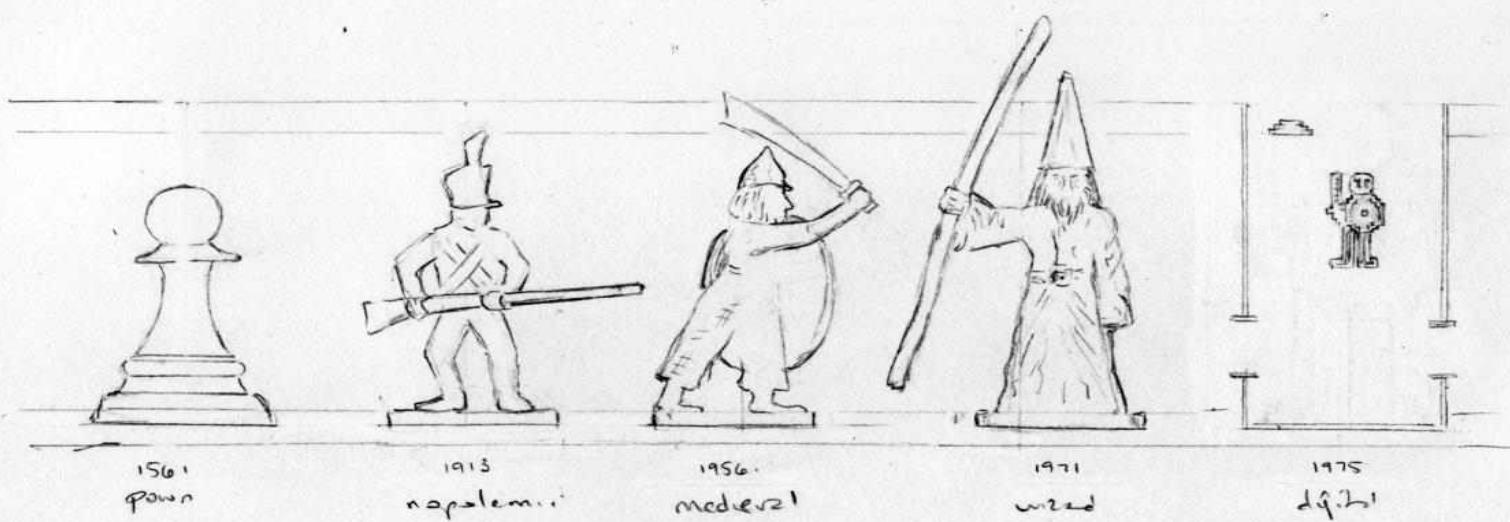


Vol. 1 No. 1
Summer 2012

PLAYING AT THE WORLD

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A History of Simulating Wars, People
and Fantastic Adventures, from Chess to
Role-Playing Games

JON PETERSON

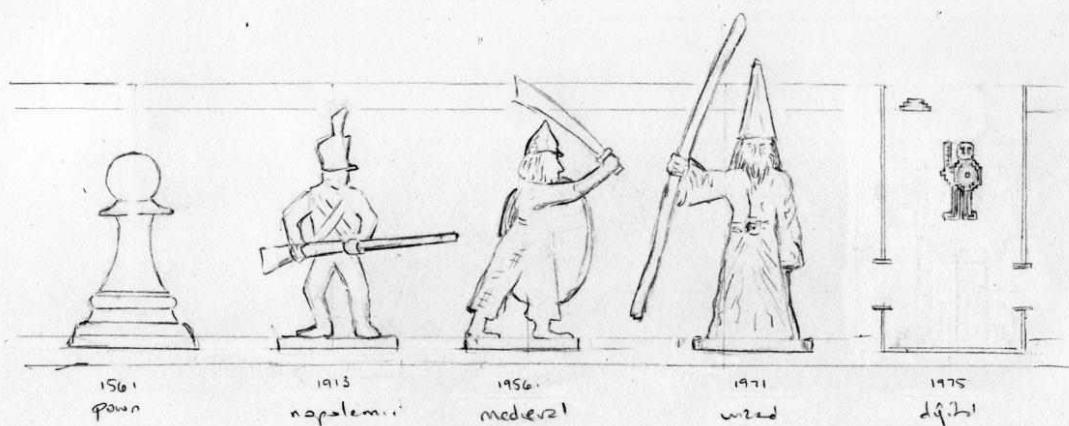
UNREASON PRESS
SAN DIEGO

PLAYING *at the* WORLD

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Back cover: Detail of *Beschreibung und Regeln eines neuen Krieges-Spiels zum Nutzen und Vergnügen, besonders aber zum Gebrauche in Militärschulen* (1797)

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INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the twentieth century, an innovative form of mass-market entertainment captivated a young adult audience: games of simulation. The first commercial products in this genre, the board wargames sold by Avalon Hill and others, reached a small but devoted fan base with titles that let players refight historical battles. After two decades of modest success, this industry took a surprising turn. Growing interest in fantasy genre fiction combined with the principles of wargaming to create the new category of roleplaying games, which began with the hugely popular

Dungeons & Dragons (1974). In these games, players managed individual characters more so than the vast armies common in wargames, and the scope of agency of these characters encompassed far more than just conflict. Although role-playing games still relied heavily on the systems of wargames, they are distinguished by the many innovations present in the flagship title *Dungeons & Dragons*.

The earliest account of the history of *Dungeons & Dragons* also ranks among the briefest. Gary Gygax included it in a letter to *Alarums & Excursions* in July 1975, only sixteen months after the first sales of the game, and it reads as follows: In case you don't know the history of *D&D*, it all began with the fantasy rules of *Chainmail*. Dave A took these rules and changed them into a prototype of what is now *D&D*. When I played in his Blackmoor campaign I fell in love with the new concept and expanded and changed his 20 or so pages of hand-written rules into about 100 ms. pages. Dave's group and ours here in Lake Geneva then began eager and enthusiastic play-testing, and the result was the *D&D* game in January of 1974. [A&E:#2]

Chainmail, a miniature wargame Gygax released in 1971, focused on simulating the medieval period but also included a small appendix detailing a fantasy setting, one largely derived from the works of Tolkien. Dave Arneson used the *Chainmail* rules as the basis for his seminal Blackmoor fantasy game, which pioneered dungeon exploration and many other elements essential to the invention of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Gygax transformed Arneson's Blackmoor from a local phenomenon known only in a Minneapolis gaming group to a commercial product, and even founded a company to sell it. As Gygax's paragraph-length account seems to explain all of the immediate background, one may well wonder how greatly our understanding will benefit from meticulous expansion of the history of these games. After all, why lavish some hundreds of pages of scrupulous attention on a fad of juvenile popular culture, one whose zenith passed decades ago? In its own defense, this study must submit by way of introduction a few reasons for believing a deeper investigation of the phenomenon of role-playing games will prove worthwhile.

In the first place, enthusiasts would protest that the significance of *Dungeons & Dragons* in the twenty-first-century marketplace is easily underestimated. The introduction of so novel a game transformed our culture, and brought to the mainstream ideas and practices previously relegated to small societies clustered around wargames and genre fiction. As

its early converts grappled with its implications, they struggled to relate what they found in *Dungeons & Dragons* to prior experiences. One fan promised that if you took everything possible or impossible you ever dreamed about, read about, or imagined;; put it in a medieval setting, and heaped it all into one set of rules for a game, you would have *Dungeons & Dragons*. new order of game, A second pioneer recognized that Gygax and Arneson had created a one so addictive that another early commentator fears it s worse than

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heroin.¹ As the progenitor of all role-playing games, *Dungeons & Dragons* set in motion cultural forces which only gather momentum with the passage of time. Although the original pencil-and-paper game claims fewer devotees than it did thirty years ago, literally thousands of role-playing games compete in the market, and some massively multiplayer online role-playing games can boast over ten million subscribers. Focusing solely on these obvious descendants of the role-playing games of the 1970s, however, neglects the more pervasive influence of their celebrated ancestor. The fundamental principles of simulation popularized by *Dungeons & Dragons* concepts like a character enduring a specific quantity of damage before death, and improving skills with experience now permeate virtually all video game genres.

Furthermore, a history must reach beyond the immediate background of roleplaying games to expose the broader cultural context in which fantasy and simulation arose. *Dungeons & Dragons* did not result solely from the activity of hobby gamers, as that community relied on a diverse, interdisciplinary web of influences in genre fiction, historical scholarship, military science, psychology, mathematics and mythology. This is not to say that the authors of *Dungeons & Dragons* always followed these sources knowingly these ideas suffused twentieth-century popular culture, and the paths of transmission were often forgotten or even deliberately obscured. This leaves posterity with a number of difficult questions about the origins of simulation gaming. When were the principles of simulation invented, and who first rolled dice to decide events in a game? How did games move beyond simulating armies at war and into the simulation of individual people? Why does the fantasy genre inspire its fans to want more than just to read about magical adventures, but actually to experience them, in some meaningful fashion? To investigate these matters, one must go back not just

years or decades but centuries. Previous attempts to detail the history of wargaming have suffered greatly from lack of access to foundational material, both the scarce fanzines of early hobbyists and the far older military training methods documented in volumes that have never been translated into English. While fantasy literature has received a great deal of academic scrutiny, the genre works that informed the setting of popular fantasy games have not previously been analyzed to demonstrate how they repackaged mythology in a form suitable for simulation. It is perhaps the boldest ambition of this book to recover that context, to show these games in their proper relation to intellectual history.

Finally, if we might prognosticate for a moment, computer-aided simulations of reality will eventually usher in wonders that make our advances to date seem pedestrian. As a form of mass entertainment, games incorporating these principles of simulation already rival the popular appeal of motion pictures. For those narratives of action or adventure that try to incite a vicarious response in viewers, the cinema increasingly seems a weaker tool than the computer. Just as the popular magazine, once the primary venue for adventure stories, eventually yielded to the vividness and verisimilitude of movies, so too will the motion picture inevitably yield its primacy to a more participatory medium, because the resulting experience is more real, more immersive. *Dungeons & Dragons* established a formula for replacing the passivity of traditional media with an interactive experience, one that enables fans of the fantastic to approach ever closer to the exploits of mythical heroes. As the melding of computers and role-playing games progresses, the vistas that will open to

¹ As Chapter Five will show, those quotations came from Andy Pudewa, Ted Johnstone and George Phillies, respectively.

INTRODUCTION xiii human experience must lie beyond our present ability to imagine. Role-playing games moreover demonstrate an unwillingness to remain confined to the realms of the unreal;; the economies of massively multiplayer online games graft themselves unbidden onto worldly money, and the tools developed for role-playing games to model alternative realities show surprising applicability to everyday life. When future sleuths ask when and where the blurring of games and reality began, the trail of evidence will lead ineluctably back to *Dungeons & Dragons*.

What was it, exactly, that *Dungeons & Dragons* pioneered? Answering that question consumes the larger part of this study, as it requires a deep

exploration both of the game's influences and of its reception. While it is tempting to count role-playing among its innovations, that poses certain difficulties. Famously, the game's original rulebooks do not contain the construction role-playing, which has its own prior history of employment only in hindsight did the role-playing element in *Dungeons & Dragons* become preeminent, and thus one can hardly attribute the definition of role-playing games to its authors. This omission has left the meaning of the term somewhat adrift, and led some to adopt a very expansive notion of role-playing games. For example, the American game designer Steve Jackson once described the situation as follows: The most popular board game ever developed in the US is pure role*Monopoly*. Consider: each player takes on the role of a cheerfully rapacious real-estate tycoon, wheeling and dealing until he alone commands the board. [DW:#2] With a definition so broad, almost no games would fall outside the category of role-playing yet the incontrovertible fact remains that some games with certain common qualities market themselves as role-playing games, and others, including *Monopoly*, do not.

Jackson's supposition exposes a crucial difficulty in defining role-playing games as simply any games in which one could conceivably pretend to a role. The problem with so inclusive a definition is that nothing about the play of *Monopoly* changes if you adopt a role, however vividly we might personify our imagined tycoons. A desperate mogul cannot attempt to sneak into that hotel on Atlantic Avenue and set it on fire to undermine a rival, and nor can an unscrupulous plutocrat hire goons to incite a wildcat strike over at B&O Railroad. The rules of *Monopoly* make no provisions for anything of the kind in *Monopoly*, one circles the board at the direction of a rolled die, purchasing property or paying rent as appropriate. No matter how vehemently players might twist their imaginary mustaches or cultivate their Scrooge impressions, nothing will grant their tycoons the power to act outside of this very narrow scope of agency. Role-playing games, however, aspire to an ideal where *anything can be attempted*, where the player can direct that a character attempt any action that one can plausibly contend a person in that situation might undertake the referee, a role missing in *Monopoly* and most comparable games, decides the result. A dungeon adventurer might distract monsters by unleashing a herd of swine, or rig a door trap out of a bucket, rope and a large bag of coins, or decide to write sonnets rather than bursting into the next hazardous chamber. Most likely, none of these ventures would prove helpful to a character in *Dungeons &*

Dragons, but the game preserves the free agency that allows them to be attempted, and the latitude for the referee to determine how, if at all, they impact the game world. Simulations have limits, of course, and consequently so must the freedom of agency in role-playing games, but provided those limits lie outside the ordinary experience of players, the game will present a convincing illusion of an alternate reality.

Ultimately, this study will conclude that freedom of agency is as much a necessary condition for inclusion in the genre of role-playing games as role assumption itself. To play a character is to dictate the actions of an imaginary person, and self-determination is inseparable from personhood. *Dungeons & Dragons* also linked to role-playing games a set of common mechanisms adopted by virtually all of its successors. It established the goal of personal progression, a character's improvement through experience, as the ostensible substitute for victory;; the game is otherwise without win conditions. Its manner of measuring progression, through experience points and levels, set a widely-followed precedent, one that now admits of innumerable variants. Another key ingredient in *Dungeons & Dragons* is dramatic pacing, achieved by transitioning between three different game modes: a mode of exploration, a mode of combat and a mode of logistics. Time flows differently in each of these modes, and by rationing the modes carefully a referee guides the players through satisfying cycles of tension, catharsis and banality that mimic the ebb and flow of powerful events. Although these mechanisms have partial antecedents in the history of wargaming, they appear in *Dungeons & Dragons* in an attractive and unobvious form, and more importantly they appear together. To those who contend that *Dungeons & Dragons* does not represent a watershed moment in gaming, as its supposed innovations have analogs in earlier game systems, one must respond this is rather like arguing that the advent of life itself is not terribly noteworthy, as it merely represents a fortuitous combination of existing amino acids that had for some time bubbled in the primordial soup. The popular reaction to the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*, in laudatory or condemnatory reviews, amply substantiates its novelty.

In the process of distinguishing the new from the appropriated, we must touch on the subject of attribution a delicate one for *Dungeons & Dragons*, for at least two reasons. The first is that in 1977 the holder of the non-literary rights to the works of J.R.R. Tolkien lodged a complaint against the publisher of *Dungeons & Dragons* which led to a number of hasty changes in the rulebook and lingering questions about the originality of the game.

The second is that the two co-creators of *Dungeons & Dragons* parted acrimoniously late in 1976, eventually culminating in a 1979 lawsuit by Arneson against TSR and Gygax personally. Both of these legal actions have obscured the influences on *Dungeons & Dragons* though the second cast a darker shadow than the first. As Arneson's lawsuit concerned the assignment of inventorship and the royalties owed for derivative works, both parties understandably cast the history of *Dungeons & Dragons* in a light favorable to their claim. The resulting covert war buried a great deal of history, and a settlement largely silenced the authors on the particulars of their collaboration. A certain factionalism spread among the eyewitnesses to the birth of the game, some of whom became directly tangled in the dispute, and it is rare to find a member of either Gygax or Arneson's circle from the 1970s without strong views about this matter. Later commentators have compared the dissolution of their partnership to various historical break-ups where one party seizes a great advantage and the other is left destitute we should view such parallels skeptically, however, as all unhappy partnerships are unhappy after their own fashion.

Rather than test the patience of readers eager to learn which side of this dispute the present author champions, we will reveal at the outset that this study concludes Gygax and Arneson were co-creators of *Dungeons & Dragons*, in at least the following crucial sense: it is very unlikely Gygax would have written such a game had he not experienced Arneson's Blackmoor campaign, and it is equally unlikely that Arneson would have identified anyone other than Gygax who could base a successful commercial game on the prototype of

INTRODUCTION xv

Blackmoor. Gygax and Arneson shared almost five years of acquaintance prior to the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*, during which time they participated in the same wargaming clubs, worked together on games for publication and played together in wargames campaigns, often via post while separated by the 350 miles between the Twin Cities and Lake Geneva. Although finer points in their work obviously originated with one or other, some of the most lasting innovations in *Dungeons & Dragons* emerged from the vibrant wargaming communities its authors frequented. Readers wary of bias will undoubtedly detect that Gygax receives more citations than Arneson in this study this is because Gygax, in his extraordinary prolificacy, simply published a vastly greater amount of material. Without Arneson's *Corner of the Table*, a fanzine scarce to the brink of endangerment, posterity

would have precious little insight into the formative years of Blackmoor;; Gygax, on the other hand, deluged the wargaming community with articles and correspondence throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, leaving virtually no idea or sentiment without a write-up and a timestamp. Save for Gygax's fastidiousness on this point, any attempt to apply a rigid timeline to the history of *Dungeons & Dragons* would be futile, and history would grudgingly crib from the faded ledger of reminiscence.

Moreover, while the authors create the work, the fans create the phenomenon. The story of *Dungeons & Dragons* does not belong exclusively to its creators, but to the vast network of enthusiasts (henceforth the fandom) who received and interpreted the work. In recognition of that diversity, the current work builds on a survey of thousands of contemporary periodicals and ephemera from the years surrounding the initial publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*. It therefore differs from prior histories founded on eyewitness testimony delivered several decades after the fact. A good example of that approach is *40 Years of Gen Con* (2007), an estimable work by the game designer Robin Laws, which provides roughly year-by-year coverage of the eponymous convention culled from interviews with its organizers and regular attendees, including both Gygax and Arneson. Although that book has enormous value as a repository of folk history (to say nothing of the enviable collection of photographs it reproduces), it also pointedly illustrates that personal recollection serves a different purpose than history. On the first page alone, in the testimony of Gygax and Bill Hoyer, there are three significant historical inaccuracies.² Other works drawing on the recollection of eyewitnesses suffer from comparable problems;; for some reason, the eagerness of an authority to promulgate a given version of events seems to equal the vehemence with which others will dispute the facts. Testimony concerning *Dungeons & Dragons* suffers from more than just the fallibility of human memory, owing to the aforementioned controversies about priority and attribution. Therefore, this study anchors all major events, dates and sequences related to the history of *Dungeons & Dragons* on contemporary sources, which is to say sources printed within a year or so of the events in question preferably far closer. The constraint makes the earliest specks of data, even those as brief as the quotation from Gygax that begins this introduction, extraordinarily valuable. Any sources printed after 1976 which comment on the pre-history of *Dungeons & Dragons* are therefore treated with caution;; sources printed ² Those are: ear of the Malvern IFW

convention is given as

1966 rather than 1967;; and the size of the IFW is given as eight hundred at the time of GenCon I, when it was not even a tenth of that size. Skeptics will find these corrections proven in Chapter One. While historians live in glass houses and should throw stones only cautiously, history can be amended in the face of new evidence in a way that memory cannot.

after 1980 are not considered as evidence for that historical period, though they may receive ancillary citations when appropriate.

Working from contemporary sources produced by the wargaming and sciencefiction fandom of the 1960s and 1970s presents unique challenges. The fanzines that chronicle these years suffer greatly from the limits of existing duplicating technologies, all of which have long since been relegated to the graveyard of obsolescence: implements such as the mimeograph, spirit duplicator and hectograph, the operation of which required painstaking labor to harvest a meager number of shabby copies. Fanzines remain an underutilized historical resource not only because of their rarity, a consequence of the low copy counts delivered by these early machines, but also because of their lack of standards for dating, attribution, sequencing and similar scholarly niceties. Nor did the contents often outshine the production quality, as the self-appointed editors of these periodicals usually received no training, pay or oversight many had not yet completed high school. Nevertheless, these documents are to a historian indispensable, the abstract and brief chronicles of the time, and thus we cannot dismiss these fanzines for wanting the level of editorial quality we would expect from professional publications. We must forgive *Corner of the Table* for repeating an entire Volume 3, which graces the covers of issues both in 1970 and 1971, though this and other irregularities in numbering conventions make sequencing that periodical a fiendish ordeal worthy of a sadistic dungeon master. Moreover, we must declare a general amnesty for typos, which practically outnumber properly spelled words in some journals;; as a matter of editorial policy this study tacitly corrects minor glitches in citations of fanzines, in the process transforming many wizzards into wizards.³ To retain these artifacts might capture more period flavor, but it would detract from the underlying message this work is a testament to the achievements of this community of amateurs, not a scoff at its stylistic shortcomings.

Similarly, and with some small regret, this history overlooks many rumors, legends and allegations of a more personal nature concerning the protagonists in the narrative, tales which spread on Internet forums or the lips of elder gamers. Including that sort of material here would require adding a more sensational layer to the work, and no doubt its current girth tries the patience of casual readers already. Moreover, those elements bring a meanness to the story which is incompatible with the calling of history. While one could elaborate those doubtful claims into a more colorful narrative, one richer in the highs and lows of human interest, that task is left for some future author, who might benefit from the dry, factual framework presented in these pages. Only in cases where biographical sidestreets intersect with noteworthy events are they parenthetically incorporated into the current work.

For all its length and detail, this study cannot exhaust its subject. Although it reflects an unprecedented breadth of sources, future research will inevitably uncover more. Sam Moskowitz, an early historian of science fiction and its fandom, lamented in the introduction to one of his anthologies that the problem for the editor of this book was to hunt down the materials needed, bid against other collectors for their possession, with no quarter shown by them, despite the fact that my motives involved basic research rather

³ This study does not however efface the variance in terminology needed to monitor the spread of ideas: th -

INTRODUCTION xvii than acquisitiveness.⁴ Anyone building an evidentiary base for a history of *Dungeons & Dragons* must empathize with Moskowitz;; in the same way, many scarce documents crucial to evolution the history of role-playing games command prodigious sums at auction, and thus lie in the hands of a small number of private collectors with deep pockets. One can only hope that the publication of this study will inspire more of these collectors to open their vaults to scholarship.

It is left to the reader to decide whether or not these rationales justify lavishing such seriousness on a game, even the patriarch of many nations of games. Gygax and Arneson alike insisted that *Dungeons & Dragons* and its descendants are nothing but games, despite the messianic beliefs of some fans. There are enthusiasts anxious to elevate roleplaying games to the status of an art form while it is undoubtedly true that an artist could make art from a role-playing game, modern art has vividly demonstrated that an artist can

also make art from a shovel, a bicycle tire or similarly mundane items. The importance of role-playing games does not lie in any artistic pretension so much as in their world-forging expansiveness, the sheer audacity of games in which an improvised table-top discussion conjures an epic world into being. It sounds absurd, even preposterous, yet it captured the imaginations of millions. Role-playing games are a testament to the curious ability of the human mind to embrace a bare sketch of a situation, to fill in its undefined areas and above all to believe it, to play at these worlds in such earnest that we lose ourselves in fictional personae. How and why this works must be answered by philosophers or psychologists this history can only chart the path to the discovery that it works.

This book is divided into five chapters, of which the first and fifth provide a continuous chronological picture of events immediately before and after the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons* respectively, with the intervening three chapters exploring the major components of the game in detailed historical perspective. As the invention of *Dungeons & Dragons* depended on the mingling of fantasy genre literature with wargaming, these are the first two components examined, under the headings of setting and system. The third component is role-playing itself, the bond of identification forged between player and character. Finally, a brief epilogue examines the game's growing popularity as it entered the 1980s, and how role-playing began to spread to computer platforms.

The first chapter serves as a general introduction, explaining for the uninitiated what wargaming is, how it began and the distinction between board and miniature wargaming. Since the dawn of American commercial wargaming, fans have organized themselves into clubs in order to locate opponents and share ideas, or simply enthusiasm, for games. One such club, the International Federation of Wargaming (IFW), rose to prominence as a sponsor of conventions and periodicals, in no small part thanks to the boundless energy of its legendary co-founder Gary Gygax. Through the IFW's Lake Geneva Wargames Convention, later known as GenCon, Gygax met Dave Arneson, and the two embarked on a multi-year collaboration that yielded several influential game designs. Gygax also created within the IFW a medieval miniatures subgroup called the Castle & Crusade Society, which benefitted from the surging popularity of Tolkien. After detailing the medieval and fantasy wargame settings, this chapter shows how Gygax's fantasy medieval wargame *Chainmail* formed the basis for Arneson's Blackmoor campaign,

⁴ Moskowitz, *Under the Moons of Mars*, xii. xviii PLAYING AT THE WORLD which in turn inspired the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons* by Gygax s new game company, Tactical Studies Rules (TSR).

Leaving the events that followed the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons* for later, the second chapter takes the first of three deep dives into the components of role-playing games, this one exploring the concept of setting. Unlike abstract games of strategy, all wargames have a setting, which determines the armaments of the combatants and the environment in which they deploy. Why did the first role-playing game evolve around the fantasy and medieval settings? Could it not just as easily have drawn from a historical setting, such as the Napoleonic era popular among wargamers? This chapter explores the fantasy literary genre identified by Gygax as the inspiration for the setting of *Dungeons & Dragons* and uncovers some potential explanations for its connection to role-playing games. Fantasy inspired in many of its fans a peculiar craving for extra-literary experiences: to do more than just read about fantastic heroes, but instead to live in such a fantasy. While fantasy genre fiction has a long history rooted in the adventure romances of Victorian authors, it enjoyed little popularity until the sudden and monumental success of Tolkien in the mid-1960s, after which many fantasy authors who had labored in relative obscurity for decades suddenly found themselves celebrities. Curiously, while Gygax s foreword to *Dungeons & Dragons* names several major authors in this tradition Burroughs, Howard, de Camp, Pratt and Leiber it notably excludes Tolkien, a decision that merits some scrutiny and explication. The second half of the chapter explores the elements of the fantasy setting that appear in the original *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks, and shows how they borrowed from the fantasy literary tradition and moreover how the game s extensibility mechanisms allow players and referees to make their own incremental contributions to the fantasy canon.

Then, the third and lengthiest chapter tackles the topic of system, the rules of wargames and role-playing games. Wargames originated in the chess variants popular in Germany in the eighteenth century, and although the rules of the earliest wargames greatly resembled chess, the work of the Reiswitz family soon liberated these *kriegsspiel* from the rigid constraints of abstract games of strategy. Among the many seminal qualities of the Reiswitz game, the most revolutionary is the introduction of a neutral referee who interprets and executes the verbal orders of players a system that

permits players the same broad latitude that an officer would enjoy when issuing orders to troops in the field. A less dramatic but equally-impactful novelty in Reiswitz is his system of probability (grounded in real-world statistics) and dice to resolve game events: an innovation that could lay to claim to being the first mathematical simulation in all of intellectual history. Reiswitzian wargames trained German strategists throughout the nineteenth century;; eventually, their popularity inspired civilian imitators who repurposed wargaming into a hobby activity, most notably in the 1913 work *Little Wars* by H. G. Wells. Although hobby wargaming fandom did not gather any momentum until the 1950s, the hobby's first journal, the *War Game Digest*, rapidly charted the design space of wargame rules. When we examine the system of *Dungeons & Dragons*, many of its signature features, including hit points, armor class, saving throws, experience points, levels and abilities have clear precedents in wargaming systems. No explication of *Dungeons & Dragons* would be complete without an account of the adoption of polyhedral dice and equally noteworthy innovations such as the secret map of the dungeon maintained by the referee and the dialogic interaction between referee and player which obviates the need for boards or miniatures. These mechanisms

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combined into a game with unique dramatic pacing that transitions between exploring, fighting and the administration of wealth and power.

In the fourth chapter, the last of the three deep dives takes on the subject of character, another necessary component in role-playing games. Character is more elusive than setting or system, however, as the original *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks say little on the subject of how one adopts or controls a fictional persona. This element of the game therefore depended largely on precedents, as the concept of role-playing obviously predated *Dungeons & Dragons*, and even the term role-playing game had already been applied to certain wargames in the early 1960s. Those wargames experimented with nplayer dynamics, which naturally gave rise to cooperative as well as competitive interpersonal relationships. The popular board game *Diplomacy* must owe some of its structure to the n - player experiments in political gaming which captivated the American military intelligentsia of the 1950s. The bulk of this chapter focuses on how *Diplomacy*-like games, especially in their postal incarnation, gradually approached a format similar to *Dungeons & Dragons*. Some near misses anticipating the invention of fantasy role-playing games receive considerable attention, including the Coventry

collaborative fiction of Los Angeles science-fiction fandom, Tony Bath's longstanding Hyborian campaign drawing on the Conan stories by Howard, and the convoluted Midgard family of games, which achieved its mature form around the time that *Dungeons & Dragons* entered the market.

The fifth chapter resumes the chronological account paused at the conclusion of the first chapter, picking up directly after the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons* and showing how, in the following three years, the role-playing game industry came into being. This narrative hinges on the earliest reactions to the game, on the communities that embraced and evangelized role-playing and finally on the imitators who freed the market from TSR's informal monopoly. Initially, it was not at all clear that *Dungeons & Dragons* would meet with success, and much of TSR's energy in its first year of existence went into building a diverse stable of products. By the end of that inaugural year, however, the warm reception of fantasy fandom translated into word-of-mouth marketing, which spread through mailing lists, conventions and college campuses. Some reviewers began to note that the game did not play like a wargame, and might better be classified as another sort of game entirely. When enough competing products had entered the marketplace, commentators required a term for the type of game that *Dungeons & Dragons* represented: and thus the label role-playing game found its modern connotation. This history culminates in the marketing of *Dungeons & Dragons* as a role-playing game rather than a wargame. After 1976, with the advent of many competing games and companies, the history of role-playing games requires a more encyclopedic method than a chronological history.

Finally, a brief epilogue explores the broader cultural reception of the game beginning with the accusation that *Dungeons & Dragons* presented such an engrossing alternate world that its players could not distinguish fantasy from real life. The conjecture that games depicting violence might foster juvenile delinquency has persisted doggedly since the first wave of concerned critics descended on *Dungeons & Dragons*, but variants of this suspicion have targeted fantasists since at least the time of Cervantes. Unfounded speculation that a college student had disappeared in steam tunnels while attempting to live out the game brought worldwide attention which drove sales to new heights and opened new spin-off markets. When role-playing games transitioned to computerized environments, however, the fictional worlds they depicted took on qualities that made

them far more playable and realistic. The epilogue therefore traces the diminishing role of a human referee as computers assumed responsibility for administering fantastic adventures. When they migrated to the Internet and increased in sophistication, these games evolved into persistent virtual worlds which are, in an important sense, as real to their global community of players as the everyday world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Two university library collections provided invaluable material for this project: the Bruce E. Pelz collection of fanzines at the University of California at Riverside, and the collection of the Brown Popular Culture Library at Bowling Green State University, which incorporates the Hoosier Archives of *Diplomacy* fanzines. The author is also grateful for access to the archives of Boston University, Harvard University (Houghton), the Staatsbibliotek of Berlin, the National Library of Sweden, the Smithsonian Institution, the Minnesota Historical Society, Duke University, Marquette University, the University of California at Berkeley, Stanford University and the University of North Dakota.

Many of the resources necessary to chart this history cannot be found in academic libraries, and the author thus relied on a number of private collections. This study is especially indebted to the gracious hospitality of George Phillies, whose unsurpassed collection of wargaming zines filled in many gaps. The private holdings of Dan Nicholson, William Hoyt and Dave Arneson illuminated a great deal of early Twin Cities gaming. The author must also acknowledge some wargamers whose collections entered the market and subsequently informed this study, especially Art Mikel, Charles Ansel and Bill Owen.

The author also thanks the many eyewitnesses who took some time to answer historical questions during the five-year course of this project, including Gary Gygax, Dave Arneson, Dave Wesely, Don Lowry, Greg Svenson, Dan Nicholson, Bill Hoyt, Peter Gaylord, John Bobek, Hartley Patterson, Lee Gold, George Phillies and Tim Kask.

Undertaking a project of this scope prior to the existence of the Internet would have been virtually hopeless. Two web sites in particular, the Acaeum and the Tome of Treasures, helped enormously knowledgeable persons. Many countless pronouncements by the protagonists in the development of

role-playing games. Public services like WorldCat and Google Books also resolved previously insurmountable logistical challenges.

In keeping with the tradition of self-publishing exemplified by gaming fandom, this work was written, edited, typeset, illustrated and published by the author with the help of some friends. Incidental illustrations of a humorous nature within have been provided by Andrew Meger. Justin Sobodash and Susan Ricketts assisted with intellectual property issues. Finally, this book owes a great deal to Andrew Meger, Philip Levis, Eric Rescorla, Robert Froemke, Paul Denhartog and most of all Jessica Patterson for their insight, suggestions and support.

in identifying primary sources and connecting with online forums, especially EN World, have enshrined

CHAPTER ONE: A PRELUDE TO ADVENTURE (1964 1974)

In January 1974, a company in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, called Tactical Studies Rules released the game *Dungeons & Dragons*. The product consisted of three slim booklets and a few reference sheets housed in a woodgrain-patterned cardboard box. The authors are identified on the cover as Gygax & Arneson. The only hint the exterior gives to the subject of the game is the legend: Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures.

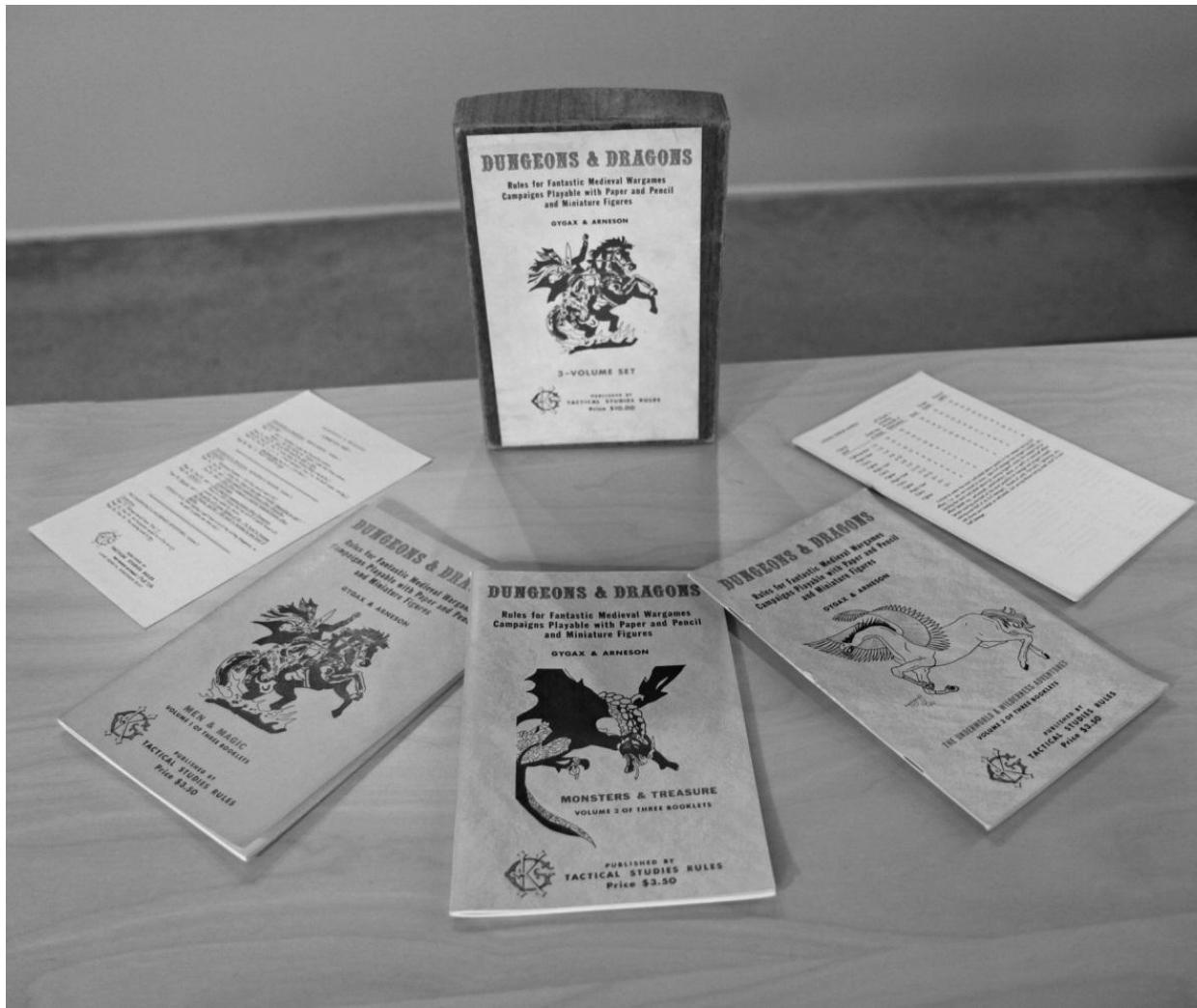


FIGURE 1: DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, FIRST EDITION

At the time of the game's release, Tactical Studies Rules comprised a partnership of three persons, none of whom it could afford to employ. Within a decade, however, *Dungeons & Dragons* became a worldwide phenomenon, an object of delight or derision to every American teenager and the parents of same. Nearly forty years later, the cultural forces it set in motion not only continue unabated, but accrue new momentum as they assume forms its designers could never have anticipated. *Dungeons & Dragons* is so iconic that it is almost impossible to recover the eyes of 1974, to see that earliest rendition as its first converts saw it: to discern in what respects it was novel or even revolutionary, and in what respects it merely rehashed known practices or reflected their inevitable combination. For those that know the game intimately, it is even harder to accept that its first

incarnation lacked so many familiar qualities and left unexamined many crucial subjects that, in retrospect, urgently required clarification. We must therefore forget the fame of *Dungeons & Dragons* for the time being, and regard it as one hopeful game among throngs of competitors, printed in minuscule numbers by determined amateurs, distributed with little fanfare and slated to reach only a tiny community of interest before an almost certain plummet into utter obscurity. Conversely, for those unfamiliar with the game, we offer no overview of its operations, as during the formative years of its design and reception the exact workings of the game were subject to much uncertainty, fluctuation and dispute. We can only explicate the game in its famous, mature incarnation by understanding that debate and the community that entertained it, which encompassed both the game's authors and audience.

Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures is a bit of a mouthful. The designers threw so many words at the cover because the type of game they had created as yet had no tidy classification. But since they put all this verbiage on the *Dungeons & Dragons* box, the creators presumably felt that Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns would be attractive, or at least comprehensible, to the contemporary market, and that their customers knew how to play games with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figurines. With sufficient fluency in the vernacular of wargaming fandom, one can decode from these terms much about the influences on *Dungeons & Dragons* and the community it targeted.

Commercial wargames occupied a well-developed market in the 1970s, one that had, over the preceding twenty years, risen from the humblest origins into a profitable niche industry in the United States. At the outset of the market, Charles Swann Roberts II (1930–2010) founded the Avalon Hill Game Company, though not to sell wargames as such the very term did not then carry its later popular significance. There had been innumerable commercial boardgames which chose war as their cosmetic subject, though in their mechanics of play, few deviated from the standard children's boardgame tropes: skipping around a racetrack at the whim of a die, finding advancement or reversal when landing on special squares, and ultimately exerting no more influence over the course of events than a spectator.¹ Before Roberts, there had also been elaborate pedagogical military simulations, largely lessons in deployment and logistics, the most famous of

these being in the tradition of nineteenth-century German *kriegsspiel* systems. There had been a smattering of hobbyist publications aimed at the owners of miniature military figurines, touting ways to put these toys to work in an enjoyable battle game. These other pursuits will receive detailed attention throughout this study, but neither provided what Avalon Hill offered: off-the-shelf boardgames that would entertain and challenge adult mass-market consumers.

By his own admission, Roberts blundered the wargaming community into existence: There was no thought, let alone premonition, of founding a company, avocation or industry in 1952 when I sat down in an apartment in Catonsville, Maryland, to design what ultimately became known as *Tactics* (1954), the first modern board wargame.² His motivation for designing a military game was simply to acquaint himself with the mechanics of war, since, as an American reservist in the early 1950s, Roberts faced the prospect of a tour of duty. When it transpired that the Korean police action did not require his services, and he consequently found himself with a serendipitous opening in his schedule, he decided to market his game to the general public rather than see his creation go to waste. From 1954 to 1957, roughly 2,000 copies of *Tactics* were sold at \$4.95 each, by mail order, under the imprint of the Avalon Game Company, mostly through the catalogs of Stackpole Books.³ The box cover bore the legend ... the new, realistic land army war game! To his mild surprise, this venture did not leave Roberts destitute, so he decided to try his luck on a larger scale. Avalon Hill formally incorporated and, by 1958, it released an initial slate of products, including *Tactics II*, a slight revision of its predecessor.

¹ More sophisticated military boardgames, like *Risk* (1959) from Parker Brothers or *Stratego* (1961) from Milton Bradley, largely meet the definition of a wargame, but both of those games entered the American market slightly later than the earliest Avalon Hill titles, and moreover both address war as a very high-level exercise in strategy rather than exploring the tactical underpinnings of battle. ² From the *Avalon Hill Jubilee* promotional.

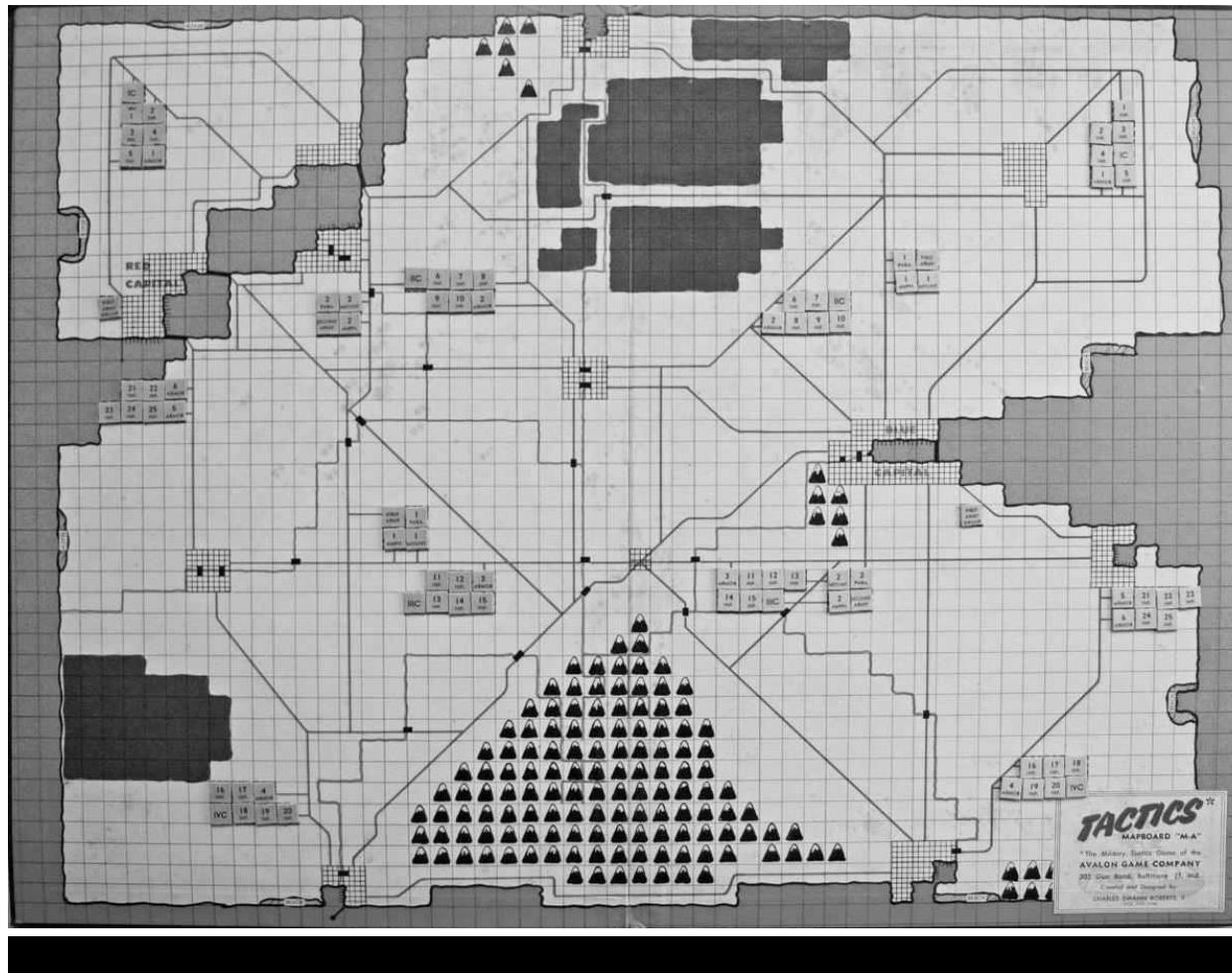


FIGURE 2: *TACTICS* (1954) BOARD, WITH PIECES

Tactics, which may serve as an exemplar of Avalon Hill wargame designs, ultimately resembled fast-paced boardgames more than tedious military training exercises.⁴ In the earliest Avalon Hill releases, the board superimposed a grid over a simple terrain map;; it was not until a few years later that board wargames adopted their signature hexagonal, rather than square, overlay. The map itself depicted a field of battle which would, from wargame to wargame, admit of widely differing scales. In the case of *Tactics*, the depicted land represents many miles surrounding the cities of a pair of opposing countries, with³ The Military Service Publishing Company and Stackpole Books were then separate divisions in Telegraph Press;; they merged in 1959 under the Stackpole brand. Bob Bard, fellow resident of the Baltimore area, also sold *Tactics* through his military miniatures catalog. See Bromley, *The Charles S. Roberts Auction*.

⁴ This paragraph describes the higher-level properties of Avalon Hill board wargames and is thus applicable to both *Tactics* and *Tactics II*; readers

interested in the finer distinctions between these two games should see Section 3.1.7.

squares containing diverse types of terrain: mountains, forests, roads, water and so on. At the start of the game, the board is populated with game pieces controlled by the two opposing players, who take turns moving their forces. The pieces themselves, squares of die-cut cardboard with identifying markings, represented the troops such as infantry and armored units which contended to capture enemy cities. The novice player of the day would find many elements of the game unfamiliar, including the opportunity to move all of one's pieces during a turn (as opposed to, say moving a single piece per turn in chess or checkers), not to mention moving them several squares from where they started.

Furthermore, the use of dice to resolve combats between units differentiated Avalon Hill games from prior offerings available to the American public. In *Tactics*, all units have a combat factor which quantifies their overall efficacy in battle. After the movement phase of a turn, all adjacent opposing units resolve combat by throwing dice (the rules call for rolling a cubit, a euphemism to disassociate this dicing from gambling) and comparing the results to a Combat Results Table (CRT). This table takes into account the total combat factors of the opposing adjacent forces, and through judicious application of probability, when the die is rolled it is more likely that the force with the higher combat factor will win. Depending on how favorable the odds are, a die roll might precipitate a retreat, or might herald the capture or elimination of one or more enemy units. Thus, it is critical for players to deploy their pieces to collaborate in assault and defense, concentrating their aggregate strength in the most strategically valuable positions. The objective is to crush the enemy forces, though in *Tactics* victory may come from simply occupying cities if the enemy is bashful. These core mechanisms, with minor variations, have remained the mainstay of turn-based military strategy games, on boards and computers, for half a century.

The most commercially viable of Avalon Hill's initial offerings was *Gettysburg* (1958), given that the upcoming centennial commemoration of the battle would provide some free advertising and spur patriotic purchases. Unlike *Tactics*, *Gettysburg* chose a historical battle as its setting, and thus instead of fighting over imaginary terrain with fictional forces, players took the sides of the Union and Confederacy to contend over a small piece of Pennsylvania. The release of the game attracted some national attention:

Newsweek, for example, put a blurb about the game in their November 17, 1958, edition which begins by asking, Want to re-write history? Whereas *Tactics* had sold primarily by mail, *Gettysburg*, as the *Newsweek* piece informs us, is the new game salesmen were hawking this week in stores across the US. In fact, *Gettysburg* virtually put Avalon Hill on the map, selling nearly 140,000 copies (again, at \$4.95 each) by 1963. War-themed titles were not indicative of the entire Avalon Hill portfolio, however. During its first five years of operation, Avalon Hill published fewer military games than civilian titles, as they called them: sports games, business-themed games (including *Dispatcher*, a railroad game), even legal thriller games. These pacifist dalliances proved less successful, however, than games in the bellicose mold of *Tactics*; one out of every five Avalon Hill games sold up to 1963 was a copy of *Gettysburg*. Despite their innovative product line and favorable reception, the fledgling Avalon Hill business was not strong enough to weather a 1961 disruption in its distribution network, and thus, on December 13, 1963, Roberts regretfully left the company in the hands of a creditor, Eric A. Dott, who pledged to continue the business in cooperation with remaining executives. After the departure of Roberts, Thomas N. Shaw continued as a vice-president and assumed control over products and strategy. Reflecting upon his foundational role in the development of commercial wargaming in Avalon Hill's twenty-fifth year *Jubilee* retrospective, Roberts can only remark, May I note that I would rather be known for something that was the result of a deliberate effort.

Before he left the company, however, Roberts conceived of a magazine that would provide marketing for Avalon Hill products, as well as columns on game strategy, design and the like. Under the anonymous editorship of Shaw, the *Avalon Hill General* debuted on May 1, 1964. Counterintuitive as this may sound, it is because of the existence and careful stewardship of the *General* that any serious history of *Dungeons & Dragons* must begin with Avalon Hill. Through the medium of the *General*, wargames fans united into a national community, a wargaming fandom, which proved essential to future game development. Of course, the success of wargaming had many fathers, when we look outside of Avalon Hill: Jack Scruby, for example, incubated the infant miniature wargaming hobby community of the 1950s as he built his seminal business around the manufacture and sale of military miniatures. Scruby also recruited English wargamers Tony Bath and Don Featherstone as co-editors of his early hobby magazine, the *War Game Digest*, a periodical that had already run for several years (and folded) well

before the first issue of the *General*;; Featherstone would in turn edit the bellwether miniature wargaming journal of the 1960s and 1970s, *Wargamer s Newsletter*. One would similarly be remiss to neglect Alan B. Calhamer: his *Diplomacy* (1959), a more abstract and political game with greater popular appeal than the initial Avalon Hill titles, went on to storm classrooms everywhere and reportedly the inner cloisters of the Kennedy White House.⁵ All of these fathers should be given their due, and in pages that follow they shall.⁶ The claim which belongs to Avalon Hill alone is the creation of American board wargaming fandom within the pages of the *General*. By enabling wargamers to connect with one another, and form organizations independent of Avalon Hill and its house organ, the *General* opened a reserve of distributed creative power that might otherwise have gone untapped. However, in keeping with the regrets of Avalon Hill s founder Charles S. Roberts, it is less clear that the wargaming community turned out to be quite what its enablers had in mind.

1.1 THE RISE OF WARGAMING CLUBS

To understand the need for a national wargaming community, one must first appreciate the scale of wargaming as a hobby in the mid-60s. It was, in a word, minuscule. In the first bimonthly issue of the *General*, the subscriber s directory listed only seventy-two names, though as many as two thousand copies may have been printed for promotional purposes. The directory in the second issue showed that subscriptions had leapt over five hundred evidently the promotion was a success. The two subsequent issues detailed a more modest increase in subscriptions (under one hundred per issue) until the practice of maintaining a directory was discontinued with the fourth issue of the *General*. Decent gains, but this was hardly a phenomenon holding millions in thrall.

Sales figures for games similarly show Avalon Hill making respectable headway, but only for an industry in its first stages of growth. The initial print run of Avalon Hill s flagship game release for the inaugural year of the *General*, a military game designed by Thomas Shaw called *Afrika Korps* (1964), was around 2,500 copies;; a later analysis suggests that Avalon Hill may have sold 60,000 total games in 1964. [S&T:#33] Avalon Hill quickly discovered, however, that much of their sales relied on fanatical repeat-buyers who collected every new release;; this lack of breadth and diversity in their audience would curb their growth. Furthermore, while 60,000 may sound like an impressive number, consider that the first year that *Monopoly*

sold more than a million copies was 1936, and that sales per annum did not exactly decline from there in a given year in the 1960s, a single successful Parker Brothers title could easily sell thirty times as many copies as the entire Avalon Hill product line. Wargaming, in the grand scheme of things, was a niche hobby.

⁵ Although to many younger enthusiasts *Diplomacy* is remembered as an Avalon Hill title, it was not until 1976, seventeen years into its life, that the rights to *Diplomacy* were secured by Avalon Hill.

⁶ The history of the military and hobby wargaming traditions fills up the several subsections in 3.1, while *Diplomacy* receives a thorough treatment in Section 4.1.

These figures underlie a sad reality of that era: as Avalon Hill products scattered into the teeming populace of the United States, locating opponents became a significant challenge. Two-player wargames lack any satisfying form of solitaire, and thus a shortage of opponents seriously diminished the appeal of these titles. Overall awareness of Avalon Hill products among American consumers remained very low;; moreover, the games had a learning curve that discouraged casual play. A novice without natural talent would lose many games before standing a chance against an experienced gamer. For those living outside a major North American city board wargames being more or less entirely unknown outside of North America at the time the prospects were remote for finding rivals at all, let alone players with a comparable level of expertise.

It was this isolation that the *General* addressed. This is not to say that the *General* did not serve primarily as a venue for showcasing new Avalon Hill products, nor that the analyses contributed to it by seasoned gamers did not improve Avalon Hill games and foster community talent that might one day yield new designs these functions were also critical to the industry's future. But in hindsight, the importance of the *General* lies in how it provided a way for the community to get to know itself, in particular through the commons of the Opponents Wanted column.

The premise behind Opponents Wanted was simple. The *General* would print, free of charge, any want ad blurb submitted by a subscriber. Ostensibly, these submissions formed a rendezvous service to assist gamers in discovering local adversaries and organizing these pockets of wargamers into clubs. An article by John Perica in the first issue of the *General* explained in detail how to form a club, stage competitions to hone the craft,

and then finally offers that when you think are you pretty good, challenge me to a game. But expect no mercy! I m a pretty ruthless person in my military conquests! The development of play-by-mail kits for many Avalon Hill strategy titles significantly broadened the reach of solitary fans;; a few technically-savvy wargamers even proposed the use of ham radio to conduct games in real time. Thomas Shaw, as *de facto* editor of the *General*, would later characterize this outreach effort as an attempt to create a family of togetherness among wargame aficionados. [AHG:v25n1]

However, despite the best intentions of the staff, the community that emerged from the Opponents Wanted column proved more confrontational than Avalon Hill intended.⁷ In the first instance of the column, submitters had already intuited that taunting potential opponents would yield rapid replies. Have Army, will destroy you, writes one prospective combatant. Will slaughter any opponents on any Avalon Hill game within reasonable distance of our home, promises another. In the spirit of *Afrika Korps*, a game set in the North African theater of the Second World War, a man from Illinois assumes a historical mantle: Field-Marshal Erwin Rommel will take on all who wish to fight him. Each boast accompanied a postal address where one could toss one s own gauntlet. These flamboyant jibes were interspersed among more prosaic requests, along the lines of:

⁷ The wargaming clubs of the 1960s have yet to receive any definitive historical treatment. Steven Patrick authored a detailed overview of the period which appeared in *Strategy & Tactics* #33 with a continuation in *S&T* #53, though it is peppered with partisanship. It was partially reprinted in *Wargame Design* (1982), unfortunately omitting much of the detailed information on clubs. The recollections of Thomas Shaw and Donald Greenwood in the *General* on this period are also valuable. [AHG:v25n1] In *Little Wars*

a certified eyewitness to the history (one Gary Gygax), although it mostly

Avalon Hill game enthusiast wishes to engage in a game of *Afrika Korps* with someone willing to command the British, but enthusiast is willing to play a second game as the British with this person. But which style seizes your attention and demands a response?

Given the setting of Avalon Hill titles like *D-Day* (1961) and *Afrika Korps*, it was not long before Opponents Wanted featured ads that flaunted a SIEG HEIL! to lure indignant opponents into battle. Clubs emerged with names like Fourth Reich, entire advertisements appeared in German and

protestations of invincibility became hyperbolic. The staff of the *General* quickly downplayed any literal interpretation of these neo-Nazi blurbs, noting that chest-beating before battle has a sound historical basis;; it's been a human trait since the dawn of time, and is found in many cultures. [AHG:v2n6] The character of these assertions was transformed, however, by the advent of a club which took the name SPECTRE, after the villainous association imagined by Ian Fleming James Bond novels had recently been adapted as the feature films *Dr. No* (1962) and *From Russia With Love* (1963), the latter of which especially focuses on the clumsily named Special Executive for Counter-intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge and Extortion. The first of their advertisements in the *General* (March 1965) reads: ATTENTION ALL GENERALS: Do you live east of the Mississippi River? Would you like to be in command of your state or of a section thereof? Would you like to engage in inter-state and inter-sectional conflicts? If your answer to any of these questions is Yes, write: Brian Heavey hief of Spectre, (Special Efficacy for CounterIntelligence, Revenge and Extermination). [AHG:v1n6]

Very rapidly, the notion that a wargame might decide the command of a state captured the imagination of the Opponents Wanted community. The aura of villainy, moreover, proved a powerful recruitment tool, and chapters of SPECTRE quickly sprung up in Texas, Virginia, Arizona, Pennsylvania and elsewhere. Even as serious a wargamer as the young Donald P. Greenwood, who would go on to be editor of the famous wargaming zine *Panzerfaust*, and subsequently the *General* itself, attached himself to SPECTRE briefly.

Once SPECTRE had laid claim to a state in the Opponents Wanted column, there were certain to be protestations of resistance from various parties. However, there existed no recognized method to decide command of a geographic region in wargaming fandom though well-intentioned contributors to the *General* proposed various contests, it's doubtful that many were tested. A more fundamental problem was that players formed ties to clubs like SPECTRE out of simple vanity;; membership in this sort of club implied reacts against the boardgame-centric perspective of prior accounts. For contemporary sources, the studies of the IFW and Sparta in the *General* [AHG:v5n1 and AHG:v5n3] constitute the best substitute for access to the journals of the clubs themselves. The catalogs of George Phillips, including his *Big Six, Guide to Wargaming Periodical Literature and History*

of *Wargaming Quarterly* are the sole reliable index to those periodicals and really the only contemporary analysis of the overall trends in the community.

nothing about the experience or ability of players, and SPECTRE provided no services as a club other than a decidedly arbitrary assignment of rank. It was simply a shocking name to bandy about the agony column of Opponents Wanted that infuriated do-gooders and encouraged opposition. Insofar as its membership did compete in games on behalf of the organization, the results were inevitably disputed.

The reason for these disputed results is easily discovered. Since, for the most part, these conflicting claims of regional supremacy originated from geographically dispersed parties, their only avenue to resolution was the play-by-mail game. As this amounted to private correspondence between two individuals, however, the rest of the world could only judge the outcome from self-interested first-hand reports, which had an obvious propensity toward bias. The aforementioned Don Greenwood was even the victim of an apparent forgery;; after reporting to the *General* that he had broken the dubious but widely-asserted 150-0 winning streak of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) War Games Society, someone sent in a forged note to the *General* signed as Greenwood retracting his announcement and admitting complicity in a campaign of libel and character assassination against the M.I.T. War Games Society. [AHG:v2n5] But few availed themselves of this extreme remedy when it was simpler to abandon a play-by-mail game that no longer appeared winnable. A later issue of the *General* would glumly conclude, We finally found out why all these wargame clubs have such fantastic pbm won-lost records, they never finish games in which they are losing. [AHG:v4n1] Accusations of unresponsiveness in the face of likely defeat abounded.

Meanwhile, angst regarding SPECTRE reached startling heights. New clubs formed on a seemingly weekly basis to oppose or in some cases outdo SPECTRE's dastardly, but more or less entirely illusory, campaign of conquest. As an example of the anti-SPECTRE backlash (from September 1965), consider the following from a representative young wargamer of the day: Midwesterners arise! Meet the threat from the east. As you well know the subversive organization known as Specter is invading our area and will soon take over this last bastion of resistance. We are all that remains to stem this tide that has swept in from the East coast. We must resist. We challenge any Specter club (aside from the ones we have already beaten) to beat us in *Bulge*. Also we need more recruits from the upper Midwest if you wish to

join our club write: The Centurions, David L. Arneson... Also let s hear from other anti-Specter clubs if any. [AHG:v2n3]

Of course, these shows of resistance only served to exaggerate the importance of SPECTRE, swelling their membership and goading their ilk to more radical public proclamations. This could hardly have been lost on any of the participants at the time, but most likely it did not matter since they were all clearly having a lot of fun. Hoping to seize their share of the carnage, many other clubs played the blackguard. Later, Victor Gervol, the founder of Aggressor Homeland, one of the largest of the early wargaming clubs, would explain the mock-fascist propaganda his club promulgated in *Opponents Wanted* thus: What we say in our ad and correspondence as a nation is not intended to be taken as any reflection on the personal beliefs of the members of the club. As a wargaming nation we play the role of a totalitarian to the best of our ability to make wargaming more colorful and entertaining. Note in particular Gervol s choice of the words play the role here. Someone had to be the bad guys and I m sure Aggressor has done more to peal to the readers emotions,

antagonizing as well as gaining support for wargames. [AHG:v4n5]

Eventually, these excesses spurred a predictable backlash in wargaming fandom: a spate of more mature neutral clubs that focused on completing games, honing skills and enriching the hobby, rather than squabbling over imaginary, irresolvable territorial disputes. One such club, the United States Continental Army Command (USCAC), was founded by the teenage General William Speer in January 1966 as yet another territory-claiming club for himself and his associates in Malvern and Paoli, Pennsylvania. After seeing a sample of Scott Duncan s work in the *General*, Speer quickly enlisted Duncan (another denizen of the greater Philadelphia area), who would turn out to be a prolific contributor to wargaming and future head of the organization.⁸

Within a few months of its formation, the USCAC rose above the squabbling crowd with *Opponents Wanted* advertisements like this one from Speer: Are you tired of seeing clubs fighting each other? ? ? ? In line with this direction, the USCAC quickly evolved into an organization that promised not to conflict with any other wargaming clubs to which a prospective member might belong. We don t conquer anyone: our members are interested in wargaming, not fantasy, writes Jim Cook. We want members of the USCAC, but all that s necessary is a desire to play AH

wargames, writes a Maj. Gen. Gary Gygax, who had joined the group late in 1966, shortly after he submitted an Opponents Wanted advertisement noting, innocently enough, that he will cooperate on game design. [AHG:v3n4] The USCAC was not merely a vanity club like SPECTRE it provided actual services to its membership, including a fan magazine or fanzine called the *Spartan*, albeit a humble ditto graph club newsletter Speer assembled at his parents office. Confusingly, the USCAC's main rival for neutrality and respectability was a Southern California club called Sparta, founded at roughly the same time (June 1966), but completely unaffiliated with Speer fledgling publication.

The neutral stance of the USCAC allowed the club to aspire to weightier ambitions.⁹ By April 1967, the USCAC boasted one hundred members and had decided to organize a wargaming convention that summer. Although this would not be the first congregation of American wargamers ever, it was the first such gathering to feature a diverse set of board wargames, military miniatures and even chess matches.¹⁰ To reflect the

grad just to keep in practice. Previous
opponents please don't answer. I will
restart gaming on a large scale later
on. Contact: Donald Greenwood, 128
Warren Street, Sayre, Pa. 18840.
Opponents wanted for face-to-face play.
Any AH Wargame, other type wargame
or any form of chess (Shog preferred).
Will cooperate on game design. Gary
Gygax, Lake Geneva, Wis., Phone:
248-4663 (330 Center Street)
I challenge anyone who doesn't want
Alfred E. Neuman, president, to a
game (live-pbm) of D-Day, Stalingrad,
Bulge, or Chess. Either Side! Specify
Rules! Marc Herbert, 814 Hilda St.

FIGURE 3: GYGAX'S FIRST "OPPONENTS WANTED" ADVERTISEMENT [AHG:v3n4]

Duncan was moreover the author of a useful early history of the club which

is substantially followed here. [IW:v2n6] He deserves special remembrance for tirelessly stimulating discussion on controversy, he created an atmosphere which led many within the IFW to start thinking like designers.

⁹ Fans of *Dungeons & Dragons*

light of the later application of that term to alignment.

¹⁰ The first ever American wargames convention? That depends on how liberally one understands

broadening scope of the organization, Speer rechristened the group the International Federation of Wargaming (IFW) on May 1, 1967;; they justified the somewhat dubious claim that they were an international organization on the grounds that they had a handful of members in Puerto Rico and at least one in Germany. The IFW held its convention on July 15, 1967, at the General Wayne Junior High School in Malvern. Avalon Hill heavily promoted the event and acknowledged the hard working efforts of William Speer and cohorts Scott Duncan, Gary Gygax, George Petronis and Clark Wilson. By this time, the *General* could boast a circulation close to five thousand, so its endorsement promised high attendance. The IFW pledged that the event would include exhibitions, films, speakers, meals, giveaways of Avalon Hill games and participation of major clubs from around the country.

Although the convention occurred as scheduled, it was not entirely a success: in fact, the *General* would bluntly deem the Malvern event pretty much a flop. [AHG:v7n1] Attendance came in lower than anticipated around seventy-five persons total because many vocal clubs who promised to send delegates turned out to be fictions of a single, probably teenage, individual. In person, it was painfully obvious that the average age of a subscriber to the *General* was seventeen. The absence of supposed Nazi ideologues from the Malvern convention largely dispelled any pretense of malevolence, not to mention credibility, that the more bombastic wargaming clubs had enjoyed. As a result, on Speer advice, the *General* later began offering a voluntary registration and directory service for wargaming clubs, so that it would be easier to determine which offered some benefits to members and which were purely vanity projects operated for shock value. The real disaster attendant on the Malvern convention, however, came late in the day. The organizers had greatly overestimated the number of attendees who would remain for the \$4-per-head banquet dinner that evening, and as such the club was saddled with an unexpected \$200 catering charge. That sum was more than enough

to deplete the treasury of the IFW and throw its entire future into grave doubt. Disenchanted with the wargaming community, President Speer resigned from the leadership of the IFW and suspended publication of the *Spartan*. The organization more or less collapsed, and over the next few months the membership drifted away.

The name of the IFW would now be forgotten, had IFW Vice-President Scott Duncan not intervened and assumed the mantle of club President. In October, when affairs had reached rock bottom, Duncan managed to raise enough money from the remaining membership (through donations to the tune of \$5 per person) to restart the organization;; as of December 20, 1967, the IFW roster claimed twenty-six paying members, the majority of whom hailed from either Duncan's home state of Pennsylvania or the greater Chicago area including Gygax in Wisconsin, who served as the organization's Vice-President during the transition. Over the next year, the IFW slowly rebuilt itself. By January 1968, the *Spartan* had returned as a bimonthly, though the magazine did not reach a circulation past the low thirties before April.¹¹ Lenard Lakofka, who became associated those held by Jack Scruby and his associates in California which stretched back to the 1950s but does a gathering of little more than a dozen really constitute a convention? The Miniature Figure Collectors of America held yearly wargaming conventions in the Philadelphia area starting in 1964 with some dozens of attendees (eighty in October 1965 by 1970, a couple hundred), but these centered on miniature wargaming to the exclusion of board wargaming, and the MFCA itself focused more on the eponymous goal of collecting and decorating miniatures.

¹¹

with the IFW around this advertisement of the day as conventions and a rules committee for consistency in wargaming.¹² Conventions would become the most prominent of these offerings, amplified by the community-building interests of the *General*. A large summer convention, a successor to the failed Malvern event, was planned for 1968, this time closer to the center of the country to make travel less coastally-biased, and in recognition that a good number of the remaining IFW membership hailed from flyover country. Since the impecunious IFW could contribute only \$35 toward the rental cost for the venue, Gary Gygax agreed to front an additional \$15 personally, provided the event were held at the Horticultural Hall a scant block away from his home in the town of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Lake Geneva is a resort community on the banks of Geneva Lake, reachable from Chicago by car or rail in about two hours. The name comes not from the mountainside lake in Switzerland, but rather from the town of Geneva, New York, which rests on the banks of a similar body of water. In the summer, well-heeled Chicagoans take to boats along the town's riviera and spend their nights in the grand houses that have lined the shore since the nineteenth century. Hugh Hefner even opened a Playboy Club there, with its own private airport, in the summer of 1968 (now the Grand Geneva Resort). The indigenous residents, however, live in quiet suburban homes and enjoy American small-town life. In the late 1960s, the year-round population of the town numbered just five thousand, and there was only one traffic light within city limits, at the intersection of the proverbial Main and Broad streets. It seems an unusual place, perhaps, for wargaming to have flourished, but there's no doubt that the bitter winters left the townies with a great want for indoor activities. The town's Horticultural Hall is a modestly-sized, ivy-wreathed facility that hosts weddings, banquets, crafts shows and the occasional convention with an attendance under two hundred or so.

Since IFW members were to be admitted free of charge, recuperating the Hall's \$50 overhead required strong outside attendance. Happily, a total of ninety-six attendees only thirty-three of them IFW members converged on Saturday, August 24, 1968, for the **Lake Geneva Wargames Convention**. Suffice it to say that no banquet dinners followed, the closest approximation being coffee and rolls at the Hall a half an hour before the convention officially started at 10:00 AM, though during the day the IFW further profited from the sale of soda, popcorn and hot dogs.¹³ The *General* later described Gary Gygax, the convention chairman, as the stereotype mold of a typical 30-ish mid-west family man who might sell insurance. [AHG:v5n4] An apt description, though in fairness he worked as an time, listed the additional services of the IFW in an

a matching-rating service, numerous tournaments and launching of the *Spartan* at the beginning of 1968;; that issue was Vol. 1 No. 1. When the name of the monthly publication changed to the *IFW Monthly*, and then subsequently the *International Wargamer*, this numbering system was retained;; thus the June 1969 issue of the *IFW Monthly* was Vol. 2, No 6, and the September 1969 issue of the *International Wargamer* was Vol. 2, No 9. For more information see the Bibliography. ¹² [AHG:v5n2] A contemporary biographical notice on Lakofka relates that he began playing Avalon Hill

games in 1960. He had subscribed to the *General* since its second year , and after participating in a few play-by - Champaign.

