



# AXIOMS

**AUTARCH'S QUARTERLY SUPPLEMENT FOR  
THE ADVENTURER CONQUEROR KING SYSTEM**

Eldritch secrets are revealed...

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**March 2016**

**\$3.<sup>99</sup>**

ADVENTURER CONQUEROR KING SYSTEM™

# AXIOMS

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# BEYOND ARCANES AND DIVINE

## RULES FOR DESIGNING CUSTOM MAGIC TYPES FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

### BY ALEXANDER MACRIS

In the Adventurer Conqueror King System, there are only two types of magic: **divine magic** and **arcane magic**. All of the spellcasting character classes in ACKS and Player's Companion use one or both of these types of magic. The two types of characters represent the most common and popular archetypes of myth, legend, film, and literature. However, they also incorporate certain assumptions that might not be appropriate for every setting. For instance, in a setting similar to Robert E. Howard's Hyboria, the Judge might want sorcery-wielding priests who can heal and animate the dead, but learn their spells through study like mages.

The rules that follow enable Judges to create new magic types with different characteristics that can be used with the Player's Companion to create very different spellcasting classes. These rules were originally built for my internal use during the development of the upcoming Heroic Companion, which features an Eldritch magic type for use in heroic fantasy settings. They are offered here as a tool for Judges who want more flexibility in building their campaign. With these rules, along with the monster creation rules in Lairs & Encounters, you have the building blocks to re-create virtually any fantasy setting.

### CREATING A CUSTOM MAGIC TYPE

To create a new type of magic, follow these ten steps:

1. Develop a name and concept for the new magic type. Is it an art of illusions and dweomers, such as appears in fairy tales? Perhaps it is a sinister sorcery devoted to mind-control and summoning. The concept should drive your choices in the remaining steps.
2. Set the magic type's **source factors** for each of the 11 spell types. No source factor can be less than 1 or greater than 2.25, and the sum of all source factors must be at least 11 and no more than 15. See **Source Factors** section.
3. Use the magic type's source factors to calculate the magic type's Base XP Cost. See the Source Factors section.
4. Choose a spell progression for the magic type. Spell progressions can be standard (mage), alternative (cleric), or improved. Adjust the Base XP Cost as directed. See the **Spell Progression** section.
5. Determine how the magic type acquires its spell repertoire, through **prayer**, **study**, or **inheritance**. See the **Spell Repertoire** section.
6. Decide whether the magic type carries a **code of behavior**. See the **Codes of Behavior** section.
7. Use the Base XP Cost and spell progression to create the magic type's **class category value**. This **class category value** will be used when making custom classes that use the magic type. See the **Magic Type Class Category** section.
8. Choose the methods of **magic research** open to the magic type's classes. See the **Magic Research** section.
9. Determine what **saving throw progression** the magic type's class category value results in. See the **Saving Throw Progression** section.
10. Create a spell list of 10 to 20 spells of each level for your new magic type. This spell list will serve as the basis from which studious and inherited casters of the new type learn spells, or from which prayerful caster classes select their repertoire. See Player's Companion, Chapter 5, for rules on creating spells.

Once these ten steps are complete, the new magic type is ready for use in your custom classes.

### SOURCE FACTOR PER SPELL TYPE

As explained in the Player's Companion, all spells are categorized into **spell types**, which are broad descriptions of what spells are supposed to do. There are 11 different **spell types**: Blast, Death, Detection, Enchantment, Healing, Illusion, Movement, Protection, Summoning, Transmogrification, and Wall. For each of the 11 types, each magic type will have a different **source factor**. The lower the source factor, the easier it is for the spellcaster to cast spells of that type. For example, arcane magic excels in Blast type spells (source factor 1) while divine magic is very poor at this type (source factor 2.25). Conversely, divine magic excels at Healing spells (source factor 1) while arcane magic is sub-par at this type (source factor 1.5).

The first step in creating a new magic type is to choose a source factor for each of the 11 spell types. Each spell type must have a source factor of at least 1 and no more than 2.25. Write down your magic type's source factors in the appropriate rows of the Type Modifier column of the Source Factor Construction table, below.

Now total all of the source factors and enter the sum in the Total row of the Type Modifier column. This is the type's **source factor total**. The source factor total must be at least 11 and no more than 15. If source factor total is not within this range, increase or decrease your source factors until the sum of their values is between 11 and 15.

The lower the source factor total, the more powerful the magic type and the more XP it will cost to advance in classes which use that type of magic. For reference, the arcane magic type has a source factor total of 12.5, while the divine magic type has a source factor total of 15.

Next, find the difference between the Base Modifier listed on the table and the Type Modifier you wrote down in each row. Enter this value in the Variance column. Then multiply each Variance by the appropriate Cost of Variance to determine the Type Cost of that spell type. Total all of the Type Costs and enter the sum in the Total row of the Type Cost column.

Finally, add the value you wrote down in the Type Cost column to 500. The resulting sum is the **Base XP Cost** of the new magic type you've created. Round this value to the closest value divisible by 25. Base XP Cost can never be lower than 500 XP; if less, increase or decrease your source factors until Base XP Cost is at least 500.

### Source Factor Construction

Spell Type	Base Modifier	-	Type Modifier	=	Variance	x	Cost of Variance	=	Type Cost	Magic Type's Base XP Cost
Blast	2.25	-		=		x	1,300	=		
Death	1.5	-		=		x	500	=		
Detection	1.25	-		=		x	500	=		
Enchantment	1.3	-		=		x	500	=		
Healing	1	-		=		x	1,000	=		
Illusion	1.5	-		=		x	500	=		
Movement	1.25	-		=		x	500	=		
Protection	1	-		=		x	500	=		
Summoning	1.2	-		=		x	500	=		
Transmogrification	1.25	-		=		x	500	=		
Wall	1.5	-		=		x	500	=		
Total	15.0				n/a		n/a			+ 500 = Base Cost

EXAMPLE: Below are three completed Source Factor Construction tables. The first table is for the Divine magic type (used by clerics), the second table is for the Arcane magic type (used by mages) and the third table is for a new magic type called Faery. The Faery magic type excels at enchantments, illusion, transformation, and similar glamours, but is poor at blast and death spells.

### Divine Magic Type

Spell Type	Base Modifier	-	Type Modifier	=	Variance	x	Cost of Variance	=	Type Cost	Magic Type's Base XP Cost
Blast	2.25	-	2.25	=	0	x	1,300	=	0	
Death	1.5	-	1.5	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Detection	1.25	-	1.25	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Enchantment	1.3	-	1.3	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Healing	1	-	1	=	0	x	1,000	=	0	
Illusion	1.5	-	1.5	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Movement	1.25	-	1.25	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Protection	1	-	1	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Summoning	1.2	-	1.2	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Transmogrification	1.25	-	1.25	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Wall	1.5	-	1.5	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Total	15.0		15.0		n/a		n/a		0	+ 500 = 500



Arcane Magic Type										
Spell Type	Base Modifier	-	Type Modifier	=	Variance	x	Cost of Variance	=	Type Cost	Magic Type's Base XP Cost
Blast	2.25	-	1	=	1.25	x	1,300	=	1625	
Death	1.5	-	1	=	0.5	x	500	=	250	
Detection	1.25	-	1.6	=	-0.35	x	500	=	-175	
Enchantment	1.3	-	1.4	=	-0.1	x	500	=	-50	
Healing	1	-	1.5	=	-0.5	x	1,000	=	-500	
Illusion	1.5	-	1	=	0.5	x	500	=	250	
Movement	1.25	-	1	=	0.25	x	500	=	125	
Protection	1	-	1	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Summoning	1.2	-	1	=	0.2	x	500	=	100	
Transmogrification	1.25	-	1	=	0.25	x	500	=	125	
Wall	1.5	-	1	=	0.5	x	500	=	250	
Total	15.0		12.5		n/a		n/a		2,000	+ 500 = 2,500

Faery Magic Type										
Spell Type	Base Modifier	-	Type Modifier	=	Variance	x	Cost of Variance	=	Type Cost	Magic Type's Base XP Cost
Blast	2.25	-	2.25	=	0	x	1,300	=	0	
Death	1.5	-	1.5	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Detection	1.25	-	1.25	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Enchantment	1.3	-	1	=	0.3	x	500	=	150	
Healing	1	-	1	=	0	x	1,000	=	0	
Illusion	1.5	-	1	=	0.5	x	500	=	250	
Movement	1.25	-	1	=	0.25	x	500	=	125	
Protection	1	-	1	=	0	x	500	=	0	
Summoning	1.2	-	1	=	0.2	x	500	=	100	
Transmogrification	1.25	-	1	=	0.25	x	500	=	125	
Wall	1.5	-	1	=	0.5	x	500	=	250	
Total	15.0		12.75		n/a		n/a		1,000	+ 500 = 1,500

EXAMPLE (cont.): As can be seen, the Faery magic type is midway between the power and XP cost of the Arcane and Divine magic types. It has a Base XP Cost of 1,500 XP, lower than the Arcane type's Base XP Cost of 2,500 but higher than the Divine type's Base XP Cost of 500 XP.

**A Note on Source Factors:** The custom magic type construction rules require that each spell type be assigned a specific source factor. This is not always a simple matter, however. In the Player's Companion, the source factor for Detection spells is subject to a host of modifiers that can make the source factor as high as x3 for some spells (e.g. arcane detection of curse). The source factor for Enchantment spells is even more ambiguous, as there are several source factors listed, depending on the type of effect, from x1 to x1.5 for Arcane and from x1 to x1.5 for Divine, again with source modifier factor stacked on top.

To calculate the source factor for Detection spells, we assumed that each effect is approximately equal, and then calculated an average source factor for all of the effects. There are 13 different effects listed. Divine magic has a source factor of x1 on nine of these; x1.5 on two of these; and x2 on the last two. The average source factor is [(1 + 1 +

1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1.5 + 1.5 + 2 + 2) / 13] = 1.23. We rounded this to 1.25. A similar procedure was used for the Arcane source factor for Detection and for the source factors for Enchantment.

For your own magic types, you can create similarly complex source factors and source factor modifiers if desired, at the cost of some math scribbling. If you want a custom magic type to have precisely the same factors as Arcane or Divine magic, just use the ones listed above – we've done the math for you. The fact that Faery type magic has a Detection source factor of 1.25 (same as Divine) could be understood to mean it builds Detection spells using the source modifier factors for Divine magic. But you could also disregard those complexities and simply build Faery spells with a source factor of x1.25, making it better than Divine magic at detecting treasure or secret doors, but worse at detecting evil or danger, for instance. This decision should be made when the magic type is created!

### SPECIALIZED MAGIC TYPES

The source factor rules above assume that all types of magic are capable of casting all 11 types of spells, albeit at greater or lesser effectiveness.

Particular classes that use that type of magic, or particular characters of that class, might be specialized but the magic type itself is not.

In some cases, the Judge may wish to create a type of magic which is itself specialized. Perhaps he wants to create an evil type of sorcery that can only be used for death and summoning spells, or an elemental magic that can only be used for blast and wall spells. Because of this specialization, the magic type might be better at certain spells than is otherwise possible in the rules. For this reason, specialized magic types must be used carefully.

To create a specialized magic type, simply remove one or more of the 11 spell types. Cross them out on the Source Factor Construction table – do not write down a type modifier for them and do not calculate a variance. For each spell type removed from the Source Factor Construction table, the magic type's minimum source factor totals are reduced by 1.125, and its Base XP Cost is reduced by 45. (Base XP Cost must still be at least 500, however).

Source factor modifiers for specialized magic types must always be equal to or lower than the base modifier for that type, to a minimum of 1. (You cannot have a specialized school of magic that is bad in casting its specialty!) Some specialized schools of magics might have

some source factors below 1. If two spell types unavailable to the magic type, the minimum source factor for one spell type is reduced from 1 to 0.75. If four spell types are unavailable, the minimum source factor for two spell types is reduced from 1 to 0.75. Finally, if six or more spell types are unavailable, the minimum source factor for three spell types is reduced from 1 to 0.75.

