellation of Eridani,” past a star referred to as the “the End of the River” (presumably Archenar), which is described as “a blue star shaped like an egg.” The author then stops to ask directions from a “vast and pulsing mother-thing” that orbits the star. The penultimate chapter relates how the author uses these directions to travel via the Celestial Coachman on his final journey. This takes the

author “across the cold and lightless Void of Eridanus” to the planet he called Sova Rashaverak, “where another cosmos emerges into our own.”

On this threshold, the author found a world filled with mountain-sized pyramids of bones and “seas of phlegthonic blood from which rise a world-girdling line of gargantuan pillars of pale, blasphemously tattooed flesh.” Finding a door inside one of these pillars, he discovered a “living city of the dead” and there dwelt for many days in frustrating attempts at communication with the “lissome, vampiric, half-seen” inhabitants of this world while trading blood for insight into their “fearful geometries and sigils of their hyperspatial fourth-power consciousness.”

At this point, the final chapter of the book, which has references that suggest it was composed in the year 1912, descends into incoherence, for the author was apparently suffering from severe anemia along with some form of unspecified mental illness while attempting to complete the work before his health or memory failed. The remaining manuscript is devoid of further anecdote, devoted instead to a so far incomprehensible mathematical formula and set of ritual diagrams that offer the final magical insights gained from the Rasherverakim, a theory (or ritual?) he dubs the Transcendent Manifold Nativity.

There was a first edition of Fort's Book of the Damned and a dark grimoire so waterstained she could make out none of the spells.

– Avram Davidson, *Magic For Sale*

DECODING THE BOOK

Although the narrative is in English, its mathematical complexities and astronomical references effectively mean learning its Book skill requires Mathematics-12+ and Astronomy-12+ as prerequisites. Four comprehensible rituals exist within the tome.

Horoscope

Effect Shaping: Book Skill-4; 10 minutes.

Energy Accumulating: 6 points.

This is simply a standard astrological divination spell that uses the Chinese zodiac (*Thaumatology*, p. 86). It is otherwise identical to the Vision of Luck (*Thaumatology*, p. 152). Casting involves preparing an astrological chart and requires knowledge of the subject's birthday.

The Astral Telescope

Effect Shaping: Book Skill-4; 1hour. This adds levels of Telescopic Vision equal to margin of success (minimum 1).

Energy Accumulating: 5 points + 2 per level of Telescopic Vision.

This ritual is cast on a telescope (or binoculars). For the duration of the ritual effect, it permits the telescope to gather astral as well as visible light, greatly increasing its performance by one or more levels of Telescopic Vision. In addition, it grants the scope See Invisible (for invisibility to electromagnetic vision) and Hyperspectral Vision (Extended High and Low-Band). In particular, the user may use the scope to see invisible and insubstantial entities, such as ghosts and astral travelers.

Evocation of the Falling Star

Effect Shaping: Book Skill-6; 1 hour. This inflicts dice of crushing damage equal to margin of success (minimum 1d).

Energy Accumulating: 12 points; use *Damage Modifiers Tables (Thaumatology, pp. 242-243)* to determine damage, which must be crushing.

If cast during an existing meteor shower, or in advance of a predicted shower, this will redirect the path of a falling meteor to strike a particular target designated by the magician. Except for inflicting crushing rather than burning damage, the ritual is effectively identical to Thunderbolt (*Thaumatology, p. 144*)

The Cosmologist

The ex-NASA astrophysicist Steven Shrewsbury (see *The Tokyo Copy, p. 22*) indeed possesses a copy of the manuscript. Although not a magician himself, he is a believer in paranormal phenomena. He acquired the manuscript after reading the Widmore Abstract and being fascinated by its reference to “five moons of the ninth planet” in a 1913-era manuscript. While the existence of a ninth planet or planet X was widely suspected in the period, the fact that Pluto had at least five sizable moons was not discovered until far more recent times. Moreover, the references in the final chapter to a void in the constellation of Eridanus sound to him like the Cosmic Background Microwave (CBM) cold spot, or Eridanus Supervoid, an area that might possibly be a vast empty space in the universe or even, according to one controversial theory, the impression of another universe impinging on our own.

Shrewsbury would dearly like to find a magician who can test these theories by trying out the rituals. The cosmologist wishes to follow in Arthur Runciman’s footsteps to the very ends of the universe. Perhaps he will come to the PCs – or maybe his quest for an occult partner will lead him to the wrong people (Chinese agents?) and either he, or a friend or relative, will need someone to rescue him.

The Celestial Coachman

Effect Shaping: Book Skill-6; 20 minutes.

Energy Accumulating: 8 points.

This ritual transports the user and any companions who are touching him across a great distance of interplanetary or interstellar space – a minimum of 100,000 miles and no maximum distance. It does not always transport the subject exactly where he wishes. Rather, it follows a magical form of the anthropic principle: that observations of the physical universe must be compatible with the conscious life that

observes it. In this case, the mystical force that is the Coachman “knows best” and will act to protect the magician from his own ignorance.

The caster is transported to the nearest habitable point where he could survive to his named destination, provided one exists at this point that is closer to the destination than to his point of origin. Should no such point exist, the ritual fails to work. The definition of survivability depends on the magician’s own equipment and preparations; should he first have protected himself with magic or equipment, like a space suit, he might go anywhere. However, should the destination be vague enough that multiple possibilities exist, he is transported to a random one that is most compatible with his own form of life. Thus, humans will tend to arrive on terrestrial garden worlds.

Even where a world is not necessarily survivable, the spell has a tendency to find a way! For example, suppose the user is on Earth and wishes to travel to the moon. If there are no habitable locations on the moon where he could survive, the spell would fail. If there was a location, but it was in a space station hundreds of miles above Luna, or an ancient cavern created by alien visitors under the lunar south pole, he would go there instead! But if the nearest survivable location was a space station that was orbiting Earth, he would not go there, and the spell would fail, since that location is obviously closer to the Earth than it is to his designated destination on the moon.

When performing the ritual, apply weight modifiers if bringing along a group or traveling with luggage or a vehicle; any companions must be touching the caster. Multiple target and area modifiers are inapplicable. Optionally, zodiacal correspondences may apply if the destination is within the corresponding constellation. Assuming Book magic is subject to the laws of magic (*Thaumatology pp. 14-15*), contagion modifiers apply if the caster has materials from that destination. Thus, most visitors to distant points should be sure to bring back something. If traveling to the moon, having a rock retrieved from an Apollo mission or a lock of hair from a lunar astronaut would be useful.

Once the ritual is complete, a silvery sphere appears to form around the caster and any passengers and bear them aloft into space, though they actually vanish from the sight of any outside observer. The time required in seconds to reach a destination is equal to 10 seconds plus (10 seconds times the square of the range penalty as specified above). For example, a range penalty of -7 would require 500 seconds to reach the destination.

ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

David L. Pulver is a Canadian freelance author. An avid SF fan, he began roleplaying in junior high with the newly released *Basic Dungeons & Dragons*. Upon graduating from university, he decided to become a game designer. Since then, David has written over 70 roleplaying game books, and he has worked as a staff writer, editor, and line developer for Steve Jackson Games and Guardians of Order. He is best known for creating *Transhuman Space*, co-authoring the *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* anime RPG, and writing countless *GURPS* books, including the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition, GURPS Ultra-Tech*, and the *GURPS Spaceships* series.

THOROUGHLY MODERN MAGIC

BY PAUL STEFKO

In *GURPS Technomancer*, David Pulver introduced an industrial enchantment system that applied the speed and cost efficiency of modern mass-production practices to magic items as defined in the standard *GURPS* magic system. These rules were later made generic in *GURPS Magic Items 3*, which expanded them to fit into any setting at any tech level.

Now, the industrial enchantment system is updated to *GURPS Fourth Edition*. This material examines the costs of constructing and operating an industrial enchantment line and how to create a line mage, complete with template and job description.

These rules do not limit industrial enchantment to any specific genre or tech level, but the GM should consider carefully how suitable this system is to the campaign.

Cost and time to enchant the production line is determined normally, using the rules on p. 22 of *GURPS Magic*.

Sample Production Line Construction

House Elf Domestics, Inc. of Pittsburgh plans to introduce a wand enchanted with the Clean spell, marketed to facility-management departments at hotels, hospitals, and event centers. House Elf designs a Power-15 assembly line, which they intend to staff with up to 16 line mages. The product (a slender cherry wand carved with the “Redd Up” brand logo) requires 100 energy, so the line needs 4,000 energy to enchant. At TL8, the production line costs \$495,160.

CREATING A PRODUCTION LINE

At the core, an industrial enchantment-production line is itself a specialized magic item, created using the Enchant spell via the Slow and Sure enchantment method. The Power of the production line determines the Power of the item produced by the line. In most cases, a Power-15 production line is sufficient, but items designed to function in low-mana areas must be produced by production lines with Power-20 or greater. The line is designed to manufacture a single, specific magic item; the product’s exact nature must be set when the line is created, including magical capabilities and mundane materials to be enchanted.

Once the product is defined, decide how many mages can work on the line at one time. This can be any number from four mages to 400. More mages can produce items in less time. (Larger factories have multiple production lines running simultaneously.)