¹³ bags of popcorn, and 12

insurance underwriter, not an insurance salesman. The action spilled over that single day and the bounds of the Horticultural Hall gamers occupied the Gygax home on Center Street from Friday evening until the wee hours of the next morning, and in the Hall itself played anywhere that games could be staged, including the courtyard lawn, despite the oppressive August heat. Beyond ceaseless informal gaming, the organizers had arranged wargaming tournaments for prizes, a modicum of speeches, displays of military miniature figurines and of course publicity for clubs, magazines and major game companies like Avalon Hill. The detailed account in the *Spartan* gives a sense of how the convention space came together: The main hall was reserved for naval and military miniatures display and games. Bob Faber, Gary Nemeth and Chuck Scholti came from Ohio with over 700 warships they had constructed themselves. The Fleet of Greater Milwaukee brought over 200 Alnavco model ships and many AHM tanks in an attractive display. Four larger tables were placed together for Ray Johnson s Napoleonic miniatures which would arrive the next day. Along one of the walks beside the patio a double row of card tables were set up for the active competition in Avalon Hill, 3M, and Gamescience games, Chess, Go, Shogi and other games too numerous to mention. [IW:v1n6]

The earliest event scheduled on Saturday morning was a tournament based around the underground hit First World War aerial board wargame *Fight in the Skies*, refereed by the game s designer and publisher, Mike Carr;; the winner, Mark Goldberg, secured a free copy of the game. A round of naval wargaming under the Fletcher Pratt rules followed, after which Ray Johnson gave his lecture and battle demonstration of Napoleonic wargaming.

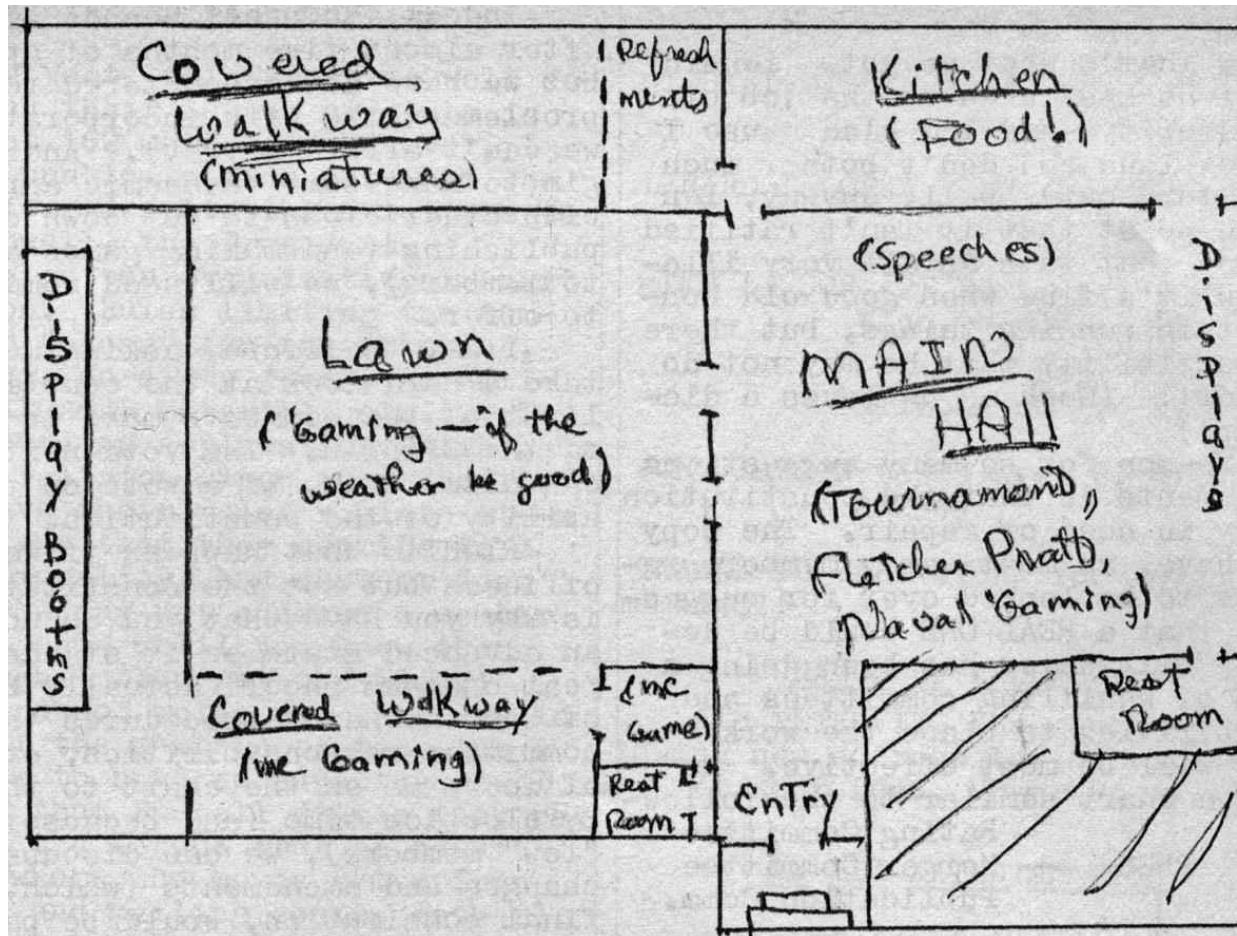


FIGURE 4

LOOR PLAN [IW:V1N4]

The *Spartan* especially notes that Jerry White's excellent miniatures set-up for *The Siege of Bodenburg* was viewed and played by a large number of persons. In the several tournaments that followed, prizes included phonograph records with martial themes (including one of bagpipe music), gift certificates and not a few free games. Despite the conspicuous presence of several wargaming companies, the IFW sorely missed one in particular, but put their best face on it: Although they had no representative or formal display at the affair, Avalon Hill certainly contributed more than their share through their fine pre-convention coverage in the *General* and their donation of two 1914 games as prizes.

The night before the doors opened, feeling the strain and uncertainty of a party host, Gygax reportedly insisted that he would never run a convention again by the end of the weekend, however, he was deep in planning next year's venture. [S&T:v2n5] The *Spartan* proclaimed, Because everybody

had such a good time the event can only be termed a tremendous success! The number of attendees only modestly exceeded that of the Malvern convention, but with the lower overhead at Lake Geneva, the conference was on balance profitable and easily repeatable.

The success of the Lake Geneva Wargames Convention granted the IFW a new lease on life, and moreover established the viability of wargaming clubs as sponsors of conventions. From that point forward, most other clubs of stature sponsored regular wargaming conventions of all shapes and sizes. Among the competing clubs, the aforementioned Spartans favored highly centralized, almost autocratic governance under their leader Russell Powell;; they focused on league competition, and in 1969 they filed articles of incorporation in the hopes of pioneering a professional wargaming circuit that might someday achieve the stature of hobby sports like league bowling. The IFW, on the other hand, was an organization with all of the advantages and liabilities of a democracy, complete with President, Vice-President and Senate: equality among members encouraged fresh ideas and participation, but the IFW was plagued by mud-slinging election campaigns, burnt-out officials and an unmanageable treasury. Once a handful of such large and stable clubs emerged, it became obvious that they shared a common pool of members. The average wargamer interested enough to purchase membership in one club seemed willing to splurge on two or three with no feelings of exclusivity although club leaderships railed against one another and much ado was made of loyalty to these organizations.¹⁴

Although the International Federation of Wargaming and its rivals arguably merit nothing more than an obscure footnote in mainstream history, they are an important legacy of the Opponents Wanted column, and of the foresight of the Avalon Hill company in granting the wargaming community the ability to organize itself. The newsletters of the various wargaming clubs, including the IFW's long-running *International Wargamer* (successor to the *Spartan*), became hotbeds of game advertisement, review and ultimately design. The IFW is further remembered for its crucial role in the establishment of the Lake Geneva Wargames Convention, later known as GenCon, which has reconvened annually for over forty years now, surviving by quite a ways the effective demise of the IFW, in 1972, and even the *General*, in 1998. GenCon has proven a vibrant forum for the exchange of ideas about gaming, one that embraced change in the industry with surprising alacrity. Indeed, within ten years, GenCon would no longer focus

on the games of Avalon Hill, or even wargaming as such, as the wargaming community would be overwhelmed by the enormous fandom surrounding *Dungeons & Dragons*. Most significantly for those interested in the history of that game, the second instance of GenCon would spark the initial collaboration between two game designers whose names surreptitiously crept into the narrative above: E. Gary Gygax (1938 2008) and David L. Arneson (1947 2009), cocreators of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Furthermore, the first GenCon introduced Gygax to the medieval miniatures made by the Hausser corporation in Germany, and a particular set of rules written to exercise them, although the significance of this acquaintanceship can only be understood after a grounding in miniature wargaming.

¹⁴ The much-touted maturity and neutrality of the IFW was apparently compatible with calling their

1.2 MINIATURE WARGAMING

Wargames of the sort produced by Avalon Hill tell only half the story of late twentieth-century wargaming, and to understand what the last two words of Rules for Fantastical Medieval Wargames Campaigns with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures would have meant in 1974, one must also look to the other half: miniature wargaming. To find wargames involving *miniatures*, small (typically metal) figurines resembling and representing soldiers and their vehicles or equipment, we must look outside the scope of the *Avalon Hill General*. Alluding to the focus of Don Featherstone's competing magazine, *Wargamer's Newsletter*, the *General* asserted with some wariness that it described the use of realistic models of terrain features and soldiers themselves. [AHG:v1n6] To liberate terrain from the flatland of board wargames, proponents staged sand box battles on special tables, where they sculpted and decorated wet sand into precise three-dimensional landscapes for their battles.¹⁵ This was clearly a very different thing than an Avalon Hill product.

Unbeknownst to the average Avalon Hill fan, this parallel tradition of *miniature wargaming* existed alongside the tradition of *board wargaming*.¹⁶ Whether fought on a sand table, a floor or a yard outdoors, miniature wargames eschewed boards and the resulting ease of quantifying movements between squares (or hexagons) in favor of irregular scalemodel terrain and rulers to measure movement distance. Various sorts of toy soldiers traditionally made of wood, lead or tin, but by the mid-twentieth century

constructed from a variety of alloys and composites peopled these diminutive landscapes, in various attitudes of assault and movement.

While Avalon Hill sold everything you needed to play their board wargames in a handy box, miniature wargamers had the responsibility and the freedom to provide all of the components of a game: maps, game pieces and the system. Consider that even the most complicated boardgame is easily retrieved from a shelf or closet, its board unfolded and lain across a table top, its pieces sorted and arranged in a starting configuration, all within a span of some minutes in a pinch the game could be stowed away in seconds. Not so for the miniature wargamer. Weeks might be spent in constructing the battleground alone, in which trees, manmade structures, gravel roads and so on are often selected for maximum verisimilitude. Researching a historical battle or period to determine the lay of the land, as well as the positions and equipment of the combatants, is a task which can exhaust any investment of time and energy. Determining how to model the effects of various weapons, or the relative movement rates of different vehicles, requires similar diligent investigations, especially to prevent an imbalanced and unfair game.

¹⁵ Information on the construction of sand tables can be found in many early periodicals (see for example the article by A. W. Saunders in the BMSS *Bulletin* [BMSS:1955n6]). *Chainmail* teaches us instead edge to allow the top to be Gygax described his own sand table design in the February 1970 *International Wargamer*: he preferred a six-by for almost any kind of topographical feature. Of course, some items like buildings, trees, walls, bridges and the like must be added. But the main thing is the adaptability of the sand. In a few provided the sand has been properly wetted the night before.

¹⁶ A third more or less separate tradition of wargaming surrounded Alan B. Calhamer *Diplomacy* (1959);; much of Sections 4.1 and 4.3 cover the influence of this game, especially in the play-by-mail context.

Wargaming with miniatures consequently is not something undertaken lightly. The acquisition, customization and adornment of the miniature figurines themselves is painstaking, and the most dedicated players design and cast their own soldiers, often with the goal of fighting a single particular historical battle. Wargamers select miniatures that exhibit the proper dress and armaments of the period in which the planned battle took place. Ideally, miniatures actually resemble the soldiers who might have taken part in the

military actions they simulate. The fruits of these labors are described from an outsider's perspective by a *Sports Illustrated* reporter who spent an evening at the home of American miniature wargamer Charlie Sweet in 1965: The observation post I picked to watch the battle was about halfway between a railroad of the troops to the east were about to haul an artillery piece over a bridge, and behind them a group of cavalrymen was preparing to charge. To the west, the enemy had concealed some of his men. The men looked very small at that distance. For that matter, they looked very small up close, for each was only 1 3/16 inches tall. Their battlefield was a 5-by-9-foot piece of green-painted plywood set atop a pool table.¹⁷

The reporter begins with a realistic description of the battlefield, imagining himself as just one of the figures overlooking the carnage, only reluctantly conceding that the visceral reality of the miniature battlefield is an illusion. This experience of surrendering oneself to an imaginary game environment is the phenomenon which this study will call immersion. The opportunity for immersion is the primary purpose and result of the great labor involved in miniature wargaming. When all is said and done, a game piece from a boardgame like *Tactics II* is a fleck of cardboard, with no more than a few abstract lines and numerals to distinguish it from its fellows. No one would mistake it at a distance for an infantryman, and no one would display it in a case as an object of innate appreciation. It does not aspire to resemble what it represents; only the rulebook provided in the *Tactics II* box invests the piece with any meaning or value. Moreover, a game piece from *Tactics II* is useful only within the context of the game *Tactics II*; it could not be imported into another game, like say Avalon Hill *Gettysburg*, and fielded there. The miniature wargaming tradition is by contrast centered around figurines with intrinsic aesthetic quality that could deploy to any table-top battle where their attire and equipment belonged.

A detailed history of the miniature wargaming hobby occupies Sections 3.1.5 through 3.1.7 below, but to understand how this tradition influenced the wargaming community of the 1960s requires only a brief overview for now. The science fiction author H. G. Wells laid the foundation for the

modern miniature wargaming hobby in the early twentieth century, and he chose as his theaters of operations parlors or the occasional lawn.

¹⁷ *Sports Illustrated*, January 4, 1965.

Wells's wargame presupposed that youths, including the young at heart, who already played with toy soldiers needed a system that might allow them to pit armies against one another in a fair and interesting contest. His mechanics were simple and universal, and emphasized the tendency for opposing forces to slaughter each other in equal quantities. Dice or probability played no role in deciding conflicts, only raw numerical superiority.

To Wells must be credited the invention of miniature wargame rules marketed in book form to the general public, through his seminal *Little Wars* (1913).¹⁸ A pacifist, Wells expressed some optimism that playing at war might obviate the need for the real thing as it turned out, not a very timely aspiration, given the year his rules appeared. While Wells did affirm the potential value of his game to the military as a simulation, he cared less about instructing officers than he did about entertainment or playability he aimed to provide a game that two or four or six amateurish persons might play in an afternoon.¹⁹ Wells also exhibited significant engrossment and immersion in his wargames. In *Little Wars*, before he felt fit to describe a prior battle, he needed to throw aside Wells the pacifist in favor of a different persona entirely: And suddenly your author changes. He changes into what perhaps he might have been under different circumstances. His inky fingers become large, manly hands, his drooping scholastic back stiffens, his elbows go out, his etiolated complexion corrugates and darkens, his moustaches increase and grow and spread, and curl up horribly;; a large, red scar, a sabre cut, grows lurid over one eye. He expands all over he expands.²⁰

And so a peaceful Dr. Jekyll becomes bellicose Mr. Hyde. This probable allusion on Wells's part is especially apropos because Robert Louis Stevenson, author of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), was a wargaming pioneer in his own right. Although his rules remain unpublished, Stevenson penned vivid, literary battle reports describing his campaigns. Stevenson never released any of this material during his lifetime, but his regular opponent (also his stepson) brought excerpts from these campaign histories to the public in the final years of the nineteenth century, and it is likely that Wells owed no small debt to this account of Stevenson skirmishes. Stevenson wrote from the perspective of a war correspondent

who witnessed the miniature fray, wandering through lands ravaged by fictional battles and reporting on the victories of General Stevenson in the third person. To decide combat, both Wells's and Stevenson games relied on a practice that has not been favored in later miniature wargaming: on the player's skill with aiming small mechanical guns that shoot tiny physical projectiles in order to knock over enemy miniature soldiers. Stevenson wielded a pea-shooter;; Wells heaped praise on a particular spring-based breechloader gun manufactured by a British company called Britains, which fired a wooden cylinder about an inch long. This reliance on the aim of the players is not to be found in the stuffy *kriegsspiel* of Prussia, but was sure to delight any Victorian (or, as the case may be, Edwardian) boy.

¹⁸ Section 3.1.5 examines the surrounding history in greater detail, and notes a few precursors that were insufficiently influential to lay claim to a decent chunk of this credit.

¹⁹ Wells certainly was aware of existing German *kriegsspiel* techniques for simulating warfare on a map (see Section 3.1.4), but without commanding any fluency in their operation;; only after publishing his rules for *Little Wars* did he learn how such training exercises were viewed by the armed forces.

²⁰ *Little Wars*, 39.

Despite the originality, clarity and contemporary relevance of his work, Wells's rules did not immediately inspire a commercial wargaming industry. In the first half of the twentieth century, a great many enthusiasts collected miniature military figurines and arranged them to populate dioramas, but this was part of a larger hobby of scale modeling, aspects of which included model railroads, aircraft, ships and so on, but not game rules. While pre-1950s organizations for fanciers of military figurines existed on both sides of the Atlantic, such as the British Model Soldier Society or the Miniature Figure Collectors of America, within these clubs wargaming was at best a peripheral activity. Exactly why *Little Wars* did not usher in an era of wargaming is difficult to say definitively, though a few contributing factors are obvious. For one thing, the outbreak of the Great War shortly following its release must have deglamorized warfare in Britain. Another factor may have been the want of any means to discover opponents, which is really just a symptom of the lack of a miniature wargaming community, as the previous section covered for the board wargaming community.

It was not until the commencement of Jack Scruby quarterly *War Game Digest* (1957–1962) that a community began to develop around miniature

wargaming. The initial circulation of that periodical was around forty, including (to pick just two names) the American Charlie Sweet, whose game graced the pages *Sports Illustrated* above, and the Englishman Tony Bath, who is among the most influential British miniature wargamers. Scruby leveraged his *Digest* to advertise his own manufacture of miniatures, as well as to socialize rules and ideas related to gaming. His audience viewed Wells as the *de facto* standard wargame system in fact, Sweet still used a modern version of Wells's spring breechloader toy cannon as artillery, though to guard his beloved miniatures from any blemishes, Sweet shot Q-tips instead of wooden lances;; where the Q-tip landed a wire circle would be centered, within which all soldiers were deemed casualties of the cannon blast. Eventually, the success of the *Digest* prompted Scruby to offload responsibility for half the quarterly issues to Tony Bath and his wargaming opponent Donald Featherstone. The *Digest* reached almost two hundred subscribers by the time Scruby and Featherstone had an acrimonious falling out over editorial policy (Bath previously having withdrawn as an editor) which, along with non-payment of many subscriptions, proved fatal to the *Digest*.²¹

Don Featherstone followed up shortly thereafter with his long-lived *Wargamer's Newsletter*, which carried the torch for the miniature wargaming fan community throughout the 1960s and 1970s.²² It started humbly enough, with only twenty-four subscribers in April 1962, and did not boast over five hundred subscribers until May 1966. Compared with the Avalon Hill community fostered by the *General*, the miniature wargaming community grew very slowly. The difference can be attributed to the opposing philosophies of board wargames and miniature wargames. Miniature wargaming was more artisanal, less prefabricated;; more demanding, less commercially viable. To the avid miniature wargamer, board gaming must have appeared crude, aesthetically dull and confining in the rigidity of its rules;; to the unrepentant board wargamer, miniature gaming looked expensive, laborintensive and contentious in its latitude toward system. Not all players want to have to design a game in order to play it, but for creative gamers, miniature wargames inspired new heights of craftsmanship and sophistication. For someone like Gary Gygax, someone eager to cooperate on game design, miniatures provided a perfect outlet for pent-up ingenuity: Gygax quickly found his way into the miniature wargaming community, and

Gygax's name surfaced in the pages of *Wargamer's Newsletter* as often as in the *General*.

²¹ See Section 3.1.7 for a more detailed consideration of the rise, importance and demise of the *Digest*.

²² For his part, Jack Scruby followed up with his *Table Top Talk* (1962–1967), but this journal remained smaller in scope than Featherstone miniatures.

Another factor that limited the growth of miniature wargaming was the nearimpossibility of playing a miniature wargame by mail. Board wargaming grew despite the geographical dispersal of its proponents because of the ease of playing via correspondence: game owners could be assumed to share a common board, and game moves could easily translate onto paper.²³ Miniature wargamers in remote areas had no similar recourse: the uniqueness of miniature wargame terrain and the difficulty of quantifying the location of miniatures made correspondence play a hopeless proposition neither the *War Game Digest* nor *Wargamer's Newsletter* provided anything comparable to the Opponents Wanted column. Gygax once summed the situation up thus: The necessity of having to have local groups to buy and play naval or military miniatures promotes isolationism. [WGN:#97] Among miniature players, the lack of a postal method of play discouraged the growth of the vibrant communities and clubs that sprang up around Avalon Hill games or *Diplomacy*.²⁴ No less an enthusiast than Tony Bath found himself in dire want of a single local opponent in his native Southampton, England, at the start of his miniature wargaming career. After devising many unsatisfying varieties of solitaire wargaming, and exhausting the patience of his supportive wife Mary, he finally managed to enlist as a rival a local chiropractor Don Featherstone, it turned out. No doubt many other miniature players who lacked Bath's perseverance soon gave up altogether.

Because of these disparities, the fandom of board and miniature wargaming had little in common. The *General* pointedly did not cover miniatures, and *Wargamer's Newsletter* took little interest in boardgames. However, some young people introduced to wargaming through Avalon Hill boardgames discovered, or were discovered by, military miniature gamers. For example, when Dave Arneson advertised in the *General* in 1965, he received a response from a local group calling itself the Twin Cities Military Miniatures Group, a mixed gathering of miniature collectors and wargamers.

In their company, he began to explore miniature wargaming in the Napoleonic era. A 1966 picture of gaming in Dave Wes level of detail in the construction of the town, scaled appropriately for the size of the miniature figurines, with dramatic three-dimensional details like the high steeple of the church. From the fact that four of the participants are currently moving pieces, we can infer that this is a multiplayer game, possibly with two teams competing against each other;;

²³ One impediment to the play of Avalon Hill games by mail was handling random events which one would ordinarily relegate to dice. In serious competition it was of course impossible to trust an ent. A number of ingenious solutions arose to fill this need. The use of daily stock trades as a source of randomness (typically based on the number of shares traded of a well-known high volume stock on a pre-set day, a quantity no wargamer could hope to control) was the most common. Avalon Hill Society (or AHKS) also provided pre-rolled random number kits that would be dispatched to both players, giving enough random results to serve for an entire game.

²⁴ Owing to the small number of pieces and the consequent ease of translating *Diplomacy* for the post, that game alone boasted a couple dozen separate fanzines by the mid-1960s.



FIGURE 5: WARGAMING IN WESELY'S BASEMENT

we can see Arneson (third from right, elbows on the table) in the middle of a move.²⁵ Wesely (far left) places on the table a stick which measures the maximum distance troops can travel in a turn. Several participants keep their six-sided dice close at hand, incongruously resting on the landscape and even the river.

Few communities built such bridges between the parallel traditions of board and miniature wargaming in the mid-1960s fewer even than one might suppose. One of the first interdisciplinary periodicals began in January 1967: *Strategy & Tactics* magazine, under the editorship of Christopher R. Wagner. *S&T*, as it has come to be known, recognized the narrowness of existing magazines and provided a perspective on the wargaming industry as a whole. In the first issue, Wagner's editorial set as a goal for *S&T* the development of the general wargamer, given that most were to date limiting themselves to one aspect of their hobby... This, we are convinced, can be attributed to lack of exposure to related areas. As such, from the first issue forward, miniature and board wargaming received equal coverage in the pages of *S&T*. An early survey conducted by Wagner of his subscribers

revealed that 70% owned one or more Avalon Hill games, and about 40% owned military miniatures, numbers that suggested the crossover market had been unfairly neglected. [AHG:v5n5] This focus on covering both board and miniature wargaming would be adopted by the more sophisticated of the wargaming club fanzines, including the IFW *International Wargamer*, the *Spartan International Monthly* of the Spartan International Competition League (SICL), *Tactics & Variants* and *Panzerfaust*.

At the time he founded *Strategy & Tactics*, Wagner served as a staff sergeant stationed in Tokyo, where he compiled and printed the magazine. As such, he needed an American confederate who could manage distribution, subscriptions and related business Stateside. He found such a partner in a play-by-mail wargames opponent: Henry H.

²⁵ As two other participants are overseeing the movement while one records notes, we might further infer that the game is refereed. This picture was printed in the *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 17, 1966.

Bodenstedt, owner of Continental Hobby Supplies in Adelphia, New Jersey, a mail-order hobby store.²⁶ They struck an agreement whereby Bodenstedt might freely advertise his shop in *S&T* and receive a percentage of any profits from the magazine in the unlikely event of a profit. Bodenstedt also had considerable experience with miniature wargaming, and accordingly he contributed a regular column called Warfare with Miniatures and a steady supply of wargaming rules for use with particular miniature figures. Wagner later noted trenchantly, Of course, his games were designed around items that Continental could supply, and Henry did all right with that. [*S&T:Compendium #1*] This turns out to be a truism of the miniature wargames business anyone who sold miniatures distributed relevant rules, self-designed if necessary, as widely and cheaply as possible in the interests of driving lucrative sales of miniatures.

Bodenstedt began serial publication in the first issue of *S&T* of a World War II era miniature system called *Remagen Bridgehead*. These *Remagen* rules, through a series of contingencies and indirect channels, prompted some early activities that ultimately contributed to the invention of *Dungeons & Dragons*. At the invitation of William Speer, Bodenstedt personally brought the *Remagen* miniature ensemble to the aforementioned July 1967 convention of the IFW in Malvern, Pennsylvania, where he ran demonstration games and moved a bit of inventory;; his miniatures played a large part in establishing that the scope of the IFW convention went beyond

just Avalon Hill board games. Even before Malvern, however, it transpired that the *Remagen Bridgehead* rules caught the particular attention of an *S&T* reader named W. Gerald White, from Portland, Oregon. Earlier in the 1960s, White served in the very army unit which had, during the Second World War, garnered renown for its actions at the Remagen bridgehead (where, after the German retreat in 1945, Ludendorff Bridge was the last crossing over the Rhine available to the Allies penetrating into the core of Germany). Given the game's connection to the history of his unit, White became an early adopter and proponent of *Remagen Bridgehead*.

Furthermore, White's enthusiasm for *Remagen* carried over to Bodenstedt's next game design, which was serialized in *S&T* #6 through #11 a new game called *The Siege of Bodenburg*. Although it is set a bit earlier than the Second World War, White's interest may have been piqued because, coincidentally, the four major landscape props of *Remagen*, as sold by Continental Hobby Supplies, were also critical setpieces in *Bodenburg*.

1.3 THE MEDIEVAL SETTING

The Siege of Bodenburg is a miniature wargame in the medieval setting, and thus an ancestor of Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns.

²⁶ Wagner, incidentally, advertised for enemies in the *General* as March 1966. Bodenstedt

scheme (the Avalon Hill International Kriegspiel Society) and thus he personally took up many

²⁷ The name of the game is not Bodenberg *S&T* #6 has it

²⁷ It chooses as its scenario the column as early

-by-mail stewardship over *S&T*. Bodenstedt, one must recall, was the agent of *S&T* in the United States, and when he noticed the misprint he insisted that issue #6 be reprinted to correct it. When it became apparent that this would literally bankrupt the magazine, Bodenstedt reluctantly distributed the flawed copies, but only in the understanding that his association with *S&T* was now ended, and that he receive some monetary compensation for his trouble. Given that Bodenstedt held the capital assets of the organization, including the back issues and mailing lists, a crippling deal was made.

fictitious stronghold of a German Count von Boden, whom one might allege a distant ancestor of the designer. A horde of Huns and Turks with medieval siege engines assault the town, and face a garrison armed with

swords, bows and other medieval implements. Bodenstedt assigns no specific date or place to the game, and most likely, as Wagner observes above, the scenario of *The Siege of Bodenburg* owes more to the miniatures stocked by Continental Hobby Supplies than any specific historical vision.

While readers no doubt have a general sense of the qualities of the medieval period, one must appreciate that a wargame is medieval if it not only has a medieval setting, but also employs a rules system tuned for combat between medieval units. In *War Games* (1962), a book that influenced many early proponents of miniature wargaming in England and worldwide, Don Featherstone provides separate miniature wargaming rules for three distinct epochs: the Ancient Period of swords and arrows, the Horse-and-Musket Period of firearms and cannon, and finally the Modern Period of tanks and aircraft. Joe Morschauser followed the same three-era model (though he referred to the Ancient Period as the Shock Period) in his *War Games in Miniature* (1962), which won many converts in the United States. For the duration of these epochs, the high-level capabilities of military forces in the Western world did not differ fundamentally, and as such the behavior of troops from any point in that setting could be modeled with a common miniature system of rules. For example, throughout the Ancient Period mounted swordsmen engaged in warfare, and the manner in which a wargame would model the actions of a mounted swordsman does not differ between, say, the third century BCE and the fifth century CE;; however, by the time of the Napoleonic wars the role of cavalry had changed completely and it accordingly requires a very different wargaming system.

Given the meticulous, artisanal character of miniature wargaming, the number of distinct epochs requiring their own rules systems necessarily multiplied as research unearthed more distinctions to model. While neither Featherstone nor Morschauser recognized the medieval period as something distinct from the ancient in their early books, Morschauser does open with a vivid dramatization of a counterfactual outcome at Agincourt (the decisive 1415 battle in the English King Henry V's campaign against the French), and one can find many descriptions of medieval conflicts in early wargaming periodicals. Before the late 1960s, however, medieval rules tended to be published as an addendum to a set of ancient rules. Tony Bath's Society of the Ancients, founded in 1965, widely promoted medieval systems, including Bath's own seminal rules, which were widely known through their 1966 incarnation but had existed since a decade beforehand.²⁸ Bath



FIGURE 6: ELASTOLIN CASTLE FROM *THE SIEGE OF BODENBURG*

S&T under Wagner was subsequently distributed, up until his final issue (#17), by his mother.²⁸ In 1956 issues of the *Bulletin* of the British Model Soldier Society. At the time, the *Bulletin* was probably the closest thing in existence to a wargaming journal. However, Jack Scruby frequently complained that in the pages of

traced his interest in the medieval period back to the release of the film version of Sir Walter Scott's medieval epic *Ivanhoe* (1952), and in particular to a set of promotional miniature figurines displayed in the lobby of the theater where he saw that film. *Ivanhoe* depicted a lengthy and vivid (though

to modern viewers undoubtedly somewhat farcical) castle siege, as well as jousting tourneys, both of which inspired wargamers to simulate the epoch.

The medieval period lies at the end of the reign of shock troops, so called because forces gain a significant advantage when charging a stationary enemy. When they are not conflated with ancients rules, medieval rules place heavy emphasis on the supremacy of longbowmen, pikemen and lance-wielding cavalry, the difficulties of morale and general unruliness of forces, as well as the presence of castles, towers and other fortifications that give significant advantages to entrenched defenders. Combatants in medieval wargames are typically armored melee units, mounted or on foot, who favored swords and shields and the support of distant bowmen.

Granted, then, that it was far from the original set of medieval wargaming rules, *The Siege of Bodenburg* centers around a replica miniature castle, a specific element produced by the Hausser company in (at the time, West) Germany with a composite material trademarked as Elastolin. By the time Hausser began manufacturing medieval miniatures in 1955, that trademark designated a thin application of polystyrene to a wire frame. This *Bodenburg* castle (Elastolin #9732) was an imposing four-cornered fortress of thick stone with a single great tower, a working drawbridge and an embedded manor. It was optimized for use in conjunction with 40mm Elastolin miniatures: having a standard scale for the size of miniatures in a particular game ensures that your Turks are not jarringly three times taller than your Huns, and that figures can pass upright through the castle gate. As the title of the game would suggest, these troops either defended or assaulted the castle, as appropriate manning various siege weapons, ladders and so on.

The Siege of Bodenburg remains historically significant because of its prominent placement at the first GenCon in 1968. While Tony Bath's work was known in the miniature wargaming community, it surely escaped the notice of most board wargamers focused on Avalon Hill products. *The Siege of Bodenburg*, however, would not. While Bodenstedt could not make a personal appearance at GenCon I in Wisconsin to demonstrate his new game and thereby stimulate sales, as he had at the Malvern IFW conference, an enthusiast filled in for him. As the last section mentioned, Jerry White drove all the way from Oregon (around two thousand miles) with the *Bodenburg* miniatures set and rules in his car. [IW:v1n6] With the presence of White and some wargamers from the New England area, the first GenCon could claim to be a truly national convention, with representation from both coasts.

White set up his game in the west walkway of the Horticultural Hall, and overall *Bodenburg* received quite a bit of attention.

One of the people who encountered *Bodenburg* that day was Gary Gygax. As a subscriber to *Strategy & Tactics*, Gygax probably knew of the game already, but actually witnessing Huns and Turks besieging a miniature castle is a very different matter than reading wargaming rules off a page immersion can be contagious. *Bodenburg* kindled in Gygax an enduring fascination with the medieval setting. In the classifieds of an *International Wargamer* early in 1969, Gygax interest can readily be seen in his desire to purchase

wargamers were marginalized by the editors. See Section 3.1.7 for details.

Ancient and Medieval miniatures, figures, & equipment, [IW:v2n1] and then in the following issue he more particularly advertises for 20mm, 30mm, and Siege of Bodenberg miniature figures, equipment and castles. [IW:v2n2] Gygax sensed that Avalon Hill had neglected a potentially addressable market for pre-modern games;; later in 1969, he observed disapprovingly that there are no wargames commercially available that are based on battles or campaigns prior to the end of the Napoleonic wars. [PZF:v4n3] In the next couple of years he would take this matter into his own hands: first with his local gaming group, and then within the IFW, where he sparked a number of efforts around the ancient and medieval periods that influenced the evolution of wargames and of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Thanks in no small part to its acclaimed Lake Geneva convention, the IFW began to increase in size and importance rapidly. At the time of GenCon I, the ranks of the IFW stood at around fifty persons;; within a year, after an aggressive membership drive, it would be five times that.²⁹ The girth of the IFW monthly zine paced this growth, beginning 1968 at four meager pages of blurbs but ending it plush with thirty-four pages of lengthy articles. The expansion of the IFW coincided with a period of consolidation among wargaming clubs. The IFW tendered offers of merger to several smaller groups, and established the practice of forming Societies dedicated to specific games or topics, in part to facilitate the integration of assimilated clubs with narrow focuses. These semi-autonomous bodies typically maintained independent newsletters, but regularly reported news back to the IFW flagship zine. For example, the IFW Diplomacy Society encompassed some thirteen affiliated *Diplomacy* fanzines by 1969, including *Atlantis*, *Thangorodrim* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, all of which boasted Gary

Gygax as a consistent player. The *Fight in the Skies* Society published the newsletter *Aerodrome* supporting its early First World War aerial combat game, which became a sensation at GenCon so much so that it has been played under the supervision of designer Mike Carr at every subsequent GenCon. *Fight in the Skies* is itself emblematic of another facet of the IFW's activities at this time: game design. Early in 1967, Gygax and others within the USCAC/IFW had been involved with an independent organization called the War Game Inventors Guild (WGIG), publishers of the *Artisan*, a newsletter featuring self-published games systems and tips for prospective designers.³⁰ After GenCon I, the *Artisan* and the *Spartan* consolidated into a new monthly.²⁹ As the Introduction already hinted, *40 Years of Gen Con* quotes a much larger estimate of the size of the IFW at the time of GenCon I directly from a later interview with Gygax. However, the *Spartan* of July 1968, directly prior to GenCon

that consists of only forty-eight names. [IW:v1n5] The following issue of the bimonthly, after

subsequent issue, which asserts that the IFW had 105 members as of October. For corroboration, the *International Wargamer* enCon.

as fact or even a ballpark estimate. While forty years can obscure the clearest memories, note that Gygax already claimed back in 1976 that the IFW eventually had seven thousand members, a prodigious sum which is also in error by an order of magnitude. [LW:v1n1] That article saw print only three or four years after the dissolution of the IFW, and while Gygax may simply have repeated this claim in this case, one can begin to see a pattern of overstating the size of GenCon and the IFW, especially given the attendance controversy surrounding GenCon VIII.³⁰ The War Game Inventors Guild was founded by Grant Noble (one of the loyal twenty-six members who resurrected the IFW late in 1967) and Dane Lyons. Gary Gygax served as its

periodical temporarily titled the *IFW Monthly* (so named at Gygax's suggestion) and the activities of the Guild reorganized into an IFW Game Design Bureau. Finished products of the Bureau went out to the IFW membership on a quarterly basis, typically as free inserts in club newsletters, as Section 1.5 will explore in more detail.

Gygax's involvement in amateur game designs and the planning of conventions only scratches the surface of his total output in the wargaming community of the time. Throughout the late 1960s, Gygax proved an

uncommonly prolific writer, contributing tirelessly to virtually all aspects of the industry. It was not uncommon to find two or three articles by Gygax in a single issue of the IFW *International Wargamer*; when he first joined the USCAC in September 1966, the very next month's issue of the *Spartan* appeared with two contributions bearing his byline. Because of his obsessive level of activity, his confederates dubbed him the Mad Lake Genevan. Early on, he was especially notorious, and gently chided, for his vociferous advocacy of chess variants, including *shogi* (Japanese chess) and fairy chess. This is to say nothing of his contributions to the *Avalon Hill General* at this time;; for example, his byline recurs in the March, May and September issues in 1969. In the same year, Gygax was also awarded a free membership to the Spartan International Competition League in recognition of his contribution to the hobby, an honor the Spartans bestowed on a single individual once every two years. In recompense, the *Spartan International Monthly* became yet another outlet for his work. He also simultaneously maintained a column and a contributor to smaller zines Furthermore, he commented with exceptional dedication on the work of others across all of these publications, as well as in his ceaseless private correspondence. Gygax also found the time to serialize a work of historical fiction, an alternate history of the Second World War called *Victorious German Arms*, written in collaboration with Terry Stafford, then the publisher of the *International Wargamer*.³¹ Finally, do bear in mind that he worked full time as an underwriter for Fireman's Fund Insurance in Chicago, which entailed a grueling commute (sometimes five hours round trip) every working day, and that together with his wife, he raised a rapidly-growing family which would soon comprise six children.

More than merely demonstrating that Gygax was a fanatical scrivener, this vast output illustrates the manner in which he pursued ideas in the wargaming community: he was a networker, a community-builder, a collaborator. He did his work in public, publishing drafts of ideas in the hopes of eliciting feedback and simultaneously reacting, often with considerable frankness, to the ideas of others. He actively sought co-authors for his work, and over time it was increasingly rare to find his name credited alone on a project;; as the prophetic words in his first Opponents Wanted advertisement suggested, he will cooperate on game design.³² This method proved very successful at forging consensus co-editorship for *Panzerfaust*,

and remained a steadfast like the *Tactics & Variants* and the *Canadian Wargamer*.

collaborated with Dane Lyons on the game *Arbela*. The *General* ran a good introduction to the WGIG. [AHG:v5n1] More on the WGIG appears in Section 1.5.³¹ Eventually, this would see print in a 1973 pamphlet.

³²

miniature rules in *D B#5* were credited to Arneson. This connotes a stature somewhat less than full co-authorship. By the time *Chainmail* appeared, enough credit on *Tractics* (1972), which gives Arneson billing as the main author before Gygax. These nuances of attribution are valuable in assessing how Gygax perceived the relative contributions of himself and Arneson to behind his ideas within the wargaming community. In a poll conducted by the *International Wargamer* in 1970, Gygax was voted the person who had done the most for wargaming in the past five years, narrowly beating out Thomas Shaw of Avalon Hill even though Gygax had to date never designed a commercially-available wargame.

His proselytizing was not restricted to print. Gygax also socialized his ideas in person, within his local gaming group in Lake Geneva and through his signature convention. Any earlier misgivings now forgotten, Gygax in August 1969 hosted and chaired a sequel to the previous summer's convention: **GenCon II**, this time spread across two days, August 23 and 24. Overall attendance for both days was 187, with sixty-eight IFW members present more IFW members attended this convention than there were members of the IFW a year before. An auction of miniatures attracted a fresh crop of prospective buyers and sellers to the Horticultural Hall that year, many of whom were not yet members of the IFW. Among them can be found Dave Arneson, an inveterate naval wargamer who brought some of the 1:1,200 scale ship of the line models he had built.

Arneson drove down to Lake Geneva, a journey of some eight hours, with a sizable contingent of fellow gamers from the Twin Cities, including Dave Wesely and Bill Hoyt. They came not only for the official events of the convention, but also in the hopes of meeting other gamers from the Twin Cities ironically, a convention in another state was the most promising way of recruiting new members for their local club. During GenCon II, they made the acquaintance of Mike Carr (the first IFW member to hail from Minnesota), whose Twin Cities First World War aerial wargaming club

centered around the game *Fight in the Skies* was to date completely unknown to them. Arneson's wargaming group had recently gained official recognition as the University of Minnesota Military History Club, which allowed them the use of large classrooms for space-intensive naval wargaming under Fletcher Pratt rules. When Arneson and Gygax met for the first time at GenCon II, they discussed their mutual interest in the development of Napoleonic rules, especially naval rules for the Great Age of Sail. They agreed to take up a correspondence on the matter;; in his report on the trip Arneson would mention, I am in the process of working up a set of Napoleonic naval wargame rules in co-operation with Gary Gygax of the IFW. [COTT:69:v2n6] Arneson went on to join the IFW before the end of the year a December mailing lists him as a new member. [IWS:Dec69] Although the meeting of those two famous collaborators is perhaps the most fateful event discussed thus far in the history of *Dungeons & Dragons*, for the moment, we shall leave Mr. Arneson with one of his model sailing ships in hand and a promise to return soon.

By the end of 1969, Gygax had also made good progress toward forming a steady local gaming group. Wargamers remained sparsely concentrated, especially outside of urban areas, and at a drive of almost two hours Lake Geneva could hardly count Chicago as local. In order to lure gamers from neighboring Illinois to the shores of Lake Geneva more regularly than once a year for GenCon, Gygax constructed a sand table in his basement, as he detailed in the *International Wargamer*. [IW:v3n2] This created a compelling miniature wargaming venue for locals and those within a reasonable driving distance. Among Lake Geneva natives, Gygax did find a few compatriots, notably the teenage Robert J. Kuntz (b. 1955), though he was not the youngest member of the emerging wargaming circle that distinction belonged to Gygax 11-year-old son Ernie (Ernest Gary *Dungeons & Dragons*, insofar as Gygax did not habitually assign himself primary authorship by default.

Gygax, Jr.) The local wargamers also included Donald R. Kaye (1938-1975), a childhood friend of Gygax who maintained a low profile in club fanzines but would play a critical part in this history come 1973. Only twenty miles away from Lake Geneva in Harvard, Illinois, lived Michael G. Reese, who headed up the IFW WWII Miniatures Society (later to be known as the Armored Operations Society). From farther afield came Leon L. Tucker, a professor of statistics at Roosevelt University in Chicago, who resided in the suburban community of Champaign. Tucker and Reese had

jointly refereed a tank battle game at GenCon II, and they returned to play games in the World War II setting at Gygax house on Center Street in Lake Geneva at the weekly Saturday meetings over the next couple years. The wargaming group founded in early 1970 with these six members (plus one more to be mentioned in a moment) came to be known as the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association, or the LGTSA.³³

Much of the energy behind medieval wargaming in the LGTSA came from its seventh founding member: Jeff Perren. Perren was a native of nearby Rockport, Illinois, though in the mid-1960s he attended college across the border in Milton, Wisconsin, about thirty miles away from Lake Geneva. Despite his relative youth (he was in his early twenties), Perren could boast the longest involvement in wargaming of any of the members of the LGTSA. At the tender age of fifteen, Perren had been a subscriber, and even a contributor, to Jack Scruby original *War Game Digest*, and subsequently corresponded with its successor *Table Top Talk*, as well as *Wargamer's Newsletter* and other seminal miniature wargaming periodicals. As early as 1963, Perren actively amassed ancient and medieval miniatures. He was an avid collector of Avalon Hill games, boasting in his Opponents Wanted ad, I own every AH wargame except Nieu chess and I win 95% of games played. [AHG:v2n4] Medieval wargaming, however, remained one of his abiding passions. He wrote to *Wargamer's Newsletter* in August 1969 that he would like to do something with the High Middle Ages, noting: Lots of possibilities here. [WGN:#89]

Perren's collection of medieval miniatures included some of the Elastolin 40mm figurines preferred for *The Siege of Bodenburg*, and as the LGTSA took shape, the members pooled their resources to purchase more of these Elastolin figures for large-scale battles on Gygax's sand table. However, rather than adopting Bodenstedt's rules, Perren had crafted his own simple system for medieval wargames, one which he and Gygax enjoyed quite a bit. But Gygax was rarely one to play a game without finding ways to embellish and improve upon it, to make something novel through collaboration. When Gygax would go on to expand those rules to encompass more historical settings, in keeping with his

³³. In

Reese, Rob Kuntz, and myself, with the aid of Lee Tucker, Terry Kuntz [GPGPN:#9] However, in mid Ernie Gygax must have been considered brother Terry (whose name appears infrequently in early 1970). Note as well

that during its first month or two of existence, the organization was known as the Lake Geneva Tactical Games Association (LGTGA). This earlier name can be seen, for example, in the masthead of *Domesday Book*, correspondence from around February and March 1970. By *Domesday Book* #2, only two weeks after the first issue, the name is given as LGTSA, as it is thenceforth.

consensus-building *modus operandi*, he strove to build a public community of interest in medieval wargaming.

1.4 THE CASTLE & CRUSADE SOCIETY

Throughout 1969 and 1970, Gygax serialized rules for ancient and medieval wargaming in *Panzerfaust* and the *International Wargamer*. As the first inkling of this direction, Gygax submitted a brief teaser to the February 1969 *IFW Monthly* observing that there is a great interest in wargames of ancient and medieval times but few games are published. He planned first to detail ancient wargaming and subsequently to specify any variations on those rules applicable to the medieval period. The earliest installments of the eight-part series thus provided systems for the mainstays of combat in antiquity: the elephant, the chariot, the sling and so on.³⁴

Simultaneously with that work, Gygax also unveiled in *Panzerfaust* between April and July 1969 a medieval board wargame called *Arsouf* depicting a famous Third Crusade battle between Richard I of England and Saladin.³⁵ This game followed closely on the heels of former IFW President Scott Duncan's *England: 1066*, a medieval board wargame printed in the *International Wargamer* quarterly toward the end of 1968 which Duncan specifically addressed to Gygax for playtesting and comment. Gygax *Arsouf* obviously builds on Duncan's framework for medieval board wargaming, but it borrows subtleties such as morale from miniature warfare. While after the serialization of *Arsouf*, Gygax lamented in the September 1969 *Panzerfaust* the lack of commercially available board wargames for ancient and medieval times, he later concluded that the optimal way to explore these periods is not on a board but with miniatures. By the following year, he would argue explicitly that in order to recreate the conditions of medieval warfare only miniatures will serve well. [SIM:Apr70]

As 1969 drew to a close, Gygax began circulating material specifically on the subject of medieval miniatures rules. In the October issue of the *International Wargamer*, Gygax weighed in with a lengthy article titled The Knight in Relation to the Play of Medieval Miniatures, one of many places

where he invokes the authority of C.W.C. Oman's *The Art of War in the Middle Ages* (1953) as his keystone source for historical data on medieval warfare.³⁶ His piece is best understood as a rebuttal to an earlier essay appearing in *Strategy & Tactics*, How to Design One

The Medieval Battle Game and Why this Article Doesn't Tell You by John E. Dotson. [S&T:#15] Dotson contended, presumably in³⁴ Some further detail of these rules is sprinkled through the latter sections of Chapter Three. The ancient period rules of this system later evolved into *Classic Warfare* (1976), in which one can detect *Classic Warfare*

follows the first installment ([IW:v2n5]), and so on. Gygax began revising these rules towards eventual publication in 1974, beginning with his article in the May issue of .³⁵ Don Greenwood subsequently repackaged the game as a mail-order title called *Crusader*, which can be found for sale in advertisements in *Panzerfaust* throughout the era.

³⁶ Gygax references Oman as an authority on the Middle Ages repeatedly (e.g., [IW:v2n4] and *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*) coincidence that Oman, who wrote this book while still a student at Oxford, was concurrently a member of the Oxford Kriegspiel Club, perhaps the first non-military organization devoted to wargaming. More on Oman and the in *Art of War in the Middle Ages* (Vol. 1),

reaction to the publication of *The Siege of Bodenburg* the year before, that medieval soldiers were so disobedient and unpredictable that they could not be properly modeled in an enjoyable game. Gygax refuted Dotson's position in the strongest possible terms and sketched some foundational principles of medieval wargame systems, especially an outline of a morale mechanism, though he stopped short of specifying rules with a playable level of detail. Not just any set of rules would satisfy Gygax: when another longstanding IFW member, Mark F. Goldberg, proffered a set of MFG-Rules for medieval combat to the October 1969 issue of *Panzerfaust*, Gygax reacted with the advice that the best thing to do with the MFG-Rules is to forget them! [PZF:v4n7] In that same letter he disclosed the extent of his own interest: Lately, most of my time has been devoted to miniatures medieval and WWII. From that point forward, Gygax consistently deemphasized the board wargaming culture of Avalon Hill in favor of homebrew miniature design.

Before he made a concrete proposal for a set of medieval rules, Gygax wanted a solid community of interest positioned to evaluate and popularize

the rules. The first step in this direction was the formation of the IFW Ancients Society in September 1969.³⁷ Originally, the membership of this society consisted solely of Gygax and Tom Webster, the latter a wargamer who developed an Atlantis setting for ancient wargaming. For his part, Gary has a mythical land of Romans and Barbarians set up. [IW:v2n9] The scope of the society was broader than just ancient games, as their initial notice made clear: Medieval battles are perfectly welcome. Gygax found the Ancients Society stymieing, however, because of the slow pace of collaboration. Some months later in the *International Wargamer*, Gygax complains impatiently that since Tom Webster has formed an Ancient Miniatures Society I have been waiting for the completion of his rules and comments on mine. [IW:v3n2] The Society had also failed to attract a membership larger than twenty, despite holding promotional tournaments featuring ancient-themed games like *Arbela*.

Consequently, Gygax shifted to a different tack the formation of a separate IFW Society dedicated to medieval wargaming. He found a more responsive accomplice in the person of young Rob Kuntz, who lived only three blocks away from Gygax on Madison Street in Lake Geneva. Kuntz first advanced the suggestion in the *International Wargamer Supplement* of March 1970 that a Society, complete with monthly newsletter, would be perfect. However, IFW has no Medieval Wargaming Society. We are asking if you are interested in forming one. [IWS:Mar70] Kuntz tendered his proposal in conjunction with a small independent group of miniatures players, by which we should understand the LGTSA (although Jeff Perren's enthusiasm for medieval miniatures had waned a bit at this point) and most of all Gygax, whose name is dropped twice in the announcement.³⁸ The initial scope of the proposed Society included³⁷ Note that this Ancients Society was in no way connected to the British Society of the Ancients, did however resell the 1969 ancient setting rules of the War Game Research Group, [IWS:Mar70] a

connection whose import Chapter Four will elucidate.

³⁸ According to a notice appearing in the *IFW Messenger* (a bulletin distributed only to IFW

leadership), Gygax heavily mentored Kuntz in this effort in order to grow new talent for the IFW:

these items up for him but left the final decisions to him. Being under the proverbial gun, he is fast

[IWM:v2n7]

accounts of battles fought (properly dramatized), press releases, and fictional history. Gygax and Kuntz intended to model the organization after a feudal kingdom, where one member would serve as King and bestow various honors upon the membership depending on their level of participation and contribution;; in time, they would also propose tourneys to elevate the station of members.

The resulting organization became the Castle & Crusade Society (C&CS).³⁹ From their initial recruitment efforts, which yielded nine members in April, Gygax and Kuntz had bolstered the ranks to twenty-five members by the end of June and dozens more thereafter. The primary output of the C&CS was a monthly periodical entitled the *Domesday Book*, after the famous eleventh-century census of England though the wargaming community often misprinted the title as the Doomsday Book in contemporary reviews. The *Domesday Book* carried articles and communicated the Precedence List, which is to say the feudal ranks assigned to contributors. For most of the lifetime of the C&CS, Rob Kuntz reigned as King, Gary Gygax was styled Earl Palatine and Steward, and Jeff Perren was a Viscount. Rank was a fluid commodity in the C&CS, however. As the interest and energy levels of the participants fluctuated, so did their standing in the peerage. For example, at the commencement of the Society, Gygax was merely a knight to Kuntz s king, but upon the publication of the second *Domesday Book* only a couple of weeks later, Kuntz created him an Earl.⁴⁰ Fatefully, Dave Arneson joined the C&CS in mid-April (issue #3 shipped with Arneson s name hastily added to the membership list in red pen), and quickly rose to become a Baron and assistant to the Chief Herald, with responsibility for drawing the heraldic devices of the membership. Arneson found enough value in the C&CS that he recruited some of his Twin Cities cohorts, the earliest being Duane Jenkins.

All of this pomp and circumstance about noble titles and precedence was mostly just encouragement to contribute articles. Kuntz offered one advancement in rank per three pages printed in the *Domesday Book*; while this may seem too modest a requirement, do bear in mind that the earliest two issues of the *Domesday Book* filled only a single page each. Given that Gygax edited and published the *Domesday Book* at the time, his quick rise through the ranks is justifiable. By June, Gygax boasted that the incentive

system had proven so successful that the editorial staff hoarded two issues worth of surplus material.

³⁹ The birthday of the Castle & Crusade Society is hidden in a small ambiguity. We take the March Society proposal [IWS:Mar70] and the publication of *Domesday Book* #1 on March 15, even though the organization was not officially known as the C&CS until July;; issues #1 4 of the *Domesday Book* -to

World War aviation enthusiasts. While a causal connection cannot be established definitively, it is not at all implausible: *Aerodrome*, the magazine of the IFW *Fight in the Skies* Society, regularly advertised the Cross & Cockade Society at around this time, e.g., in *Aerodrome* #4, September 1969. Although neither Gygax nor Kuntz were members of the *FitS* Society, many other members of the e issues of *Aerodrome*, or simply overheard the name from Mike Carr on any of a number of occasions.⁴⁰ A more radical upheaval occurred on June 1, 1971, when Gygax assumed the throne (presumably in order to rescue the C&CS from its torpor) until the restoration of King Robert I coinciding with the publication of *Domesday Book* #11 at the end of the year. Apparently, Kuntz would not pardon this treason after his restoration, for in the final year of the C&CS, Dave Arneson would serve as Steward and Gygax vanished from the peerage entirely.

[ASD:v9n6] Submissions to the *Domesday Book* typically fell into one of three categories: short subjects in medieval history, *Diplomacy* variants and wargaming systems. All three can be found in *Domesday Book* #5 (July 1970). An example of the first would be Dave Arneson s Tigers of the Sea, in which he praises Viking vessels and naval tactics in the Middle Ages without any explicit reference to wargaming. Gygax *Diplomacy* variant Crusadomacy is a typical instance of the second category, an unobtrusive transposition of the game to a period nine centuries earlier than the First World War. The fifth issue of the *Domesday Book* is famous, however, for its example of the third category, a certain wargaming ruleset called the LGTSA Miniatures Rules by Jeff Perren and Gary Gygax.⁴¹

The LGTSA medieval miniatures rules resulted from Gygax expansion of Jeff Perren s original four-page ruleset, a system which had served as the basis for the Battle of Webster s Gully reported in *Domesday Book* #3.⁴² To answer Dotson s concerns in *Strategy & Tactics* about the unreliability of knights, Gygax furthermore included a random check to determine the extent of feudal loyalty, as well as similar rules governing the behavior of

mercenaries appropriated from an article Charles Wesencraft wrote for *Wargamer's Newsletter* #94. As the *Domesday Book* #5 rules are a close ancestor perhaps a grandparent of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and because they serve as a good example of the components of a miniature wargaming system, it is worth reviewing them in some detail (though Section 3.2.2 will dive quite a bit deeper into this system and its predecessors).

The rules treat miniatures with a 10:1 figure scale, meaning that one miniature figure represents ten men (in Perren's original rules, one figure stood for twenty men). As with all miniature wargaming rules, they favor play on a sand table or similar surface, rather than a board overlain with squares or hexes. Movement of units is measured in inches, and may be modified when crossing unusual terrain (five types of special terrain are described: hills, woods, swamps, rough terrain and rivers).

The movement system depends on the sort of equipment that troops carry, and whether or not they travel on their own two feet. Heavier armor confers greater resilience at a cost of movement speed. A fully armored footman enjoys near immunity to arrows,

⁴¹ As copies of the *Domesday Book* are scarce, prospective historians might be interested to know that reprinted in the *International Wargamer* rules from *DB* #5 reappeared later that year in *Panzerfaust*. [PZF:v5n7] The LGTSA Miniatures Rules are reprinted in the August 1970 issue of the *Spartan International Monthly* verbatim, with one cannons. Actually, that can scarcely be called a reprint, as the rules were originally scheduled to appear in the July 1970 issue, contemporaneous with *DB* #5;; space issues delayed their publication in *SIM* for one month. When it became known to the editors of *SIM*

recycled material, it was quietly discontinued;; an editorial in the October issue of *SIM*

⁴² However, a contemporary *Panzerfaust* figures of the medieval period Jeff Perren wrote up an excellent set of rules to go with them. Being a typical wargamer I immediately set about revising them;; however, if anyone is interested in obtaining a 4 page set of the original, less complicated version, they may do so by sending me 50¢. We played a number of games using them, and they are excellent for introducing medieval wargaming, or for a fast

assert that Perren originally authored a four-page medieval miniature ruleset.

but moves at a lumbering pace. An unarmored peasant, on the other hand, can move half again as fast as an armored footman, but is much more likely to fall under missile fire. Differing systems govern mounted figures and footmen, and both categories are further subdivided into light, heavy and armored troops: light troops lack protective attire altogether;; heavy troops might be in half armor or in possession of a shield;; armored troops are as completely encased as the system allows. Such a progression in classes of armor would be familiar to anyone who knew Tony Bath's medieval rules Perren, as a subscriber to *War Game Digest* and *Wargamer's Newsletter* in the early 1960s, could hardly be ignorant of Bath's rules, and Gygax several times in his series on ancient and medieval wargaming in the *International Wargamer* acknowledged his debt to Bath. [IW:v2n9]

The LGTSA system encompasses two forms of combat which require significantly different rules: melee combat and missile combat. Units conduct melee combat in close quarters, armed with swords, axes, pikes or other medieval arms. Various unit types fire missile volleys from range, including longbowmen, crossbowmen and potentially arquebusiers primitive musketeers, familiar from *The Siege of Bodenburg*. The resolution of missile fire depends greatly on the armor worn by the target: a solitary archer has one chance in two to kill a peasant with missile fire, but it takes a minimum of four archers all directing their fire at a single target to have even one chance in three to kill an armored footman. These odds are resolved in a combat by rolling a six-sided dice (henceforth d6) and comparing the results to tables supplied in the rules in a manner analogous to Avalon Hill Combat Results Tables. For example, if four archers are firing on an armored footman, a single d6 is rolled, and if the result is 4 or lower, the shot is said to have missed. Similarly, for melee combat, all opposing units that are within 3 of one another at the end of a

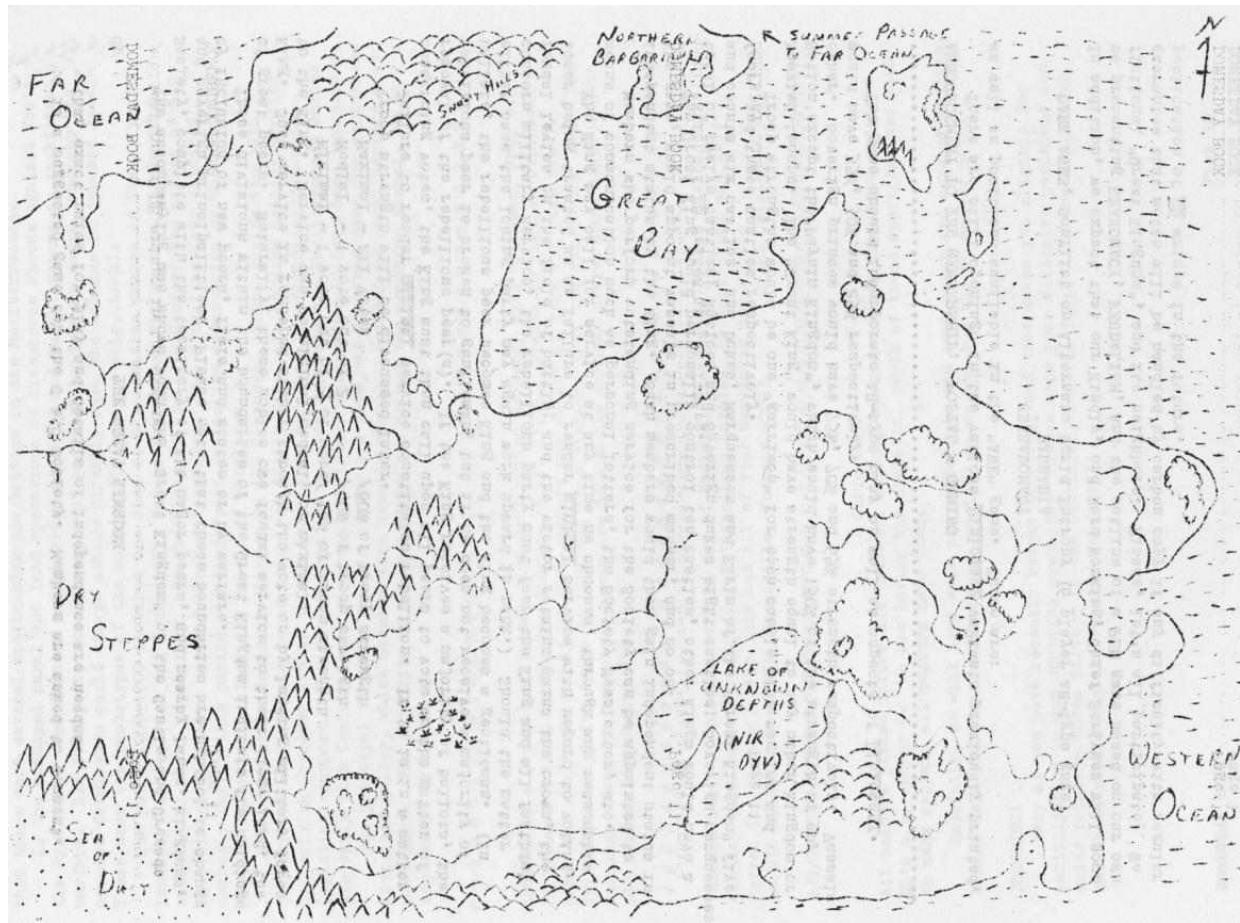


FIGURE 7: MAP OF THE GREAT KINGDOM [DB:#9]

movement phase trigger a combat roll, the number of dice cast and the result needed depending on the quality of the opposing troops. If an armored footman attacks a nearby unarmored peasant in melee, for example, a d6 is rolled, and if the result is 4 or higher, the peasant is killed;; if the peasant counterattacks, however, only a score of 6 will defeat the armored footman. The casualties inflicted by the attacker and defender in melee resolve simultaneously, and it is quite possible that combatants will suffer mutual elimination. In practice, it is rare that a melee combat consists only of a pair of opposing units;; when there is an extreme imbalance in the quality of units in a melee, it is entirely possible for a single unit to kill several adversaries, and often necessary for multiple weak units to gang up on a single imposing enemy to have any hope of victory. For example, one heavy horseman, when facing a mass of light footmen, would roll four six-sided dice (henceforth 4d6), killing one light footmen for each of those four dice which rolled a 5 or 6. Conversely, it requires four light footmen acting in

concert to threaten a heavy horseman sufficiently that the group may roll a single d6, and then only a roll of 6 will kill the horseman.

Many ancillary rules flesh out the system. Catapults and cannons deal massive swaths of damage. In common with most other systems derived from Wells, there are allowances for capturing, and more importantly retaining, prisoners. Cavalry charges, a feature of many medieval battles, follow a slightly different system than the ordinary melee combat described above. As cavalry trample over unfortunate targets, each defending unit rolls 2d6, hoping to roll higher than a target number in order to be saved from death. For heavy horsemen against light footmen, the footmen need to roll 10 or higher to withstand the assault;; armored footmen need only roll above a 5 to weather the stampede. The aforementioned rules for mercenaries drawn from Wesencraft s article in *Wargamer s Newsletter* allow a decent chance of desertion in the face of adversity. Finally, a brief section discusses the idea of an Army Commander, a figure representing the commanding officer of one of the contending forces. This last element is notable as an early use of 1:1 figure scale (where one figurine represents a single person).

While the LGTSA rules focus on table-top miniature battles, the *Domesday Book* also created games and settings for long-distance use by its distributed membership. Rules for jousting formed the basis for a play-by-mail Society tournament, which served as yet another way to increase one s medieval rank.⁴³ As of August, the *Domesday Book* began mentioning ongoing efforts to create a mythical world for our Society. To date we have a map showing our Great Kingdom [DB:#6] The promised map appears in *Domesday Book* #9. It shows a coastal land, bounded on the east by the Western Ocean;; to the far west and southwest of the continent, we find the Dry Steppes and the Sea of Dust respectively. The leadership of the C&CS began to grant to the nobility certain holdings in the Great Kingdom, all for the purpose of eventually starting a large-scale game of feudal conflict within the Kingdom. An inland Lake of Unknown Depth labeled as Nir Dyu seems to have a dot representing a city on its westernmost edge;; from later maps, we can surmise this to be the location of Gary Gygax s city of Greyhawk.⁴⁴ The southwest corner of a

⁴³ The rules, which appear in DB #6 and subsequently in DB #13, bear some resemblance to *Fight in the Skies*. Each player secretly selects an offensive and defensive position, with scoring determined by incorporated into *Chainmail*.

⁴⁴ The *World of Greyhawk* (1980) shows the planet Oerth somewhat transformed from this initial

Many initial features remain unchanged, however, including the Sea of Dust and the Dry Steppes. As Great Bay to the north similarly converges on a dot where Dave Arneson Barony of Blackmoor resides. Though the grand diplomatic game of the Great Kingdom was never fully realized, some members, like Dave Arneson, elaborated their holdings into rich scenarios.

Compared with other IFW societies, the C&CS rapidly grew to a substantial size, thanks in no small part to its aggressive promotion and the regular publication of its newsletter. The July 1970 *International Wargamer* supplement offers the *Domesday Book* at a rate of \$2.00 for 12 issues of this soon to be 32 page zine. The society maintained its own booth at **GenCon III** (August 22 23, 1970), where the 250-odd attendees had an opportunity to peruse Society literature and sign up;; the Horticultural Hall grew full enough this year that some exhibits and games relocated to the adjacent Guild Hall of the Episcopal Church of Lake Geneva. The Society boasted over forty members by the first of September. Toward the end of the summer of 1970, however, the *Domesday Book* ran into difficulties. Gygax, who had served as its publisher up to issue #5, lost access to his photooffset machine. A new editor was identified in Chris Schleicher, the Chicago-based publisher of the IFW-affiliated *Diplomacy* fanzine *Atlantis*, which ran some medieval *Diplomacy* variants and counted Gygax among its players.⁴⁵ Schleicher took over the printing and distribution responsibilities of the *Domesday Book* as of issue #6, but shortly thereafter publication diverged from a monthly schedule and became quite sporadic. As for thirty-two pages, issue #7 hit the ceiling at twenty-eight the following issue was only twelve pages. Whether the cause was a lack of articles, as Schleicher attested, or a lack of editorial energy is disputed. Kuntz would later quote an unnamed member of the C&CS as saying when Schleicher prints the magazine the society continues, when he doesn't⁴⁶

The stagnation of the *Domesday Book* was not the only setback Gygax experienced towards the end of 1970. Late in October, he lost his position at the Fireman's Fund Insurance in Chicago after a change in senior management. This would prove a crucial turning point for him. While he might have sought a similar job in Chicago, the commute was grueling, and he was loath to relocate from his beloved Lake Geneva, even though, like most resort towns, it did not abound in business opportunities. Until he made

up his mind about what to do next, however, he followed an interim plan. He wrote: During this temporary (forced) vacation I am working on a couple of board games for semicommercial sale and trying to get some work in on miniatures rules.⁴⁷ It would however

late as 1976, for his serialized novel based on Oerth which commences in the *Dragon* #1, Gygax still
of Brown Hills

placement of the cities, in *Alarums & Excursions* #15 (Oct 1976), Gygax wrote of his Oerth e somewhat different. Most of our campaign activity takes place on what corresponds to North America, on the eastern half of the central⁴⁵ *Atlantis*. 1967 Mab was a medieval *Diplomacy* variant which Gygax joined in April 1970, taking over the role of Africa. *Atlantis* is also notable for the fantasy dramatizations of some of its games, and the extensive embellishments by Lakofka in particular;; see Section 4.3 for more. Schleicher at this time also printed Lakofka *Diplomacy* zine *Liaisons Dangereuses*.