**EXAMPLE:** The Judge decides to create a magic type called Battlelore. Battlelore can only use Blast, Death, Protection, and Wall spells. This eliminates Detection, Enchantment, Healing, Illusion, Movement, Summoning, and Transmogrification, or 7 spell types. Battlelore's minimum source factor total is  $[11 - (7 \times 1.125)]$  3.125. Its Base XP Cost is reduced by  $(7 \times 45)$  315 points, from 500 to 185. Since six or more spell types are unavailable to the magic type, up to three spell types can have source factors as low as 0.75. Battlelore's source factors are set at Blast 0.75, Death 1, Protection 0.75, and Wall 0.75, for a source factor total of 3.25. Its Base XP Cost works out to 2,810, which rounds to 2,800. Battlelore has far less flexibility than Arcane magic, but a 6th blast, protection, or wall spell using Battlelore could be as powerful as an 8th level spell using Arcane magic!

Battlelore Type										
Spell Type	Base Modifier	-	Type Modifier	=	Variance	x	Cost of Variance	=	Type Cost	Magic Type's Base XP Cost
Blast	2.25	-	0.75	=	1.25	x	1,300	=	1,625	
Death	1.5	-	1.0	=	0.5	x	500	=	500	
Detection	1.25	-		=		x	500	=		
Enchantment	1.3	-		=		x	500	=		
Healing	1	-		=		x	1,000	=		
Illusion	1.5	-		=		x	500	=		
Movement	1.25	-		=		x	500	=		
Protection	1	-	0.75	=	0.25	x	500	=	125	
Summoning	1.2	-		=		x	500	=		
Transmogrification	1.25	-		=		x	500	=		
Wall	1.5	-	0.75	=	0.75	x	500	=	375	
Total			3.25		n/a		n/a		2,625	+ 500 185 = 2,810

## SPELL PROGRESSION TABLES

The number and levels of spells a caster can use in a single day are determined by cross-referencing the caster's effective level of experience with his magic types' spell progression table. There are three available spell progression tables: the standard, alternative, and improved progression.

**Standard:** The standard progression allows the caster to use spells of increasingly high level with every other level of experience earned. It gradually but slowly accumulates spells of the lower levels with every level of experience earned. In the Player's Companion, the standard progression is referred to as the "mage" progression, as it is used by mages and (in form or another) all other Arcane casters. Choosing the standard progression does not adjust the magic type's Base XP Cost.

**Alternative:** At first glance, the alternative progression looks much weaker than the standard progression. It never offers access to 6<sup>th</sup> level spells, and it doesn't even offer spells at all until 2<sup>nd</sup> level. These disadvantages are counter-balanced by two advantages: It gets 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> level spells much faster than the standard progression, and at higher levels it offers 50% more spells per day within each spell level. In the Player's Companion, the alternative progression is referred to as the "cleric" progression as it is used by the cleric and all other Divine casters. Choosing the alternative progression does not adjust the magic type's Base XP Cost.

**Improved:** The improved progression offers faster access to low- and high-level spells than the standard progression, more spells at higher level than the standard progression, and higher-level spells overall than the alternative progressions. No magic types or classes



Standard Spell Progression						
Level	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-	-	-
3	2	1	-	-	-	-
4	2	2	-	-	-	-
5	2	2	1	-	-	-
6	2	2	2	-	-	-
7	3	2	2	1	-	-
8	3	3	2	2	-	-
9	3	3	3	2	1	-
10	3	3	3	3	2	-
11	4	3	3	3	2	1
12	4	4	3	3	3	2
13	4	4	4	3	3	2
14	4	4	4	4	3	3

Alternative Spell Progression					
Level	1	2	3	4	5
1	-	-	-	-	-
2	1	-	-	-	-
3	2	-	-	-	-
4	2	1	-	-	-
5	2	2	-	-	-
6	2	2	1	1	-
7	2	2	2	1	1
8	3	3	2	2	1
9	3	3	3	2	2
10	4	4	3	3	2
11	4	4	4	3	3
12	5	5	4	4	3
13	5	5	5	4	3
14	6	5	5	5	4

Improved Spell Progression						
Level	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	-	-	-	-	-
2	3	-	-	-	-	-
3	3	1	-	-	-	-
4	3	2	-	-	-	-
5	3	2	1	-	-	-
6	3	3	2	-	-	-
7	4	3	2	1	-	-
8	4	3	3	2	-	-
9	4	4	3	2	1	-
10	4	4	3	3	2	-
11	5	4	4	3	2	1
12	5	4	4	3	3	2
13	5	5	4	4	3	2
14	6	5	4	4	3	3

in ACKS use the improved progression, but it may be suitable for campaign settings with exceptionally powerful magic-users or high magic. Choosing the improved progression increases the magic type's Base XP Cost by 13.5%. Round the Base XP Cost up to the nearest divisor of 25.

EXAMPLE #1: The Arcane magic type uses the standard spell progression.

EXAMPLE #2: The Divine magic type uses the alternative spell progression.

EXAMPLE #3: The Judge decides that the Faery magic type will use the alternative spell progression, to represent that faery magic lacks the raw power of arcane magic (no 6th level spells). This does not adjust its Base XP Cost.

EXAMPLE #4: The Judge decides that the Battlere magic type will use the improved spell progression, to represent the unwavering devotion to magical mastery its elite practitioners display. This increases its Base XP by 13.5% from 2,300 to 2,610, rounded to 2,600.

## SPELL REPERTOIRE

The spells available to a spellcaster are called his **spell repertoire**. Practitioners of different types of magic acquire their repertoire in very different ways. There are three mutually exclusive ways that casters of a particular type of magic might acquire its spells, **prayer**, **study**, and **inheritance**. Casters and magic types which use these methods are called **prayerful**, **studious**, and **inherited** respectively.

In ACKS, all arcane magic is studious, and all divine magic is prayerful. When creating a custom magic type, however, the Judge has complete freedom. A magic type's source factors for spell type, its spell progression, and its method of learning spells are all distinct choices when using these rules!

## PRAYERFUL

Prayerful magic is acquired from beseeching extraplanar sources. Prayerful casters receive their spells directly from the deity (or other power) they serve. Their spell repertoire automatically includes a certain number of spells of each level they can cast from the **spell list** made available to them by their deity (but not necessarily every divine spell in existence). Each day, generally in the morning, a well-rested prayerful caster simply needs to pray for at least one hour in order to be able to cast

these spells. Of course, the prayerful spellcaster may be expected to pray more than this in order to remain in his deity's good graces!

The number of spells of each level in a prayerful caster's repertoire is equal to  $(5000 / \text{Base XP Cost})$ , rounded up. If the caster has more or less than a full level progression, this repertoire may be increased or decreased. See the **Magic Type Class Category** section, below.

EXAMPLE: The Faery magic type has a Base XP Cost of 1,500. If the Faery magic type were prayerful, it would have a repertoire of  $(5000 / 1,500) = 3.33$ , rounded up to 4, spells per level. This Judge decides to select a different repertoire acquisition method.

Do not select spells for the repertoire now! The selection of spells in a prayerful spell repertoire comes when custom classes are created that use the magic type. The exact spells available for any given prayerful caster class could vary widely. For example, the Cleric Spell List, Shaman Spell List, and Witch Spell List in the Player's Companion are all examples of the same magic type, Divine, but their spell repertoires vary considerably.

**Reversed Spells:** Some spells can be cast **reversed**. A reversed spell results in an effect that is opposite to the effect the spell normally causes. Prayerful spellcasters will know both the normal and reversed form of any spell on their spell list. However, Lawful prayerful spellcasters prefer to cast spells in their normal form, and will use the reversed forms only against Chaotic opponents. Conversely, Chaotic prayerful spellcasters will freely cast reversed spells, while using the normal version only to aid comrades and followers. Some prayerful spellcasters may be restricted entirely by their deity from using normal or reversed versions of particular spells (Judge's discretion).

## STUDIOUS

Studious magic is acquired from intense study. Studious spellcasters have only a limited repertoire of spells. The base number and level of spells in a studious spellcaster's repertoire is always equal to the number and level of spells he can cast per day. The number of spells of each level in the repertoire is increased by the caster's Intelligence bonus. For instance, assume a 3<sup>rd</sup> level studious caster is able to cast two 1<sup>st</sup> and one 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell per day. His repertoire is two 1<sup>st</sup> and one 2<sup>nd</sup> level spells. If he has 16 INT (+2 modifier), then his spell repertoire is increased to four 1<sup>st</sup> level and three 2<sup>nd</sup> level spells.

A **formula** for each spell in a studious spellcaster's repertoire must be recorded in his **spell books**. Periodically the caster reviews his spell books to refresh himself on each spell in his repertoire. Spellbooks do not actually have to be books – a different physical object capable of recording information can be used, if that is more appropriate to the magic type being created.

Whatever their physical form, a blank spell book costs 20gp and has 100 “pages”. Each spell formula in the repertoire takes up one page per spell level in a spell book. Spell formula are accumulated over time and are useful if the caster wishes to change his repertoire (see below).

As they advance in level, studious spellcasters can add new spells to their repertoire in a few different ways. When they gain a level of experience, they may return to their masters and be out of play for one game week per spell while they are adding new spells to their repertoire. Their masters will teach them spells equal to the number and level of spells the caster can use in a single day. Characters of 9<sup>th</sup> level or above do not have masters to teach them spells, so they must find or research them. When a master is not available, studious casters depend entirely on finding spell scrolls, finding other spell books with new spells in them, or conducting spell research.

If a new spell is found on a scroll, or another studious spellcaster's spell book, it may be added to the studious spellcaster's repertoire if the character can still learn new spells of that level. If the spell is of too high level to be cast, it cannot be put into the repertoire, but it may be saved to be put into the repertoire in the future. It takes one week of study to add a spell to the character's repertoire. Scribing a spell from a scroll uses it up in the process, but copying spells from a spell book does not erase spells from the book.

Scrolls and spell books are complex and esoteric, and usually written in obscure or dead languages. A scroll or spell book can be read only by the spellcaster who created it, or by a studious spellcaster who can read the language the scroll or spell book is written in. A studious spellcaster can use **read languages** to read a scroll or spell book in an unfamiliar language.

Sometimes a studious spellcaster's spell book will either be lost or destroyed. Each week he goes without access to his spell books, a studious spellcaster loses one spell level from his repertoire, until eventually he knows none at all. A studious spellcaster can rewrite the spells through research and memory at a cost of 1 week of game time and 1,000gp for each spell level. For instance, if two 1<sup>st</sup> level spells and one 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell are replaced, it will take 4 weeks and 4,000gp. This activity requires complete concentration, and a character doing this work may not engage in any other activity for the time required.

A studious spellcaster who already has a full repertoire of spells may sometimes wish to replace one spell in his spell repertoire with another of equal level. It costs 1 week of game time and 1,000gp for each spell level to replace a spell in the repertoire with another. For instance, if

one 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell is replaced, it will take 3 weeks and 3,000gp. This activity requires complete concentration, and a character doing this work may not engage in any other activity for the time required. The studious spellcaster must have a copy of the spell formula for the new spell. Replacing a spell in the repertoire does not cause the character to lose the formula of the replaced spell.

This practice commonly occurs when a spellcaster gets access to more useful spells than what he currently knows, or when a particular adventure requires a spell the caster doesn't normally use. Powerful studious spellcasters generally build large libraries of spell formula and scrolls so that they can replace the spells in their repertoire with new spells when the situation calls for it. For instance, a studious spellcaster confronting a pack of gorgons might wish to learn **stone to flesh** in preparation for the encounter. Given enough time, a studious spellcaster can prepare for almost any challenge.

**Reversed Spells:** Studious spellcasters treat the normal and reversed version of a spell as separate spells.

## INHERITED

Inherited magic is just that, inherited – the caster is born with the power to cast spells. Like studious spellcasters, inherited spellcasters have only a limited repertoire of spells, equal to the number and level of spells they can cast per day. The number of spells of each level in the repertoire is increased by the caster's Charisma bonus. (At the Judge's discretion he may create inherited magic types that benefit from abilities other than Charisma.)

As inherited casters advance in level, they automatically learn new spells equal to the number and level of spells the caster can use in a single day. They do not need or benefit from masters, spellbooks, or scrolls, and are not beholden to any deity or higher power that limits their repertoire. Unlike studious spellcasters, they may not change spells in their repertoire.