A production line needs at least one hex of floor space for every mage it is designed to accommodate. Larger products require more space in which to enchant. If the product’s volume exceeds the volume of a hex (approximately 93.5 cubic feet), multiply the total number of hexes in the line by 2 or by the square root of (the product’s volume in cubic feet divided by 93.5), whichever is greater.

Enchanting the production line itself requires 10 times the energy needed to enchant the product, multiplied by the square root of the number of mages the line can accommodate. So, a 25-mage production line designed to produce a 50-energy magic item would require 2,500 energy to enchant.

OPERATING A PRODUCTION LINE

Industrial enchantment operates much as Slow and Sure enchantment, but the enchanted production line makes the process more efficient. This efficiency increases with tech level, making products cheaper and production faster as the thaumatology underpinning the process grows more advanced. Industrial enchantment requires one day per point of energy in the product item, divided by the efficiency of the line (see table on p. 26). This time is further divided by the number of mages working on the line (up to the line’s maximum).

Production lines require enchanting materials, power, and periodic maintenance. The total operational expenses for an industrial enchantment line work out to 0.833% of the starting wealth for the line’s tech level for every hex of space in the line. This cost is fixed, regardless of whether or not the line runs with the maximum number of mages.

In addition to the operating expenses, each wizard working on the line earns a wage. Line enchantment is an Average job, but since a mage doing it requires a minimum skill of 15 in Enchant and at least one other spell (the spell being enchanted into the product), a line mage counts as highly trained, earning pay at the high end of the range for his tech level. Calculate a daily wage for the wizards working on a line by assuming that a line mage labors 22 days per month.

Success rolls for industrial enchantment are made at the Power of the production line, not the skill level of any of the mages working on the line. Since production lines have a Power of 15 or higher, you can assume a success rate of about 95%.

Production-Line Operation Table

TL	Efficiency	Expenses Per Hex	Daily Wage	Daily Cost Per Hex	Item Cost (Per Energy)
0	2	\$2.08	\$29.55	\$31.63	\$16.57
1	2	\$4.17	\$30.68	\$34.85	\$18.25
2	2	\$6.25	\$31.82	\$38.07	\$19.94
3	2	\$8.33	\$36.36	\$44.69	\$23.41
4	3	\$16.66	\$50.00	\$66.66	\$23.27
5	5	\$41.65	\$72.73	\$114.38	\$23.96
6	8	\$83.30	\$95.45	\$178.75	\$23.40
7	10	\$124.95	\$118.18	\$243.13	\$25.47
8	12	\$166.60	\$163.64	\$330.24	\$28.83
9	15	\$249.90	\$254.55	\$504.45	\$35.23
10	20	\$416.50	\$368.18	\$784.68	\$41.10
11	20	\$624.75	\$481.82	\$1,106.57	\$57.95
12	20	\$833.00	\$602.27	\$1,435.27	\$76.17

When calculating the manufacturing cost of the product item, you must account for this chance of failure.

To figure the total cost to operate a production line on a daily basis, multiply the daily wage of a line wizard by the number of mages working on the line, and then add the daily operational expenses. To figure the total manufacturing cost of a product, divide this daily cost by 0.9547 (the chance of failure) and the efficiency of the production line (see the table below), and then multiply the result by the energy cost of the item.

The Production-Line Operation Table (above) works out the math for the costs above, giving a total daily cost per hex in the line, and a total manufacturing cost per point of energy in the product item.

Sample Production Line Operation

The Redd Up Cleaning Wand production line is a 16-hex TL8 industrial enchantment line, requiring a total of \$2,665.60 per day in operational expenses. Each line mage earns \$163.64 per day. The manufacturing cost of each Redd Up wand is \$2,883.

LEARNING INDUSTRIAL ENCHANTMENT

In a setting with industrial enchantment, companies function much like the mages' guilds of the pseudo-medieval worlds familiar from fantasy games. To ensure the highest quality and discipline in their line mages, companies may formalize their process with both on-the-job training and classroom instruction. The resulting body of skill works like the styles presented in *GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles*.

Line Enchantment

13 points

Style Prerequisite: Magery 2 (not One College Only).

The Line Enchantment style represents a generic magical style for line mages working in industrial enchantment. While the existence of industrial enchantment implies a fairly modern setting (TL8), this style can apply to any world with the process.

Every line mage requires the Enchant spell, of course, but a given company stresses its own selection of basic spells. Once mages qualify for the company style, they focus on the core spell and the basic or advanced spell(s) necessary for the line on which they will work, getting all to the required skill level of 15.

Some settings require mages to pass a licensing exam before they can work on an enchantment line. If this is the case, the first Magic Perk a line mage takes should be License. The other style perks are tricks to make the production line safer and more efficient.

Required Skills: Thaumatology.

Required Spells: Enchant; 10 spells chosen from the basic spells below.

Perks: Intuitive Cantrip (Boost Enchantment, Filter, Kindle, Muffle, Rinse, Screen, Spark); License; Quick and Focused; Staff Attunement; Standard Operating Procedure (Precision Recharger).

Optional Traits

Attributes: Increased IQ.

Advantages: Security Clearance; Single-Minded; Visualization.

Disadvantages: Magic Susceptibility; Overweight; Unfit.

Skills: Alchemy; Herb Lore; Hazardous Materials (Magical); Symbol Drawing.

Basic Spells

The following spells are typical basic spells taught to initiate in a line enchantment style to get them the prerequisites for Enchant. Each basic spell has no other spells as prerequisites. If a choice is given, a mage should pick just one when taking required spells.

Apportation	Sense Life
Keen (Sense)	Shield
Lend Energy	Ignite Fire <i>or</i> Seek Fire
Light	Measurement <i>or</i> Tell Time
Purify Air	Seek Fuel/TL, Seek Machine/TL, <i>or</i> Seek Power/TL

Advanced Spells

Advanced spells are those that would most commonly be found in items produced by industrial enchantment.

These are usually everyday spells, especially those with suggested items useful to non-mages. All prerequisites for these spells are also considered advanced style spells, though they do not necessarily make viable magic items. The GM can rule that a given company only teaches a subset of these spells, depending on the diversity of its product lines.

(Animal) Control	Powerstone
Aura	Preserve Food
Awaken	Preserve Fuel/TL
Beast Link	Purify Water
Beast-Soother	Relieve Sickness
Beast Speech	Remove Contagion
Bladeturning	Repel (Animal)
Body-Reading	Resist Water
Bravery	Reveal Function/TL
Bright Vision	Reverse Missiles
Clean	Rider
Conceal Magic	Scryguard
Continual Light	Scrywall
Create Air	Season
Create Fire	See Radiation
Create Water	Seek Air
Dancing Object	Seek Earth
Dark Vision	Seek Food
Detect Magic	Seek Magic
Detect Poison	Seek Plant
Earth to Stone	Seek Radiation
Earth Vision	Seek Water
Encrypt	Seeker
Extinguish Fire	Sense Danger
Fireproof	Sense Emotion
Glue	Sense Foes
Hawk Vision	Sense Mana
Heal Plant	Sense Observation
Hide	Shade
Hush	Shape Air
Identify Plant	Shape Earth
Identify Spell	Shape Fire
Illusion Disguise	Shape Plant
Illusion Shell	Silence
Infravision	Sleep
Jump	Slow
Lend Power/TL	Slow Fall
Lighten Burden	Slow Fire
Long March	Small Vision
Mage Sense	Sound
Mage Sight	Sound Vision
Magelock	Speed
Magnetic Vision	Stop Bleeding
Manipulate	Stop Spasm
Manastone	Tell Position
Mature	Test Food
Minor Healing	Test Fuel/TL
Mirror	Test Load
Missile Shield	Truthsayer
Neutralize Poison	Turn Blade
Night Vision	Umbrella
Nightingale	Undo
No-Smell	Voices
One-College Powerstone	Wallwalker
Pathfinder	Watchdog
Power	Wizard Eye

THE LINE MAGE

The industrial enchantment-production line mitigates the role of the individual enchanter. It doesn't eliminate him. The job of the line mage consists of long, boring hours, but it pays better than most similar jobs. Moreover, in the course of his work, the mage gains valuable experience with the Enchant spell and whatever spells are included in the line's product. He may eventually leverage these skills into a more lucrative career doing contract work via traditional enchantment methods.

A line mage typically is expected to know how to craft the mundane product (in the case of simple items like wands) or to operate equipment (in the case of complex products), perform accurate quality assurance, and occasionally make minor repairs to any line machinery. Some lines require the ability to handle dangerous chemicals, alchemical reagents, or exotic materials. Line mages also may pick up proficiency in forklift operation, freight handling, and other skills.

Daily exposure to the enchantment process can sometimes result in a minor susceptibility to magical effects. In modern times, health plans typically require female line mages who become pregnant to temporarily transfer to less magically stressful jobs or to take prenatal maternity leave (possibly at reduced pay) to avoid developmental abnormalities. Rare industrial accidents can result in hearing loss or damage to the hands and feet; such injuries are covered under worker compensation laws. Finally, since the job involves extended sedentary periods and a general lack of physical activity, line mages are more likely to become obese and develop other health conditions. Employers encourage their workers to exercise and maintain a healthy lifestyle at home; many companies start softball leagues or subsidize gym memberships.