⁴⁶ DB #13. Much of the preceding description of the history of the C&CS follows this account.

⁴⁷ From

transpire that Gygax stint as a full-time game designer would be far from a temporary matter.

1.5 AMATEUR ATTEMPTS AND GUIDON GAMES

In 1970, Avalon Hill dominated the commercial board wargaming market. Its closest competitor, the fledgling Simulation Publications, Inc. (SPI), had recently acquired control of *Strategy & Tactics* magazine, and since late 1969, SPI games shipped with every issue of that periodical. Even with that admirable sales channel, Avalon Hill outsold SPI by around ten to one in 1970, and closer to fifty to one in 1969 that follows SPI own figures, which might charitably be deemed optimistic. [S&T:#33] All of the other minor publishers of board wargames combined constituted no more than one or two percent of the market. Even the top-shelf works of SPI star designer, James F. Dunnigan, only became darlings of the market under Avalon Hill s imprint: a notable example would be the influential AH game *Panzerblitz* (1970), a Dunnigan project which had previously come in the mail with S&T #22.

Thus, when Gygax talks about board games for semi-commercial sale, by semicommercial we should probably understand not published by Avalon

Hill. This does not necessarily mean an amateur production, but amateur board wargames were far from uncommon;; as a natural product of their enthusiasm, wargaming hobbyists experimented with the development of variants on existing games as well as entirely original creations like Gygax *Arsouf*. These sorts of efforts began to emerge shortly after the Avalon Hill community found its voice in the pages of the *General*. Before the foundation of the various wargaming clubs, the *General* was the only outlet for these energies, and Avalon Hill wisely made room for discussion of do it yourself and homebrew games beginning in July 1965. An early issue reports on a variant Tactics III game designed by The Centurions, Dave Arneson Twin Cities Avalon Hill club, which comprises four countries, army, navy, air forces, special tables for naval gun duels, destruction of industry plus all sorts of maneuvers over a huge 4 x 2 map for land operations and another same size mapboard for naval operations. [AHG:v2n4] This was apparently just one of several amateur games Arneson s group had developed by 1965, though surely none ever evolved into saleable wares;; many clubs produced games and rules purely for local usage without any aspirations toward broader distribution.

Avalon Hill did encourage and support these amateur design activities, but only to a point. Since they sold blank hex maps and unit counters, they realized a small income from the activities of would-be designers. By abetting amateurs they also invested in their own future, given that many of these enthusiasts would offer Avalon Hill their projects works with greatly varying levels of sophistication and maturity, but the same slim prospects for acceptance. The risks in driving discussion of game design out of the *General*, and thus ceding some authority over the market, must also have been cause for concern.

job in an executive change roundtrip delay of cross-Atlantic correspondence, the backlog queue of submissions to *Newsletter* and miscellaneous logistical delays adding up to six months of lag on occasion. Only a

correspondence with George Phillies provides a detailed chronology for this period;; his letter on However, the establishment had to remain mindful of enabling competitors. At first, AH happily advertised and resold early Phil Orbanes titles such as *Viet Nam* (1965) and *Confrontation* (1967). [AHG:v4n4] After Orbanes s firm Gamescience Inc. scored a surprise

commercial hit with a game that AH had rejected, Lou Zocchi's *The Battle of Britain*, however, the *General* lost interest in promoting independent titles.⁴⁸

Once the wargaming clubs found their own voices, it became clear that they did not share Avalon Hill paternal devotion to its own products. Many openly criticized Avalon Hill: though they welcomed the company's triumphs, they were quick to ridicule its failings. As early as May 1966, Scott Duncan, future president of the IFW, wrote an article for the *General* bluntly entitled, Are AH Games and the *General* Doomed? By 1967, the community needed its own structures for exploring game design and marketing. The founding of the War Game Inventors Guild that year marked the first step toward an organized self-publication community independent of Avalon Hill. The first games it offered, Dane Lyons's *Arbela*, Scott Duncan's *Campaign* and Gygax's *Little Big Horn*, had little immediate impact, as the Guild was so small (it numbered only twenty-three in 1968) and the production quality of their games suffered greatly from budgetary constraints.⁴⁹ The *General* did cover the WGIG as a news story, which constituted at worst a wary endorsement, but only with a caveat: The problem, now, is to create an expanded consumer market with room for amateur games, the *General* notes ruefully. [AHG:v5n1] Avalon Hill perceived the wargaming market as finite, and feared that any commercial success enjoyed by hobby games would necessarily eat into their profits unless the overall consumer market expanded. SPI assailed AH on this apparent point of weakness by releasing a new game with every month's issue of *Strategy & Tactics*, testing whether or not the market really had a saturation point. With its meager resources, the WGIG could not have hoped to seize a piece of that pie;; Gygax himself proclaimed the demise of the WGIG in February 1969 owing to communications and publications problems. [PZF:v3n4] However, when the rapidly growing IFW absorbed the remnants of the WGIG into its Game Design Bureau, the games which had previously been discussed in the *Artisan* and which were formerly circulated only in the limited circles of the Guild began to reach a wider audience. Through the *International Wargamer*, they tested the appetite of the community for games outside the AH mold.

As the 1960s drew to a close, subscribers to *Panzerfaust*, the *Spartan International Monthly* and the *International Wargamer* frequently received amateur games tacked on to those periodicals. Production quality conformed to this medium of distribution: game maps and pieces were typically

rendered on the same paper stock as the remainder of the fanzine, or on a marginally-superior light cardboard stock in the same form factor. Larger boards were carved into letter-size segments with some assembly required. Rules also suffered the limitations of space and graphics budgets. Since subscribers paid nothing extra for these games, and the periodicals themselves lacked any meaningful payroll, designers usually went uncompensated;; few would even term this semi-commercial publication.

⁴⁸ Phil Orbanes eventually became an executive at Parker Brothers, and wrote a fascinating history of that company and American popular gaming overall entitled *The Game Makers* (2004).

⁴⁹ The *Spartan*, comprising the *Artisan*, reviewed these three games. [IW:v1n4] *Little Big Horn* would finally appear in a mature form in the TSR product line in 1976. For the size of the Guild, see *S&T* #13.

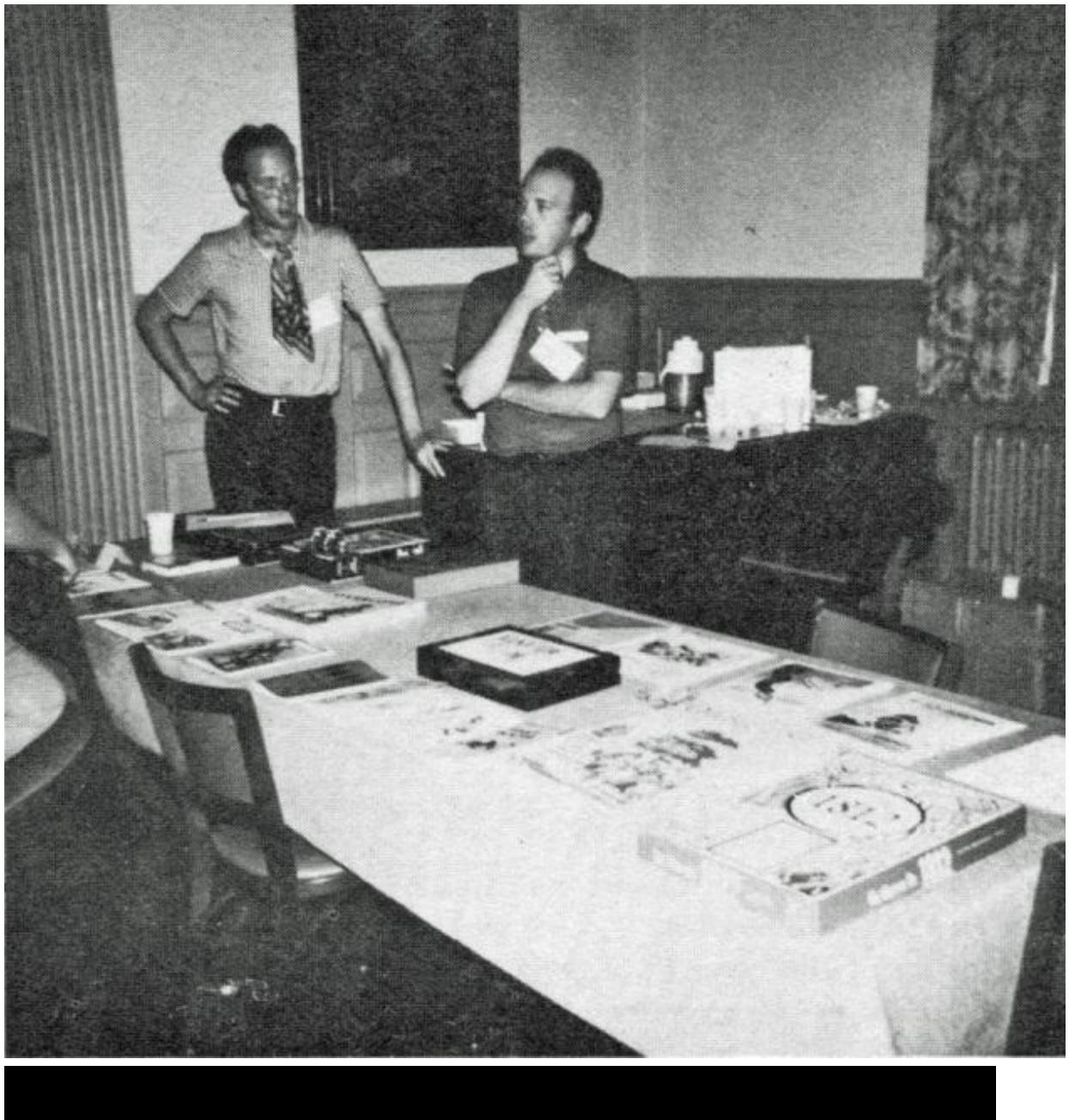


FIGURE 8: DON LOWRY (R) IN 1973

Many of these amateur efforts were game variants, which merely added new features or scenarios to existing boardgames. Gygax had produced a few such variants, notably an expansion to Avalon Hill boardgame *Stalingrad* and a few alternative settings for *Diplomacy*.⁵⁰ In the late 1960s, Gygax furthermore worked as a collaborator on several game design projects under the auspices of the aforementioned IFW Game Design Bureau. In 1969, he retooled and administered a very early play-by-mail space opera game invented by Tullio Proni called *War of the Empires*.⁵¹ Similarly, after

publishing many articles clarifying or modifying its rules, Gygax took over responsibility for the development of the first WGIG game, Dane Lyons's *Arbela*, which depicted the showdown between Alexander the Great and Darius III of Persia (better known as the Battle of Gaugamela).⁵² Gygax even sold WGIG games including *Arbela* by mail-order briefly under the name Gystaff Enterprises. [IW:v1n7] Gystaff, one might say, was first tentative step into the game publishing business, though not his most successful one. Its inventory never extended beyond *Arbela*, Bill Hoyer's *Dien Bien Phu*, back issues of IFW magazines and blank sheets of graph or hex paper. By mid-1969, advertisements for Gystaff had disappeared.

In terms of production quality and breadth of distribution, none of efforts rose even to the level of semi-commercial publication. Games like *Arbela* remained very obscure, though they sold socially through venues like GenCon or by mail to⁵⁰ *Stalingrad* (which he sometimes remembered *Tactics & Variants* [TV:v2n12] and subsequently the *International Wargamer D-Day* variant written in conjunction with Bill Hoyer ran in the *International Wargamer*. [IW:v1n5] *Diplomacy* variations were a cottage industry unto themselves.

Gygax Crusadomacy *Domesday Book* [DB:#5] and in *Panzerfaust*; Napoleonic Diplomacy II in *Thangorodrim* [THG:v1n3] and *Tricolor* (Vol. Hyborian Age Diplomacy in *Supernova*.

⁵¹ Although the *War of the Empires* receives occasional mentions in the *General*, [AHG:v5n1, as well as many OW columns of the era, e.g., AHG:v3n6] the most accessible source of information on the he *Dragon* #3. The first *New War Reports* edited by Gygax [NWR:v2n1] appeared on April 28, 1969;; Gygax produced only one more issue before handing the publication over to Bill McDuffie (a of *War of the Empires* (his second edition appeared August 31, 1969) remains significant for its influence results table modeled around ten outcomes (determined in play-by-mail with stock-market randomization).

⁵² Of the original *Arbela*,

completist gamers like Dave Arneson's group in the Twin Cities, who acquired a copy of *Arbela* in April 1969. [COTT:69:v2n3] Eventually, Gygax did find a way to release board wargames and miniature wargames outside the Avalon Hill system which had a reasonable chance of reaching a

broad market: he encountered in the ranks of the IFW someone else serious about publishing commercial-grade wargaming ventures.

Shortly after GenCon II, a notice appeared in the Opponents Wanted column of the *General* written by a 29-year-old ex-A.F. Captain seeking opponent for first pbm [playby-mail] game. Bulge. [AHG:v6n3] In response, IFW President William Hoyer forwarded a recent copy of the *International Wargamer* to this *Battle of the Bulge* fan, a man named Donald S. Lowry (b. 1939). A talented draftsman, Lowry joined the IFW and promptly began submitting artwork to the *International Wargamer*, typically to accompany his articles on board wargames. By February 1970, Lowry was providing the cover art for the *International Wargamer*, and in May he was elected to a seat in the IFW Senate. [IWM:May70]

Lowry had left the Air Force, after serving as a personnel officer for six years, with aspirations of making a living as a freelance writer;; he held a history degree from Bethel College and a passion for military history, especially the American Civil War.⁵³ Moreover, had he remained in the armed services, his next assignment would have involved babysitting a nuclear missile silo, which apparently provided him some incentive to find a situation in the private sector. His work illustrating and writing for wargaming fanzines propelled him gradually toward a new career. In 1970, his wife Julie's pregnancy encouraged a more remunerative vocation than penning *pro bono* monographs for the *International Wargamer*. Accordingly, the couple jointly founded a family business called Lowrys Hobbies, a mail-order shop for miniature and board wargaming, which operated out of their home in Belleville, Illinois, a suburb of St. Louis.

From its inception, Lowrys Hobbies assumed a unique role in the wargaming community. In the first place, it advertised heavily in the club fanzines of the IFW and Sparta as well as in *Panzerfaust*; while it was not uncommon to see plugs for major hobby shops in professional trades like the *General* or *S&T*, the club market remained largely untapped early in 1970. As a marketing expense, this publicity came at little cost (a full page ad in the *Spartan International Monthly*, for example, cost only \$14 at the time), and it cannily targeted club members, who in all probability were the most acquisitive and coveted customers. Lowry tempted them with military miniatures, discounts on AH board wargames, history books and miscellaneous accessories like replica weapons. Even the *General* magnanimously notes in a presumably unpaid endorsement that Lowry's is

just about the only place we know that has everything for the wargamer, including games that aren't even commercially marketed.

To this last point in particular, Lowry's April 1970 advertisement in the *Spartan International Monthly* heralded the availability of what Gygax might call a semi-commercial game variant, designed by Lowry, entitled Operation Greif (*greif* being the German word for griffon). It was a variant on AH's *Battle of the Bulge*; Lowry's study Exploiting the Initiative in Bulge, which appeared in the *International Wargamer* [IW:v3n2 v3n5] and was later reprinted in the *Avalon Hill General* [AHG:v7n6, AHG:v8n1], showed if nothing else that he had given the rules profound consideration. During the historical Battle of the Bulge, Operation Greif was a notorious German sabotage and disinformation campaign perpetrated by English-speaking soldiers wearing captured American uniforms. This element was missing from AH's rendition, and Lowry's variant rectified this oversight. As was noted above, game variants along these lines were not uncommon; what set

⁵³ Much of this biographical information is taken from *Panzerfaust* #50, which featured Lowry as Wargamer of the Month.

Operation Greif apart was its higher production quality and scale of distribution. Before it was ever advertised for sale, hundred *International Wargamer* [IWS:Jun1970] Unlike previous fanzine insert games, however, Operation Greif included a new set of unit-counters professionally printed, on thick stock. [SIM:Apr70] Lowry offered his variant for \$3.00, or bundled with *Bulge* for \$9.00 only about a dollar more than he realized from the sale of the original AH game alone.

Operation Greif met with a positive reception, but from the start, Lowry had larger ambitions than the publication of this single variant: Operation Greif is the first in what we hope will be a long line of variants and games of high-quality design and production. We hope to fill the gap between A-H's mass-produced, quality, but very infrequent games and the efforts of individual designers to produce their own brain children with the school mimeograph. [SIM:Apr70]

Sales of Operation Greif established, to Lowry's satisfaction, the commercial viability not only of variant publishing, but of a whole market for semi-commercial games. Since Second World War-related miniatures made up the bulk of his mail-order trade, Lowry developed a keen interest, like Henry Bodenstedt before him, in marketing rules that would boost his

miniatures sales. Within the IFW at the time, the highest profile activities relating to modern miniatures were organized under the Armored Operations Society, and the associated rules were largely the work of Leon Tucker and Mike Reese of the LGTSA. In the issue of the *International Wargamer* where Lowry's first article on *Bulge* appeared, Tucker's initial installment of Tracklinks began revealing the principles of modern wargaming in a series that would continue well into 1971. Mike Reese's Tracklinks Tidbits in that same venue supplemented, and occasionally corrected, Tucker's ongoing work.

Much of the modern wargaming conducted by Tucker and Reese took place in Gary Gygax's basement in Lake Geneva, on his legendary sand table, and naturally Gygax had some role in the ongoing evolution of the modern rules favored there. As a longerterm project, the three of them had collaborated since GenCon II on the GRT tank warfare rules, so named for their initials, but commonly expanded as the Grand Rules Triumvirate.⁵⁵ Perfectionism repeatedly delayed completion of the exhaustively-realistic GRT rules, however, so as a stopgap the Armored Operations Society, of which Reese was the President, put together a forty page photocopied monograph of their tank battle system which Leon Tucker sold for \$2.50. [IWS:Mar70] By June 1970, these were self-published by Tucker as a more polished twenty-four page pamphlet of Fast Rules, in which, according to the foreword, utmost simplicity has been the constant concern of the authors in order that the rules might be easily learned and quickly put to use.

Operation Greif had been sent to more than three subscribers accompanying the June supplement.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ game was intended as compensation for the fact the IFW had found itself unable to produce an *International Wargamer* on schedule for April, May or June of that year; these issues were retroactively sent in July;; one subscriber who took notes on when issues were received, Charles Ansel, did not see these three until August 3, 1970.

⁵⁵ Eventually these rules would become *Tractics* (1971).

For Lowry, these *Fast Rules* (1970) presented a perfect complement to the Minitank brand miniatures he sold. The system employs the HO scale, a standard common to model railroads, which promised wider appeal than many of the esoteric scales peculiar to wargaming. In August 1970, Lowry began to sell these rules for a pittance, just 75¢, hoping for pull-through

revenue from sales of the associated miniatures.⁵⁶ He was not disappointed, and this new success emboldened him further.

Shortly thereafter, Gary Gygax found himself with a bit of spare time on his hands thanks to his employment situation, nicely coinciding with Lowry's newfound enthusiasm for publishing games. Lowry's success in marketing the work of fellow LGTSA members Tucker and Reese surely did not escape the notice of Gygax. This was not the only connection between them; Lowry had drawn the illustrations for Gygax cover story in the July 1970 issue of the *General* on *chaturanga*, the ancient precursor to chess. [AHG:v7n2] Given his standing as a Senator in the IFW, not to mention his proximity to the greater Chicago area, Lowry could not but be aware of Gygax amateur game design activities. The two met for the first time at GenCon III;; this would usher in an era of collaboration between them under the imprint of Lowry's new game publishing house, Guidon Games.

Guidon Games would go on to produce works in three lines: commercial boardgames in the tradition of Avalon Hill, wargamer's guides mostly of anthologized selections from the club zines and a series in the vein of *Fast Rules*. Gygax served as the Editor of the miniature wargaming line. The trio of debut products of Guidon Games all appearing in the spring of 1971, and all spearheaded by Gygax consisted of two boardgames and one miniatures game. Avalon Hill had long ago demonstrated the market for boardgames, but one could not easily extrapolate the demand for miniature wargames booklets. Although some miniature wargaming rulebooks were in print in England, the appetite of Americans for such products was largely untested.

The two Guidon boardgames both derived from Gygax work in the War Game Inventors Guild and its successor, the IFW Game Design Bureau. The first was the previously mentioned *Arbela*, work on which had eventually fallen within the scope of the short-lived IFW Ancients Society. Gygax retrofitted *Arbela* into the Guidon title *Alexander the Great* (1971).⁵⁷ *Alexander* became known as a hybrid game, using the typical board and unit counters of Avalon Hill games but incorporating complex rules for conditions like morale commonly found in miniature wargames. The second Guidon boardgame, *Dunkirk* (1971), probably derived from Gygax earlier work on a GDB game called *France 40*.⁵⁸ to popular titles consisting Wargaming in Miniatures Lowry scheduled both of these boardgames for release on April 30, and both came in large, sturdy boxes with all the production quality that amateur designs lacked: hefty folding boards, large

die-cut cardboard counters and thorough rulebooks (*Alexander* shipped with thirty-one pages of rules).

⁵⁶ Advertisements for *Fast Rules* crop up in several periodicals of the era [IW:v3n7, IWS:Sep70, SIM:Jul70] which were received in the mail by subscribers between late August and late September.

⁵⁷ *Alexander*

earlier *Arbela Alexander* in 1974, with some slight modifications introduced by Donald Greenwood. Dane Lyon

Arbela after 1968 is unclear.

⁵⁸ There exists only circumstantial evidence in support of this claim, but nor is there any more plausible guess as to origins of *Dunkirk*. The *International Wargamer Quarterly* of the previous year nigan boardgame) as one of the projects Gygax had undertaken. [IWQ:Spring69] Bill Hoyer dropped a further hint that same year during an interview with Shaw in a discussion of games based on the France 1940 setting. [IW:v2n2] The design credit to Chris Johnson suggests that *Dunkirk Arsouf* (1969).

Guidon's debut miniatures game, *Chainmail* (March 1971), considerably expanded the LGTSA miniatures rules by Gygax and Perren published in *Domesday Book* #5. *Chainmail* exemplifies Gygax earlier contention that for medieval warfare only miniatures will serve well. [SIM:Apr70] It avoids the simplistic constructions of his *Arsouf*. The core system of *Chainmail* adheres closely to the earlier LGTSA rules;; for example, the movement system and missile combat system charts are copied verbatim, and most of their associated text is identical. The melee combat table, which had been fairly difficult to decipher in the LGTSA rules, was reorganized into a concise gatefold chart at the back of the *Chainmail* booklet, though without any discernible change to gameplay.

It was not just a rehash of prior material, however: the final published form of *Chainmail* incorporated a number of novel features. It leads with a brief tutorial on the basics of miniature wargaming for the benefit of newcomers. A turn sequence, sorely absent from the earlier rules, commences with each side rolling a die and the side with the higher score having the option to move first or defer. The section on sieges offers far more detail than the LGTSA version, which contained only the briefest characterization of siege towers, mantlets, ladders and the discipline of the mines;; *Chainmail* adds systems for such niceties as boiling oil, defensive

rock bombardments, battering rams and breached walls, as well as the beginnings of a point system for designing a fortification that scales fairly against an assault force.

To better represent castle sieges and other small battles, *Chainmail* recommends abandoning the 20:1 or 10:1 figure scale for a 1:1 scale that is, a scale where each miniature figurine represents a single combatant rather than a squadron of ten or twenty. A melee combat table specific to man-to-man combat also folds out of the back of the pamphlet, offering a much richer approach to combat than the LGTSA system.⁵⁹ It identified twelve different weapons that an attacker might wield, and eight different varieties of armor that a defender might wear (ten, if one includes mounted targets). The weapons ranged from the prosaic to the exotic: daggers, hand axes, maces, swords, battle axes, morning stars, flails, spears, pole arms, halberds, two-handed swords, mounted lances and pikes. The armor categories ran from no armor, to leather (or padded), to chain or banded or studded or splint mail (all of which were equivalent), and finally to plate armor;; each type of armor could be worn with or without a shield. A comparison via the fold-out table of the attacker s weapon with the quality of the opponent s armor resulted in a presumably realistic probability that the attacker s strike would score a hit. On a roll of 2d6, for example, a simple dagger would hit a completely unarmored opponent on a score of 6 or higher, but in order to hit a defender in plate armor only a 12 would suffice. A powerful two-handed sword, on the other hand, would hit even a defender wearing chainmail and a shield on a roll of 5 or higher, and required only a 7 or higher to hit a target in full plate armor with a shield. This pioneering system of outfitting individual combatants with any of a wide variety of armaments allowed for vivid and diverse medieval combat. For those more interested in sport combat, the jousting rules first published in *Domesday Book* #6 also return in *Chainmail*.

⁵⁹ This system elaborates on the uncredited rules printed in *Domesday Book* #7, which include a similar table pitting various weapons against armor types. Gygax published these rules in the *DB* with profuse apologies for his ignorance of their authorship. See Section 3.2.2 for far more detail on the evolution of medieval systems.

All of this, however, ignores the elephant in the room: the subject of the final fourteen pages of this forty-seven-page pamphlet. Quite late in the development of *Chainmail*, Gygax decided to furnish the game with a

supplement dealing with a very different sort of combat. As he offhandedly reported to *Wargamer's Newsletter* in early 1971: We are also planning to write up rules for Tolkien fantasy games, using LGTSA Medieval Miniatures rules as the basic starting point. Hobbits will be 20mm, dwarfs/goblins 25mm, elves/orcs 30mm, men/Nazgul/Balrog 40mm, ents/trolls/dragons 54mm, and a few 70mm giants to top it off.⁶⁰

1.6 CHAINMAIL AND FANTASY WARGAMING

If all that has been recounted above served only to explicate medieval wargames, now we can begin to investigate fantastic medieval wargames. *Chainmail* included a Fantasy Supplement which allowed wargamers to refight the epic struggles related by J.R.R. Tolkien, Robert E. Howard, and other fantasy writers;; or you can devise your own world , and conduct fantastic campaigns and conflicts based on it. Why attach these rules to *Chainmail*? Because most of the fantastic battles related in novels more closely resemble medieval warfare than they do earlier or later forms of combat.⁶¹

Fantasy fiction, and in particular the sword-and-sorcery subgenre that most informed Gygax, will be explored in detail in Chapter Two. The most salient background to the publication of *Chainmail* was the monumental success of the mid-1960s American paperback editions of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, a trilogy that had hidden in the relative obscurity of expensive hardbound editions for a decade. The sudden and enormous popularity of Tolkien triggered reprints and sales of many other fantasy authors, among them 1930s pulp master Robert E. Howard, best remembered as the creator of Conan the Cimmerian, a noted barbarian. In the course of explaining its fantasy rules, *Chainmail* also makes reference to authors Poul Anderson and Michael Moorcock, both of whom had achieved notoriety for fantasy fiction written in the 1950s and 1960s.

The fantasy content of *Chainmail* is broadly divided into four categories: rules for magic items, fantasy figures, magic spells and

finally the line-up sorting the various new figures into the sides of Law, Chaos and

Chainmail

rules for medieval miniatures
by
Gary Gygax & Jeff Perren



GUIDON GAMES

"WARGAMING WITH MINIATURES"

WM101-200

FIGURE 9:

FIRST EDITION

CHAINMAIL

⁶⁰ [WGN:#112]

Neutrality.⁶² Only two magical items are described in the first edition of *Chainmail*: enchanted arrows and magical swords. The majority of the fantasy miniature figure types were mythological monsters, notably the Tolkien-inspired dragons, orcs, goblins, wraiths, wights, ents, balrogs, trolls and lycanthropes (i.e., shape-changers, of whom Beorn the were-bear of *The Hobbit* was a likely prototype) arguably, rocs and giants arrived via Tolkien as well.⁶³ There were also rules for the less monstrous humanoid races of Tolkien, the elves, dwarves and hobbits, as well as exceptional human types: the Hero, Super-hero and Wizard.⁶⁴ A Hero has the fighting ability of four ordinary heavy armored figures and must be hit by four enemies at the same time in order to be killed;; Super-heroes are described as one-man armies twice as powerful as Heroes (fighting as eight figures, requiring eight simultaneous hits to be killed). There is an intriguing mention that some figures might have the qualities of more than one type, and will thus be combination types. A good example of this is Moorcock's antihero Elric of Melniboné, who combines the attributes of the Hero-type with wizardry.⁶⁵

Magic spells are the purview of the Wizard type in *Chainmail*. Although unexceptional as melee fighters, Wizards have two ranged attacks they can employ: a fire ball and a lightning bolt. The former explodes like a thrown bomb, creating a circle of carnage, hopefully at some distance from the caster, while the latter extends in a straight line from the Wizard, annihilating those in its path. In addition to these attacks, Wizards also cast utility spells. There are virtually unlimited numbers of spells that can be employed, but *Chainmail* lists six by way of example: Phantasmal Forces, Darkness, Wizard Light, Detection, Concealment and Conjunction of an Elemental. Obviously Darkness and Wizard Light cancel each other out;; Darkness, when cast, gives an advantage to creatures that can see without the benefit of light, which includes a number of the humanoid types. Concealment and Detection are similarly opposed, allowing a Wizard to make a particular figure invisible, though some creatures, such as dragons, can always perceive concealed figures. The last two spells both place new units on the battlefield. Phantasmal Forces creates an illusion of any figure

lasting up to four turns. Conjunction of an Elemental allows a Wizard to summon an air, earth, fire or water elemental, each of which has certain strengths and weaknesses;; the summoning of Djinn or Efreet is also allowed through this spell. A Wizard can attempt to counter-spell the work of another Wizard, and similarly dispel summoned elementals, though the system for determining the relative strength of Wizards for this purpose in the first edition of *Chainmail* is underspecified.

Gygax reported that the addition of these fantasy rules to *Chainmail* was an afterthought, [WGN:#110] but the publication of *Chainmail* was not the first place where Gygax announced his intention to join fantasy fiction with wargaming. As far back as November 1968, Gygax solicited the IFW membership for details of a rumored Hobbit⁶² *Chainmail*. Alignment is discussed in detail in Section 2.8; *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, which is assuredly a source for this opposition of Law and Chaos, one at least as significant as the better-known Elric novels of Michael Moorcock.

⁶³ f the type

apparently this was an omission in the manuscript. The description of giants is given in the first

Chainmail

⁶⁴ *Chainmail*

Dragons, though sometimes with implications of It then appears in subsequent editions of *Chainmail*. *Dungeons & variant of Diplomacy*. [IW:v1n7] Even before that, the venerable War Game Inventors Guild had an interest, documented in March 1968, in developing a Tolkien-based game derived from his Battle of Five Armies.⁶⁶ On behalf of the WGIG, Gygax that same year conducted a survey on settings and scenarios of potential interest to wargamers, and heroic fantasy performed middling well (slightly above space warfare, though well below the mainstays of the Second World War and Napoleonic eras). As his own interest intensified, Gygax wrote an article for the *International Wargamer* in the following year on Wargaming and the Hyborian Age, where Hyboria or the Hyborian Age signifies the mythical era when Conan walked the earth. [IW:v2n5] Gygax proposes that an enlarged map of Conan's world could be drawn up, and various players signed up for each of the countries therein. Given the considerable acclaim

of the fantasy genre, Gygax cannot understand why no one (at least to my knowledge) has yet come up with a Hyborian game.

There is a certain irony in this pronouncement, given that the longest-standing miniature wargame in the world must have been Tony Bath's Hyboria it had at this point been in progress for more than a decade.⁶⁷ As early as 1957, Tony Bath wrote an article for the original *War Game Digest* entitled The Hyborian Age as a War Game Period in which he boasts that he had developed a large scale map of the continent of Hyboria, and each country therein possesses its own colours and flags, its own weapons and strategies. [WDG:v1n4] It is however critical to understand that Bath did not propose to fight fantastical wargames on the continent of Hyboria, but instead standard ancient-period wargames without any wizards, hobbits, orcs or what have you. As Bath wrote in a 1967 article, Campaigning with the Aid of Fantasy Fiction, the advantage of a mythical background was that there are no restrictions save those that we ourselves impose. You can indulge in any mixture of types and races, mix medieval and ancients, do as you please within the structure of your design;; whereas the historical set-up, if it is to be of any worth, is strictly limited in its choices of troops, weapons, etc. [SL:#9] Fantasy elements played very little role in Hyboria.⁶⁸

So while it is perhaps surprising that Gygax was unaware of Bath's Hyboria, it cannot be said that Bath's Hyboria preceded *Chainmail* as a fantasy wargame. Bath did however incorporate a few fantasy elements into his briefly-explored world of Tolkia, including a College of Wizards who can affect the situation by their use of the Black Arts and such fearsome beasts as pteranodons (winged reptiles), tyrannosaurs and dinosaurs to do their bidding (Bath writes of this in the *War Game Digest* in 1961, but the existence of Tolkia is documented back to 1958).⁶⁹ Bath's later Campaigning with the Aid of Fantasy Fiction also makes an off-hand mention of the fantastic races in Tolkien and notes that a

Colin Rowbotham has drawn up a set of rules to include all these odd creatures.

⁶⁶ [IW:v1n2] Later activities record a member named Van Siegling developing this Middle-earth game. [IWQ:Spring69]

⁶⁷ thusiasm for

⁶⁸ We shall return to the element of magic in Hyboria in Section 4.5.1.

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Southampton resident Roy Blackman incorporated those elements in his own campaign world of Heskeronis as well: in September 1960, he mentions that in his game

[WGD:v4n3]

Whatever those rules were, it is unlikely that they were ever published;; most miniature systems in those days were crafted for a specific match and never intended for a wider audience.

These early British examples are only the tip of the iceberg: plenty of pre*Chainmail* fantasy wargaming transpired in America as well, among fantasy authors and fans, *Diplomacy* players and both miniature and board wargamers. In 1960, the fantasy author Fritz Leiber proposed adapting his invented world of Nehwon for a war game, of course, with heroes and sorcerers, citadels and swords

encouraging readers to make

and even sketches a simple chess-based system before your own war game!

[AMR:v2n12] Most *Diplomacy* enthusiasts had strong historical ties to fantasy and science-fiction fandom, and in their hands the Middle-earth setting blossomed into variants like Middle Earth II, first published in early 1966;; thus Gygax was at least two years behind the curve when he inquired about a Hobbit variant in 1968.⁷⁰ Leo Cronin very briefly postulates mythical miniature wargaming toward the end of a long list of potential future directions for wargame design in the July 1966 *Table Top Talk*. The same interest could be found in Avalon Hill circles. In November 1968, for example, a John Fritz wrote the following to the *General's Opponents Wanted* column: Attention Tolkien fans! Am interested in designing wargame based on Second Age. Either repulsion of Sauron from Eriador or the Last Alliance. At the World Science Fiction Convention in Heidelberg in August 1970, a group of German gamers demonstrated a circa 1967 board wargame called *Armageddon* which included a number of fantasy elements.⁷¹ As late as the fall of 1970, the New England Wargamer's Association played a Tolkien-based miniature wargame complete with fire-breathing dragons and walking trees at the annual war game convention of the Miniature Figure Collectors of America they even won best of show, though they too opted not to publish their system.⁷² Thus, Gygax was not the first or only one to grasp the appeal of fantastic wargaming.

Given that this interest existed in the community for some years prior to the publication of *Chainmail*, why weren't there any number of competing fantasy wargaming systems available? In *Wargamer's Newsletter* #127, Gygax relates his travails in converting mundane wargaming miniatures into fantasy pieces, an arduous process needed because no one cast or sold fantasy wargame miniatures in 1971.⁷³ Even the *Domesday Book* contains no⁷⁰ *Diplomania* #2 (Feb 1966). While it did not contain fantasy elements, strictly speaking, a number of other Tolkien-based *Diplomacy* variants with clear fantasy themes (including the Ring granting invisibility to units) had appeared by the late 1960s.

Supplement of *Chainmail Atlantis*, 1970AJ (starting with #25, June 1970), featured elaborate press releases written by Lakofka parodying the postal *Diplomacy* scene through the lens of the *Lord of the Rings*: he -earth using magic rings and so on. See Section 4.3 for further detail on this interesting period.

⁷¹ *Armageddon*, based on the fantasy world of Magira Midgard family of postal fantasy wargames. See Section 4.6.

⁷² See the MFCA *Guidon*, Vol. 28 No. 4 (winter 1970). It is certainly possible that news of the *Chainmail*.

⁷³ The first company to sell fantasy wargaming miniatures, Miniature Figurines Ltd. of the United Kingdom, did not create that product line until well after the release of *Dungeons & Dragons* see

mention of fantasy until the announcement of the publication of *Chainmail*, and then only curtly mentions its large fantasy supplement for fighting Tolkien-type battles. [DB:#9] Why did Gygax not telegraph his intentions in that forum? One plausible answer is obvious from the public reaction to the published product: the fantasy setting remained enormously controversial in the broader wargaming community.

Even Guidon Games promoted *Chainmail* with a mildly apologetic tone. The first advertisements to appear in *Panzerfaust* focus on the strength of the medieval rules, and then almost audibly trail off as they continue. Special features include rules for jousting and hand-to-hand combat and a large Fantasy supplement for gaming with Super-heroes, wizards, trolls, hobbits and (why not) dragons, among others. [PZF:#48] The parenthetical why not constitutes something of a soft sell, if not outright defensiveness. Why be

defensive? Justification for this caution is not hard to find. In November 1969, Don Featherstone penned an editorial for the *Wargamer's Newsletter*, one that would later be reprinted in the *International Wargamer*, in which he disdainfully related: No one resisted more strongly than I when an opponent introduced into his Ancient wargames the use of wizards whose spells would turn cavalry squadrons into toads or formulated rules governing the introduction of pre-historic animals (Timpo plastic monsters) whose table-top activities made war elephants seem like seaside donkeys. [WGN:#92 and IW:v3n10]

Featherstone here almost certainly denounces Tony Bath's Tolkia game described above from this negative reaction, we perhaps understand why these fantasy themes did not pervade Bath's Hyborian campaign, where Featherstone regularly played. Gygax quickly found himself the target of similar reproaches when he published more information about *Chainmail* in the *Wargamer's Newsletter*. Featherstone ran a regular column entitled Battle Report of the Month in which wargamers annotated recent table-top conflicts of note; in the November 1971 issue, under this heading he published Gygax Battle of Brown Hills, a description of a *Chainmail* combat fought between the LGTSA and a group of wargamers from Madison, Wisconsin. [WGN:#116] Having run across an old map I had drawn of a mythical continent, Gygax wrote, complete with many fantastic inhabitants, I decided to use it as the basis for a game.⁷⁴ The forces of Chaos, led by the Warlock Huldor ap Skree and Verdurmir, the Giant King, assailed the forces of Law, led by Count Aerll, a Super-hero with a magical sword, and his associate the Magician of the Cairn.⁷⁵ The armies of Chaos marshaled ogres, orcs and some infantry, matching a host of cavalry and elven archers standing for Law. Unfortunately for the LGTSA, who played the side of Law, Count Aerll perished shortly after the start of the battle. Chaos even managed to repel a passing dragon who spied an opportunity, in the midst of the carnage, to make off with a war chest the ogres had plundered from the Law-abiding. After publishing this battle report, Featherstone received responses from his readership like the following: Section 5.3.

⁷⁴ This mythical continent must be the Great Kingdom as shown in *Domesday Book #9*, which was already described above. It is also clear that this single battle is but one encounter in a longer I, without first reading it myself, loaned [a non-wargaming friend] the November issue (No. 116). The net result was that he has not stopped laughing since. I refer to the Battle

Report of the Month. Firstly, I have lost a convert to our hobby, secondly, I object to paying good money for absolute rubbish such as in this issue. I was under the impression that you yourself were of a like mind. I refer to your editorial in Newsletter No. 92 article should not even be considered by the editor. [WGN:#120]

was lost in the field, and Chaos did not search for it. So far, neith

⁷⁵ It is notable that the Magician of the Cairn has learned a spell called Circle of Protection;; this is very likely the first recorded instance of that spell.

Naturally, opinion was not unanimous on this matter, and articles on wargaming in Middle-earth continued to appear in *Wargamer's Newsletter*, but never without controversy. Even in Tony Bath's Society of the Ancients, debate raged in the pages of *Slingshot* on the propriety of adapting Tolkien to wargaming. Bath went a long way toward instigating this debate personally with a game for the Society that he arranged on November 20, 1972, in Southampton, in which sixteen heroes, four magicians, two bands of brigands, a pirate queen and a dragon, all drawn directly from sword-and-sorcery literature, competed in a free-for-all battle to recover hidden treasure.⁷⁶ Throughout 1973, prospective fantasy rules were debated in the pages of *Slingshot* and letters to the editor repeatedly questioned the overall wisdom of approaching the genre at all (see *Slingshot* #47 especially). When the British wargaming community finally did publish fantasy rules, they manifested as a three-page appendix to the War Games Research Group's *1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D.* (1973), and then only with the following caveat: They are hidden at the back like this so that sane, sensible wargamers can avoid continuous mental shocks while thumbing through the pages.

Nor could Gygax rely on a warmer reception for fantasy wargaming Stateside. In the November 1971 issue of *Panzerfaust*, that publication's influential editor (and Gygax close associate) Donald Greenwood wrote: Interesting though they may be to some, rules about dragons, wizards, ogres, etc., must appear somewhat foolish to the majority of wargamers. He even casually suggested that some illustrations and examples of play would be welcome even if it meant the deletion of such extras as the fantasy rules in *Chainmail*. His conclusion is that it would be better to put this type of material in a separate booklet so that it would not detract from the quality of the medieval rules, toward which Greenwood seemed favorably disposed. Even in the LGTSA, the Fantasy Supplement proved divisive;; the older

gamers like Leon Tucker (who had relocated to the East Coast in July 1970) rejected it, while the younger set like Rob Kuntz found it quite engaging. The *International Wargamer*, a publication devoutly biased toward Gygax, unsurprisingly carried a lone review praising the Tolkien element, by IFW President Lenard Lakofka: The fantasy Supplement, using Hobbits, Elves, Orcs, super heroes, Wizards, & Dragons, plus many more, is utterly DELIGHTFUL! [IW:v4n8]

Gygax optimistically maintained that the fantasy rules would prove the most popular element of the game, and cited anecdotal evidence of *Chainmail*'s favorable reception by the wargaming public.⁷⁷ Of an IFW convention in mid-1971, Gygax attested, Despite the fact that some outsider viewing wargaming for the first time would have

-believe fairy tale creatures, the participants had a wonderful time! [WGN:#118] Perhaps to settle this question in his own mind, in the June 1971 edition of *Panzerfaust* Gygax conducted a survey through his regular ⁷⁶ [SL:#44] Apparently the Gray Mouser, Harold Shea and Boromir fared well, while John Carter, Brak and Thongor finished poorly see Chapter Two if any of these names are unfamiliar. Section

4.5.2 will cover this game in more detail.

⁷⁷ In early 1975, however, Gygax wrote to *Europa* #4/#5

afte *Chainmail*

mistaken for confidence.

Warfare in Miniature column on subjects of interest to his readership. He asked readers to indicate their preference among a number of wargaming settings, encompassing ancient, medieval, pike & musket, Napoleonic, (American) Civil War, First or Second World War, nuclear, fantasy and the catch-all miscellaneous. In October, when he published his preliminary results, he noted that the lack of interest in Fantasy wargaming really surprised experience at several conventions. His intuitions on the subject notwithstanding, the showing of fantasy in his survey was low enough that he promised it will be a long, long time before you'll be reading more about fantasy miniatures in this column. [PZF:#49]

1.7 WILL COOPERATE ON GAME DESIGN

Despite the poor critical reception of its fantasy supplement, *Chainmail* took hold in a number of communities around the American Midwest. One place where it found an audience immediately was in the Twin Cities, in Dave Arneson's group more on that development shortly. Whether because

or in spite of its fantasy elements, *Chainmail* sold enough copies to establish the viability of the Guidon Games Wargaming in Miniature line. For Don Lowry, this became another facet of a quickly-growing wargaming media business.

Shortly before Guidon's first releases went to market, Don Lowry assumed responsibility for the publication of the *International Wargamer*, commencing with the January 1971 issue (which was not actually completed until March). Political connections within the IFW aside, Lowry offered a competitive bid for the business, apparently saving \$30 per issue over the printing costs of the previous service. [IWS:Feb71] The additional revenue from printing the IFW monthly helped offset his investment in a press for Guidon Games. By the May issue, Lowry managed to provide timely publication and distribution of the *International Wargamer* for perhaps the first time in its history;; for most of 1970, issues had appeared two to three months behind schedule, and typically with multiple issues assembled and mailed in clusters to save on shipping and labor. Lowry proved able to deliver issues during the months claimed on their covers, a feat practically unknown among the wargaming clubs.

That summer saw the second installment of the Wargaming in Miniature line of Guidon Games, the long-awaited GRT miniature tank rules spearheaded by Leon Tucker and Mike Reese. After some three years of development, however, the system had bloated to the point that no single *Chainmailsize* booklet could contain it. The product thus split into three separate pamphlets, the first of which, *Tank & Anti-Tank*, appeared late in August 1971. Two subsequent volumes, *Infantry & Artillery* and *Special & Modern* arrived in October, and the three books sold together in a black cardboard box, along with many pull-out charts for easy reference, under the name of *Tractics* (1971).

Tractics is best remembered today for its pioneering use of polyhedral dice. Leon Tucker, an academic statistician, had long studied methods of deciding wargame events with percentile probability;; since he aspired to a realistic depiction of combat, he scoured military statistics derived from battles in the Second World War, most of which were rendered as percentiles. Six-sided dice, however, cannot easily resolve percentile probabilities there's no intuitive way to use any number of six-sided dice to determine whether or not an event with a 7% probability has occurred in game. Thus, Tucker sought a way to resolve wargame events with a finer level of granularity than just a one-in-six chance. As *Tractics* neared release,

the existence of twenty-sided (icosahedral) dice became known to the wargaming community;; consequently, *Tractics* requires for play a device to generate random numbers of 1 20.⁷⁸ However, at this time twenty-sided dice (henceforth d20) were not so common nor inexpensive that every wargamer could be assumed to possess one and there was no cost-effective way Guidon Games could supply one in every *Tractics* box. For the have-nots, *Tractics* proposes a budget alternative: twenty numbered poker chips for pulling out of a hat.

The majority of the design of *Tractics* came from Tucker and Reese;; Gygax, for his part, shares a credit for his work on the infantry combat rules. While it might seem odd for a tank combat game to have infantry rules, the scope of *Tractics* had expanded so wantonly during its development that it ended up encompassing everything between bayonets and tactical nuclear strikes. Gygax leveraged the twenty-sided die to provide a new combat resolution system predicated on a to-hit number. When an attacker attempts to hit a defender, the attacker must roll the to-hit number or lower on a d20 (thus a to-hit target of 21 is an automatic hit). The calculation of the to-hit target involves a base number which is adjusted by myriad factors including range, concealment of targets, morale of the parties and so on. In this convoluted example from *Tractics*, typically the random number is generated by rolling one d20.

A German [light machinegun] positioned behind a hedgerow is watching some British troops in line abreast walking towards its position. Machinegun fire is made by simply picking targets and limited only by the number of targets within either a 2 x 6 oval or a 4

is 18, divided by 3 targets is 6, adjusted Base is +18. Target size is Man erect , add 0;; Target protection cover and concealment are nil, add 0;; Target range is 27 (medium), subtract 3;; Target movement is normal (walking at 4), subtract 3;; and Attacker Status is Calm, add 1. The final To-Hit number is +12. One random number is generated for each target. Supposing a 12, 15 and 3 were generated, the first and third men are dead, while the second was missed.⁷⁹

Tractics represented a second LGTSA collaboration published by Guidon Games, but projects from within the thin ranks of the LGTSA alone would not sustain an entire line of miniature wargames publications. In the spring of 1971, Dave Arneson and Gary Gygax made good on their longstanding aspiration to collaborate on a set of naval miniature rules. When they first

met at GenCon II in 1969, Arneson favored the Fletcher Pratt naval miniatures rules, one of the older sets of American hobby wargaming rules, which Arneson had acquired in Chicago in the summer of 1968. Early in 1969, for example, Arneson ran a series of naval battles based on the world situation in the year 1923 using the Fletcher Pratt rules, which assigned to nine local players command of the major powers including the United States, Japan, Britain, Italy, Germany, France and Russia. [COTT:69:v2n1] The Twin Cities gamers, however, had larger ambitions: they wanted to initiate a series of Napoleonic era battles that would involve their entire gaming group as well as other clubs, and provide a continuous simulation of the military actions (be they on land or sea) and economies of nations in Europe and beyond as they allied and sparred with one another. Rather than limiting this epic contest to one game session, they planned to explore it over the course of months or even years worth of games. They began developing the rules in December 1968, but it would not be until the end of 1969 that the idea matured enough to commence.

⁷⁸ See *Tank & Anti-Tank*, 3. Tractics makes one of the earliest uses of polyhedral dice in wargaming, but it is not the first nor is it even the first tank wargame to include them. This history of dice and probability in gaming is explored further in Chapter Three, especially Section 3.2.1.2. ⁷⁹ *Special & Modern*, 44.

This grand Twin Cities Napoleonic game serves as a good example of a *wargame campaign*, which might broadly be defined as the strategic context in which a series of tactical wargame battles occur. This distinction between strategy and tactics is an essential one for understanding the campaign element of wargames: where tactics concerns the movement of troops on a battlefield to decide a particular encounter over a span of a day or at most a few days, strategy is the higher-level governance of forces that might span years as entire armies march across continents engaging in multiple battles, sieges, garrisons and what have you. The term campaign abounds in military parlance, where it typically designates the set of all the military actions associated with a particular war or political objective. The application of the concept of campaigning to hobby wargames stretched back to Stevenson and Wells;; the latter wrote in *Little Wars* that a campaign was to a single game what a rubber is to a game of whist. Wells devised a system for assigning and totaling scored points for each individual miniature battle fought, which he found essential for the realistic handling of defeat.

Forty years after Wells, Tony Bath took up the cause of campaigning in wargames with his Hyborian campaign, rightfully seen as the progenitor of modern miniature wargame campaigns. Although we reserve the details of the Hyborian campaign for Section 4.5.1, for our current purposes the primary innovation it popularized was the notion of a very high-level campaign map on which military forces would maneuver during a strategic mode of the game.⁸⁰ When opposing forces met on the strategic map and a battle resulted, a tactical miniature wargame would be initiated on terrain corresponding to the area on the strategic map where the armies contended;; the size and constitution of the armies in the miniature game would similarly correspond to the forces managed at the strategic level. This two-mode approach to wargaming allowed a campaign commander to engage in a much deeper consideration of how to allocate military power. A small force could be used on a strategic level as a decoy, for example, engaging a larger force in a hopeless tactical battle in order to allow another body of troops free movement to achieve some unrelated strategic objective. Similarly, at the conclusion of a tactical miniature battle, assuming that the armies did not completely annihilate one another, the remaining combatants could return to the strategic map in retreat or triumph, perhaps joining up with their allied units to engage in some new battle. Bath saw campaigning as a natural direction for the maturing wargamer who has graduated from the early stages of odd, unconnected battles :⁸¹

As we become more experienced, however, we begin to notice a lack of something in these odd battles a lack of continuity between them, the lack of any objective save that of destroying the opposing army and we start thinking in terms of campaigns rather than disconnected single battles. [SL:#30]

To manage his Hyborian campaign, Bath maintained a large strategic-level map which marked the position of armies with pins. Jack Scruby *Strategy-Tactical War Game* (1961) contained a campaign element which eliminated the concept of figure scale in strategic miniature wargaming and instead allowed a miniature figure at the strategic level to serve merely as a counter representing an arbitrary number of men, as do the units in Avalon Hill titles like *Gettysburg*. The notion of repurposing an existing board wargame as a campaign map also has roots in early wargaming practice. In *War Games in Miniature* (1962), Morschauser explicitly suggests that games like *Tactics II* may be used as strategy games in connection with tactical

table games.⁸² This same principle could allow any board wargame to serve as a strategic context for miniature battles, even a higher-level game like *Diplomacy*.

⁸⁰ Although Bath popularized this technique, it was known before the dawn of hobby wargaming, at least as early as the 1870s notably in the work of Meckel, which is further detailed in Section 3.1.4.

⁸¹ [SL:#9]

Along these lines, the direct catalyst for the initial collaboration of Gygax and Arneson was the publication by Gygax of a *Diplomacy* variant called Napoleonic Diplomacy II in the August 1969, the same month that they first met at GenCon II.⁸³ By adding a great many rules to the base game of *Diplomacy* (and setting the game a century earlier), Gygax created what he argued to be a realistic *Diplomacy* variant for the Napoleonic era. Meanwhile, Arneson and his Twin Cities group, as we noted above, had since December 1968 been looking for an overall strategic framework for their proposed Napoleonic campaign: Gygax *Diplomacy* variant looked like an adequate point of departure. At the end of 1969, Arneson advertised in Peter Gaylord's Twin Cities *Diplomacy* zine, the *Ramsey Diplomat*, the start of a Napoleonic Diplomacy game which would serve as a background for Napoleonic Campaigns & Battles.⁸⁴ [RD:v3n7] Gygax originally envisioned no table top miniature component in his variant as he later wrote, they took the design, improved on it, and added miniature warfare to it. Thus, when hostile armies or fleets met play went to the table top, and a miniature battle was fought out. [PZF:#53] The long time scale of *Diplomacy*, namely two moves per game year, meshed well with Arneson's realistic approach to campaign management, in which player's orders might take months of game time to implement. Arneson refereed and administered this Napoleonic *Diplomacy*-miniatures hybrid, known locally as the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign or sometimes just the Strategic Campaign, and also documented its rules and progress in his self-published club journal *Corner of the Table*. The splicing of such different types of games did however pose certain inevitable logistical difficulties. As early as March 1970, tardiness in the resolution of miniature battles already delayed the turns of the *Diplomacy* game, inciting reprimands and ultimatums from Arneson. [RD:v2n4]

⁸² Morschauser, *War Games*, 131.

Tricolor (split across Vol. 1 No. 6 and Vol. 2 No. 1). The variant was not, however, played postally in *Thangorodrim*; McDuffie tried to start up a game in a separate zine called

Boardman

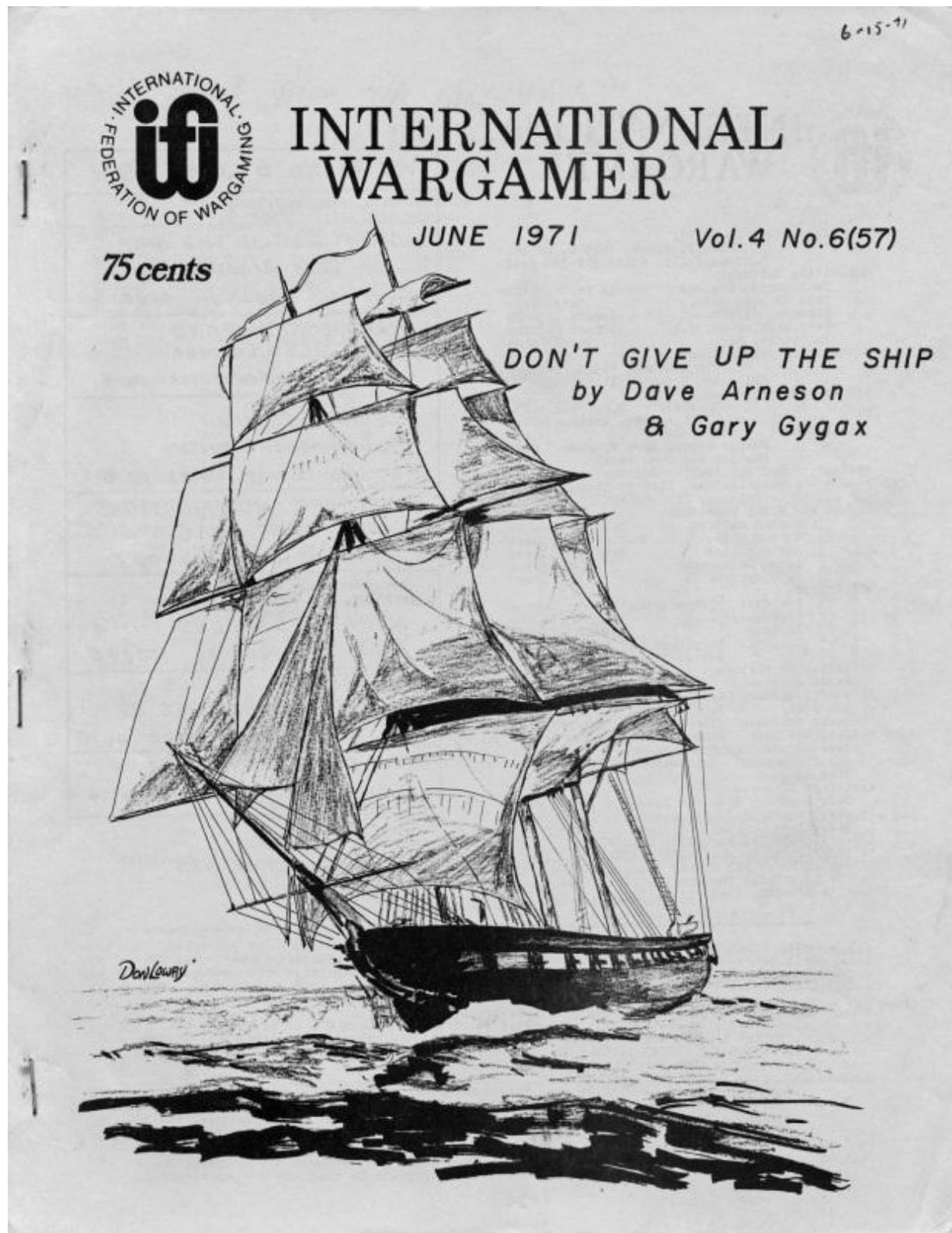
it was informally called 1969Nap.

Talleyrand, apparently without success. The official *Ramsey Diplomat*

⁸⁴ The first notice appears in an earlier *Ramsey Diplomat*. [RD:v1n6] In February, the thirteen initial players (two per faction, except Spain with one) had been assigned their positions. Notice that while -player game, there are optional rules for adding a hostile Spain, which Arneson apparently embraced. It is interesting to note that many of the initial players held their position in the campaign into 1974, including Jenkins (Britain), Nelson (Turkey) and Nicholson (Spain).

In its scale and sheer ambition, the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign had few parallels among wargames campaigns in the United States in the early 1970s. From the original seven countries defined in Gygax's *Diplomacy* variant, the campaign eventually grew to include twenty-one distinct powers, as Arneson added new territories and players. While most of the players were local to the Twin Cities, the strategic portion of the Napoleonic game took place largely by mail in the pages of *Corner of the Table*. Through the post, it would encompass several remote correspondents, from displaced Minneapolis natives to wargaming groups elsewhere in the Midwest or even abroad. Each of the remote clubs tended to be granted communal control of a nation in the campaign, the administration of which they would then divvy up among their local membership most notably, the LGTSA received control of the United States, with Don Kaye as the President, Rob Kuntz as Secretary of State and Gygax as Secretary of the Navy. [COTT:71:May Supplement] Apparently, in the counterfactual Napoleonic setting of the game, the United States pursued a more aggressive naval policy, dispatching warships to the Continent to participate in the conflict. Gygax enjoyed the game very much, and wished that something of its scale could have been launched across the entire IFW to link all of its membership in one huge game. Between the summer of 1971 and the end of the year, the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign was more or less the only wargame that Gygax played.⁸⁵

When, in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, seafaring forces maneuvered into combat at the strategic level, a tactical naval miniature battle would ensue, and this required a set of solid Napoleonic naval miniatures rules. Thus, Arneson and Gygax began to serialize through the *International Wargamer* a set of rules entitled *Don t Give Up the Ship*, so named after the famous last words of Captain James Lawrence in the War of 1812. Arneson, an old sea dog of wargaming, had long meditated on a miniatures system for Napoleonic naval conflicts;; Gygax had expressed interest in designing for Single-Ship Action with Sailing Vessels back in 1969. [IW:v2n5] The first segment of their joint approach appeared in the June 1971 issue of the *International Wargamer*, which went out to some 425 subscribers;; this was one of four installments of the system released in 1971. Arneson demonstrated a nine-page mimeographed version of the game for the couple of hundred attendees at **GenCon IV**, where he also advertised the availability of advanced



FIGURE

10:

INTERNATIONAL

WARGAMER,



FEATURING DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP

85

summ to George Phillies, December 31, 1971.

rules by the end of the year.⁸⁶ The Twin Cities gamers arrived in force for that 1971 GenCon, reserving two tables in advance in order to run three long miniature battles demonstrating both the land and sea systems of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign (see, for example, the planning in *Corner of the Table* [COTT:71:v3n6]).⁸⁷ The naval system owed a good deal to Fletcher Pratt, notably insofar as ships took a certain number of points of damage, depending on their tonnage, before they sank. As our collaborators prepared the rules for publication at Guidon Games, Lowry cannily began marketing Arneson 1:1,200 scale ship models to boost the overall profits of the venture. [COTT:71:v3n5]

Administering the Napoleonic campaign, both in its postal aspect and the judging of table-top miniature games, occupied a good deal of Arneson's time and energy. In the foreword to the Guidon Games edition of *Don't Give Up the Ship* (1972, foreword dated June 1), Gygax wrote of Arneson that although this is his first rules publication, and he is seldom seen in print in the hobby journals, it is not surprising, for he has been busily employed for the past two years plus running a fantastic Napoleonic campaign which now involves the entire world!⁸⁸ Some four years after the campaign began, Mike Carr said of Arneson that his unceasing work as referee has been responsible for the campaign's success and remarkable longevity. [EC:v1n5]

One of the notable places where Arneson's name could be found in the hobby journals of the day was in the *Domesday Book*. Although the Castle & Crusade Society lurched through 1971, its putatively monthly magazine appearing only four times during the year, the success of *Chainmail* encouraged further work on the system, albeit much of it developed outside of the C&CS. A few largely clerical amendments to the *Chainmail* rules appeared in the August *International Wargamer*, and a small update to the behavior of cannons and catapults occupies one page of the *Domesday Book* an issue which also contained an impassioned plea from Rick Crane for more consideration of fantasy in the C&CS. [DB:#11] Only the substantive revisions published in the January 1972 *International Wargamer* constituted

enough of an expansion to justify a revised second edition of *Chainmail*, which would appear that July.⁸⁹

These revisions spanned the medieval and fantasy rules of *Chainmail*. Additions to the medieval rules included an optional system for movement fatigue and weather (in bad weather, fatigue rates might be doubled), special properties for particular historical troops including English longbowmen and the introduction of a bonus for flank and rear attacks, both of which negate the shield, if any, for armor class this early use of those last two

⁸⁶ GenCon had grown into a venue where many regional gamers learned about new offerings. Lenard Lakofka ⁸⁷ These demonstrations included the *Strategos N* rules (see below), refereed personally by Wesely for the Sunday afternoon game. While some sources (such as *30 Years of Adventure*) claim that Arneson demonstrated Blackmoor at GenCon IV, this seems quite unlikely, in light of Arn being in a battle not refereeing one, plus I have certain duties to perform at the convention since I [COTT:71:v3n6] Surely in either this issue or the

following one, Arneson would have mentioned his intention to run Blackmoor as a part of the events at GenCon. It would be difficult for a game of Blackmoor to break out spontaneously either,

given the amount of materials and set-up time required for a miniature wargame.

⁸⁸ *Corner of the Table* did not qualify as a hobby journal.

⁸⁹ DB #11 probably appeared sometime around the very end of 1971;; the January IW however was delayed until March 1972, as will be detailed below.

words, armor class, will resonate with any fan of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The revised fantasy rules divided the former Wizard type into four classes of persons endowed with magical ability. In descending order of ability, they are the Wizard who is permitted six spells per game, a Sorcerer of five spells per game, a Warlock who can bring four spells to a game and finally a lowly Magician capable of casting only three spells per game.⁹⁰ New rules for magic items suggest that one should treat normal figures armed with magical swords as Heroes, a first hint of upward mobility between the ranks of the mundane and heroic. *Chainmail* also began embracing a new spirit of open-endedness at this time, which we will examine further at the end of Section 1.9.

The release of *Tractics* in the fall, the development of the new title *Don t Give up the Ship* and the revision to *Chainmail* kept Guidon Games busy in 1971. Don Lowry had also acquired the rights to Mike Carr's popular First World War aerial combat game *Fight in the Skies*: it was slated for a Christmas release as Guidon's third boardgame (after *Alexander* and *Dunkirk*), but did not become available until early 1972. Another Guidon Games miniatures title, Lou Zocchi's brief American Civil War miniatures guide *Hardtack*, shipped before the new year, but did not meet with a positive reception.⁹¹ Tucker and Reese also reissued their *Fast Rules* in the beginning of 1972 under the Guidon Games imprint. Finally, Lowry's business interests in game publication and as a hobby retailer had grown large enough to warrant the establishment of an in-house magazine called *Lowry's Guidon*, advertising both new Guidon publications and miniature figures stock available for mail order, the first issue of which appeared in January 1972. The *Guidon* would become yet another outlet for Gygax literary output, though a necessary one, given that the situation of the IFW began to change rapidly for the worse.

1.8 THE FALL OF THE IFW

In all of its incarnations, the monthly newsletter of the IFW be it the *Spartan* of 1968, the *IFW Monthly* of 1969 or the semiprofessional *International Wargamer* thereafter epitomized the achievements of wargaming fandom. At the beginning of 1972, it reached the peak of its production quality and circulation. As a sounding board for some of the most important designs and designers of the last four years, the *International Wargamer* certainly appeared to be an institution resting on a secure foundation. That illusion would be dashed in the spring of 1972, though the woes of the IFW extend well back into the preceding several months. In November 1971, Lenard Lakofka, IFW President, announced the resignation of both the Vice-President and Treasurer of the IFW, which meant that the responsibilities of both these offices devolved to the President.⁹² New elections were called for the IFW Senate over the Christmas holidays (Dave Arneson stood for a regional seat),⁹³ -users in *Dungeons & Dragons* (even the titles are retained as level ranks: a Magician is a sixth-level Magic-user, a Warlock eighth, a Sorcerer ninth and a Wizard eleventh, retaining the same precedence). Note that when *Chainmail* second edition was published, this class was allowed 6-7 spells. Also, superior classes of Wizard could cast

their spells at greater ranges. See Section 3.2.3.1 for more.

⁹¹ An earlier review deemed *Hardtack*

⁹² Lakofka, who had served as the President of the IFW since March 29, 1970, was certainly no

difficulty earlier in his tenure, when the positions of Secretary and Treasurer were simultaneously abandoned;; Lakofka himself took the office of President upon the resignation of Bill Hoyer.

but the returning instructions were unnecessarily complex, and as Don Lowry would remark in January 1973, the results of election of officers held about a year ago have yet to be announced to the membership. [PZF:#57] This apparently left the work of the Senate in Lakofka's hands as well.

Lakofka had still further demands on his time. He championed an ambitious new summer gaming convention in Chicago called the International Game Show, which would encompass as well the fifth annual incarnation of DipCon, the largest *Diplomacy* convention. Alan Calhamer, inventor of *Diplomacy* and a Chicago native, promised to attend. Lakofka's commitments to *Diplomacy* fandom equaled, if not exceeded, his interests in the IFW. He had covered the postal *Diplomacy* scene for the *International Wargamer* through his longstanding Diplomacy Forum column, as well as through *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, his IFW-affiliated *Diplomacy* zine;; outside of the IFW, Lakofka maintained a high profile among the core hobbyists who struggled to organize the diverse postal activities of *Diplomacy* fandom (see Section 4.3 for more). A successful convention cementing an alliance between wargaming and *Diplomacy* fandom was therefore Lakofka's foremost aspiration and priority. Advertisements of the time, like the one in the March *International Wargamer*, promised confidently that this Chicago show would be the greatest convention to date. [IW:v5n3]

Ultimately, the scale and ambition of the IFW at this time had outgrown its administrative capacities. The circulation of the *International Wargamer* exceeded five hundred, and it is no easy matter for a staff of unpaid volunteers to oversee the reliable publication and distribution of that many copies. When critical decisions involving large enough sums are left to well-meaning amateurs on a part-time basis, it is only a matter of time before things will begin to go wrong. As Lakofka shouldered the burden of most of the administrative duties of the IFW, as well as of his new convention, the

International Wargamer failed to be printed in January 1972, and then in February.

Late publication of the monthly was hardly unheard of, and alone would not have been fatal, but the crisis of the IFW was also influenced by events at Avalon Hill. After editing the *Avalon Hill General* personally but anonymously since its inception, Thomas Shaw found himself in a position where, as he put it, subscribers were beginning to ask questions that were out of my bailiwick of gaming knowledge. [AHG:v25n1] His search for a successor, someone who had his finger on the pulse of contemporary gaming, was apparently a short one: Donald Greenwood, editor of the beloved wargaming fanzine *Panzerfaust*, was the only one [Shaw] had seriously considered for the job. Greenwood, whose imminent graduation from college loomed in the spring of 1972, faced a choice between getting a mainstream job, facing the draft or starting a career editing a wargaming periodical. This could not have been a terribly difficult decision for someone with Greenwood's interests, and the March 1972 issue of the *General* would be the last under Shaw.

