

Copyrighted Material

SIDEWAYS

FATE Edition



Copyrighted Material

Character Generation

Sors Magica uses the standard FATE Core character generation rules with modifications noted in **Red.**:

- The standard Refresh of 3 **is for Magi only:**
 - ▶ Magi get 3 Refresh
 - ▶ Companions get 2 Refresh
 - ▶ Important Grogs get 1 Refresh (shield grogs, footsoldiers, maybe the seneschal/autocrat)
 - ▶ Covenfolk get 0 Refresh (page, scullery maid, carpenter, etc.), and need not have full-PC stat blocks

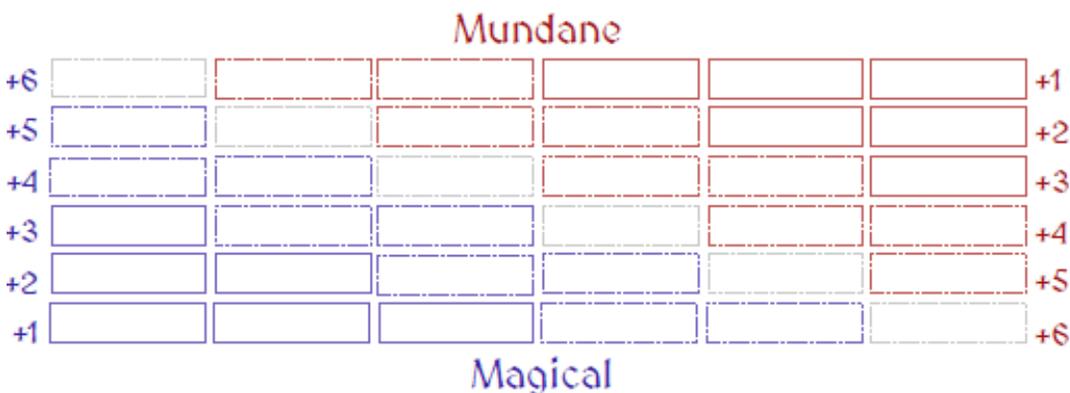
Any characters may expend permanent Refresh for extra Stunts/Spells or Skill Pyramid Options.

- High Concepts (e.g., ArM4, 18-30) that refer to Hermetic Houses or hedge wizardry justify spellcasting
- Your Trouble **is called your “Flaw”** and you can use ArM4, 32-50 for inspiration or wholesale plagiarism
- Other Aspects should be double-edged, **even if inspired by the Virtues from ArM4, 34-50**
- Mundanes have a four-high Skill Pyramid; **Magi also have a Magical Skill Pyramid**

Sors Magica Skills

Sors Magica uses the standard Fate Core skill list, **with two exceptions:**

1. Drive is split into two skills (Boating and Ride) and Lore is divided further into sixteen knowledges (below).
2. Hermetic Magi get a second pyramid of magical skills which may include:
 - a. any of the fifteen Hermetic Arts (the 5 Techniques and 10 Forms),
 - b. Finesse, Penetration
 - c. Will, Magic Theory (may be in either the Mundane Skill Pyramid or Magical Skill Pyramid)



- *Certámen* is not a Skill in *Sors Magica*; it's handled as a Contest or Conflict per FATE Core 147-154.
- Penetration is not a Skill in *Sors Magica*; it's assumed in the FATE Conflict mechanics.
- *Parma Magica* is not a Skill in *Sors Magica*. It's a Stunt you must purchase if you chose a magical High Concept.

Nota Bene: Unlike in *Ars Magica*, a character's age doesn't affect how many skills he gets, though you could conceivably create a *Sors Magica* Stunt called something like "With Age, Experience" or "Arch-Magus" that confers upon the character extra Skill slots at the lowest end of the Mundane or Magical Skill Pyramids.

The *Sors Magica* skill list is:

Athletics

Boating (split off from “Drive,” which no longer exists)

Burglary

Contacts

Crafts

Deceive

~~Drive~~ (now split into Boating and Riding)

Empathy

Fight (Combat Skills are not divided up by weapon like they are in *Ars Magica*)

Investigate

~~Lore~~ (Now split up as below; Chirurgy can be a Medicine-based Stunt to justify recovery)

Artes Liberales

Civil/Canon Law

Medicine

Philosophiae

Speak Latin

Scribe (Language)

Theology

[Academic Knowledges: requires Aspect permission, like “University educated”]

Enigmatic Wisdom

Faerie Lore

Hermetic Law

Occult Lore

Magic Theory

[Arcane Knowledges: requires Aspect permission, like “House Flambeau Hoplite” or “Grew up near a fairy grove”]

(Area) Lore

(Organization) Lore

Legend Lore

Speak (Language)

[Casual Knowledges: requires no Aspect permission, but should jibe with your character concept. A Bulgarian peasant should not have “Córdoba Lore” without some Aspect to explain it.]