For several ideas on how to take industrial enchantment from background color to adventure plots, see p. 38.

Line Mage

125 points

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 13 [60]; HT 10 [0].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 12 [-5]; Per 13 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Magery 2 [25]. ● 20 points chosen from among IQ +1 [20], HT +1 or +2 [10 or 20], FP +1 to +6 [3/level], Luck (Aspected, Enchantment spells only, -20%) [12], Magical School Familiarity (Line Enchantment, p. 26) [1], Security Clearance [3 or 5], Signature Gear [1/level], Single-Minded [5], Status 1 or 2 [5 or 10], Visualization [10], Style Perks (p. 26) [1/perk], or increase Magery to 3 [10].

Disadvantages: -15 points chosen from among Debt 1-5 [-1/level], Hard of Hearing [-10], Insomniac (Mild) [-10], Magic Susceptibility 1-2 [-3/level], Missing Digit [-2 or -5], Overweight [-1], Unfit [-5], or Workaholic [-5].

Primary Skills: Thaumatology (VH) IQ+1 [4]-14*. ● One of Alchemy/TL (VH) IQ-1 [4]-12, Herb Lore/TL (VH) IQ-1 [4]-12, or Symbol Drawing (any) (H) IQ [4]-13.

Secondary Skills: Three of Sewing/TL or Leatherworking, both (E) DX [1]-10; Carpentry (E) IQ [1]-13; Electronics Operation/TL (any), Electrician/TL, Electronics Repair/TL (any), Hazardous Materials/TL (Biological, Chemical, Magical, or Radioactive), Machinist/TL, or Smith/TL (any), all (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; or Artist (Pottery, Sculpting, or Woodworking), Chemistry/TL, Jeweler/TL, Metallurgy/TL, all (H) IQ-2 [1]-11.

Background Skills: 5 points chosen from among Driving/TL (Automobile, Construction Equipment, or Heavy Wheeled), DX/A; Computer Operation/TL or Current Affairs/TL (Business or Science & Technology), both IQ/E; or Administration, Packing, Research, or Teamster (any), all IQ/A.

Spells*: Enchant (VH) IQ+2 [8]-15; and Apportation, Keen (Sense), Lend Energy, Light, Purify Air, Sense Life, and Shield, all (H) IQ [1]-13. ● One of Ignite Fire or Seek Fire, both (H) IQ [1]-13. ● One of Measurement or Tell Time, both (H) IQ [1]-13. ● One of Seek Fuel/TL, Seek Machine/TL, or Seek Power/TL, all (H) IQ [1]-13. ● 6 points to add or improve the above spells or *Advanced Spells* (pp. 26-27) and their prerequisites. At least one spell capable of producing an enchanted item must be known at 15+.

* Thaumatology and all spells include +2 from Magery.

Industrial Enchanter

You work on an industrial enchantment line, creating mass-produced magic items. The job pays well, but is fairly tedious and doesn't afford very many opportunities for advancement.

Prerequisites: Enchant 15+ and at least one spell capable of producing an enchanted item at 15+.

Job Roll: Worst prerequisite. On critical failure, an industrial accident causes the character 1d+1 injury and results in a demotion (decrease monthly pay by 10%).

Monthly Pay: Varies by Tech Level.

Wealth Level: Average (highly trained). Supports Status 1-2.

Sample Line Mage: Melissa Straithairn

150 points

Melissa Straithairn studied enchantment at the University of New Mexico, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Applied Thaumatology. After college, she found herself with a head full of minor spells and a lot of student debt. She suffered through a few rough months of temp jobs before finding work with House Elf Domestics. The company moved her to Pittsburgh and trained her for their new Redd Up line.

Melissa has been with House Elf now for two years. She's a hard worker, valued by her supervisors, but the job is starting to get to her. She lays awake at night working through the spell formulae, trying to find ways to make the process more efficient. She has begun studying Sleep elixirs as a way to combat this.

Melissa works out several days a week. On the weekends, she takes a self-defense class based on Shotokan Karate. Since moving to Pittsburgh, she has avoided romantic relationships. She claims that she is simply too busy to date.

Melissa is an attractive young woman in her late 20s. She wears her blond hair short and stark. She usually dresses in simple, comfortable clothes such as khaki pants and light shirts.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 13 [60]; **HT** 11 [10].
Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 12 [-5]; Per 13 [0]; FP 13 [6].
Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 8; Parry 7 (Karate).
5'4"; 125 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 8 [0].

CF: Western (Native) [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0].

Advantages

Appearance (Attractive) [4]; Fit [5]; Magery 3 [35]; Single-Minded [5].

Perks: Magical School Familiarity (Line Enchantment); License. [2]

Disadvantages

Debt 2 [-2]; Insomniac (Mild) [-10]; Workaholic [-5].

Quirks: Careful; Minor Addiction (Caffeine); Obsession (Increase line efficiency); Uncomfortable discussing her sexuality. [-4]

Skills

Administration (H) IQ-1 [1]-12; Alchemy/TL8 (VH) IQ-1 [4]-12; Artist (Pottery) (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Artist (Woodworking) (H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Computer Operation/TL8 (E) IQ [1]-13; Current Affairs/TL8 (Science & Technology) (E) IQ [1]-13; Karate (H) DX-2 [1]-8; Karate Art (H) DX-1 [2]-9; Research/TL8 (A) IQ [2]-13; Savoir-Faire (Dojo) (E) IQ [1]-13; Sewing/TL8 (E) DX [1]-10; Thaumatology (VH) IQ+2 [4]-15*.

Techniques: Elbow Strike (Karate) (A) [2]-8; Knee Strike (Karate) (A) [1]-8; Sleep (Alchemy) (H) [2]-12.

Spells*

Apportation (H) IQ+1 [1]-14; Clean (H) IQ+3 [4]-16; Enchant (VH) IQ+3 [8]-16; Ignite Fire (H) IQ+1 [1]-14; Keen Vision (H) IQ+1 [1]-14; Lend Energy (H) IQ+1 [1]-14; Light (H) IQ+1 [1]-14; Measurement (H) IQ+1 [1]-14; Purify Air (H) IQ+1 [1]-14; Restore (H) IQ+1 [1]-14; Seek Power/TL8 (H) IQ+1 [1] 14; Sense Life (H) IQ+1 [1]-14; Shield (H) IQ+1 [1]-14; Simple Illusion (H) IQ+1 [1]-14.

* Includes +3 from Magery.

Check out **GURPS Technomancer** (p. 40) for some ideas on what a magical production line might look like.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Stefko bought a Hand of Glory at the mall once, but he's still waiting for a chance to use it. It's just as hard to find candles made from the fat of a hanged man as you would think. Paul lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with his wife Jamie and a wide collection of toys that might be magic. That's what he tells guests anyway.

THE MATERIAL DIFFERENCE

BY SEAN PUNCH

GURPS Magic makes it impractical for adventuring wizards in fast-paced campaigns to produce any but the most trifling of permanent magic items. Even in sweeping epics, enchanting all but removes the enchanters from the story – conceivably for *years*. This is because artifacts that are clearly preferable to simply casting temporary spells as needed call for hundreds, quite often *thousands* of energy points. In theory, “Quick and Dirty” enchanting makes it possible to complete such efforts in mere hours if all the energy is available as a lump sum, but that’s rarely the case, as most mages command on the order of tens of energy points. Which leaves “Slow and Sure” enchanting . . . at the glacial pace of a day per energy point.

In some genres and settings, that’s fine – the heroes aren’t *supposed* to be enchanters. If magic items are common, it’s a reasonable world-building decision to attribute them to high-efficiency thaumatological processes that are the jealously guarded secrets of NPCs ranging from guildsmen to gods. If such artifacts are rare, they may all originate from a legendary age of Elder Races or Lost Magicks, as in so many fantasy tales. Whatever the situation, if the game emphasizes treasure-finding, like *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, there needs to be *some* incentive to undertake risky adventures rather than stay home, grinding away at magical projects.

If enchanting is appropriate for PCs, however, then long timescales are liable to seem arbitrary and unsatisfying. There are many partial remedies for this: Enchanters can work faster in groups by collaborating on ceremonial magic (*Magic*, p. 12). Symbol magic (*Magic*, pp. 205-209) can create items in half the time if use requires activation with the Symbol Drawing skill. Several of the energy sources described on pp. 50-58 of *GURPS Thaumatology* can make Quick and Dirty enchanting more viable by harvesting extra energy points from ceremonial magic (e.g., via mass magic or the Raise Cone of Power spell), static power supplies, or sacrifices. And suitably crafted items (*Resonant Designs and Materials*, *Thaumatology*, p. 110) can reduce enchantment costs.

These possibilities don’t help the lone adventurer much, though. The ones compatible with Slow and Sure enchanting can reduce years to months, or months to weeks . . . but that still might as well be forever in an action-oriented game. Improved Quick and Dirty efforts can be genuinely speedy, but most require access to strategic resources: mobs of devoted supporters, covens of highly trained wizards, special sites, and so forth. And replacing the labor of enchanting with that of mundane crafting is seldom much of an improvement. All this stuff is wonderful for explaining how cabals of powerful *NPCs*

enchant on an economically practical timescale, but it isn’t optimal for *PCs* who work alone in the days between adventures, perhaps even in the hours between encounters.