It transpired that editing the *General* was a real job, one that often required sixty hours a week of Greenwood time. Running the *General* and *Panzerfaust* simultaneously was simply out of the question, and thus the future of *Panzerfaust* became very uncertain. Rather than allow a venue of such influence in the wargaming fan community to disappear, Greenwood began looking for a successor who was in a position to offer a fair value for the reach of *Panzerfaust*. As far back as early 1968, the IFW administration had proposed merging its monthly with *Panzerfaust* given the declining state of the IFW, however, how credible would that offer be, and where would the necessary funds come from? In the proverbial wings, however, waited an interested party who had already invested in the wargaming industry, resulting in successful game and printing interests, but who still had an appetite for more. In March 1972, Greenwood announced that Donald Lowry has bought PNZFST lock, stock and barrel. [PZF:#52] Lowry had in fact acted as the printer of *Panzerfaust* since the beginning of the year, because its subscriber base had grown large enough that Greenwood required a professional press to satisfy the mounting demand.

The opportunity to control a high-profile periodical like *Panzerfaust* naturally appealed to Lowry, who had ramped up his own *Lowrys Guidon* but still could not compete in this space. He also had good reason to doubt the long-term prospects of the *International Wargamer*, especially in light of

the club's inability to produce an issue in January and February, to say nothing of the churn and vacancy in the IFW executive positions. Subsequent to the acquisition of *Panzerfaust*, Lowry abruptly discontinued his involvement with the production of the *International Wargamer*; the last issues for which Lowry served as publisher and Art Editor were the cluster of January, February and March 1972 editions which were printed and mailed jointly around March 6.⁹³ The necessity of contracting with a new printer postponed an April issue indefinitely, and these delays compounded the IFW internal woes. For the majority of members, the *International Wargamer* was the primary service that the IFW provided;; the bulk of membership fees went toward the cost of maintaining member subscriptions, and when production incurred substantial delays, dues thus went unpaid and the financial situation of the organization worsened dramatically. This is to say nothing of the effect that sporadic publication had on the volunteer corps, many of whom lost any impetus to contribute in the long months that the magazine languished in abeyance.

There was, however, even more bad news for the membership. In March, Lakofka dropped another bombshell: Gary Gygax has retired from wargaming. [IWS:Mar72] Nominally, Gygax stepped away from wargaming in order to spend more time with his wife and children.⁹⁴ However, he no doubt also sensed that the IFW condition was rapidly deteriorating, and the consequences of the shuffle in the administration of the *General* and *Panzerfaust* were far from certain. It is also perhaps the case that Lakofka enthusiasm for his new International Game Show in Chicago detracted from the promotion of Gygax brainchild GenCon, and this might have further soured Gygax relationship with the IFW.⁹⁵

As he stepped out of a leadership role in the wargaming community, Gygax washed his hands of the administration of the 1972 GenCon, which left Lakofka in the awkward position of needing to manage two summer conventions scheduled only a month apart. I can not plan and run Chicago AND prepare for GenCon, Lakofka complained.

⁹³ e direct oversight of Lakofka.

⁹⁴ , as was Gygax himself. At the time of this associates that his religion required greater devotion than his wargaming habit would allow;; although this rationale did not make it into print, it has been attested by several parties involved at the time. Note that this was the second time that Gygax had formally retired from the IFW and wargaming;; in September 1969 he

adopted a similar stance specifically to devote more time to Christian ministry. See Section 2.4 for more about Gygax and his faith. News of Gygax he *General* and proclaimed there

⁹⁵ Four years later, in the *Dragon* #1, Gygax continued to disparage CITEX, as the IGS came to be known.

[IWS:Mar72] With the fate of GenCon in his hands, Lakofka decided in favor of tossing that convention to the members It will not be easy, but if the membership wants this convention then they will have to work for it. Participating in the postal *Diplomacy* community also meant Lakofka endured an endless succession of bitter political struggles that must have consumed no small part of his attentions (see the issues of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* from this era). Juggling far too many responsibilities, and enduring a number of shocks in his personal life at this time, Lakofka was unable to produce the April and May issues of the *IW* until well into June.

That May issue of the *International Wargamer* was the last that many subscribers received. Although some 550 copies each of the June and July issues saw print, because of a variety of convoluted circumstances they did not reach the subscriber base. Putatively, the issues were jointly compiled and dispatched to the post in early August. However, six weeks later, Lakofka and newly-appointed *International Wargamer* Secretary Thomas Daley discovered that the magazines lay unshipped in the basement of the main branch of the Chicago Post Office;; after some bureaucratic wrangling they received assurances that the magazines were finally en route. have arrived, please let me know. IFW to recover from the loss of two issues in the mail, no further issues of the *International Wargamer* even reached the printers before the end of the year, which casts some doubt on the alleged culpability of the postal service. ⁹⁶ Dues reciprocally failed to appear, submissions and interested declined. Appropriately enough, the cover of the May *International Wargamer* depicts a flaming plane, presumably the loser of a dogfight, plummeting to the ground.

Despite the collapse of that institution, the community did rally to host a GenCon in the summer of 1972. **GenCon V** transpired August 19 20 at George Williams College (a part of Aurora University), a site one mile west of Williams Bay, on the far side of Geneva Lake from the town of Lake Geneva. A flyer for the event distributed in June 1972 called GenCon an IFW tradition. Games were held in four separate venues in mutually distant locations on the campus;; attendees complained of prohibitive commuting

times between events. Some usual suspects did not shun GenCon: Arneson, for example, ran a naval miniatures tournament based on the Battle of the Nile (1798) using the *Don t Give Up the Ship* rules. [SR:v1n5] The *Avalon Hill General*, for its part, could not seem to figure out if the conference would be held the weekend of August 19 or a week later. Lakofka did not make an appearance. Don Lowry reported that attendance had dwindled to around two hundred, complained that the showcase tournament seemed to go unfinished and expressed his wish that the convention might return to its original venue on the other side of the lake. [PZF:#55] For all intents and purposes, this was the last gasp of the International Federation of Wargaming. At this point the IFW became, in spite of a few ardent but fruitless attempts at resuscitation, utterly defunct.

However, as the IFW foundered, Rob Kuntz as the head of the Castle & Crusade Society, styled King Robert I struggled to salvage that one small portion of it. He was not the first to attempt to rescue the Society;; the previous June, after receiving many complaints about the absenteeism of the *Domesday Book*, Gygax usurped the Society s crown and managed to produce a single issue before, in August, he too lost his impetus. Only one Well, Daley wrote meekly in December, if any IWS [IWS:Dec72] While it might have been possible for the more edition (#11) would surface in 1971, in the beginning of November. By March 1972, sixteen-year-old Kuntz s patience with the current publisher of the *Domesday Book* had run out. Even the issues that Chris Schleicher printed in 1971 failed to reach much of the membership, probably because of lax management of the subscriber list;; for example, Walter J. Williams, who joined the Society in the spring of 1971, did not receive any issues for over a year.⁹⁷ Schleicher was summarily dismissed from his post. Kuntz acquired his own mimeograph machine, and with the assistance of his older brother Terry contacted the entire membership of the Castle & Crusade Society, which at this point stood at about eighty, to solicit articles. It had been some time since an issue had been published, however, and rekindling enthusiasm for the project proved difficult. Only two respondents sent submissions one was Arneson, with a historical piece about Lincolnshire and on the basis of these, Kuntz assembled a slim *Domesday Book* #12 in June.

⁹⁶ There is no doubt that the June and July issues were actually printed at the time they were sold at the International Game Show in Chicago in late July. Many were eventually mailed early in 1973.

Despite the initiative Kuntz had taken, this issue was met with more criticism than welcome, largely owing to its low page count and the editor's unfamiliarity with his new mimeograph. *Gamesletter* #41 dismissed it with the quip: Unfortunately, this issue is only a shadow of its former glorious self. Merely publishing a fresh edition, however, stimulated some interest and generated a wider pool of submissions for the next issue, which turned out to be the last *Domesday Book* and thus the swan song of the Castle & Crusade Society.⁹⁸

One of the articles appearing in the thirteenth and final *Domesday Book* was an unusual piece written by Dave Arneson describing his ongoing *Chainmail* campaign. Arneson had graduated from the University of Minnesota at the beginning of the summer of 1971 with a degree in history. He took a job as a security guard, but spent some time elaborating the rules for *Don't Give Up the Ship* and promoting that game in wargaming club zines, mostly through historical articles on the naval situation of the era. Along these lines, for the March and April 1972 issues of the *International Wargamer*, Arneson drafted a twopart article on the campaigns of Trafalgar, detailing the exact composition and character of the major fleets in 1805 and other information for wargamers recreating that famous battle. His first part of a similar article on The Fleets of Europe at the Beginning of the Napoleonic Wars (which consisted of nothing more than unannotated lists of vessels) appears in the July *International Wargamer*, though of course the discontinuation of that journal left the second installment a long time coming.⁹⁹ An interesting Napoleonic naval battle report by Arneson (which we'll return to below) also occupies Gygax Miniature Warfare column in the May/June 1972 issue of *Panzerfaust*, the first under Lowry's new editorship.

The bulk of Arneson's past contributions to the *Domesday Book* concerned medieval naval combat, but Arneson's submission to *Domesday Book* #13 stayed away from boats. Entitled Points of Interest in Black Moor, it introduced the setting of his *fantastic*

⁹⁷ From *Cymry* #1. Incidentally, Williams went on to a career authoring science fiction. ⁹⁸ Walter J. Williams along with some associates offered to continue the *Domesday Book* when Kuntz

that he would discontinue publication until sometime next summer, and prune the 80 members From *Cymry* #1. These plans never came to fruition, though undoubtedly Kuntz had more material that he could have printed. ⁹⁹ The second half of the article, a bald catalog of the French fleet as the

previous one was of the British, would appear in *International Wargamer* #64, which appeared the following year during John brief attempt to resurrect the IFW.

medieval wargames campaign the most direct ancestor of *Dungeons & Dragons*.¹⁰⁰ It was fantastic, insofar as it concerned a town peopled by creatures familiar from *Chainmail*'s Fantasy Supplement, medieval in structure, material culture and governance, and a campaign in that it constituted a series of connected miniature wargames, all built upon the social structures and playstyles that had emerged in the Twin Cities Napoleonic Simulation Campaign. The Blackmoor campaign contained elements that go beyond our prior understanding of a wargame campaign, however, and to grasp those elements, it is necessary to explore the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign in more detail.

1.9 THE RETURN OF THE REFEREE

To recap, the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign incorporated a postal *Diplomacy* game as a background strategic context for its tactical miniature battles, specifically the Napoleonic Diplomacy II variant by Gary Gygax. The Twin Cities gamers expanded the variant to include many more nations, dozens of players participating in a variety of capacities, more detailed management of national economic resources and a healthy dose of Arneson's favorite: maritime action.¹⁰¹ When forces conflicted in the *Diplomacy* game, rather than resolving the disagreement of those colored blocks as the *Diplomacy* rules recommended, the contests were translated into miniature table-top battles fought by the participating wargamers. While others had implemented such two-mode strategy-tactical wargames before, few dared to attempt them with so many geographically-dispersed participants. This made the resolution of moves depend on the results and reporting of many miniature wargames conducted in remote locations, and turns thus could tarry for months. Over the course of four real-world years of play, the game progressed through only six *Diplomacy* turns (which, in the variant in question, alternate between spring and fall), in game time from the beginning of 1800 up to the end of 1802. Advancement at the strategic level held less importance for the participants than the tactical miniature battles, obviously. Naval combat followed the emerging *Don't Give Up the Ship* rules;; for warfare on land, however, the Twin Cities gamers invoked a different set of Napoleonic rules designed by local gamer Dave Wesely.¹⁰²

David A. Wesely (b. 1945) brought several innovative ideas to the Twin Cities gaming group. Like Jeff Perren, Wesely found hobby wargaming fandom early in its existence;; Wesely corresponded with Jack Scruby's *Table Top Talk* late in 1963 to advertise his new wargaming club in St. Paul, Minnesota. The following spring, shortly before the debut of the *Avalon Hill General*, Wesely connected with Ray Allard of Minneapolis, and they pooled their wargaming circles into a new club of fourteen people. [TTT:v3n2] Although Allard's group focused on miniature collecting and ornamentation, Wesely wargamed throughout the 1960s with his willing accomplices in Arneson's undergraduate gaming circle. Their combined club, initially called the Twin Cities Military Miniatures Group, evolved into one of the largest local wargaming communities in the Midwest. In ¹⁰⁰ Arguably, the Great Kingdom itself was such a campaign context, though it is unclear when fantasy elements developed therein.

¹⁰¹ See Section 4.1 for the primary discussion of the rules of *Diplomacy* and Section 4.3 for their implications for the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign.

¹⁰² Since there are very few direct contemporary assertions to this effect, Mike Carr -hand

Arneson, Gary Gygax, and Mike Carr [EC:v1n5]

1969, it would affiliate with the University of Minnesota, but after Arneson graduated (which sparked concerns about a non-student running the club) two years later, it came under an umbrella organization called the Midwest Military Simulation Association, which incorporated university clubs including the University of Minnesota Military History Club and a similar club at the College of St. Thomas, as well as groups in nearby cities like Rochester and Duluth.

Wesely read widely in the literature of wargaming and, in 1967, found inspiration in a wargaming book published decades before Wells: Charles A. L. Totten's *Strategos: The American Art of War* (1880).¹⁰³ *Strategos* is among the earliest American wargame rules, a literature which Section 3.1.4 of this study examines closely;; more information on the particulars of *Strategos* appears there. In brief, the tradition began in the early 1870s when English military scientists cribbed from Prussian *kriegsspiel*;; British officers had translated the rules of Tschischwitz (originally published in 1862) for their own use, and subsequently naturalized this work into the famous 1872 Aldershot rules. In America, the fad arrived slightly later, once those books crossed the Atlantic Totten *Strategos* stands among the first native imitators.

While *Strategos* thus reiterated well-understood European wargaming practices of the time, those systems had largely fallen into obscurity by the 1960s, and their rediscovery contributed to something of a Twin Cities wargaming renaissance.

Strategos typifies military training games of the nineteenth century. It primarily teaches the tactical deployment of the three classic branches of the military: the infantry, cavalry and artillery. It provides detailed instructions for movement and dice-based combat resolutions which would look familiar to anyone versed in the Avalon Hill games of the 1960s, but *Strategos* introduces a further element: an authoritative referee responsible for determining the course of events. Avalon Hill designed games for two players without any need for supervision other than mutual suspicion, and thus tailored their rules specifically for interpretation and mediation by parties with opposed interests. *Strategos* instead defers

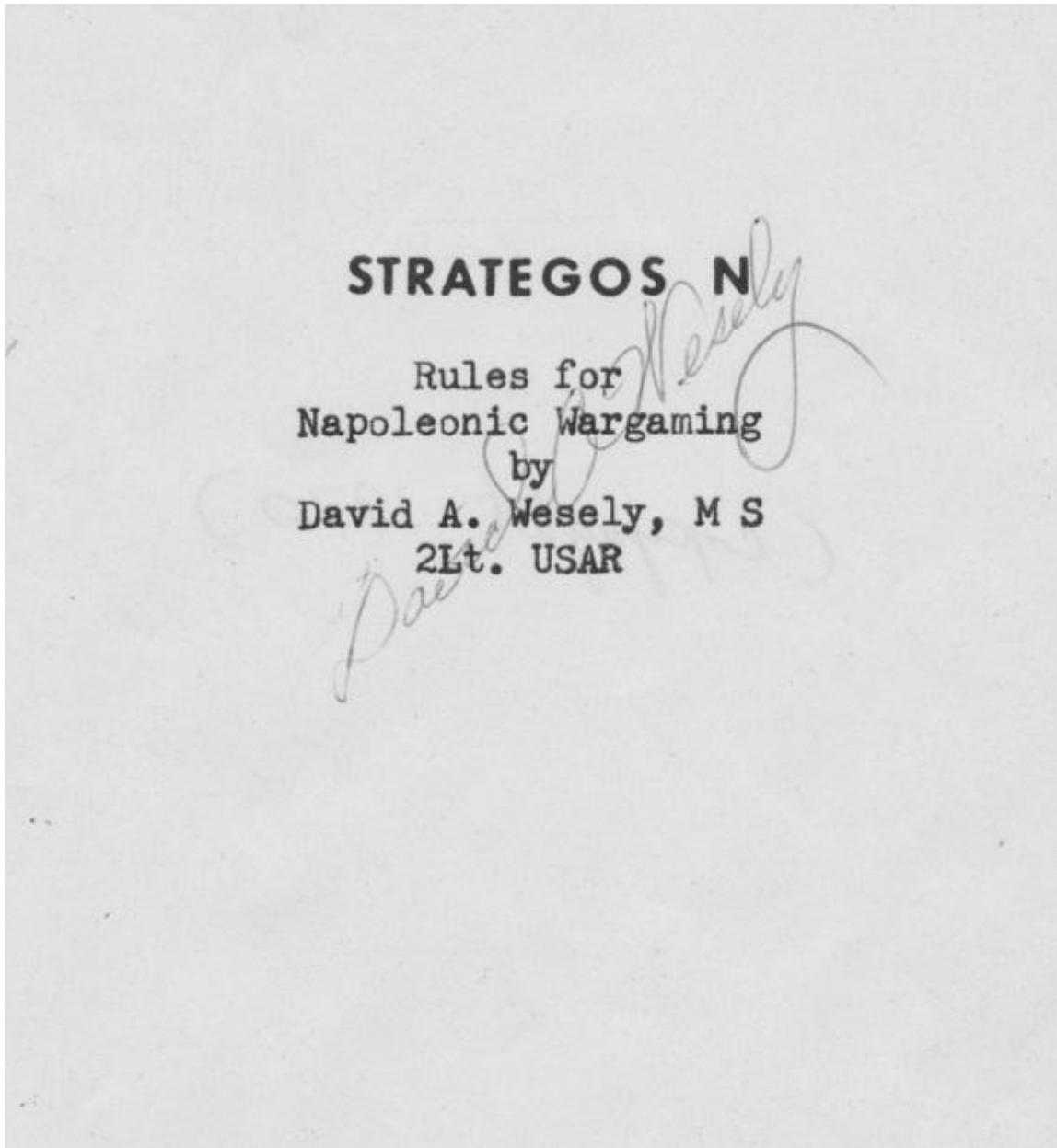


FIGURE 11: *STRATEGOS N* (1970)

to the so-called free *kriegsspiel* movement associated with Meckel and other Prussian authors post-1870 (again, detailed in Section 3.1.4);; these wargames rejected strict adherence to predetermined rules in favor of allowing wide latitude to both players and referees in determining what tactics might be employed and how successful they might be: regarded, not so much in the light of an adviser, as of an *arbiter*. He should bear in mind the principle that *anything can be attempted*. The *advisability* of an attempt

is another thing, and one that it is the object of the War Game to make evident to all concerned by results. The Referee, therefore, should generally require a *positive statement of intention*, as the *basis* of his decision;; the attempt must be *willed* into operation by the player.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ More properly from its front piece, *Strategos: A Series of American Games of War Based upon Military Principles and Designed for the Assistance both of Beginners and Advanced Students in Prosecuting the Whole Study of Tactics, Grand Tactics, Strategy, Military History, and the Various Operations of War.*

The success of such a game depends wholly on the quality of the referee: as Totten acknowledges in the same passage, the skillful exercise of the important office of Referee requires not only a special aptitude, but it is indispensable that he, of all others, should be so thoroughly familiar with the principles and methods of the Game. But this familiarity does not entail blind obedience to the system as envisioned by Totten indeed, if literally *anything can be attempted* it would be impossible to design a system that provided for every contingency. As a contemporary reviewer noted, the mechanics designed by Totten thus defer to the wisdom of the referee, these rules being suggestive, not binding, leaving him free in the exercise of his judgment, as enlightened by his own experience and study.¹⁰⁵ Wesely, encountering this book nearly a century after it was written, grasped the liberating potential of this approach for wargamers weaned on the strictness of Avalon Hill.

Despite Wesely enthusiasm for the system, he quickly conceded that the lengthy and complex presentation of Totten, not to mention the scarcity of the original rules (of which only a few hundred copies were printed eighty years beforehand), raised a significant barrier to their adoption by the Twin Cities gamers. Thus, early in 1968, Wesely and a few other enthusiasts began work on a compact version of the *Strategos* rules, initially just extracting a few key combat resolution tables from Totten which circulated locally for the next two years or so. [COTT:68:v1n2] Wesely ultimately distilled nineteen pages of Napoleonic rules from Totten which he published under the title *Strategos N* (1970).¹⁰⁶ The reduction in the length of the rules did not, apparently, lead to a commensurate reduction in complexity;; one commentator familiar with *Strategos N* opined that the rival 122-page Napoleonic system *Charge!* was actually somewhat simpler than Wesely's.¹⁰⁷ Although the *Strategos N* rules may nominally have been available for

sale by mail order from Wesely home address, they were not advertised in wargaming fanzines and thus remained effectively private to his local circle.

Most of Wesely's borrowings from Totten are only of minor historical interest, but significantly, he embraced its playstyle predicated on open-endedness: the notions that a player might attempt any action, that a referee must determine the consequences and that¹⁰⁴ *Strategos*, 105.

¹⁰⁵ *Strategos*, 175.

¹⁰⁶ *Strategos N* is one of several *Strategos* variants developed in the Twin Cities. Dave Arneson published in *COTT* a set of *Strategos RT* rules for his Russo-Turkish war campaign early in 1969, and then *Strategos A* rules for ancient wargaming in November 1969. Compared to these more radical adaptations, *Strategos N* came closest to the setting of Totten, a circa-1880 model of the armed forces that cannot be said to have varied greatly from that of the Napoleonic era. Dave Wesely authored a set of *Strategos C* rules for the American Civil War as well. The date of 1967 frequently proposed by Wesely lacks any evidentiary basis; surely *COTT* in 1968 cited above would not mention that a compact version of *Strategos* was underway in those terms had *Strategos N* already been published. The lack of any mention of *Strategos N* in *COTT* prior to 1971 casts further doubt on the existence of some edition prior to 1970. Note as well that in the introduction to *Valley Forge* Wesely

illustration by Ken Fletcher. *Strategos N* was written by Mr. -bound edition of *Strategos N* appeared in 1984, with a cover

¹⁰⁷ Quote from Gary Charbonneau in July 1972. [ASD:v11n7]. Contemporary notices of the exi

any predetermined system can only serve to inspire, not constrain, that outcome. *Strategos N* even paraphrases Totten's seminal advocacy for freedom of agency on its first page, stating that the referee must remember that anything which is physically possible may be attempted not always successfully. Wesely evangelized these ideas throughout the Twin Cities, and they recur in much of the area's subsequent miniature wargaming.¹⁰⁸

On the heels of the idea that *anything can be attempted* must come the promise that anything might be achieved, and that military supremacy need not be the only interesting victory condition in a game. Totten could not have made this leap, *Strategos* being an educational wargame fought between two sides where victory is decided when one side gains such a manifest advantage.¹⁰⁹ Wesely invented more creative victory conditions, however, at

least partially out of necessity he typically had many more than two prospective players clamoring to participate in his games. In traditional wargames, there are a number of ways to involve more than two players: team-based play with a commander-in-chief administering various subordinates would be familiar to Totten, and the web of alliances and betrayals that make up *Diplomacy* (ideally a seven-player game) were well known among Twin Cities gamers. Both require the subjugation of foes for victory. Certain *Diplomacy* variants, however, depart more radically from traditional wargaming assumptions;; for example, Mordor Versus the World II has no less than four distinct win conditions, some of which can arise to the great surprise of other players (though probably Sauron should anticipate that the destruction of the One Ring is his enemy's plan for victory). *Diplomacy* and other n -player games naturally give rise to unusual notions of victory as well as complex interpersonal dynamics;; Section 4.1 covers this subject in detail. While undoubtedly *Diplomacy* informed Wesely games (he played consistently in the late 1960s), he often suggests that the Parker Brothers game *Careers* (1955) is another significant influence, insofar as each player chooses a secret victory condition before the game commences, and thus it is left to the cunning of the participants to assess how far their competitors are from winning.¹¹⁰

These practices culminated in Wesely's 1969 Napoleonic miniature wargame set in the fictitious German town of Braunstein.¹¹¹ The first incarnation of the Braunstein game

¹⁰⁸ It is unlikely that Wesely was the sole source of this notion: Korns rules were known in the

direction. See Chapter Four (especially 4.1) for more on the open-endedness of multiplayer games with referees. Arneson
his work into more free-form games without traditional victory conditions,
and that assertion must be taken seriously.

¹⁰⁹ *Strategos*, 116. Note, however, that more interesting victory conditions are known to the Prussian *kriegsspiel* tradition, as is described in Section 3.1.3.

¹¹⁰

on the Acaenum forum on the Internet.

¹¹¹ Arneson provides a 1969 date for Braunstein. [WG:#4] Wesely himself has suggested on the Acaenum forum and elsewhere that Braunstein might have been first run as early as 1967, but this seems very unlikely in light of

the sequence of events;; for example, Wesely also stipulates that the Strategic Campaign was in full swing by the time he ran the first Braunstein, which argues for 1969 or later. It is also likely that *Strategos N* existed in a mature state for the Braunstein games, which suggests that they may have occurred as late as 1970 (no later than October, when Wesely left for the Army, though Wesley did revisit the Twin Cities frequently on furlough). Unfortunately *COTT* is virtually silent on Braunstein until April 1971, when Blackmoor and Brownstone had begun, and no other contemporary source seems to note Braunstein at all.

featured French invaders squaring off against the Prussian resistance for control of the town, but in order to provide some occupation for more than two players, Wesely assigned to bystanders control over a number of other interested fictional persons, each with accompanying goals. These persons might not have any direct involvement with the military one was the Chancellor of the University of Braunstein, for example, who had little interest in the Franco-Prussian conflict other than weathering the storm and preserving the lives of students. To further those aims, the player of the Chancellor might attempt anything within the power of a chancellor: he could order school gates open or closed at his whim, request (and likely receive) an audience with the Baron of Braunstein, even assemble the student body and urge them to take arms and join the local militia. Permitting characters in a game the same freedom of agency that a real person would have in their circumstances engages the imagination of players in a way that differs substantially from traditional wargames, where the system constrains the actions of players to a narrow set of allowable moves. Arneson played in that first Braunstein, and he characterized his participation in the game in this way: As a local student leader, I tried to rally resistance to thwart a French attack (I ended up arrested by the Prussian General because I was too fanatical). [DW:#3]

This was the logical consequence of the notion that *anything can be attempted*. If you put yourself in the shoes of an activist student leader, attempting to foment rebellion in the face of an occupation might seem a sensible course of action. For Wesely as the referee, however, it sounds more like a nightmare. How could the success or failure of such an uprising be modeled by the system? It required extraordinary ingenuity on the part of the referee to determine any outcome for that sort of spontaneous plan, let alone deciding on arrest for excessive fanaticism. It also levied great demands on the players themselves to invent a course of action, effectively to decide

what to do with a life. All of this wild novelty, while intriguing, made the actual play of the game awkward. Arneson later reflected, The limitations of these one shot scenarios quickly showed themselves;; very complicated rules suited only for pure combat, and large amounts of time required to consult each player as to their activities each turn. [WG:#4] The first Braunstein instance never even reached the point of actual miniature combat;; although to Wesely this appeared to doom the venture to failure, the players clamored for more.

Wesely attempted a handful of variants on the Braunstein game, concluding with one set in a modern banana republic facing a coup d état, before his US Army Reserve unit was activated and he left for duty in October 1970¹¹² The games proved so popular and influential locally that players coined the term a Braunstein (or Brownstine or various other spellings) to refer to any game with open-ended victory conditions and ensemble casts of characters, even if the game had nothing to do with the fictional town of Braunstein or even the Napoleonic wars. As Arneson's basement had served as the venue for these games, it was quite natural that Arneson continue the tradition, acting as the referee over these chaotic miniature wargames in Wesely absence. He was not the only one, however in the spring of 1971, local gamer Duane Jenkins began a set of Western wargames set in the town of Brownstone, Texas, involving the antics of the famous bandit El Pauncho and his nemesis, Marshall Fant. [COTT:71:v3n5] The spirit of allowing the players unbounded freedom of agency in wargames extended even to Arneson naval miniature battles tied to the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign. Consider the account he gives in the Battle Report of the USS Franklin. [PZF:#53] Written from the perspective of Commodore John Rogers of the US Navy, this anecdotal description ostensibly covers the battle between the Franklin and a fleet of Italian privateers who had captured an American warship (the USS Experiment) in the Azores, but the preamble describes many events that seem to fall outside the scope of wargaming. For instance:

¹¹² Wesely recalled running four Braunstein-style games at this time, though he remembers the second and third games to be complete failures.

We were well received by an honor guard of one hundred pirates and promptly escorted with all due ceremony to the Governor's residence. The chief of the Tusc-Lombard privateers was also present and after a few formalities I got down to business. I demanded the immediate return of the

Experiment, its crew, and the payment of a cash indemnity to compensate for our efforts and impress upon them that they could not attack American vessels in time of peace. Although the privateer chief was willing to return the ship and pay damages, he was very evasive about returning the crew and all my efforts failed to get him to produce any of the ship's complement.

When the futility of diplomatic overtures became evident, Rogers even sent a letter of ultimatum to the unfortunate governor, whose subsequent entreaties for peace were denied, and the battle ensign of the USS Franklin unfurled as it sailed into the harbor the next day. This first-person narrative suggests significant immersion on the part of the players presumably, were Commodore John Rogers a real sailor of the era, and were he to find himself in these circumstances, he would attempt to resolve the situation through diplomacy before chancing a battle. Yet the tradition of board wargaming, for example, never made allowances for thinking outside the box one could not in the play of *Gettysburg* strike up an armistice under newly negotiated peace terms only to set fire to the enemy baggage hours later. Only a referee could adjudicate that.

The idea that a miniature wargame might require a judge or referee was fairly common in the hobby: especially in tournament competitions, the presence of an arbiter who could resolve rules disputes was invaluable. As early as the 1940s, the British Model Soldier Society typically had referees oversee their Tactical Cup Challenge. The judge is a staple of virtually all the Guidon miniature games;; in the introduction to *Tractics*, Gygax suggests that a disinterested party serving as judge for each game always works best.¹¹³ Postal *Diplomacy* games by necessity had a single impartial gamesmaster who collected orders from the players and implemented the system (see Section 4.3). While in the original 1971 *Chainmail* booklet we read nothing like the idea that *anything can be attempted*, among the *Chainmail* additions Gygax published at the beginning of 1972, one hears a tone of expansiveness, a sense that the rules committed to paper thus far were only a point of departure. Speaking of mythical creatures, for example, Gygax writes: Various Chimerae, Basilisks, Cockatrices, giant insects, and so forth can be included in play. Simply utilize extension rules or whatever parts thereof of the current rules that you desire. [IW:v5n1] He implies that the creatures that had been specified to date might serve as a blueprint for minting new monsters, as the imagination of players or referees required. More broadly on the interpretation and scope of the rules, he elaborates that

many unusual circumstances are not covered in these rules as they are meant primarily as guidelines

purposely vague in areas in order to encourage thinking and initiative on the part of contestants. Referring to the medieval rules in particular, he continues, if a historical precedent can be found, there is seldom any reason for precluding something unusual, although the final ruling should be left to the game judge. For example: signal fires, raft construction, digging traps, burning woods or constructions, and so on.

¹¹³ Gygax goes on to say that Mike Reese had been too much forced into that thankless role, implying that he did not often referee their modern miniature wargames.

Clearly, Gygax envisioned a more flexible and integral role for the referee than merely someone who makes sure players follow the rules: a role where prudence balanced the unbounded ingenuity of players. Players could attempt any reasonable action in the course of the game, even something for which no system had previously been defined, provided that the judge agreed that the action was appropriate for the game in question. His own play of *Chainmail* accordingly evolved and diversified during this period, and became less like the familiar showdowns of mundane miniature wargames. Gygax describes, for example, a particular miniature game for which he acted as the judge where two sides competed for possession of a treasure chest (instead of more traditionally battling each other to the death for victory) only to discover that the chest was a trap: Perhaps the best part of fantasy wargaming is being able to allow your imagination full reign. Whatever the players desire can be used or done in games. For example, for one match I built a chest of jewels as the object to be obtained to win. However, I did not mention to either team that I had added a pair of basilisk eyes (large pin heads dotted appropriately) which immediately turned the first ogre who opened it to stone. The possibilities are boundless.¹¹⁴

Gygax approach to *Chainmail* increasingly emphasized the discretion of the judge and unusual victory conditions. Given Gygax heavy involvement in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, this shift in his playstyle is probably no coincidence. Perhaps something about the fantasy setting itself contributed to this dynamism and spontaneity, to the idea that the imagination should not yield to the constraints of boards and systems. When Arneson started a *Chainmail* campaign in the Twin Cities, it obeyed these same precepts. Combining Arneson's wargame campaigns and *Chainmail*'s

fantastic medieval wargame, the result forged a true fantastic medieval wargame campaign. As the Lake Geneva and Twin Cities gamers embraced the principle that *anything can be attempted*, their play increasingly diverged from wargaming and tended towards something else entirely.

1.10 BLACKMOOR

In the spring of 1971, Arneson faced an internal political challenge within the Twin Cities wargaming group: Randy Hoffa, who did not care for Arneson's playstyle and campaign administration, managed to persuade the club to endorse a rival Napoleonic campaign. The April *Corner of the Table* proclaims the

though not without an expression of referee,

Arneson, viable and indeed probably will never start, a belief that history validated, but for the moment the progress of his own Napoleonic Simulation Campaign stalled. [COTT:71:May Supplement] Consequently, Arneson decided to run something completely different.¹¹⁵ elimination of the office of strategic gratitude and appreciation to Dave [COTT:71:v3n4] Arneson insisted that the vaunted Hoffa campaign was not Medieval wargames had become a topic of local consideration earlier in the year: at the January 1971 meeting of the Twin Cities club, Castle & Crusade Society member Duane Jenkins was scheduled to give a talk on the Middle Ages. Arneson chose to design his new game around the fantasy elements of the just-released *Chainmail*. He found inspiration in the writings of Robert E. Howard, whose Conan stories set the original parameters of the sword-and-sorcery genre, and in classic B-movies like those of Hammer Studios, Roger Corman, monster-perpetrated disaster extravaganzas and anything featuring the inimitable claymation of Roy Harryhausen.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ [WGN:#127] Brown Hills both games that were fought between opposing teams of players, rather than just a pair adversaries.

¹¹⁵ Later, Arneson would suggest that he had simply wearied of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign in the spring

By blending this fantasy setting with the Braunstein stylings pioneered by Dave Wesely, Arneson conjured up the following:

There will be a medieval Braunstein April 17, 1971 at the home of David Arneson from

mythical creatures and a Poker game under the Troll's bridge between sunup and sundown. [COTT:71:v3n4]

The next issue of *COTT* appeared in May, the month that Arneson graduated from college, and promised the start of the Black Moors battle reports, a series dealing with the perils of living in Medieval Europe (or at least as much as is possible when a wargamer cum fantasy nut creates a parallel world that includes perils from a dozen Fantasy plots plus a few of his own). Immediately afterwards, however, Arneson left for a post-collegiate jaunt in Sweden through July of that year, so it would be some months before the Twin Cities gamers would return to those Black Moors, or, as the setting came to be known, Blackmoor.¹¹⁷

interview in *Pegasus* #1.

¹¹⁶ [DW:#3] These literary and cinematic influences are explored further in the next chapter.

¹¹⁷ One must have a certain temerity to assert any start date for Blackmoor, given the contradictory evidence. The quotation from *COTT* (unless its wording is read very uncharitably) establishes the inception of the Blackmoor scenario, but gives little inkling of when various events in Blackmoor, most importantly dungeon adventures, commenced. In April 1981, immediately after the resolution of the TSR lawsuit (judgment was passed on March 6, 1981), Arneson is quoted in *Pegasus* #1 as *Heroic Worlds* (1991), Ar different from early sessions in April and May, or whether it encompassed dungeon explorations. Confusingly, not long after his acrimonious departure from TSR, Arneson recorded in the *First Fantasy Campaign* n, insofar as it makes no claim about Blackmoor, nor running any game in particular). A 1970 1971 date faces the challenge that *Chainmail* had not yet been released;; all statements by Arneson, including the following quote from the *First Fantasy Campaign*, s *Different Worlds Chainmail*

the last two words salient here. In the winter of 1970, it is unlikely that the Fantasy Supplement of *Chainmail First Fantasy Campaign* that *Outdoor Survival* did not appear until September 1972, the end of the Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger

little else in the spring 1972 issue, which strongly suggests dungeoneering began in the intervening period. Overall, the holiday season at the end of 1971, leading to 1972, is the most plausible date for the beginning of the dungeon adventures;; early games must have involved the Coot invasions.

Like the similarly-named Braunstein, Blackmoor designated a town, though it shared that name with the lakeside castle at its heart as well as the

surrounding countryside. In the layout of the Great Kingdom, the fictional land invented by the Castle & Crusade Society for division among its landed membership, Blackmoor resided roughly in the center, at the tip of the Great Bay (per the map in *Domesday Book #9*). Also like Braunstein, Blackmoor is a barony;; Arneson erstwhile title in the C&CS was Baron, which perhaps inspired him to organize Blackmoor under that degree of nobility.

The protagonists of Blackmoor turned out to be the players of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign themselves, who, in the conceit of the game, played their own persons as if they had fallen into some sort of time-warp or portal that brought them to Blackmoor.¹¹⁸ In this respect they followed the precedent of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign: a player corresponded to a particular in-game personality, as they called them. The personalities of the Strategic Campaign were simple transpositions of the players themselves. Duane Jenkins began the campaign as Prime Minister Jenkins of Great Britain, rather than adopting the identity of any fictional or historical Prime Minister. The death of a personality could be dealt with in any number of ways, though most often the

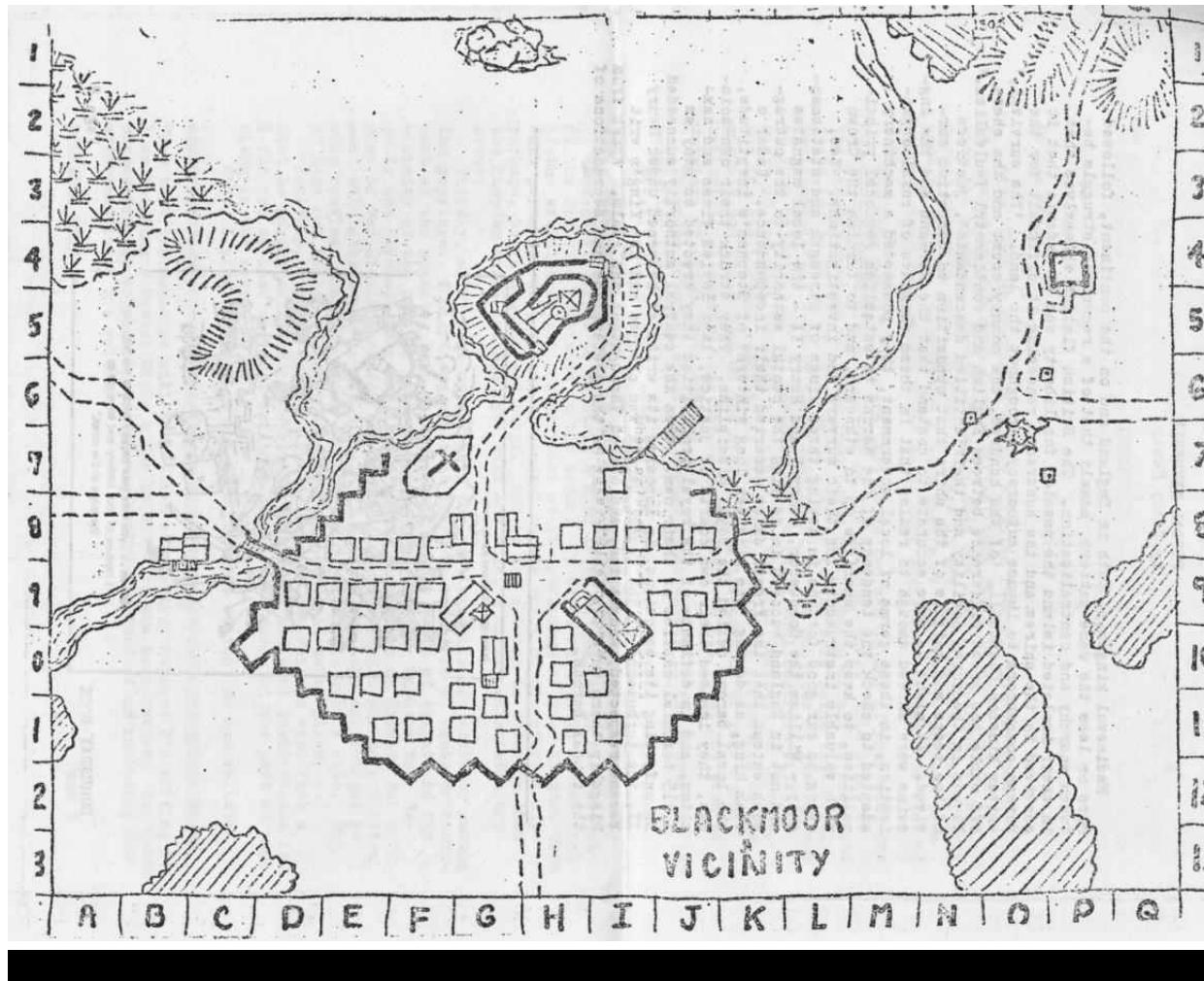


FIGURE 12: ARNESEN'S MAP OF BLACKMOOR [DB:#12]

¹¹⁸ One of the original Blackmoor players, Dan Nicholson, told the author that he was introduced to the game thus: Arneson, who had traveled to Sweden with his family early in the summer of 1971, had in the conceit of the game disappeared somewhere over the Atlantic. The players in the Strategic Campaign thus chartered a plane to search for him, but they crashed somewhere over Iceland, and were forced to camp for the evening by a river only to be assaulted by a group of giants. Fleeing from this encounter, they made it eventually to the town of Blackmoor.

successor could barely be differentiated from the predecessor: when David I of Denmark, played by David Fant, died in a naval battle off Malmö, the investiture of David II of Denmark followed hard upon. This proved essential, as personalities were subject to a wide variety of debilitating conditions, from illnesses, injuries and assassinations to weddings and alas parenting. Some players specified the offspring of their personalities and

married them off to friends and rivals in the traditional diplomatic manner. Eventually, the management of personalities became intensive enough that Arneson fielded out the work to Mike Carr, who became the Personalities Coordinator of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, as Section 4.3 will discuss in more detail. While the personalities mostly came into play at the strategic and diplomatic layer of the game, they also sometimes appeared in the table top miniature battles, especially in Braunstein-style sessions. For instance, Marshall Hogefeldt, who played as the King of Portugal, found himself facing repeated assassination attempts, and sequestered the entire royal family within a coastal Portuguese castle for their own safety. As *Corner of the Table* notes, this provided a great table top opportunity: One of our next Brownstines will include such an attempt on the life of Marshall I King of Portugal! [COTT:71:May Supplement]

Once transplanted to the town of Blackmoor, the players led a defense of local soldiers against the invading forces of the vile Egg of Coot, a power that resided to the north of Blackmoor, after the current Baron of Blackmoor, aptly named The Weasel, defected to the forces of the Egg.¹¹⁹ Thus, for example, the aforementioned Dave Fant (in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, Emperor of Denmark and subsequently Austria), who proved instrumental in the repulsion of the first Coot invasion, became styled as Baron Fant, and assumed control of Blackmoor Castle. Duane Jenkins was styled Sir Jenkins as a result the same action, and an area outside the town of Blackmoor became known as Jenkins Hill;; later he became Baron of the territory to the north, forming something of a buffer between Blackmoor and the Egg of Coot. As in the Braunstein games, some of the personalities of Blackmoor were neither Heroes nor in any direct way associated with martial prowess;; Dan Nicholson, for example, who governed Spain in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, played as the shady Merchant of Blackmoor.

The popularity of the first Blackmoor game guaranteed that Arneson would run more instances. Naturally, returning players resumed the same role they had played before to do otherwise would have been quite unnatural given that they were playing themselves. Thus, Blackmoor imported from the Strategic Campaign a continuity that the one-off Braunstein games lacked, and truly became a campaign game, in which the results of a previous session set the stage for the next iteration. This allowed the personalities to improve over time, as Jenkins improved in social standing

from a bandit to a Baron. Personalities could also acquire magic weapons or steeds and retain them from session to session. But the concept of improvement over time did not merely extend to social standing, as Arneson writes: ¹¹⁹ -disguised and uncharitable rendition of local wargamer Greg Scott;; , the local gamer who instigated a competing Napoleonic campaign in April 1971. While it is commonly rumored that the negative representation of Scott owed to his disdain for fantasy wargaming, it must equally reflect mpaign, as Scott played a large role in those events.

Further tables and charts were then made to take into account player progress and experience. With these charts each player increased their ability in a given area by engaging in activity in that area. For a fighter this meant that by killing opponents (normal types or monsters), their ability to strike an opponent and avoid the latter s blows was increased. [WG:#4]

The addition of this element of experience, which had its roots in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign and which *Chainmail* lacked, was undoubtedly the most revolutionary aspect of the Blackmoor campaign from a system perspective. Latent in any such concept, however, is the notion that there were quantifiable abilities that would be improved by experience. The notion that a Super-hero survived more peril and dealt more doom than a mere Hero was familiar from *Chainmail* (a Super-hero required eight simultaneous hits to kill, a mere Hero only four), but there was no obvious means of mobility between Heroism and Super-heroism.¹²⁰ When he introduced experience as the mechanism of that mobility, Arneson also expanded the quantification of heroic ability, and thus introduced new ways that improvement could be measured. The term personality in Blackmoor became synonymous with this quantification of certain key abilities that might improve over time, including among others strength, brains, courage, credibility, health and looks, as Section 3.2.4 explores in more detail.

By the fall of 1971, the society and storyline of Blackmoor had expanded to the point that Arneson circulated a one-page Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger, a campaign newspaper, which he later embedded in *Corner of the Table*. The second issue of the Gazette, which details events of the late spring of 1972, provides the first mention of the counterintuitive but seminal notion that the dungeons beneath Castle Blackmoor were a place where

heroes went looking for adventure and treasure. By this point, Arneson had mapped, on a pad of graph paper, a dungeon six levels deep beneath the castle, with each level containing progressively more formidable adversaries. While *Chainmail* obliquely mentioned the use of pen and paper to represent mines beneath castles (digging under walls being a recognized, if tedious, manner of circumventing defenses in the medieval period), Gygax never suggested that an underworld might be a suitable venue for gaming. The purpose of this paper record in *Chainmail* is to preserve the secrecy of mining operations: While the defender will always know where these men are located, that is, where the miners broke ground, he will not know if they are actually at work on a mine, nor more significantly where the tunnel extends.¹²¹ The referee maintains the paper, and draws the direction of mines and counter-mines in accordance with the instructions of the players. Arneson borrowed this pen and paper to keep his players in the proverbial dark while they explored his dungeon. He gave them information only about their immediate, claustrophobic surroundings, leaving it to their ingenuity to navigate their way to the ultimate depths, to say nothing of the way out.¹²² The result little resembled a traditional wargame: it was more a game of exploration, negotiated verbally with the referee, punctuated by bursts of combat.

¹²⁰ Though see the discussion of experience in Section 3.2.3.1 for a few qualifying points.

¹²¹ *Chainmail*, 29.

¹²² appeal lay in its finite scope, its manageability something his Braunstein sessions lacked. There were simply less choices and complexity when what lay before you was a branch in a tunnel or a room full of monsters. It was thus easier for referees to run fantasy adventure games in a dungeon and easier for players to decide what to do.

The Gazette pointedly writes about these dungeon adventures as a distraction from the main thrust of the Blackmoor series of games, which was the conflict between the Heroes and the Baddies, which is to say the forces of the Egg of the Coot. As the Gazette reports under the heading Castle Burned While Heroes Away : Although the expedition supposedly bagged the evil wizard of the dungeon and bagged all the gold our bravados could carry, the castle, with all its loot, personal effects, family and defenses were wiped out and for several hours the town lay naked to attack until the wanderers returned from their jaunt. [COTT:72:v4n3]

Even the local village priest is berated for going on trips to the dungeon to look for artifacts. In the face of a large scale invasion of the forces of evil, one of the preeminent heroes of Blackmoor, William of the Heath (played by William Heaton and affectionately known as Blue Bill on account of his magical and willful blue armor) is only dissuaded from a dungeon expedition in search of a sword by the rumor that the Baddies might attack through that same underground. As a result of all this irresponsibility on the part of the heroes, Arneson announced in July that the Blackmoor campaign world was drawing to a close... with an overwhelming victory for the bad guys seeming to be inevitable. [COTT:72:v4n4]

Fortunately, Blackmoor did not disappear with the conclusion of that first campaign, nor were its innovations confined to Arneson local gaming group in the Twin Cities. In part because of Blackmoor's connection to the Great Kingdom of the Castle & Crusade Society, a number of players of Arneson Blackmoor campaign had joined the C&CS, though by this point the Society had lapsed into the long period of sluggishness of 1971 and early 1972. That notwithstanding, in reply to Rob Kuntz's pleas for articles, Arneson furnished Points of Interest in Black Moor. Kuntz cut this submission in half, publishing the first portion in *Domesday Book* #13, the July 1972 issue (in actuality, the issue probably shipped closer to the end of August, right after GenCon).¹²³ The initial installment provided a high-level overview of the town of Blackmoor and the surrounding region, including local persons of importance, under the subheading Facts about Black Moor. Although the half printed by Kuntz does not explicitly mention dungeons, it does report that:

Points of geologic oddity exist in the Dragon Hills, Dragon Rock, the hill where Black Moor Castle stands itself. The numerous pits that lead into underground caverns which run where the Elfs and Dwarves make their homes along several unclassified inhabitants and denizens of darker places. [DB:#13]

The article stressed that the underworld was not the only place to find adventure in the vicinity of Blackmoor. Arneson designed the Blackmoor environs to be an area one could spend a lifetime exploring. After the heroes abrogated their responsibilities for the defense of Castle Blackmoor and lost the campaign, Arneson, as he put it, collapsed in silly giggling and announced the destruction of the entire world, or some such nonsense.

¹²³ This article is reprinted, verbatim but for some slight differences in place names, in the *First Fantasy Campaign* (1977), 25. From the suggestion in *DB*

will appear in the next issue, it seems very likely the following page of the *First Fantasy Campaign* was also sent to Kuntz at that time, but never printed because of the discontinuation of the *Domesday Book*.

[DW:#3] However, even in July Arneson knew that a new series is planned using the Blackmoor series as a take off. [COTT:72:v4n4] Other members of the circle quickly stepped up to run Blackmoor itself or close variants, including Greg Svenson, Peter Gaylord, and John Snider, though all activities relating to the actual town and environs of Blackmoor entailed some amount of oversight on Arneson part. This fragmentation of the Blackmoor campaign even resulted in the invention of an entirely separate and novel game: the underworld component alone inspired The Dungeons of Pasha Cada by David R. Megarry (who played the King of Prussia in the Strategic Campaign), a boardgame which isolates the dungeon exploration mode of Blackmoor.¹²⁴ Megarry's game had a simple victory condition the accumulation of a certain amount of gold. Players accrued gold from treasure hoards defended by randomly-selected monsters (drawn from decks of cards), with more fearsome adversaries and larger potential rewards lurking in the deepest levels. Each player took on a simple character and made an independent expedition to the dungeon;; the first character to reach a preordained revenue target won.

As novel and captivating as Blackmoor may have been, these fantasy adventures were not the end-all-be-all of gaming in the Twin Cities. New Braunstein-style games emerged;; one mentioned in the *Corner of the Table* issue for July 1972 was set in the early twenties complete with gangsters volunteers for the plot are welcome and you should apply early to get a good part in the game, suggesting high demand for the parts in these Braunstein variants. John Snider, who played a tax collector in Blackmoor, began a new series of games in the far distant future when good old humans are mucking around the universe getting into trouble.¹²⁵ Last but not least, the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign continued, despite Randy Hoffa's competing effort, and it remained the focus of Arneson's visible activity in wargaming fandom. At the ill-fated GenCon V late in August, Arneson tellingly ran a Napoleonic naval miniature game, rather than anything fantasy-related. In the beginning of the year, Arneson had announced his intention to collect the

rules of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign into a professionally-printed booklet that he would make available for sale;; by the summer, these rules evolved into a campaign framework for the recently-published *Don t Give Up the Ship*. This project, tentatively titled *Ships of the Line*, was well underway by GenCon. As for Blackmoor, its game sessions were held at the College of St. Thomas so that the main table at Arneson can be reserved for the Napoleonic games. Taken all together, these data points strongly suggest that Blackmoor may not have been Arneson s highest priority game at the time. [COTT:72:v4n6]

Although Gygax and Arneson collaborated together in early 1972 on *Don t Give Up the Ship*, it does not seem to have been until GenCon V that Gygax learned the degree to which Blackmoor had expanded beyond the original rules and scope of *Chainmail*. Little of the diversity and novelty of these dungeon adventures could be inferred from the offhand reference to an underground maze in Points of Interest in Black Moor, and that article would only be printed in the final breath of the Castle & Crusade Society, never to be

¹²⁴ TSR would later publish this game as *DUNGEON!* (1975). It is not to be confused with the *D&D* e Section 5.1). game below.

¹²⁵ [COTT:72:v4n4] The September issue of *Corner of the Table* briefly details some of the actions of piece for *Different Worlds* #5. This science fiction campaign inspired the future TSR releases *Star Probe* (1975) and *Star Empires* (1977), see Section 5.5.

elaborated in that forum. As a recipient of *Corner of the Table*, however, Gygax had the opportunity to read some more interesting tidbits about Arneson fantasy campaign;; he observed that the battle reports were so interesting and humorous that there was no stopping a handful of Lake Geneva players from horning into things. [WD:v1n7] Once the depth of Blackmoor became apparent, Gygax expressed an interest in the new Twin Cities games, and invited both Arneson and Megarry (with his Dungeons of Pasha Cada) to demonstrate their work in Lake Geneva no doubt with the understanding that Gygax endorsement could be a quick inroad to publication via Guidon Games. In the fall of 1972, the two ambassadors from the Twin Cities arrived and put on a show for the Lake Genevans. This visit might have coincided with Gygax review of Arneson *Ships of the Line* manuscript around the middle of September.¹²⁶

Meanwhile, in the Blackmoor campaign, the heroes had been exiled to a southern marshland called Loch Gloomen, or more colloquially Lake Gloomey (any resemblance of this name or geography to Lake Geneva is presumably coincidental).¹²⁷ Once again, the heroes found themselves under siege by the familiar Baddies in this hostile new land, and redeemed themselves through a victory against the forces led by Kurt Krey (formerly the captain of the guard of Blackmoor, now designated as Anti-Super-Hero Level IV Wizard [riding a] Tame Dragon). After their victory, some of the heroes chose to remain in that unpleasant area, and others returned to Blackmoor to further pillage its underworld. The September *Corner of the Table* summarizes the state of play at the time: Each weekend at St. Thomas three or four such adventures are held or there may be a great battle as the forces of Evil sweep into Vestføld to again do battle on a massive scale. There are roles for everyone and should one suddenly depart Blackmoor veil of tears a new role awaits you immediately. There isn't a single player in the Blackmoor Bunch that hasn't had at least a half dozen lives so don't get depressed if a Dragon steps on you the first time you participate it isn't the first time, or the last, that it has happened. [COTT:72:v4n6]

With roles for everyone to play, it sounds like introducing new characters to the mix posed no great difficulties. When envisioning how Gygax experienced Blackmoor in Lake Geneva, however, consider that it is no trivial matter for a game like Blackmoor to go on the road. In the first place, Arneson certainly could not have brought much by way of a miniature tabletop setup, and thus the incarnation that Gygax saw may have emphasized the paper and pencil dungeons more than some Twin Cities sessions had. Moreover, Arneson could not supply Blackmoor's players. In Blackmoor, as it was played in the Twin Cities, most of the Baddies were nominally under the control of players; the orcs in the dungeon beneath Castle Blackmoor, for example, were answerable to Fred Funk (King Fred I of the Orcs) and the Wizard who lurked in its darkest recesses was played by John Soukop. As a referee running the game for the Lake Genevans, however, Arneson needed to embody all the forces of Chaos himself. Rob Kuntz recorded his memories of the occasion for posterity:

¹²⁶ *Ships of the Line* is dated September 15, 1972, and clearly states that the work was intended for a Guidon Games edition, which never came. *Ships of the Line* did, however, appear in the *Strategic Review* #3) along with a planned title called *Naval Orders of Battle*. See Chapter Five for more.

¹²⁷

presented in *Blackmoor* (1975).

Gary, myself and a few other local wargamers were the first lucky fellows from Lake Geneva to experience the rigors of Blackmoor. This idea caught on deeply with Gary after an exciting adventure in which our party of heroes fought a troll, were fireballed by a magic-user, then fled to the outdoors (being chased by the Magic-user and his minions), fought four (gulp!) Balrogs, followed a map to sixteen ogres and destroyed them with a wish from a sword we had procured from the hapless troll earlier. All, what you'd say, in a day's work. [WG:#1]

Two things particularly captured Gygax imagination during that initial exposure: the idea of measured progression (experience points) and the addition of games taking place in a dungeon maze. had expanded character), the availability of diverse equipment that characters could purchase and the addition of new monsters. Much like when he witnessed *The Siege of Bodenburg* at GenCon I, Gygax was hooked, and quite naturally the first thing he requested was the rules. [DR:#7] He was also struck by the manner in which Arneson

descriptions (presumably the abilities grouped under

1.11 THE FANTASY GAME

Arneson recorded his reaction as: Rules? What rules!??! [DW:#3] Instead of deliberately designing a *Chainmail* variant, Arneson accumulated rulings from day to day without constructing any coherent overarching system.¹²⁸ In this respect, Blackmoor followed the precedent of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, which operated for years on piecemeal chunks of rules published a page or so at a time in *Corner of the Table*. When Arneson collected those rules for his compendium *Ships of the Line*, he described it as a process of transcription more than organization, even reproducing some rules we only used for short periods [which] proved usable if not desirable. [COTT:72:v4n1]

Thus, in response to his request for Blackmoor's system, Gygax received 20 or so pages of hand-written rules. [DR:#7] Gygax does not put rules in quotes idly. This was not a system constructed with any consideration to instructing someone who had not already experienced it. While for a first-time player, this sketch might have been baffling, it challenged Gygax in exactly the way that stimulated his creativity as the consummate collaborator, as someone who will cooperate on game design. He reacted to

Arneson fantasy wargame campaign notes in much the same way he had reacted to Jeff Perren's medieval rules in 1970, by adopting, expanding and repurposing them. On that foundation he built a system inspired by his subjective impression of playing in the Lake Geneva roadshow of Blackmoor and in Dave Megarry's Dungeons of Pasha Cada. How precisely those experiences corresponded to play in the Twin Cities, we can only speculate.

Gygax worked quickly: In a few weeks the rules Dave had done were subjected to even more expansion and change. [WD:v1n7] Shortly, Gygax had produced a preliminary manuscript for a fantasy game.¹²⁹ In it, he detailed no mere expansion of *Chainmail*, but a

¹²⁸ According to the interview in *Pegasus*

track of my rules decisions in a big black notebook as we went along so I'd
Unfortunately

have to keep track of all those records and maps. I really thought that it was going to be easy (just draw up one map and use it for-ever along with all kinds of other ideas on how to make things easy

Heroic Worlds

organized set, more notes on what I said earlier. Today people expect more detail, coherency,

¹²⁹ Early statements by Gygax suggest the initial manuscript may have been as long as one hundred

novel and largely independent system, though admittedly one that deferred to the original *Chainmail* rules for many procedures. Naturally, Gygax aspired to bring this game to the market, but his favored outlets for publication had grown less stable in 1972. In July, Don Lowry had announced his intention to relocate his entire business to the small coastal city of Belfast, Maine, and moreover to take on some full-time staff to assist in his triple-play of publishing *Panzerfaust*, producing the Guidon Games line and selling games through the mail. After assessing the prospects of this new venture, Gygax opted to remain in Lake Geneva;; by November, the Lowry family had already completed their move.¹³⁰ Thus, from the summer forward, Gygax association with the Guidon Games Wargaming in Miniatures series diminished, and the line itself began to dry up. Upon reopening in Maine, Lowry published Leon Tucker's Napoleonic wargaming monograph *Grosstaktik* (1972) in a pamphlet which omitted a Guidon Games imprint on its cover. The sole remaining titles Guidon would produce

Atlanta and *Ironclad*, both appearing in 1973 would credit Lowry as their primary designer. Geographical separation did not, however, terminate the partnership of Lowry and Gygax entirely;; Gygax did retain his miniatures column in *Panzerfaust* and continued to submit modest contributions to *Lowrys Guidon*.

Gygax's decision not to accompany Lowry to Maine must have depended in part on financial realities. After losing his insurance position in Chicago, Gygax had worked odd jobs in Lake Geneva to make ends meet, as the wages of semi-professional game publication, such as they were, could never suffice to support himself, his wife and their young children. From August 1971 forward, Gygax made a steady income repairing shoes. The bulky cobbling apparatus required for this vocation, by occupying so much space in his basement, forced Gygax to relocate his beloved sand table to his childhood friend Don Kaye's garage on Sage Street in Lake Geneva, which consequently became the primary meeting place of the LGTSA. Although Kaye very rarely contributed to, nor even received mention in, the wargaming trade journals, he enjoyed fantasy wargaming from its inception, and notably constructed one of the dragons featured in the LGTSA miniature games, a conversion from a toy brontosaurus.¹³¹

Separated from Lowry, and with the IFW comatose, Gygax lacked his traditional venues for socialization and consensus-building. He did however circulate copies of the fantasy game manuscript to a small number of his close associates in Lake Geneva and the Twin Cities. His most immediate source of feedback was his local circle, especially his son typed pages. [A&E:#2 and DR:#7]

¹³⁰ As one of their hires, they brought with them Tom Wham, later a celebrated illustrator and game designer.

¹³¹ [WGN:#127] Because of the lack of fantasy miniature figures manufactured at the time, most *Chainmail* figures employed by Gygax were tiny humanoids could be adapted from existing figures by mixing different scales and applying a bit of paint, but exotic creatures required more invasive procedures. Gygax made one dragon from a plastic stegosaurus model:

into the tail and puttied to make it longer and barbed, the spikes of the tail were clipped off and added as horns to the head end, cardboard bat wings were puttied into place, and finally the entire

ded to the long neck, spikes along the back, , Gygax had to the first fantasy miniature figures manufactured for the mass market, by MiniFigs and Scruby.

Ernie, his neighbors Rob and Terry Kuntz, and Don Kaye, as well as the rest of the LGTSA. Playtesting took place in an original fantasy setting: the dungeons beneath Gygax's newly-invented Castle Greyhawk, naturally patterned after Arneson Castle Blackmoor. An early description of that fiendish underworld realm gives a sense of the extent of Greyhawk thirteen developed levels: The first level was a simple maze of rooms and corridors, for none of the participants had ever played such a game before. The second level had two unusual items, a Nixie pool and a Fountain of snakes. The third featured a torture chamber and many small cells and prison rooms. The fourth was a level of crypts and undead... Level twelve was filled with Dragons. The bottom level, number thirteen, contained an inescapable slide which took the players clear through to China from whence they had to return via Outdoor Adventure [ed: Gygax surely means *Outdoor Survival*, the Avalon Hill boardgame see Section 3.2.1]... Of the dozen or so who played on a fairly regular basis, four made the lowest levels and took the trip: Rob Kuntz, now a co-referee in the campaign went alone;; and three of his friends managed to trace part of his route and blunder along the rest, so they followed him quickly to the Land of China Side levels included a barracks with Orcs, Hobgoblins and Gnolls continually warring with each other, a museum, a huge arena, an underground lake, a Giant's home, and a garden of fungi. [EU:#6 8] (Apr 1975) Famously, Gygax guided Rob Kuntz's character Robilar through those early Greyhawk romps. When Kuntz in turn acted as the referee, Gygax played a stable of characters including Yrag the swordsman and Mordenkainen the sorcerer. From the beginning of the Greyhawk campaign with six original players, the circle of converts grew, so that by the end of a year sixteen players sometimes crowded around the table.¹³² There is only scattered evidence of Gygax's larger outreach at the time;; a blurb in *Gamesletter* published June 1, 1973, reads: Gary Gygax & Dave Arneson are compiling an extensive set of rules for fantasy campaigns. Gary is very interested in contacting more fantasy gamers.¹³³

On the basis of the feedback he received, Gygax reworked and expanded the manuscript for the fantasy game throughout the spring of 1973, simultaneously helping to smooth the edges on Megarry's dungeon board game. Given his continuing status of alleged retirement from wargaming, the

twice-weekly dungeon adventures on Sunday and Wednesday evenings and the design of the fantasy campaign rules consumed all of his available hobby time. Gygax revealed in an article in *Lowrys Guidon* on a new product sets of five polyhedral dice (four, six, eight, twelve and twenty-sided dice) which Lowry had begun reselling that: I regret to state that I have been so busy working up chance tables for a fantasy campaign game of late that I have had no time to experiment with the dice for wargaming purposes. [LG:#5]

¹³² The players who joined the Greyhawk campaign during its first year included Don Arndt, Brian Blume, Tom Champeny, Bill Corey, Bob Dale, Mary Dale, Chip Mornard, Mike Mornard and Tim Wilson. [DR:#7]

¹³³ [GL:v9n58] To further explain the provenance of this short note, it was submitted to the *Gamesletter* of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (a science-fiction fandom association) by Alister It is likely that Gygax wrote to Macintyre asking him to help find fantasy gamers, and that Macintyre thought it more likely to unearth a few in a journal connected with science-fiction fandom than in any of the few barely-surviving wargaming club periodicals.

Meanwhile, in the Twin Cities, Arneson group integrated Gygax's new rules, and throughout 1973 the Blackmoor circle expanded, eventually including several members of the Minneapolis science-fiction fandom community not an inconsequential development, as we shall see in Section 5.1. An account from the autumn of 1973 notes that the Midwest Military Simulation Association then had about 35 members of which 20 are full-time active members, with individual members residing in Duluth, Rochester and Winona who come up for a monthly meeting of all the clubs.¹³⁴ Of course, the MMSA still practiced a great deal of traditional wargaming, including campaigns centering on the American Civil War and early modern Europe, but among its most popular activities of the day was the Fantasy (Sword and Sorcery) simulation being run in conjunction with Gary Gygax's group in Lake Geneva. As a publishable system took shape, however, Arneson would express concerns about his meager ongoing involvement and the direction of development. He lamented after the fact: It was very much a case of me providing various ideas and concepts but not having any say as to how they were used, [DW:#3] and, I was not consulted on many aspects of the final work. [SG:#21] In part, this arose from the remoteness of the Twin Cities from Lake Geneva and the high cost of telephone calls at the time;; postal participation in the game design process could only exert so much influence.

Gygax acknowledged Arneson he saw fit. He recorded that Arneson [DR:#7] and indeed, as early as 1974 Arneson bemoaned the communication breakdown and mixup evinced by some aspects of the final product, obviously places where Gygax deviated from Arneson context, however: Gygax ruleset that could be understood by a novice, represented a polar opposite from Arneson modus operandi. Whatever objections he raised, Arneson did not manage to impose a bar on proceeding to publication.

The resulting mid-1973 manuscript far exceeded the length of the first draft. Gygax arrived at a name for the project that followed the longstanding wargaming trend of ampersand conjunctions in titles: *Strategy & Tactics* magazines, or the Castle & Crusade Society, or the popular alliterative cadence of sword-and-sorcery, or any of the three X & Y titled booklets that made up *Tractics*. Later in life, Gygax was fond of ascribing the coinage to one of his family members, though the attribution changed in the telling: sometimes he bestowed it to his first wife Mary, other times to his daughter Cindy. The name was, of course, *Dungeons & Dragons*.

discomfiture, but proceeded with the design as complained bitterly that the game wasn't right,

original system.¹³⁵ Posterity must understand this rift in its approach to game design, that is formulating an organized

¹³⁴ From #40, which is undated. The following issue of *GG*, however, notes that *Strategy & Tactics*

has no precise attribution,

but lists Arneson as the contact for the MMSA. Arneson probably authored it himself, though

possibly William Hoyt (who is listed in #38 as a contact for the Minnesota area) put

the piece together. Right up to the discontinuation of *Corner of the Table* late in 1972, Arneson had an

increasingly ambivalent relationship with the MMSA, however, frequently complaining of the lack of

activity in the group. A surviving undated letter (probably 1973) from Arneson announces a

suspension o

¹³⁵ In a letter to Scott Rich, . [GPGPN:#15]

The matter of finding a publisher for this *Dungeons & Dragons* was not trivial. Gygax first dispatched Megarry, with his recommendation, to show

Don Lowry The Dungeons of Pasha Cada, but Guidon Games financial state at the time forced Lowry to pass on publication, despite a favorable impression of the game.¹³⁶ Lowry's relocation to Maine had proven acutely disruptive: thanks to the higher profile of *Panzerfaust*, the volume of the business outpaced both staff and physical space, and thus orders dropped on account of sluggish service but ironically, after he moved to larger quarters and engaged new employees, the sales these improvements had hoped to address were already in an irreversible decline. One must also recall that the general American economic downturn of that year, precipitated by stratospheric oil prices, dampened spending on most luxuries, including hobbies. By mid-1973, Lowry already had laid off his employees and faced more tough choices.¹³⁷ Even after Megarry's disappointing reception, Gygax still pitched *Dungeons & Dragons* to Lowry over the telephone: As Lowry's Miniature Rules Editor, I urged him to immediately publish the game, for I viewed it as something really new and different and envisioned it as having great potential just how great I must admit I did not conceive at that time. Don turned it down. [DR:#11]

Lowry believed the effort required to create a dungeon exceeded any reasonable expectation of the enthusiasm of consumers. Remember that few ventures other than Guidon Games at the time dared to print miniature wargame rules in book form at all, and the sprawling length of the *Dungeons & Dragons* manuscript could not have improved its prospects in that narrow market. Although former *Panzerfaust* editor Donald Greenwood new position at Avalon Hill translated into a Consulting Editor post (assuredly uncompensated) for Gygax at the *General*, and soon would result in the republication of the Guidon offering *Alexander* under the Avalon Hill imprint, this new fantasy game could not find a home there either. I mentioned *D&D* to Avalon Hill, but the reception was a trifle chilly, Gygax recalled, and the establishment was not about to jump into something as neither *D&D* nor [Megarry's] *Dungeon* were salable different and controversial as fantasy commodities.¹³⁸

The solution arose from convention. At the start of the summer of 1973, Len Lakofka, John Bobek and other IFW loyalists made one last Herculean effort to restart the IFW. Earlier in the spring, they had mailed out many of the year-old issues of the *International Wargamer* which had previously failed to reach the membership. Two new issues also appeared in the spring, mostly to Gygax's old brainchild, his beloved wargaming

¹³⁶ In *Panzerfaust*

offered it to us (Guidon Games

then, so we returned it to him via Gary Gygax who had been the one to refer him to us in the first

¹³⁷ Within a year, Lowry sold the Lowrys Hobbies business altogether, to focus on Guidon Games and *Panzerfaust*. However, no further Guidon Games would be produced; by the end of 1974 Lowry left Maine for southern California, where he has resided ever since.