**Reversed Spells:** Inherited spellcasters treat the normal and reversed version of a spell as separate spells.

**EXAMPLE:** The Faery magic type has an inherited spell repertoire. Faery casters have a spell repertoire equal to the number and level of spells they can cast per day, increased by their Charisma bonus.

## MAGIC TYPE CLASS CATEGORY

In order to use a new magic type in play, it will need to be incorporated into one or more custom character classes. As explained in the Player's Companion, creating a custom class is a process of allocating **build points** to various **class categories** that define the strengths and weaknesses of the class. The Divine and Arcane magic types each have their own class category, and any new magic type must have its own class category value as well.

Class Category Value	2000+ Base XP Cost		1,999 – 1,000 Base XP Cost		999 – 500 Base XP Cost	
	Spell Progression	XP Cost Multiplier	Spell Progression	XP Cost Multiplier	Spell Progression	XP Cost Multiplier
4	Full Level	x1	Spells x 133%	x2	Spells x 150%	x4
3	2/3 Level	x0.75	Full Level	x1	Spells x 133%	x2
2	1/2 Level	x0.5	3/4 Level	x0.75	Full Level	x1
1	1/3 Level	x0.25	2/5 Level	x0.4	1/2 Level	0.5
0	None	0	None	0	None	0



Class Category Value	Arcane (Base XP Cost 2,500)		Faery (Base XP Cost 1,500)		Divine (Base XP Cost 500)	
	Spell Progression	XP Cost	Spell Progression	XP Cost	Spell Progression	XP Cost
4	Full Standard	2,500	Spells x 133%	3,000	Spells x 150%	2,000
3	2/3 Standard	1,875	Full Alternative	1,500	Spells x 133%	1,000
2	1/2 Standard	1,250	3/4 Alternative	1,125	Full Alternative	500
1	1/3 Standard	625	2/5 Alternative	600	1/2 Alternative	250
0	None	0	None	0	None	0

When building a custom class, each class category is allocated between 0 and 4 build points. When more build points are allocated to the class category, more abilities from within that class category are available, and more XP are required to advance in level.

At each build point (1-4), the magic type's spell progression and Base XP Cost is modified upward or downward. As such, different class categories can be more or less powerful and expensive depending on the underlying magic type's Base XP Cost. For example, assigning 2 build points to the Divine value allows a character class to cast spells at the character's actual level, at a cost of 500 XP. Assigning 2 build points to the Arcane value allows a character class to cast spells at 1/2 the characters' actual level, at a cost of 1,250 XP. This 500% variance is because the Arcane magic type has a Base XP Cost of 2,500 while the Divine magic type has a Base XP Cost of 500.

To determine the XP Cost and rate of spell progression at each build point, find the magic type's Base XP Cost on the Class Category Value table below. Multiply the Base XP Cost by the XP Cost Multiplier at each level. Apply the effects noted on the Spell Progression column to the magic type's spell progression (alternative, improved, or standard), as explained below.

**1/3 Level:** The class has the ability to cast spells and engage in magic research (see below) at 1/3 its actual class level, rounded down. For instance, at 5<sup>th</sup> level, the class casts spells as a 1<sup>st</sup> level caster. The class uses its effective caster level (1/3 its level of experience) for purposes of level-dependent spell ranges, duration, and damage. If the magic type is prayerful, its repertoire is decreased to 1/3 the normal allocation (rounded up).

**2/5 Level:** The class has the ability to cast spells at 2/5 and engage in magic research its actual class level, rounded down. For instance, at 5<sup>th</sup> level, the class casts spells as a 2<sup>nd</sup> level caster. The class uses its effective caster level (2/5 its level of experience) for purposes of level-dependent spell ranges, duration, and damage. If the magic type is prayerful, its repertoire is decreased to 1/3 the normal allocation (rounded up).

**1/2 Level:** The class has the ability to cast spells and perform magic research at 1/2 its actual class level. After 1<sup>st</sup> level, round fractions of 0.5 or greater up. For instance, at 5<sup>th</sup> level, the class casts spells as a 3<sup>rd</sup> level caster. The class uses its effective caster level (1/2 its level of experience) for purposes of level-dependent spell ranges, duration,

and damage. If the magic type is prayerful, its repertoire is decreased to 1/2 the normal allocation (rounded up).

**2/3 Level:** The class has the ability to casts spells and engage in magical research at 2/3 its actual class level. Round fractions of 0.5 or greater up. For instance, at 5<sup>th</sup> level, the character has the abilities of a 4<sup>th</sup> level mage. The class uses its effective caster level (2/3 its level of experience) for purposes of level-dependent spell ranges, durations, and damage. If the magic type is prayerful, its repertoire is decreased to 1/2 the normal allocation (rounded up).

**3/4 Level:** The class has the ability to cast spells and engage in magical research at 3/4 its actual class level. Round fractions of 0.5 or greater up. For instance, at 7<sup>th</sup> level, the character has the abilities of a 5<sup>th</sup> level mage. The class uses its effective caster level (3/4 its level of experience) for purposes of level-dependent spell ranges, duration, and damage. If the magic type is prayerful, its repertoire is decreased to 3/4 the normal allocation (rounded up).

**Full Level:** The class has the ability to cast spells at its class level according its spell progression.

**Spells x 133%:** The class has the ability to cast spells and engage in magical research at its class level according to its spell progression. However, increase the class's spells per level by 33%. Round fractions of .5 or greater up. The class uses its class level for all level-dependent spell ranges, durations, and damages; these are not increased by 33%. A class using the Alternative progression with Spells x 133% can cast one 1<sup>st</sup> level spell per day at 1<sup>st</sup> level. If the magic type is prayerful, its repertoire is increased by 20% above the normal allocation.

**Spells x 150%:** The class has the ability to cast spells at its class level according to its spell progression. However, increase the class's spells per level by 50%. Round fractions of .5 or greater up. The class uses its class level for all level-dependent spell ranges, durations, and damages; these are not increased by 50%. A class using the Alternative progression with Spells x 150% can cast one 1<sup>st</sup> level spell per day at 1<sup>st</sup> level. If the magic type is prayerful, its repertoire is increased by 50% above the normal allocation.

EXAMPLE: Below are three completed Class Category tables. The first table is for the Arcane magic type, the second table is for the Faery magic type, and the third table is for the Divine magic type.

Class Category Value	Codes of Behavior	
	Restriction	Benefit
4	Extreme Code	4 Class Powers or Turn Undead as Cleric of effective caster level
3	Monastic Code	3 Class Powers or Turn Undead as Cleric of effective caster level
2	Clerical Code	2 Class Powers or Turn Undead as Cleric of effective caster level
1	Chivalric Code	1 Class Power or Turn Undead as Cleric of effective caster level
0	None	None

## ADDING CLASS POWERS

A class category can provide one or more class powers at some or all of its class category values. Each class power costs 75 XP. Add the cost of the class powers to the final XP cost of the class category at each class category value. A magic type class category can provide a maximum of one class power per point of class category value.

The specific class powers offered can be defined in advance for the class category, or left as “open slots” to be filled with class-specific powers.

**EXAMPLE:** The Judge decides he wants the Faery class category to offer a variety of class powers which can be used on a variety of spell-like abilities. He decides the class category will offer the maximum number of powers – 4 at class category value 4, 3 at class category value 3, 2 at class category value 2, and 1 at class category value 1. This raises the cost of the class category. Class category value 4 now costs  $[3,000 + (75 \times 4)]$  3,300 XP. Class category value 3 now costs  $[1,500 + (75 \times 3)]$  1,725 XP. Class category value 2 now costs  $[1,125 + (75 \times 2)]$  1,275 XP. Class category value 1 now costs  $(560 + 75)$  635 XP.

## CODES OF BEHAVIOR

The Divine magic type carries a restricted **code of behavior** that limits its casters’ choices and courses of action. Other types of casters may also carry codes of behavior. For prayerful magic types, the code of behavior generally comes for the magic type’s deity or religious order. For studious magic types, the code of behavior might arise from purification requirements, ascetic traditions, lifelong curses, taboos, or impositions arising from the study of magic. For inherited magic types, the code of behavior might be due to a madness or abnormality, a strange and unearthly longing, or a nature alien to normal mankind.

In exchange for accepting a code of behavior, a magic type gains special powers not otherwise available. The more build points assigned to the magic type’s class category when building the class, the more restrictive the behavior code will be, but the more benefits will be gained, as shown on the table below.

**Class Category Value 1:** The class’s code will be similar to the commandments on a lay member of a religious faith, such as not to commit adultery, to follow minor dietary restrictions, and to engage in prayer on worship days, etc. A knight’s chivalric vows would also qualify.

**Class Category Value 2:** The code will add additional rules to an extent similar to that imposed on clergy, such as monogamy or celibacy, restrictions on dress, bans on certain indulgences, strict dietary rules, daily prayer, etc. The bladedancer, cleric, dwarven craftpriest, and shaman have such codes.

**Class Category Value 3:** The code will require a highly restrictive set of behaviors akin to those of a monastic order, including vows of chastity, obedience, and so on.

**Class Category Value 4:** The class’s code will be similar to that of the value below, but with an additional restriction such as pacifism, silence, or poverty. The Priestess class has a class category 4 code.

As with the selection of the spell repertoire, the exact nature of the code of behavior should be left undetermined until specific custom classes are built for the magic type. Different classes within the same magic

type may have different codes of behavior depending what value is assigned to the magic type’s category value.

A code of behavior need not demand virtue – a class’s code could dictate strange or vile behavior if appropriate to the class’s concept. For example, a cultist class devoted to chaotic powers might require ritual sacrifices, or use of strange drugs. The Judge is the ultimate authority on the permissibility of any class’s code.

**EXAMPLE:** The Faery magic type represents otherworldly magic inspired by folklore and fairy tales. Therefore the Judge decides he wants the Faery class category to have a Code of Behavior which reflects superstitions and taboos that delimit its spellcaster’s behavior.

**Note:** There is an asymmetry between class power availability and turn undead. A cleric-like class with a code of behavior can gain the ability to turn undead at his class level with 2 build points, while a mage-like class with a code of behavior cannot gain the ability to turn undead at his class level until 4 build points; but the cleric-like class can only get 2 class powers for giving up turn undead while the mage-like class can get 4 class powers. The asymmetry makes it relatively more expensive (in terms of XP per level or class powers forsaken) for powerful casters to also be able to turn undead. The custom class rules in ACKS are designed to penalize classes that attempt to “do everything” and to prevent classes from being made that are better at core class abilities than the core classes are.

## MAGIC RESEARCH

All types of magic offer their casters the ability to engage in magic research, but the exact abilities granted can vary widely between types. Magic research actually consists of nine different abilities: collecting and using divine power; researching spells; scribing scrolls; brewing potions; creating permanent magic items; casting ritual spells; creating and designing magical constructs; create magical crossbreeds; and granting unlife. Each of these abilities has an effective caster level requirement as well as other prerequisites, detailed below.

**Collect and Use Divine Power:** This is the ability for the character to draw on the divine power of a higher being to further magical research. Divine power can be collected from congregants and/or from sacrifice (if Chaotic). Divine power is available at 1<sup>st</sup> level. However, in order to collect and use divine power, the class must have some strictures dictated by its faith or imposed by the being granting the power. As such, only classes with a Code of Behavior gain this ability. The Arcane magic type does not enforce a Code of Behavior on its spellcasters, so they are not afforded this ability.

Magic Research Ability	Caster Level	Other Prerequisites
Collect/Use Divine Power	1 <sup>st</sup>	Code of Behavior
Research Spells	5 <sup>th</sup>	Prayerful or Studious Magic
Scribe Scrolls	5 <sup>th</sup>	Prayerful or Studious Magic
Brew Potions	5 <sup>th</sup>	Transmogrification modifier 1.25 or less
Create Permanent Magic Items	9 <sup>th</sup>	Enchantment modifier 1.5 or less
Cast Ritual Spells	11 <sup>th</sup>	None; Effects vary by Progression
Create and Design Constructs	11 <sup>th</sup> / 9 <sup>th</sup>	Blast modifier 1.5 or less or Dwarf
Create Crossbreeds	11 <sup>th</sup>	Transmogrification modifier 1 or less
Grant Unlife	11 <sup>th</sup>	Death modifier 1.5 or less

**EXAMPLE:** The Judge has determined that Faery magic imposes a Code of Behavior. Therefore any classes built with the Faery class category offer the ability to collect and use divine power, presumably from the royal courts of the fey or perhaps the otherworldly realm of the faery itself.