Of course, the GM can dispense with all this complexity and simply reduce the time and/or energy requirements for enchanting. *Enchanting Items* (*Thaumatology*, pp. 107-113) offers many alternatives along these lines. The problem is that these cheapen magic items by making them *too* available, weakening the incentive to quest after artifacts of power.

Inherent Magic (*Thaumatology*, pp. 96-100) offers a glimmer of hope, however: Let wizards enchant quickly by drawing large amounts of energy from special materials, but make those resources obtainable only through exciting quests. This approach means that creating magic items *still* takes time and effort, but in the shape of action and adventure. Once the heroes have done enough hacking and slashing and looting, they can convert the spoils of war into enchantments with a few hours’ work. Thus, every PC – not just the magic-users – participates in the process, and there’s good reason to venture out into the world instead of staying safely at home!

RESOURCE FARMING

The basic process here is familiar to players of computer RPGs, who call it “farming”: Complete adventures to obtain rare ingredients, and then turn those commodities into magic items. The devil is in the details!

The GM controls what materials are required for enchantments of each college – and perhaps even for individual spells. Such substances are usually one or more of valuable (gems, incense, precious metals, spices, etc.), risky to transport or work with (demonic soul residue . . .), or dangerous to obtain (e.g., dragon’s blood, lava gathered from active volcanoes, or a rare herb found only atop the Pinnacle of Jagged Death). See *Sample Materials* (p. 31) for ideas.

The number of energy points contained in materials is likewise the GM’s decision. Some suggested guidelines:

- Mundane valuables give energy points proportional to cash value. The ratio might be as favorable as that recommended on p. 98 of *Thaumatology*: one point per full 1/250 of campaign average starting wealth, or \$4 per point in a typical TL3 fantasy setting. For instance, if Fire enchantments require rubies, then a 1,000-energy item consumes \$4,000 in rubies at TL3. However, in games like *Dungeon Fantasy*, where gold and gems flow like water, it’s prudent to be more conservative.

Abilities for Material Enchanters

Enchanters who want to exploit material magic require a specialized set of abilities:

Attributes and Secondary Characteristics: Improved Per (for recognizing essences).

Advantages and Perks: Magery 2+ (a prerequisite for the Enchant spell) – and possibly Signature Gear and/or an Equipment Bond perk for an enchanter's lab.

Skills: Thaumatology; usually Alchemy and Hazardous Materials (Magical); and often several of Armoury (Body Armor, Melee Weapons, etc.), Connoisseur (for valuable goods), Engineer (Mining), Exorcism, Farming, Gardening, Herb Lore, Hazardous Materials (any other), Hidden Lore (for supernatural artifacts), Jeweler, Merchant, Metallurgy, Naturalist, Occultism, Physiology (monster type), Poisons, Professional Skill (Butcher), Prospecting, Religious Ritual, Surgery, and Survival (any).

Spells: Enchant; often Analyze Magic (for evaluating essences) and Remove Enchantment (for recycling magic items); and conceivably Entrap Spirit, Solidify, Soul Jar, or a suitable Bind Spirit specialty (for gathering spirit residues).

Dungeon Fantasy Enchanters

The GM may permit *Dungeon Fantasy* wizards to use material enchanting. They already come with

enough Magery, as well as many of the skills. Apply the following lens:

Material Enchanter (+0 points): Raise Per 12 [-15] to Per 15 [0], but lower FP 14 [9] to FP 11 [0]. ● Reduce advantage allowance to 25 points. ● Add Equipment Bond (Enchanter's Lab) to advantage options. ● Remove Meditation (H) Will-1 [2]-14 from secondary skills. ● Increase background skill picks from nine to 10, which can now also include Gardening (E) IQ [1]-15; Armoury (Body Armor or Melee Weapons), Connoisseur (any kind of valuables), Farming, Hazardous Materials (any other), Merchant, Professional Skill (Butcher), or Prospecting, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Engineer (Mining), Jeweler, Metallurgy, Naturalist, Poisons, or Religious Ritual, all (H) IQ-2 [1]-13; Surgery (VH) IQ-3 [1]-12; or Survival (any) Per-1 [1]-14.* ● Wizardly spells *must* include Material Enchantment (VH) IQ [1]-15.†

* Surgery requires First Aid. Exorcism and Herb Lore remain restricted to clerics and druids, respectively.

† Wizards still can't learn Enchant, but they *can* learn Material Enchantment (VH), which is identical but works only when using these rules. They can further learn any Enchantment spell the GM allows in the campaign, but such magic functions only alongside Material Enchantment.

A point per full 1/30 of starting wealth yields \$33 per point at nominal TL3, and makes items cost about the same as if they had been enchanted the hard way. In that case, the 1,000-point Fire enchantment would call for \$33,000 in rubies!

● Dangerous substances yield energy points equal to the character-point value of the nearest comparable attack advantage, ignoring all modifiers but those essential to the unpleasant effect. If the threat were 6d of burning damage, it would count as Burning Attack 6d [30] and justify 30 energy. If the danger is instant death or an equivalent one-shot doom such as petrification, call it Affliction (Heart Attack, +300%) [40] and go with 40 energy. Spirit possession would work like Possession [100] and mean 100 energy. This sort of thing is per "dose" or other fitting measure of exposure; e.g., 10 demonic soul residues that could result in possession if mishandled would contain 1,000 energy.

● Monster parts – horns, teeth, blood, venom, etc. – generically provide energy equal to IQ multiplied by the *lower* of HT or HP for creatures of IQ 5 or less, but by the *higher* of the two for IQ 6+ beings. Specific examples can use whatever value the GM assigns: the GM might substitute or *add* the "dangerous substances" value for famously lethal bogeys, replace IQ with Will for spirits, treat beings with Automaton (e.g., zombies) as if they had IQ 5 or less, and so on. Moreover, while nearly all suitable entities are unusual in some way, truly unique specimens ought to grant bonus energy or even all the energy that some specific enchantment requires. Conversely, livestock, vermin, and cannon fodder should be low-grade enchantment fuel at best.

● Specific quest items – like that rare herb at the top of the mountain – ought to offer enough energy to complete whatever enchantment has the heroes out questing after it in the first place!

Identification

Which materials aid what enchantments *might* be common knowledge, but the GM is free to require obscure ingredients for specific spells, or to rule that some relationships are poorly understood. Likewise, the PCs may occasionally find unusual substances that they're uncertain about. In cases like that, learning the truth requires a Thaumatology roll – possibly at -1 to -10 for obscurity. A wizard may substitute the best spell that could benefit from the material, where better. In fantasy worlds, particularly settings suited to *Dungeon Fantasy*, mundane skills include this kind of information and often avoid some or all of the obscurity penalty within their sphere; use these for the roll, where beneficial. Examples include:

Armor, tools, or weapons: Craft skills (e.g., Armoury).

Artworks or luxury goods: Suitable Connoisseur specialty.

Forgotten, holy, or magical artifacts: Suitable Hidden Lore specialty.

Gemstones: Jeweler, Merchant, or Prospecting.

Internal organs: Suitable Physiology specialty.

Metals: Metallurgy or Prospecting – or Merchant, for *precious* metals.

Plants: Herb Lore.

Visible animal parts (eyeballs, pelts, tusks, and so on): Naturalist.

Any success reveals the material's potential uses, and estimates the amount of energy provided. Any failure doesn't, and allows no repeated attempt.

Extraction

Not all materials are found in a state suitable for transporting and working with them! At the GM's option, skill rolls may be necessary to extract such goods with their magical potency intact. Some suggestions:

Animal parts (blood, bones, pelts, tusks, etc.): Professional Skill (Butcher) or Survival.

Intangible spiritual residues: Entrap Spirit, Solidify, Soul Jar, or suitable Bind Spirit spell. This is a use of thaumatological *knowledge*, not a casting; it demands a roll but no energy. Demonic spirits might also respond to an Exorcism or Religious Ritual roll.

Internal organs or delicate body parts (e.g., eyeballs): Surgery.
Ores or rough gems: Engineer (Mining) or Prospecting.

Sample Materials

The GM must fine-tune a list of specific materials to the campaign. Here are some generic examples inspired by *Magic*, p. 222 and *Thaumatology*, pp. 99, 247-252.

College: This list suggests materials useful for *entire colleges*, not just specific enchantments.

Valuables: Gems, incense, manmade goods, and other treasures that can be sacrificed for energy instead of sold for money.

Dangers: Perils encountered to obtain more unusual substances, or faced by individuals carrying them. Be creative; e.g., anything that requires braving angry beasts to collect, or that attracts vicious animals, might supply energy for Animal enchantments. The associated college's offensive spells are an excellent source of ideas. Failed Hazardous Materials rolls often trigger these effects!

Monsters: Creatures whose body parts, spirit residues, or other remains act as suitable materials.