¹³⁸ [DR *Dungeons & Dragons D&D* was never presented to Avalon Hill for *Avalon Hill Silver Jubilee*). However, they do concede would have published it had the opportunity arose it was so foreign to the marketing philosophy

promote Lakofka second annual Chicago International Game Show, though with an added attempt to reignite interest in the IFW overall.¹³⁹ The latter goal, in any event, was not to be met. Following the final issue of the *International Wargamer* there appeared a twopage addendum called IFW News which proclaimed the death of the *International Wargamer* and a proposed reorganization of the destitute IFW, accompanied by an appeal for a sta s subscription list.¹⁴⁰ That would be the final document to bear the IFW imprimatur. As for the International Game Show itself, Lowry heard that turnout was disappointing. [PZF:#59]

Neither of these 1973 issues of the *International Wargamer* mentioned, let alone endorsed, a Lake Geneva Convention. Apparently, it was no longer an IFW tradition. **GenCon VI** would proceed without the IFW, however. The LGTSA itself hosted the convention, with some sponsorship from Lowry Enterprises, publicity from Avalon Hill in the *General* and support from the Twin Cities gamers, including Arneson, Mike Carr and the eminent Pete Gaylord. [PZF:#60] In response to popular demand, the LGTSA welcomed GenCon back to its traditional venue, the Horticultural Hall in Lake Geneva, on August 18 and 19. Attendance reported climbed back over three hundred, enough to make that venue bustle without bursting, and Don Greenwood proclaimed the event an outstanding success in the pages of the *General*. [AHG:v10n3]

The triumphant homecoming of GenCon clarified the destiny of the LGTSA and of *Dungeons & Dragons*. If a tiny wargaming club like the LGTSA could operate GenCon unencumbered by the woes afflicting the national and diverse IFW, then why could that club not just as easily take

game publication into its own hands? Perhaps the success of a small publisher named Game Designers Workshop (GDW), which formed in June 1973 and exhibited its initial offerings to much acclaim at GenCon, also instilled some confidence in the LGTSA.¹⁴¹ Following that blueprint, Gygax thus entered a partnership with his close friend and fellow LGTSA member Donald Kaye as of October 1, 1973.¹⁴² Their venture clearly modeled itself Guidon Games, aspiring to produce inexpensive pamphlet-format publications of miniature wargame rules. Kaye borrowed against an insurance policy to provide the initial capital to cover articles of incorporation and the printing of a single game. In honor of the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association, they named their concern Tactical Studies Rules, or TSR.

Dungeons & Dragons, however, weighed in far too heavy to count as a single game. Like *Tractics*, its scope had expanded during its development to a point where the text¹³⁹ Oddly, the first new issue to appear broke from the previous volume/number convention and instead referred to itself as *International Wargamer* #64. This convention was abandoned a month later, with the publication of the final issue of the *IW*. [IW:v5n9] Note that *Gamesletter* #55 (Apr 1973) records receipt of that undated *IW*, so the issue could not have shipped any later than that date.

¹⁴⁰ Lowry volunteered to let *Panzerfaust* replace the *IW*, but by the time he did so Lakofka had probably already identified a successor in the publishers of the *Diplomacy* fanzine *El Conquistador*, who were closely tied to Lakofka
¹⁴¹ The behemoth game demonstrated at GenCon VI, GDW *Drang Noch Osten* (1973), remains one of the paragons of board wargaming.

¹⁴² This date for the original partnership appears in the documentation of Civ. 4-79-109, a preliminary *Arneson v. Gygax* court case. Those notes suggest that the only documented extension of that partnership to include Brian Blume

greement (see below for more).

needed to be divided across no less than three Guidon-sized pamphlets. This simply exceeded the capability of TSR meager initial budget. Accordingly, they opted to print some less ambitious title first, hoping that the proceeds might help finance *Dungeons & Dragons* as well as future projects. They selected for this purpose another collaboration between Gygax and his *Chainmail* co-author Jeff Perren, already proven a commerciallyviable duo, this time with a piece set in the English Civil War

entitled *Cavaliers & Roundheads*. This October 1973 pamphlet, an offering firmly in the tradition of Guidon Games, was the inaugural publication of Tactical Studies Rules.

The profits from *Cavaliers & Roundheads*, however, fell short of expectations. Sales suffered for want of broad advertising, an impossibility given budgetary constraints. Had the game debuted during GenCon, that would have presented a natural marketing channel, but the autumn held no similar opportunities for promotion. TSR initial offering did receive a half-page notice in *Lowrys Guidon* #7, but this likely did not reach consumers until close to the new year, and even in the most generous estimation could not have reached many of them. Nor did Gygax market the game in his few remaining columns in the journals of the wargaming community;; even where he did maintain a presence, he ignored the English Civil War game in favor of his less mundane interests. For example, in spite of his promise to the contrary, Gygax once again leveraged his feature in *Panzerfaust* in the fall to promote fantasy wargaming: an article in the September 1973 issue entitled Fantasy Wargaming a la Tolkien provided a *Chainmail* interpretation of the Battle of the Five Armies from *The Hobbit*. [PZF:#60] A couple months later, to a new wargaming periodical called the *Great Plains Game Players Newsletter*, he wrote lamely, TSR currently has ECW rules (*Cavalier & Roundheads*), but suddenly perks up to gush and as of January we should have a fantasy campaign set (a really superb game, built from *Chainmail* and Arneson Blackmoor).¹⁴³ Observe that even as its release drew very close, Gygax still shied away from divulging the title of this forthcoming fantasy game.

Gygax and Kaye desperately strove to expedite release of *Dungeons & Dragons*, at least in part because they feared competition, given the lengthy development cycle of the game.¹⁴⁴ Fortunately, they found additional funding within the ranks of the LGTSA itself. The previous summer at GenCon VI, Brian J. Blume (b. 1950), admiring the LGTSA's work in organizing the conference, requested and received admittance;; by the turn of 1974, the LGTSA could boast a whopping twelve members. Blume, who worked as a tool and die maker, had a long background in Avalon Hill gaming, and believed strongly in the prospects of fantasy wargaming. With the support of his family, Blume provided Gygax and Kaye with additional funding, in exchange for a position of equal partnership with the two of them

in TSR, commencing in December 1973.¹⁴⁵ As Gygax reported a few months later in 1974:

¹⁴³ [GPGPN:#6] Though this did not appear until after the new year (Feb 1974), it obviously is written in reply to the previous issue of *GPGPN*, that of November 1973.

¹⁴⁴ Given the difficulty they had bringing the game to print, however, it is not clear where competitors might have sought publication. Most likely Gygax feared the Midgard family of postal games, which had received periodic mentions in various zines, for example in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* #34 (July 31, 1972). See Section 4.6 for more information about Midgard.

¹⁴⁵

were Don Kaye (deceased January of this year) and myself. We were joined by Brian Blume about [O&W:#9] A relatively early Gygax interview in August 1979 is [WDF:#14] Some

Don Kaye is our wise and noble president, Brian Blume the watchful vice president, and I am the oppressed and hard-working editor. We capitalized the firm on a proverbial shoe string, and although we someday hope to make a small profit, every cent that comes in is immediately put right back into the company. [GPGPN:#9]

This cash infusion from Blume, along with the profits from the publication of *Cavaliers & Roundheads*, secured the funds needed for the printing of one thousand copies of *Dungeons & Dragons* by the aptly-named Graphic Printing company of Lake Geneva, right after the holidays.¹⁴⁶ Gygax solemnly attested that Don Kaye, Brian Blume and I staked the whole of our company on this venture, for it took every bit of capital we had to produce the game. We also spent hundreds of hours readying it to print hours we could not spend gaming, or with our family, or in pursuit of some other form of relaxation and enjoyment. It was long, hard work done late into the night and on weekends. [DR:#11]

1.12 STARTLED BY THE NEW

The printers obligingly returned three pamphlets whose titles followed the familiar ampersand-punctuated pattern: *Men & Magic*, *Monsters & Treasure* and *Underworld & Wilderness*. They arrived with cardboard boxes bearing a woodgrain pattern to which a few paper labels identifying the product as *Dungeons & Dragons* needed to be affixed. It was the duty of the three principles in TSR to assemble these boxes by hand, and of course to fulfill all orders arriving by mail. The question was whether or not the

broader world would buy this thing whether or not anyone wanted rules for fantastic medieval wargames campaigns.

There was no compelling reason to assume that *Dungeons & Dragons* would take the market by storm. In the summer of 1973, for *Panzerfaust* #59, Don Lowry invited various luminaries of the wargaming community to prognosticate on the future of the industry. Most of the responses agonized over the glut of commercial wargames in the marketplace, as if the respondents informally conspired to discourage any additional competition through overstatement of market saturation. Avalon Hill, its views presented by Don Greenwood, predictably insisted that it maintained supremacy in the hobby gaming market even refusing to acknowledge that SPI constituted a direct competitor and expansively proclaimed in quite the spirit of their founder Charles S. Roberts: It is our goal to become another Milton Bradley or Parker Brothers, only with adult games. Naturally, since we deal with adult rather than children's games, this is somewhat idealistic, the market just not being big enough to sustain that volume of sales. [PZF:#59]

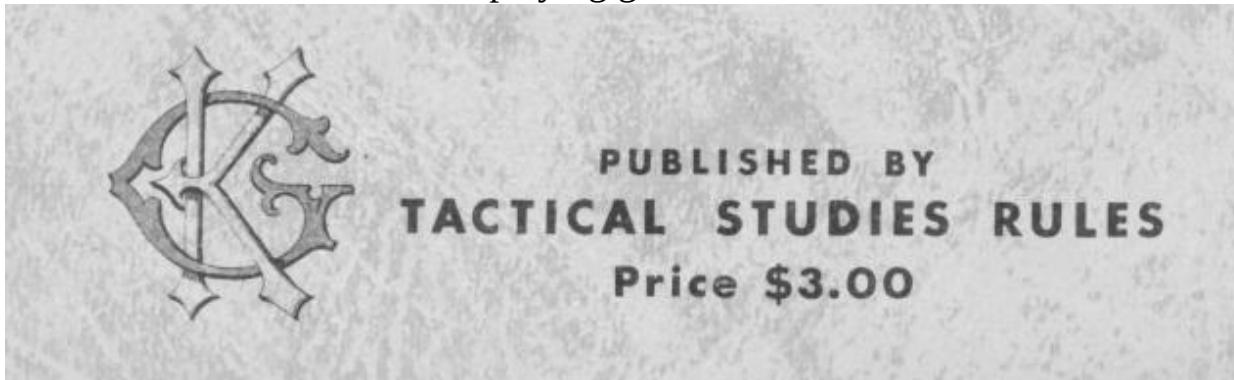
A few months later, in the *General*, Thomas Shaw expressed a more critical and insightful perspective on the state of the industry: The wargame today is still much the same as it was in 1952, the time that Charles S. Roberts conceived the original *Tactics*. Despite having reviewed the work of, at conservative estimate, at least 10,000 freelance designers, Shaw attested that

dramatically new since *Gettysburg*,
in the wargame field, there really hasn't been anything
a 1958 title. The form letter that Avalon Hill dispatched
late interview sources suggest that with \$700 from the proceeds of *Cavaliers*& *Roundheads* granted TSR the \$2,300 it needed to publish the game. No contemporary resources directly corroborate these figures, however.¹⁴⁶
Early on, Gygax
eleven months to sell those first sets of *D&D*
print sizes.

to prospective designers suggested they submit only games unlike any other on the market. So where were those games? It is my opinion that we have today far too many games on the market that are re-hashes of old formulas... Frankly, I've seen nothing startlingly new in over a decade. [AHG:v10n3] It is almost shocking to hear such candid words from the executive in charge of Avalon Hill's strategy, himself a designer of some

renown, painting his industry as in the sort of rut that would preclude challenging titans like Parker Brothers. He intuited the market's receptiveness to something startlingly new, yet could not quite divine what might fill that void.

None of the respondents to Lowry's survey mentioned fantasy wargaming, not even Don Lowry himself. In keeping with his own interests, Lowry predicted that the popularity of miniature wargames would increase, but surely he did not anticipate anything like the imminent popularity of *Dungeons & Dragons*, which would suddenly and unexpectedly place the success of the wargaming community on a level where Milton Bradley and Parker Brothers had cause for concern. Before that would happen, however, *Dungeons & Dragons* would no longer be sold as Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns. By mid-1976, the term wargames campaigns, which, it must be said, failed to characterize what the product had become, would be replaced by a new term, one which has not yet appeared in this chapter, and one which did not appear anywhere within the 1974 *Dungeons & Dragons* box. There was in fact no need for the term until enough imitators had emerged that *Dungeons & Dragons* became one instance of a type of game, and a name for the type was needed. The name that stuck was, of course, role-playing game.



FIGURE

13:

TSR'S

GYGYAX/KAYE

"GK"

LOGO

CHAPTER TWO: SETTING THE MEDIEVAL FANTASY GENRE

All wargames have a *setting*, and it is from wargames that the concept of setting entered *Dungeons & Dragons* and its many descendants. In a

wargame, the setting encompasses both the environment in which conflicts transpire and the nature of the participants in the conflict. Settings admit of varying degrees of abstraction or concreteness, but the presence of a setting is one of the necessary criteria that differentiates wargames from general games of strategy.

Consider the game of chess as a counterexample. The board on which chess games transpire is completely abstract, just sixty-four squares with no relationship to any real or imagined terrain. One could claim that a particular chess game was supposed to represent a battle in Italy, or on one of the moons of Saturn, but nothing about the play of the game would change as a result. The only context that the game provides is the trappings of a feudal monarchy, with nobility, mounted horseman, castles and expendable serfs. The behavior of these agents quickly dispels any pretense of a coherent setting, however;; a cowering monarch, a deadly queen, veering clergymen and deftly gliding towers have no necessary relationship with their namesakes in a medieval court.

A wargame, by contrast, has a setting which characterizes both the conflicting forces and the sorts of locations where battles take place. Games may further dictate specific theaters of battle, or *scenarios*. The clearest examples of wargames published with scenarios are Avalon Hill board wargames like *Gettysburg* (1958). In all board wargames, the physical location of battle is modeled by the map glued to the provided board. For *Gettysburg*, the scenario encompasses the terrain of the famous American Civil War battle and the forces that fought upon it. Wargamers might say its setting is the American Civil War, in which the Battle of Gettysburg is a real scenario. It is real by virtue of reflecting the conditions of a historical battle: if the map of *Gettysburg* depicted some area other than the battleground at Gettysburg, say a parcel of land somewhere in Colorado, it would cease to be a realistic model of that battle and would encroach upon a fictional setting. Similarly, the game pieces of *Gettysburg* are Union and Confederate soldiers, with armaments and capability approximating those of their historical counterparts. If Union tanks met Confederate war chariots on the field of battle, then once again, the setting would cease to correspond to the event it aspires to model. Not all departures from realism are so egregious if the game featured three times as many Confederate soldiers as Union soldiers at the battle of Gettysburg, say, this would also undermine the realistic depiction of that conflict.

The setting of a wargame need neither be real nor unique, however. *Tactics* (1954), the progenitor of board wargames, shipped with a map depicting a fictional battleground. While it does not correspond to any historical battle or any physical location on this planet, it is a scenario firmly grounded in the modern wargaming setting. The map originally published with *Tactics* was not, however, the only scenario developed for the game. In its twenty-fifth anniversary reissue, *Tactics* appeared with an alternate board depicting a different terrain for use with the same original combatants and rules. Games with a real scenario also need not have a unique setting: Gygax board game *Alexander the Great* (1971) modeled only the Battle of Gaugamela in its initial release, but a subsequent expansion to the game entitled *Alexander's Other Battles* provides several additional scenarios where Alexander campaigned.

A great deal of the study in the previous chapter is committed to understanding what it meant for a wargame to be medieval or fantastical. These predicates define setting abstractly, and are most commonly used in miniature wargaming, where, unlike in board wargames, scenarios are rarely supplied in published rules after all, the construction of the terrain is an essential component of miniature wargaming. One exception would be *The Siege of Bodenburg*, which is a medieval miniature wargame published with a fictional scenario it depicts a particular battle between particular forces in a particular place, but that place does not actually exist in the real world and there was thus no historical battle which the game can be said to simulate. *Chainmail*, on the other hand, provides a generic medieval setting applicable to any number of medieval battles, real or otherwise. The players or referees setting up an instance of the *Chainmail* miniature game must invent a scenario for that game, as the published rules do not supply one themselves. One could easily imagine the adaptation of the *Chainmail* rules to the Bodenburg scenario without altering the parameters of *Bodenburg* significantly.

The greatest innovation in *Chainmail* was its Fantasy Supplement, which built upon the medieval setting because most of the fantastic battles related in novels more closely resemble medieval warfare than they do earlier or later forms of combat. From the claim that it allows players to refight the epic struggles related by J.R.R. Tolkien, Robert E. Howard, and other fantasy writers, we gather that the fantasy elements of *Chainmail* are also generic rather than specific to any scenario *Chainmail* is not a set of rules dedicated to the Middle-earth setting of Tolkien, let alone any particular

battle therein. Fantasy *Chainmail* games transpire in necessarily fictional settings, but even fictional settings have measurable consistency with their sources, as well as varying levels of detail and concreteness. Defensively, Gygax wrote that, Tolkien purists will not find these rules entirely satisfactory, I believe, for many of the fantastic creatures do not follow his specifications, mainly because I believe that other writers were as authoritative as he. [WGN:#127] Furthermore, *Chainmail* goes on to mention Poul Anderson's novel *Three Hearts and Three Lions* and Michael Moorcock character Elric as contributing influences.

Dungeons & Dragons did not relegate its fantasy element to a mere supplement: while it is possible to play the game without invoking the fantastic, this would disregard the majority of the rules and the likely interests of players. The setting remains a medieval setting, but a medieval setting suffused with the fantastical. As Gygax wrote in the foreword: These rules are strictly fantasy. Those wargamers who lack imagination, those who don't care for Burroughs's Martian adventures where John Carter is groping through black pits, who feel no thrill upon reading Howard's Conan saga, who do not enjoy the de Camp & Pratt fantasies or Fritz Leiber Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser pitting their swords against evil sorceries will not be likely to find *DUNGEONS and DRAGONS* to their taste. But those whose imaginations know no bounds will find that these rules are the answer to their prayers.

How was the fantasy setting of *Dungeons & Dragons* constructed? What aspects of the setting were invented by Gygax and Arneson, and what aspects have clear antecedents in fantasy literature known to the authors? Even more than in *Chainmail*, the fantasy setting of *Dungeons & Dragons* is a generic setting, an amalgamation of various fantasy sources rather than the world of any particular author. Its construction was a taxonomic exercise, incorporating a superset of the elements that appear in the corpus of fantasy fiction and, through a system of quantification, providing something of a grand unified theory of how all these entities compare to one another and might interact with one another. From the foreword we know this corpus must include Burroughs, Howard, de Camp, Pratt, and Leiber;; in later writings Gygax enumerated more sources, as is discussed below.¹ This ambitious taxonomic undertaking grew ever more elaborate as *Dungeons & Dragons* developed past 1974, incorporating diverse historical mythoi and the products of many authors' imaginations;; its overall classification of the

fantasy universe is one of the most lasting products of the game. The core elements of the *Dungeons & Dragons* setting, including creatures, magic items, spells, currency and classes, influenced a host of subsequent games and fictions.

A mere analysis of that taxonomy, though essential to a history, cannot however resolve a core mystery of the *Dungeons & Dragons* setting, and perhaps the most significant one: why was it that this whole family of games, which we now call role-playing games, began with fantasy gaming instead of some other setting, like a modern wargame setting or science fiction or the Wild West? Why did the fantasy genre capture the popular imagination in the years before the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*? And to what degree did the subject of fantasy literature itself contribute to the invention of role-playing games?

2.1 THE EVOLUTION OF FANTASY

The answer to these questions lies in the history of the fantasy wargame setting, which branched off from a twentieth-century fantasy genre straddling a number of media. In the early 1970s, the most important artifacts of the fantasy genre were written fictions;; although comics and films contributed to the popular conception of fantasy, these works usually derived, however loosely, from a prior literary source. Of course, fantasy, if we understand the term broadly, has existed since the dawn of intellectual history. Tolkien and his contemporaries were not the inventors of dwarves or elves or wizards. These fantastic personages were the staples of mythology, folklore and fairy tales in a number of (mostly northern European) cultures: the eddas and sagas of the Scandinavian people, the Old English ballads, the Irish tales of sorcery and German *kindermärchen* collected by the Brothers Grimm.² Following only the visual arts, stories were among humanity's first tools

¹ In the *Wargamer's Digest* of May 1974, not long after the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*, Gygax Howard, Leiber, de Camp, Pratt and Anderson trading Burroughs for Anderson focuses more directly on the modern conception of fantasy.

² The oldest stories featuring these fantastic elements emerged at a time and place when the threads of history, religion and fiction had yet to be disentangled into discrete disciplines. As C. S. Lewis wrote in *The Discarded Image* etimes accepted myths as facts, often when they had some correlation with prevalent religious beliefs or on the strength of a respected

authority who related them. Thus, although texts in the remotest antiquity of human thought set certain parameters that are followed in later genre conventions, it would be a *Strange Journey* constitutes science fiction, or that *Odyssey* is a contribution to the fantasy genre, but it would be more accurate to say these works introduced elements which would later inspire genre authors. Mythological sources will receive detailed consideration in Section 2.6.

to simulate the impossible, thanks to the fundamental disconnection of language from reality: words can describe things, including fantastic adventures, that could never exist.

Tellingly, Gygax does not promise in the foreword to *Dungeons & Dragons* that one might use its system to recreate the myths of old: the wanderings of Odysseus, or the exploits of Siegfried in the *Nibelungenlied*. Naming instead the works of Burroughs, Howard, de Camp, Pratt and Leiber, he directs our attention to a body of literature flush with mythological trappings but nonetheless qualitatively different in character from myths.³ Gygax's literary sources were first and foremost works of popular fiction. As such, we must carefully distinguish these works from ancient legends or classical fantasy literature. Works of academic literary criticism like Penzoldt's *The Supernatural in Fiction* (1952) or Todorov's *The Fantastic* (1970) treat highbrow fantasies involving uncanny events;; Todorov's nuanced definition of fantastic literature is strongly predicated on the presence of uncertainty, in the minds of characters within and readers of the story, about the reality of supernatural happenings. Under this definition, fantastic literature would comprise a great many things that we would today more likely identify as predecessors of the horror genre, and a great many works, like those of Kafka, which are clearly not genre fiction at all. The fantasy genre stories that inspired *Dungeons & Dragons* are more readily distinguished by the presence of one or more of the following elements: fantastic people and creatures including mythological animals and humanoids;; magical items such as enchanted swords, rings that bestow invisibility and so on;; and magic as a discipline studied by wizards who learn and cast spells. These stories typically transpire at some remove from the mundane world, be it in a distant past or future age, in a lost or undiscovered land or an imaginary otherworld. They moreover differ from classical sources and fairy tales in tone and pacing;; legends and myths bear little resemblance to the direct adventure stories appearing in popular fiction,

and it is those sorts of stories that a game system like *Dungeons & Dragons* aims to recreate.

2.1.1 FANTASY AS POPULAR ADVENTURE FICTION

Popular fantasy fiction as we understand it today developed into its mature form over a period of roughly thirty years, from the mid-1930s to the 1960s. It relied heavily on earlier works, including those of Edgar Rice Burroughs and Lord Dunsany, but only in Howard's Conan stories and in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* do we see the inception of a sword-and-sorcery genre. Over the decades that followed, fantasy fiction remained the product of a relatively small and insular community, including such notables as de Camp and Leiber, thriving in the pages of inexpensive but transient genre magazines. It flourished largely in the format of short fiction, rarely seeing book form outside of specialty hardcover anthologies with low print runs. In the 1960s, the sudden and monumental popularity of Tolkien rescued those works from obscurity and encouraged a flood of reprints, imitators and newcomers. In that period of frenzied interest lie the seeds of the fantasy setting of *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons*. Prior to the 1960s, these genre fantasy works simply were not available to the general public;³ a story published in a mass-market pulp like *Unknown* in the 1940s would effectively stay in print for a month and then fall off the face of the earth. Only when later editors collected these stories into cheap, profitable paperback anthologies in the 1960s could they find a large and consistent audience. This situation was not unique to fantasy: all popular fiction exists in a similar situation, prisoner to the demands of the market and the most expedient means to turn a profit from literature.

³ The best introductions to the body of genre literature covered here have all been written not by *Imaginary Worlds* (1973) by Lin Carter, *Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers* (1977) by L. Sprague de Camp and *Wizardry & Wild Romance* (2004) by Michael Moorcock. Unfortunately, none of these studies approaches the material from quite the perspective that this study requires, hence a brief history of the fantasy genre appears in the following pages.

For a window of time from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, after the advent of industrial bulk publishing but before the seductive immediacy of radio and motion pictures, popular fiction was the primary

medium for the promulgation of stories to the general public. It emerged in a period where authorship as a remunerative career shifted its basis from patronage to broad popular appeal. Surging literacy rates created a market, but prior to the advent of inexpensive mass printing in the Industrial Revolution, total sales of books and magazines were obviously limited by the means of production and high costs restricted their availability to persons of means. Ineffectual copyright protection, especially at the international treaty level, further curtailed profits from sales. Authors at that time who were not themselves independently wealthy relied on patronage for their primary subsistence, and often suffused their works with dedications, poems or other celebrations of their patrons. Successful works that catered to a general readership were rare before the middle of the nineteenth century, beyond the pioneering success of Dickens's serials, but as they emerged, they clearly evinced a novel literary mode. When you aspire to entertain one aristocrat, or at best a small community of highly educated readers, you write a very different sort of work than you would when you hope your readership will encompass every literate person with a modest disposable income.⁴

It is unfashionable to levy any objective value judgment on the respective quality of popular fiction versus serious literature. It perhaps wisest to follow the conclusion of Ken Gelder, in his study *Popular Fiction* (2004), that the two exist in a constant state of mutual repulsion or repudiation. Authors of popular fiction tend to be prolific, if not hurried, as maximizing their output also maximizes their profits. The best popular authors write to provoke a vicarious response with direct, linear, action-oriented prose, the most successful instances of which were undoubtedly adventure stories, or as they were called in the nineteenth century, romances. These exciting and highly immersive romances would eventually collide with historical and mythological sources to form the fantasy genre which inspired the setting of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

For the purposes of this study, the first notable commercial romance came from Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 1894). It appeared in the primary medium through which fiction reached the consumers of its day: magazines. These mass-market periodicals, be they weekly or monthly, brought a mixture of news and entertainment to the Victorian home, and in this regard served much the same purpose as radio and television would later.⁵ Serialization in a popular magazine also increased the prospects of

publication in book form. Starting on the first of October in 1881, Stevenson serialized in a juvenile magazine called *Young Folks* a novel entitled *The Sea Cook, or Treasure Island*, which met with little popular acclaim until reprinted as a standalone book with the shorter name *Treasure Island* (1883). As Stevenson wrote the final sections of that famous novel, while wintering at the spas of Davos, Switzerland, in his life-long struggle against tuberculosis, he played war games in the attic of his chalet with his young stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, a practice which we will revisit in Section 3.1.5.

⁴ As is noted in Section 3.1.2, even authors of works on wargaming relied on patrons and advance subscriptions in the last years of the eighteenth century. Early editions of both Hellwig and Venturini exhibit lengthy subscription lists, ordered by the social rank of the subscriber. ⁵ This notion, and the following analysis of early English popular fiction magazines overall, is greatly

The Age of Storytellers (2006).

Treasure Island established the quest for riches as the most reliable subject of romances. It popularized the trope of a group of adventurers following a map to a buried treasure, and the familiar device of treasure chests. Indeed, the gold pieces coveted by the adventurers of *Treasure Island* and their adversaries, the mutinous pirates, are an important literary ancestor of all the lucre won by later wizards and warriors. It is perhaps no coincidence that when Jim Hawkins inspects the map of *Treasure Island*, its contours strike him as that of a fat dragon standing up, a fitting custodian for riches. The immediacy of the narrative in *Treasure Island*, the lack of pace-deadening summarization and digressions, the judicious use of suspense and a triumphant rags-to-riches storyline (as well as the reprieve of the charismatic villain, Long John Silver) informed many later works of popular fiction. Stevenson's party of adventurers, with their diverse and complementary skill sets, also inspired future fellowships in adventure fiction: in *Treasure Island* one finds the marksman squire, the combat-honed doctor and the plucky lad (and faithful narrator) whose stealthiness enables him to uncover the plot of the mutineers and, at a critical moment, to wrest control of the schooner from the pirates.

The acclaim of this treasure-seeking romance soon encouraged imitations, the most direct of which was H. Rider Haggard *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), the debut of the hunter and adventurer Allan Quatermain. Haggard's tale features a similar cadre of hardy Englishmen on the lookout

for a lost sibling, though quickly their attention turns to treasure. It takes the party into uncharted African territory, where they discover an uncontacted tribe and masquerade as gods who have descended from the sky. Eventually, they join in a civil war, and while fighting on the side of the rightful king, an English hero named Sir Henry Curtis lays aside his firearms to don chain armor and swing an enormous battle axe. Victorious, they are rewarded with a trip to the eponymous diamond mines, where an ageless witch opens a secret door leading to a vast treasure chamber. They are entombed within, but manage to escape through an elaborate series of forgotten catacombs with only a few handfuls of diamonds enough to make them comfortably wealthy, yet a pittance compared to the world-changing wealth they left behind.

One could shift the setting of either *Treasure Island* or *King Solomon's Mines* to a fantasy world without doing great violence to either story. But in the Victorian era, the fantasy genre as such did not yet exist, and nor did the other distinct genres we would recognize today: science fiction, horror, mystery, romance and so on. A delineation of genres had been intuited earlier in the nineteenth century by Edgar Allan Poe, whose narrowly-focused short stories laid the very foundations of the mystery, horror and sciencefiction genres. His innovations were well known to the authors who carried those styles of fiction into popular literary magazines and subsequently the pulps. Years before Jim Hawkins and his crew in *Treasure Island* set out to find pirate treasure, William Legrand ventured in search of the buried hoard of the pirate Captain Kidd in Poe's *The Gold Bug*.⁶ Years before Arthur Conan Doyle introduced Sherlock Holmes in *The Strand* magazine in 1891, there was the preternaturally-gifted armchair deducer C. Auguste Dupin in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841).⁷ Years before H. G. Wells and Jules Verne pioneered a genre of scientific exploration of the unknown, there was Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, an influential imagining of a horrific voyage to the South Pole and the discovery of the unspeakable secrets it concealed.

⁶ *Treasure Island* openly alludes to

Authors like Conan Doyle and Wells popularized recognizable genre fiction in the pages of mass-market periodicals. When *The Strand* first appeared in London in 1891, it targeted a general middle-class readership, a niche which had previously been neglected by costly highbrow literary magazines. The science fiction historian Sam Moskowitz observed that there

was no dearth of English magazines for the affluent (costing around a shilling per issue), nor for the juvenile readership (like *Young Folks*, where Stevenson serialized *Treasure Island*), but *The Strand* pioneered inexpensive adult fiction in the British periodical market. The international demand for the Sherlock Holmes stories in the early issues of *The Strand* guaranteed a flurry of competing periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic. Frank Munsey started one such American imitator, the *Argosy*, in 1896. To keep costs at a mere dime per issue, Munsey printed the *Argosy* on wood pulp paper, and thus secured a place in history as the first purveyor of the thick, large-format booklets known as pulp fiction. Forever sensitive to subtle shifts in the marketplace, Munsey would not tolerate the risks of offering only a single brand to the fickle public;; nine years later he began another venture, the *All-Story Magazine*, in which the nascent science fiction and fantasy genres began to take shape.

In 1912, the same year that Wells would release his first installment of *Little Wars in Windsor Magazine*, the Munsey *All-Story Magazine* carried the earliest published writing of Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875 1950). Burroughs had previously tried his hands at any number of failed businesses, but remained perpetually in desperate financial straits. When he embarked on his literary career, he was earning an insufficient living at a pencilsharpener manufacturer and had already pawned his watch and his wife's jewelry. He became an author for exclusively commercial reasons, and he did not exactly view popular fiction as a means of artistic expression. As he would later write:

I had gone thoroughly through the all-fiction magazines, and made up my mind that if people were paid for writing rot such as I read I could write stories just as rotten.⁸

The tale Burroughs submitted to *All-Story Magazine* was tentatively called *Dejah Thoris, Martian Princess*, and the editors of that periodical retitled the resulting serial (for which they paid \$400 upon acceptance) *Under the Moons of Mars* today, however, it is best known as the novel *A Princess of Mars* (1917). Such incidental matters as what the story might be called were irrelevant to Burroughs, who stated repeatedly in correspondence with the magazine that financial gain was his sole authorial intent. The tale he told, however, was so fantastic that he feared to associate his own name with the story, and for that reason he asked that it be published under the pseudonym Normal Bean, where bean should be understood as a

synonym for head, as if to preempt suspicions that the creator of such a narrative suffered from a derangement.⁹ What, then, was so radical about this story of Mars, an attempt to write nothing more than rot, that its author would hide behind such a pseudonym to preserve his reputation?

skeleton pointing in the direction of treasure.

⁷ Technically, two Sherlock Holmes stories appeared before *A Scandal in Bohemia* graced the July

1891 issue of *The Strand*, but it was certainly *The Strand* that brought fame to Holmes, just as Holmes brought renown, readership and ultimately competition to *The Strand*.

⁸ Quoted in Moskowitz, *Under the Moons of Mars*, 292.

The tale concerns one John Carter of Virginia, a veteran of the Confederate Army who had taken up prospecting for gold in Arizona, an echo of the romantic treasures-seeking motif. Through a mysterious set of circumstances, Carter finds himself on Mars, or as the natives call it Barsoom, where he exhibits superhuman martial prowess. In the course of several adventures, Carter befriends the warlike four-armed green natives, rescues a beautiful human princess from bondage and eventually saves the planet from an atmospheric crisis. After this climactic finish, he loses consciousness and finds himself restored to Earth, with no way to revisit his beloved red planet.

In sequels, however, John Carter would not remain earthbound for long. Gygax references his later exploits in the black pits of Mars in the foreword to *Dungeons & Dragons*, which occur in the second of eleven Carter novels. What makes the John Carter story especially noteworthy for our current purposes is the fantastic manner in which he is first transported to Mars and his acquisition of superhuman powers upon his arrival. At the start of *A Princess of Mars*, Carter enters a cave, in order to conceal himself from Native American adversaries, and there succumbs to a paralyzing gas. While under its influence he finds himself on Mars, without any rationale he cannot even explain how he knows he is on Mars, except to say, my inner consciousness told me as plainly that I was upon Mars as your conscious mind tells you that you are upon Earth. He similarly finds himself endowed with a preternatural strength of limbs, which he ascribes to the lower gravity of Mars;; as far as rational explanations go, this is about as plausible as the yellow sun that would two decades later imbue Superman with his laser vision and freezing exhalations.

This very neglect of a scientific explanation no doubt prompted Burroughs to insist he possessed a normal bean. As a budding fantasist, though, he was not by a long shot the most unscientifically-minded among contributors to the popular magazines of the day. In England, for example, Edward Plunkett, the 18th Baron Dunsany (1878–1957), regularly published his dreamy tales in newspapers and magazines. Of these, examples such as the *Sword of Welleran* and the *Fortress Unvanquishable, Save for Sacnoth* (both 1910) deal with more explicit fantastical elements elves, wizards and dragons than Burroughs, if in more of a fairy tale idiom with irony-steeped prose and laconic mannerisms that contrast sharply with the plain, action-driven, suspenseful storytelling of Burroughs. Dunsany unscientific interests reflect the intellectual climate of Great Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which encompassed the Celtic Revival of Yeats and his contemporaries, the Alice stories of Lewis Carroll, the enormously-popular

fairy books published by Andrew Lang and the prevalence of the Theosophist and Spiritualist movements.¹⁰

Theosophical beliefs appropriated liberally from the mystical traditions of the world, especially those poorly understood, and poorly translated, in Western Europe at the time. This pluralism allowed Helena Blavatsky and her followers to defend the probable existence of various spiritual manifestations known by different names in different cultures;;

⁹ Unfortunately for Burroughs, the cover artist for the February 1912 issue of *All-Story Digest*

¹⁰ L. Sprague de Camp specifically ties the novels to Theosophy. [AMR:v2n43]

in her *Isis Unveiled*, she alludes to elves, dwarfs, trolls, kobolds, brownies, demons and numerous elemental spirits. At their most inventive, the Theosophists

even retrofitted contemporary scientific fashions, like the Darwinian theory of evolution, to

explain fairies as a race of natural beings that simply evolved in concurrent independence of

humanity.¹¹ Even Arthur Conan Doyle, who created in the person of Sherlock Holmes the

proverbial rationalist mind, attached himself to the Spiritualist movement, and his

commitments to its principles led to his widely publicized, if somewhat guarded, endorsement of the famous Cottingley Fairy photographs in the Christmas issue of *The Strand* in 1920. These cartoonish composites of real girls in the company of suspiciously stylized, miniaturized and winged women appear today like an indefensible forgery, but in their day, although they were the target of near-universal skepticism, they were not simply dismissed out-of-hand (perhaps a decent analogy a century later would be a blurry photograph of a purported UFO making the evening news). In this light, Dunsany's bloody and cynical fairy tales, which constituted a body of significant work within the Celtic Revival, were practically mainstream.

Conan Doyle further popularized the notion that the Earth still retained some secrets with his novel *The Lost World* (1912), a fantasy that imagines dinosaurs surviving in an obscure pocket of South America, published virtually simultaneously with the beginning of the John Carter serial. Stateside, other authors continued to elaborate on these peculiar narratives of exploration, in which intrepid adventurers find our scientific wisdom challenged in obscure corners of the world. Abraham Merritt wrote the bulk of his fiction between 1917 and 1927, including the classics *The Face in the Abyss* (1923) and *The Ship of Ishtar* (1924). In the former, an African explorer in much the stamp of Allen Quatermain stumbles onto an isolated civilization of demi-humans whose ancient and powerful scientific tools dwarf the achievements of humanity. *The Ship of Ishtar* departs from a very different premise, one where the protagonist, in a manner reminiscent of John Carter, is

abducted from modern life by an ancient model ship which transports him into a fantasy

era. Like Carter, Merritt's hero periodically commutes back and forth between the real and

fantastic as the narrative unfolds and he becomes more involved in the events (and women)

of the alternate world. There is a striking similarity between Merritt's two stories of

ordinary humans drawn into otherworldly environments, whether they travel by mundane

means to undiscovered pockets of Earth or fantastically to other spaces and times entirely,

insofar as both heroes journey on a round-trip ticket. This visitation theme is central to

the fantasy genre, and receives detailed consideration in Section 2.4 below.

Ultimately, the question of Burroughs' sanity or lack thereof would become moot

when the monumental success of his next submission to the *All-Story Magazine*, a booklength yarn of marginally-greater plausibility entitled Tarzan of the Apes (October 1912),

permanently secured his reputation as a premier author of popular fiction. The arrival of

this famous protagonist did not, however, divert his creator's attention entirely from his

firstborn, John Carter. The exploits of Carter and his plucky descendants fill ten more

novels, the last of which Burroughs serialized in the 1940s. Along the way, the strangeness

of the savage world of Barsoom is further unfolded, but each revelation ultimately

reinforces the parallels to our world and the porousness of the boundary between the

fantastic and reality. For example, in the fifth novel of the series, *The Chessmen of Mars*, we

learn that the Martians play the chess variant Jetan, a game similar enough to terrestrial chess, excepting that in its most elaborate incarnation its pieces are played by living actors who fight to the death over a square. The game decided disputes between the chieftains of Barsoom, and since John Carter

kindly explices its rules in full, his fans could enjoy their own games of Jetan, presumably with less bloodshed than their Martian counterparts. Thus Burroughs, at the very inception of fantastic adventuring, had already joined his stories with gaming.¹²

While Burroughs was spared suspicions about his sanity, it would not be long before his readership started to demand a distinction between plausible and implausible speculations about the universe. The reaction to unscientific popular imaginative fiction became evident only after the Great War, which had forced the entire literary market into a period of dormancy. Before the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, one Hugo Gernsback (1884–1967) had enjoyed success as a science and engineering magazine publisher. Gernsback founded the first American magazine for enthusiasts of electrical engineering, *Modern Electronics*, through which he disseminated schematics to amateur radio operators; later, he would go on to become a pioneer of television broadcasting. Starting in 1911, Gernsback also used *Modern Electronics* as a platform for publishing his own science-related fiction, for which he coined the new label scientifiction. In 1926, his confidence in the market for scientifiction had increased to the point where Gernsback started a magazine dedicated exclusively to its publication: *Amazing Stories*.

¹¹ For a discussion of Victorian fantastic beliefs see Silver, *Strange & Secret Peoples*, 51.

2.1.2 SCIENTIFICITION AND THE UNSCIENTIFIC

The premier issue of *Amazing Stories* included tales by Wells, Verne and Poe none of which saw print there for the first time, of course. The stories set a tone for the publication, indicating the type of fiction that Gernsback hoped to collect under its rubric. It may seem odd to find the name of Poe alongside those of Wells and Verne, but for this inaugural issue Gernsback disinterred one of Poe's fifty-year-old tales of mesmerism, a decidedly Frankensteinian piece called *The Facts of the Case of M. Valdemar* in which the power of hypnosis, administered as a scientific experiment at a patient's deathbed, results in a state of unnatural animation after the demise of the subject, a state which is dispelled, with messy results, only when the trance is broken many months later. While the more scientifically-minded Poe yarns would only occasionally haunt the subsequent months of *Amazing Stories*, Wells became a mainstay, appearing in every issue of the first year.

In his rigorous selection of scientifiction for *Amazing Stories*, Gernsback forged a genre. Even if he did not bequeath its lasting name, Gernsback is

remembered as a progenitor of science fiction;; for example, he is the namesake of the prestigious Hugo awards bestowed by the World Science Fiction Society at their annual convention. Science

¹² As chess variants factor into Section 3.1, readers may be interested to learn that Jetan is a game ranks): one each of the chief and princess, eight panthans, and then two each of the warrior, padwar, dwarf, flier and thoat. The object of the game is to capture the princess, though the game can also be won if a chief takes the opposing chief (not if a lesser piece takes a chief, however, in which case the game is drawn). Weaker pieces tend to be able to move two squares, and to be limited to moving either straight or diagonally;; stronger pieces like the chief and princess can move three squares and may move straight or diagonally or both in a given movement. Once per game the princess may make an squares. Only the princess and the flier may pass over other pieces in their move. Games of play-by-mail Jetan are among the first instances of gaming in the science fiction setting;; see Section 4.3 for more details.

fiction is in many respects defined by what it rejects, and Gernsback rejected that which lay beyond the foreseeable powers of science. In the words of Moskowitz, Gernsback tried to lay down rules for science fiction. Primary among these was plausibility: nothing was to appear in the stories he published that could not be given a logical, scientific explanation.¹³ In fact, Gernsback adopted the radical position that fans of his scientific fiction must rightfully be scientists themselves: that the authorship and appreciation of science fiction were ineluctably coupled with the scientific process. Moskowitz summarizes Gernsback beliefs as follows: The aim of every fan should not be a collection of fantastic fiction, but a home laboratory where fictional dreams might attain reality. The emphasis of the stories favored by Gernsback thus fell not on the vicarious adventure stories that generate immersion so much as more pedantic and speculative work hinging on imaginative scientific ideas.



FIGURE 14: PULPS (L TO R) FROM THE 1920S, 30S, 40S AND 50S Beyond the fiction that it carried, *Amazing Stories* also supplied a forum for the exchange of ideas about science and science fiction a Discussions section that accepted letters from the readership. It was in this lively column that science fiction acquired one of its defining characteristics, and indeed a defining characteristic of any genre: a fandom. Science-fiction fandom, as it came to be known, was born in the pages of *Amazing Stories*. Correspondents gave their full names and addresses along with their commentary in Discussions, permitting fans to contact one another without using Gernsback magazine as an intermediary. The Discussions column served roughly the same purpose as the later

Opponents Wanted column of the *Avalon Hill General*: it gave science-fiction fandom a means to organize itself, to establish clubs and amateur publications (fanzines) advancing its interests.¹⁴ Moreover, it provided fandom with an awareness of its own scale and the voracity of its interest, and allowed fans to express their appreciation or criticism of science fiction in a manner that influenced not only their fellow readers but also the editorial direction of *Amazing Stories*: fans suggested authors or particular pieces of fiction for publication or even submitted their own writings and illustrations.

By listening attentively to fandom, Gernsback could tailor the content of *Amazing Stories* to maximize its appeal to science fiction fans. In so doing, he necessarily excluded other works of imaginative fiction. Given that there was barely an accepted term for science fiction at this time, it is unsurprising

that the opposing term fantasy had yet to take on its current connotation of elves and wizards and magic: it still served as an umbrella term for all manner of imaginative fiction. Unscientific imaginative fiction exerted a weaker influence on the market of the 1920s, in part because of this lack of definition. The specialization of *Amazing Stories*, and its policy barring unscientific popular fiction, did however create an opportunity in the marketplace for competing publications with a more lenient attitude toward the laws of nature.

Three years prior to the advent of *Amazing Stories*, J. C. Henneburger founded a publication entitled *Weird Tales*. Like all lovers of popular fiction, Henneburger was greatly enamored of Poe, and he justifiably worried that there existed in the 1920s no American periodical that would have welcomed Poe's macabre tales, were they newly offered for publication. Although his association with *Weird Tales* was brief, Henneburger involved two parties in the magazine who would be responsible for its lasting fame. The first was its legendary editor, Farnsworth Wright, who oversaw the content of *Weird Tales* from 1924 to 1940. The second was a young, decidedly unscientific author whose works Henneburger first encountered in the world of amateur journalism, the author with whom *Weird Tales* is most closely associated: H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937).

Before further discussing the place of *Weird Tales* in the history of the fantasy genre, it is worth dwelling for a moment on the form of amateur journalism with which Lovecraft was involved. Throughout his life, Lovecraft was a prolific letter-writer, both in private correspondence with his acquaintances and in letters to the popular periodicals of his day. His missives to the *Argosy* and *All-Story* magazines brought him to the attention of the United Amateur Press Association (UAPA) in 1914. An amateur press association, or APA, is an unusual form of publication, little used after the advent of the Internet, but one which is instrumental to both the history of science-fiction fandom and role-playing games. An APA is typically constituted of any number of contributors and a single collator or editor. Broadly, each contributor to an APA is completely responsible for the authorship and printing of their own section of the publication, which an editor merely collates for distribution. In its purest incarnation there are no passive subscribers to an APA you only receive an issue if you contribute yourself.¹⁵ This format is well-suited to communities where all voices have equal value and contributors to a periodical want to retain complete editorial

control of their work, and thus it became a serviceable device for science-fiction fandom from the late 1930s forward: a considerable number of APAs figure in Chapters Four and Five.

Most of Lovecraft amateur journalism explored his views on literature and the advancement of knowledge. He did, however, write some fiction in these journals prior to 1920, and it was this work that caught Henneburger attention. The first Lovecraft story published in *Weird Tales* (October 1923) was *Dagon*, a story which had originally appeared five years before in the amateur press. This dark narrative, with its eponymous oceanic monstrosity, bore a marked resemblance to the works of Poe, especially the later portion of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, and thus struck exactly the chord that delighted Henneburger. Lovecraft himself despaired that he would ever escape his primary influences, lamenting, There are my Poe pieces & my Dunsany pieces but alas where are any *Lovecraft* pieces?¹⁶ For his part, Henneburger felt such confidence in Lovecraft sensibilities that he offered the young writer the editorship of *Weird Tales*, which Lovecraft declined, although through his massive correspondence and influential fiction he did his share of steering the publication indirectly. Lovecraft feuds with Farnsworth Wright, who accepted the editorship of *Weird Tales* in 1924, are the stuff of legend, but throughout his all-too-short career Lovecraft never found a superior vehicle for his work. Although founded as a venue for the literary descendants of Poe, *Weird Tales* nevertheless faced declining readership when *Amazing Stories* appeared in 1926, as scientifically-minded fans and authors gravitated toward Gernsback's more discriminating editorship. Wright, sensing the direction of the marketplace, briefly began to favor stories in the scientific fiction style over the unexplainable events typical of Lovecraft's stories. These pressures even compelled Lovecraft to explicate some of his monstrous creations in a rational universe of wayfaring extraterrestrials, leading to products such as a story famously rejected by Wright entitled *The Call of Cthulhu*.

Editorial shifts notwithstanding, the marketplace for literature unconcerned with space and science, though smaller than that of scientific fiction, remained intact, and *Weird Tales* became a venue of choice for stories with an unscientific emphasis, especially those dealing with forgotten civilizations in the prehistory of our world. Lovecraft wrote, after the dreamy manner of Dunsany, about such ancient cities and temples and the abominations worshipped therein, often through the conceit of modern persons discovering

the shocking truth in a device similar to *King Solomon's Mines* and *The Lost World*. Sometimes, however, Lovecraft explored these primal localities with a direct narrative set in ancient times. His early works like *The Doom That Came to Sarnath*, replete with forgotten empires, swordsmen and monsters, helped to steer weird literature into the realm of adventure stories featuring warriors, wizards and priests. Many authors in Lovecraft's immediate circle developed fiction in this vein in the 1920s and 1930s, notably Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth and a young wunderkind named Robert E. Howard (1906–1936), who established the most enduring formulae of the sword-and-sorcery subgenre. In 1925, Howard sold the first story of his career to *Weird Tales*, a gritty illustration of the primitive brutality of Neanderthals entitled sixteen dollars in payment, but undeterred by

Spear and Fang. He received only the meager and perennially tardy compensation, he remained a loyal contributor to Farnsworth's magazine for more than a decade. Farnsworth accepted his stories more liberally following the introduction of Howard's popular modern hero Solomon Kane in the story *Red Shadows* (August 1928). In early 1929, Howard unveiled a prehistory of lost lands and barbarians with his stories of Kull, king of Atlantis. His most enduring creation emerged from a Kull story called *By This Axe I Rule!* which Wright rejected; Howard reworked it in 1932 into *Phoenix on the Sword*, the inaugural appearance of his new hero, Conan the Cimmerian.

Like Kull before him, Conan is above all a barbarian, ill at ease among civilized people and capable of drawing on reserves of primal strength forgotten in those softened¹³ Moskowitz, *Immortal Storm*, 4. The continuing quotation is *ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴ The early history of wargaming fandom related in the previous chapter largely recapitulates that of science-fiction fandom the rise of clubs, zines, conventions, bitter rivalries and infighting, the establishment of new professional ventures, all in a community dominated by Caucasian, middleclass, American teenage males.

¹⁵ Practically speaking, most editors of APAs are also willing to do the copying themselves for a fee if it is impractical for the contributor to do so. Similarly, virtually all APAs still send copies to regular contributors who happen to sit out an issue or two, and many do permit passive subscribers, though sometimes at a not inconsiderable expense. See Section 4.2 for more on APAs.

¹⁶ Letter to Elizabeth Toldridge, March 8, 1929, as cited in the introduction by S. T. Joshi to *The Dreams in the Witch House and Other Weird Stories*.



FIGURE 15: HOWARD (R) ENACTING "SPEAR & FANG"

by sophistication. In this respect, both characters are descendants of Burroughs's famous creation Tarzan, a feral man whose affinity with nature empowers him to work feats beyond the ken of pampered society. Like Tarzan, Conan is frequently clad in little more than a loincloth, and disdains the hypocrisy and weakness of civilized men. In moments of crisis both forsake all vestige of rationality and rely purely on primitive instincts. Yet unlike Tarzan, Conan did not learn from apes in the jungle, but instead from the barbarous Cimmerian culture in the frozen north of Hyborea, Howard's mythical setting, both a land and an epoch.¹⁷

Conan's exploits transpire in that ancient culture of dark religions, wizardry and monsters, all of which Conan despises. The practice of sorcery is an innately despicable act in Conan's eyes, a form of weakness and poor sportsmanship, and Howard little differentiates sorcery from devotion to heathen gods. This dim view of magic, and its basic conceit that evil men worship monstrous gods and draw power from this association, certainly

derives from Lovecraft. Howard maintained an active correspondence with Lovecraft and other regulars of *Weird Tales*, and the influence of Lovecraftian horror suffuses the Conan stories. Often his adversaries work on behalf of dark powers, like the warped Ganesh surrogate Yag-Kosha of the Tower of the Elephant, a deity who would not look out of place among Lovecraft's pantheon of Old Ones. When contrasted to Lovecraft's vision of the insignificance and powerlessness of men in the face of cosmic powers unsympathetic to human moral categories, Howard's Conan is ultimately a comforting figure, one who resists these forces and emerges with life and sanity intact, if not always victorious as such. Against this backdrop Conan ekes out a living, as occasion demands as a mercenary, a thief, a pirate, a plunderer and a king. He is most often driven by financial necessity, though he sometimes fights for revenge after receiving some slight, or out of some mixture of altruism and desire for the sake of a woman. The thinly-clad society ladies peopling Hyborea are seldom able to resist his animal magnetism. Although he shuns civilization, he frequents the sorts of taverns where shady brokers might hire muscle for dangerous work.

In this harsh existence, one might see a dark mirror of Howard's own life in Depression-era Texas, where he lived as a wanderer and an embittered pugilist, obsessed with history and literature but hindered by debilitating mental illness.¹⁸ Perhaps the

¹⁷

mythology, though in the early twentieth century this latter term was reclaimed by the Theosophists to represent a more metaphysical polar north. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith both wrote of a - more an era than a place;; the place-names of Hyborea are thinly-veiled transpositions of existing regions between West Africa and South Asia. While Howard (and Tony Bath) both preferred the wargame campaign.

¹⁸ For a biography that avoids hagiographic excess, see de Camp, *Dark Valley Destiny*.

strangest artifacts of Howard's relationship with the barbarism of the past are the staged photographs of himself and his Texan friends enacting scenes from his work. One, entitled Spear & Fang, shows an unarmed, grimacing Howard, clad only in a loincloth, being menaced by a spear-wielding acquaintance. In most of these images, Howard clutches weapons: swords, knives, guns or sometimes a knife in one hand and a gun in the other.

Howard cut an imposing figure standing nearly six feet tall with a muscular two-hundred pound frame and while one can only speculate about the degree to which he identified with his heroes, the reenactments in these photographs suggest that he found being his characters as interesting as writing them.

As influential as the Conan tales would become, only seventeen were published in Howard's lifetime, all in *Weird Tales*, and all in the four years between 1932 and Howard's suicide in 1936 at the age of thirty;; he left behind four other completed but unpublished Conan stories and five readership of *Weird Tales* Conan era, and often contained a salacious scene to inspire the lurid covers favored by that magazine but this was a very ephemeral form of publication, and these works had little prospect for reaching posterity. None of Howard's contributions to *Weird Tales* made it into book form before his death, and there was no immediate interest in preserving his legacy, though a few writers in the *Weird Tales* stable did pen close imitations of Conan in the 1930s, such as C. L. Moore's Jirel of Joiry and Henry Kuttner's Elak of Atlantis.

While these imitations did constitute a modest tradition emerging from Howard, that fledgling genre could not depend on the longevity of *Weird Tales*. In the late 1930s, *Weird Tales* began to decline, largely for want of its familiar and celebrated authors. Lovecraft died in 1937, less than a year after Howard, and Clark Ashton Smith's extraordinary period of literary fecundity concluded in 1935, when he turned his attention to sculpture. Other regulars had found better pay elsewhere in the industry. Finally, Farnsworth Wright resigned as editor in March 1940 for health reasons, the golden age of *Weird Tales* having long since passed.

In England, only months after Lovecraft's death (and eight months before the birth of Gary Gygax), there appeared a juvenile novel called *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973), an Oxford professor of philology. One can hardly imagine a work more different in tone from the grim fatalism of Howard, and certainly Tolkien was completely ignorant of Howard and the small fantastic literary tradition he had inspired.²⁰ Tolkien did however know many of the sources that the *Weird Tales* crowd embraced certainly he had read Dunsany, though he held him in no great esteem, favoring instead the fairy tales of George MacDonald like *The Princess and the Goblin*. There are, however, unmistakable commonalities in the adventures of Bilbo Baggins and those of Conan. Both are driven to fragments.¹⁹ Howard's stories were quite popular with the

they appeared in roughly three out of every four issues in the¹⁹ An excellent synopsis of this publication history appears in Sammon, *Conan the Phenomenon*, 12–13. Quotations from the Conan stories in this volume follow the original *Weird Tales* printings of the stories, including changes demanded by Farnsworth Wright. The Lancer and Ace editions that Gygax and Arneson knew in the 1960s and 1970s typically reflected the editorial ministrations of L. Sprague de Camp manuscripts, even when they are incomplete. The titles and contents of the stories in modern editions thus differ in small particulars from the form known to the creators of *Dungeons & Dragons*.²⁰ L. Sprague de Camp relates that he brought the Conan stories to the editor of *Science Fiction Digest* in the 1970s, and that Tolkien *Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers*, 244.

adventure for profit, both deal with wizards, magic swords and monsters including dragons, and both roam a primordial era of our world which has been lost to history. Tolkien's initial novel about Middle-earth was widely praised on both sides of the Atlantic, but mostly outside of the context of adult fiction. Tolkien does not seem to have resonated immediately with most American fantasy fans.

At the time, there existed no real fantasy fandom as such, given that the genre descriptor fantasy was not yet a specific term for the sort of fictions that Tolkien and Howard had produced. That is not to say that genre distinctions had not become sharper by the mid-1930s they had, in large part thanks to competing periodicals entering the marketplace over the previous decade. The term science fiction began to replace scientifiction, first in the columns of Gernsback's magazines and subsequently in fanzines like the *Science Fiction Digest*, which appeared in 1932. Recognizing the market opportunity, the publishers of the *Science Fiction Digest* introduced a second large-scale magazine a year later entitled *The Fantasy Fan* which emphasized a genre delineation: Starting with this issue, we will present a story every month (maybe more than one) by Clark Ashton Smith, H. P. Lovecraft, August W. Derleth, and other top-notchers in the field of weird fiction. You science fiction fans are probably wondering by the import of that last sentence why we will not print science fiction. Well, here's the reason. In the *Science Fiction Digest* it was stated that the weird fan should also have a magazine for themselves. It was thus in the early 1930s that the term hence *The Fantasy Fan*.²¹

fantasy began to acquire a connotation that excluded science fiction from its rubric, albeit here it mostly signified what would subsequently be deemed the horror genre. The acceptance of any distinction in these terms still was not universal, however. For example, in 1937, a New York area science fiction fan named Donald A. Wollheim (later to be a famous editor) started a new APA, inspired by Lovecraft's early amateur journalism, called the *Fantasy Amateur Press Association* (*FAPA*), where the term fantasy must still be understood to encompass mostly science fiction; the 1941 National Fantasy Fan Federation (*NFFF*), also spearheaded by Wollheim, was similarly a science-fiction fandom organization.²² In Wollheim's short-lived fanzine *Fanciful Tales*, which published its sole issue in the fall of 1936, he unhelpfully distinguishes weird fiction, science fiction, and that most elusive of all flights of fancy, Pure Phantasy, which at least hints that there was something outside the scope of the weird tale which was not science fiction. In short, editors and critics were at this time grasping at a new set of genre categories that would come to include fantasy as an independent genre, but there certainly was not yet any consensus on the matter.

The judicious promotion of science fiction over unscientific fantastic literature greatly bolstered many of the magazines struggling in the wake of the Great Depression a time when identifying a dedicated market was a matter of life and death for periodicals. While Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* catapulted itself to a circulation of over 100,000 in the 1920s, Gernsback had lost control of the magazine in 1929, resulting in significant market fragmentation as he tried to prop up his replacement, the *Wonder Stories* family of magazines. Coupled with reluctant consumer spending, the suddenly-flooded market forced many magazines to halve their publication schedules or fold entirely. Even in an adverse economic climate, however, science fiction could thrive: for instance, 1930 saw the launch of *Astounding Stories*, which enjoyed double the circulation of any of its surviving competitors when legendary editor John W. Campbell took its helm in 1937 and changed the name to *Astounding Science Fiction*. Campbell also discerned the steadily weakening position of *Weird Tales* toward the end of the decade, and in 1939, he launched a competing venture called *Unknown* (later *Unknown Worlds*).

²¹ Quoted in Moskowitz, *The Immortal Storm*, 19.

²² See Sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more on the *NFFF* and *FAPA*.

Unknown provided a foster home for high-quality submissions that Campbell deemed too unscientific for *Astounding*.²³ Given *Astounding*'s market share, *Unknown* was well-positioned to poach any remaining authors from *Weird Tales*; it was not long before Henry Kuttner, for example, became a frequent contributor. In the decline of *Weird Tales*, Wright and his successor furthermore consistently rejected new talent that might have revitalized their magazine, writers that Campbell wisely accepted at *Unknown*. Among these was an author named Fritz Leiber (1910–1992), whose story "Two Sought Adventure," introducing his characters Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, was bounced by Wright but accepted by Campbell for the August 1939 issue of *Unknown*.

Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser represent an important evolutionary step in fantasy literature beyond Conan, though you might not be able to tell from a glance at Fafhrd, who is indeed a barbarian from the frozen wastelands to the north. At his side, however, you find the Gray Mouser, who is cut from a different cloth: a spry, cynical, urban adventurer wielding two light swords and surviving much more on wits than brawn, a blueprint for many roguish heroes in later fantasy fiction. Their partnership, which Leiber detailed for decades to come, survived much longer than *Unknown*, but it exemplified the tone that the magazine sought to strike, a break from the weird tradition of horror fiction. In Campbell's words, his goal was: a type of fantasy that is decidedly not standard, conventional or *Unknown Worlds* believed that fantasy was intended for fun; it used the familiar creatures of mythology and folklore, but treated them in a most disrespectful fashion. Fantasy and the things of fantasy are, we felt, much more fun than anything else, if you'll just take off those traditional wrappings of the grim and ghastly. This, then, is an anthology of the Light Fantastic, in which werewolves get the hotfoot, demons are haunted and anything goes provided it's fun.²⁴

Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser and the world of Nehwon they inhabited were, in this important sense, much lighter than their predecessors in *Weird Tales*. While villainy abounds in Nehwon, and Leiber's heroes might even perpetrate it from time to time, it was a more wholesome evil than the cosmic horror of the antagonists deployed by Lovecraft and his immediate circle. Religion, for example, is more a harmless folly in Nehwon than a life-negating prostration at the feet of a callous, inscrutable monster, and priests are more likely to dotter than snarl. Wizards also receive better treatment in Leiber's hands: Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser are both

chaperoned by sorcerers (Ningauble of the Seven Eyes and Sheelba of the Eyeless Face, respectively) who may be vague and secretive about their motivations, but who nonetheless issue productive guidance to the heroes. Oftentimes it is their influence which steers Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser away from self-enrichment into nobler endeavors. The heroes are also markedly more human and plausible, lacking Conan's cartoonish flawlessness, stilted pronouncements and rigid code of conduct;; their allegiances are always for sale, and on more than one occasion they find themselves individually hired by opposing interests and thus brought into conflict with each other. They moreover ignored the fourth wall with aplomb Leiber's seminal article/narrative *The Mouser on Games* in *Amra* imagines a conversation between Leiber and the Mouser on the subject of wargaming and in particular the game of Lankhmar, in which the Mouser displays passing familiarity with *Monopoly*, the many varieties of chess, the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs including his invented game of Jetan and even *kriegsspiel*.²⁵

²³ The editors of *Amazing Stories* launched a similar side venture entitled *Fantastic Adventures* in 1939, though it did not attract the same caliber of contributor. *Fantastic Adventures* did however outlast *Unknown*, surviving long enough to merge into *Fantastic* magazine in 1953.

²⁴ From the foreword of Campbell, *From Unknown Worlds*.

Unknown also served as a venue for authors in the *Astounding* stable to try their hands at concepts that would infuriate readers expecting traditional science fiction. For example, Robert A. Heinlein published in the pages of *Unknown* in 1940 his classic story The Devil Makes the Law (better remembered under its anthology title *Magic, Inc.*), a widely-imitated story that substituted storybook magic for the technology of modern society: flying carpets instead of cars, and so on. Early in his career, Heinlein returned occasionally to crossover stories blending the rationality of science fiction with the presence of wizardry, swordsmen and epic quests;; his novel *Glory Road* will receive some treatment below. Perhaps *Unknown*'s most prolific contributor was a younger writer who had made his first professional sale in 1937 to *Astounding*: L. Sprague de Camp (1907-2000).

De Camp readily embraced the Light Fantasy ethic of *Unknown*, and contributed one of its exemplary instances: a piece called Nothing in the Rules (July 1939), which postulates a mermaid competing in a high school swim meet. His enduring contributions to fantasy literature at the time,

however, came in collaboration with another writer, Fletcher Pratt (1897–1956). De Camp had studied engineering at the California Institute of Technology, and John D. Clark, his college roommate, introduced him to Pratt's Manhattan circle in 1939. Intriguingly, de Camp and Pratt initially met not to discuss literary matters, but instead to indulge a favorite hobby of Pratt's: wargaming.

In the 1930s, Fletcher Pratt hosted monthly sessions where numerous players, sometimes as many as forty or fifty, would crowd into his Manhattan apartment to play his naval wargame. Regular attendees included science fiction writers like Theodore Sturgeon and L. Ron Hubbard, both regular contributors to *Unknown*, as well as de Camp. Although Pratt's wargaming rules eventually saw print in 1943 and his Manhattan games ran until the end of the Second World War, they quickly fell out of obscurity and were only²⁵ [AMR:v2n12] As follows:

checkered map of Lankhmar, the Land of the Eight Cities, the Eastern Lands, and Mingol Steppes, and so on. Each player has sixteen warriors and one hero. We use corks for warriors—and arrows ng apparently was such a game played by Leiber and his close friend Harry O. Fischer (who served as the prototype for Fafhrd). As a component of its outreach to fantasy authors, TSR would later release *Lankhmar* (1976), a reconstruction of this board game spearheaded by Gygax and Kuntz. In the TSR rendition, a large hexagonal board substitutes for a chessboard, and pieces designate heroes, weapons and modes of transportation. The object of the game is the occupation of enemy citadels, though along the way many rewards can be reaped by fulfilling the geasa levied by wizards. It is Amra with Leiber the Dragon

wargaming and *Dungeons & Dragons* to his characters.

rediscovered by the wargaming community in the 1960s, which allowed Dave Arneson to apply Pratt's naval games at the University of Minnesota. More detailed coverage of Pratt's game appears in Section 3.1.6.

Wargame design hardly constituted a viable vocation;; Pratt professionally wrote fiction and non-fiction, and had sold to the pulps, including *Amazing Stories*, since the 1920s. Later, for publication in *Unknown*, he collaborated with de Camp on a series of novels about a psychologist who manages to transport himself into mythological and fictional settings ranging from Norse sagas to Spenser's *Faerie Queen*. Harold Shea, as the psychologist is

syllogismobile, called, entered these stories by means of the unfortunately-named which was not a physical vehicle but rather a method of incanting propositions of predicate logic that uniquely identify the metaphysical laws of the literary world in question. Once the parameters of the world have been adequately specified, the psychologist and his companions would find themselves enmeshed in the fiction and abruptly caught up in the action. Notably, the practice of magic in these fictions excluded the operation of modern technological devices like pistols;; Shea and his entourage quickly adjusted to the realities of spell-casting and sword-swinging to survive their adventures.

The exploits of Harold Shea differ substantially from those of Conan or of Lankhmar s two favorite sons;; for the most part, Shea is a witness to scripted events of preexisting myths and fictions, occasionally assuming a pivotal role for a brief time. In the Norse revival entitled *The Roaring Trumpet*, for example, Shea tags along for the longest sustained narrative episode in the *Gylfaginning* segment of the *Prose Edda*, the visit of Thor to the illusion-drenched court of Utgarda-Loki, where Shea learns to dispel the giant s deceptions and assist Thor in recovering his hammer. Shea s ultimate aim, however, is usually to see himself and his friends out of their self-imposed predicament and back to the real world. The concept that an individual from the real world might visit a fantasy world and return should ring a bell it featured already in the works of Burroughs and Merritt and will be explored in greater detail shortly.