**Research Spells:** This is the ability for the character to use spell research spells that he does not have access to from scrolls, spell books, or (if a prayerful spellcaster) his deity. This ability is gained at an effective caster level of 5. However, magic types with an inherited repertoire never offer this ability.

**EXAMPLE:** The Judge has determined that Faery magic is inherited, so classes built with the Faery class category never offer the ability to research spells.

**Scribe Scrolls:** This is the ability for the character to create scrolls inscribed with spells. This ability is gained at an effective caster level of 5. This ability can be gained at level 3 if the ability to Brew Potions is delayed until level 7. (This option is not available if the magic type is disqualified from brewing potion altogether.) As with researching spells, spellcasters with an Inherited never gain this ability.

**EXAMPLE:** The Judge has determined that Faery magic is inherited, so classes built with the Faery class category never offer the ability to scribe scrolls.

**Brew Potions:** This is the ability for the character to brew single-use potions. This ability is gained at an effective caster level of 5. In order to offer this ability, the magic type must have a Transmogrification modifier of 1.25 or less. This ability can be gained at level 3 if the ability to scribe scrolls is delayed until level 7. (This option is not available if the magic type is disqualified from scribing scrolls altogether.)

**EXAMPLE:** Faery magic has a Transmogrification modifier of 1, so classes built with the Faery class category will offer the ability to brew potions ability at 5<sup>th</sup> level.

**Create Permanent Magic Items:** This is the ability for the character to make multi-charge and permanent magic items such as wands, rings, swords, and armor. This ability is gained at an effective caster level of 9. In order to offer this ability, the magic type must have an Enchantment modifier of 1.5 or less.

**EXAMPLE:** Faery magic has an Enchantment modifier of 1, so classes built with the Faery class category will offer the ability to create permanent magic items at 9<sup>th</sup> level.

**Cast Ritual Spells:** This is the ability for the character to learn and cast very powerful enchantments. This ability is gained at an effective caster level of 11. If the magic type follows the Standard or Improved progression, it will offer ritual spells of 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> level. If the magic type follows the Alternative progression, it will offer ritual spells of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> level.

**EXAMPLE:** Faery magic follows the Alternative progression. Therefore, classes built with the Faery class category will gain the ability to cast ritual spells of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> level when they reach 11<sup>th</sup> level.

**Create and Design Constructs:** This is the ability for the character to craft magical constructs such as gargoyles and golems. This ability is gained at an effective caster level of 11, or 9 if the character is a Dwarven

class. In order to offer this ability to non-Dwarves, the magic type must have a Blast modifier of 1.5 or less. Thus, the Divine magic type, with a Blast modifier of 2.25, does not afford non-Dwarven casters the ability to create crossbreeds.

**EXAMPLE:** Faery magic has a Blast modifier of 2.25, so classes built with the Faery class category will never offer the ability to create and design constructs, unless they are Dwarven custom classes.

**Create Crossbreeds:** This is the ability for the character to magically blend different progenitor creatures together to create a crossbreed monster. This ability is gained at an effective caster level of 11. In order to offer this ability, the magic type must have a Transmogrification modifier of 1 or less. Thus, the Divine magic type, with a Transmogrification modifier of 1.25, does not afford its casters the ability create crossbreeds.

**EXAMPLE:** Faery magic has a Transmogrification modifier of 1, so classes built with the Faery class category will offer the ability to create crossbreeds ability at 11<sup>th</sup> level.

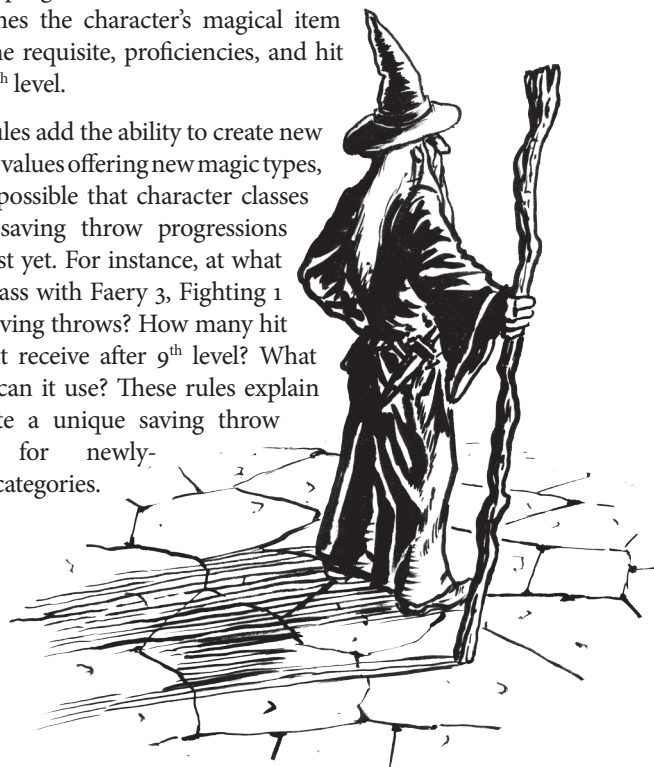
**Grant Unlife:** This is the ability for the character to transform creatures into intelligent undead through necromancy. This ability is gained at an effective caster level of 11. In order to offer this ability, the magic type must have a Death modifier of 1.5 or less. Granting unlife is limited to Chaotic spellcasters, but this is a limitation of alignment rather than magic type.

**EXAMPLE:** Faery magic has a Death modifier of 1.5, so classes built with the Faery class category will offer the ability to grant unlife ability at 11<sup>th</sup> level.

## SAVING THROW PROGRESSION

In the Player's Companion custom class creation system, every class is assigned a saving throw progression based on its highest of the four class category values (Fighting, Thievery, Divine, or Arcane). The saving throw progression is critical, because it also determines the character's magical item options, prime requisite, proficiencies, and hit points after 9<sup>th</sup> level.

Since these rules add the ability to create new class category values offering new magic types, it is entirely possible that character classes might have saving throw progressions that don't exist yet. For instance, at what rate does a class with Faery 3, Fighting 1 advance in saving throws? How many hit points does it receive after 9<sup>th</sup> level? What magic items can it use? These rules explain how to create a unique saving throw progression for newly-created class categories.



Saving Throw Progression



## PROGRESSION RATE

The class category of a new magic type will have a saving throw progression rate such as “2 points every 6 levels”. This rate is determined by its source factor total, its repertoire acquisition method, and its code of behavior.

Source Factor Total	Inherited or Studious, No Code of Behavior	Inherited or Studious, With Code of Behavior	Any Prayerful
12.5 or less	2 points every 6 levels	2 points every 6 levels	2 points every 4 levels
12.6 – 13.5	2 points every 6 levels	2 points every 4 levels	2 points every 4 levels
13.6 or more	2 points every 4 levels	2 points every 4 levels	2 points every 4 levels

EXAMPLE: Faery magic is inherited, imposes a code of behavior, and has a source factor total of 12.75. Classes with the Faery saving throwing progression will improve their saving throws by 2 points every 4 levels (like a cleric).

The saving throw progression rate also determines proficiency acquisition; characters choose one additional proficiency chosen from their class list each time they complete a full (2-point) saving throw progression.

EXAMPLE: Classes with the Faery saving throw progression will gain one class proficiency at 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> level.

## MAGIC ITEM USAGE

The magic items available to classes with the new saving throw progression are determined by cross-referencing its repertoire acquisition method with the quotient of its Blast modifier / Healing modifier on the table below. If a choice of two magic item selections is available, the choice should be made by class, not by class category.

Source Factor Total	Blast modifier / Healing modifier		
	0.67 – 1.10	1.10 – 1.50	1.6 – 2.25
12.5 or less	Mage	Mage and Cleric	Mage or Cleric
12.6 – 13.5	Mage or Cleric	Mage and Cleric	Mage or Cleric
13.6 or more	Mage or Cleric	Mage and Cleric	Cleric

EXAMPLE: Faery magic has a source factor total of 12.75. It has a Blast modifier of 2.25 and a Healing modifier of 1, which yields a quotient of 2.25. Therefore the class category can offer the ability to use either mage or cleric magic items. This choice is left open until specific custom classes are built for the magic type.

## PRIME REQUISITE

The prime requisite(s) of classes with the new saving throw progression are determined by cross-referencing its repertoire acquisition method with the quotient of its Blast modifier / Healing modifier on the table below. If a choice of two prime requisites is available, the choice should be made by class, not by class category.

Repertoire	Blast modifier / Healing modifier		
	0.67 – 1.10	1.10 – 1.50	1.6 – 2.25
Prayerful	INT and WIS	INT or WIS	WIS
Studious	INT	INT or WIS	INT and WIS
Inherited	INT and CHA	CHA	CHA and WIS

EXAMPLE: Faery magic is inherited. It has a Blast modifier of 2.25 and a Healing modifier of 1, which yields a quotient of 2.25. The prime requisites of classes with the Faery saving throw progression will therefore be CHA and WIS.

## HIT POINTS AFTER 9<sup>TH</sup> LEVEL

Any class category offering spellcasting will have a saving throw progression that grants 1 hit point per level after 9<sup>th</sup>.

## EXPERIENCE POINT PROGRESSION AFTER 8<sup>TH</sup> LEVEL

After 8<sup>th</sup> level, the amount of experience required to advance no longer doubles. Instead, it increases by a flat amount each level. The amount required is based on the saving throw progression. Determine this amount based on the magic type’s source factor total:

- Source Factor total of 14 or more: Additional 100,000XP for each level after 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Source factor total 13.1 to 14: An additional 120,000XP for each level after 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Source factor total 13 or less: An additional 150,000XP for each level after 8<sup>th</sup>.

EXAMPLE: Faery magic has a source factor total of 12.75. Classes with the Faery saving throw progression will require an additional 150,000XP for each level of advancement after 8<sup>th</sup>.

## SPELL LIST

The final stage of creating a new magic type is to create a spell list of 10 to 20 spells of each level for your new magic type. This spell list will serve as the basis from which studious and inherited casters of the new type learn spells, or from which prayerful caster classes select their repertoire. If the new magic type is Prayerful, you should create multiple spell lists, reflecting the varying spell selection offered by different deities and higher beings.

Spell lists can include new spells custom-created for your magic type and/or existing spells imported from the various Arcane and Divine spell lists. See Player’s Companion, Chapter 5, for rules on creating custom spells. Remember to apply the appropriate magic type’s source factors when building its spells.

When importing spells from the various Arcane and Divine spell lists, you will need to compare the source modifier applied to spells of its category based on its type (Arcane or Divine) with the source modifier for that category of spells applied by your new magic type. If your new magic type has the same source modifier for that category as magic type from which you’re importing it, no modification is required. However, if your new magic type has a different source modifier, you’ll need to increase or decrease the spell’s level accordingly.

# THE SHADES OF MAGIC

## BECAUSE POWER CORRUPTS, AND MAGICAL POWER CORRUPTS MAGICALLY BY ALEXANDER MACRIS

In *Beyond Arcane and Divine* (pg. 3), we introduced new mechanics allowing Judges to design new types of magic. One of those mechanics allowed for spellcasters to be restricted by Codes of Behavior. This article introduces the concept of Shades of Magic as a replacement for Codes of Behavior.

Instead of a code that mandates how a spellcaster must act, the shades of magic leave a spellcaster with complete free will - while nevertheless imposing sharp limits on the spellcaster's behavior if he wishes to avoid falling to darkness. But of course, not everyone wishes to avoid corruption. The dark side is, after all, quicker, easier, and more seductive. These rules were developed for our upcoming Heroic Companion, but we're opening up the hood to let you deploy them for magic types of your own.

### SHADED MAGIC

In lieu of imposing a code of behavior, a magic type may be **shaded**. Shaded magic can be dangerous to a caster's soul. Shaded magic types divide their spells into three categories, depending on how dangerous they are to case.

- Spells which have an inherently corrupting influence on the soul are **black magic**.
- Spells which may or may not be corrupting, depending on the purposes to which they are used, are **grey magic**.
- Spells which are inherently safe to cast are called **white magic**.