College	Valuables	Dangers	Monsters
Air	Chalcedony, galbanum, onyx	Falling, storms	Air elementals, giant birds
Animal	Bloodstone, furs, musk	Angry animals, lycanthropy	Giant animals, were-creatures
Body Control	Bone jewelry, ivory	Aging, disease	Foes of noble blood, golems
Communication and Empathy	Ancient tomes, coral, ivory	Muteness, nightmares	Dream entities, telepaths
Earth	Quartz, silver	Cave-ins, petrification, rockslides	Earth elementals, tunneling worms
Enchantment	Magic items, opal	Cursed/disenchanting possessions	Magical constructs
Fire	Carnelian, gold, ruby	Burning, explosions	Dragons, fire elementals
Food	Edible delicacies, peridot	Bloating, starvation	Gluttonous trash-heap dwellers
Gate	Alexandrite, amber	Insubstantiality, teleportation	Extradimensional intruders, TMWNMTK
Healing	Jasper, jet	Bleeding, infection, tumors	Monsters that heal vampirically
Illusion and Creation	Fine art, pyrites, zircons	Hallucination, madness	Doppelgangers, faerie
Knowledge	Agate, diamond	Confusion, forgetfulness	Giant owls, sphinxes
Light and Darkness	Cinnamon, gold, sunstone	Blindness, darkness	Entities of pure light or shadow
Making and Breaking	Fine armor/weapons, finest clay	Decay, disintegration, rust	Creatures that corrode/dissolve
Meta-Spells	Green moonstone, opal, orichalcum	Curses, Magery loss	Natural spellcasters
Mind Control	Amethyst, garnet	Any mental affliction	Dream entities, telepaths
Movement	Fulgurites, wreckage of legendary ships	Paralysis, slowing	Swift creatures (giant hawks, serpents, etc.)
Necromantic	Ebony, jet, onyx	Possession, withering	Demons, undead
Plant	Green jade, rare herbs	Forest hazards, poisoning	Animated plants
Protection and Warning	Alicorn, asafoetida, bronze	Reduced resistance, vulnerabilities	Anything with an armored shell
Sound	Finest seashells, masterwork musical instruments	Deafness, noise	Monsters with sonic attacks
Technological	Brass, fine armor/weapons	Equipment failure	Clockwork constructs
Water	Aquamarine, beryl, pearl	Drowning, rain, waves	Giant fish, water elementals
Weather	Platinum, saffron	Lightning, tornadoes	Energy beings, giants

Plants: Farming, Gardening, or Naturalist
Tangible supernatural residues (ectoplasm, etc.): Alchemy or Occultism.
Venoms: Poisons.

Any success extracts the full quantity the GM decided was present. Failure destroys 10% of the material's energy value per point of failure. Failure by 10+ or critical failure ruins the material.

Optional Rule: Essences Not Essential

The intermediate step of essences is flavorful but not vital to these rules. Here are two ways to reduce or eliminate their importance.

Time Is of the Essence

If the GM likes the notion of magical materials requiring preparation but feels that containers of pure magical energy don't fit the campaign – or simply doesn't want PCs trading in them! – the solution is to make *Preparing Materials* (pp. 32-33) and *Material Enchanting* (pp. 33-34) two steps in a continuous process. The wizard still requires lab facilities, but the preparation step consists of somehow integrating the substances into the object being enchanted. Maybe they're turned into a potion and painted onto it, or perhaps they mysteriously merge with it. The *same* wizard must put in the time and skill rolls for distillation and follow that up with the time and skill rolls for enchanting. Treat any delay between steps as an interruption of the distillation process.

Pure Materialism

The GM who dislikes the added complication of *Preparing Materials* (pp. 32-33) can let wizards use magical materials "as is." They behave as specialized Powerstones consumed by the enchantment process. They might disintegrate, burn, or otherwise be reduced to a valueless state (precious gems and metals turning to worthless gray rock, organic matter rotting to compost, and so on). To preserve a little of the special flavor of material magic, the GM may still require an enchanter's lab to benefit from this technique, and cap enchantment using it at the *lowest* of the wizard's level with the specific spell, the Enchant spell, and the Alchemy and/or Thaumatology skill. This approach means that enchanters still need special gear and training to exploit materials – they just don't have to invest extra time, make additional skill rolls, or carry around strange essences.

Handling

Many magical materials are *dangerous* to carry or work with. If the GM rules that this is so, roll against a suitable Hazardous Materials specialty whenever a container holding such stuff is filled, emptied, or damaged. For any substance that demands knowledge of the supernatural – e.g., Alchemy, Exorcism, Occultism, Religious Ritual, or a spell – to identify or extract, the relevant specialty is Hazardous Materials (Magical). Failure on this roll triggers the ill effects, whatever they might be.

PREPARING MATERIALS

Merely possessing a material doesn't aid enchanting – it must be reduced to a magical "essence" first. This "distillation" process consumes the original substance. For stuff that could yield any of several essences, the enchanter has to select *one* before beginning; all the others are lost. *Unknown* essences can't be isolated, as the magic-worker won't know the appropriate steps or reagents (though the GM may allow experimentalists to find out using *New Inventions*, pp. B473-474).

Enchanter's Labs

Distilling magic *requires* an enchanter's lab:

Backpack Lab: No skill modifier. Takes an hour to set up or pack. Cost equals one month's typical pay (e.g., \$700 at TL3). 20 lbs.

Lab-in-a-Chest: Gives +1 on rolls to distill magic and enchant using essences. Takes five hours to set up or pack. Cost equals five months' typical pay (e.g., \$3,500 at TL3). 200 lbs.

Lab-in-a-Cart: Gives +2 on rolls to distill magic and enchant using essences. Takes 20 hours to set up or pack. Cost equals 20 months' typical pay (e.g., \$14,000 at TL3). 2,000 lbs.

An alchemist's lab will do, but all rolls are at -4 (so even a fine alchemist's lab with +2 to skill works at -2).

Distilling Essences

Once the lab is set up, distillation can proceed. This takes one uninterrupted hour per 1,000 energy involved, rounded up. Roll *separately* for each ingredient being prepared in that session. The skill roll is against the *better* of Alchemy or Thaumatology – and Herb Lore works for plants. Any success converts the entire sample to energy without loss. Failure loses 10% of the material's energy value per point of failure. Failure by 10+ or critical failure ruins the material *and* triggers any bad effects the substance might have.

If there's any interruption during distillation, make the same roll. In this case, success saves the materials; failure depletes them as above. If anything remains, the process can be restarted from the beginning – but any previous work counts for nothing.

Distilled energy takes the form of an essence which can be stored indefinitely for later use or trade. The market value for essences is typically at least 10-20% higher than the dollars-to-energy exchange rate in the setting, which covers risks, losses, facilities, and labor; e.g., if using \$33 per energy point, essences might sell for \$36 to \$40 per point.

An essence's physical form is always remarkable: cool flame, glinting motes, liquid shadow, shimmering light, tiny tornadoes, etc. Assume that a suitable container weighs 1 lb. per ingredient type. For large quantities, the GM might prefer 1 lb. per 1,000 energy.

Because of their high utility and price-to-weight ratio, ready-to-use essences found in wizards' labs and forgotten ruins make wonderful treasures. Unless the GM is running a high-powered campaign, though, they should also be rare – enchanters almost always use their essences at once.

Identifying an essence on sight calls for a *Per*-based roll against the *higher* of Alchemy or Thaumatology. Mages may use *Per* + *Magery* instead, if better, and get a second roll on touching the container. The only way to measure the quantity of essence is to cast *Analyze Magic*, which also verifies the type.

Recycling Magic Items

In many worlds where material enchanting is possible, existing magic items can be broken down into essences, too. Use the distillation rules with these changes:

1. Figure time using the total energy to enchant the item with *all* the spells found on it. For effects different from standard enchantments, the GM can either use the nearest spell or assign an energy value by fiat.
2. The distillation skill is the *lower* of the Enchant spell or Thaumatology. Alchemy isn't applicable. However, wizards who know the Remove Enchantment spell may use that, if better.
3. Roll once for the *entire item* – don't treat its enchantments as separate ingredients. This is an all-or-nothing proposition.
4. The essences yielded correspond to *half* those called for in the recipe (see *Recipes*, below) for each enchantment on the item. Apply any reduction for failure to these halved amounts. Critical success distills the *full* essences!
5. Whatever the outcome of the roll, recycling an item destroys it.

MATERIAL ENCHANTING

A wizard with the right ingredients and spells can expend essences to pay the energy costs for enchantments. This is a new procedure that's neither Quick and Dirty nor Slow and Sure.

Recipes

The default assumption here is that the wizard must use suitable essences to cover the standard energy cost listed for the desired enchantment in *Magic*; e.g., a Mage Sight item that requires 800 energy to create involves a Knowledge spell and so calls for 800 points of Knowledge essence. However, the GM may opt to fiddle with what "suitable" means:

College Essence: The most basic approach – assumed throughout these rules – is that each college has an associated essence and all enchantments of that college require only that essence. Thus, that Mage Sight item consumes 800 energy points of Knowledge essence.

Master Essence: In some game worlds, all enchantments require a "magical spark" in the form of Enchantment or Meta-Spells essence, which must supply a certain proportion of the energy. The necessary fraction is usually a constant; 50% is easy to work with. For instance, in a campaign where all enchantments need half their energy from Enchantment essence, that Mage Sight item would call for 400 points of Enchantment essence and 400 points of Knowledge essence.