Despite its support for seminal figures like Leiber and de Camp, *Unknown* survived for only four years and thirty-nine issues, succumbing late in 1943 to the paper shortages and declining sales resulting from the latest bout of hostilities in Europe. De Camp, alongside Heinlein and Isaac Asimov, assisted the war effort in the Philadelphia Naval Yard. For the second half of the 1940s, fantastic literature (especially science fiction) entered a period of upheaval after the detonation of two atomic bombs over Japan as it would again following the launch of Sputnik twelve years later. Upon the conclusion of the war, however, the popular appetite for diversions justified the publication of *Skull-Face and Other Stories* (1946), the first book preserving any of Robert E. Howard s Conan stories;; it reached the public ten years after Howard s death, and a year before the birth of Dave Arneson.

August Derleth founded Arkham House, the publisher of *Skull-Face*, two years after the death of Lovecraft with a distinct mission to preserve that author's work for posterity. Aside from this focus, the press would go on to produce anthologies of Derleth's own work, as well as that of Clark Ashton Smith and others who contributed Lovecraft-influenced fiction to *Weird Tales*. It was therefore quite natural that the attention of Arkham House would turn eventually to Howard, and that their collection of Howard's work might emphasize his connections to Lovecraft. Of the twenty-three stories appearing in the 475 pages of *Skull-Face*, only five were Conan stories.²⁶ This coupled with the extremely limited print run only three thousand copies hardly portended that this would be the first step toward a revival of Conan after a decade of near-complete obscurity. In the subsequent four years, however, Conan revisited the reading public in the occasional print venture; for example, a few Conan staples from *Weird Tales* neglected by *Skull-Face* appeared in the pages of Donald A. Wollheim's *Avon Fantasy Reader* in 1948 and 1949. Where Wollheim had written of his quest for rarefied Pure Phantasy as editor of *Fanciful Tales* a decade earlier, his *Avon Fantasy Reader* proclaims the long-sought-after classics of science fiction, weirdfiction, and fantasy are published here. It was indeed at this point, around 1950, that the term fantasy became locked into a dichotomous relationship with science fiction, and while the two were often paired or blended, and shared much of their fan bases in common, each now had a distinct identity rooted in its rejection of the other's assumptions.²⁷

2.1.3 FANTASY AFTER THE PULPS

At that same juncture, however, the pulp fiction industry reeled from wartime disruptions and entered an irreversible decline. The venerable Street & Smith, publisher of *Astounding* and *Unknown* as well as a legion of other pulps across the genres, would close its pulp mill for good in 1949. The overall trend in the science fiction and fantasy marketplace was toward wordier, more modestly-proportioned magazines, as well as anthologies and novels published as hardcover books rather than serialized in periodicals. An example of the new breed of magazine was the digest-sized *Magazine of Fantasy* (1949), soon to become the *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, which easily used half the paper of an issue of *Unknown*, in part by simply arranging text more efficiently and relying less on graphics. A few years later, it was followed by the digest-sized *Fantastic* magazine (subsequently *Fantastic Stories*), a venture by the publishers of *Amazing*

Stories, which promised, like *Unknown*, to focus exclusively on fantasy. In these publications, the definition of fantasy now firmly excluded science fiction;; just as science fiction had long ago under Gernsback excluded the impossible, now fantasy specifically entailed the exclusion of the possible. For example, in the first issue of *Beyond Fantasy Fiction* (July 1953), the editorial specifically states that it will²⁶ (1947), it included only two Fafhrd & Gray

to Lovecraft, who provided Leiber detailed criticism of the story late in 1936. See Joshi, *Sixty Years of Arkham House*, 44.

²⁷ Yet as early as 1953, the editors of *Fantasy & Science Fiction* editors and critics are dropping the undefinable distinction between science fiction and fantasy... the chief reason for this is not so much a literary as a purely scientific one. Scientific thinking is itself some of the most stimulating modern science-fantasy is being written in the borderlands created by advanced mathematical and physical thought concerning alternate universes, parallel variant space*Three Hearts and Three Lions*. This is especially striking, given how soon these words were written after the written by Anderson or Moorcock or their contemporaries were first and foremost adventure stories, and the fantastic or scientific elements support the story in a manner that is practically interchangeable.

not contain the probably possible, but instead only the less probable.²⁸ All of these fantasy magazines acted as heir presumptive to *Unknown*, and their content in the 1950s predominantly followed *Unknown*'s precedent.

It was in this environment that twelve-year-old Gary Gygax became a fan of fantasy and science fiction. From 1950 to 1955, Gygax accumulated two large book cases worth of pulps and the new digests, including the first issue of the *Magazine of Fantasy* as well as many of its competitors.²⁹ He writes of the pleasures of a teenager quietly sneaking a copy home and with covers such as they had even the news dealer looked at you strangely when you purchased one unless he happened to be a reader also. [NWR:v2n2] Among his favorites was a cover which showed a (WOW!) beautiful redhead in would you believe skin-tight armor wielding a huge, double bitted black axe, an image which he jokes might have influenced me subconsciously in my choice of a wife. He later regretted parting with his entire collection of pulps, paperbacks and hardcovers, but his nostalgic appreciation for the pulps stayed with him decades later.

The publication in book form of novel-length fantasy genre fiction was a rarity before this time, but it became increasingly popular from this point forward it cannot be said, however, that these novels immediately met with great success. For example, in 1950, a recently-established science fiction author named Jack Vance (b. 1916) published an anthology of largely unreleased fantasy fiction, hastily assembled into the form of a novel called *The Dying Earth*. In the words of a later reviewer, the book as a whole appeared only in a cheap, poorly-bound paperback, issued in late 1950 and withdrawn almost immediately from the newsstands, despite that the fact it was one of the most vivid, exciting, and imaginative works of fantasy. [AMR:v2n18] While serving in the Merchant Marine, Vance had written a number of short stories taking place on the Dying Earth, a far future of our world, chronicling the adventures of warriors, sorcerers and various unscrupulous persons casting about for adventure in the face of the imminent extinguishment of the sun. His irony-steeped tales owe a great debt to Dunsany, especially creations such as Chun the Unavoidable in his classic story Liane the Wayfarer.³⁰ *The Dying Earth* is best remembered for its innovative portrayal of magicians and spell-casting, especially for its rationalist vision of magic and the notion that memorized spells, once cast, are forgotten. In Vance's fantasy stories, the hero might very well be a wizard, struggling to master new powers or contend with his rivals, and a loincloth-clad swordsman might be nowhere in sight.

It was also around the mid-century mark that Fletcher Pratt published (under the pseudonym George U. Fletcher) his *Well of the Unicorn* (1948), a full-length fantasy novel taking place in an imaginary world, like Leiber's Nehwon, but in Pratt's case departing from a few obscure names invented by Lord Dunsany for one of his plays. Its greatest inspiration was the work of E. R. Eddison, which Pratt revered, despite its imposing and²⁸ *Beyond Fantasy Fiction* spun off from *Galaxy Science Fiction* as a repository for its unscientific stories from 1953 to 1955;; the Harold Shea tale *The Green Magician* appeared there in November 1954. Another important transitional fantasy magazine of the era, *Fantasy Magazine* (later *Fantasy Fiction*), put out only four issues, all in 1953, which included some works by Howard.

²⁹ Gygax reports that he sold his c

³⁰ *Worlds Beyond*, December 1950, but this was more or less simultaneous with the appearance of the full-length novel, and it was the only story to appear in periodical form.

anachronistic style.³¹ As de Camp would write of Pratt's efforts, not surprisingly, the book was remaindered after a year or so and has remained out of print ever since. [AMR:v2n35] Despite the poor reception of *Well*, Pratt continued his fantasy collaboration with de Camp;; that same year they completed a fantasy novel (one that was well underway before Pearl Harbor), similar in many respects to the Harold Shea stories, entitled *The Carnelian Cube* (1948). It would be the first book produced by the Gnome Press publishing house. Gnome, like Arkham House, aspired to address the post-war demand for adventurous dalliance by reprinting the best of the pulps.

The surprising dedication of Howard's fans, a recurring impetus in the history of fantasy fiction, delivered Conan to Gnome Press as well. The same John D. Clark who had roomed with de Camp at Caltech, and who introduced de Camp to Pratt, had been an early fan of Conan fiction in fact, he had corresponded with Howard in 1936 to inquire about the geography of Howard's Hyborea and the exact timeline of Conan's career. The result was one of the first definitive accounts of the world of Hyborea, *The Hyborian Age*, which Clark disseminated in a fanzine in the 1930s.³² Later, Clark's connection to Howard uniquely positioned him to serve as editor for a new Gnome Press edition of Howard's classic story *Hour of the Dragon* (which had appeared in five installments in *Weird Tales* shortly before Howard's death) under the title *Conan the Conqueror* (1950). Its cover advertised the Conan tales as works of science fantasy, though one might be at some pains to find any science within. The management of Gnome Press sent a review copy to Pratt for his comment, which Pratt promptly and dismissively bequeathed to de Camp. So it was that de Camp himself first read Conan, fell in love and took his first step toward serving as Howard's avid evangelist, editor and eventually posthumous collaborator.

De Camp's deep devotion to the Conan saga led him to collect all the stories in print and eventually, through unpublished originals that never discoveries, de Camp took over the ongoing editorship of the Gnome Press anthologies of Conan. Apparently, de Camp understood the responsibilities of an editor quite expansively, bit of literary detective work, to uncover several made it to *Weird Tales*. On the strength of these

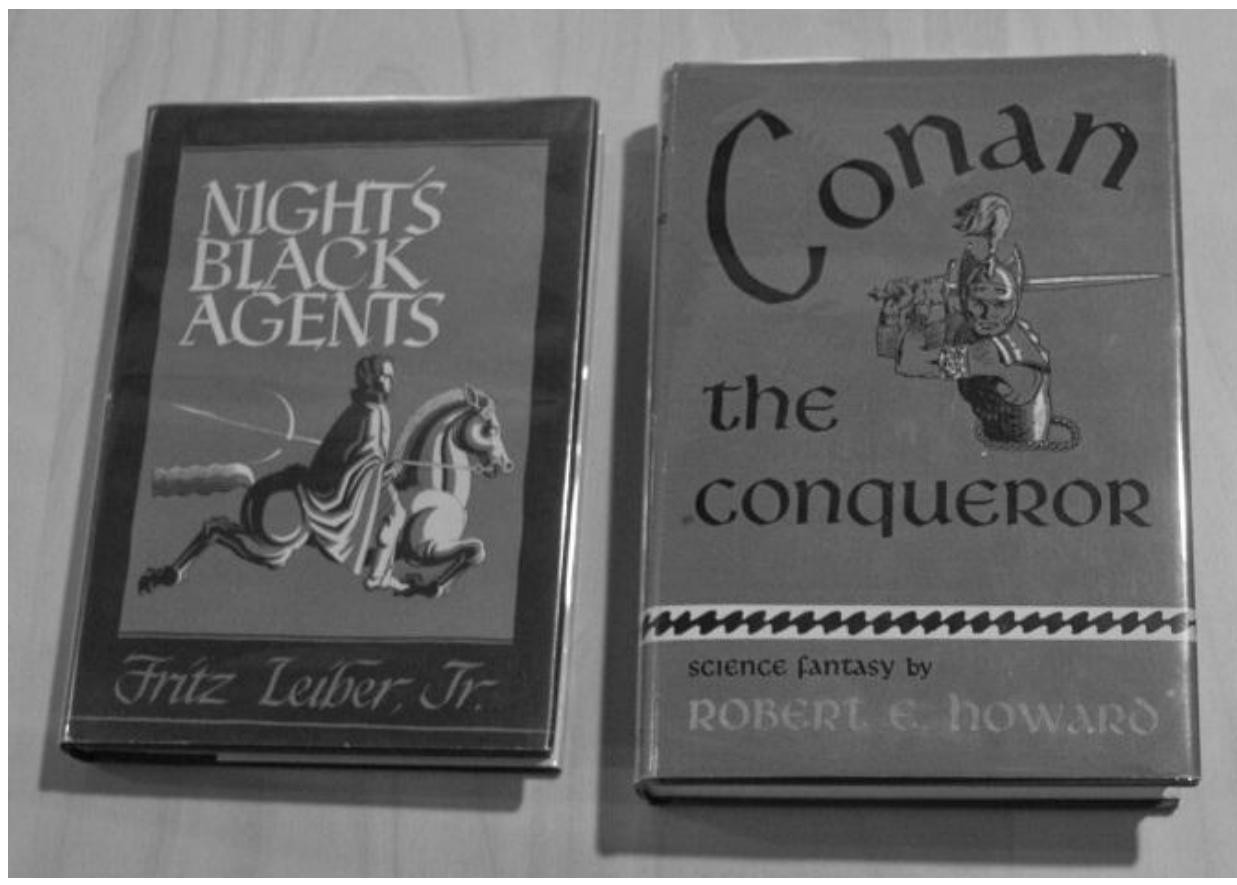


FIGURE 16: ARKHAM AND GNOME EDITIONS OF

LEIBER AND HOWARD

³¹ John D. Clark

much in mind when he wrote *Well AMR:v2n50]*

and made substantive changes to the texts and titles of Howard's work prior to publication, though arguably, the resulting modifications were no more intrusive than the numberless alterations Farnsworth Wright demanded before publishing Conan in *Weird Tales*. The first fruits of de Camp's labor appeared in Gnome's *King Conan* (1953). This and ensuing Gnome Conan editions were printed in initial runs of three to five thousand that sold respectably relative to other genre

The Worm Ouroboros very

³² The letter of response that Howard sent to Clark and P. Schuyler Miller appears in the first Lancer *Conan* (1967) paperback.

publications, yet these early printings remained undepleted until well after 1960.

Like Jack Vance, Poul Anderson (1926-2001) began publishing science fiction during the twilight of the pulps in the late 1940s. It was in the early fifties, however, that he wrote seminal book-length fantasy: notably, his variation on the medieval *Chanson de Roland* entitled *Three Hearts and Three Lions* was serialized across two issues of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* in 1953 (it would not appear in book form for eight more years); and in 1954 *The Broken Sword*, his retelling of the end times of Norse myth, went directly to paperback. The former work, aside from apprising the fantasy community that a paladin is resistant to sorcery provided he remains virtuous and that trolls are regenerating green brutes, also introduced the conceit of a cosmic battle between the opposing forces of Law and Chaos, which would be appropriated by several future fantasy authors and also some games of note. The latter work tells the story of the terrible, titular, inevitably-to-be-reforged sword, destined to instigate the cosmic battle that will destroy the world, which furthermore possesses an evil intelligence and causes its wielder to harm loved ones a device that will also resurface shortly in the work of another fantasy author.

It transpired that Anderson was not the only author distilling Norse myth and medieval romances to brew fantasy fiction in the post-war environment. Between 1954 and 1955, there appeared in Great Britain, and shortly thereafter Stateside, three volumes of an epic called the *Lord of the Rings*, a work that J.R.R. Tolkien had pursued since the publication of *The Hobbit* in 1937. While the influence of Tolkien is discussed in detail in Section 2.3, the vast literature exploring the origins and themes of the *Lord of the Rings* makes further comment here superfluous, save for noting its weak initial reception. The sales and renown of the *Lord of the Rings* were modest at first, especially in the United States, where the trilogy existed only in expensive hardcover editions that sold one or two thousand copies a year: by mass-market standards, a dismal failure, albeit compared to the sales of Gnome or Arkham books, a strong showing. For those first years after the trilogy's release, only the comparatively insular American fan communities knew and revered these works. It was not until a decade after its first publication, when cheap softcovers became available, that Tolkien masterpiece would achieve its monumental American popularity.³³

Despite this bounty of new stories and storytellers, Conan continued to exert a posthumous gravity on fantasy authors. In 1957, a young lieutenant in the Swedish Air Force named Bjorn Nyberg decided, somewhat inexplicably, that the surest means to improve his command over the English language would be to author a sequel to the adventures of Conan. Satisfied with the result of this exercise, Nyberg sent his novel to Gnome Press for publication. By this time, Gnome was scraping the bottom of the proverbial barrel for fresh Conan material. De Camp had already worked the handful of incomplete Conan manuscripts into finished products. As Howard sometimes cosmetically altered the setting and protagonist of rejected Conan stories in order to publish them elsewhere under other names, de Camp had furthermore refitted some of Howard's non-Conan stories, including yarns set in modern Afghanistan and Egypt, as Conan tales to populate the Gnome Press anthology *Tales of Conan* (1955). De Camp must have been relieved to see the fresh creation of Nyberg, which Gnome polished and issued as *The Return of Conan* (1957); no doubt it raised the tantalizing proposition of authoring Conan works containing not even a kernel of Howard's original prose.

³³ De Camp, *Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers*, 216.

The enthusiasm for Conan in the late 1950s also had a reflection in fandom. On November 12, 1955, there gathered in Philadelphia twelve stalwart admirers of Conan including L. Sprague de Camp, de Camp's old roommate John D. Clark and Gnome Press owner Martin Greenberg who then formed the Hyborian Legion, the first fandom organization dedicated to Howard's Conan stories (modeled upon organizations like the Baker Street Irregulars, fanciers of the fictional detective who maintained an address there). [AMR:v2n1] The following April, George R. Heap (Royal Chancellor of the Legion) published the first issue of a magazine called *Amra*, named for the pseudonym Conan assumed during his career as a pirate. While Heap's editorship lasted only until the end of 1958, *Amra* proved surprisingly long-lived: the second volume of *Amra* consisted of some seventy-one issues spread out between 1959 and 1982.

While nominally focused on artwork and articles relating directly to Conan, from the first issue of the second volume the editors established their intention to print material relating to fantasies outside of Hyborea. Instead of asking a formal question, Would you like to see something about Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser? we prefer to print something and then

ask, Did you like it? [AMR:v2n1] Leiber, whose own interest in the saga of those two heroes had been flagging, found inspiration in the passion of *Amra* to resume their history, and even to publish there a full-color gatefold map of Nehwon in 1961. [AMR:v2n18] Poul Anderson had taken a playful swipe at Conan in a 1956 parody entitled *The Barbarian*, yet he too contributed regularly to *Amra* and counted himself a member of the Hyborian Legion. Wanting only the presence of Jack Vance, *Amra* became a commons of ideas for many of the key authors of the fiction Gygax identifies as integral to *Dungeons & Dragons*. It was a forum for feedback and a platform for advertising. Although its circulation remained modest (it did not exceed three hundred before 1966), its value to American writers of fantasy fiction is difficult to overestimate. *Amra* carried the most critically sophisticated commentary on Conan and his literary successors, as well as the most thorough consideration of similar contemporary writings in that Sacred Genre, as they deemed it. It would not be extraordinary to find therein articles comparing Howard with Flaubert, unearthing obscure instances of the name Conan in medieval literature including the *Gesta Romanorum*, cataloging famous paintings that a receptive eye might fancy as depicting the Hyborian Age, examining Conan's apparent existentialism or covering many other topics that, tongue half in cheek, ascribe an unexpected and probably unwarranted depth to Howard's thuggish creation.

Young authors entering the fantasy field in the 1960s, at the crest of an emerging New Wave in science fiction and fantasy that strove to find authenticity in a sprawling graveyard of stereotypes, found themselves unable to escape Conan's gravitational pull. Among the first of a generation of writers born after the passing of Howard and Lovecraft, the British writer Michael Moorcock (b. 1939) started publishing stories in 1961 in the United Kingdom magazine *Science Fantasy* about a character named Elric of Melniboné. Elric wielded the cursed runeblade Stormbringer, a drinker of souls and slayer of allies, which obviously took inspiration from Anderson's *The Broken Sword*. As a character, however, Elric is probably best understood as an intentional subversion and inversion of Conan: a weakling, reliant on magic and sorcery, descended from an advanced civilization in a line of decadent kings, an albino crowned with the opposite of a black mane of hair and, finally, an aloof drug addict who cannot seem to avoid inadvertently murdering his leading ladies.³⁴ Yet Moorcock still realized that he wrote within the confines of a tradition, even if only to subvert it, and he

inquires in the pages of *Amra* (May 1961), in an article called Putting a Tag On It, exactly what that tradition should be called.

We have two tags, really SF and Fantasy but I feel that we should have another general name to include the sub-genre of books which deal with Middle Earths and lands and worlds based on this planet, worlds which exist only in some author's vivid imagination. In this sub-genre I would classify books like *Jurgen*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Once and Mouser/Fafhrd series*, the *Conan* series, *The Broken Sword*,
[AMR:v2n15]

The Worm Ouroboros, Future King, the Gray
Well of the Unicorn, etc.

It is arguable whether the most important element of commonality among those works is the presence of an imaginary world, and one could also dispute whether or not this designates the optimal set of books to identify a sub-genre.³⁵ Regardless, Moorcock floats the term Epic Fantasy as a proposed name, but invites dialog and duly notes that other terms have already been advanced (including de Camp's bulky suggestion Prehistoric-Adventure-Fantasy). It was Fritz Leiber who replied in the next issue with a counterproposal, and one that stuck: I feel more certain than ever [that this field] should be called the sword-and-sorcery story. This accurately describes the points of culture-level and supernatural element and also immediately distinguishes it from the cloak-and-sword (historical adventure) story and (quite incidentally) from the cloak-and-dagger (international espionage) story too!³⁶

The term sword-and-sorcery rapidly matured from a conjecture into marketing copy. Before two years had passed, de Camp produced an anthology entitled *Swords & Sorcery* (1963) which grouped under that label works of Anderson, Howard, Leiber, Dunsany and Lovecraft rounded out with *Weird Tales* fantasists Clark Ashton Smith, C. L. Moore and Henry Kuttner. A sequel entitled *The Spell of the Seven* (1965) added Vance and Moorcock to that roster. Their publisher, Pyramid Books, also maintained de Camp & Pratt's Harold Shea novellas in paperback editions throughout the 1960s.

The early 1960s saw the continuing rise of Moorcock and Anderson both as prolific authors in the fantasy genre. They also saw the decline of Gnome Press, which was driven into bankruptcy in 1962, leaving Conan temporarily homeless. After some legal wrangling, and not without inciting some

ongoing controversy over rights, de Camp managed to install Conan in a new home at Lancer Books in 1964. The publication of their inexpensive paperback editions of the original works of Howard, plus the various revisions and reversions of de Camp, turned out to be very timely.

³⁴ A drug-addicted antihero, feared by human society, who drives the world toward an apocalypse in which it will be fundamentally reformed has certain counterculture resonances as well;; see Section 2.2 on the politics of the 1960s.

³⁵ *Jurgen, A Comedy of Justice* (1919), for example, Moorcock considers an allegory, and its lack of a direct adventure narrative is one reason why it is not treated in the present study, despite being a beloved influence on Fritz Leiber and others.

³⁶ Actually, this passage from Leiber appeared earlier in the April 1961 issue of *Ancalagon*, the fanzine that George Heap began to edit when he left *Amra* to his Hyborian compatriots. In *Ancalagon*, the

-
Amra [AMR:v2n16] by way of response to Moorcock.



FIGURE 17: ACE BOOKS EDITIONS OF THE *LORD OF THE RINGS*

In 1965, Donald A. Wollheim, now an editor at Ace Books, came to believe that the American paperback rights to the *Lord of the Rings* had never properly been secured. Acting on this uncertain supposition, he put out his own imprint of the three volumes in paperback. Since these were offered as a public domain work, without any royalty paid to the author, the individual volumes traded for only 75¢, a small fraction of the cost of the deluxe hardcover editions which remained largely unsold since the 1950s. The reduced price no doubt contributed to a sharp increase in sales of the book, but more importantly, America itself had changed during the intervening decade into a much more receptive venue for an epic fantasy. Where hardcover sales had been a trickle of a few thousand copies a year, the Ace edition sold some 100,000 copies in a matter of months. Ballantine, believing themselves on more plausible grounds to hold exclusive American paperback rights to Tolkien's work, managed to produce a revised softcover edition before the end of the year which contained a stern admonition penned by Tolkien himself against Ace's alleged act of piracy. The controversy over the rights, of course, served only to draw more attention to the *Lord of the Rings* and stimulate further sales. Ace wisely settled with Tolkien and opted to discontinue their knock-off.³⁷ Ballantine found that the reading public eagerly devoured three million paperback copies of the series between 1965 and 1968.³⁸ Enthusiasts simultaneously rediscovered *The Hobbit*, which now shared in this tremendous success after years of obscurity following the wartime paper shortages which had rendered the book virtually unavailable for the first dozen years after its publication.

The *Lord of the Rings* became a youth counterculture fad, a touchstone for anyone connected with the fanciful movements of the 1960s. As a side effect, the reading public and publishers suddenly became desperate for any literary work with a veneer of fantasy about it. Thus, de Camp's 1964 deal with Lancer proved fortuitous, as it positioned an inexpensive canon of Conan before a receptive public at an ideal moment. While legal wrangling delayed the Lancer releases until 1966, during the intervening time Howard's executors also uncovered a fresh store of incomplete Conan manuscripts and one fully realized story, the Vale of Lost Women. In order to finish the fragmentary stories, which included such stories as the Hall of the Dead, in time for the Lancer releases, de Camp needed to enlist some editorial assistance.

³⁷ *Amra* ran an editorial slightly more sympathetic to Ace Books, emphasizing their attempts to negotiate with the hardcover publisher, and the clear business interest of Ballantine in keeping the controversy alive for marketing reasons. [AMR:v2n39]

³⁸ *J.R.R. Tolkien: This Far Land*, 73.

De Camp recruited Lin Carter (1930 1988), a budding author who had recently consulted de Camp on the manuscript of his first novel, which detailed the adventures of a brute cut from Conan's cloth named Thongor the Mighty. Although the first Thongor novel, *The Wizard of Lemuria* (1965), met with scathing reviews in *Amra*, it happily debuted in the midst of America's newfound appetite for sword-and-sorcery and thus quickly attracted an audience.³⁹ Carter joined de Camp in reworking Howard's abandoned projects into complete stories, and their various posthumous collaborations filled the Lancer Conan releases of the second half of the 1960s. Now thoroughly versed in the construction of Conan tales, the duo furthermore elaborated the Conan saga with their own original work written in collaboration, which can be found throughout these paperbacks and the various fantasy periodicals of the early 1970s. When Arneson writes that he had been reading a Conan book (I cannot recall which one but I always thought they were much the same) the day before he first ran Blackmoor, these Lancers must be the editions he encountered. A typical volume contained a couple stories by Howard, a few incomplete or merely projected Howard stories finished by de Camp or Carter, and perhaps one or two original Conan works invented by de Camp and Carter jointly. Collectively, the Lancer Conan paperbacks enjoyed tremendous success, themselves selling in excess of a million copies.⁴⁰ In 1969, Gygax evinced his familiarity with these editions and Howard's posthumous collaborators, writing of the world of Conan the Cimmerian as created by Robert E. Howard, Sprague de Camp, Lin Carter and Bjorn Nyberg. [IW:v2n5]

Once the wild popularity of barbarism had been established, several other writers joined Carter in open imitation of Howard's Conan, and thus duosyllabic brutish names graced the covers of the fantasy paperbacks in the late 1960s. If neither Conan nor Thongor sufficed, readers could soon resort to Kenneth Bulmer's *Kandar* (1969) or Gardener F. Fox's *Kothar* (1969). Those with a preference for monosyllabic thuggery could avail themselves of John Jakes's *Brak the Barbarian* (1968); syllables aside, there was little else to differentiate these imitators.⁴¹ In recognition that these writings

jointly represented a movement, in 1968 de Camp, Carter and Jakes founded the Swordsmen & Sorcerers Guild of America, a sort of second wave of the original concept of the Hyborian Legion;; the quickly came to encompass Leiber, Vance and Moorcock as well. [AMR:v2n49]

³⁹ Both of the reviews in *Amra* AMR:v2n36] Note that Carter seems unphased, however, perhaps because he had already secured a sequel on the strength of the sales the first installment. [AMR:v2n37] ⁴⁰ See de Camp, *Dark Valley Destiny*, 363, for de Camp e sales, but the degree of that contribution is probably unknowable.

⁴¹

Tarnsman of Gor

John Jandar of *Callisto* (1972).

Happily, these established authors did not squander the fleeting attention of the American public. After a sixteen year hiatus, Vance returned to his classic Dying Earth fantasy setting with a new novel entitled *The Eyes of the Overworld* (1966), featuring the exploits of the unfortunate rogue and would-be sorcerer Cugel the Clever. Not only did Leiber publish his first two books collecting Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser stories in 1968, each containing one story there published for the first time), but he also that year produced his only novel dedicated to that pair: *The Swords of Lankhmar* (1968). Two more anthologies of their adventures in Nehwon would follow in 1970. L. Sprague de Camp used this window of sword-and-sorcery enthusiasm to release his Novarian series of novels, starting with *The Goblin Tower* (1968) and *The Clocks of Iraz* (1971) this time however not in collaboration with Fletcher Pratt, who had passed away in 1956. Moorcock, for his part, had by the mid-1960s already produced two Elric anthologies (*The Stealer of Souls* (1963) and *Stormbringer* (1965), both of which appeared in American Lancer editions in 1967) which awaited post-Tolkien converts to fantasy fandom. In the late 1960s, at the height of his legendary fecundity, Moorcock produced dazzling amounts of fantasy fiction, sometimes allowing himself only three days to write an entire novel, as was reportedly the case with each of his four original *Runestaff* books, which Lancer printed in 1969.

These were not the only fantasy authors who experienced a revival in the late 1960s. Ballantine Books, anxious to further capitalize on the success of the *Lord of the Rings*, hired Lin Carter as an editor in 1969, and under his

auspices Ballantine introduced an Adult Fantasy series that resurrected in cheap paperbacks many neglected classics: it would reprint Anderson's *The Broken Sword*, as well as several works by Lovecraft, Dunsany and earlier writers. Gygax specifically mentions his awareness of the Adult Fantasy line in his 1974 article Swords and Sorcery in Wargaming. Any publisher that possessed a backcatalog of classic fantasy rushed it into print and into bookstores. Authors new to the fantasy genre found inroads to publication with the largest publishers in the world, as opposed to small vanity presses of the past like Arkham and Gnome that printed a couple thousand copies of a book;; for example, consider Roger Zelazny landing at Doubleday his stylized *Nine Princes in Amber* (1970), where hardboiled sleuthing implausibly met psychedelic, strangely detached, epic warfare.

Nor did fantasy at this time remain confined to literary texts. The 1960s and early 1970s saw a rapid proliferation of comic books which drew on the fantasy literary tradition. Of course, fantastic superheroes had blended seamlessly into the milieu of comics from its inception. For example, before Siegel and Shuster created the character of Superman in *Action Comics* #1 (1938), they introduced in *More Fun Comics* #6 (1935) their Doctor Occult, who combats the likes of vampires and werewolves. Through his story-cycle, Doctor Occult transitioned from a Dick Tracey look-alike to a caped, sword-wielding superhero with a mystical belt that permits him to fly and turn others to stone, among other powers. Some writers divided their careers between the pulps and the comics: Gardner F. Fox, for example, cut his teeth writing the character Doctor Fate for *More Fun Comics* in the 1940s long before he wrote *Kothar*. The comics industry of the time reached a youthful mass audience: one estimate suggests that in 1941, perhaps ten million comic books were sold each month.⁴² It was not until the 1960s, however, that the growing popularity of fantasy induced Marvel comics to draw openly on mythological and fantasy genre sources: with the debut of Stan Lee's character Thor in 1962, Marvel Comics juxtaposed the lives of modern Americans with ancient pagan gods and magic.

⁴² See Hajdu, *The Ten-Cent Plague*, 40.

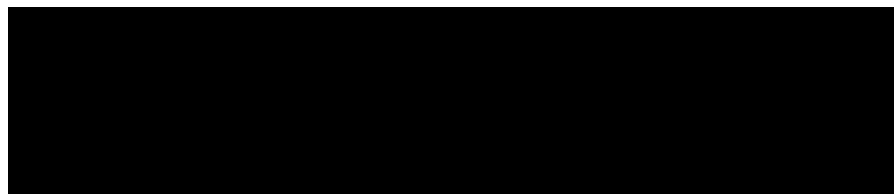
The fantasy genre found its strongest expression at Marvel in the character of Doctor Strange, overseen first by Stan Lee (*Strange Tales* #110, 1963) and later by Roy Thomas (as of *Doctor Strange* #169, 1968). With his spells learned from books, his magic cloak and amulet and constant assumption of ethereal form, it may raise eyebrows that Doctor Strange

receives no explicit mention from the authors of *Dungeons & Dragons* however, the illustration on the very cover of the game's box (as well as the first booklet inside), cribbed from a panel of *Strange Tales* #167, should count as testimony to the relevance of the comic. The very presence of a type called the Super-hero in *Chainmail* indicates the pervasive influence of comic book concepts. Roy Thomas also oversaw Marvel's acquisition of the rights to the character of Conan from the estate of Robert E. Howard, which led to the *Conan the Barbarian* comic series, beginning in October 1970. Thomas drew liberally on the *Weird Tales* back catalog for the adventures of Conan and Doctor Strange alike: the Doctor Strange plotline underway late in 1972 through 1973, at the time *Dungeons & Dragons* took shape, mirrors several Lovecraft stories. Nor did his Conan follow Howard's work alone: for *Conan the Barbarian* #13, Thomas enlisted John Jakes (author of *Brak*) to plot a new adventure for Conan, and for the next issue, even appealed to Michael Moorcock to develop a storyline where Conan met his antithesis, Elric of Melniboné. The medium of comic books accustomed a new audience to these authors and characters.

The early 1970s were undoubtedly the time when the fantasy genre enjoyed its greatest prominence to date, and reached the largest number of consumers.⁴³ It was in this milieu that *Chainmail* and subsequently *Dungeons & Dragons* were conceived.



FIGURE 18: PANEL FROM *STRANGE TALES* #167 THAT INSPIRED THE *D&D* COVER



2.2 WAR AND ITS

OPPONENTS

The dramatic surge in the reputation of Tolkien and other fantasy authors between the 1950s and the 1960s paced a vast cultural upheaval sweeping

the United States and Britain. In some respects, the study of wargaming in the late 1960s is the study of a conservative youth movement, a bastion of early post-war values preserved in middle-class suburban America. At a time when many young Americans vocally, and sometimes violently, opposed militarism, wargaming harbored inescapable reactionary connotations. To understand why fantasy took hold in wargaming circles in the early 1970s over the objections of traditional historically-minded wargamers, as discussed in Section 1.6, one must appreciate the mounting resistance to war. Fantasy formed the setting of the first role-playing game, at least in part, because the setting of traditional wargames had grown problematic. Most youths of the day found war an outright downer.

⁴³ It is curious that Gygax singles out exclusively literary works in his foreword to *Dungeons & Dragons* and his subsequent writings on the conceptual origins of the game, given that by the 1970s, so much of popular genre storytelling had shifted to the cinema, comics and television. Reacting to some variant rules circulating for *Dungeons & Dragons* unbalanced power-tripping.

The interests of wargamers seemingly ran directly counter to this trend. Consider that the first month that the United States Continental Army Command the *Spartan* carried an article by Gary Gygax, on the other side of the country the first issue of the *San Francisco Oracle* traded in Haight-Ashbury. These two contemporaneous, initially lowvolume youth culture fanzines could not have been more different in subject. Observe that the Malvern convention of the International Federation of Wargaming, the first bellwether gathering in modern wargaming, occurred right at the start of the Summer of Love in 1967. On the cover of the *Avalon Hill General* in September 1967, clean-shorn seventeen-year-old IFW President William Speer is depicted at that convention wearing a coat and tie and horn-rimmed spectacles, flanked by a clergyman and a colonel, the latter shaking his hand and grinning broadly, the sort of image you were not likely to find on the cover of a magazine like *Rolling Stone* when it debuted two months later. Compared with the alternatives, the subculture of wargaming looked like a movement that the beleaguered establishment might heartily endorse.

The hobby wargaming community, insofar as it deigned to acknowledge the youth movement of its day, reacted with skepticism and scorn. For example, the report on the first GenCon that of 1968, which incidentally took place the week before the Democratic National Convention in nearby

Chicago, on the same weekend that the Yippies selected a pig as their Presidential nominee in the IFW monthly contemptuously relates the community's perception of the counterculture: As luck would have it there were no peace pickets parading outside but three hippie type characters did show up. One came attired in a blue guru outfit with some sort of love medallion, another came in a vest that looked like it was cut from last year's Santa outfit, and the last one appeared in a typical hippie outfit of a paisley shirt and 14 year old shoes. (We learned the last one was trying for a part in Fu Man Chu but his mustache wasn't long enough yet.) [IW:v1n6]

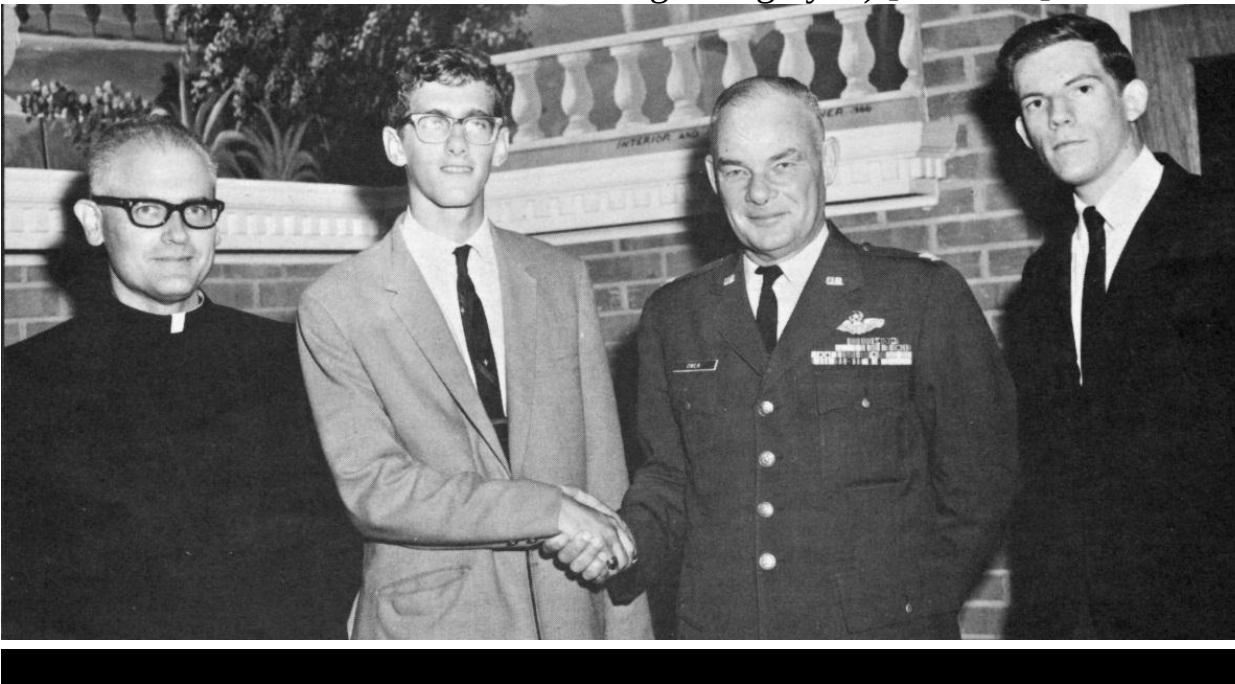


FIGURE 19: BILL SPEER (2ND FROM L) AND SCOTT DUNCAN (R) [AHG:V4N3]

Why would hippies picket a wargaming convention? Two articles in the *Avalon Hill General* in July 1968 exemplify a growing resistance to wargaming. The first, an editorial cover story, noted the steadily increasing flow of antiwar, and antiwargame, letters that Avalon Hill fielded. Missives they quote suggest that the game-makers might be doing a disservice to the youth of this country and that their games are unacceptable to decent people everywhere. An article by Lee Matthews entitled A New Image for Wargaming attests that when the author and his associates enjoyed wargames during breaks at their high school, passing students branded them warmongers, fanatics, or Fascists and that one educator went as far as saying that it was because of people such as we that the world was in the state it is today;; that we were the destroyers of civilization.

These accusations were rooted in the colossal unpopularity of the United States policy of escalation in Vietnam under President Johnson, and the steadily worsening public opinion of war itself in the late 1960s. A very small minority of white, male, middle-class American youths played wargames, while the ranks of the counterculture grew unchecked and claimed a national consensus of the young. The aforementioned *San Francisco Oracle*, for example, enjoyed a circulation of 100,000 by 1968, at which time the IFW could hardly muster a hundred subscribers for its monthly newsletter. Naturally, Avalon Hill felt threatened by this peacemongering, but perhaps disproportionately so, given that the wargaming community remained tiny enough to escape the scrutiny of the mainstream press. An article conjecturing that within a year s time, hippies would picket Avalon Hill as they did napalm-peddler Dow Chemical is thus a bit far-fetched, if not exhibiting a mild persecution mania. [AHG:v5n2] Similarly, when Avalon Hill Vice President Thomas Shaw first met game designer James F. Dunnigan, after a glance Shaw reportedly thought, Uhoh, another one of these pacifist nuts.⁴⁴ Granted, Dunnigan attended Columbia University at the time, but on the GI Bill. As a witness to the upheaval on that campus of April 1968, Dunnigan responded by designing a protesters-versus-police boardgame, which took its name from one of the demonstration s most prominent slogans: *Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker!* (1969). Another amateur game, *Kampus Komedy* (1969), pits the Students for a Democratic Society and Black Panthers against university administrators, police, faculty and so on, with objectives including capturing the Dean or eliminating army recruiters;; its author resided at Carnegie Mellon. An IFW reviewer in the *International Wargamer* quipped, If *Kampus Komedy* were any indication of the dangers of campus life in these uneasy times, then I think I would live a longer and healthier life if I joined the army. [IW:v2n10]

Some of the wariness on Avalon Hill part justifiably resulted from the scant but scathing press wargaming received in youth culture outlets. The April 1969 issue of the short-lived *Eye* magazine, for example, contained a lengthy and somewhat incredulous account of the wargaming scene, emphasizing the Nazi trappings of some of the juvenile clubs and the wargaming community s presumed endorsement of violence, ultimately postulating that the elite of the war lovers are the war gamers. Gary Gygax was one of several prominent wargamers who repudiated this claim in the

strongest possible terms. His objection, however, differed from the traditional apology of the wargaming community, that rejection of war is mere naïveté. He did not claim, as the *Avalon Hill General* did, that man's aggressiveness is not a learned characteristic but an inborn one. [AHG:v5n2] Nor did he acknowledge, as Don Featherstone did in *Wargamer's Newsletter*, war's place as an inevitable reflection of the failings of human nature for as long as man has existed.

⁴⁴ From the *Avalon Hill Jubilee*, 11. [WGN:#102] Instead, Gygax advanced the counterintuitive proposition that the majority is definitely anti-war.⁴⁵

Wells made the original case that wargames taught pacifism, but that was before a pair of World Wars and countless regional conflicts established that games would not rid humanity of its warlike spirit. Although Gygax had enlisted in the military when a teenager, by his thirties he was a Jehovah's Witness and thus a conscientious objector. He advertised his antiwar stance quite openly, often in the face of ridicule from more hawkish gamers. Along with L. Sprague de Camp, he participated in Ted Paul's zine *Kipple*, which Gygax endorsed in wargaming zines specifically because of its intelligent coverage of Vietnam from an anti position. [NWR:v2n2] Most tellingly, Gygax wrote a poem lamenting the drudgery and brutality of military life entitled I'm Glad I'm Not a Soldier which appeared on the cover of *Graustark* (#173), a postal *Diplomacy* magazine.⁴⁶ To elucidate the religious dimension of his opposition to the war in Vietnam, Gygax dispatched to a later issue of *Graustark* the following curious explanation: You know, the Bible Book of Revelation describes the dual Anglo-American world power as an animal that resembles a two-horned lamb with the mouth of a dragon and calls it a false prophet cloaks its actions in lamb-like motives (that is what are declared to be altruistic reasons for aggressive wars) but you'd better believe that it speaks like a s the False Prophet because it is misleading the nations (like backing the U.N., the Image of the Wild Beast and they all derive their power from Satan). [GRS:#184]

Given these colorful sentiments, it can hardly be a coincidence that Gygax main design energies in the summer of 1969 went toward the board wargame *Arsouf*, which recreated one of the more dramatic victories of medieval Christian crusader forces over the Muslim Caliphate. Gygax's broad interest in the medieval period as a setting must derive some inspiration from the religious commitments of that age, which one may also hear reflected in the name of the Castle & Crusade Society. It is, however, equally important

to consider the radical differences between the fabled chivalric warfare in the accounts of the crusader era and the modern conflict in Southeast Asia. The chroniclers record that when King Richard lost his horse in battle, his enemy Saladin bequeathed to the dismounted sovereign two replacements from his own royal stables. Gestures like this might not have been representative of the combat of the day, but as a romantic ideal they suggest a more sane and orderly form of warfare than the clumsy carnage reviled in *Kipple*: medieval war meant a war without industrial atrocities, a polite war, a war sufficiently removed from contemporary problems to admit the levity of games.

Medieval warfare had its own horrors, of course, but centuries later the romance overshadowed those realities. This guiltless allure of wargaming in the medieval setting only raises the question of whether all wargames necessarily address themselves to a romantic ideal. The prescient Wells, who had in 1903 predicted the invention of armored tanks in his story *The Land Ironclads*, published a novel entitled *The World Set Free* (1914) in which he postulated the invention of atomic bombs that indefinitely desecrated the land where they exploded.⁴⁷ Wells prophesized that this dramatic increase in the magnitude of military power entailed that war itself would not withstand the increasing destructive capability of mankind, and that man's bellicose instincts would succumb to the new magnitude of warfare:⁴⁵ [CW:#11] Some further IFW reaction to this article appears in the *International Wargamer* quarterly for the spring of 1969.

⁴⁶ med anything but wretched doggerel, elicited the criticism of *Erehwon* editor Rod Walker and *Graustark* editor John Boardman, resulting in a heated dispute that spread across several postal *Diplomacy* magazines. This fracas may have contributed to Gygax

Certainly it seems now that nothing could have been more obvious to the people of the earlier twentieth century than the rapidity with which war was becoming impossible. And as certainly they did not see it. They did not see it until the atomic bombs burst in their fumbling hands... All through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the amount of energy that men were able to command was continually increasing. Applied to warfare that meant that the power to inflict a blow, the power to destroy, was continually increasing. There was no increase whatever in the ability to escape...

It can be no accident that *The World Set Free* appeared within a year's breadth of *Little Wars*, the seminal text that brought wargaming rules to the Anglo-American world with a hope that you have only to play at Little Wars

three or four times to realise just what a blundering thing Great War must be.⁴⁸ When you are preoccupied with forecasts of tanks and atomic warfare, there must be something quaint about lining up tin soldiers to march at one another and bravely perish on the battlefield, or fall under the barrage of a wooden dowel shot by a spring. It recalled a romantic era in warfare, that of a century before: a time when two uniformed armies in orderly columns conducted the business of war under a common law of arms, in a bounded arena far from civilians. Wells recognized the dreadful truth in *The World Set Free*: safety was soon to be lost forever, as destruction was becoming so facile that any little body of malcontents could use it... it was a matter of common knowledge that a man could carry about in a handbag an amount of latent energy sufficient to wreck half a city.

In this sense, the stylized, antique warfare of *Little Wars* is a comforting fantasy of war, an adaptation that hints at a digestible modicum of the horror of Napoleonic-era battle but is entirely free of the terrible personal implications of modern battle. When real war came to Europe the year after the publication of *Little Wars*, it could not have been more different from the battles of Wells: it was fought by starving troops in trenches, with poison gas, with barbed wire, with aerial bombardments. The young Englishmen who survived those atrocities remember that Tolkien was among their number understandably did not soon take to Wells's game, but future generations would discover in it something that spoke to their condition.

As commercially-produced board wargames entered the market forty years later, they too reflected a rosier past. The nature of warfare fundamentally changed in 1945 when the United States employed atomic weapons against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Avalon Hill most successful titles in the 1960s games like *Stalingrad*, *Afrika Korps*, *Battle of the Bulge*, *DDay* emphasized conventional military actions in World War II in the European theater, all of them Allied victories (or at least Axis losses). The world-shattering conclusion of the Pacific theater operation was not the subject of any Avalon Hill wargame, unsurprisingly: the Japanese player in such a hypothetical game would seem to be at a tedious disadvantage. By 1949, nuclear weapons had proliferated to Russia;; by 1964, when publication of the *Avalon Hill General* commenced, to China. Rocketry now promised to delivery these armaments anywhere that civilians abounded, an aerial invasion which America's beloved oceanic moat could not obstruct. The Cold War of nuclear anxiety in America had begun. With the battle lines

drawn against communism, another world war seemed inevitable and World War III had become synonymous with a nuclear holocaust that would destroy civilization, if not all life on the planet. For virtually everyone who played Avalon Hill games in the late 1960s, the Cuban Missile Crisis was a matter of recent memory. To middle-class American teenagers of that era, how could the heavy cavalry actions in 1940s North Africa not serve as a comforting fantasy of warfare, like the quaint Napoleonic adventures of *Little Wars* were to Wells? Perhaps wargaming bestowed on young people the illusion that they held some control over war, let them experience war as something manageable and reasonable, rather than something that could arrive without warning and snuff out all existence one otherwise unremarkable afternoon.

⁴⁷

with far greater explosive force than conventional ordnance coupled with lingering deadly radiation.⁴⁸ *Little Wars*, 67.

Of course, Wells's powers of prognostication failed him when it came to the implications of nuclear arsenals: they did not end all conventional wars, as their use in an environment of proliferation became too perilous. Conventional wars flourished in the 1950s and 1960s, fought as proxy wars between powers who dared not to confront each other openly, since that might indeed unleash atomic arms. These conflicts, notably the Korean War and the Vietnam War, did not find their way into Avalon Hill titles, however. The Korean War, much like World War I (which, at least in its land conflicts, is not a favorite of wargamers), dragged through extensive periods of stalemate once the combatants had aligned themselves. Its outcome did not eliminate the communist influence in the area, and it certainly requires some optimism to view the result as a victory for American foreign policy.

As for Vietnam, the situation looked even less appealing. In 1967, wargamers might still snigger at the drug-addled attempts of the counterculture to levitate the Pentagon and exorcize its evil spirits. By 1969, however, the deplorable condition of the American endeavor in Vietnam had become undeniable. Television relentlessly replayed footage from the warzone back in American households, once and for all dispelling any illusions about the nobility of conventional warfare. The revelation of the My Lai massacre in 1969 discredited American intentions and, for many, painted soldiers as villains. Civilians widely doubted the justification for American involvement in Vietnam, and cynical reconsideration of America's

imperial ambitions tainted even its most glorious past successes. Perhaps most seriously for the wargaming community, an American victory became an increasingly remote possibility;; the army that had beaten the Kaiser, beaten Hitler, lay ineffectually mired in the jungles of Southeast Asia, hopeless misapplied against a numerically and technologically inferior force which refused to fight a traditional war. The conflict in Vietnam exposed a fundamental limit of military power, and in the popular imagination cast grave doubts on the overall propriety of waging war.

All of this was quite relevant to the average Avalon Hill enthusiast, as he (and the average enthusiast certainly was a he, not a she) stood a decent chance of observing the situation in Vietnam first-hand. The mean age of a subscriber to the *Avalon Hill General* in 1967 was seventeen, so those teenagers who began wargaming in the mid-to-late 1960s were almost certainly eligible for the draft at the end of the decade. Reports of wargamers going to war surfaced in some of the club fanzines. Wargamer and Lieutenant Mike Arnovitz wrote from Vietnam to *Wargamer's Newsletter* in mid-August 1969, reporting that VC activity had picked up a bit in the past few days;; two weeks later he would be killed in action, and even the editor of that periodical remarks on the sad irony that a boy whose previous interest in war lay in its most peaceful aspect of collecting model soldiers should end a victim to it. As Don Greenwood, editor of *Panzerfaust*, prepared to graduate from high school, he took almost fatalistic precautions to ensure his zine would smoothly transition to a new publisher in the event of his conscription.

The wargaming circle in Lake Geneva was in this respect atypical, as it included a disproportionate share of members ineligible for the draft. Of the seven founding members of the LGTSA, three (Gygax, Kaye and Tucker) had aged beyond the reach of the draft, and two (Kuntz and Gygax Jr.) remained safely youthful. Of the remaining two members, however, Mike Reese did enter the military in 1971, where he eventually served as a tank commander, as befitting a modern armor miniatures specialist. The Twin Cities wargaming circle, however, had a more typical age distribution, its membership largely deriving from local universities. Arneson graduated from college in 1971 with a minor in ROTC;; had the Selective Service Bureau not designated him 4-F, he might very well have taken a tour abroad during the critical period when he ran the Blackmoor campaign. [SG:#21] Dave Wesely, the referee of the Braunstein Napoleonic miniatures games, went into the service in the fall of 1970. Fortunately, Wesely education and

technical skills landed him engineering assignments nowhere in Vietnam military service rather than Asia.

Widespread anxiety about Vietnam reminiscent of that conflict might not exactly be a bestseller. When IFW President Bill Hoyer asked Thomas Shaw in 1968 why Avalon Hill produced no Vietnam titles, Shaw replied, Simply because of the controversy, and for that we wouldn't touch it with a ten foot pole.⁴⁹ Vietnam went a long way toward discrediting war, and thus wargames, for Avalon Hill's target audience;; while it could not sour gaming for the hardcore established base, it did prove an insurmountable barrier to expanding further into a youth market which increasingly espoused counterculture values, and thus Vietnam hampered Avalon Hill's ambition of rivaling Parker Brothers or Milton Bradley. If the market for games was going to grow, that growth could not rely on selling games about the very tanks and bombs and rifles reviled in nightly newscasts. In this respect, Gygax interest in medieval wargaming turned out to be timely.⁵⁰ The chivalric world of knights, bowmen, castles and catapults differed sufficiently from the trappings of modern warfare to escape any of the latter's negative connotations. The romantic ideals of the medieval era, especially the code of chivalry, stood at a sufficient remove from modern soldiery to remain attractive and, for uncritical historians, at least somewhat plausible.

The appeal of medievalism manifested outside of wargaming as well. In its rejection of conventional America and bourgeois values, the counterculture dabbled in a sort of pastoral, agrarian fantasy, the withdrawal from modern technology and urbanism in favor of simple communal living in harmony with nature. The pre-industrial mode of life to which these communes aspired exhibited many medieval traits, albeit within a carefully constructed ideal. This is not to say that this fantasy was entirely a peaceful one in vicinity. John Snider went to Europe for his portended that any Avalon Hill title frequently veered in the opposite direction. In 1970, Led Zeppelin would capture the popular imagination, as well as some of the counterculture's disposable income, with a rambunctious medieval battle hymn culminating in a desire to fight the horde, sing and cry, Valhalla, I am coming. The most pronounced outcropping of this sort of militant nostalgia for the Middle Ages was the Society for Creative Anachronism, founded in 1966 in Berkeley, California, a hub of counterculture, which promised a playful return to the jousts and chivalry of the Middle Ages, recreated as they should have been: ⁴⁹ *t entirely disinterested, as Hoyer had designed an amateur*

game based on the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, a 1950s conflict in Vietnam.

⁵⁰ In *Alarums & Excursions* #5 (Oct 1975), an early player of *Dungeons & Dragons* named Sherna Burley typified this attitude by reacting to a proposal to bring firearms into *Dungeons & Dragons* with: *not a wargamer except for D&D. I think that if you use those things that make the 6:00 news a*

riod distorted in present day consciousness by the ministrations of inaccurate historians who have made it seem dull and unpleasant;; who, through a lack of understanding of the aesthetics of the period, have given modern man an image of an un-culture which could never have been, steeped in ignorance, warped by prejudicial faith, cold and dreary and unpleasant.⁵¹

While the SCA will be discussed more broadly in the context of historical recreation in Section 4.4, it is important to appreciate the linkage between this counterculture movement glorifying militant medievalism and wargaming fandom;; William Linden, the Lord Prince of Arms (i.e., the chief authority on heraldry) of the Castle & Crusade Society, was a member of the SCA, and the SCA flagship periodical, *Tournaments Illustrated*, is advertised in *Domesday Book* #5 as a periodical of interest to the membership. All of this medievalism, moreover, has unmistakable ties to the rising popularity of fantasy. The arrival of the SCA followed hard upon the success of Tolkien, and Tolkien role in the promotion of all things medieval is difficult to overestimate.

2.3 THE INFLUENCE OF TOLKIEN

Considering only the dating within the texts themselves, the connection between medievalism and the fantasies of Tolkien might not be patently obvious: after all, Middleearth is not meant to be the Middle Ages, but rather, like Conan Hyborian Age, a prehistorical interlude concluding with the withdrawal of the fantastic from the world, leaving behind our mundane realm. Tolkien's connection to medievalism as an academic, however, could not be more profound. In his tenure as a professor of philology at Oxford, he served as a translator and interpreter of several important works of Middle English, to say nothing of his influential treatment of *Beowulf*. Strictly in terms of its martial qualities, Tolkien Middle-earth does fit the criteria for medieval warfare: it is a world of nobility, fortresses, sieges and siege weaponry (evinced at Helm's Deep and Minas Tirith), of cavalry charges (per the tactics of Rohan) and of primitive uses of gunpowder in a pre-industrial context.

In fact, the medieval environment of the *Lord of the Rings* incorporates a number of thematic elements that one might expect to impede its acceptance by the 1960s counterculture, as critics have observed. Leonard Jackson, for example, noted that many of the Tolkien fans among his students were full of fashionable opinions of the day: they lived in communes, were anti-racist, were in favour of Marxist revolution and free love, and accordingly it seems odd that their favourite reading should be a book about a largely racial war, favouring feudal politics, jam-full of father-figures, and entirely devoid of sex.⁵² Like the trend toward medievalism exemplified by the Society for Creative Anachronism, the popularity of Tolkien in counterculture circles owed to Middle-earth's removal from modern industrial society. Nigel Walmsley argues in his essay Tolkien and the 60s that young people who rejected the comforts of consumer society and retreated to communes and pre-industrial life found a blueprint in Tolkien: The rural atavism, passive and apolitical, bore direct similarities to Hobbit culture, whether in the troglodytic communes of Taos or the mountain communes of Washington State.⁵³

⁵¹ From *A Handbook of the (Current) Middle Ages*, produced by the SCA in 1968.

⁵² From Jackson, *Literature, Psychoanalysis and the New Sciences of the Mind* as cited in Shippey, *The Road to Middle-earth*, 323.

While there must be some truth in this, Walmsley hits on a more important factor when he alludes to the trilogy's lack of moral ambiguity, its placing of evil and violence in an otherworldly context, rather than next door. In Tolkien, evil is unmistakably evil, and those who go to war against it do so uncynically. When the Riders of Rohan massacre a band of orcs, there are no moral qualms about their actions: orcs are necessarily agents of evil, and thus it cannot be immoral to slay them. For a nation agonizing over the atrocities committed by its reluctant soldiers abroad, this Manichean simplicity must have been refreshing. Moreover, Tolkien acknowledges the limits of military power while warfare is a necessary component in the struggle against evil, it is not the decisive component. Instead, the sole path to overcoming evil is the grueling quest of Frodo and Samwise, a pair of good-hearted civilians bent on the destruction of the ring. While it would be wrongheaded to insist that some specific allegory explicates the ring, the properties of the ring hint at fundamental truths about the nature of power and violence. Many are tempted to deploy the immense power of the ring

against Sauron, an embodiment of evil, yet the wise recognize that the exercise of this power would play into Sauron's hands, and ultimately abet him rather than end him. The only way that Sauron can be defeated is to renounce this power utterly, to deprive good and evil alike of access to it, by destroying the ring itself. While there is a role for martial prowess in this endeavor, it is largely just clearing the way for those with the moral forbearance to renounce the ring. In this story, it takes a greater courage to forswear violence and destruction than it does to employ them, and the exercise of power, even with the best intentions, necessarily perpetuates a cycle of evil. It is perhaps this sensibility that resonated so deeply with the counterculture of the 1960s through its deep-seated suspicion of military force.

The whimsical mythological creatures in the *Lord of the Rings* (and perhaps more so in the child-friendly *The Hobbit*) must furthermore have found a welcome audience in the drug culture of the 1960s. Walmsley points out that Albert Hoffman first synthesized LSD in 1938, the same year that Tolkien began work on his trilogy, and that these two cultural forces seemed almost destined to rendezvous, if only thirty years later. Ironically, Tolkien's world became another commercial commodity of the 1960s, endlessly resold in posters, buttons, T-shirts and of course in popular music. In the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco, there was an obligatory store called the Hobbit Hole. One of the most popular records of 1969, *Led Zeppelin II*, dropped several Tolkien references;; more would follow on that band's astronomically successful fourth album, which appeared about six months after *Chainmail* in 1971, including Robert Plant's statement of intent: I'm packing my bags for the Misty Mountains.⁵⁴

⁵³ From Walmsley, *J.R.R. Tolkien: This Far Land*, 76.

⁵⁴ Even wargamers uninterested in Tolkien found a use for Led Zeppelin. Bickerstaffe writes in to #104 (Nov 1970)

have a found a way to really enhance our wargames in an unusual way. We smoke strong cigars to simulate the smoke of the battlefield. (Eyes soon water). We also play a record (LED ZEPPELIN #2). The crashing guitars and the throbbing drums give a very good battle feel. The screamed vocals

The origins of Tolkien's fantasies have been explored so widely and thoroughly that this study cannot hope to improve on the existing literature. Readers who want to understand how Tolkien arrived at his setting are referred to Tom Shippey's *The Road to Middle-Earth* (2003) and the many

volumes of letters and manuscripts Tolkien left behind, as well as John Rateliff annotations to Tolkien's original drafts in the two-volume *The History of the Hobbit* (2007). Unsurprisingly, much of Tolkien's thinking was informed by his professional research into mythology and language; throughout the remainder of this chapter, we will touch on such subjects briefly as we explore how monsters and magic entered the canon of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Tolkien permeated the culture of the day, but weighing the influence of Tolkien on *Chainmail* and its successor *Dungeons & Dragons* is not a simple process. The Fantasy Supplement in *Chainmail* introduces itself as a means to refight the epic struggles related by J.R.R. Tolkien, Robert E. Howard, and other fantasy writers, and in that light it is striking that the foreword to the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* invokes the work of many founding fathers of the fantasy genre Edgar Rice Burroughs, Robert E. Howard, L. Sprague de Camp, Fletcher Pratt and Fritz Leiber but not Tolkien.⁵⁵ Naturally, *Dungeons & Dragons* inherited from *Chainmail* the presence of hobbits, orcs, ents and balrogs, all of which are unambiguous appropriations from Tolkien. Even dwarves, elves, wizards and the like resided, as far as the popular imagination of the early 1970s was concerned, firmly within the borders of Middle-earth, regardless of their prominence in folklore and the works of other authors. So how are we to understand Gygax's omission of Tolkien in this instance? Had something changed between the publication of *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons*? And was *Dungeons & Dragons* primarily another commoditization of Tolkien, even if the foreword suggests otherwise?

These questions are clouded by events that transpired three years after the initial publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*: namely, that the intellectual property holder of the nonliterary rights to the *Lord of the Rings* sent a cease-and-desist letter to Tactical Studies Rules in 1977 demanding the removal of Tolkien creations from *Dungeons & Dragons* and other TSR products. As a consequence, for example, the term hobbit would be excised from subsequent editions of *Dungeons & Dragons*, beginning with the sixth, in favor of halfling, a synonym for hobbit sparingly used in Tolkien. The ramifications of these legal actions will be discussed in more detail at the end of Section 5.9, but the very existence of this cease-and-desist order suggests, rightly or wrongly, that the setting of *Dungeons & Dragons* is largely derivative of Tolkien. The hasty substitution of halflings for hobbits

arouses suspicions of circumventing the Tolkien intellectual property in a rather superficial manner, which in turn obscures the issue of how integral that intellectual property actually was to *Dungeons & Dragons*.

For our current purposes, however, it is most important to understand that this dispute over intellectual property did not arise until some years after the initial publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and thus, when Gygax wrote the foreword excluding Tolkien, he did not omit him for fear of legal reprisal. Remember that *Chainmail*, which contains the same Tolkien vocabulary plus an explicit nod to the professor, had been in print for three years at that time without any challenge from rights holders, granted that it may very well have hidden in its scarcity. While by 1977, against all expectations, TSR had grown into a large enough phenomenon that Hollywood production companies might take note of it, certainly in 1974 Gygax could not have anticipated this eventuality. The reasons for excluding Tolkien must lie elsewhere.

⁵⁵ Lord Dunsany though the name is spelled correctly in the first printing) is the only other fantasy author mentioned by name in the text, and he only in the description of gnolls, which owe a debt to Dunsany

Our best insight into this question comes from an article Gygax published soon after the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* in the fall of 1974 entitled, handily enough, Fantasy Wargaming and the Influence of J.R.R. Tolkien. [LV:v1n4] In that piece Gygax questions whether or not Tolkien invented the definitive fantasy setting: Most hobbyists who are in the least interested in playing fantasy games will tend to consider Tolkien as the ultimate authority and his writings as sacrosanct. Is this position actually deserved? At the risk of being called all sorts of elves, goblins, orcs, trolls, and so on as found in his writings are unimpeachable;; whether or not his treatment of heroes and magicians is such as to disallow any other.

The first question we must ask about this piece is why Gygax penned it. He gives us a strong clue near the start by discussing the reception of *Chainmail*. He relates that while its brief rules were aimed primarily at the battles found in the Tolkien books, they admitted a secondary focus on Howard and other fantasy writers as well, such that the rules are not limited to any single mythos or author's fantasy creation. Gygax consequently laments that despite these very clear prefatory statements, not a few readers complained that the work did not follow Tolkien! As was noted above,

Gygax had already complained about the reception of *Chainmail* back in 1972, in the pages of *Wargamer's Newsletter*: Tolkien purists will not find these rules entirely satisfactory, I believe, for many of the fantastic creatures do not follow his writers were as authoritative as he. who played *Chainmail* had read Tolkien, but fewer had other experience with fantasy literature thus, when they encountered creatures like the troll of *Chainmail*, which is indebted to the vicious and resilient creatures in Poul Anderson's *Three Hearts and Three Lions* rather than to the bumbling trolls in *The Hobbit*, they interpreted the design of the creature as a simple error. Gygax apparently found these sorts of complaints exasperating, and they may have steered him to deemphasize Tolkien in creating *Dungeons & Dragons*.

To this effect, Gygax openly asserts of *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons* that the first is very much more influenced by the works of Professor Tolkien than is the second. [LV:v1n4] This is an important claim, and one which merits deeper analysis. The mere fact that this is Gygax opinion goes a long way toward explaining why the former work acknowledges such an explicit debt to Tolkien and the latter does not. However, Gygax cannot deny the reality that, in the absence of Tolkien, there would be no market for fantasy gaming. Indeed, he does readily acknowledge the debt owed to J.R.R. Tolkien as far as popularizing fantasy and notes that both of his games

not inconsiderably upon [Tolkien's] creations. Remembering the state of obscurity in which fantasy literature languished before 1965, it seems improbable that *Chainmail* or *Dungeons & Dragons* could have found a broad, positive reception without the monumental popularity of Tolkien. What Gygax does suggest, however, is that in much the same way that other fantasy authors reaped the rewards of a market seeded by Tolkien in the late specifications, mainly because I believe that other [WGN:#127] It is easy to imagine that most gamers 1960s, so too could *Dungeons & Dragons* sell to Tolkien fans a game weighted toward the creations of other fantasy authors.

Who were these other authors? In Fantasy Wargaming, Gygax helpfully provides a list of the most significant authors, all names familiar from the account of fantasy literature earlier in this chapter: Besides Howard whom I have already mentioned, there are the likes of Poul Anderson, L. Sprague de Camp (and Fletcher Pratt), Fritz Leiber, H. P. Lovecraft, A. Merritt, Michael Moorcock, Jack Vance, and Roger Zelazny.⁵⁶ Using selections from their collective canon as examples, Gygax then embarks on a series of arguments

to illustrate why Tolkien is not as good a basis for fantasy wargaming as the works of these other authors. First, he asserts that the Ring Trilogy is not fast paced. The *Lord of the Rings* is indeed not a vivid adventure narrative in the stamp of *Treasure Island*, but more of a historical chronicle. Second, he tackles the depiction of heroes and wizards and the lack of any religious element. The heroic figures of Tolkien, he argues, are not of the Conan stamp, and do not strike him as the sorts of characters with whom a participant in a fantasy game should identify. Tolkien wizards, he says, are either rather ineffectual or else they lurk in their strongholds working magical spells which seem to have little if any effect while their gross or stupid minions bungle their plans for supremacy. The absence of religion in the *Lord of the Rings* is another respect in which it is followed more closely by *Chainmail* (which has no concept of a religious miniature figure type) than by *Dungeons & Dragons*. Third, Gygax argues that outside the framework of the tale many of Tolkien creatures are not very exciting or different. The aforementioned trolls are one. He complains that giants are largely glossed over by Tolkien yet have tremendous potential in fantasy settings. Finally, Gygax stresses that Tolkien elves are actually far more like English fairies than anything else, and that wargaming required a very different vision of elves.

This is not to suggest that Gygax believed the *Lord of the Rings* got everything wrong. He enthusiastically endorses Tolkien version of goblins, dragons and especially dwarves. Among Tolkien original creations, Gygax esteems the barrow wights, Nazgûl, balrog, ents and hobbits, all of which he faithfully reproduced in *Chainmail*. However, he adamantly resists a dogmatic elevation of Tolkien to an authority over fantasy, insisting instead that fantasy wargaming should be a blend of all these fantastic worlds and creatures, especially devised for recreating fantasy in game form.

Gygax points of contention with Tolkien fantasy world echo those expressed by the authors whom he champions: a group that found themselves in the awkward position of being simultaneously indebted to Tolkien for the boost in their sales yet reluctant to embrace his approach to the genre. Gygax certainly was not the first to claim that the *Lord of the Rings* suffered from serious pacing problems: Fritz Leiber praised the beginning of the series, especially bits with the Nazgûl and the balrog, but then when he searches his memory for later notable events, exciting things *should* spring to mind, but they don t.⁵⁷ In fairness, however, we should

remember that *The Hobbit* is as significant a potential influence as Tolkien's later trilogy, and where Frodo's quest explores deep questions about the use of power and the nature of evil in a protracted and sometimes ponderous mythical narrative, Bilbo's far briefer adventure is a more light-hearted romp of treasure-seeking dwarves and slain monsters. As we shall explore later in Section 2.5, Bilbo's adventure comes much closer to the spirit of *Dungeons & Dragons*, not in the least part because it prominently features both dungeons and dragons.