### CORRUPTION

Shaded spellcasters acquire **corruption points** whenever they learn or cast a black magic spell, or cast grey magic spells for certain corrupt purposes:

- Each time a black magic spell is learned, the caster acquires a number of corruption points equal to the spell's level.
- Each time a black magic spell is cast, the caster acquires one additional corruption point.
- Each time a grey magic spell is used in order to coerce, deceive, harm, or rob a Lawful or sapient Neutral target, the caster acquires one corruption point.

EXAMPLE: Baldur has come into possession of a Chaotic spellcaster's spellbook. After several weeks of study, Baldur learns **darkness** (a 1<sup>st</sup> level black magic spell) and **deathless minion** (a 2<sup>nd</sup> level black magic spell). He acquires 3 corruption points, 1 for learning **darkness** and 2 for learning **deathless minion**. When Baldur is caught with the Chaotic spellbook, men-at-arms from the local militia (Neutral men) are sent to arrest him for sorcery. Baldur casts **burning sparks** (a 2<sup>nd</sup> level grey magic spell) against his would-be captors, killing one guard and wounding two others. He gains 1 corruption point for casting grey magic to harm sapient Neutrals. Baldur then casts **deathless minion** to animate the slain guard, gaining another 1 corruption point for casting a black magic spell. After making his escape, Baldur has accumulated a total of 5 corruption points.

When a caster accumulates a number of corruption points equal to his Wisdom score, his alignment shifts one step towards Chaotic. When a caster accumulates twice his Wisdom score in corruption, his alignment shifts a second step towards Chaotic. Characters who begin Neutral are not affected by the first stage of corruption, and characters who begin Chaotic are not affected by the first two stages of corruption.

When a caster accumulates a number of corruption points equal to three times his Wisdom score, and for each additional multiple of his Wisdom score the caster accumulates in corruption points thereafter, he acquires a **corrupting weakness**. The Judge will randomly determine or pick from the list below:

1. **Disfigured:** Sorcerous studies have begun to make the caster a monstrous figure, leaving him misshapen limbs, clawed hands or feet, hideous scarring, strangely colored eyes, and so on. Each disfigurement imposes a -2 reaction rolls with sapient creatures of Lawful or Neutral alignment.
2. **Distrusted:** Lore best left unstudied has twisted the caster's demeanor and personality. A reaction roll with sapient creatures of Lawful or Neutral alignment can never achieve a friendly (12+) result. Each time this weakness is selected thereafter, reduce the best possible reaction roll by one further step.
3. **Enervated:** The caster's exploration of sinister sorcery has sapped his soul of strength and vigor. His Constitution is reduced by 2 points each time this weakness occurs.
4. **Frightening to Beasts:** The caster's corruption is unsettling to animals. They growl, hiss, rear up, and otherwise make their displeasure known whenever he is within 10'. The caster suffers a -4 reaction roll when encountering animals or giant animals. He cannot ride normal mounts. Characters with Beast Friendship proficiency can detect something is unnatural about the caster, but do not suffer a reaction roll penalty. If the caster himself had Beast Friendship proficiency, the proficiency's effects now only help when dealing with wild predators and scavengers, such as wolves and vultures.
5. **Haunted:** Whispers from the beyond plague the caster. They are difficult to ignore, and impose a -2 penalty to hear noise throws and -1 penalty to initiative and surprise rolls. The penalty is cumulative each time this weakness occurs.
6. **Mad:** So disturbing are the caster's dark secrets that he has begun to lose his grip on reality. Each day he must make a saving throw versus Spells or go mad for 1-10 hours. The caster's first saving throw against madness is at +20, but each consecutive saving throw is one point less advantaged. When the caster goes mad, he falls under the Judge's control for 1d10 hours, during which time his behavior is entirely unpredictable. The day after a bout of madness, the caster resumes his saving throws with a +20 bonus.



7. **Mutation:** The corrupting influences of dark magic have begun to warp the caster's body. The first time this weakness occurs, roll 1d10 on the Player's Companion Magical Mutations sub-table. The second time it occurs, roll 1d10+1. The third time it occurs, roll 1d10+2, and so on.
8. **Nocturnal:** Creatures of darkness and evil hunt by night, and sleep by day. So too does the caster. He cannot regain spells unless he sleeps during the day. Due to his nocturnal habits, he suffers a penalty of -2 to all throws when in sunlight. This penalty is increased by an additional 2 points each time this weakness occurs.
9. **Obsession:** The caster's self-control and will begin to erode in the face of ongoing corruption. His Wisdom is reduced by 2 points each time this weakness occurs. Note that this result may cause the caster to acquire more weaknesses by increasing the ratio of his corruption points to his Wisdom!
10. **Sleepless:** Haunted by nightmares and disturbing visions of the grave, the caster finds it hard to sleep. Each time he attempts to rest, he must roll 1d6. On a 1, the caster tosses and turns all night, regaining no hit points and recovering no spells. The chance of sleeplessness increases by 1 each time this weakness occurs, to a maximum of five times.

The maximum number of weaknesses a caster may have is equal to the highest level spell he can cast. Such a caster is as depraved as he can be, given his knowledge; additional corruption cannot taint him further until he unlocks even darker secrets (e.g. learns higher level spells). He still accumulates corruption points, however.

EXAMPLE: Baldur is a 7th level Neutral loremaster with 11 Wisdom. Over several months of studying a Chaotic spellbook, Baldur accumulates 11 corruption points. This is sufficient to cause Baldur's alignment to shift one step, but because he is Neutral he ignores this first stage of corruption. On a dangerous adventure, he casts several black magic spells, and accumulates 22 corruption points. Baldur's alignment now shifts another step, which he cannot ignore; he becomes Chaotic aligned.

With his new alignment, evil deeds come easier to him, and Baldur soon racks up more corruption. When accumulates 33 corruption points, Baldur acquires his first corrupting weakness. The Judge rolls a 1 on 1d10, indicating that Baldur is now **disfigured**. Because Baldur has been casting a lot of necromancy spells, the Judge decides that Baldur has taken on a corpse-like appearance, with pale yellowish skin, gaunt flesh, and reddish eyes. Baldur now suffers a -2 reaction roll with sapient Lawful and Neutral creatures.

The disfigured Baldur is now shunned by all good creature and sees little point in "playing nice" anymore. He soon accumulates many more corruption points. At 44, 55, and 66 corruption points, he accumulates his second, third, and fourth corrupting weakness. He becomes **nocturnal** (-2 penalty to throws in sunlight), **haunted** (-2 to hear noise, -1 initiative and surprise rolls), and **mutated** – with a roll of 8 on the Magical Mutation sub-table indicating he grows large fangs which prevent intelligible human speech (though not spells). At 8<sup>th</sup> level he accumulates 80 corruption points, but he cannot acquire more than four weaknesses, because the highest level spell he can cast is 4<sup>th</sup>. When Baldur reaches 9<sup>th</sup> level, and becomes capable of 5<sup>th</sup> level spells, he has acquired 103 corruption points. He immediately

acquires his fifth weakness – another result of **nocturnal** means that he now suffers -4 penalty to throws in sunlight.

## IDENTIFYING THE SHADE OF MAGIC

Any spell school that uses the Shades of Magic must categorize its body of spells into black, grey, and white. To determine the shade of a spell, consult the checklists below. Always start with the black magic checklist, then proceed to the grey magic checklist, then to the white magic checklist. The following types of spells should be considered black magic:

- Death and necromancy spells of any sort, except those which exclusively harm the undead.
- Detection spells reversed to conceal black magic (e.g. **undetected curse**).
- Enchantment spells which are capable of charming or commanding sapient creatures for more than an hour. Having the power to enslave the will of sapient creatures for long periods of time is inherently corrupting.
- Enchantment spells which cause fear in living creatures, unless limited to target evil creatures. Causing fear and terror is an inherently black deed.
- Illusion spells which send phantasmal killers against the target. Causing fear and terror is, again, a black deed.
- Healing spells reversed to cause harm (e.g. **cause light wounds** or **cause disease**). Perverting healing magic is always black.
- Protection spells reversed to operate against good creatures (e.g. **protection from good**) or harm the target (**bane**).
- Summoning spells which communicate with or summon creatures from thin air (other planes of existence); or summoning spells which summon Lawful or sapient Neutral creatures which are compelled to serve the caster or any Chaotic creatures.
- Wall spells with necromantic components (e.g. **wall of corpses**).

The following types of spells should be considered grey magic:

- Blast spells of any type.
- Enchantment spells which are capable of charming or commanding sapient creatures, but not for more than an hour; and other enchantment spells which are not limited to targeting evil creatures.
- Illusion spells which render the target invisible or inaudible, or which can be disbelieved.
- Movement spells which can affect objects or unwilling targets.
- Transmogrification spells which can affect unwilling targets.
- Wall spells of any type except **walls of corpses**.

The following types of spells should be considered white magic:

- Death spells which exclusively harm the undead.
- Detection spells which are not black.
- Enchantment spells which are limited to targeting evil creatures.

- Healing spells, except if reversed to cause harm.
- Illusion spells which cannot be disbelieved, except for inaudibility and invisibility.
- Movement spells which can only affect willing targets.
- Protection spells, except if reversed to operate against “good” creatures or to harm the target.
- Transmogrification spells which can only affect objects or willing targets.
- Summoning spells in which the creature(s) summoned must arrive by means of their own locomotion from the nearest lair and are either sapient Lawful creatures which serve Lawful casters; or are unintelligent Neutral creatures.

Any other spell which is not black or grey.

**Robert E. Howard Memorial Rule (Optional):** The taint on this type of magic is very strong. All of its grey magic spells are considered black magic. This magic type’s spellcasters gain 1 bonus class power per point of class category value.

**H.P. Lovecraft Memorial Rule (Optional):** The taint on this type of magic is so dark that there are no “pure” spells all. All of its spells are considered black magic. This magic type’s spellcasters gain 2 bonus class powers per point of class category value.

# INTRODUCING THE WIZARD

## MANKIND’S MIGHTIEST PRACTITIONERS OF ARCAINE MAGIC

### BY ALEXANDER MACRIS AND CHARLES MYERS

The wizard class was originally created by Charles Myers, and appears on his blog **By This Axe I Rule** (<http://www.bythisaxe.co/2012/08/the-wizard.html>). It was an application of the “one class, four paths” approach that we pioneered with the Witch class in the ACKS Player’s Handbook. The witch class itself was a class created with and as a reward for Charles, who was our highest-tier backer on Player’s Companion. A huge thank you goes out to him for his contributions to ACKS throughout!

When using the custom class rules in Player’s Companion there is almost no way to get any class powers for an Arcane 4 spellcaster, so Charles’s wizard was an Arcane 3, Thief 1 build, like the warlock. This afforded Charles three class powers to play with, along with a fourth from dropping two-handed weapon fighting style, but it meant that the wizard was not as good a spellcaster as the mage.

The new wizard class is an Arcane 4 build with four class powers. This was accomplished by assigning a code of behavior to the Arcane value, which affords one class power per point spent in the class category value. (Codes of behavior were introduced in the article *Beyond Arcane and Divine* found in this issue, p. 3).

The code of behavior assigned to the wizard is shaded magic. Shaded magic makes spellcasting perilous for the caster. Like the arcanists in Tolkien, However, and Lovecraft, the wizard risks his body and spirit whenever he casts grey or black magic. (Shaded magic was introduced in the article *The Shades of Magic* in this issue, p. 13).

Since the new wizard is an Arcane 4 caster, it has the same level advancement, XP requirements, and spell progression as, and both cast arcane spells. However, the wizard has a lot more special abilities than the mage, to compensate for the fact that his spellcasting is limited by the shades of magic.

Because the wizard has a lot more class powers, and more interesting choices as it advances, it’s probably more fun to play than the mage; it also is more challenging to play, because wrong decisions in learning and casting spells can send you on a one way road to chaos and damnation.