Mixed Essences: To make enchanting more colorful, the GM may require certain enchantments (typically powerful ones!) or *all* enchantments to use combinations of essences associated with several colleges. Proportions might reflect the spell's prerequisites, the "feel" of the magic, or GM fiat. For instance, because Mage Sight is a Knowledge spell that detects magical energy, the GM might make its recipe 400 points of Knowledge

essence and 400 points of Meta-Spells essence. A three-point Bless spell enchanted into an item rather than cast on a person might require 5,000 energy in the form of 500 energy from each of 10 different essences, in accordance with the spell's prerequisites – and the GM may further require that two of those be Meta-Spells (the college to which Bless belongs) and Enchantment (for magical spark).

Specialized Essences: Really potent spells might not use standard college essences at all. They could require peculiar essences distilled from extraordinary sources, used only for a few rare enchantments. The GM may judge potency on purely quantitative grounds (e.g., "anything that costs 2,000+ energy") or weigh more qualitative concerns (Bless, Lesser Wish, Wish, Great Wish, and similar fate-changers are often troublesome, as are enchantments that create high-end monsters, like Golem, Lich, and Wraith). Even lower-powered spells might be different enough to need slightly unorthodox energy sources; this fits implied sub-colleges, such as Acid and Cold for the Water college, and Electricity for the Weather college. Recipes could call for pure essences of this kind or mixtures.

Other Sources: Some of the energy might not come from essences at all. See *Items* (below) and *Paying of Yourself* (p. 34) for possibilities.

It's fairest if the GM clearly defines the recipes for popular enchantments so that the players know what to farm for. However, high-powered spells might have secret recipes that must be discovered in play, while forgotten tomes could hide *alternative* recipes for lower-powered magic.

Items

This variant enchantment process still requires objects to enchant. By default, these are the usual ones noted in *Magic*. However, because material magic focuses so strongly on physical components, it can be fun if recipes for particular items call for specific articles; e.g., the Bless spell might specify "A one-, two-, or three-point blessing calls for 10, 50, or 500 energy, respectively, from each of 10 different essences, plus a silver holy symbol worth at least \$10, \$50, or \$500." The GM owes it to the players to spell out such requirements clearly.

Intrinsic Energy: Optionally, the GM may have high-quality items contribute energy of their own, proportional to their fair cash value. This helps to explain why enchanted blades tend to be fine and most magical trinkets are jewels. To avoid rendering resource farming and preparation redundant, this contribution shouldn't be large – something on the order of an energy point per full 1/10 of campaign average starting wealth is fair. For instance, a fine-quality thrusting broadsword costs \$2,400 and a very fine one is \$12,000, so in a TL3 fantasy campaign where starting cash is \$1,000 and the ratio is 1/10, these weapons contribute 24 and 120 points of energy, respectively. Intrinsic energy is used up forever once spent; enchanters can sense how much remains and decide which essences it will replace for what castings . . . but once it's gone, it's gone.

Spells and Casting

An enchantment involving material magic requires all the usual spells. The enchanter must know the Enchant spell and the specific spell being placed on the item, and rolls against the *lower* of the two. Casting takes an hour per 100 energy points being used from all sources (round up).

Paying of Yourself

Optionally, it may be possible – even required – for enchanters to get some of the energy for an enchantment from *themselves* rather than from essences.

Temporary Costs

The GM may treat material magic as “just another energy source” rather than as an alternative to the usual sources wizards use. In that case, enchanters can make up shortfalls using anything Quick and Dirty enchanting permits – personal FP, Energy Reserves, Powerstones, and so on – and the energy takes the place of whatever essence(s) the caster prefers. For instance, a wizard who requires 400 points of Knowledge essence and 400 points of Meta-Spells essence for a Mage Sight item, and who can supply 30 energy points from FP and an Energy Reserve, could use 370 points of one essence and 400 of the other, 385 points of each, or any combination in between.

To make enchanting more like tiring work, the GM might instead *require* that some of the energy be supplied this way. This might be a flat 5 or 10 points; if it's a percentage, this probably shouldn't succeed 1%, rounded up, or the benefits of material magic will be too diluted. In that case, it becomes part of the recipe, in a fixed proportion to the other ingredients; e.g., 395 points of Knowledge essence, 395 points of Meta-Spells essence, and 10 points of personal energy for that Mage Sight item.

The GM can combine these, requiring a minimum personal outlay but allowing expenditures above this level. If so, the required payment is a fixed part of the recipe but voluntary extra investments defray whatever other ingredients costs the caster likes.

Lasting Costs

More painfully, the enchanter might pay *character points*, at the usual ratio of one character point per 25 energy points assumed throughout *Thaumatology*. This, too could be voluntary, part of a recipe, or both. Ruling that all recipes must pull, say, 10% of their energy from character-point investments will make the decision to create a permanent magic item a serious one. It also emulates older RPGs – and some fantasy novels – where enchanting takes a terrible toll on the wizard.

At the end of the casting period, roll separately for each enchantment, as described in *Success Rolls for Enchanting (Magic, p. 17)*. Add any bonus for a good lab (*Enchanter's Labs, p. 32*). Standard modifiers for magic (e.g., mana level) also apply.

Any success consumes the essences and enchants the item. Failure – any roll of 16+ counts, regardless of skill – indicates that the enchantment didn't work and that any essences used for it are lost, but has no negative effect on the object or on any other spells. Critical failure – and 17 or 18 always counts as such – destroys the target item, too. The GM may assess further critical-failure effects if any of the magical essences involved were derived from materials that require Hazardous Materials rolls.

Interruptions require the same roll. In this case, success means it's possible to restart the casting from the beginning. Failure wastes 10% of the essences per point of failure. Failure by 10+ or critical failure destroys the item and essences, *and* triggers any bad effects associated with those essences!

EXAMPLE: A MATERIAL ENCHANTER AT WORK

Sirena provides general magical support to a squad of mercenary “problem-solvers.” Her important capabilities for this example are Per 15, FP 13, Magery 3, and Equipment Bond (Backpack Lab); the skills Alchemy-15, Armoury (Melee Weapons)-14, Hazardous Materials (Magical)-14, Jeweler-13, and Thaumatology-15; and a grimoire that includes Analyze Magic-16, Enchant-15, Penetrating Weapon-16, and Remove Enchantment-16. She never travels without her backpack enchanter's lab; her Equipment Bond gives +1 when working with this.

The team's current job involves taking down Baron Ioric, Champion of Evil. Clearly, Evil pays well – Ioric is equipped his four hulking bodyguards with high-end weapons and armor. After wiping the floor with Ioric and his thugs in a dawn raid, Sirena's group find themselves in possession of five thrusting greatswords: Ioric's own blade and those of his goons.

Sirena examines the greatswords and her player rolls a 6 against her Armoury skill of 14; this confirms that they're all fine-quality, worth \$3,600 apiece. A 12 against Sirena's Per + Magery of 18 further reveals that Ioric's sword is magical. Sirena's associate, Dog, has a similar enchanted blade – fine, with Puissance +1 – and wants to know whether he should trade up. Sirena takes an hour to cast Analyze Magic; her player rolls an 11 and Sirena tells Dog that Ioric had Puissance +1 of his own. Too bad!

While Sirena is analyzing the sword, her teammates find three black stones sitting on the sinister altar where the mercenaries surprised Ioric mid-sacrifice. Nobody recognizes them, but the GM allows a Thaumatology or any Enchantment spell roll at -5, or an unmodified Jeweler roll, to guess what they're useful for. Sirena has Jeweler at 13 and uses that instead of the 16 - 5 = 11 that her best Enchantment spell would give. Good thing, too – her player rolls a 13! The GM explains that the rocks are “Demon's Eyes”: gems mined in the Lands of Darkness, each of which can contribute 100 energy points toward Enchantment or Necromantic magic.

This gives Sirena an idea. She tells the group that if they spend the night here, she can upgrade Dog's blade. She'll need the captured greatswords and Demon's Eyes to accomplish this, however. Her associates have no problem with this – they know that Ioric has treasure more valuable than 35 lbs. of second-hand swords and some evil rocks, and aren't leaving until they find it.

Sirena's player knows that the GM requires the Penetrating Weapon enchantment to pull half its energy from Enchantment essence, half from Making and Breaking essence – a reflection of its prerequisites, Enchant and Find Weakness. Fine weapons yield Making and Breaking essence, while Demon's Eyes give Enchantment essence, so Sirena should be able to do something here. She gets to work . . .

Neither the stones nor the greatswords need physical extraction – Sirena can skip that step. However, the GM informs the player that Demon’s Eyes are *evil* and thus perilous to work with, so a Hazardous Materials (Magical) roll is needed to remove them from the altar safely. A roll of 13 against Sirena’s skill of 14 means she doesn’t end up possessed or otherwise cursed.

After taking an hour to set up her backpack lab, Sirena starts distilling. The Demon’s Eyes provide $3 \times 100 = 300$ energy, which Sirena wants as Enchantment essence. Four fine-quality greatswords are worth $4 \times \$3,600 = \$14,400$; at the campaign’s conversion rate of an energy point per \$33, they’ll yield 436 points of Making and Breaking essence. As for Ioric’s magic sword, Sirena wants to recycle it; its Puisseance +1 costs 250 energy, so it should return 125 energy, which the GM explains will be 63 points of Enchantment essence and 62 points of Earth essence, in keeping with spell prerequisites.