Notice

Physique

Provoke

Rapport (Animal Handling, Performance Skills & Social Skills [ArM4, 53] can be Rapport Stunts)

Resources (Only Magi and Nobles should have positive values in this Skill; peasants don’t own very much)

Riding (includes mounts and Wagoneering; split off from “Drive,” which no longer exists)

Shoot (Combat Skills are not divided up by weapon like they are in *Ars Magica*)

Stealth

Will

The Exceptional Abilities from ArM4, 59 (Animal Ken, Contortions, Direction Sense, Divination, Dousing, Empathy, Enchanting Music, Entrancement, Healer, Hex, Magic Sensitivity, Mimicry, Premonitions, Read Lips, Second Sight, Sense Holy/Unholy, Visions, Weather Sense, Will Over Form, Alchemy and Herbalism) can all be rendered as Stunts; in some cases, they can be rendered as Aspects.

Hermetic Magic

The ability to practice Hermetic Magic is justified by taking a High Concept, usually referring to your affiliation with the Order of Hermes and one of the twelve Houses and paid for by:

1. spending one of your free Stunts on *Parma Magica*, (this Stunt confers upon the wizard the ability to reduce the potency of hostile magic spells by opposing it with a Will roll) and
2. reducing your four-high Mundane Skill Pyramid thusly:

Option A: a three-high Mundane Skill Pyramid in exchange for a three-high Magical Skill Pyramid

Option B: pay two Refresh to keep a four-high Mundane Skill Pyramid and have a two-high Magical Skill Pyramid (this is particularly appropriate for Jerbiton magi)

Option C: pay two Refresh and your remaining two free Stunts to have a two-high Mundane Skill Pyramid and a four-high Magical Skill Pyramid (as for a particularly obsessive Bonisagus theoretician).

You may notice that options resulting in higher Magical Skill Pyramids are costlier – this is because two Arts are added together when casting spells, so higher Magical Skill Pyramids have a lot more potential bang than higher Mundane Skill Pyramids.

Hermetic Spellcasting is a two-step process:

1. Step One:

- a. spend a Fate Point or
- b. burn a Boost or free invocation from a Situation Aspect representing your spell preparation ordinarily previously created with a Magic Theory roll at the following opposition rating:
 - ≡ **Average** for preparations with words and gestures
 - ≡ **Fair** for preparations lacking a gestural component
 - ≡ **Good** for preparations lacking a verbal component
 - ≡ **Fantastic** for preparations lacking both words and gestures

The boost or free invocation you burn doesn't add anything to your casting total, so only success with style on a spell preparation Create Advantage action adds anything numerically to the spell itself)

2. **Step Two:** Perform a FATE action (Attack, Create Advantage, Defend, or Overcome) using the values of your rankings in the appropriate Technique and Form added together.

Spells are like any other skill roll in Fate, **except that:**

1. The player rolls $4dF +$ **the sum of the PC's scores in the *two* relevant **Magical Arts:****

 - a. **Technique:** *Creo, Intelligo, Muto, Perdo, Rego* (the "Predicate" of the magical incantation, as in "I create..." "I understand..." "I mutate...") and
 - b. **Form:** *Animál, Aquam, Auram, Corpus, Herbam, Ignem, Imáginem, Mentem, Terram, Vim* (the direct object of the sentence)

2. The GM sets the opposition rating using (at least) the following **five factors:**
 - a. **Range** ("Personal" up to "Arcane Connection")
 - b. **Target** ("Small" up to "Boundary")
 - c. **Duration** ("Momentary" up to "Permanent")
 - d. **Aura** (rating of 0 through 10 in Magical, Fairy, Divine, or Infernal)
 - e. **Resistance** (*Parma Magica*, Magical Resistance, Fairy Might, True Faith, Infernal Might, etc.)