There are a few different ways you can add the wizard to your campaigns:

1. You can use the wizard alongside the mage. If you enjoy a “kitchen sink” approach to your setting, then wizardry might represent a more ancient, more dangerous art, still existent but largely abandoned by civilized spellcasters who rely on safer methods of magery.
2. You can replace the mage with the wizard. This is a great option if you want to have a Tolkienesque or Howardian flavor to magic.
3. You can use the wizard as a template for rebuilding ALL the magic-using classes as shaded spellcasters. This is the approach I take in the Heroic Companion, which actually swaps out arcane and divine casting entirely for an integrated “eldritch” magic which has its own unique spells, subject to shaded magic limitations.

And now, on to the class!

## WIZARD

*“You cannot pass,” he said. The orcs stood still, and a dead silence fell. “I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udûn. Go back to the Shadow! You cannot pass.”*

– Gandalf, in **The Lord of the Rings** (J.R.R. Tolkien)

**Prime Requisite:** INT  
**Requirements:** None  
**Hit Dice:** 1d4  
**Maximum Level:** 14

Wizards are mankind’s mightiest practitioners of arcane magic. The most powerful wizards can shatter the gate of a fortress with a blow from their staff, and summon up a thunder-storm with a song. Some wizards succumb to the temptations of their great power, and are

Wizard Level Progression					Wizard Spell Progression					
Experience	Title	Level	Hit Dice	Special Abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6
0	Initiate	1	1d4	College, prestidigitation, spells	1	-	-	-	-	-
2,500	Adept	2	2d4	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
5,000	Theurgist	3	3d4	College	2	1	-	-	-	-
10,000	Magician	4	4d4	-	3	2	-	-	-	-
20,000	Thaumaturge	5	5d4	Magic research (minor), college	3	2	1	-	-	-
40,000	Enchanter	6	6d4	-	3	3	2	-	-	-
80,000	Conjurer	7	7d4	-	4	3	2	1	-	-
160,000	Mage	8	8d4	-	4	3	3	2	-	-
310,000	Wizard	9	9d4	Magic research, college, tower	4	4	3	2	1	-
460,000	Wizard, 10 <sup>th</sup> level	10	9d4+1*	-	4	4	3	3	2	-
610,000	Wizard, 11 <sup>th</sup> level	11	9d4+2*	Magic research (advanced), college	5	4	4	3	2	1
760,000	Wizard, 12 <sup>th</sup> level	12	9d4+3*	-	5	4	4	3	3	2
910,000	Wizard, 13 <sup>th</sup> level	13	9d4+4*	-	5	5	4	4	3	2
1,060,000	Wizard of the Council	14	9d4+5*	-	5	5	4	4	3	3

\*Hit point modifiers from constitution are ignored

counted among the enemies of men; but most use their knowledge to advise, guide, and protect the realm from the evils that assail it.

At first level, wizards hit an unarmored foe (AC 0) with an attack throw of 10+. Like mages, they advance in attack throws and saving throws by two points every six levels of experience. Wizards are limited to fighting with the weapons taught by their college (see below), and are unable to use shields, fight with two weapons, or wear any kind of armor.

All wizards can magically accomplish simple illusions and sleight of hand tricks suitable for impressing peasants, such as lighting a candle or shaping a smoke ring, at will. To cast these prestidigitations, the wizard merely must be able to perform the task physically, and be free to speak and gesture. He may use prestidigitation to pick pockets as a thief of one half his class level.

As they grow in power, wizards are able to learn and cast arcane spells as a mage of their class level. The number and levels of spells the wizard can use in a single day are listed on the Wizard Spell Progression table. A wizard's spell selection is limited to the spells in his repertoire. A wizard's repertoire can include a number of spells up to the number and level of spells listed for his level, increased by his Intelligence bonus. All wizards can use any magic items usable by mages.

A wizard's advancement in the magical arts is shaped by his college of wizardry. The origin of the colleges of wizardry is lost in the mists of time. However, the colleges of Artifice, Fellowship, Lore, and Nature are believed to be the oldest of the colleges. Graduates of these colleges are known for their white, grey, blue and brown robes, respectively.

When a wizard is created, select a college for the character from the Wizard Colleges table below. (Judges may create colleges specific to their campaign setting if desired.) Each college teaches the use of a selection of four weapons for self-defense, four proficiency selections which are added to the Wizard Proficiency List as potential class proficiency choices, and four special abilities earned as they advance in level.

College	Description
Artifice	The college of Artifice sees magic as a mechanical process to be studied systematically in order to decipher its operations and improve upon them. Its wizards frequently seek out the company of dwarves, who share their fascination with artificial things made with metal and fire.
Fellowship	The college of Fellowship teaches that magic is a manifestation of the divine spark within every sapient creature. Its wizards are often found in adventuring parties, carrying divine light into the shadowed places of the world.
Lore	The college of Lore teaches that magic is governed by secret laws and esoteric principles. Its wizards seek out forgotten knowledge and share insights with sages and scholars.
Nature	The college of Nature views magic as a force of nature, created and sustained by life. Its wizards live in the wild places of earth, and find friendship with birds, beasts, elves, and shamans.

## WIZARD OF ARTIFICE

Class Proficiencies: Bargaining, Bribery, Command, Siege Engineering

**Weapons:** Dagger, dart, staff, whip

**1<sup>st</sup> level:** The wizard has studied the craft of magic and the methods by which it is worked into objects. The wizard gains one rank of **Magical Engineering** proficiency.

**3<sup>rd</sup> level:** The mechanisms of war are among the most intricate ever crafted by man, and worthy of deep study. The wizard gains one rank of **Siege Engineering** proficiency.

**5<sup>th</sup> level:** The science of making reveals the art of unmaking. Once per day the wizard can cast **dispel magic** (as the 3<sup>rd</sup> level arcane spell).

**9<sup>th</sup> level:** Years of careful laboratory work begin to pay off as the wizard develops **flawless precision**. When conducting ordinary magic research (i.e. not using experimental methods), the wizard avoids automatic failures on unmodified die rolls of 2-3. An unmodified die roll of 1 is still an automatic failure, however.

**11<sup>th</sup> level:** The wizard is an **innovative researcher** capable of devising solutions that other wizards would never even conceive of. His bonus on magic research throws from using experimental methods is doubled (e.g. conventional methods provide a +4 bonus).

## WIZARD OF FELLOWSHIP

**Class Proficiencies:** Beast Friendship, Command, Divine Blessing, Leadership

**Weapons:** Club, dagger, dart, staff

**1<sup>st</sup> level:** The wizard is an ever-present reminder of light and hope in a dark world. He gains the ability to **inspire courage**, as a bard.

**3<sup>rd</sup> level:** The wizard is ready to take the battle to the enemy. He gains **Martial Training** in short swords, swords, and two-handed swords.

**5<sup>th</sup> level:** Though he may take a humble mien as he walks among the common man, a wizard in the fullness of his power is a luminous being that the dark cannot stand against. Once per day the wizard can cast **sustained protection from evil** (as the 3<sup>rd</sup> level arcane spell).

**9<sup>th</sup> level:** The wizard is blessed with an **aura of protection** that grants a +1 bonus to AC and a +1 bonus on saving throws against attacks made or effects created by evil creatures. The wizard's aura of protection appears as a golden halo when viewed with magic.

**11<sup>th</sup> level:** The powers of darkness cannot stand before the wizard's bright lore. The character can turn undead as a cleric of one-half his class level. If the character casts spells that require a saving throw versus Paralysis, his targets suffer a -2 penalty on the save. When the character casts spells that dispel or protect against magic or evil, the spell effects are calculated as if he were two class levels higher than his actual level of experience.

## WIZARD OF LORE

**Class Proficiencies:** Mapping, Navigation, Riding, Seafaring

**Weapons:** Dagger, dart, sling, staff

**1<sup>st</sup> level:** The wizard has undertaken a careful study of ancient annals and occult mysteries. He gains the Lore mastery proficiency.

**3<sup>rd</sup> level:** Few books and scrolls of interest to the wizard are written in the Common tongue, so the wizard must master obscure scripts, codes, and languages. He may read languages (including ciphers, treasure maps, and dead languages, but not magical writings) with a proficiency throw of 5+ on 1d20. If the roll does not succeed, the wizard may not try to read that particular piece of writing until he reaches a higher level of experience.

**5<sup>th</sup> level:** In his studies, the wizard has learned ancient runes of power. Once per day, he can cast glyphs of warding (as the 3<sup>rd</sup> level divine spell).

**9<sup>th</sup> level:** The wizard's pursuit of magical learning has revealed secret knowledge. He may add any four spells of his choice to his repertoire of spells known.

**11<sup>th</sup> level:** By studying astrology and metaphysics, the wizard masters the lore of the stars and spheres. The wizard is able to learn and cast ritual magic at half the usual base time and cost.

## WIZARD OF NATURE

**Class Proficiencies:** Animal Husbandry, Contemplation, Divine Health, Survival

**Weapons:** Club, dagger, sling, staff

**1<sup>st</sup> level:** As a friend of birds and beasts, the wizard can understand the subtle language of normal animals. He gains a +2 to all reaction rolls when encountering animals, and may take them as henchmen. He can identify flora and fauna with a proficiency throw of 11+.

**3<sup>rd</sup> level:** The ways of the wild include the art of the hunt. The wizard gains Martial Training in short bows, short swords, and spears.

**5<sup>th</sup> level:** So close has the wizard grown to his wild kin that their shape is as natural to him as his own skin. Once per day, the wizard can skinchange (as the 3<sup>rd</sup> level arcane spell).

**9<sup>th</sup> level:** The spirits of nature reward the wizard with an animal companion. A wizard of nature's animal companion is mechanically identical to a shaman's totem animal (see Player's Companion, p. 38).

**11<sup>th</sup> level:** Due to his attunement to nature, the wizard gains a +1 bonus to surprise rolls when in the wilderness. All ordinary animals within 5 miles of the wizard's home or sanctum become kind and helpful, knowing him as a steward of the wild.

The great power of wizards comes at a high cost, however. The magic taught by colleges is shaded, and can be dangerous to the wizard's soul. Wizards gain corruption whenever they learn or cast black magic, or cast grey magic for corrupt purposes. See the rules for Shades of Magic in Axioms issue 1.

When a wizard of any college reaches 5<sup>th</sup> level (Thaumaturge), he may begin to research spells, scribe magical scrolls, and brew potions. When a wizard reaches 9<sup>th</sup> level (Wizard), he is able to create more powerful magic items such as weapons, rings, and staves. A wizard may also build a wizard's tower when he reaches 9<sup>th</sup> level. He will then attract 1d6 apprentice wizards of 1st-3<sup>rd</sup> level plus 2d6 young people seeking to become wizards. Their intelligence scores will be above average, but many will become discouraged from the rigorous mental training and quit after 1d6 months. While in the wizard's service, apprentices must be provided food and lodging, but need not be paid wages. If the wizard builds a dungeon beneath or near his tower, monsters will start to arrive to dwell within, followed shortly by adventurers seeking to fight them.

At 11<sup>th</sup> level, a wizard may learn and cast ritual arcane spells of great power (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> level), craft magical constructs, and create magical cross-breeds. If chaotic, a wizard may create necromantic servants and even become undead himself.

**Wizard Proficiency List:** Alchemy, Battle Magic, Black Lore of Zahar, Collegiate Wizardry, Craft, Diplomacy, Elementalism, Elven Bloodline, Familiar, Healing, Illusion Resistance, Knowledge, Language, Laying on Hands, Magical Engineering, Magical Music, Mystic Aura, Naturalism, Quiet Magic, Sensing Power, Sensing Evil, Soothsaying, Transmogrification, Unflappable Casting.



# THE ART OF ARCANOGENESIS

## CREATING NEW LIFE-FORMS WITH MAGIC BY MARK BOBER WITH ALEXANDER MACRIS

The wilds and dark places at the borders of civilization are filled with unspeakable creations of twisted magic – owlbears and beastmen, chimera and lamia. But however unnatural these crossbreeds are, at least these creatures were blends of the natural. Some mages go beyond mere crossbreeding and create new life forms entirely. This esoteric and dangerous practice is known as **arcanogenesis**.

By default, arcanogenesis can be practiced only by arcane spellcasters who reach 11th level or higher. If desired, the Judge may restrict arcanogenesis to spellcasters who select a particular proficiency (e.g. Transmogrification or Black Lore) or otherwise place limits upon it.