That’s $300 + 436 = 736$ energy points from materials, plus a magic item with spells totaling 250 energy, for a net 986 points of energy for calculating distillation time. As that’s just under 1,000 points, distillation will take one hour. Sirena’s player rolls once per ingredient, using the better of Alchemy and Thaumatology, both 15 anyway, for the stones and mundane swords, and Remove Enchantment, at 16, for the enchanted blade. All three rolls get +1 for Sirena’s lab, thanks to Equipment Bond. Sirena rolls 7, 14, and 12 against 16, 16, and 17, and distills $300 + 63 = 363$ points of Enchantment essence, 436 points of Making and Breaking essence, and 62 points of Earth essence. This turns the swords to rust and vaporizes the Demon’s Eyes in a column of hellfire.

Now it’s time for enchanting! Sirena wants to put Penetrating Weapon (3) on Dog’s sword. That costs 750 energy, so work will take eight hours. Sirena needs 375 points of Enchantment essence and 375 points of Making and Breaking essence for the spell. She has ample Making and Breaking essence but is 12 points short on Enchantment essence – and while the GM allows intrinsic energy, and Dog’s fine thrusting greatsword is worth \$3,600 without magic and could theoretically yield 36 energy

(campaign ground rules are a point per \$100), Sirena senses that the enchanter who put Puisseance on it used that up. Fortunately, the GM permits enchanters to contribute personal energy, so Sirena can make up the deficit out of her 13 FP.

Sirena’s roll is the *lower* of Enchant or Penetrating Weapon, or 15. However, her lab once again gives her +1 thanks to Equipment Bond, for 16. She gets a 12. Dog’s fine thrusting greatsword gains Penetrating Weapon (3) alongside Puisseance +1. Luckily for Dog, Sirena didn’t roll 17-18, or his sword would be so much dust!

Sirena ends up with $436 - 375 = 61$ points of spare Making and Breaking essence and 62 points of unused Earth essence. Sirena packages this into two vessels, each weighing 1 lb., before stowing her lab. She knows these are worth \$40 a point – a total of \$4,920 – to enchanters in town. The total time involved was an hour to set up her lab, an hour for distillation, eight hours of enchanting, and an hour to pack the lab. Sirena started in the morning, but now it’s well into evening and she has 1 FP left, so it’s time to rest. Dog is happy to stand guard with his powered-up blade, Sirena sleeps well knowing that she just earned a small fortune, and their allies are relieved to be counting treasure without those Demon’s Eyes staring at them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every *GURPS* product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of *GURPS Third Edition* projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition* with David Pulver. Since then, he has created *GURPS Powers* (with Phil Masters), *GURPS Martial Arts* (with Peter Dell’Orto), *GURPS Zombies*, and the *GURPS Action, GURPS Dungeon Fantasy, and GURPS Power-Ups* series . . . among other things. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. His non-gaming interests include cinema, mixology, and Argentine tango. He lives in Montréal, Québec with his wife, Bonnie.



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RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE

BREAK THE LAW!

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

Don't feed them after midnight.
Don't cross the streams.
Never meet yourself.
Don't push the red button.

In just about any story with rules, the rules are going to get broken. Dramatically speaking, that's the *whole point* of rules. It's Chekov's gun codified as an actual law of the universe.

While a universe's "laws of magic" are often a way to determine the boundaries and limitations of a world's magic – such as the Paths of *GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic* – they can often just serve as a catalyst for adventures and a source of plot twists. These common examples from games and fiction demonstrate this.

- **Mage: The Ascension** based its entire magical worldview on the idea that all magic should be done outside the sight of "mundanes." The act of disbelief served to keep mages from performing their arts, so magic is best done in private, away from prying eyes.

- **Torg** had the realm Aysle, which has as one of its codified laws that the observed is real; in other words, seeing *is* believing.

- **In Nomine** had a number of spiritual/magical aspects that were unlikely to happen, but arguably the most unlikely was the inability for the angelic choir known as the Malakim to fall from their positions to become demons.

- The classic comedy *Bewitched* had as a core premise that it was impossible for a witch to undo another witch's spell; magic could only be solved or undone by the witch that effected the spell in the first place.

Immutable laws of magic or the supernatural world help to define things and give it an "otherworldly" feeling. In the same way that the speed of light is a constant driving force in the understanding and defining of physics, so too can laws of magic define a more fantastic world. Here, then, are some ideas to get you started on coming up with your *own* laws.

NO, REALLY . . . YOU CAN'T

With no doubt an exception or two out there (magic is *tricky*), most laws of magic can be broken down into two broad categories. The first category is what's best thought of

as "ironclad." *No matter what*, these laws can't be broken . . . although that probably won't stop a lot of mages from trying. The *Bewitched* "no witch can undo another witch's spell" clause and the **In Nomine** idea that "Malakim don't fall" count as this. Although not related to magic, Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics (see below) are another classic example. In the world of gaming, "you can't wish for more wishes" is often another classic.

In most stories featuring ironclad laws, the laws provide two common situations:

- Context for a larger setting element.
- Story elements where it *seems* the laws have been broken, but in fact they haven't (because they *can't*) . . . and now the heroes need to figure out what really occurred.

Again, the Asimov Robot stories are an ideal example here, since they do both. The laws help craft the world (robots will help people and follow orders, and protect their own lives), *and* provide the springboard for a number of adventures: "Robots can't kill, but this one seems to have done so; *what could have happened?!*" The inability of Malakim to fall formed the lynchpin of the mystery behind the adventure aptly entitled *Fall of the Malakim*.

GOSUB Laws

For those unfamiliar with the Asimov laws of robotics – or need a refresher – here they are:

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection doesn't conflict with the First or Second Laws.

If you're looking for a quick-and-easy application to magic, replace "robot" with "golem" (or "magical construct") and you're done!

Coming up with an ironclad law of magic means determining what it is and how it does what it does. For example, it'd be straightforward to come up with a fairly cool magical law such as: *Magic cannot cause permanent damage to any living entity.*

What are the implications of that? Well, it might be that any spell that is intended to cause direct harm – say, a fireball – will fizzle. That makes sense. But it's also ignoring a lot of other ways magic *could* cause harm: creating a (non-magical) two-ton weight above someone's head, transmuting all oxygen in a room to cyanide gas, or rusting all the fixtures on a vehicle's break mechanism.

If we wanted to go with this law, then probably the easiest fix – one that'd be simplest to conceptualize and use in-game – would be:

Magic cannot cause permanent damage to any living entity, or place someone in a situation where they would come to permanent physical harm. If magic ever would cause permanent damage, the universe utilizes the least amount of magical effect necessary to restore that person to wholeness and safety.

Thinking this through, it should work. You cast a sleep spell on someone? It works; it's not permanent damage. You try to stab such a sleeping victim? They immediately wake up and are able to defend themselves. You dump a vat of boiling oil over the head of someone sleeping thus? Perhaps the oil immediately evaporates, or turns into water; maybe the person teleports a foot away. The universe has a "you know what I mean" clause.

This one law allows for any manner of magical stories, starting with the obvious ("Someone seems to have been killed by magic; that's impossible, so what happened?") to the less so ("Will casting *any* spell on this exploding nuke protect us?"). In addition, it provides a lot of world-building possibilities in a compact package. Nonlethal magical effects would be the norm, and sidestep a lot of horrific battlefield conundrums. However, permanent social and mental harm aren't covered by the law, so magical madness or imprisonment would be common. In addition, it'd lead to a lot of what-if experiments for heroes (and NPCs) alike: If I use magic to help carve these reeds into a thin veneer, and then build a pit trap out of them, what happens when someone steps on it? Sure, the victim will be saved from permanent harm, but *then* what?

YOU COULD, BUT I WOULDN'T

Perhaps more common than the ironclad laws are those that can be broken, but it's a bad idea. Feed a mogwai (from *Gremlins*) after midnight, and he turns into a monster. Cast a magic in front of mundanes in *Mage*, and it'll be harder to do and you're likely to take damage and mental stress. You could cross the streams or push the red button but . . . well, something far too *interesting* will happen.

These softer laws are enticing to heroes; they're a perfectly encapsulated conundrum. One of the earliest and most famous examples in history comes from the biblical story of the Garden of Eden: "Don't eat the fruit of this one tree or else . . ." (Curiously, the Tree of Life mentioned in the same breath as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil seems not to be mentioned again.)

Any softer law is almost invariably going to be broken. The question is always: What happens when it is?

Returning to our magical example of magic that can't harm living things, what if we tweak that?

*Never use magic to harm life. If you do, all such damage will be inflicted **proportionally** unto the magician.*

The use of "proportionally" there ensures that the law will be treated seriously; one point of magical damage to a one-HP ant doesn't mean the mage will only lose one HP . . . it means they'll both be dead.

This softer law has the same "magic doesn't harm life" appeal that its ironclad counterpart had, but it's open to different possibilities. Building pit traps with magic means you'll be inflicting a lot of crushing damage on yourself. A suicidal mage can cause plenty of carnage before being taken out by his own spells. And so on.

These softer laws are difficult to formulate, but they're usually of the form "you'll get hurt," "it'll be a lot more difficult," or "your life will get more interesting in a bad way" . . . and often all three together.

GOOD OR BAD?