Spellcasting Difficulty uses a variation of the standard FATE Ladder of opposition ratings as shown below:

Mundane Ladder	
+8	Legendary
+7	Epic
+6	Fantastic
+5	Superb
+4	Great
+3	Good
+2	Fair
+1	Average
0	Mediocre
-1	Poor
-2	Terrible
-3	Awful

Spellcasting Ladder	
+8	You Should Write a Book on This Spell
+7	Effect Worthy of the Covenant Annals
+6	Effect Worthy of an Arch-Mage
+5	Effect Impressive to Another Magus
+4	A Show of True Power
+3	Effect Worthy of a Magus
+2	Effect Any Apprentice Could Do
+1	Cantrip or Card-trick
0	No (or Unintended) Effect
-1	Unintended Averse Effect
-2	Botch
-3	Double Botch

Nota Bene: Because Spellcasting involves adding together *two* Magical Skill Pyramid skills (unlike mundane skills, which use only one skill from the Mundane Skill Pyramid), against a difficulty affected by the sum of Range, Duration and Time, the difficulties are higher in the Spellcasting Ladder to achieve any significant effects.

Spellcasting Difficulty	
Duration	
Momentary	0
Diameter / Concentration	1
Sunrise / Sunset	2
Moon Cycle / Ring / Season	3
Year	4
Permanent	5
Range	
Personal	0
Eye-contact / Touch	1
Reach (≈ 2 paces) / Near (≈ 15 paces)	2
Sight	3
Arcane Connection	4
Target	
Small	0
Individual Person / Single Object	1
Group / Room	2
Circle / Structure	3
Boundary	4
Aura Rating	
None	0
Magical (added to spellcasting roll)	1-10
Fairy (replace spellcasting dice with double-valued dice)	1-10
Divine ("armor" subtracted from spellcasting roll)	1-10
Infernal (subtracted from spellcasting roll, or add for a ≥ Consequence)	1-10
Active Resistance	roll +/- or rating

Duration

Difficulty 0: Momentary (but the effects of the spell may remain)

Difficulty 1: Diameter (the time for the sun to move its diameter in the sky, ≈ 2 min.), Concentration

Difficulty 2: Sunset/Sunrise

Difficulty 3: Season, Moon Cycle (new and full moon have been in the sky), Ring (target leaves a drawn ring)

Difficulty 4: Year (until the fourth equinox/solstice after casting)

Difficulty 5: Permanent (magical creation or healing spells require Vis for permanence)

Range

Difficulty 0: Personal (casting magus)

Difficulty 1: Eye-contact, Touch

Difficulty 2: Reach (≈ 2 paces), Near (≈ 15 paces)

Difficulty 3: Sight (a high vantage point can extend sight range for miles)

Difficulty 4: Arcane Connection (an item intimate to the target)

Target

Difficulty 0: Small (something a person of average strength could comfortably hold/carry with both hands)

Difficulty 1: Individual Person / Single Object (e.g. a boulder, a cart)

Difficulty 2: Group (no more than about a dozen of an obvious group) / Room

Difficulty 3: Structure (a single, linked edifice, such as a hut/castle, and all within) / Circle (drawn by caster)

Difficulty 4: Boundary (visible and natural/man-made: e.g., city wall, lake shore, mountain foot)

Realms/Auras

Auras have numerical ratings, usually ranging in value from 1 to 4, though more powerful auras are possible. The effect these ratings have on Hermetic magic varies according to the aura type.

1. Magic Aura values are *added* to the player's spellcasting roll.

2. Faerie Aura values *replace* a number of your dice equal to the aura's rating with dice of a different color.

- plusses rolled on these differently-colored dice are worth +2 rather than +1.

- For Faerie auras rated higher than 4, separate the dice above the standard four Fate dice and only pay attention to plusses on these (because they surpass the standard 4dF, minuses on these are disregarded).

3. Divine Aura values are *subtracted* from the player's spellcasting rolls.

- the aura rating is treated as an armor rating against magical attacks for Divine-aligned characters (including God-fearing mundanes not in a state of mortal sin).

4. Infernal Aura values are *subtracted* from the player's spellcasting roll.

- A player can choose to *add* an Infernal aura rating to their roll rather than subtract it if they immediately take a Consequence (usually Mental) equal or greater in value to that of the rating, reflecting the corruption the use of Infernal power works in their character.

Active Resistance

Some targets may resist spellcasting rolls with a Will roll or other skill roll if permitted by stunts such as *Parma Magica*, *Infernal Might*, *Fairy Might*, *True Faith* or other such Stunts. Depending on how the Stunt is constructed, the character may have a base resistance to magical spells, a resistance roll, or both.