⁵⁶ he *Dragons* #4 (Dec 1976), where he lists twenty-two authors, and then Appendix N of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* (1979), where he lists twenty-nine. In the *DMG*

influences on *AD&D* were probably de Camp & Pratt, REH [Howard], Fritz Leiber, Jack Vance, HPL [Lovecraft] and A. Merritt

⁵⁷ Quoted in Carter, *Imaginary Worlds*, 116, from a personal letter that Leiber dated June 9, 1969.

Other criticisms by fantasy authors of the day cut a bit deeper. In his *Imaginary Worlds*, Lin Carter submits that Tolkien is not much of an artist when it comes to prose style (though it is embarrassing for Carter to cast that particular stone, especially at an Oxford don) and that his portrayal of evil is flimsy and two-dimensional. Carter dedicates quite a long passage to the absurdity of religion's absence from the *Lord of the Rings*, a critique that encompasses a veritable catalog of all previous fantasy fiction, demonstrating the universality of religion and the incredibility that it should not flourish in the bellicose medieval societies of Middle-earth. Michael Moorcock is perhaps most damning, and most aligned with the expected stance of the counterculture, in his judgment that the *Lord of the Rings* is a pernicious confirmation of the values of a morally bankrupt middle-class. When Moorcock reviewed both *The Broken Sword* and the *Lord of the Rings* near their time of release, he noted that Anderson's book impressed me so powerfully that I couldn't enjoy Tolkien I couldn't take Tolkien seriously.⁵⁸

The basis of Moorcock's critique in particular reminds us of the counterculture's seemingly hypocritical acceptance of a work with so many reactionary elements. If Led Zeppelin often-confused references are any indication, the popular embrace of the *Lord of the Rings* was not slavishly faithful to Tolkien's work as much as to a more general impression of its meaning, a message that spread rapidly and anecdotally through the counterculture. Weighing in at half a million words, spread in common

editions over some twelve hundred pages, the complete trilogy must have been more admired than read to take that one step further, in some respects the work itself may have been ancillary to the extra-literary sense of the setting it imparted and the tremendous attraction that this magical world exerted on the minds of readers.

2.4 THE VISITATION THEME

In the same issue of *Eye* magazine (April 1969) where a critical article proclaimed that the elite of the war lovers are the war gamers, there appears in the back, among the classified advertisements, the following peculiar submission: Homesick poet-adventurer would like to journey back to Middle Earth. I have relatives in the Shire and Lothlorien. Anyone sixteen and over, male or female, who has a mind that may at times foresee the unforeseeable or just wants to go, please contact Aaron son of Drogo.

The allure of Middle-earth was so great that the impulse to pack one's bags and head for the Misty Mountains struck many more than just Robert Plant. A popular slogan that adorned Tolkien-themed T-shirts of the day was the defiant proclamation Frodo Lives! One thing that Middle-earth decidedly lacks, however, is our modern selves;; while some critics have conjectured that the bourgeois hobbits of the Shire serve as our surrogates, we cannot find Aaron son of Drogo wandering around Hobbiton on a sabbatical.

⁵⁸ See Moorcock, *Wizardry & Wild Romance*, 127 and 155.

There is however a trajectory in fantasy literature running through Burroughs, de Camp and Anderson, which also surfaces in the works of Moorcock and Howard, that demonstrates precisely this sort of connection between fantasy and the denizens of the real modern world. The first important popular novel in this tradition is probably Haggard *King Solomon's Mines*, a story without any overt fantastical component, but nonetheless one whose structure and thematic elements recur in several fantasy works. The formula is a simple one: plausible contemporary persons undertake a journey to an undiscovered, fantastic realm, where after some adventures they return to their place of origin. One most American of authors penned a work shortly after *King Solomon's Mines* that might be best understood as both a continuation and a rebuttal of Haggard: *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* (1889) by Mark Twain.

Where Haggard wrote of English aristocrats transported into a primitive environment intervening decisively in local affairs to further the common good, Twain tells of an American transported into the mythic Arthurian age

of England and finding its much-touted chivalry and nobility to be an utter sham. Haggard heroes traverse a seemingly impassable African desert to cross from the civilization into a lost world of ancient tribes and forgotten wealth. Twain's protagonist, Hank Morgan (better known as The Boss), arrives in King Arthur's England in a rather less conventional manner. As is apparently an occupational hazard of administering an armaments factory employing

rough men, Morgan was knocked unconscious during a crowbar-fight with an insubordinate subordinate and he awoke in Camelot. No explanation is given, nor apparently required, for Morgan's presence in these legendary times, where he gleefully explodes the sacred myths of England. All of the fantastic elements of Arthurian mythology are relegated to delusions, willful or simply wacky, that governed the lives of medieval Englishmen. Morgan applies nineteenth-century engineering know-how to the raw materials of the period, and his accomplishments quickly outstrip those of deranged mystics like Merlin, to say nothing of the martial prowess of the knights themselves. Eventually, in the final confrontation between American ingenuity and English hereditary privilege, Morgan handily butchers the flower of British nobility with dynamite, Gatling guns and electric fences. Yet after explaining away all magic as madness, Twain leaves us with one inescapable bit of fantasy the very mechanism by which Hank Morgan came to visit King Arthur's Court. His mode of return to his native time offers us little more by way of rational explanation, except the conjecture that the journey was itself imaginary. In this respect, Edgar Rice Burroughs borrowed Twain's framework for his series of novels concerning John Carter and his adventures on the planet Mars. John Carter's method of transference to Barsoom similarly requires lapsing into unconsciousness, though in his case owing to some sort of mephitic gas rather than fisticuffs. Like Hank Morgan, John Carter eventually finds himself back in his native place and time, though he bitterly regrets his inability to return to his Martian love Dejah Thoris The Boss, had he even wished to return, lacked recourse to the long line of sequels that fulfilled John Carter's desires. The Mars visited by John Carter is not a realm of sorcery, but the very mechanism of his visitations is necessarily preternatural. The John Carter stories formed a blueprint for round-trip visits to fantastic worlds that would be reworked by many later authors. Merritt's *The Ship of Ishtar*, published only ten years after the debut of John Carter, rehashes this basic formula: a man of our world pulled, in an

involuntary fashion, into a fantastic realm where adventure awaits.⁵⁹ In *The Ship of Ishtar*, however, the protagonist oscillates back and forth between Manhattan and the magical realm of the eponymous ship, experiencing his adventure on the installment plan.

The Harold Shea stories by Fletcher Pratt and L. Sprague de Camp which filled the pages of *Unknown* in the 1940s are also accounts of modern persons temporarily visiting fantastic worlds, though they edge closer to the precedent of Twain than Burroughs.⁶⁰ Shea visited well-documented worlds of literary legend rather than any presumably contemporary planet, just as Hank Morgan landed himself squarely in Malory's Arthurian legends. Shea made a grand tour of Norse and Irish mythology, the *Kalevala*, *Orlando Furioso* and even the allegories of Spencer. Notably, Shea entered into these fictional realms intentionally, unlike the inadvertent relocations of Hank Morgan and John Carter. Shea's accuracy in targeting mythical worlds leaves something to be desired, as he frequently landed in fables other than those he intended, but in each visitation twentieth-century wits prevailed over fantasy, as with Twain's hero.⁶¹ However, de Camp and Pratt inverted Twain's depiction of the primacy of engineering and poverty of wizardry by rendering technology dysfunctional in worlds governed by magic. A pistol brought along on one of their sojourns proves useless, for example. Fortunately for the protagonists, cunning and rationality still proved quite efficacious. Shea and his more systematically minded companions quickly mastered the logic underlying the operation of sorcery, or, as one of their stories is titled, the mathematics of magic. This notion that magic obeys a set of underlying principles that render its practice virtually an exercise in engineering was a common one in the pages of *Unknown*, especially in the crossover works of science fiction by writers like Heinlein. These stories introduced an account of magic that might not seem entirely implausible to twentieth-century sensibilities, magic that could exist in a society similar to ours without disrupting the underlying social order limited, scientific magic that in many respects is just a fanciful surrogate for the achievements of modern science. The presence of this modest magic greatly facilitated the integration of real people into fantasy settings.

Intriguingly, the stories of John Carter and Harold Shea are prominently mentioned by Gygax in the foreword to *Dungeons & Dragons* as inspirations for the game together they constitute two out of the four fictions that he expects *Dungeons & Dragons* to emulate. Perhaps Gygax is not

merely acknowledging a debt to the settings, to the planet Barsoom or the various mythologies toured by Shea, but to the higher-level structure of the stories as well. There is a certain intrinsic kinship between these stories of twentieth-century persons visiting fantasy worlds and the play of *Dungeons & Dragons*, where we as players set aside our mundane selves temporarily to assume a fantastic role. The connection is thrown into stark relief in the original Blackmoor campaign where the players played themselves, thrust into a fantasy setting of Arneson invention. Every time they sat down to play in Blackmoor, they made a round trip journey into a fantasy world, and like Carter

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artifact serving as a portal between our world and a fantastic realm, and the story is similarly framed as a visitation.

⁶⁰ In fact, the theme of ordinary people thrown into such extraordinary surfaces frequently recurred in *Unknown* it was a favorite of L. Ron Hubbard, for example. Later in the 1940s, it would also figure in the more mainstream novel *Silverlock* by John Myers Myers.

⁶¹ There is even an explicit mention of the Connecticut Yankee toward the end of the Shea tale *The Green Magician*.

or Shea, once in that world they acquitted themselves as one might expect a modern person to do under the circumstances.⁶²

Visitation fictions recognized the appetite of fantasy readers in the 1960s to interact with these fantasy worlds not merely as passive observers, but as protagonists. Fantasy was never content to be confined to the page. Fantastic adventure is too exciting, too immersive, to be appreciated only from afar: its fans wanted to get involved with it. This longing became so integral to the fantasy setting that it steered the very plots of the genre toward stories where ordinary people leave the mundane world behind and enter, for a time, the world of the fantastic. These visitation stories must have satisfied the craving for a greater level of immersion for a time, at least, but fantasy demanded more. Would Aaron, son of Drogo, be content merely to read about the world with which he so strongly identified? Most of the key authors of the genre experimented with extra-literary components of the fantasy setting Howard's posed photographs reenacting his stories, Burroughs's chess variant Jetan, Leiber's fantasy wargame of Nehwon all suggest a level of engagement that goes beyond the static experience of literature. We can hardly be surprised to find (as Section 4.4 will show)

authors like Leiber and Poul Anderson taking up swords and fighting in the Society for Creative Anachronism. The fantasy genre remained incomplete without a way for its devotees to immerse themselves more fully in its environment: in that fundamental sense, *Dungeons & Dragons*, and fantasy role-playing in general, would fulfill a promise that the fantasy genre had always made to its readership, by transforming the visitation theme from something one reads to something one experiences.

The narrative framing device of transporting a character from the real world into a fantasy setting is hardly unique to the sword-and-sorcery genre, of course. It is especially prevalent in juvenile works like *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) or *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900). Alice's adventures are framed as a dream, as are Dorothy's in the screen adaptation which made Oz famous (although not in Baum's original novel).⁶³ In juvenile fiction, this device often serves to cast doubt on children's experience and garner the reader's sympathy by pitting adult skepticism against youthful testimony. Even Harold Shea must contend with dubious detectives when his love interest disappears into a fiction. The presence of characters who voice the doubts of the reader confronted by fantasy provides an indispensable tool for authors who hope to elicit a vicarious response. Through a fictional surrogate, readers experience a fantastic world where the author provides the disbelief, so readers do not have to the result is a surprisingly credible and highly immersive story about the impossible.

Perhaps the most famous instance of the theme of visiting fantasy worlds employed the Second World War as a backdrop. While it was not mentioned by Gygax as an influence, and indeed its fantasy elements are more allegorical than adventuresome, it did introduce many juvenile readers of that era to the idea of touring magic realms. The story concerned the Pevensie children who, like many young Londoners during the Blitz, were sent away to a country retreat far from the bombing. In the novel *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), they discover a magical cabinet that allows them access to a land called Narnia, a place where they become kings and queens and live decades of their lives before finding themselves back in England, still children in the 1940s and confronting the same adult skepticism that plagued Alice and Dorothy after their visitations. C. S. Lewis, the author of that novel and its six sequels, belonged to the same small Oxford literary circle as Tolkien, the famous Inklings. Although his fantasy novels never strayed far from pedagogy, Lewis developed an

accessible formula for introducing modern protagonists into fantastic worlds that addressed a much broader audience than typical genre fiction.

⁶² See Section 4.3 for more on the evolution of the practice of playing as oneself thrust into the fictional context of a game.

⁶³ The Wizard of Oz himself, as presented in the film, owes a conspicuous debt to the Connecticut Yankee he hails from Kansas, came to Oz somewhat inadvertently and disguises his technology as magic in order to control the denizens of the Emerald City.

Of the later works in this tradition, the one that exerted the greatest influence over *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons* was Poul Anderson's *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, a story which explicitly cribs from Twain's prototype. Holger Carlson, a Danish resistance fighter during the Second World War, survives a vicious gun battle with the Nazis at the end of which all his world blew up in flame and darkness. Upon awakening, he finds himself adrift in the setting of the medieval poem *Le Chanson de Roland*. Within that medieval French narrative, it transpires that Carlson plays a very specific role, that of Ogier the Dane, and although he does not quickly guess his own secret identity, he bluffs and intuits his way through the fantasy world, half humoring the fantastic conceits of its denizens and half evolving into the hero he does not suspect he is. Upon the completion of his fantastic sojourn he found himself exactly where he had started in Denmark, facing the Germans.

There I stood in armor, with bullets yelping around me and Cortana [his magic sword] still in my hand. And I rushed forward and killed the Germans. From Carlson's account, we might surmise that the Germans present at that moment would not have been skeptical of the veracity of his fantastic travels. We do however once again see a work whose influence Gygax stresses, from which *Dungeons & Dragons* inherits its trolls and later its paladins, exhibiting this same pattern of a modern protagonist temporarily assuming a place in the epic circumstances of a fantastic setting, here even accumulating experience and equipment, and then returning to the real world.

In the 1960s, as the fantasy craze began to take hold of the popular imagination, many new works relied on the visitation theme. Heinlein *Glory Road* (serialized in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* from July through September 1963 and published in hardcover that same year) serves as a prominent example.⁶⁴ It details the adventures of Oscar Gordon, a

young war veteran presumably just returned from Vietnam, who struggles to find a place for himself in the society of the early 1960s. While he dabbles with the unsatisfactory paths of schooling, careers and freeloading, when he asks himself the question, What *did* I want? the answer is: I wanted a Roc's egg.... I wanted the hurtling moons of Barsoom.... I wanted Prester John, and Excalibur held by a moon white arm out of a silent lake.... I wanted the feeling of romance and the sense of wonder I had known as a kid. I wanted the world to be what they had promised me it was going to be instead of the tawdry, lousy, fouled-up mess it is.

It transpires that Oscar Gordon has the opportunity for precisely these sorts of adventures when he answers a classified ad seeking a hero and passes through a gate into a series of alternative worlds. There, as he quests for the legendary Egg of the Phoenix on behalf of his patroness, he acquits himself in the manner of a typical sword-and-sorcery hero of the barbarous stamp in comparison to these lavish planets, Earth is indeed a barbarous, backwater place. Once various evildoers are dispatched, his reward for retrieving the Egg is fantastic wealth and luxury, which after the fashion of Conan he wears poorly. Eventually, he returns to Earth, where he once again attempts unsuccessfully to assimilate himself into American society. His conclusion is that only a life of adventure will be satisfactory, and the novel ends with his search for new fantastic quests, hanging on the question, Got any dragons you need killed? Of course, in the time between the Harold Shea stories and *Glory Road*, a great deal had changed in America. Near the end of *Glory Road*, Oscar encounters a group of proto-hippies, recognizable as such because the men wore beards and didn't comb their hair. The beards helped, it made it easy to tell which were girls. When he informs a poet in their midst of the injury he received during his military service in Southeast Asia, the poet scornfully replies, Mercenary! American society seemingly has no place for someone like Oscar Gordon: he is driven out of our world and into another in his quest for self-realization.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Heinlein dedicated *Glory Road*, obliquely, to the perpetrators of *Amra*.

In the middle of his quest, Oscar Gordon speaks a few metafictional words to himself that echo the sentiments of Harold Shea before him: I had fallen into a book. Well, I hoped it was a success and that the writer would keep me alive for lots of sequels. It was a pretty nice deal for the hero. This sentiment is one of the keys to the fantasy theme of visitation and certainly among the most significant vectors through which fantasy fiction inspired

Dungeons & Dragons. In one of the Harold Shea stories, the character of Chalmers compares the prospects of achieving glory while living within the world of the *Faerie Queen* to those of regular old Earth, and decides that it is an attractive plan;; to look in another world for the achievement denied in this. This statement is somewhat remarkable insofar as Chalmers is the head of Shea s university psychology department, by most standards not an unsuccessful man. In what sense had he been denied achievement in the real world? The implication is that there exists some deeper aspiration latent in humanity to experience a life of mythical heroism, irrespective of our station in the world. Before Oscar Gordon walks the Glory Road, he is virtually penniless;; upon his return to Earth he commands limitless wealth but still finds his life wanting. When the hero of Anderson s *Three Hearts and Three Lions* returns to modern times, he somewhat wistfully reports, Since then I ve been plain Holger Carlson, no super-human powers, no great destiny, just the memory of a life which began in Carl s day. All of these vivid adventure stories were not merely providing the vicarious experience of a hero succeeding in a fantasy world, but instead, the vicarious experience of a normal person from the real world visiting a fantasy world, mastering its ways and becoming a hero, temporarily.⁶⁶ Even if we only experience this Heinlein was one of the very few among science fiction and fantasy authors to condone United States foreign policy in Southeast Asia.

⁶⁶ *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), a book much read in the 1960s, embarks

ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious

in the case of Harold Shea or Holger Carlson) or a novel realm of imagination. Many authors of importance to *D&D*, most obviously Moorcock

state of heroism intermittently, that may be its own joy the joy of a Peter Parker walking the streets of New York safe in the knowledge that no one suspects his secret pastime.

The elaboration of this visitation theme continued throughout the 1960s. It appears in John Norman s work, certainly in a direct lineage from the Barsoom novels, beginning with *Tarnsman of Gor* (1967), in which Tarl Cabot is first transplanted from our world to the Counter-Earth of Gor. It is a major component of Zelazny Amber series, where the amnesiac protagonist

awakens in the real world and must travel a metaphysical road to Amber which, in a manner somewhat similar to Harold Shea's syllogismobile, involves adding and subtracting elements from reality until it is constituted entirely of Amber. In Michael Moorcock novel *The Eternal Champion* (1970 publication in the United States), the hero hears voices call to him on the cusp of sleep, summoning him to fight as the hero Erekosë in a distant world;; of his life on Earth, we know only: There was a woman. A child. A city. An occupation. A name: John Draker. A sense of frustration. A need for fulfillment.

All of this is not to suggest that visitations are a necessary element in fantasy fiction. Although Moorcock's Erekosë crossed from our world to another, his Elric is firmly bred of Melniboné, and indeed brings about the end of that world before his own death, curtailing any prospect that it might be visited later. The visitation theme is moreover apparently lacking in two of the four works that Gygax cites in the foreword to *Dungeons & Dragons*. Conan was born a barbarian of the frozen north of Cimmeria it is unclear how his story could have unfolded as a visitation narrative, as the Hyborian Age does not come across as a welcoming destination for tourists. It is however worth noting that Howard first invoked the character of Conan (some months prior to the publication of the *Phoenix and the Sword*) in a story called *People of the Dark* (1932), in which a modern narrator named John O'Brien visits a mysteriously familiar ancient cave and, upon losing consciousness after a nasty fall, awakens as Conan of the reavers, a black-haired, loin cloth and sandal-clad barbarian wielding an iron sword who swears by the god Crom. O'Brien's experiences playing the role of Conan are eventually revealed to be a reincarnation narrative in which O'Brien recalls his past life as Conan, and uses Conan experience to resolve a course of action in his own present-day life. It is remarkable, however, how closely the narrative framing device mirrors that of Burroughs' first *John Carter* novel, down to the ancient cave, the loss of consciousness, and the disoriented awakening as a warrior swordsman. While this story is not commonly anthologized with the Conan canon, and was almost certainly unknown to Gygax and Arneson, one cannot ignore that even Conan debut closely followed the visitation theme.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Howard employed this theme outside of his Conan stories: his novel *Almuric*, which first appeared in book form in 1964, struck very much in the Burroughs vein, featuring a hero named Esau Cairn who inexplicably relocates to another world.

As for Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, they are similarly homegrown in the fictional Nehwon, though they do visit the ancient past of Earth in the story the Adept's Gambit and occasionally meet interlopers from other worlds in their diverse wanderings. The visit to Earth in the Adept's Gambit owes its existence to a historical accident in Leiber's creative process, as this was actually the first Fafhrd/Gray Mouser story written, though not the first published. Leiber's original vision, which was informed

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Amra. [AMR *Strange Tales* (Jun 1932).

somewhat by input from Lovecraft, set his heroes in Earth's ancient past, in an era reminiscent of Howard's Hyborian Age. Once Two Sought Adventure and other stories were published, however, and the world of Nehwon began to take shape, it was necessary to retrofit a framework for the Adept's Gambit in which the heroes pass through a mysterious cave in Nehwon leading to our world, where they enjoy various adventures before returning from whence they came.

While the visitation theme is not universal in fantasy genre fiction, it is sufficiently prevalent, especially in the works cited by Gygax as core influences, that its connection with the structure of *Dungeons & Dragons* cannot trivially be dismissed as coincidence. Beginning with Arneson Blackmoor, in which the participants played themselves installed in a fantasy world, *Dungeons & Dragons* pioneered an entirely new way of episodically interacting with the fantasy genre, one which extended the visitation theme of fantasy fiction beyond the scope of the written word. While detailed analysis of the various modes of participation in role-playing games is reserved for Chapter Four, for the moment we need only appreciate that the prevalence of the visitation theme is one of the dominant factors that ensured role-playing games began in a fantasy setting, rather than some other genre. These stories taught readers how to role-play when immersed in a fantasy narrative: how to follow the example of a Connecticut Yankee, of Harold Shea, of Holger Carlson. The immense popularity of Tolkien seeded a global marketplace for fantasy that was cleverly exploited by both *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons*, both of which transcended the popular distaste for warfare by setting their action at a great remove from modern weaponry and casting their battles in a world of moral absolutes, among evil beasts that can be slain without qualms.

So, while Aaron son of Drogo might find no modern surrogate contained in Tolkien works that would grant him the vicarious experience of packing

his bags for the proverbial Misty Mountains, through a game like *Dungeons & Dragons* he might have a far more intense extra-literary experience.⁶⁸

2.5 ON DUNGEONS AND ON DRAGONS

Having explored the history of the fantasy genre and the circumstances that positioned fantasy as a game setting, we will for the remainder of this chapter examine how *Dungeons & Dragons* borrowed from the fantasy genre to populate the particulars of its setting. From the works of the authors previously discussed, Gygax and Arneson adapted much of the monsters, magic, treasure and fundamental narrative of their game. While enumerating these influences, we will frequently skirt the boundaries between setting and system: it is, for example, a fact about the setting that *Dungeons & Dragons* has wizards of varying degrees of power who may cast certain sorts of spells, but the system governs exactly how those powers are quantified, that is, the extent to which those spells might change the state of the game and precisely how often they can be invoked. In some cases, the distinction between system and setting may disappear entirely, especially in systematized fantasy fictions that treat magic as a discipline similar to engineering. No individual fiction or even author, however, conveys a fantastic environment that fully describes the setting of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Gygax and Arneson designed a setting broad enough to encompass existing and future fantasy scenarios, partly by appropriating elements from diverse sources, but more importantly by leaving the setting open-ended and providing simple ways for the setting to be extended. Two features of the setting, however, had such a prominent standing that they merited a place in the game's title.

⁶⁸ It is worth noting that the visitation theme did not grind to a halt with the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*, but instead remains a very popular framing device in fantasy literature. It is central to the chronicles of Thomas Covenant, beginning with *Lord Fou Harry Potter*, a wizard who dwells in the real world but attends a boarding school in a fantasy realm accessed through which had previously been a gateway to fantasy for the Pevensie children in *Prince Caspian* (1951).

2.5.1 MAZES WITH MONSTERS

Upon first consideration, a dungeon might seem like an unlikely venue for adventure. When the Connecticut Yankee visits the dungeon of Morgan le Fay, for instance, all he finds therein are inmates whose miserable condition has left them far beyond the memory of their former lives, let

alone their misdeeds, especially since the latter are in The Boss's words trifling offenses. Her dungeon is an oubliette where the captives languish out of sight and mind, and it is also furnished with the necessary implements to extract confessions and administer punishments but nowhere among its dank and filthy cells is there any treasure or glory to be found, nor anything monstrous other than the debasement of the human condition.

Our word dungeon comes from the French *donjon*, a name for the strongest tower in a castle, which thus often served as a place to detain prisoners. Its connotation of a subterranean cell of confinement existed in English from the late Middle Ages forward, and the term was used in this fashion by Shakespeare (*Hamlet*'s many confines, wards and dungeons) and Milton. Even where the word signifies an underground prison, this place of incarceration inevitably lies beneath a larger fortress or castle: a dungeon does not crop up independently. It was in this configuration that Dave Arneson appropriated the concept of a dungeon: his Castle Blackmoor squatted atop a complex of underground rooms and passages, and it was in that dungeon that a grand tradition of chthonic adventures began.

The fact that dungeons lie underground connects them with another category of subterranean structure that famously does house treasures: tombs. Since the dawn of human history, the deceased have been interred with grave goods, presumably for use in the next world, ranging from the humble coins to pay a ferryman up to the most lavish fortunes in gold, weapons, home furnishings and even slaughtered retainers. Tombs thus became synonymous with treasure, of which the most prominent examples are surely the Egyptian necropoleis at Thebes and elsewhere, underground complexes comprised of diverse rooms, passages and purported traps. After the discovery of Tutankhamun's bounteous resting place in 1922, the trope of hunting for treasure in ancient mausoleums took up permanent

And finally Baron Blackmoor, adding a full six levels of twisting, trap-filled passages beneath your castle will pay for itself two times over when it comes time to sell.

Hmmmm...
And if you order today, spike filled pits
are Two-for-one.



residence in popular culture, especially after its enshrinement in the film *The Mummy* (1932).⁶⁹ The undead mummy personifies the widespread superstitions about a curse on those who plunder the riches of these sacred underworlds. This supernatural association is to be expected, as graves have always served as a border between the living world and the otherworld of the dead. Things buried underground are addressed to that otherworld, a place of ghosts, gods and things in between, entities which rarely look favorably on living humans. This is surely the sort of space Arneson wrote about in his description of the Blackmoor underworld for the *Domesday Book*, about the bottomless pits, some of these connect with the underground caves in the area but many go far deeper than that and may either join with other cave networks, the Castle Dungeons, or form the nexus for independent networks of caves and tunnels that connect with the nether world.⁷⁰ His dungeons

were not merely a prison, but a conduit that allowed all sorts of otherworldly beings to come into conflict with adventurers.

Arneson testimony five or so years after the fact suggests that directly before conceiving of the Blackmoor setting, he spent some time reading old Conan novels, [WG:#4] reading several S&S novels [SG:#21] or reading a Conan book (I cannot recall which one but I always thought they were much the same). [DW:#3] Popcorn also consistently figures in accounts of the factors contributing to the invention of Blackmoor, as well as a few unspecified monster movies and absent-minded doodling on a pad of graph paper. This last factor, graph paper, presumably derived from the *Chainmail* rules, which recommend the use of pen and paper to map underground areas that were prohibitively difficult to model on a miniature sand table, such as mines that might be dug beneath castle walls. *Chainmail* makes no mention of dungeons, however. In the pages of the *Domesday Book*, dungeons scarcely receive a mention other than Arneson off-hand remark, much in the spirit of the Connecticut Yankee's experience, that dungeons are icky-poo! [DB:#5]

In a search for the influences on Arneson's dungeon adventures, Conan makes a fruitful starting point. Arneson remembrance of reading Conan novels in particular is a potentially valuable clue, since for the most part the Conan saga is parceled into short stories rather than novels. Only one Conan work by Howard extends to full novel length: a tale entitled Hour of the Dragon, later published by Gnome under the title *Conan the Conqueror*, which Lancer in turn reprinted in 1967. Conveniently, the Hour of the Dragon contains a lengthy sequence that transpires in a dungeon.

Conan, now King of Aquilonia, is locked away in a dungeon beneath the palace of King Tarascus in the Nemedian empire. One of the king's slave girls takes pity on Conan and frees him from his chains. She is not, however, able to secure his release from the barred interior of the prison, though she gives him a dagger and rough directions to an exit.

What awful perils lurk behind that door I cannot even guess, she warns. From oddly disposed bones, Conan surmises a supernatural threat might inhabit the dungeon. He cautiously proceeds past the cells, only to discover he is stalked by something in the darkness. ... it was heavy and huge, and yet it moved with more than human ease and swiftness and when it was upon him, he knew the creature to be one of the monsters that

⁶⁹ The treasures of Tutankhamun went on display at the British Museum, with much fanfare, in March 1972, during a crucial era in the evolution of Blackmoor and its dungeons.

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for *Domesday Book First Fantasy Campaign*.

were the goblins of Hyborian legendry, and were in reality ogres of the natural world. With a single powerful thrust of the dagger, Conan manages to dispatch the fiend and effect his escape. None too soon, as the slave-girl advises him, Beyond these dungeons lie the pits which are the doors to Hell. This may well have directly inspired the connection bet Arneson parenthetical remark that the various Conan tales were much the same is amply substantiated by the repetition of this dungeon theme in other stories. In the Scarlet Citadel, for example, we find the following: ... these must be the very Halls of Horror named in shuddering legendry, the tunnels and dungeons wherein Tsotha performed horrible experiments with beings human, bestial, and, it was whispered, demoniac, tampering blasphemously with the naked basic elements of life itself. Rumor said that the mad poet Rinaldo had visited these pits, and been shown horrors by the wizard, and that the nameless monstrosities of which he hinted in his awful poem, *The Song of the Pit*, were no mere fantasies of a disordered brain.

Conan also begins his tenure in the dungeon of the Scarlet Citadel chained to the wall, though in this case he has been left the plaything of an enormous serpent known as Satha, the Old One. Inadvertently freed by an assassin who came to take his life but instead fell to the serpent, Conan sets out with a torch in one hand and a sword in the other to find an exit from the dungeon. In his exploration he meets other monsters, including humans horribly reshaped by the evil wizard Tsotha. Eventually, he finds himself lost in a maze of tunnels with no obvious exit;; its various rooms are described almost thoroughly enough that one could sketch a rudimentary map of the area. Finally, he discovers and liberates Pelias, a rival sorcerer of Tsotha, and together they escape when Pelias conveniently resurrects a deceased eunuch on the other side of the bars who can raise the gate. Jointly, the Hour of the Dragon and the Scarlet Citadel establish dungeons as places to explore, where monsters reside that must be confronted.

Conan once again finds himself imprisoned in a dungeon at the beginning of *Rogues in the House*, and though his liberation is achieved fairly easily, in the course of discharging a resulting obligation he not long

thereafter finds himself in yet another prison, in the pits under the house of the Red Priest. He is not there confined to a cell, but instead stumbles blindly through corridors, though fearful of pits and other traps as he proceeds. This fear is well founded: Conan at one point accidentally springs a hidden catch that releases a portcullis, and only his steel-spring quickness spares him a skewering. These particular cellars abound with such mechanical contraptions as well as systems of mirrors that enable distant observers to track movement below. Conan and his associates make their exit after allowing a few expendable men to trigger the final snare. Thus, Howard also imparts to posterity the notion that in these underground prisons one must constantly be wary of concealed, automated contrivances that can dole out quick deaths.

Howard's imitators inherited this structure in all its particulars. Even when completing an untitled synopsis left behind by Howard one describing the plunder of ancient ruins in Zamoria by Conan and his temporary companion Nestor as the short story Halls of the Dead for the February 1967 issue of *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, de Camp has the torch-wielding heroes wander through claustrophobic underground chambers before they discover a long-buried treasure chamber and its undead guardians.⁷¹ Lin Carter's *Thongor of Lemuria* (1966) has an extremely familiar sequence where the blackhaired, loincloth-clad barbarian Thongor is imprisoned in the dungeons of Thalaba the Destroyer, where there are... things... in the deeper pits, that do not obey Thalaba... strange, terrible things that were here long before Thalaba came to this place. As Thongor escapes his captors eventually discovers a and wanders the thrice-accursed, nightmarish dungeons, he vast, swollen, worm-like shape, so translucent that the guards it swallows can still be seen struggling within its jellied flesh. Discretion trumping valor in this case, Thongor beats a hasty retreat via an underground river.

On the strength of these stories and Arneson testimony, it does not seem unreasonable to award Howard some share of the credit for inspiring the dungeon adventure. The primary difference between the dungeon adventures of Conan and those of the Blackmoor Bunch seems to lie in the incentives. Conan never willingly charted a dungeon: his explorations always begin with his involuntary confinement. The Blackmoor Bunch, on the other hand, are hardly to be kept out of the dungeons, even when their attention by all rights should be elsewhere. The reason for this is the lure of treasure. The

Blackmoor Bunch looted the dungeon for gold and enchanted items, whereas Conan never turns a profit from his dungeon forays he preferred to ransack mansions or palaces, admittedly more plausible homes for valuable artifacts.

Examples of subterranean plunder can however be found elsewhere in the fantasy novels of the 1930s. Certainly the most famous of these is *The Hobbit*, a novel entirely predicated on a party of adventurers setting out to raid a distant underground lair for profit. As a narrative, it bears no small resemblance to *Treasure Island*. Gandalf provides the treasure map leading to the Lonely Mountain and its secret entrance, where the ancestral wealth of the dwarves lies entombed but not unsupervised. Bilbo Baggins, the inadvertent burglar, steps into the role of Jim Hawkins, a civilian among professional treasure-hunters whose character growth through adventure drives much of the storyline. Although *The Hobbit* may not be remembered for its liberal use of dungeons, the song sung by Bilbo dwarven visitors links dungeons and treasure explicitly:

Far over the misty mountains cold
To dungeons deep and caverns old
We must away ere break of day
To seek the pale enchanted gold.

This is not the only connection in *The Hobbit* between the exploration of dungeons and acquisition of riches. When the party is captured by the Wood-elves, they are imprisoned by the king: The king's cave was his palace, and the strong place of his treasure, and the fortress of his people against their enemies. It was also the dungeon of his prisoners. When finally, Bilbo and his party reach the Lonely Mountain and gain admittance to the abandoned dwarven city beneath, it is there in the great bottommost cellar or dungeon-hall of the ancient dwarves right at the Mountain's root that Bilbo finds the dragon Smaug, who lay upon countless piles of precious things, gold wrought and unwrought, gems and jewels, and silver. Though the original agreement of their party, which awarded each member a fourteenth share of the loot, became void after the Battle of the Five Armies, Bilbo does eventually receive a decent severance package: two small chests, one filled with silver, and the other with gold. His compensation also includes the loot acquired from three bickering trolls early in the expedition, which the party had buried earlier, which included pots full of gold coin.

⁷¹ The unfinished synopsis appears in Howard, *The Coming of Conan the Cimmerian* (2003), 399. Roy Thomas took the same outline for a slightly different spin than de Camp in the comic book *Conan the Barbarian*

bafflingly imagines the guardian of the surface ruins to be an enormous slug, for example, Thomas furnishes a more fitting dragon.

In the decades after the debut of Conan and Bilbo, many other fantasy protagonists adventured in a variety of underworlds, though for the most part these dungeons are more about imprisonment than enrichment. For example, Harold Shea is jailed in a dungeon by giants in *The Roaring Trumpet*, and must outwit the troll wardens in order to effect his escape;; though a later story, *The Mathematic of Magic*, concludes with the exploration of an underground maze, it is basically for the sake of rescuing a prisoner therein. Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser undertake all sorts of errands for profit, including plundering the occasional ruin, but their grandest effort below ground comes in the story the Lords of Quarmall, which envisions a vast underground civilization that even Tolkien dwarves might envy. Quarmall is divided between the Upper Levels and the Lower Levels, the latter of which are a maze within a maze, an ever-extending labyrinth tunneled into the rock. Thus, there existed a number of later novels where Arneson might have learned to consider dungeons a stage for adventure rather than just captivity.

Dungeons & Dragons leaves a great deal of latitude in the design of dungeons, a crucial openness when one appreciates that the dungeon is, for all intents and purposes, the primary venue of the game. This is a bit of an overstatement, however Arneson invented habitations above their dungeons: Blackmoor is a village of small size (a one-horse town), while Greyhawk Both have maps with streets and buildings indicated, and players can have town adventures roaming around the bazaars, inns, taverns, shops, temples and so on. Venture into the Thieves Quarters only at your own risk! [OD&D3:15]

Moreover, rules in *Underworld & Wilderness* provide, as the latter half of the title suggests, some guidance for adventuring in the wilds of the surface. This system assumes the availability of the Avalon Hill game *Outdoor Survival* (1972), a peculiar non-military title billed as a game about wilderness skills.⁷² *Dungeons & Dragons* commandeers the hexagonal map of *Outdoor Survival* which depicts a large swath of undeveloped terrain, though it is slightly reinterpreted for medieval fantasy use: Catch basins are castles, buildings are towns, and the balance of the terrain is as indicated. Other terrains that await the adventurer include plains, mountains, swamps, woods, rivers and deserts. If the *Outdoor Survival* board becomes too familiar, the referee may create alternative hexagonal maps in order to keep

the players ignorant of their whereabouts. While the terrain types enumerated by *Dungeons & Dragons* are almost entirely generic, the rules do list a special type Desert (Mars) where randomly-generated monsters including Tharks and various colored Martians from Barsoom might lie in ambush, and the Optional Arid Plains has an even fuller assortment of Burroughs's creations, including Apts, Banths, Thoats, Orluks and so on.⁷³ The Optional Swamps type harbors lost world species such as the both Gygax and is a large city.

⁷² The play of *Outdoor Survival* is detailed in Section 3.2.1.

⁷³ This is indeed the only direct incorporation from Burroughs in the entire ruleset.

Tyrannosaurus Rex, the Stegosaurus and the Pterodactyl. Aside from these offhand references to particular fantasy settings, however, the specification of the overworld is virtually an afterthought, not an aspect of the game which the referee specifies deeply.

By way of contrast, a *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign referee must lay out extensive maps for dungeons and upper terrain, with a minimum of six levels recommended for play (the initial number of levels in the Blackmoor dungeon). When this task is completed, the participants can then be allowed to make their descent into the dungeons beneath the huge ruined pile, a vast castle built by generations of mad wizards and insane geniuses. [OD&D1:6] The most detailed instructions for dungeon architecture appear in the third volume of the rules, which includes helpful diagrams of the manner in which dungeon levels might connect with one another. [OD&D3:4] That text suggests that a good dungeon will have no less than a dozen levels down, a number apparently exceeded by Gygax Greyhawk Castle dungeon, which included such whimsical attractions as a museum from another age, an underground lake, a series of caverns filled with giant fungi, a bowling alley for 20 high giants, an arena of evil, crypts, and so on.⁷⁴

In laying out your dungeons keep in mind that downward (and upward) mobility is desirable, for players will not find a game enjoyable which confines them too much. On the other hand unusual areas and rich treasures should be relatively difficult to locate, and access must be limited. [OD&D3:5]

These connections between dungeon levels include not only the obligatory stairs, but also chutes and teleportation terminals. The rulebooks

further recommend the inclusion of various tricks and traps in the design of dungeon levels, everything from pits to sinking rooms, illusions, spatial distortions and the like. Part of the carnival funhouse atmosphere undoubtedly came from the state of Arneson Blackmoor campaign at around the time Gygax visited the dungeon;; that is, while the Blackmoor Bunch remained exiled in Loch Gloomen and non-player elves controlled Blackmoor Castle. The elves set up a perpetual country fair outside and charged admission (complete with turnstiles and guided tours) to the Blackmoor dungeon, even handing out I visited Blackmoor Dungeon buttons to any survivors. [FFC:87] Levity aside, dungeon designers are advised to include as many mystifying and dangerous areas as is consistent with a reasonable chance for survival, especially as they go beyond the initial six levels and into successive levels, which, of course, should be progressively more dangerous and difficult. As Gandalf informs us in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, There are older and fouler things than Orcs in the deep places of the world. The farther down adventurers venture, the more dangerous the levels will be, the more powerful the adversaries and the more lucrative the potential spoils.

2.5.2 DRACO HORRIBILIS

The greatest adversary in *Dungeons & Dragons* is, appropriately enough, the dragon. In system terms, no monster is naturally harder to hit, no monster can endure more damage, no monster has an attack equal to the awesome power of an elder dragon's breath weapon and no monster has a more spectacular yield of treasure. Dragons are ubiquitous in fantasy novels, to a point where one might nominate the presence of dragons as a necessary condition for inclusion in the fantasy genre. Dragons so pervade the literature that tracing the origins of these fire-breathing lizards in *Dungeons & Dragons* seems practically superfluous. It is however worth examining a few particulars to understand why they took on titular importance.

⁷⁴ See Section 1.11 for a lengthier description of the dungeons of Greyhawk.

The most renowned of literary dragons is undoubtedly Tolkien's Smaug, a vast red-golden dragon with wings like an immeasurable bat, a huge coiled tail, and a long pale belly crusted with gems. Smaug is no mere ravenous beast: he in fact proves a savvy conversationalist, if a bit vain and easily manipulated. Most of all, Smaug is remembered as a living furnace, spouting flames at will and even fuming smoke out of his nostrils as he sleeps. Folklorists have thoroughly explored the origins of dragon myths in English

literature, and Smaug draws heavily on this tradition when he flies, breathes fire, hoards treasure and has but one vulnerable spot.⁷⁵ For an academic like Tolkien, whose expertise encompassed much of the medieval literature of northern Europe, dragons originate in very specific source texts.

In northern literature there are only two that are significant. If we omit from consideration the vast and vague Encircler of the World, Midgardsormr, the doom of the great gods and no matter for heroes, we have but the dragon of the Völsungs, Fáfnir, and Beowulf bane.⁷⁶

The dragon confronted by Beowulf is indeed an obvious prototype of Smaug;; in many respects *The Hobbit* retells that passage in *Beowulf* quite faithfully. A fire-breather who guards a hoard of treasure left under the earth by an ancient high-born race, the *Beowulf* dragon awakes when a thief who gained admittance to his stone-roofed barrow through a hidden passage steals a single goblet from his hoard, just as Bilbo takes a great two-handled cup from the pile of treasure on which Smaug sleeps. In both cases, this theft causes the dragon to awake and wreak a horrible vengeance on the surrounding countryside. While Beowulf tries to cut through the dragon s scales, he succeeds only in breaking his own sword;; eventually, it is a blow to the vulnerable stomach of the dragon that deals death, much as Bard s arrow finds the single vulnerability in Smaug jewelarmored belly.

The *Beowulf* poet calls this monster by the Old English *draca*, which echoes the Greek *drakon*. This term is of the greatest antiquity in Greek, appearing for example in Hesiod s *Theogony* to describe the heads of Typhon (as the site where Delphi would be founded, which stands among the earliest myths of a dragon-slaying hero. In terms of its physical characteristics, the *Hymn to Apollo* only identifies this dragon as a sort of *pelor* (), a general term for a monster Homer applies it to the Cyclops but in representations the dragon took on the form of a serpent, and due to the circumstances of its death became known as the Python.⁷⁷ Given its mythical connotations, the term *drakon* appealed to the translators of the Septuagint, who consistently used it as a translation for the Hebrew word Leviathan (); while modern readers (and speakers of Hebrew) may be more accustomed to envisioning Leviathan as a whale, some Biblical passages refer to it as a twisted serpent (), which recalls the serpent of Genesis and its intrinsic evil.⁷⁸ It is only natural that the New Testament authors writing directly in Greek would later borrow the same word for the apocalyptic vision in Revelation 12:1 of the great red dragon (, where Gygax would

later see the metaphorical dragon of Anglo-American hegemony, as discussed in Section 2.3. A dragon who guards hidden treasures underground can be found in the first-century CE Latin work of Phaedrus, a fabulist translating and embellishing Aesop, whose *draconis* serves as an allegory for misers who amass wealth joylessly;; Phaedrus does not describe his dragon at all, however, let alone bestow on him any of the scales, claws or wings we might recognize. But if we take the Leviathan of Job to be a dragon, we quickly find many qualities fantasy fans would recognize:

⁷⁵

British folklore that Smaug does not seem to exhibit is a fondness for milk, through perhaps we merely never have the opportunity to witness him indulging.

⁷⁶ Tolkien, *The Monster and his Critics*, 13.

⁷⁷ See *Hymn to Apollo*, v. 371 374. Parallel mentions of the dragon appear in the *Iliad* (Bk. IV, v. 181) *Theogony* (around v. 322).

His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal.
One is so near to another that no air can come between them.
They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered... Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.
Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron.
The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.⁷⁹

Given that the Bible itself attested to the existence of dragons, probably few in medieval Europe doubted that there was some basis for these stories. In the thirteenth century, the *Life of St. George* in the *Golden Legend* detailed the famous knight's triumph over the dragon at Silene, and a century later the *Travels of John Mandeville* recorded the contemporary story of a dragon on a Mediterranean island who possessed a large treasure hoard. These epic portrayals of the dragon contrast with that of the first-century Roman author Pliny the Elder, who explicitly identifies *dracones* with more plausible large serpents in his much-reproduced *Natural History*. His credulous but not incredible account focuses on the disposition and characteristics of python-like creatures located in India and Ethiopia that he identifies as dragons, a precedent followed by many later authors.⁸⁰ Legends of great serpents and lizards seem to have arisen from all corners of the globe, in mutually isolated pockets of ancient civilization, which has led to the hypothesis that these myths arose from primitive paleontology, as an

explanation for unearthed dinosaur fossils. For example, the third-century Chinese author Chang Qu mentions in his *Huayang guozhi* a site at which dragon bones may still be seen today in the southern Qinling Mountains of Sichuan province, where Mesozoic rocks containing dinosaur bones remain exposed to

follows the Vulgate, though for

⁷⁹ Job 41:14 27, King James Version.

⁸⁰ Pliny, *Natural History*, Bk. VIII, especially chapters 11–13. Pliny envisioned these large serpents as constrictors, and believed that they preyed especially on elephants. Some, but not all, later medieval

⁷⁸ Isaiah 27:1, echoing the serpent () in Genesis 3:1.

Job 41:1 and Psalms 74:13–14. The authors of the Vulgate in Latin preferred to transliterate the The King James Version of the Bible usually in Isaiah 27:1 the Vulgate gives *cetum* (whale), the Septuagint twelfth-century bestiary translated by T. H. White and M.S. Bodley 764, both of which are further discussed below in Section 2.6.

view at present.⁸¹ Even if such discoveries in antiquity did not inspire the myth of the dragon, they must have corroborated it and given pause to the most vehement skeptics. These legends predated the concepts of species extinction or evolution: the remains of an unknown creature would almost certainly be interpreted as evidence of its continuing existence, if only in scarce quantities. L. Sprague de Camp discusses these sorts of archaeological findings, and the general relationship between dragons and various reptiles extinct and extant in his non-fiction title *Day of the Dinosaur* (1968).⁸² The pages of *Amra* spoke of the historical origins of dragons from time to time, such as Elizabeth Wilson's article in June 1959 which discusses everything from crocodiles to Tiamat. [AMR:v2n4] Although fantasy literature abounds with dragons, they run the gamut between these extremes of sophistication, from intelligent, magical menaces to gigantic reptiles that escaped extinction.

Before *The Hobbit*, for example, Conan battles a dragon in the story Red Nails, but this sort of dragon is merely a monstrous reptile. It had a head bigger than that of a crocodile and a gigantic, barrel-bellied torso on absurdly short legs. While it is too fearsome an adversary even for Conan to meet with his typical bare-handed aplomb, he eventually wounds the inside of its mouth with a poisoned spear. It breaths no fire, exchanges no witticisms and carries no wallet;; all in all, it might be best understood as a

refugee from Doyle's *The Lost World*, just a misplaced dinosaur surviving in some primordial corner of the world. Even Conan expresses a certain disappointment at its nature: That thing must be a dragon, such as the black people speak of in their legends, he remarks, in which one might detect a faint insinuation that the legends whispered of a grander creature.

Harold Shea and his erstwhile department head Reed Chalmers were no strangers to dragons themselves. In *The Mathematics of Magic*, Chalmers conjures a dragon into existence in order to prove to skeptics that he is truly an enchanter. The resulting beast has a reptilian head a yard long with a scaly neck behind it and ends in a stinger-tipped tail. Although Chalmers botches his spell and summons one hundred such dragons by accident, fortunately they turn out to be harmless herbivores. Later, he succeeds under



FIGURE 20: DRAGON FROM A MEDIEVAL

BESTIARY (MS HARLEY 3244)

⁸¹ See Dong, *Dinosaurs from China*, 9.

⁸² De Camp also conjectures that the skulls of extinct elephants may have been mistaken for giants skull of an elephant, one sees that it does look a bit like the skull of a monstrously hideous man, five or six times natural size. If one had never seen an elephant and did not know about its trunk, one *Day of the Dinosaur*, 246. The enormous cavity of the trunk lends a cyclopean cast to some elephant skulls.

laboratory conditions in summoning a single fire-breathing dragon, this time flying with bat wings, but the poor beast is only ten inches long, and is promptly turned to stone

when it blunders into the gaze of a nearby cockatrice.

The world of Nehwon is not one rich in dragons, even though the very name Fafhrd invokes that of Fáfnir, the dragon of the *Völsungs saga*. Leiber ironically assures us

that Ningauble of the Seven Eyes often sends Fafhrd on quests the likes of which include the slaying of dragons, the sinking of four-masted magic ships, and the kidnapping of

ogre-guarded enchanted queens, though we readers rarely witness such epic events in the

usually down-to-earth adventures of Leiber's duo. Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser do

however encounter a dragon while boating across the Inner Sea in *The Swords of Lankhmar*,

in this case not a fire-breather but an aquatic green dragon. It too seems more like an

enormous animal than a truly supernatural being, but back in port the existence of the

dragon is dismissed by hardened realists as a strange mass delusion.

In Poul Anderson's *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, Holger Carlson conjectures that he

might face creatures of myth in the strange world where he finds himself, and especially

dreads the prospect of a fire-breathing dragon. Naturally, he is quick to encounter one, a

specimen encompassing fifty feet of scale-armored muscle, a snake head which could

swallow him in two bites, bat wings and iron talons. When Carlson sees flame and smoke

roll from the fanged mouth, he defeats the dragon in a manner that would have made the Connecticut Yankee proud: he dumps a few buckets of cold water into its snout soon, it reaches the dragon's inner bellows, causing a small boiler explosion. Over the dragon's corpse, he is quick to explain to his unscientific companions that he has merely exercised the laws of thermodynamics judiciously.

The Elric saga, which inverts every fantasy stereotype it can find, aligns its antihero's ancient race with dragonkind. The rulers of Melniboné are known as the Dragon

Princes, and in the caverns below their island hibernate a whole society of ancient dragons, which can be awakened only once in a matter of centuries to fight alongside their

caretakers. Readers see these winged terrors fly over vast armies and spew sticky, flaming venom from above in a manner analogous (coincidentally, perhaps) to the use of napalm by

American forces in Southeast Asia at around the time these novels appeared. When

Moorcock first reveals the dragons in the Dreaming City, they are described as having a

wingspan some thirty feet across, with snake-like bodies, beginning in a narrow-snouted

head and terminating in a dreadful whip of a tail. Though their breath is not itself flame,

the liquid they spew does quickly draw flame from wood or cloth.

By no means do these examples enumerate all of the relevant portrayals in the

literature, but they demonstrate the abundance and family resemblance of dragons in the

primary fantasy influences cited by Gygax. Long prior to the publication of *Chainmail*, and

indeed before Gygax contributed to any fantasy game design, he already demonstrated an

interest in the taxonomy of dragons. To the pages of the IFW *Diplomacy*

fanzine

Thangorodrim, Gygax contributed a series of articles between 1969 and 1970 on various types

of dragons entitled GRAYTE WOURMES. From some small textual clues, one gathers

that these dragons are imagined to live in Tolkien Middle-earth setting, though only

fragmentary evidence of color-coded dragon varieties appears in Tolkien writings.

Gandalf does briefly mention to Frodo the existence of the dragon Ancalagon the Black,

though in the *Lord of the Rings* we learn little of his nature.⁸³ Wizards in Middle-earth, from Gandalf the Grey to Sauron the White to Radagast the Brown, seem to have domains of authority associated with their respective colors, and it is quite possible that Gygax merely expanded that schema to the dragons of the world.⁸⁴

The cover of the second *Thangorodrim* depicts a dragon with the caption, Gary Gygax, a.k.a. Smaug yes, there are good worms, too! Within, a *Diplomacy* press release related to Smaug entitled Red Dragon Remains Raised refers to the scholarship of one Professor S. K. Eltolereth, curator of the Rhovanion National Museum, who recently supervised the recovery of an enormous dragon corpse from Long Lake. While it offers no particular description of the quality of red dragons, the next issue of *Thangorodrim* contains a second part of a manuscript supposedly translated by Eltolereth detailing the qualities of the Arctic Dragon, or *Draco Articus*, a white beast whose primary weapon is a chilling breath. The editor of *Thangorodrim* reveals in an aside that this Professor is, in fact, a pen name for Gygax, who will contribute further dragon lore to subsequent issues. The November 1969 issue describes *Draco Nigrus*, the Black or Spitting Dragon, a smaller dragon who spews streams of a potent caustic enzyme when angry. This was followed by an installment on the Green Dragon (*Draco Chlorinum*), enemy of the Mountain Giants, which breathes clouds of chlorine gas, is highly intelligent and hoards jade;; a subsequent issue (July 1970) tells of the *Draco Electricus*, the Blue Dragon, which attacks enemies with lightning and is hunted by trolls for its blue hide. The final installment details the Mottled or Purple Worm, which the entry concedes is not a true dragon, being wingless and without a breath weapon, yet it has a venomous sting in the tip of its tail.

By the end of 1970, of course, the publication of *Chainmail* was imminent, and its Fantasy Supplement has a great deal to say on the subject of dragons. The system

description deals with the Red Dragon (*Draco Conflagratio* or *Draco Horribilis*, it specifies),

which breathes fire in a truncated cone in front of it that is almost certain to kill any

opponent other than a Wizard or another dragon. The conclusion of the entry notes,

however, that other kinds of Dragons can be introduced into games, if a little imagination

is used, and goes on to describe the White, Black, Blue and Green Dragons, as well as the

Purple Dragon (not here described as a Worm), and even notes that the Basilisk and

Cockatrice should be considered as branches of the dragon family.

Given the emphasis on dragons in the fantasy canon and the pages of *Chainmail*, it

is unsurprising that Arneson Blackmoor campaign featured a dragon prominently. The

Wizard of the Wood (played by Peter Gaylord) kept a pet Red Dragon known as

Gertrude.⁸⁵ In the first issue of the Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger, Gertrude

hatches five offspring of various sizes shapes and colors which terrorize the countryside,

forcing the Wizard to pay significant restitution before the youngsters leave the nest.

[COTT:72:v4n3] In the census appearing in *Domesday Book* #13, the population of

⁸³ **Gandalf makes it clear that Ancalagon breathed flame, unlike the black dragon Gygax describes.**

In Appendix A to the *Lord of the Rings* -

- ascribed to his whit

green dragon, also apparently a fire

, *The History of the Hobbit* (Vol. 2), 525.

⁸⁴ The idea has a further corollary in the different types of giants in Norse mythology, especially frost and fire giants.

⁸⁵ An early copy of the character sheet into the formal name Gertrude.

Blackmoor lists only one dragon, fortunately, and notes the Dragon Rock out in the middle of Blackmoor Lake where Gertrude roosts.

The compendium of monsters in *Dungeons & Dragons* list six dragon types, five of which GRAYTE WOURMES previously described: White, Black, Green, Blue and Red. Instead of the Purple Worm (which is now listed as a separate creature), the *Dungeons & Dragons* rules include the Gold Dragons, the most powerful of all, which are Lawful, intelligent users of magic, and often appear as human or in some other guise. In addition, dragons are highlighted in the rules as creatures which might be subdued rather than killed outright. Subdued dragons can be sold or retained as servants by those who best them;; in Blackmoor, many characters other than the Wizard of the Wood eventually had pet dragons. For example, Kurt Krey's character, one of the leaders of the Baddies, rode a tame dragon into battle against the Blackmoor Bunch during the Loch Gloomen exile.

Dragons are in some respects an unlikely mascot for a game concerned with adventure for the sake of plundering riches. The dragon of the *Völsungs* saga mentioned by Tolkien at the start of this section, Fáfnir, did not begin life as a large reptile he was a dwarf who became a dragon out of the necessity of defending his immense treasury.⁸⁶ The notion of exhibiting dragon-like qualities or even becoming a dragon as a consequence of greed is common in mythology and in fantasy literature. In *The Hobbit*, for example, after Bilbo sees Smaug immense treasure, the enchanted desire of the hoard began to overtake him. A fit of involuntary cupidity even forces Bilbo to pocket the Arkenstone, the greatest treasure of the dwarves whose halls and wealth Smaug had long ago claimed, though ultimately Bilbo repents and surrenders this prize to buy peace between the dwarves and men, parting with it not without a shudder, not without a glance of longing. When the old Master of Lake-town is overcome with greed and flees with most of Laketown's share of the gold, Tolkien says that he fell under the dragon-sickness, suggesting that the greed Smaug exhibits is a moral failing that humans are obligated to resist. Tolkien fellow Inkling C. S. Lewis has an even closer analog to the story of Fáfnir in his Narnia novel *The Voyage of*

the Dawn Treader, in which Eustace comes upon a dragon in its dying moments and decides to claim its hoard, only to discover that by so doing, in something of a Kafkaesque turn, he is physically transformed into a dragon and is now cut off from the remainder of humanity. Eustace is at some pains to establish his identity to his companions, as he can no longer speak with humans, and in the fashion of Lewis's books he suffers a character-building experience before he is eventually rescued from his deplorable condition by the patient intervention of Aslan. Any such sense of the negative consequences of greed is entirely absent from *Dungeons & Dragons*.

2.6 FANTASTIC PEOPLE AND CREATURES

Essential as the dragon may be to fantasy, for *Dungeons & Dragons* it is a rare and powerful creature reserved for the most epic encounters. In everyday adventuring, characters are far more likely to deal with a variety of humbler foes and allies, including mythical beasts distinct in important ways from animals as well as persons that fall outside the recognized constraints of humankind. In *Chainmail*, the category of type encompassed both of these sorts, entities as diverse the Hero, Super-hero, Wizard, elf, orc and dragon it is probably safest to say that a type in *Chainmail* could be anything that a miniature might represent. *Chainmail* conflated qualities that the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* would subsequently disentangle most notably class and level but only in later editions would *Dungeons & Dragons* explicitly isolate the quality that distinguished an elf from an implicitly-human Hero. The section of *Men & Magic* which describes characters glosses over this distinction: it begins by stating that there are three (3) main classes of character (as will be enumerated in Section 2.7), but after detailing each, it goes on to explain the existence of dwarves, elves, hobbits and other character types without any new header to differentiate these types from classes. [OD&D1:6]

⁸⁶ greed and transformation into a dragon is told briefly in the *Skáldskaparmál*.

The idea of a fantastic race familiar from later works does not appear in the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The descriptive text under the heading of dwarves, elves and so on does however implicitly establish that being inhuman is not a matter of class or level, but is a separate characteristic varying independently. The description of dwarves, for example, begins, Dwarves may opt only for the Fighting-man class, and similar restrictions apply to elves and hobbits. [OD&D1:7] The next page of

rules goes on to suggest, however, that players may select all sorts of fantastic creatures as their characters, that there is no reason that players cannot play virtually anything, provided they begin relatively weak and work up to the top. Fledgling dragons serve as an example of this liberality.

Dwarves, elves and hobbits would later be further designated as humanoid in order to grant them a necessary quality of personhood, as there are many inhuman entities in *Dungeons & Dragons* which fall short of sentience and thus cannot be characters as such. Some fantastic creatures are merely animals the term monster, which forms half the title of the second booklet, *Monsters & Treasure*, implies something more exotic, and perhaps more essentially malign, than a mere animal whose interests are confined to the urges of nature. The distinction is inexact, but is a significant one for understanding what sorts of creatures might be played as characters, since presumably some degree of rational thought and linguistic ability is desirable when forging a character. The supernatural advantages of fantastic creatures might discourage players from choosing human characters, but the system bestows only on true humans the privilege of limitless progression, which the humanoid races, and presumably monster-characters, exchange for their own innate powers, as Section 3.2.3.1 details.

The popular conception of the three humanoid races derives largely from a single, well-known source. Hobbits, Gygax writes in his article Fantasy Wargaming and the Influence of J.R.R. Tolkien, are outstanding. The term

are one of Tolkien more-or-less original creatures which hobbit is certainly an invention of Tolkien, and authorities steeped in Tolkien sources have explored his literary and mythological inspirations in far greater detail than the present study can provide.⁸⁷ Whether or not a hobbit is a wholly different thing from the various little people of folklore, brownies and so on, is a much more complicated question, perhaps an unanswerable one, but the qualities of hobbits given in *Dungeons & Dragons* for example, that they can aspire to only modest prowess as⁸⁷ See especially Shippey, *The Road to Middle-earth*. Shippey also explores the sources of dwarves and Keys to *Middle-earth* provides a sourcebook of *The Discarded Image The History of the Hobbit* exam

largely follows the scholarship of these authors.

Fighting-men but have great accuracy with hurled stones can have no source but Tolkien, and none other is claimed.

The origins of dwarves and elves are less straightforward. Especially in later years, Gygax insisted that

though he concedes that the humanoid races followed

Tolkien in order to attract potential players to the *D&D* game.⁸⁸ There is however a

certain irony in Gygax claim that his dwarves do not originate from the works of

Tolkien: if we look one year before the release of *The Hobbit* in the United States, we find in

theaters a certain Snow White cohabiting with seven dwarfs that is, dwarfs, not dwarves. Similarly, in Howard's *People of the Dark* (1932), the first story featuring

Conan, Howard recorded this back-story for the subterranean antagonists in his tale: They

had vanished before the invading races, theory said, forming the base of all Aryan legends

of trolls, elves, dwarfs and witches. Again, dwarfs rather than dwarves. During the

process of publishing *The Hobbit*, Tolkien apparently restored many places where copy

editors had corrected his mistaken use of the plural dwarves.⁸⁹ Even following the

publication of *The Hobbit*, Poul Anderson still uses the form dwarfs in *The Broken Sword*

and *Three Hearts and Three Lions* Leiber and Moorcock, however, follow Tolkien with dwarves, as does *Chainmail* and subsequently *Dungeons & Dragons*. Moreover, in Fantasy

Wargaming and the Influence of J.R.R. Tolkien, Gygax gushes that Thorin Oakenshield

is the epitome of dwarves! and volunteers no respect in which the dwarves of Tolkien

differ from those of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

If anyone could pen the epitome of fantastic dwarves, it would be Tolkien. With

his vast knowledge of medieval literature, Tolkien knew well that the oldest English texts

acknowledged the existence of elves and dwarves;; the author of *Beowulf*

knew of the *ylfe*, for example. Those words came into English from Old Norse, where they can be found in medieval Eddaic poems like the *Völuspá*, which details the creation of the *dvergr* out of the earth, and even gives the names of some, including Thorin, Balin, Glóin and many others that would later appear in Tolkien's Middle-earth. That the name Gandalf is taken from the same list would not be surprising to readers of early drafts of *The Hobbit*, in which Gandalf was the lead dwarf rather than a wizard.⁹⁰ Confusingly, the *alf* root in Gandalf's name signifies elves, but this only demonstrates the somewhat fluid distinction between elves and dwarves in the earliest Norse works.⁹¹ Later in the *Völuspá*, a single stanza (48) refers to both the elves (*alfum*) and dwarves (*dvergar*), and while it stipulates nothing of the former, it does associate the dwarves strongly with stone and rock. It is through such fragmentary

⁸⁸ Gygax, July 19, 2006 (05:08 PM), comment ENWorld, <http://www.enworld.org/forum/2958387-post185.html>.

⁸⁹

The Hobbit was far too entrenched to revise its terminology. See Tolkien, *Letters*, 23.

⁹⁰ See Rateliff, *The History of the Hobbit* (Vol. 1), 48. The dwarf Gandalf became Thorin; the name of the wizard originally was Bladorthin.

⁹¹ *Gylfaginning* light-elves (*Ljósálfar*), but dark-elves (*Dökkálfar*) live down in the ground, and they are unlike them in *Skáldskaparmál* (4 *Svartálfum dverga*). Is a dwarf then just a type of elf? Jacob Grimm argues that we should understand the *Svartálfum* and *dverga* to be identical; see *Teutonic Mythology* (Vol. 2), 447. Later editions of *Dungeons & Dragons* would elves.

evidence scattered across medieval sources that the qualities of the dwarf race come into view. From various Eddaic stories we learn that dwarves are craftsmen;; the *Skáldskaparmál* shows dwarves manufacturing Thor's hammer and Odin's spear. The section on the origin of the dwarves in the *Gylfaginning* (14) tells us that by a decision of the gods they acquired human understanding and assumed the likeness of men, living in the earth and the rocks. In these tales, dwarves are often unscrupulous and concerned about payment and wealth. These qualities remained largely intact in Germanic folklore by the time that the Brothers Grimm began collecting tales of dwarves five centuries later. In Snow-White and RoseRed (Grimm #161), dwarves transform a prince into a bear in order to steal his treasure, and display ingratitude for any kindness done to them. Even the kindlier dwarves who take pity on the more famous Snow White (Grimm #53) are miners who work underground, seeking gold.

Tom Shippey argues that the master-text for understanding Tolkien's elves is the Middle English work *Sir Orfeo*, a retelling of the myth of Orpheus transposed to medieval Winchester. In it, we find a kingdom of elves tucked away in another world, a land of fairy standing in for the original land of the dead visited by Orpheus. The elves live in a feudal society that mirrors earthly social structures but far exceeds the wealth and glamor of any real court. Elves abduct whom they please from our world, and even the presence of a thousand knights cannot stop the king of the elves from spiriting away Orfeo's wife. Such prisoners remain in the society of fairy indefinitely, though with chaperoned sojourns back to the real world for courtly pursuits like falconing;; a lone wanderer in the woods could glimpse them in their wild hunts, and with sufficient determination, follow them back to their world. In their splendid palaces, the elves delight in all manner of entertainment: they are well-mannered but supercilious, menacing yet ultimately honorable. The author of *Sir Orfeo* clearly identifies the woods as the place where mortals encounter elves, and later authors follow this precedent fastidiously;; for example, Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* transpires almost entirely in a forest. We can see these parameters reflected in the elves of Middle-earth, in the wood elves who imprison Thorin and company in *The Hobbit*, and in the uncanny forest court of Lothlórien in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. While the elves in *Sir Orfeo* display no capacity for archery, the association of elves with arrows is an ancient one. The Old English medical handbook the *Lacnunga* (assembled in the eleventh century) gives advice on remedying

which superstition of the elf-shot (*ylfa escotes*), any sudden, sharp, unexplained pain, time ascribed to arrows shot by elves.⁹² Livestock also purportedly fell victim to these elven arrows, and thus Neolithic flint arrowheads found in pastures developed a reputation as elf-arrows, especially in Scotland.⁹³ These popular beliefs cemented a further relationship between elves and bows which Tolkien elaborates.

⁹² *Lacnunga* CXXXIV CXXXV. Elves did not bear sole responsibility for these supernatural assaults;; the *Lacnunga* back to them will send anot *AngloSaxon Medicine and Magic*, 175.

⁹³ For a seventeenth-century perspective on elven armaments, see Kirk, *The Secret Commonwealth*, 16:

ng of iron but much of stone, like to yellow firsthand.

For his part, Gygax held that Tolkien wronged the elves. In his article Fantasy Wargaming and the Influence of J.R.R. Tolkien, Gygax argues, Tolkien took a blend of elves and fairies for his elves. In fact, they are actually far more like English fairies than anything else, for they are almost indistinguishable from humans save for their beauty and their magical powers. [LV:#4] By way of contrast, Gygax points to the portrayal of the elves in *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, where elves cannot abide the touch of iron or steel, and moreover to the trickery of the Faerie lords who attempt to lure Holger Carlson into a temporal trap, as examples of a more compelling vision of elvenkind but not one that seems to have influenced the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*.⁹⁴ Gygax retreats from any implication that Anderson's account served as an inspiration for his elves, instead claiming of both accounts of elvenkind that neither was quite suitable for a fantasy wargame, so an entirely different interpretation was used. So from whence exactly did the elves of *Dungeons & Dragons* come?

A better question is in what respects the elves in *Dungeons & Dragons* differ from those of Tolkien. Gygax allows elves the unique ability to begin as either Fighting-Men or Magic-Users and freely switch class whenever they choose, and as a consequence, they may use both magic weapons and spells, and even wear magic armor while acting as a Magic-user. [OD&D1:8] Elves apparently have heightened powers of observation, as they are more able to note secret and hidden doors. In *Monsters & Treasure*, concerning the behavior of non-player elves, we learn that one-half of the

Elves in any given party will be bow armed, and that elves have the ability of moving silently and are nearly invisible in their gray-green cloaks.