In a world with multiple types of magic – or if trying to introduce magical laws to a world that previously hadn't had any – it can be difficult to wonder why folks would switch to magic with laws that are difficult or impossible to work around if alternatives are available.

It can be tempting to just say that Something Big Happened, and magic without limitations is no longer available. However, it might be more *fun* to come up with justifications as to why folks might like the limited magic, even if other possibilities are available. Some ideas include:

- Even with the limitations, the magic possible with these laws are more powerful. This is the tack taken with *Mage: The Ascension*; normal mundanes can master magical effects that can be done anywhere, but the power wielded by true mages is so great – even with the limitations imposed by reality – that it warrants a variant spelling *and* a capital letter in *Magick*.

- The laws are a double-edged sword. For example, "magic cannot cause permanent physical harm" might be a deal-breaker for some, but it'd be mind-bogglingly *useful* for many applications: police forces, those with oaths to avoid taking lives, medical mages, etc.

- The magical form confers other benefits that are (seemingly) unrelated to the laws enforced by the magic. For example, magic hindered by these laws could be about as powerful as magic unencumbered by such limitations, but it's perhaps undetectable as magic, or it doesn't attract the attention of otherworldly forces.

Regardless of how you want to incorporate magical laws into your campaign, they're sure to add spice. A good law can be an evocative way to spark the players' imaginations; it works like magic.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Steven Marsh is a freelance writer and editor. He has contributed to roleplaying game releases from Green Ronin, West End Games, White Wolf, Hogshead Publishing, and others. He has been editing *Pyramid* for over 10 years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana.

ODDS AND ENDS

REPERCUSSIVE RITUALS

by Christopher R. Rice

Some forms of magic have nasty aftereffects for casters. This may be something a caster decides (taking extra risk for an energy reduction), something that applies to *all* spells in this setting, or something that the GM feels should apply to specific spells (e.g., Summon Outsider). See below for an example of the latter.

To simulate this, first determine what the limitation value of an equivalent Backlash would be; see *Nuisance Effect (GURPS Powers, p. 104)*. As a special effect, this is often resisted by Will instead of HT. Halve this value (rounding up, toward zero) and apply it to the energy cost of the spell, along with any other reductions from traditional trappings, etc.

Mages who cast spells as a daily routine, under mostly controlled conditions, are much less likely to have things go wrong. With one roll a month, a mage with effective skill 15 or less goes 54 months between mishaps, on the average; one with effective skill 16 or better could go 216 months (or 18 years).

– **GURPS
Thaumatology:
Urban Magics**

Voice of Phobos

Spell Effects: Lesser Control Mind + Lesser Destroy Mind.

Inherent Modifiers: Area of Effect (Hearing-Based); Bestows a Bonus, Fright Checks.

Greater Effects: 0 (x1).

You can temporarily channel the god of fear and speak in his voice. Everyone who can hear you and fails to resist must

roll on the *Fright Check Table* at +5! Regardless of the outcome, they make any further Fright Checks in the next 10 minutes at -5.

This comes at a cost: The caster must roll against Will to shut out Phobos' voice afterward. Failure means he's wracked with fearful internal screams (treat as hallucinating) for minutes equal to his margin of failure!

Typical Casting: Lesser Control Mind (5) + Lesser Destroy Mind (5) + Area of Effect, 1,000 yards (32) + Bestows a Penalty, -5 to Fright Checks (16) + Duration, 10 minutes (1). 59 energy (59¥1). *Note:* Backlash of resistible hallucination (-12%) reduces final cost to 52 energy.

INDUSTRIAL ENCHANTMENT AND ADVENTURE

by Paul Stefko

In many campaigns, industrial enchantment (pp. 25-28) will simply be a background setting element, but like any other kind of business, it can be the source of adventure.

Off the Books: A small production line could serve as a front operation for a criminal organization. While it's hard to disguise a production line that produces illicit goods, the (otherwise legitimate) business could be used to launder money gained through other enterprises. A line's warehouse could also store drugs, weapons, or other contraband.

A Foot in the Door: An industrial enchantment line owned by a larger company may serve as a starting point for investigations into shadowy dealings by the parent. By infiltrating the production line or fostering contacts on the inside (such as a line mage like Melissa Straithaim), investigators can begin gathering information about the whole company.

Consumer Reports' Most Wanted: Since an industrial enchantment-production line is essentially a very large, very complex magic item, the line itself could be the source of a magical emergency. A particularly subtle critical failure on the enchantment of the line may not manifest itself in a broken production line or a release of magical energy. Instead, a line may develop quirks like a Powerstone, and introduce these quirks into the products it turns out. Such quirks may have disastrous consequences for the end user. Imagine a flying carpet that stops functioning if its user attempts too steep a climb on the 23rd day of the month. The fallout from such a scenario could have terrible implications, personally, politically, and economically.

Not in My Backyard: When a major corporation moves to build a production line near a residential neighborhood, a citizens' group stages protests, claiming that the industrial enchantment will endanger their children. The city needs the jobs and tax revenue the line will bring, but the protests are beginning to disrupt other businesses in the area. With the company threatening to move elsewhere, the mayor needs to resolve the situation quickly.

Hidden Secrets of *Pyramid*

Speaking of necromancy . . . wait, were we? *DEAD BODIES WALKING!* Now we're talking. Anyway, speaking of necromancy, way back in *Pyramid* #3/1: *Tools of the Trade – Wizards*, we had a hidden puzzler.

The footers of each page of that issue included a fictional wizard's name, along with a piece of advice. For example, p. 16 said, "R'sixte En carries a tiny volume of limericks with him . . ." Eagle-eyed readers noticed that each "mage" actually contained a hidden number ("R'sixte En" = "16"); some footers had more than one mage. If the mages were arranged in numerical order, the "extra" letter at the front of their names spelled a hidden phrase: "SEND SECRET WORD FROTZ AND WIZARD JOKE."

We had 26 brave souls send in a wizard-themed joke along with the code word. We've turned the list into a table that you can use to create your own wizardly names. Roll 1d, 1d and consult the table. If desired, roll twice, taking the first name for the first roll and the last name for the second roll. If you get "5, 3-6" or "6, 1-6," you foiled our random list; roll again!

And now, here are those whose names shall be hailed in history as the Finders of the Hidden from the first issue of *Pyramid*:

1, 1	Alain Ducharme
1, 2	Alloni Kramer
1, 3	Andrew Batishko
1, 4	Charlton Wilbur
1, 5	Chris Bowling
1, 6	Chuck Stevens
2, 1	David Cunnius
2, 2	David Trimboli
2, 3	Eric Rossing
2, 4	Gary Roth
2, 5	George D. Stefanowich
2, 6	Graham Brand
3, 1	James Henry
3, 2	Jeff Raglin
3, 3	Jennifer Lange
3, 4	Jeremy Alexander
3, 5	John Hoyland
3, 6	Joseph Mason
4, 1	Martin Johnston
4, 2	Norman Lorenz
4, 3	Rob Kamm
4, 4	S. Manning
4, 5	Scott Harrison
4, 6	T.M. Neeck
5, 1	Taper Wickel
5, 2	Volker Marx

Thank you for being part of the crazy experiments from the earliest days of *Pyramid*, a half-decade ago!

Here are some favorites that were sent in.

From David Tromboli

Q: Why did the wizard run away from the black cat?

A: He wasn't *familiar* with it.

From Martin Johnston

Q: What kind of tests do they give in the Mage's Guild?

A: Hex-aminations.

From Scott Harrison

A wizard walks into a bar. He walks over to the biggest, ugliest troll in the place and says to him, "50 Gold says that I can drink you under the table!" The troll scoffs at the idea, places a sack of gold on the bar, and downs a large ale in one gulp. The wizard chants softly and the troll transmutes into a glass of water. The wizard then sits underneath the closest table and drinks the glass dry. He then picks up the sack of gold from the bar and walks out.

From Chris Bowling

Marvin the Mage was working in his lab one night when he was stunned by a blow to the head. When he recovered, his secret Elixir of Wondrousness was missing. Marvin immediately went to the City Watch and informed them that one of his wizardly rivals must have sent an arcane servant to steal his work. The City Watch acted quickly and gathered up all the stray animals they could find in the area for Marvin to examine in a line up. Looking up and down the line of ravens, cats, snakes, and toads, Marvin shook his head sadly and said, "I'm sorry; none of them looks familiar to me."

From Chuck Stevens

Q: What do you call an angry wizard wearing pink earmuffs?

A: Anything you like! He can't hear you!

From Others . . .

There were also several jokes with variations of "Violators will be toad . . ." and an old man who wants to have the curse of "I now pronounce you man and wife" removed.

Hidden Among Heroes

Pyramid #3/2: *Looks Like a Job for Superheroes* also had a hidden puzzler. Let's go ahead and list all those winners:

•

. . . Um. Yeah, we didn't have any. It seems this one was a bit *too* hidden.

On page 28 of that issue, there were sample superhero newspapers as part of that issue's props. In the text for the sample "Fire Boy Has Allergies," there was Lorem Ipsum text that – starting with its second line – had this text written backwards:

This is the hidden contest. Send an awful name for a hero or villain, along with a power that is really useless.

And thus ends the era of hidden puzzlers in the era of the new *Pyramid*. But we do still love to hear from you; see p. 3 for more info!

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