Examples of Effects by Art:

Animal

Difficulty 1: Magic affecting animal-derived materials or animal remains (such as corpses)

Difficulty 2: Magic affecting living mundane beasts

Difficulty 3: Magic affecting supernatural beasts

Aquam

Difficulty 1: Magic affecting liquids contained in vessels, or small quantities of liquid such as puddles

Difficulty 2: Magic affecting liquids in natural state, up to that of a small natural feature – a pond, cloud, etc.

Difficulty 3: Magic affecting large, complex liquid systems (rivers, or rainfall, or water elementals)

Auram

Difficulty 1: Magic affecting still air, usually contained within a vessel or room

Difficulty 2: Magic affecting "living" air – open air, breezes, the breath of living creatures, etc.

Difficulty 3: Magic affecting large/powerful air phenomena (hurricane, blizzard, air elementals)

Corpus

Difficulty 1: Magic affecting dead human remains

Difficulty 2: Magic affecting living, mundane human tissue or supernaturally-animated undead corpse

Difficulty 3: Magic affecting living tissue of a supernatural human or truly living magical humanoids

Creo

Difficulty 1: Fix or heal

Difficulty 2: Improve

Difficulty 3: Create by fiat, resurrect a mundane human

Difficulty 4: Resurrect a supernatural human or truly living magical humanoid

Herbam

Difficulty 1: Magic affecting plant-derived materials or dead plants

Difficulty 2: Magic affecting living plants

Difficulty 3: Magic affecting supernatural plants or plant elementals

Ignem

Difficulty 1: Magic affecting fire/light/heat created/contained by man (campfire, warmth of a blanket)

Difficulty 2: Magic affecting natural or "living" fire, light, or heat.

Difficulty 3: Magic affecting fire, light, or heat of a supernatural nature, or fire/light elementals

Imaginem

Difficulty 1: Affecting conventionally artificial sensory impressions (sounds of instruments, mirror images)

Difficulty 2: Affecting "natural" sensory impressions

Difficulty 3: Affecting extrasensory impressions (e.g., via Intellego magic, ultraviolet light, angelic music).

Intellego

Difficulty 1: Gain insight

Difficulty 2: Read carefully

Difficulty 3: Comprehend exhaustively

Mentem

Difficulty 1: Magic affecting emotion

Difficulty 2: Magic affecting memory, or most ghosts

Difficulty 3: Magic affecting intellect or reason, or purely intellectual beings (such as angels)

Muto

Difficulty 1: Tweak

Difficulty 2: Change

Difficulty 3: Transform

Perdo

Difficulty 1: Impair

Difficulty 2: Hurt

Difficulty 3: Annihilate

Rego

Difficulty 1: Influence

Difficulty 2: Compel

Difficulty 3: Dominate

Terram

Difficulty 1: Magic affecting man-made objects of earthy composition (whether altered, shaped, or displaced)

Difficulty 2: Magic affecting minerals, metal, or earth "in the raw" in nature

Difficulty 3: Magic affecting minerals, metal, or earth infused with supernatural power, and earth elementals

Vim

Difficulty 1: Metamagic affecting one's own magic and prepared vis

Difficulty 2: Metamagic affecting any Hermetic magic, raw vis, most faeries/demons/magical constructs

Difficulty 3: Metamagic affecting non-Hermetic magic (Twilight, major faerie gods, and archdemons)

Concentration

It takes concentration to cast a spell. If anything distracts you while you are casting, you must make a Will roll to maintain the spell. The opposition rating of the Will roll depends upon the type of distraction. If you ever fail a Will roll while casting or maintaining a spell, the spell automatically fails. If you botch the Will roll, you botch the spell. If you double botch the Will roll, you automatically take the Mild Consequence "Fatigued." If you triple botch, you automatically take a commensurate Mild Consequence instead, and so on. If you can't fill that slot because it's already taken, or don't have any slots high enough for the multiple botch, you succumb to Wizard's Twilight (*infra*).

Multiple Casting

Multiple casting in *Sors Magica* is handled using the FATE rules for "Affecting Multiple Targets" per pages 205-207 of the FATE core rulebook. In short, the caster "attacks" the zone, rather than making a traditional Attack action, or Creates a Scene Aspect that all within may need to Overcome.