### DESIGNING CREATURES

Spellcasters may design new, previously unknown creatures. The player and Judge should collaborate using the rules for creating new monsters presented in Lairs & Encounters to detail the new lifeform. The creature designed must have a minimum of 1 HD and cannot have more HD than twice the spellcaster's class level. It cannot have more than one special ability (\*), plus one special ability per point of Intelligence bonus the caster possesses.

EXAMPLE: An 11th level spellcaster with 16 INT can design anything from a 1 HD lifeform to a 22\*\*\* HD life form.

The design process costs 2,000 gp per Hit Die of the creature plus an additional 5,000 gp per special ability it possesses, and takes one week plus one day per 1,000 gp of cost. The design process requires a magic research throw. A successful throw yields a formula the spellcaster can use to create the creature.

The target value of the magical research is increased by +1 for every 5,000 gp the creature costs. If the creature reproduces asexually via any process (fission, sporing, parthenogenesis, etc.) the target value of the magical research throw is increased by 3.

The spellcaster must have access to a library (ACKS, p. 117) at least equal in value to the cost of the lifeform throughout the design process. For every 10,000gp of value above the minimum required for the lifeform, the spellcaster receives a +1 bonus on his magic research throw.

The spellcaster may experiment during the design process, as detailed in the Player's Companion, p. 100. The breakthroughs for designing lifeforms are identical to those for designing constructs.

EXAMPLE: Cedric, a 13th level mage of great talent (18 INT) but low charisma (7 CHA), tires of apprentices who cannot appreciate his genius, and seeks to create for himself the perfect research partner. To maximize his output, he designs a new 12 HD lifeform (base cost 24,000gp) with the abilities of an arcane spellcaster of its HD (two special abilities for 10,000gp) and the ability to work on multiple arcane research tasks at once (the Judge rules this counts as another special ability, costing 5,000gp). He gives the creature no other abilities – it is a stationary creature, meant only to research. His total cost is 39,000gp. It will take 46 days for Cedric to design the lifeform.

Cedric has a library with a value of 50,000 GP. The magical research throw to design the lifeform is 13+ (a base of 5+, plus 8 points for the value). Cedric gains a bonus of +3 for his INT, +1 for the library value, and +2 for his two ranks in Magical Engineering. Cedric needs only a throw of 7+ to succeed in his design.

### CREATING CREATURES

In order to create a creature, the spellcaster must have a formula for the type of creature he wishes to create. Formula can be found as treasure in rare manuals, or developed by the spellcaster using the design process (see above). The spellcaster is limited to creating creatures with HD no more than twice his class level.

The creation process costs 2,000gp per Hit Die of the lifeform, plus an additional 5,000gp per special ability it possesses, and takes one week plus one day per 1,000gp of cost. The creation process requires a magic research throw.

The target value of the magical research throw is increased by +1 for every 5,000gp the creature costs. If the creature reproduces asexually via any process (fission, sporing, parthenogenesis, etc.) the target value of the magical research throw is increased by 3.

In order to create a creature, the spellcaster must have access to a genesis vat at least equal in value to the cost of the creature. For every 10,000 gp of value above the minimum required for the creature, the spellcaster receives a +1 bonus on her magical research throw. The spellcaster may gain additional bonuses by using precious materials, as normal.

In addition, for each special ability, special components from creatures with a similar power must be provided. The value of special components required is 10% of the cost of the creature per special ability. (Special abilities equaling multiple asterisks count as multiple abilities.)

Instilling the capacity for thought is a laborious process. If a creature created through arcanogenesis is to have any intelligence, the spellcaster must have access to a neuropsychic distiller. Creatures created without a distiller are mindless. A basic neuropsychic distiller costs 15,000gp, and will imbue a creature with animal intelligence at a base Training Modifier of -3. For each additional point increase in Training Modifier, add 5,000gp to the base cost (up to a TM of +3 at 45,000gp in cost). An advanced neuropsychic distiller costs 60,000gp and will imbue a creature with sapient intelligence. A neuropsychic



distiller requires a brain or brains to operate. The caster must harvest brains from creatures with a total XP value equal to 20% of the cost of the creature being created. Only creatures with an intelligence equal to or greater than the newly-created creature's intelligence can be used.

A newly-created creature is not automatically under control of the caster. If the creature is of animal intelligence or greater, a reaction roll can be made to determine the creature's reaction to its creator. If the creature is unfriendly or hostile, the caster could try to tame, train, or charm it using specialists or spells; imprison it in his dungeon; or just unleash it onto the world. Mindless creatures must be controlled via magic, and cannot be trained.

By default, newly-created creatures are born at the adult age category. If desired, creatures can be created as babies, children, or adolescents, but the cost is the same.

The spellcaster may experiment during the creation process, as detailed in the Player's Companion, pg 100. The breakthroughs for creating lifeforms are identical to those for building constructs. For special abilities added from breakthroughs, roll 1d100 on the Monster Special Abilities table of Lairs & Encounters.

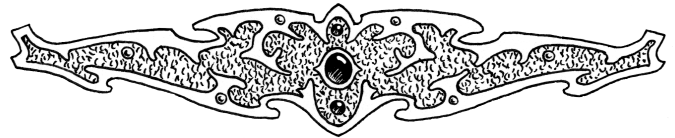
**EXAMPLE:** Cedric decides to implement his design for his new magical research partner. He acquires a genesis vat worth 50,000gp and proceeds. Since the creature will have 12 HD and 3 special abilities, it will cost a total of 39,000 GP to create. The arcanogenesis will take 46 days to complete. The magical research throw to design the lifeform is 13+ (a base of 5+, plus 8 points for the value). Cedric gains a bonus of +3 for his INT, +1 for the vat's value, and +2 for his two ranks in Magical Engineering. Cedric needs only a throw of 7+ to succeed in his design. Feeling sure of himself, Cedric decides to do some minor experimentation, receiving another +2 bonus.

To fuel the creature's special abilities, Cedric will need to provide several special components. To pay for its control of multiple arms, he gathers 3,900gp worth of tentacles from giant octopi. To pay for its spellcasting ability, he requires 6,800gp worth of special components from creatures who can cast spells - the hearts of his former apprentices and that of his main rival from his own apprenticeship are quickly co-opted for this purpose.

To be of assistance in magical research, his creature will need to be of sapient intelligence. Therefore Cedric acquires an advanced neuropsychic distiller at a cost of 60,000gp. To fuel the distiller he needs brains from sapient creatures totaling 6,800xp or more. Fortunately, his former apprentices and rival no longer have the hearts to deny him the request of their brains - they are quickly plopped into the neuropsychic distiller.

The preparations complete, the arcanogenesis process goes incredibly well (a roll of 15), and Cedric enjoys a minor breakthrough - the lifeform is given flight! The Judge decides the creature will fly at a speed of 30, as it was originally designed as an immobile creature.

His creation rises from the genesis vat and Cedric convinces it of the value of his proposition. Cedric enjoys several months of fruitful and rewarding magical research. Unfortunately, his new partner suddenly, perhaps inevitably, betrays and slays Cedric, and the sorcerous sphere makes Cedric's tower its own.



# OVERCASTING

## GOING BEYOND THE LIMITS HAS A PRICE BY ERIC MALOOF

When I began running ACKS, some of my friends initially balked at moving back to a Vancian spellcasting system, even one as relatively open-ended as ACKS's. As I love risk/reward rules, I came up with the idea that I'd allow them to cast more spells, but with an increasing risk for doing so. Hence were born the rules for overcasting.

It worked out pretty well in my game, as it was used mostly during tense situations when "the chips were down", and added even more tension. And of course, the best part of that was that the increase in tension was all their doing as the choice was solely theirs. It also helped to give them more choice when it came to deciding whether to risk further delving, or to turn back, something that in my previous experience has been a fairly Boolean decision once the caster(s) out of spells.

The rules presented in this issue are a revised version of the original rules used in my campaign and published online. Some names for things have changed, and a lot of confusing results and inconsistent grammar in the tables has been fixed. Additionally, I added an

Optional Rules section, which also includes proficiencies, equipment, and magic items.

In developing the overcasting rules, I was inspired by the *Deity Disapproval* charts in the *Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game* by Goodman Games and by the *Dangerous Sorcery: Alternate Arcane Magic Rules and the Whims of the Sublime: Alternate Divine Magic Rules* sections of *Tales of the Grotesque and Dungeonesque volume II* by Jack W. Shear.

## OVERCASTING

Casters of Arcane and Divine magic may attempt to Overcast extra spells beyond those they are allotted each day. However, each time that a spell is Overcast, the player must roll a d20 and consult the Overcasting Success table. Failure results in a fumble.

Arcane casters who fumble, roll on the ARCANES CALAMITY table. Divine casters who fumble, roll on the DIVINE DISFAVOR table.

Subsequent attempts to Overcast require successively higher throws to succeed. The Overcasting Success throw is reset after 8 hours of uninterrupted rest.

For example, a 1st-level Wizard can normally cast one 1st-level spell per day. If she elects to Overcast a second 1st-level spell on the same day before resting, she fumbles the spell on a d20 throw of 1-5. A third spell cast through Overcasting before resting will result in a fumble on a d20 throw of 1-10.

One cannot Overcast spells of a level to which one does not already have access. However, Clerics, Bladedancers, Dwarven Craftpriests, Nobiran Wonderworkers, and other classes built upon a Divine Value of 1-3, who are 1st-level, may Overcast 1st-level spells, even though they do not normally have access to spellcasting until 2nd-level. Doing so is considered the first Overcast of the day and requires an Overcasting Success throw of 6+.

All casters may choose to spend double the time Overcasting a spell in order to gain a bonus of +2 to the Overcasting Success throw. In most cases, this means taking two rounds to Overcast a spell. The player must indicate that he is taking double the casting time when the casting of the spell is declared.

Note that if the character takes damage or fails a saving throw at any time during the Overcast before the spell goes off, the spell is lost. In this case, no success throw is made, but it does count as an attempt.

Overcasting Success		
Attempt of the Day	Throw	Throw w/ Double Time
1st	6+	4+
2nd	11+	9+
3rd	16+	14+
4th+	20+	18+

## AUTOMATIC SUCCESS & FAILURE

Throwing a natural 20 results in an automatic Overcasting Success. Throwing a natural 1 is an automatic failure.

## ARCANE CALAMITY

When a caster of Arcane magic fumbles due to Overcasting, she must roll d% on the ARCANE CALAMITY table.

A calamity represents a mistake of some kind. Perhaps the caster mispronounced a magical syllable, or waggled her fingers the wrong way. The caster may also have let her guard down, allowing the extraplanar creature she had bound to her will to gain the upper hand.

ARCANE CALAMITY	
CALAMITY [d%]	RESULT
01-50	Lost - you lose the spell, but nothing else untoward occurs to you.
51-70	Stunned - you lose the spell and you may take no other actions this round. It's +4 to hit you until your next initiative.
71	Random - a different, random spell of the same level is cast from your repertoire.
72	Internalized - you immediately take 1d4 damage. At the beginning of the your next initiative, make a Save vs. Spells or take an additional 1d4 damage. This continues each round until you successful make the saving throw.
73	Target Self - the spell instead targets you. If this would not otherwise result in a negative outcome, the spell instead does 1d6 damage per spell level to you.
74	Target Ally - as Target Self above, but instead, the spell targets a random ally within range. If there are no allies within range, then the spell targets you, as above.
75	Explosion! - a magical blast of energy erupts centered on you. It does 1d6 damage per spell level in a radius of 5' per spell level. All within the radius, including you, may save vs. Blast & Breath for 1/2 damage.
76	Spell Signature - as the Overcast fails, you acquire a permanent side effect. Roll on the Spell Signatures Sub-Table (ACKS Player's Companion, pg 110).
77	No Spells - you temporarily lose the ability to cast Arcane spells for 1d4+1 rounds.
78	Unconscious - you magically lose consciousness for 1d4+1 rounds and are helpless. You cannot be wakened by mundane means.
79	Repertoire Loss - you temporarily lose the failed spell from your Repertoire. It is regained after 8 hours of uninterrupted rest.
80	Casting Slot Loss - for one week, you temporarily loses a casting slot of the same level as the failed spell. For example, a 2nd-level Arcane caster can normally cast two 1st-level spells. For one week, the caster would be reduced to being able to cast only one 1st-level spell.
81	No More Casting! - you lose the ability to cast Arcane spells until you get 8 hours of uninterrupted rest.
82	Strange Weather - the weather within 1 mile per level of the spell radically changes for 1d4 (1-3) hours, (4-5) days, or (6) weeks per level of the spell. This can occur even if indoors or underground. See the Control Weather spell (ACKS, pg 74) for some possible side effects.
83	Memory Loss - you lose all memory of the last 1d4 (1-2) hours, (3-4) days, (5) weeks, or (6) years.
84	Aged - you are aged 1d4 years per level of the spell.
85	Prone to Calamity - permanently increase your Overcasting Success throw difficulty by 1.
86	Gone from Repertoire - the spell is permanently lost from your Repertoire.
87	Permanent Slot Loss - you permanently lose a casting slot of the same level as the failed spell. For example, a 2nd-level Arcane caster can normally cast two 1st-level spells. The number of 1st-level spells that the caster can cast would be permanently decreased by one.
88	Wasting Disease - a horrible magical disease causes you to suffer -2 on all attack and Charisma throws, and reduces your natural heal rate by half. You will die within 2d6 days unless a Cure Disease spell (ACKS, pg 74) is cast upon you. Non-magical attempts to cure the disease will fail.