Requisites

Most spells involve a simple combination of two Arts, one Form and one Technique. Some spells, however, involve more than two. For instance, a spell that turns a human into a bird uses Muto because you are transforming something, Corpus because you are affecting a human body, and Animál because you are turning the human body into an animal body. In addition to involving the two primary Arts—Corpus and Muto in this case—casting the spell concerns your Animál score as well. This third Art is a requisite. You must use the lesser of your score in the requisite and your score in the spell's main Technique or Form—Technique if the requisite is a Technique, Form if the requisite is a Form.

Invented/Formulaic/Ritual Spells

The many invented Spells listed in Chapter V of the *Ars Magica* Rulebook (ArM4, 107-160) are just Stunts. If you have a FATE Core character sheet with an Extras box, you can rename it “Spells” just to keep them separate from other Stunts. But there’s no real need to do that. Spells like “Whispers through the Black Gate,” “Aegis of the Hearth” or “Conjure the Sturdy Vine” are Stunts like any other.

Words and Gestures

Increasing the potency of your spell with a firm or booming voice or bold or vigorous gestures is done with a Create Advantage roll on the turn prior to casting your spell. Similarly, attempting to cast a spell at normal potency using a soft voice or subtle gestures to avoid notice requires making a Create Advantage roll to that effect; this advantage, however, cannot be invoked to increase the potency of the spell, only to help you hide your spellcasting, or in some other relevant storytelling situation.

Resisting Spells

Mundanes are out of luck; spells affect them and they are helpless to resist. Magic-users, however, have the *Parma Magica* Stunt, allowing them to resist, or at least reduce the effect of, spells with an opposed Will roll.

Recognizing Spells

If you are a Hermetic magus watching or listening to another Hermetic magus cast spells, you should be able to recognize the spell with one success on a Magic Theory roll. Other factors can raise the difficulty such as: soft speech, subtle gestures, distance, noise, hedge wizardry, and so on.

Anticipating another mage’s spell could be represented by Discovering an Advantage (a variation of the Create Advantage action) using Magic Theory at the same opposition rating used for the Spell Preparation Aspect.

Wizard’s Sigil

Every wizard has a sigil – a feature (special scents, noises, colors, etc.) – produced when working magic. Because sigils never have concrete mechanical effects like causing more damage or making spells more effective, but rather are only secondary manifestations that allow for roleplaying, there’s no need to render them as Aspects or Stunts. You can just include them in your character’s description.

Limits of Magic

Hermetic Magic is not omnipotent. The medieval paradigm of post-Aristotelian, pre-Copernican physics and cosmology impose eight limits on Hermetic Magic (as outlined in ArM4, 67-68):

1. **The Limit of the Lunar Sphere:** Magi cannot affect the lunar sphere or anything above it.
2. **The Limit of Divinity:** Magic cannot overcome the power of the Highest Divinity or infernal deceptions.
3. **The Limit of the Soul:** Magic cannot affect the immortal soul, create true life, or resurrect the dead.
4. **The Limit of Essence:** Magic cannot affect aging, Twilight, heart-beasts, supernatural Auras.
5. **The Limit of Creation:** Magic cannot create/cure anything permanently without raw Vis.
6. **The Limit of Time:** Magic cannot alter the passage of time.
7. **The Limit of Energy:** Magic cannot restore physical energy to cast more spells or restore Fate Points.
8. **The Limit of Arcane Connections:** Magi need an arcane connection (ArM4, 72) to target an unseen person.

Houses of Hermes

Being of a particular House does not *per se* confer any mechanical benefit, but you are encouraged to design Aspects and Stunts, and purchase Skills, with your House in mind. The Houses of the Order of Hermes are:

House	Founder	Specialization
House Bjornaer	Mistress Bjornaer	Shapeshifting
House Bonisagus	Lord Bonisagus	Magical Theory and Erudition
House Criamon	Lord Criamon	“The Enigma” and other mysteries
House Diedne	Boann Diedne	Druids (eradicated in the Schism War in 1003...hopefully)
House Flambeau	Tempus Flambeau	Fire, Perdo (often used as Hoplites, along with Tremere & Tytalus)
House Jerbiton	Augustus Jerbiton	Mundane Affairs (including local religion...usually the Dominion)
House Mercere	Henri Mercere	Messengers (some are unGifted)
House Merinita	Lady Merinita	Faeries
House Quaesitori	Guernicus	Justice and Interpreting/Promulgating Hermetic Law
House Tremere	Tremere	Hierarchy, Strategy, Planning (vampires infiltrated in the 13 th Cent.)
House Tytalus	Master Tytalus	Will, Conflict & War (dabbled in Diabolism in the 10 th Century)
House Verditius	Lord Verditius	Enchantment of Items
House Ex Misc.	Pralix	Incorporated all hedge wizards and non-Hermetic wizards in 817 A.D.

Vis

Vis is represented by Fate Points or Advantages/Aspects, but *Sors Magica* discourages “bean counting” specific numbers of pawns of Vis the way *Ars Magica* does. If your character possesses a Rook (5 Pawns) or Queen (10 Pawns) of Vis, you may as well represent it on your character sheet as an Aspect, which you can then remove at the next Minor Milestone to represent depleting the Rook/Queen of Vis...or *don't* remove that Aspect, to represent the Magus replenishing the Rook/Queen of Vis from stores kept at the Covenant or his Sanctum.

Magi can use Resources to Create an Advantage like “Vis Stocks” at appropriate times, such as during seasons of downtime, to represent a season spent Vis hunting.

One character can give another character Vis from his own stores. The giving player simply tags the High Concept of the receiving character with a Fate Point (if some magical permission is included in the recipient's High Concept, then Vis is meaningful/useful to the recipient). Handing the recipient your Fate Point out-of-character represents your handing him a pawn or pawns of Vis in-character.

Wizard's Twilight

When your magic gets beyond your control, or you are overwhelmed by the powerful magic of another, you can succumb to Wizard's Twilight, a state where magic alters your very being, perhaps improving your knowledge of the arcane, perhaps deforming you physically. With each bout of Twilight, you approach Final Twilight, when you succumb to magic for the final time and pass completely out of the physical world. Twilight can be reflected as an Aspect (including being integrated into the High Concept, Trouble or other existing Aspects), which you should apply immediately, rather than at the next milestone. If it comes about as a Severe Consequence, it remains in that slot until “healed,” at which time the Consequence slot is freed, but the Twilight Episode should thereafter be reflected in one of the character's Aspects.

Yearnings for *Ars Magica*

What about [*insert your favorite Ars Magica rule/concept here*]? This is a FATE game, not *Ars Magica*! If you miss this rule or concept so much, you should probably play *Ars Magica* instead. But here are some suggestions for approximating the effects or mechanics of your favorite *Ars Magica* rules and concepts that are not otherwise covered by these rules:

Apprentices: these can be represented as Aspects or Stunts, and the FATE Fractal can apply to them

Artifacts: these can be represented as Aspects or Stunts

Books: these can be represented as Aspects or Stunts on a PC's or Covenant's character sheet

Characteristics: these are folded into the Mundane Skill Pyramid

Confidence Points: these are encompassed by Fate Points

Decrepitude: these can be Aspects, and can start out as Mild, Severe or Extreme Consequences

Encumbrance: this can be represented as a Consequence or other Aspect if necessary

Equipment: this can be represented as Aspects or Stunts, but is often assumed if you have the appropriate skill

Familiars: these can be represented as Aspects or Stunts, and the FATE Fractal can apply to them

Fast-Cast Spells: the ability to do this should be a Stunt, but "Fast Caster" could also be an Aspect

Fatigue: this is your Physical (and possibly Mental) Stress Track and Consequences slots

Flaws: this replaces your Trouble; other Flaws can be reimagined as Aspects

Foci: these can be boosts, Advantages, Aspects or even Stunts

Health: this is your Physical Stress Track and Consequences slots

Lab Work: This can be simulated by Create Advantage rolls for easy projects or Challenges for complex ones

Magic Resistance: assumed/folded into FATE Conflict mechanics; can be strengthened with Aspects/Stunts

Mastering Spells: this can be an Aspect or Stunt

Multiple Casting: this is folded into the "Target" difficulty factor, which affects the skill roll's opposition rating

Personal History: this can be an Aspect or Stunt

Personality Traits: these can be Aspects or, in a rare cases, Stunts

Quirks: this can be part of an Aspect

Reputations: these can be Aspects or Stunts

Spellbook Casting: this can be represented by boosts, Advantages, Aspects or even Stunts

Spontaneous Spells: this is the default for *Sors Magica*; Formulaic or Ritual Spells can be Stunts

Size: this can be an Aspect or Stunt

Targeting Spells: this is folded into the "Target" difficulty factor, which affects the skill roll's opposition rating

Tomes: these can be represented as Aspects or Stunts on a PC's or Covenant's character sheet

Treasure: this can be represented with Aspects or Stunts on a PC's or Covenant's character sheet

Virtues: these can be Aspects or Stunts