ARCANE CALAMITY

CALAMITY [d%]	RESULT
89	Permanent Dispel - a permanent Dispel Magic spell (ACKS, pg 76) is cast on the area in a 5' /spell level radius centered on you.
90	Turned to Stone - you are turned to stone as per the spell, Flesh to Stone (ACKS, pg 77). No saving throw is allowed.
91	Geas - an extra-planar creature associated with the spell places a Geas upon you. No saving throw is allowed. Until the Geas is completed, you may no longer cast this spell.
92	Void Hole - a 5' diameter tear in reality is summoned into the world in a random direction right next to you. Creatures and their items must make a single Save vs. Paralysis to avoid being sucked into the tear and annihilated each time they are within 10' of the hole, once per round. Inanimate matter that isn't worn or held, that comes in contact with the hole, is automatically destroyed. The Void Hole moves 10' in a random direction (d10 - start clockwise, a 9 or 10 indicates movement in the same direction) and (1-2) up, (3-4) same, or (5-6) lower elevation at the end of each hour. Only the power of a Wish ritual, or equivalent, can cause the Void Hole to be dispelled.
93	Essence Drain - the essence is drained out of everything within a 5' radius per spell level. All living creatures must Save vs. Death or be aged 1d4 years per level of the failed spell. All flora within the radius withers and dies. All food within the radius spoils, and all water evaporates.
94	Summon Monster - the failed spell pulls a monster into the world in a random direction adjacent to you. The Judge chooses a monster with HD equivalent to that of the caster +2. The monster will attack, concentrating on you.
95	Implosion - you immediately implode and then explode in a disgusting shower of blood and gore. You're dead.
96-98	Mutated - your body is magically mutated. Roll 2d10-1 on the Magical Mutations sub-table (ACKS Player's Companion, pg 109).
99-100	Judge's Choice - the Judge rolls for or selects something from this table and applies it to everyone and everything on a large scale. For example, the entire village suddenly succumbs to a wasting disease or all spellcasters within a 1 mile radius permanently lose a casting slot of the appropriate level.



## DIVINE DISFAVOR

When a caster of Divine magic fumbles due to Overcasting, he must roll d% on the DIVINE DISFAVOR table.

Disfavor represents a transgression perceived by the divine powers that the character serves. It may be that he misspoke a prayer or performed

a holy ritual incorrectly. The caster's deity, or their intercessor, might decide to teach them a lesson. It may just be a rough day in the Outer Planes. The gods are fickle, callous, and pernicious, and they and their representatives care little for the travails of mere mortals.

DIVINE DISFAVOR	
DISFAVOR [d%]	RESULT
01-25	Apathetic - the Overcast spell is lost. Perhaps if you pray more fervently next time the spell will take hold?
26-40	Unworthy? - your prayers are barely worthy of attention. If you continue casting for another round, you will prove your worth and be heard. Should you choose to stop, your spell will be lost.
41-44	Unconvinced - the agents of your god have heard your plea, and are unconvinced. To convince them and cast the spell, take 1 hp of damage per spell level, or they remain unconvinced and you lose the Overcast spell.
45-48	Beg - someone's not happy to hear from you today. Lose the spell unless you prostrate yourself and fervently beg for a miracle, losing any positive DEX bonus to AC until your next initiative. You will also need to use your movement to stand back up.
49-52	Rebuked! - you lose the spell and suffer a temporary loss of ability to cast spells for 1 round per level of the attempted spell.
53-56	Rebuffed - your prayers are rebuffed and you lose the spell. You may not attempt to cast this spell again until you have rested a full 8 uninterrupted hours and then prayed.
57-60	Doubts Have Arisen - though your spell succeeded, your effective level to turn/control undead is reduced by 1 per level of the spell for the next 24 hours.
61-64	Castigation - the spell succeeds, but your body is wracked with wounds equivalent to 1d4 damage per spell level.
65-68	Offensive! - you have offended your god. Sacrifice half the amount of the full experience it takes to get to your next level in gold within 24 hours. Example, a 1st-level Cleric would need to sacrifice the equivalent of 750 gold. Failure to make the sacrifice means that you will be subject to Divine Disfavor each time you cast a Divine Spell. This means that each time you cast a Divine spell, you roll a d20. On a throw of 1, you must roll on the Divine Disfavor table. After the 24 hours have passed without the proper sacrifice, only the full amount of experience in gold value sacrificed will remove this Disfavor. In the example above, this would be a sacrifice of the equivalent of 1,500 gold. If you are currently suffering from this Disfavor, roll again and keep rolling until you get a result of 69+.
69-72	The Downward Spiral - you are to be tested by the Downward Spiral. For the next 24 hours, any failed throw results in a cumulative -1 to the next throw of that type. For example, failing an attack throw results in a -1 to each subsequent attack throw until 24 hours have passed from the onset of this Disfavor. A second failed attack throw would now mean that your attacks are at -2, and so on.
73-75	Prove Your Faith - the spell succeeds, but for the next 24 hours, you may wear no armor, bear no shield, wield no weapon, nor use any magic item. You may only call upon the Divine spells of your god to assist you in battle.
76-78	Enemy on the Other Side - the spell succeeds, but the next throw you make on the Tampering with Mortality table (ACKS, pg 107) is at a -1 per level of the spell attempted for the d20 throw and a -1 on the d6 for the Side Effects Suffered throw.
79-81	Vow of Silence - the spell is cast, but it is the last thing that you must utter for 24 hours. During that time, you may not speak nor cast any spells. The Quiet Magic proficiency does not allow you to cast without speaking. Breaking this vow will result in the Judge being able to cause any one throw that you make in the future being an automatic failure, likely at the absolute worst time.
82-84	Forsaken! - the spell is lost and the misapplication of your deity's power results in a Forsaken Sinkhole of Evil (ACKS, pg 251) forming, centered on you, with a 50' per spell level radius. The misdirected energy of the spell immediately causes 1d6 Skeletons per spell level to erupt from the under the ground. These undead will attack the non-undead creatures closest to each of them.
85-87	Mission from God - the spell succeeds. However, you are placed under the effects of a Quest spell (ACKS, pg 84) by a representative of your deity equivalent to level 8+1d6. No initial save is allowed. The nature of the quest is up to the Judge, but it is always for the betterment of the faith, and often involves the return or destruction of some relic.
88-90	Mark of Shame - the spell fails. A Divine Mark has been placed upon you. All those who venerate your deity can see the Mark and will have no dealings with you. Clerics, Priests, Paladins, and the fervent of your faith might seek to do you harm, physical or otherwise. Enemies of your faith will only take 1/2 damage from you and receive a +2 to their saving throws vs. your spells. The Mark of Shame can only be removed when sacrifice something (or someone) of utmost personal value. The Judge will have the final say on if the sacrifice is worthy enough.
91-93	Represent! - the spell succeeds. You have one week to convert one new member to your faith per level of the spell. Only NPCs may be converted. Use the Reaction to Hiring Offer rules (ACKS, pg 49), with a result of "Accept" or better resulting in a success. Failure to convert enough new members within a week means that you suffer a temporary loss of one spellcasting and Turn Undead level per recruit that you came up short until you succeed.
94-96	Something Slipped Through - while the spell succeeds, the power used to cast the spell loosed an entity from its shackles and it has escaped into the world. It is now possessing a nearby creature and can pass from one creature to another through touch. It cannot possess you. It does not have to inhabit the body of a living creature and can exist without a host, though it has no powers of its own. It can fly and moves at a rate of 120'. It will seek to destroy you at the most inopportune moment, likely striking through someone close to you. A single Save vs. Death is allowed for anyone possessed to throw the entity out. It may not inhabit that person again if the throw is successful.
97-99	Blue Bolt! - you are smote on the spot, dropping immediately to 0 hit points. If and when you are brought back to life, by any means, even Reincarnation, you must roll on the Tampering With Mortality table (ACKS, pg 107) with a -10 to the d20 because you were killed instantly. Additionally, no one of your faith will bring you back to life because they too would suffer a Blue Bolt from your deity immediately upon attempting to do so.
100	Death Comes - at the behest of your deity, the shadowy servants of Death erupt from the ground and pull you body and soul into the Underworld. You are trapped there forever, unless someone can devise a means to rescue you.



## OPTIONAL RULES

The following optional rules are included to provide the Judge with additional ways to augment Overcasting for her campaign.

### OTHER PURPOSES

The Judge should feel free to use the Arcane Calamity and Divine Disfavor tables for appropriate situations other than Overcasting. For example, if a Cleric does something particularly offensive in the eyes of his deity, perhaps a roll on the Divine Disfavor table is in order.

### POWER & RISK

Some Judges might feel that the risk of Overcasting should increase with the power of the spell being attempted. This is so that the Overcasting of higher-level spells becomes relatively more dangerous. In this case, add the level of the spell to the Overcasting Success throw number needed to avoid a fumble.

### PROFICIENCIES

At the Judge's discretion, the following Class Proficiencies become available to Arcane and Divine casters. Players who elect to use any of these proficiencies must substitute each one taken for an existing class proficiency, permanently losing access to the replaced proficiency.

**Careful Overcaster:** When taking double the amount of time to Overcast a spell, the character gains a bonus of +4 to the Overcasting Success throw, instead of the normal +2 bonus.

**Master of Overcasting:** The character gains a +1 to all Overcasting Success throws. This proficiency may be taken only once.

**Overcasting Prodigy:** The character is able to attempt to Overcast spells beyond their ken by one level. For example, a 5th-level Nobiran Wonderworker can cast 3rd-level Arcane spells and 2nd-level Divine

spells. With this proficiency, she can attempt to Overcast 4th-level Arcane and 3rd-level Divine spells. Such Overcasting attempts are made with a -8 penalty to the Overcasting Success throw. Taking this proficiency multiple times does not increase the level of spells that may be Overcast, but it does reduce the penalty by 2 each time that it is taken.

## EQUIPMENT & MAGIC ITEMS

The following items can be used to augment a caster's attempts at Overcasting. Costs are included with the descriptions and each weighs 1/6 of a stone, unless worn.

**Elderwood Charm:** While wearing this prepared trinket, the caster may gain a +1 bonus to any one Overcasting Success throw once per week. The character may only benefit from one Elderwood Charm. If the Overcasting Success throw is a natural 1, the charm breaks, losing its power. **Cost:** 1,500gp

**Elixir of Potency:** Once this potion is quaffed, the next Overcasting Success attempt made within 1 turn is made with a +2 bonus to the throw. **Cost:** 500gp

**Overcaster's Coal (6):** If this specially-prepared charcoal is used while Overcasting, and triple the normal time is spent during the attempt, an additional +1 bonus is gained on the Overcasting Success throw. The piece of coal is consumed as the caster carefully draws a circle and various runes and sigils on the ground around his feet. **Cost:** 1,000gp

**Ring of Overcasting Mastery:** This magical ring grants the wearer a +1 to all Overcasting Success throws. **Cost:** 5,000gp

**Robes of the Wunderkind:** These magical raiments grant the wearer the benefits of the Overcasting Prodigy proficiency. **Cost:** 15,000gp





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