Elven Cloak and Boots, respectively. Elves are divided into two general sorts, those who make their homes in the woodlands and those who seek the remote meadowlands. Elves are immune to the paralyzing touch of ghouls, and generally receive system bonuses when in combat against fantastic creatures. Bearing all that in mind, when Gygax complains that Tolkien elves are like English fairies, in what sense has he improved on the example of Middle-earth? Tolkien elves are observant, we gather from Legolas's exceptional eyesight, as are Gygax's. The cloaks bestowed to the Fellowship by Galadriel, although it was hard to say of what colour they were, grey with the hue of twilight under the trees;; and yet if they moved, or set in another light, they were green as shadowed leaves serve as a great aid in keeping out of the sight of unfriendly eyes. Certainly these seem indistinguishable from the elven cloaks of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Tolkien elves are famous archers, and archery seems to come naturally to the elves of Gygax. The first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* stipulates virtually nothing of the elves beyond these facts

possess the great natural beauty Gygax sees in Tolkien while no text suggests that they elves, nothing suggests the contrary either. It appears that the grand divergence from Tolkien's elves claimed by Gygax on this point is elusive.

The humanoids of *Dungeons & Dragons* furthermore incorporate the element of Middle-earth that struck closest to Tolkien's particular area of expertise: languages. Throughout the *Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien pays careful attention to the different languages spoken by his various races, and even by communities within the races. Middle-earth is not a tower of Babel, however: virtually everyone understands the Common Speech, the [OD&D2:16] Among the magic items included in the game are which render their wearers nearly invisible and totally silent, Westron as it was named, that was current through all the lands of the kings from Arnor to Gondor, and about all the coasts of the sea from Belfalas to Lune, but we also see independent languages and scripts of elves, dwarves and orcs.⁹⁵ Hobbits, we learn, spoke the language of men, though they might struggle to understand niche dialects spoken by the Rohirrim and by Faramir's troops. Even within elvish there are divisions, as the speech that the Silvan folk east of the mountains used among themselves was unlike that of the West. Pippin

observes that some orc tribes could not understand one another's orcspeech, and consequently relied on the Common Speech. Ents spoke Old Entish, which implies there might even have been a New Entish as well. Finally, the servants of Sauron converse and write in the Black Speech, the language of Mordor, which reflects a moral quality rather than a racial one. While a wargame like *Chainmail* would benefit little from the introduction of languages, *Dungeons & Dragons* made them a central component of its initial setting: dwarves automatically understand the speech of gnomes, kobolds and goblins, whereas elves communicate natively with orcs, hobgoblins and gnolls. Fortunately, any given creature has a one-in-five chance of speaking the common tongue that is known by most humans. Highly-intelligent characters can study a number of creature languages that might prove useful in dealing with monsters.

⁹⁴ Surely Anderson drew on many of the same mythological sources familiar to Tolkien for his elves, who take prisoners to a world of faerie.

The four races intended for player characters—humans, elves, dwarves and hobbits—are in something of a minority when compared to the roughly fifty monsters described in first edition *Dungeons & Dragons*, a significant escalation from the sixteen main types of creatures presented in second edition *Chainmail* only two years beforehand. It is in its survey of monsters that *Dungeons & Dragons* is at its most taxonomic, enumerating diverse literary or mythological beasts with systems specifying how they measure up to one another. Almost all of the *Chainmail* monsters had indisputable and often unique originals in Tolkien: goblins, orcs, trolls, wraiths (from Ringwraiths), wights (from barrow-wights as well as the Nazgûl), lycanthropes (here understood to include werebears like Beorn from *The Hobbit* and the werewolves alluded to in the *Lord of the Rings*), ents, of course dragons and even giants. Of the remaining fantastic beings in *Chainmail*, many are specified as offbrand clones of Tolkien creatures: gnomes are a subcategory of dwarves, fairies of elves, ghouls of wights, kobolds of goblins, ogres of trolls. The conceptual origins of dragons have already been discussed in Section 2.5.2;; the rest of Tolkien's monsters inevitably have their roots in the history of mythology and language.

Charting a history of monsters is difficult because of the constant migration of monster-names between cultures and the lack of any stable connection between the names and the physical characteristics of monsters. In the simplest cases, the names of creatures descend to us directly from the

primary sources of mythology, crossing linguistic barriers unimpeded. The troll, for example, followed this path. The term appears alongside the words for elves and dwarves given above in the Eddaic text *Skáldskaparmál*, but unlike those other terms, troll did not pass through the shocks of translation: it entered the English language in the form it appeared in Old Norse. The word only escaped Scandinavia in the nineteenth century, when scholars of both medieval and modern fairy tales began to

⁹⁵ Linguistic differences factor into the later trilogy more than *The Hobbit*: in the earlier work, even trolls speak -

- *The Hobbit* speak to one another in their own language, though a wizard like Gandalf can understand it. These are more a difference of species than race.

catalog its use. What were the trolls, exactly? In the *Skáldskaparmál*, they seem to be a sort of giant: the skald Bragi has an encounter with a female troll who provides a boastful but somewhat opaque description of her nature. Later tales, however, render the troll an even less specific being: Jacob Grimm held that *Tröll* is the general term including at once beings of the elf or giant brood and those of magic kind.⁹⁶ Eventually, it became a word applied to dwarves as well. The root troll appears in many Swedish and Danish terms for magic and witchcraft;; a word for magic runes is *trollrunor*. Few attributes are attached to the diverse entities referred to as trolls, though Grimm does note some stories in which trolls and other underworld monsters turn to stone when exposed to sunlight.⁹⁷ But were they gigantic or tiny, and how did they then differ from giants or dwarves?

As Europe became Christianized between antiquity and the Middle Ages, many entities revered as gods in the pagan world were relegated to subordinate and antagonistic positions in the supernatural worldview. For example, Orcus, once the Roman god of death, donated his name to the *orcneas*, the demon-corpses that the Beowulf author cites as a peril in medieval Europe. What exactly did this creature look like? We receive no description.⁹⁸ Orcus also survived in the Italian language, where Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532) invokes a fiend called the *orco*; as early as 1785, this creature had been translated into English as an orc meeting the following description: Such was his form, no language can suffice To paint his bulk misshaped and giant size. Instead of eyes, upon his dreadful face

Two bones projecting fill d each eyeless space. He spy d, and chas d our trembling steps before, And seem d a mountain moving on the shore. Like

some wild boar s his spreading tusks appear d, Vast were his jaws, his hairy breast besmear d With filth obscene;; he trailed upon the ground His nose, sagacious as the scenting hound. All, that behold⁹⁹

Ariosto s translator, John Hoole, observes that this sequence obviously derives from the battle against the Cyclops in *The Odyssey*; the blindness of the orc, a characteristic Tolkien would not incorporate, seems too reminiscent of Polyphemus to mistake. Ariosto also unleashes (in Canto XI) a sea creature, the *orca*, which is large enough to swallow Roland and his boat whole the contest between Roland and this fiend over a chained maiden recalls the exploits of Perseus. Are the *orco* and *orca* relatives, or are we to understand *orca* to mean a sort of whale (a usage that also goes back to antiquity)?¹⁰⁰ When a century later another Italian author, Giambattista Basile, began compiling his famous collection of fairy-tales *Lo cunto de li cunti overo lo trattenimiento de peccerille* (1634), The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones, he frequently alludes to a monster he calls in the Neopolitan dialect the *uerco* (in later editions, *uorco*), as well as a milder feminine variant, the *uerca*. We learn from Basile that this creature is the ugliest being in the world, clawed, eager to devour women, capable of articulate speech, sometimes changing shape and knowledgeable of the world s affairs and secrets. Charles Perrault borrowed many stories from Basile for his seminal *Histoires ou contes du temps passés, avec des moralité* (1695), better known by its subtitle *Contes de ma mère l Oye* or Tales of my Mother Goose. When Perrault rendered the *uerco* in French, he chose the word *ogre*, which appears throughout Perrault s early version of the story Sleeping Beauty (*La belle au bois dormant*);; for example, Perrault identifies that the evil queen is of race *Ogresse* and thus has *les inclinations des Ogres*. English translations of Perrault preserved this coinage: the 1797 edition by Gent even provides the helpful gloss *Ogre* is a Giant, with long Teeth and Claws. Once the term became thus established, in turn English translations of Basile (such as John Edward Taylor s 1848 edition) translate his *uerco* as ogre. As this word, originally the name of a pagan god, moves between authors and languages, does it spawn new monsters along the way, or merely new characterizations for the same monster? Are the orc and ogre different creatures, and if so, how?

⁹⁶ Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (Vol. 3), 1041.

⁹⁷ Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (Vol. 2), 549 551. See also Shippey, *Road to Middle-earth*, 75, for examples of fantastic creatures kept talking until

daybreak at which point they turn to stone. Most notably, Thor employs the same trick on a dwarf in the Eddaic poem *Alvíssmál*.

⁹⁸ Tom Shippey points out that *orcbyrs*, a sort of giant, were also known in Old English. Shippey, *Road to Middle-earth*, 65.

⁹⁹ Ariosto (trans. Hoole), *Orlando Furioso*, 297 (Canto CVII).

¹⁰⁰ acknowledged in his dictionary (1755), for example. Although a 1656 usage by Samuel Holland in his *Don Zara del Fuego*

Similar ambiguities surround the origins of goblins. Jacob Grimm gave a compelling etymology for the term that begins with the Greek *kobalos* (κοβαλός), meaning rogue, enters Latin as *cobalus*, which Middle Latin rendered as *gobelinus*, hence the French *gobelín* and the English goblin.¹⁰¹ This same root word, Grimm argued, passed into German as *Coboldus*, then *kobolt* and eventually kobold. Suddenly it seems very wise of *Chainmail* to have deemed kobolds a subcategory of goblins are we to understand they are one and the same? Shakespeare knew of goblins, but deploys them in very diverse contexts;; Hamlet speculates that the ghost of his father might be a thinks the name Puck is synonymous with Hobgoblin. MacDonald produced his influential juvenile novel *The Princess and the Goblin*, he wrote that in these subterranean caverns lived a strange race of beings, called by some gnomes, by some kobolds, by some goblins.¹⁰² At the conclusion, he hints that the goblins would later

evolve into the Scottish brownies. Do all of these creatures conflate into one race? In summary, the medieval imagination bequeathed to posterity many names of monsters but little to substantiate or differentiate them aside from the attempts of some goblin damn d, but a fairy Even by 1872, when George subsequent adoption.

¹⁰¹ Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (Vol. 2), 502. *The Oxford English Dictionary* today largely corroborates this, though it cautions that the French usage *gobelín* began only in the sixteenth century. It does note that the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman chronicler Orderic Vitalias gave the name *Gobelinus* for a spirit believed to be haunting the city of Evreux in Normandy. Finally, the *OED* clarifies that even

rogues to commit various acts of mischief.

¹⁰² Gnomes are of far more recent origin than orcs and goblins. Paracelsus in his sixteenth-century *De Nymphis* introduced the *gnomi* as earth elementals;; see Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 135. The Grimm

*Dat Erdmänneken often, the Brothers Grimm used terms like *Männchen männeken* (sometimes given as .*

scrupulous authors to explain these beasts as natural phenomena in the tradition of bestiary authorship we will return to below. All storytellers be they grave poets or credulous fireside yarn-spinners enjoyed the latitude to cast the creatures as they pleased, in terms of their physical shape, supernatural powers and attitude towards people. The names of these creatures ceaselessly multiplied as they crossed cultural boundaries, leaving behind a bloated catalog of ill-defined monsters. Thus, the Renaissance skeptic Reginald Scot could complain in 1584 about the nursemaids who have so fraied us with bull beggars, spirits, witches, urchens, elves, hags, fairies, satyrs, pans, faunes, sylens, kit with the cansticke, tritons, centaurs, dwarfes, giants, imps, calcars, conjurors, nymphes, changlings, Incubus, Robin good-fellowe, the spoorne, the mare, the man in the oke, the hell waine, the fierdrake, the puckle, Tom thombe, hob gobblin, Tom tumbler, boneles, and other such bugs, that we are afraid of our owne shadowes.¹⁰³

The earliest fantasy genre authors inherited this bundle of names and the vague attributes that mythology intermittently attached to them. To a certain extent, the menace of these creatures was bound up with their unknowability, and some authors preferred to leave the nature of monsters to the reader's imagination. The fiends in the Lord Dunsany story How Nuth Would Have Practiced his Art Upon the Gnoles, for example, are kept out of view, and known solely through their violence. Early fantasy authors often reacted to the diversity of mythical creatures by constructing a pat, somewhat rational explanation for their existence;; for example, Robert E. Howard's aforementioned People of the Dark postulated that secret, sinister underground race that had inspired all legends of trolls, elves, dwarfs and witches. Although George MacDonald cannot distinguish his goblins from kobolds or gnomes, he carefully specifies their nature: that they live underground, that they go out only at night, that their appearance was reputed to be either absolutely hideous, or ludicrously grotesque, that they delighted in mischief, had a great aversion to rhymes and lacked toes. He furnishes detailed descriptions of the most illustrious members of goblin society, especially the vivid perpendicular eyes of the goblin queen. Realistic depictions of unreal entities became the norm in fantasy fiction. Only rarely would Tolkien introduce creatures that he shows us but indirectly, like the balrog, one of his original creations, which is like a great shadow, in the

middle of which was a dark form, although it wields weapons and sometimes extends out sprawling wings.

More often, Tolkien provides a clear and consistent differentiation of his monsters, one that, due to the popularity of his work and world, became a *de facto* standard. Tolkien's trolls, for example, are introduced in *The Hobbit* as very large persons with great heavy faces. They are talkative but not particularly bright, and prove vulnerable to sunlight. His goblins live underground and compete with dwarves for mining resources, sometimes to the point of full-scale war. In *The Hobbit* they are big goblins, great ugly-looking goblins, and in their habitation, speech and social organization they seem strikingly similar to MacDonald's creation.¹⁰⁴ Although to the eyes of a hobbit, goblins and trolls are both towering humanoid monsters, goblins became increasingly distinct from trolls as Tolkien further developed his world in the later trilogy. We see several varieties of trolls in the *Lord of the Rings*, including hill-trolls out of Gorgoroth who were taller and broader than

¹⁰³ Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 86. ¹⁰⁴ To they go about their business.

Men, wielding bucklers and hammers, as well as the cave-troll that Boromir identified in the Mines of Moria. Confusingly, Tolkien transitioned from using goblin in *The Hobbit* to orc in the *Lord of the Rings*: the word orc appears not at all in *The Hobbit*, and the word goblin rarely recurs in the later trilogy, more or less exclusively to refer to creatures already identified as orcs.¹⁰⁵ We can however learn something of the relative scale of goblins by looking at the description of a huge orc chieftain in the Mines of Moria who is nonetheless only almost man-high. He is clad entirely in mail, dark-faced, with red tongue and eyes, wielding a spear. Already in that sequence we had discovered that orcs have a dark skin of greenish scales, and in a nod to MacDonald, that their feet are toeless.

The orc and troll are but two of the monsters that Tolkien shows us;; Gandalf helpfully supplies to Frodo a current list of Sauron's minions: Not all his servants and chattel are wraiths! There are orcs and trolls, wargs and werewolves;; and there have been and still are many Men, warriors and kings that walk alive under the Sun, and yet are under his sway.¹⁰⁶

Rarely, Tolkien uses the word undead to refer to the Nazgûl, as with Merry's sword cleaving through the undead flesh of the Witch-king of Angmar, cleaving the spell that knit his unseen sinews to his will. More

commonly, the Nazgûl are called Ringwraiths, though other sorts of creatures might be wraiths as well: Frodo would have become a wraith under the dominion of the Dark Lord had Elrond not healed the wound left by the Morgul-knife. The word wraith is of Scottish origin and roughly synonymous with ghost, with perhaps a potential connotation of an apparition of a living being as well.¹⁰⁷ The Nazgûl have substance, however;; with the aid of the Ring, Frodo sees their white faces with keen and merciless eyes, their gray hair and robes, their haggard hands. Without the Ring, however, they appear as black holes in the deep shade. Further entities in the *Lord of the Rings* that look like a shadow against the stars are the barrow-wights encountered early on by the four hobbits. The touch of Tolkien's wight was stronger and colder than iron, and induced a sort of paralysis. Jacob Grimm presents the term wight (in its German analog *wiht*) as an umbrella term for any sort of being or creature, be it human or supernatural, and the English word is much used that way by Chaucer and Shakespeare, though sometimes with a supernatural implication.¹⁰⁸ By the time Tolkien resuscitated it, most readers would meet the term for the first time in his compound barrow-wight, or grave-being. Naturally, the unfamiliar word thus took on

¹⁰⁵ See Rateliff, *The History of the Hobbit* *The Silmarillion* written in 1916 1920, including *The Hobbit*, only the name of the sword Orcrist, the Goblin-cleaver, preserves this connotation.

¹⁰⁶ We hear little more of werewolves in Tolkien outside of fleeting mentions in *The Silmarillion*. The *varg*, a wolf;; though the form *ulf* is a more common word, both synonyms can for example be seen in the same sentence in the *Gylfaginning* (12).

¹⁰⁷ See Shippey, *Road to Middle-earth*, 148 150.

¹⁰⁸

read at the end of the same tale a comic episode in which all the (human) spectators broke out a supernatural connotation even when separated from its prefix, and this wight became a staple undead horror in later fantasy genre works. We only obliquely see the Dead whom Aragon summons below the Dwimorberg, except as shadows making shadow-sounds, but Legolas can perceive shapes of Men and of Horses, and pale banners like shreds of cloud. The wraiths and wights portrayed in the *Lord of the Rings* are united by one important thread in the narrative: the sword that Merry finds among the

treasure of the barrow-wights was crafted by the enemies of Angmar, and he wields it to good effect at the Battle of the Pelennor Fields against the leader of the Nazgûl.

No such grim foes menace *The Hobbit*. Even giants, when we briefly glimpse them, are more boisterous than monstrous. Bilbo espied stone-giants during a storm who were hurling rocks at one another for a game, the resulting cacophony, as well as giants guffawing and shouting, blending into the tumult of thunder. In the more serious later trilogy, we rarely see such levity from powerful beings, but Tolkien introduces another sort of benign giant in the form of the enormous tree-people, the ents. Tom Shippey calls attention to the Old English origins of the word ent, as the credulous medieval inhabitants of Britain attributed the existence of Roman roads to *orþanc enta geweorc*, the skillful work of ents ;; from such an oblique hint we can infer only that ents disappeared long ago and undertook huge building projects, ones that involved displacing trees. In Tolkien's hands, however, that trace of a forgotten language, in turn discussing a forgotten civilization, becomes a seed from which mighty oaks will grow.¹⁰⁹ Treebeard tells Merry and Pippin that Trolls are only counterfeits, made by the Enemy in the Great Darkness, in mockery of Ents, as Orcs were of Elves. The parallel between trolls and ents is raised several times, and helps us to understand the scale of trolls: Treebeard is described as an almost Troll-like figure, at least fourteen feet high, and when Legolas and Gimli first set eyes on the ents, we learn that as tall as trolls they were, twelve feet or more in height.

Far from simplifying the catalog of monsters provided by his medieval sources, Tolkien instead gave specific identities to diverse and previously amorphous creatures. Thanks to the monumental popularity of his work, his account became the standard for a large percentage of fantasy fandom. Naturally, when work began on *Chainmail*, Tolkien's rendition had a huge impact on how Gygax and Perren systematized monsters. A wargame using fantastic entities must first resolve the question of scale, and Gygax's earliest notice of the Fantasy Supplement of *Chainmail* runs down an ordered list of Tolkien's creations from least to greatest: Hobbits will be 20mm, dwarfs/goblins 25mm, elves/orcs 30mm, men/Nazgul/Balrog 40mm, ents/trolls/dragons 54mm, and a few 70mm giants to top it off. [WGN:#112] Note how ents and trolls are given the same scale, as are elves and orcs,

following Tolkien's account of the pairing of those races above. Orcs also rank a notch below men in height, per Tolkien.

As we learned from Section 2.3, *Chainmail* did diverge from Tolkien's standard in some particulars, to the frustration of the many fans of the *Lord of the Rings*. Gygax introduced a distinction between goblins and orcs that Tolkien did not intend, with the claim that Orcs are nothing more than overgrown Goblins, though many readers no doubt inferred this from Tolkien's usage. More materially, for the trolls of *Chainmail*, Gygax preferred the account in Poul Anderson's *Three Hearts and Three Lions* to that of *The Hobbit* or the *Lord of the Rings*. While giants are fairy-tale mainstays, their most relevant source for Gygax was not Tolkien's brief glimpse, but probably de Camp & Pratt's *The Roaring Trumpet*, in which Harold Shea encounters many varieties of giants one single sentence encompasses all the hill giants and frost giants and fire giants together at once in his exploration of Norse mythology.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ The Old English *ent* was probably yet another word for giant.

Chainmail first edition monsters with no antecedent in Tolkien include only sprites, rocs and elementals;; the second edition belatedly inserts giants, and adds basilisks, giant spiders (recalling Shelob) and the blanket category of chimerae to that short list, and clarifies that Tolkien's eagles should be understood as a subtype of roc.¹¹¹ Elementals are favorite tools of Elric's, and appear in Howard's Conan stories as well as Heinlein fantasy fiction. We hear of a basilisk in *Three Hearts and Three Lions*. Sprites flutter through much of fantasy fiction, playing small roles: a wise woman summons a sprite for information in *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, while Cugel the Clever kicks at a sprite who teases him as he is shuttled across the world in a flying cage in Vance *Eyes of the Overworld*. The enormous eagles in *The Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings* require no mythological background, though the eagle who dwells in the tree Yggdrasil received frequent mentions in Eddaic literature. The decision to group eagles under the category of rocs in *Chainmail* further investigation. The gigantic bird known as the *rukha* (رُخ) in the *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights* appears in the tale of the Second Voyage of Sinbad, and as of the first English translation, the *Arabian Nights Entertainments* (1706), the word came through as roc. Word of the roc had come back to Europe in the thirteenth century with Marco Polo, who notes in his journey¹¹⁰ The *jötunn*, or giant (Old English *eoten*

appears in several critical passages of Sturluson, and admits of some subcategories and differences in naming. The frost giants, or *hrímpursar*, are protagonists in the cosmology revealed in early sections of the *Gylfaginning*; in the word *hrím The Broken Sword*

Frostly modified form (references 1976. While no Eddaic source directly attests to fire giants, they might be inferred from the *Múspellssynir Múspell* being a southerly region of fire associated with the coming of *Ragnarök*; the ruler of that region, Surt, wields a flaming sword (*Gylfaginning* 4) and is introduced when few entities other than giants existed in the young world. The frost giants are *bergrisar*) in the *Gylfaginning* (15, and in 42), though these receive little more than passing commentary. Presumably, these mountain giants inspired the *Gylfaginning* (46) gives us no indication that the illusionist Utgarda-Loki is a hill giant in fact, his stronghold looms above the plains de Camp and Pratt in *The Roaring Trumpet*

the *jötunn* r with Skrymir and Utgarda-Loki illustrates, there is no consistent rendering of the scale of giants. On this point see Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 127.

¹¹¹ First edition *Chainmail* already briefly mentioned basilisks (and cockatrices) under the entry for dragons without providing any clear system. The general class of chimerae added in second edition *Chainmail* alternate spelling as subtypes of the roc in the first edition) as well as hippocriffs all are detailed below. Worse still, although the chimera type listing suggests that griffins be understood as rocs, it assigns wyverns to the dragon type, apparently contradicting the description of the roc. The guidance implies that chimerae are a catch-all type, though later in *Dungeons & Dragons*, a chimera connotes a specific three-headed lion-dragon-goat, as mythology would suggest. In as early a source *Theogony* swift-footed and strong, who had three heads, one of a grim-eyed lion, another of a goat, and another of a snake, a fierce dragon;; in her forepart she was a lion;; in her hinderpart, a dragon;; and in

324, trans. Evelyn-White)

to Madagascar the existence of the *ruc*, which is exactly like the eagle, only immeasurably larger so powerful as to take up the elephant, carry him high into the air, then let him drop, whereby he is at once killed, and they feed upon his carcass.¹¹² These tall tales of travelers had come to the attention of American audiences in the film the *7th Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor* (1958), for which Harryhausen animated the roc as something like a

gargantuan two-headed vulture. The same film shows a genie living in a lamp: in *Chainmail*, the Djinn of *Arabian Nights* is listed as a subtype of air elemental, while its cousin the Efreet is a fire elemental.¹¹³

By broadening his scope and incorporating the work of fantasy writers other than Tolkien, Gygax undertook a deep and unprecedented taxonomic categorization and description of monsters. It began humbly, with only the twelve categories of monsters in first edition *Chainmail*, excluding the fantastic humanoid types (hobbits, dwarves, elves, wizards, heroes and superheroes). Aside from establishing the relative height of these creatures, *Chainmail* made no attempt to describe them physically instead, the account in *Chainmail* differentiated them through statistics specific to the system. The ogres of *Chainmail* are described as intermediate creatures between men and giants, so they fight as the equivalent of six heavy footmen in the system, while giants fight as twelve. The details of the *Chainmail* system are left for Chapter Three, but for our present purposes, the quantification of monsters renders them far more narrow and specific than even the standard set by Tolkien. Insofar as Gygax seemed to stray from Middle-earth, however, he risked being called all sorts of foul blasphemer if his fantastic creatures do not follow [WGN:#127] In response to this backlash, Gygax doubled down: when *Dungeons & Dragons* came out, it drew from a more diverse set of sources, and thus rendered Tolkien only one part of a broader fantastic setting.

Dungeons & Dragons introduced distinctions between virtually all subtypes and their parent types from *Chainmail* and fleshed out many brief mentions, notably reclassifying as separate entities such creatures as goblins and kobolds or basilisks and cockatrices. The original *Chainmail* type called sprites incorporated the subtype pixies, but in *Dungeons & Dragons*, the type is split into air sprites (pixies), water sprites (nixies) and tree sprites (dryads). Two monster subtypes included under the category of rocs gained independence: the griffon, the most prized of steeds, and the wivern or wyvern, largely the same as a dragon but that it has only two legs.¹¹⁴ *Dungeons & Dragons* combined these

¹¹² Polo, *Travels of Marco Polo*, 282. Polo believed these birds to be the source of our myth of griffons,

-bird, half*Chainmail*, then, perhaps is fitting.

¹¹³ The djinn of the *Arabian Nights* belong to an ancient Arabic tradition predating Islam. The rendered the Arabic (*génie*) though K *Arabian Nights*,

and although the film version of the seventh voyage of Sinbad does not adhere to the written narrative, the famous djinn summoned by rubbing lamps and rings plays a huge role in the Aladdin tale. We that efreeti -40).

¹¹⁴ Wyverns are mostly familiar in medieval sources as heraldic devices;; their name, through the tangled paths of morphology, must have come ultimately from the Latin *viper*. Griffons existed in visual representations at the dawn of Aegean culture in the second millennium BCE;; see Buckert, *Greek Religion*, 55. Early Greek authorities like the (*Prometheus Bound*) refer to a creature called a *gryp* (Herodotus. Any *Dungeons & Dragons* adventurer would be interested to learn that griffons are among fifth-century BCE playwright Aeschylus , presumably from), as does

additions with some new creatures, the lion s share of which are familiar from ancient mythology but thoroughly laundered by contemporary fantasy authors who, as Section 2.1.1 noted, relied in turn on modern popularizations by Theosophists and authors in the Celtic Revival movement. In the expanded monster roster, we might trace the nixie, *Three Hearts and Three Lions* before we consult any mythological sources;; the wyvern, hippogriff and cockatrice are all encountered by Harold Shea in his various visitations of said mythologies.¹¹⁵ This is not to suggest, of course, that these two works are the exclusive fantasy genre sources for the *Dungeons & Dragons* counterparts of those creatures;; the manticore (as manticora) and the winged, two-legged wyvern also appear in *The Guns of Avalon* (1972), one of Zelazny Amber novels, to give just one more of many examples.

The visual descriptions of these creatures in *Dungeons & Dragons* are often cursory: the griffon, unicorn and hippogriff, for example, basically lack any physical characterization, to the point where few readers without prior knowledge could even select a miniature that resembles them. Even late fantasy authors often do little more than mention a creature in passing, like Anderson with his manticore. So how would fantasy wargamers or illustrators even know what these beings looked like? For the unicorn s appearance and preferred company, of course, a game designer could rely on the general knowledge of players, but for the hippogriff? Only the illustration on the cover of *Underworld & Wilderness* gives some sense of the body of the hippogriff;; the thirteen primitive portraits of monsters in that volume, along with the eleven in *Monsters & Treasure* and the depictions of the orc and goblin in *Men & Magic*, provide the only concrete guidance on

how these creatures should be envisioned. As the roster of creatures grew between *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons* to say nothing of later editions and the scope of taxonomy expanded, we begin to see evidence of a transition in Gygax method: encyclopedic sources outside of fiction became the dominant origins of specific information about the nature of monsters.

the few fantastic animals in mythology reputed to hoard gold, a stipulation put forward by *Paradise Lost* (Bk. II, v. 943); presumably, the d and earned their mounts the eternal hatred of these ferocious beasts. By the time of the bestiary authors, we see the hatred of griffons for horses regularly attested, as it is in Topsell, in the bestiary that White translates and in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Pausanias records the half-eagle, half reaffirmed in much Grecian pottery;; this survived to the Middle Ages in the account of Marco Polo already given above in connection with the roc, as well as in *The Travels of John Mandeville*.¹¹⁵ The cockatrice seems to have been born out of the same sorts of linguistic confusions and extrapolations that created goblins and kobolds. For a full account see White, *Bestiary*, 169, but the gist is that t -

bestiary accounts of the crocodile (*cocodrillus*) resulted in a sort of conflation that created an equivalent creature known as the cockatrice. *Dungeons & Dragons* distinguishes the cockatrice as a and more conscious invention. Given the enmity of griffons and horses, the idea of a hybrid of the two is a counterintuitive one;; hence the horse of a river (-)

) is a hippopotamus. Ariosto, in *Orlando Furioso*, put forward an origin story for a creature he calls the *ippogrifo* Camp, when he has Harold Shea

-
The Castle of Iron, preferred the English *Dungeons & Dragons* follows.

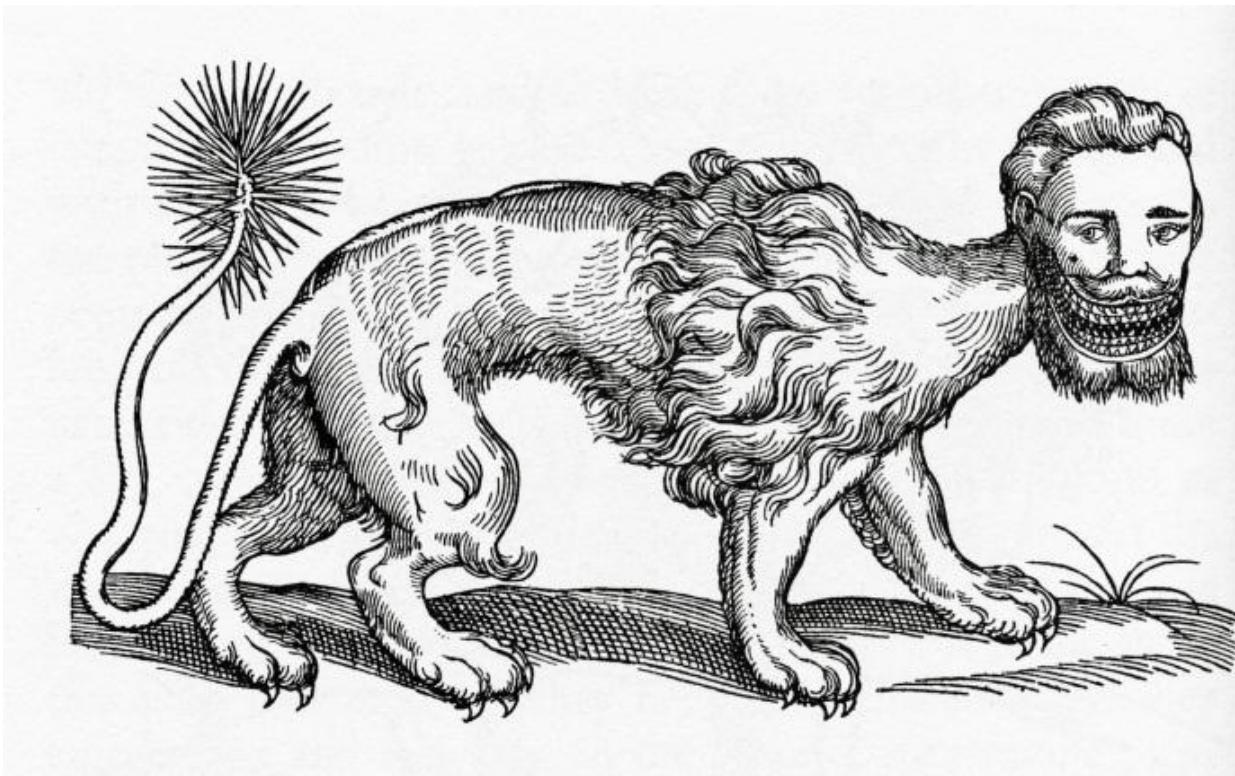


FIGURE 21: MANTICORE FROM TOPSELL (1607)

Dungeons & Dragons derived many details of its creatures from *The Bestiary* (1954) by T. H. White, a translation of an actual twelfth-century bestiary in the collection of Cambridge University, but moreover a good introduction to European monster manuals from antiquity through the Renaissance. Such bestiaries had percolated up from antiquity, cataloging beasts described by fantastic ancient authorities, for which purpose the natural historian Pliny the Elder might do as well as the Bible or Aesop.¹¹⁶ Even Pliny testified to having seen with his own eyes in the first century CE the corpse of a centaur preserved in honey which had been sent to the Roman Emperor Claudius from Egypt.¹¹⁷ He is also one of the earliest sources for the basilisk, which he identifies as a serpent not more than twelve fingers in length which is so venomous that it destroys all shrubs, not only by its contact, but even that it has breathed upon;; it burns up the grass too, and breaks the stones, so tremendous is its noxious influence it is also, he says, a creature that kills with its eye, such that all who behold its eyes fall dead upon the spot.¹¹⁸ He was not always so credulous: Pliny relegates

both the griffon and the pegasus to his section on fabulous birds, for example. These judgments did not dampen the enthusiasm of later bestiary authors, however, many of whom still embraced the griffon. As was the case with dragons, in some instances the Bible itself demanded that medieval society retain its belief in mythical beasts: even the unicorn receives a mention in the Book of Job.¹¹⁹

White's apparatus includes many excerpts from colorful Elizabethan monster sourcebooks, notably Edward Topsell's *Historie of Foure-Footed Beasts* (1607), which is itself largely a translation of Conrad Gesner's still earlier *Historia Animalium* (1551). From Topsell, for example, *Dungeons & Dragons* inherits a gorgon that looks like a bull and petrifies with its breath, rather than the gorgons of the story of Perseus, of whom Medusa is the most famous (medusae are a separate creature type in *Dungeons & Dragons*, the more familiar snake-haired lady stone-gazer). The unusual spelling manticora instead of¹¹⁶ C. S. Lewis covers the medieval components of this tradition in *The Discarded Image*, 146, in his section on Beasts. Interestingly, bestiaries often dealt with real, and even very common, animals alongside complete fabrications. Lewis argues that these tall tales were not so much avidly believed as they were perpetuated by the reliance on ancient authorities.

¹¹⁷ Pliny (trans. Bostock), *Natural History*, (Bk. VII, Ch. 3). Note that although Homer refers to the centaur (such as Chiron, *Iliad*, Bk. XI, v. 832) as - prefix to form , a usage that Pliny renders in Latin as *hippocentaurus* but the name does not seem to have stuck.

¹¹⁸ Pliny (trans. Bostock), *Natural History* (Bk. VIII, Ch. 33). The first creature to whom Pliny ascribes this power is the catoblepas, a monster later introduced in *Dungeons & Dragons* as well. White identifies the catoblepas with the gorgon explicitly.

¹¹⁹ Job 39:9. While the meaning of the Hebrew term employed there () and elsewhere is disputed, in antiquity and medieval times in Europe the Greek and Latin were far better known: the Septuagint gives for Job 39:9, and for Isaiah 34:7, or Psalm 22:21, the Vulgate gives Latin *unicornes* (though in Job, the Vulgate gives *rinoceros*)

manticore is another likely inheritance from *The Bestiary*, as is the description following Topsell's illustration of the human-faced manticore with a tail that bristles with many detachable spikes instead of the scorpion tail that the bestiary text suggests.¹²⁰ The fondness of griffons for horse

flesh probably comes from White's griffins, which are vehemently hostile to horses, though *Dungeons & Dragons* runs with the variant spelling griffon griffin.

(as the word is spelled in French) rather than the more common English¹²¹ Assembling a catalog of creatures for *Dungeons & Dragons* became more and more like the editorial process of constructing a bestiary as the breadth of mythical influences increased and like the bestiary authors of old, Gygax borrowed freely from his predecessors.

White's text also describes such fiends as the hydra, but the presence of the hydra in *Dungeons & Dragons* probably owes more to its glorious stop-motion Harryhausen animation in the film *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963) than it does to T. H. White (Gygax determined that they are large dinosaurs with multiple heads). While Harryhausen's *7th Voyage of Sinbad* portrayed many creatures from the *Arabian Nights*, that film was hardly the first Hollywood feature to draw on that same source material. The *Arabian Nights Entertainments* introduced the ghoul to the Western world, in the story of Sidi Nonman, as the narrator explains: Goules of both sexes are wandering demons, which generally infest old buildings, from whence they rush out by surprise, on people that pass by, kill them, and eat their flesh, and, for want of prey, will sometime go in the night into burying-grounds, and feed upon dead bodies.¹²² By mid-twentieth century, however, the ghoul would more likely be recognized as the titular fiend of a Boris Karloff film, *The Ghoul* (1933); that film came out a year before Howard wrote of The popular category of monster movies, beginning appropriately enough with Lon Chaney's *The Monster* (1925), bequeathed to the term monster its connotation in vernacular American English as a catch-all for supernatural creatures, a sense which would carry over to *Dungeons & Dragons* and its successors we can hardly be surprised that Arneson conceived Blackmoor after watching horror/monster movies all day.¹²³ At the same that that Howard and Tolkien were laying the foundation of the fantasy genre, Hollywood brought many monsters to life on the big¹²⁰ White reproduces this image in *The Bestiary*, 247. For the illustration and description of the gorgon, see 265–266. While White is obviously the primary source used for *Dungeons & Dragons*, it is not inconceivable that Gygax might also have known Topsell through *The Elizabethan Zoo*, a 1926 compendium of Topsell and the *Historie of Serpents* (1608).

¹²¹ Chainmail: third edition *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons*

¹²², 739. Galland rendered the Arabic *ghul* () as *goule* in the French translation that formed the basis for the English. By the late eighteenth Valthek when Babalouek cries the Nazgûl.

¹²³ [SG:#21] For more on monsters movies see Vieira, *Hollywood Horror*. Arneson identifies the Blackmoor campaign. In later years, Gygax also mentions some of the Roger Corman schlock horror films, especially *The Raven* (1963), as inspirations for some of the initial magic spells of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

screen, including Karloff's *The Mummy* (1932) and Bela Lugosi's *Dracula* (1931). Naturally, the last of these drew on the famous 1897 novel by Bram Stoker which he very nearly titled *The Un-Dead* but Stoker wrote after almost two centuries of vampire accounts had intrigued European audiences.¹²⁴ Given the prevalence of vampires in films and on television shows like *Dark Shadows*, we should not be surprised to find them in the Blackmoor setting, nor to see them joined in *Dungeons & Dragons* by other undead monsters like the mummy and spectre, the latter being defined as monsters with no corporeal body, and thus serving for all forms of ghosts. The preference for a French loan-word like spectre over ghost may owe something more to James Bond (or even the seminal wargaming club borrowing the name of that conspiracy) than conformity with British English. Doctor Strange would also recognize a spectre from the fiends dispatched by Baron Mordo in *Strange Tales* #141;; in the world of comic books, the Spectre had long been familiar as the sobriquet of the vengeful crime-fighting ghost of a deceased police officer.

The compendium of creatures in *Dungeons & Dragons* is rounded out by a set of wholly original entities that can barely be deemed monsters as such: the so-called clean-up crew of ochre jelly and black pudding, along with green slime, gray ooze and yellow mold. These substances play the important role in dungeon ecology of disposing of any organic matter (dead adventurers or their foes) that might otherwise clog up passageways, typically while leaving valuable metals like swords, armor and currency more or less intact. All of these creatures probably owe their natures to the eponymous star of another seminal horror film: *The Blob* (1958), the great liquefier of the unwary, itself a magnification of the brutish ectoplasmic world revealed by the microscope.

Dungeons & Dragons alludes to other creatures by name without specifying them, probably in order to demonstrate how the designers felt the game could be extended. While these include various Greek mythological creatures like titans and cyclopes some few science fiction castaways are also included, such as robots and androids. Adding creatures is one of the simplest and least invasive ways to expand on the printed ruleset, and virtually all of the early adopters of the game devised new adversaries to populate their dungeons. One merely needed to judge how powerful the creature should be relative to the existing offerings and set its system factors accordingly: hit points, armor class and so on, as detailed in Section 3.2.2.

In the process of systematizing these creatures, *Dungeons & Dragons* definitively linked many monster-names to particular beings with a specific physical appearance, capabilities and behavior. The few amateurish illustrations in the first edition accompanying¹²⁴ seems to have been an 1850 translation, under the title *The Phantom World Dissertation sur les Apparitions, Des Anges, des Démons & des Espirts et sur les Revenans et Vampires. De Hongrie, de Boheme, de Moravie & de Silesie*. The vampire stories Calmet confidently presents as the testimony of unimpeachable authorities have most of the attributes familiar to readers of *Dracula* the blood from the living, so that these become visibly attenuated, whilst the corpses, like leeches, appeared unnaturally preserved and if their blood remained suspiciously fluid, they would then be destroyed through decapitation, burning of the corpse, or as a stopgap measure driving a stake through the heart to fix the vampire to its resting place. Voltaire, in his *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (1764), can hardly restrain his scorn that such superstitions would persist into the eighteenth century, and probably correctly links these myths to beliefs in the Eastern Orthodox Church about the unnatural preservation of the bodies of the excommunicated, as well as to earlier eastern European folklore surrounding the *vrykolakas* (

the descriptions of these monsters continued the bestiary tradition of visualizing unreal entities, but the unified taxonomy of monsters presented by *Dungeons & Dragons* extended and ultimately surpassed the efforts of medieval bestiary authors. While Gygax and Arneson built on the consensus that had already been forged by Tolkien's popularity, ultimately they could not accept all of Tolkien's renditions of these creatures as unimpeachable. *Dungeons & Dragons* carefully distinguished orcs from goblins, trolls from ogres, skeletons from ghouls from wights from wraiths from spectres, as

well as defining several categories of giants and dragons. A game cannot model combat with an orc if an orc might equally well be a whale, or a blind giant, or three-headed, or simply a goblin a game places different demands on the elements of the fantasy genre than literary usages do. As the distinctions between fantastic creatures grew more precise, and their characteristics became more definite, they gained a certain amount of realism: *Dungeons & Dragons* needed to render fantastic creatures realistically enough to be simulated. When the game evolved beyond its first edition, this taxonomy grew ever larger and more detailed, as Chapter Five will show.¹²⁵ A monster needed to be carefully ranked against its peers and visualized thoroughly enough for drawn portraits and crafted miniatures. While *Dungeons & Dragons* did not create an unimpeachable account of the nature of these monsters, it did set a level of detail and specificity that later genre works needed to supply, even when they deviated from the standard particulars of the fantastic. A monster needed not just a body but a context for encountering it. In what environments is it found? What food does it favor? Is it solitary or social? One also needed to determine the disposition of the creature, that is whether it will be helpful or hostile to adventurers, a subject to which we will return in Section 2.8.

2.7 CLASSES

The society of *Dungeons & Dragons* is divided into those who fight, those who cast and those who pray. All player characters must have a class, and the three classes of Fighting-men, Magic-users and Clerics represented the entire job market in the original version of the game. Compared to the vast diversity of fantastic races, classes are few and far between. Only after the publication of the first supplement would they be joined by those who steal (Thieves) and those who judge (Paladins), the initial installments in a lengthy procession of new classes, canonized or homegrown, that crowded periodicals and rulebooks of the day.

In *Chainmail*, a work prior to the use of the term class, a Wizard, a Hero and a Super-hero were considered separate types. That term however conflates persons of different capabilities (as a Wizard is to a Hero) with persons of similar capabilities but a different degree of power (as a Hero is to a Super-hero). Unraveling this required the creation of the two orthogonal system properties of class (distinguishing Wizards from Heroes and Super-heroes) and level (distinguishing Heroes from Super-heroes). While the term level clearly suggests a measured and quantified stratification among entities

of similar nature, which will be explored in Section 3.2.3.1, the term class implies more of an apples-to-oranges distinction, with the proviso that *Chainmail* admitted the possibility that a particular miniature figure might behave as multiple types, as Elric is both a swordsman and a sorcerer.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Most famously, this process created the *Monster Manual* (1977), a compendium of 350 fiends and over two hundred pieces of professional artwork. The *Monster Manual* in turn inspired numerous sequels and imitations.

The allusion which began this section to the three classic estates of medieval society applies insofar as it sheds light on the origins of the term class as a signifier for the different roles that a character might embody. In medieval society, the three classes of the nobility, clergy and laborers were qualitatively different in their life experiences, and almost completely without class mobility.¹²⁷ Class was an essential quality of your person, something from which you were completely inseparable and which an observer might immediately detect. In fantasy literature, the qualities that differentiate a barbarian from a sorcerer are similarly innate and observable. To consider one example, Conan frequently contended with Stygian priests;; when he clumsily attempted (in the Hour of the Dragon) to pose as one to infiltrate a temple, a priestess bluntly informed him that differences of class are visible to the naked eye: You are not a priest, she said. You are a fighting-man. Even with that mask that is plain. There is as much difference between you and a priest as there is between a man and a woman. By Set! she exclaimed, halting suddenly, her eyes flaring wide. I do not believe you are even a Stygian!

The differences between a priest and a wizard, however, are more subtle. Conan would see no clear distinction between the two: in the Hyborian Age, both are evil, and an evil wizard s power undoubtedly derives from some evil god anyway. Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser are suspicious of wizards, but are also allied with a few;; the clergymen they meet, however, are so harmless that they rarely merit alliance or suspicion. Ultimately, the swordand-sorcery genre divides characters into two buckets rather than three it is not swordand-sorcery-and-sanctimony. The roots of the third estate in *Dungeons & Dragons* draw only incompletely on fantasy literature, but certainly borrow liberally if tacitly from the Christian faith espoused by both of the game s authors.

2.7.1 FIGHTING--MEN

The term fighting man once served as a common appellation for a professional soldier. Gygax main source on medieval warfare, C.W.C. Oman, wrote in 1924 of the professional class of the fighting man, though the term enjoyed little use after the middle of the twentieth century. Modern readers stumble over immediate difficulties in its gender specificity, and it is by no means as elegant a term as Fighter, the word that would quickly supplant Fighting-man in popular discourse and subsequently in the rulebooks of *Dungeons & Dragons* precisely because of these problems.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ In fairness, Elric is probably also a Cleric, as he prays to Gods for favors that he frequently receives though there is no priestly caste in *Chainmail*.

¹²⁷ Aside from the ability of elves to alternate their class more or less at will between Fighting-man and Magic-user, there is also a system for ordinary humans to change between classes as well. Fighting-men may become Clerics and Clerics Fighting-men, provided that they hold a sufficient score in the prime requisite of the class they hope to become. In the first edition rulebooks, however, the process of changing class is insufficiently specified for clear application.

¹²⁸ The inherent sexism of the fantasy literary tradition, let alone the mere term fighting man, set a lasting tone for fantasy role-playing, for better or for worse. When Lenard Lakofka wrote his article Notes on Women & Magic Bringing the Distaff Gamer into D&D in the *Dragon* #3 (Oct 1976), which for example substituted out the eauty, he did little but

The Fighting-man class derived from the Hero and Super-hero types of *Chainmail*, as is quickly illustrated by glancing at the level titles for Fighting-men: a fourth-level Fighting-man is called a Hero, and an eighth-level Fighting-man a Super-hero, corresponding to the system in *Chainmail*, in which a Hero fought as equivalent to four ordinary armored footman, and a Super-hero fought as eight. Given that these degrees of heroism were adapted to level titles, however, the class itself needed a separate name, hence the adoption of Fighting man, which has quite a pedigree in fantasy literature. Burroughs, for example, uses the term to introduce his hero John Carter on the first page of *A Princess of Mars*: He was a splendid specimen of manhood, standing a good two inches over six feet, broad of shoulder and narrow of hip, with the carriage of the trained fighting man. In Carter's own words, it is his choice of vocation that draws him to Barsoom and precipitates his journey there: As I gazed upon it I felt a spell of

overpowering fascination it was Mars, the god of war, and for me, the fighting man, it had always held the power of irresistible enchantment. The term appears ten times in the first John Carter book alone, and subsequently graces the very title of the seventh volume in the Mars series: *A Fighting Man of Mars*.

The term fighting man recurs in the many authors influenced by the sagas of John Carter. Conan first appearance as a protagonist in the Phoenix on the Sword introduces him thus: His slightest movement spoke of steel-spring muscles knit to a keen brain with the co-ordination of a born fighting-man. Even as a king, Conan can never free himself from this aspect of his nature, as we read in the Hour of the Dragon, where Conan felt the old tug of the professional fighting-man, to turn his horse and plunge into the fighting, the pillaging and the looting as in the days of old. In Fritz Leiber's the Bleak Shore, the Gray Mouser visits a tavern called the Silver Eel, where fighting-men predominated and the clank of swordsmen's harness mingled with the thump of tankards. After the sudden rise in popularity of fantasy literature in the late 1960s, the term reemerged to describe a new generation of heroes: for example, Kothar was a born fighting man, and Thongor's dietary advice is that a fighting-man needs meat to feed his strength!

Even in the pages of the *Domesday Book* of the Castle & Crusade Society we can find the term fighting man. In Gygax Dark Ages game on the world of Entropy, the bibliography mentions a book called *The Fighting Man* (1966) by Jack Coggins, which serves as a general introduction to the dress, weapons and tactics of elite soldiers in various historical eras and areas of the world. [DB:#7] *Domesday Book* #8 leads with a four-page excerpt from a period novel called *Fighting Men*.

Fighting-men in *Dungeons & Dragons* are distinguished by their ability to use all weapons and armor, their feats of arms and their capacity to endure punishing combat. Like their precursors in *Chainmail*, they have a choice of armor and weaponry as they start out, though *Dungeons & Dragons* incorporates an economic system, detailed further below, and an encumbrance system which jointly preclude carrying too many weapons. This is however scarcely relevant since all weapons deal a common amount of damage in the original *Dungeons & Dragons* system. All non-magical swords are grouped under the exacerbate the implication of innate gender differences in the game. Such questions were hotly debated in the fanzines of the day, especially in *Alarums & Excursions*, where many prominent gamers upheld the innate inferiority of females as physical warriors.

common rubric sword, not even making allowances for the difference between Conan staggering broadsword and the Gray Mouser nimble twin blades, Scalpel and Cat's Claw.

Magical swords, however, are a far more important accoutrement to the Fightingman, and a significant amount of real estate in *Dungeons & Dragons* is dedicated to their specification. They may emit flames, like the sword wielded by the angel who blocks the way to Eden in the Book of Genesis, or by Surt of *Múspell* in the *Prose Edda* (*Gylfaginning* 4), or their many imitators. They may prove especially efficacious against trolls or dragons or Magic-users. They might grant wishes for the right bearer. Swords may be intelligent, speak various languages (probably telepathically) and have likes and dislikes and even ambitions on the grandest scale.

While Conan looms so large and is so self-sufficient that his swords are all anonymous and interchangeable, the tradition of pedigreed swords stretches far back into mythology and permeates the literature that influenced *Dungeons & Dragons*. Without unearthing ancient celebrity couples such as Roland and Durendal or Arthur and Excalibur, nearly every fantasy hero worth his salt comes paired with an exceptional weapon. Aragorn wields his Anduril, and even Bilbo carries the orc-detecting short sword Sting, as does Frodo (and Sam) after him. When Harold Shea wields Frey's sword Hundingsbana in *The Roaring Trumpet*, he fears that the weapon's enormousness would preclude swinging it, but instead it strikes almost without Shea's trying, shearing through opposing blades and skewering the vitals of many giants. The whole of *Three Hearts and Three Lions* is more or less a journey to reunite Ogier le Danois with his sword Cortana, a blessed instrument that dispels all illusion. In Anderson's *The Broken Sword*, however, we see the darker possibilities in the sword fated to bring about the end of the world. Anderson drew this sword directly from Norse mythology;; Runes that Skafloc could not read went down the dark blade.¹²⁹ Elric and his runeblade Stormbringer resumed Anderson's premise and exerted great influence over the design of magic swords in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Stormbringer has a specific purpose, a malign intelligence, and drinks the souls of its victims, at least in part to energize its bearer (a property captured in the game by the power energy draining, one of the rarer abilities of magic swords). While there are other magical weapons in *Dungeons & Dragons* hammers, spears, daggers, the odd axe or mace or

bow among magic weaponry swords alone possess certain human (and superhuman) attributes. [OD&D2:27] As only Fighting-men can use swords, powerful swords are essentially a defining class feature, an elevated station reflecting that swords donate half the name to sword-and-sorcery.

In the first edition of *Chainmail*, the list of ensorcelled items contained only magic swords and enchanted arrows. When the second edition appeared a year or so later, however, magic armor had been added to the list, along with a tantalizing suggestion that not all magic swords were created equal Excalibur is given as an example of a super sword beyond the pale of ordinary magic swords. By the fall of 1972, magic swords and armor alike were common in the Blackmoor campaign.¹³⁰ In the brief listing of Blackmoor

¹²⁹ Fateful swords abound in Norse mythology. Snorri Sturluson told in the *Skáldskaparmál* (50) of A similar *Sigridiformál* has a Valkyrie explain her of triumph to have on the hilt of your sword some *Nordic Religions*, 108.

¹³⁰

characters circa 1972 in the *Corner of the Table*, of the six Hero types listed, four have a magic weapon, and one (Greg Svenson) has both a magic weapon and magic armor. [COTT:72:v4n6] Arneson considered magic swords to be one of the more important aspects of the Blackmoor setting, and endlessly elaborated swords with a broad variety of powers and purposes, including a series of eighteen letter swords (A through R) and ten color swords;; for example, Dave Wesely White sword was especially effective against orcs, goblins, dragons, balrogs, ogres and wraiths, could detect magic, raise the morale of others and conferred to him the abilities of a (Blackmoor) Level III Wizard.

In the final system appearing in *Dungeons & Dragons*, the sheer variety of magical powers inherent in swords compared favorably to that of spell-casters;; aside from granting various statistical advantages in combat, swords may possess spell-like abilities drawn from nine primary powers, twelve less common extraordinary abilities and a handful of miscellaneous powers over two dozen in total, roughly the number of spells available to the Cleric class. There is also the possibility that a sword will be cursed and weaken a Fighting-man, though this is one of the less deadly perils in the life of a professional dungeon explorer. Elric sword Stormbringer is cursed with a craving for the blood of his loved ones, but the fantasy genre relates a few

less troublesome curses: Kothar, for example, wields the powerful sword Frostfire, which is cursed to impoverish any who carry it.

Armor has a very significant impact on the survivability of the Fighting-man. *Dungeons & Dragons* follows the precedent of *Chainmail* in admitting three grades of progressively more effective armor: leather, chain and plate, any of which might be used with or without a shield. Reliance on protective gear runs against the preferences of Conan and his loincloth-clad imitators, for whom donning armor might be a sign of weakness, or at best civility the greater natural resilience and endurance of a fighting-man like Conan is also reflected in the system, as is discussed in Section 3.2.2.2. This is not to say that men cannot be observed wearing armor in the Hyborian Age. In the Hour of the Dragon, for example, Conan witnesses the following: A dully glinting, mail-clad figure moved out of the shadows into the starlight. This was no plumed and burnished palace guardsman. It was a tall man in morion and gray chain mail one of the Adventurers, a class of warriors peculiar to Nemedia;; men who had not attained to the wealth and position of knighthood, or had fallen from that estate;; hardbitten fighters, dedicating their lives to war and adventure.

Even Conan is caught so attired in the Black Colossus, in which his chain mail is eventually upgraded for plate, complete with a black-plumed helmet;; however, Conan finds himself restless in plate armor and eventually discarded the plate armor for the more familiar chain mail. Neither Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser are above wearing chain mail, which they don in the Bleak Shore. When Holger Carlson arrives at the era of Roland, he quickly discovers a laden warhorse (seemingly left for him as a housewarming gift) whose saddlebags contain a well-fitting suit of chain mail;; shortly into his adventure he jousts with a rider in full plate armor. All of these suits of chainmail, however, are probably less famous than the mithril coat worn by Frodo Baggins in the *Lord of the Rings*; though it is available copies of *Chainmail* FFC:64] Some of his detailed system for magic swords is recorded in the *First Fantasy Campaign*, and those notes almost certainly served as the original for the *Dungeons & Dragons* sword system. never explicitly identified by the word chainmail, when Aragorn lifts it the sound of shaken rings was like the tinkle of rain in a pool.

While Frodo's mithril coat is supernaturally strong, overtly magical armor is much less common in fantasy literature than magic swords. One notable occurrence is in Moorcock's Dead God's Homecoming (collected in *Stormbringer*), where the Theocrat Jagreen Lern wears glowing scarlet

armor that seemed to be red hot and may have been. When Elric swings his runeblade at the Theocrat, his swing is met with a flame red buckler... proving the shield to be treated against sorcerous weapons. Stormbringer similarly shrieks as it failed to pierce the armor. Perhaps magical armor is less popular with fantasy authors because defensive armaments are passive, and thus simply less engaging than swinging swords. Never one to bow to convention, Arneson devised the blue magical armor and sword of one of the Blackmoor Bunch (William Heaton), which proved so emblematic that he came to be called the Blue Rider, or just Blue for short;; however, his suit of armor apparently had a mind of its own, occasionally relegating him to be little more than a passenger in its own foolhardy adventures.

2.7.2 MAGIC--USERS

The awkward term Magic-user is without apparent precedent in fantasy literature. Gygax stated in late interviews that he coined this term himself, sometimes offering the rationale of avoiding the occult implications of terms like wizard and warlock as well as the stage and parlor tricks that are associated with a magician. However, all three of those terms do appear in *Dungeons & Dragons* as level titles for Magicusers (of the eleventh, eighth and sixth level, respectively). All in all, eleven ranked level titles for Magic-users are given, including the common synonyms conjurer, enchanter and sorcerer, compared to only eight ranked level titles for Clerics and nine for Fighting-men. Why one of these terms, say a relatively neutral one like sorcerer (the ninth level title), could not have been reserved as the class title remains unclear.

Chainmail originally designated Wizard as the type representing a human spellcaster. Although the first edition of *Chainmail* hinted that there might be Wizards of different power levels, only in the second edition were Wizards split into four classes of persons endowed with magical ability. Given in descending order of power they were: Wizard, Sorcerer, Warlock and Magician.¹³¹ In system terms, these various degrees of supernatural ability represented the number of spells that could be cast per day. It also determined the probability of effecting a counter-spell on the sorcery of an enemy Wizard;; the stronger Wizard in this case enjoyed a significant statistical advantage.

The most powerful Wizard in *Chainmail* had far fewer abilities at his disposal than a high-level Magic-user in *Dungeons & Dragons*. The first edition of *Chainmail* listed only eight spells a Wizard might cast (including

fire ball and lightening bolt [sic]);; two more, Protection from Evil and Moving Terrain are added in the second edition. Notably, the spell Moving Terrain is described as a spell only possible to a Wizard, which here we are to understand as the most powerful of the four classes of Wizard in *Chainmail* prior to the introduction of this rule, there was no concept that some spells might be available only to more powerful spell-casters. *Chainmail* in its second edition thus set a precedent, a foundational one for the future Magic-user class, that Wizards may have inferior or superior levels of power relative to other Wizards, and that some powerful spells may not be cast by Wizards of lesser ability. Both of these precepts are amply substantiated in fantasy literature, though in the works cited by Gygax as influences, there is a tremendous diversity in the representation of wizards and magic powers.

¹³¹ These changes first appeared in an IFW fanzine at the end of 1971. [IW:v5n1] Unfortunately, *Chainmail* did not introduce a different name for the spell

might refer to either all spell-casters or just the most powerful category of spell-caster. Note that the third edition of *Chainmail* added yet another rank, that of t

On some points, however, the record about wizards had long been settled. In the early seventeenth century, for example, Shakespeare knew how to accessorize a wizard: he equipped Prospero in *The Tempest* with a staff, books of magic and a wizard s robe. When the time comes for Prospero to renounce his sorcerous ways, he vows, I ll break my staff, bury it certain fathoms in the earth, and deeper than did ever plummet sound I ll drown my book. When he directs his daughter to pluck my magic garment from me, the stage directions instruct that he lays down his robe ;; elsewhere, he enters a scene wearing a magic robe. Shakespeare placed Prospero in a long tradition of practitioners whose magic depends on staves and texts: a wand can be found in the hands of the Greek god Hermes in the earliest Hellenic literature, and even Moses is bidden, lift up your staff in order to part the Red Sea.¹³² Such props naturally can be found in the hands of later wizards in mythology and fiction.

Books have contained repositories of spells for as long as literature records. The idea of a spell, of a set of spoken or written words that trigger a specific supernatural effect, is of the greatest antiquity. Ancient binding tablets (in the Greek world , in the Roman world *defixiones*) captured some

of the seminal surviving uses of words to accomplish a magical effect, often formulae targeting a specific, named adversary, perhaps invoking a god or spirit and describing a desired outcome of the procedure.¹³³ Professionals

¹³² Moses is bidden to lift his staff () in Exodus 14:16, but that is only one of many occasions that his staff comes into play: Moses draws water from a stone by smiting it with the staff (Exodus

Moses both through their staves turn the Nile to blood (Exodus 7:20) and raise up a plague of frogs (Exodus 8:5), among several other miracles. In the Greek world, *The Odyssey* instructs us about the staff (),

The Odyssey also wields a staff, though she uses hers to transform men into pigs. Virgil appropriates a wand (*virgam*) that causes sleep in mortals for Orcus in the *Aeneid* (Bk. IV, 242);; see Section 5.8 for more on the representation of Orcus and his wand in *Dungeons & Dragons*. From these early myths, the idea of a magical wand or staff passed through innumerable intermediaries before reaching the fantasy genre. Perhaps most notably, Odin - *wunscilerta*), which echoes through works like the *Nibelungenlied*. Eventually, such implements became a part of German folklore #56) where we find a witch in possession of a magic wand (*Zauberstab*). The distinction between a rod, staff and wand, however, is never firmly drawn among t¹³³ For more on the Hittite, Babylonian and Hebrew precursors to this tradition, see Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells*, 26. These invocations brought a subject under the power of the caster, whether they aimed to inflict direct bodily harm, influence affections or control the outcome of events legal processes and sporting events, where money typically was at stake, were particularly popular subjects. The words themselves mixed ordinary language with various sorts of magical

borrowed words extensively from outside cultures. Ancient and medieval books of magic are covered in Davies, *Grimoires*.

copied from standard formularies of spells to create these early magical devices, leaving a blank space for the name of the target, and sold them to the public one did not need to be a specialist to use these implements, only to craft them. As time went by, the verbiage of these binding spells became more elaborate, and the formularies collecting them would become known as grimoires. The collection of scrolls published as the *Greek Magical Papyri*, among the earliest surviving cookbooks of magic, contains material written from the second century BCE until late antiquity;; its spells require ritual purification, the assembly and processing of certain material components,

the inscription of strange symbols on ritual objects and elaborate speeches full of curious words.¹³⁴ They promised to make the caster invisible, to cause a magical light, to win or destroy friendship or love, to ward against demons, to foresee future events, to send a target to sleep, to recruit a familiar demon, to open locked doors or chains, to enchant a magic ring, even to consult with gods. Such volumes remained popular in medieval times, and thus it is not surprising to find in the account of Odin in the *Havamal* an enumeration of eighteen particular spells (identified by the word *Ljóð*, meaning poem) that he knew, including spells to stop arrows in flight, to extinguish flames, to quiet winds at sea and to speak with the dead. In English, these verbal acts of magic overshadowed the original meaning of the word spell it first signified a speech or sermon, as in a gospel is a good spell and thus we see in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* (v. 3480) how in Medieval England one said a nyght-spel on all four sides of a house to guard against supernatural creatures. Prospero, by Shakespeare's time, speaks frequently of charms and spells: he holds adversaries spell-stopp'd, until he instructs his familiar spirit Ariel to untie the spell to release his captives. His spells are recorded in his books, as he says in those volumes that I prize above my dukedom.

Gandalf the Grey of Middle-earth is first introduced in *The Hobbit* as with a staff, and by some etymologies his very name means staff elf. Gandalf rarely uses his walking stick for any spectacular purpose. In rejecting the influence of Tolkien, Gygax dismissed Saruman (and probably Sauron) as either rather ineffectual or else they lurk in their strongholds working magical spells which seem to have little if any effect. The magic Tolkien's wizards work tends to be more subtle. That much said, in the *Lord of the Rings* there is a well-developed notion that wizards have different levels of power, and that their spells are often contested by rivals. When Gandalf attempts to hold a door with magic in Moria, he reports that the counter-spell was terrible that undid his work.¹³⁶ Once Gandalf becomes the White Wizard, he breaks Saruman's staff, effectively depriving his former master of magical powers as the precedent of Prospero suggests. These competitive practices among wizards persisted in fantasy literature and even made their way into comic books. Doctor Strange, whose adversaries tend to have a sorcerous bent, must continually discover counter-spells;; in *Strange Tales* #116, he consults the Book of Vishanti for this purpose, given that every

counter-spell known to the mystic arts is inscribed within these time-worn pages. Moreover, a wizard like Doctor Strange must often detect and dispel existing magical effects. In *Doctor Strange* #171, he can detect no evil spell on his house;; in *Strange Tales* #150, an adversary is ensnared by a spell which no an old man¹³⁵ However, man living can dispel! This vocabulary made its way into the *Dungeons & Dragons* spell list with entries like Detect Magic and Dispel Magic. Throughout Doctor Strange's conflicts, especially with Baron Mordo, he and his opponents forever wax and wane in degrees of power, with only one enjoying the advantage in any given encounter.

¹³⁴ See Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*.

¹³⁵ See Lee and Solopova, *Keys to Middle-earth*, 65 (and also notes on *Völuspá* 12 II.1 4). The original form *Gandálfr* from the *Völuspá* more transparently contains the Old Norse *alfr* root, meaning elf. The Old Norse word *gandr*

¹³⁶ Among the curse tablets and magical papyri of antiquity are any number of counter-spells, typically in amulets intended to protect against the effects of curses.

The sorcerous handlers of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, Sheelba and Ningauble, might like Saruman be accused of acting as little more than managers for bungling minions (two in particular), but the world of Nehwon does not want for blatant wizardry. When the pair of heroes return to their home city at the beginning of *The Swords of Lankhmar*, they are confronted by a sizable posse in the hire of their many creditors, which includes a few capable wizards, easily identifiable by the spells they cast take the form of bolts of conducts through his sword via a grounded wire. It is unsurprising that the Mouser would know countermeasures for a lightning bolt, given that he briefly apprenticed to a sorcerer before turning to a life of brawn. In times of emergency, especially with the benefit of a scroll, even the Gray Mouser can work a little bit of magic. In the story the Lords of Quarmall, the difference between an apprentice magician and a master is quantified into ranks, with First Rank being the highest and Third Rank the lowest, appropriate to an underground kingdom divided between Upper and Lower Levels. No more than a novice himself, Mouser is quite sheepish when he is forced to admit after a magical endeavor,

That was my only spell. Similar examples are common in the fantasy literature that influenced *Chainmail*.

By the time he brought his Blackmoor campaign to Gygax attention, Arneson had introduced a number of innovations in the *Chainmail* magic system, not all of which would ultimately become a part of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Notably, Blackmoor wizards were ranked by numerical level rather than by hierarchical titles, and some players had Wizards up to Level IX (John Soukup);; non-player character Wizards as high as Level XII existed. [COTT:72:v4n6] In addition to levels of Wizards, spells themselves were sorted into ranks representing difficulty or power in Blackmoor, these were confusingly named spell levels, and in *Dungeons & Dragons* this ranking is effectively unnamed here these ranks will be called tiers. The tier system is probably best understood as an extension of the concept in *Chainmail* that the spell Moving Terrain could not be cast by lesser magicians but only by full Wizards: Arneson applied this to all spells, and associated a higher chance of spell failure with higher tier spells, depending as well on the level of the magician who manufactured the spell. So for example, the workshop of Ran of Ah Fooh (effectively a Level X Wizard) turns out one Level I spell a week and one Level II Spell a month with one Level III Spell a year... with only a 15% failure rate. The arrogant Ran, however, will never use less than Level III spell types as Level I and II spells are beneath him. [FFC:19] The idea of a percentage chance of spell failure did not make it into the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*, but the notion of separating spells into tiers did: the level of Magicusers corresponds to these tiers such that a new tier becomes available at every other level of experience;; for example, the second tier at third level, the third tier at fifth level and eventually the sixth tier at eleventh level. A high-level magic user can choose between no less than seventy potential spells which are divided among the six tiers.

Arneson also clarified a matter that *Chainmail* left ambiguous, namely whether knowledge of a spell enabled a Wizard to cast it repeatedly or merely once during a battle. As the workshop of Ran of Ah Fooh above suggests, in the world of Blackmoor, spells are constructed and packaged by Wizards long before they are cast, and thus a Wizard needed star-symbolized robe they wore. The deathblue lightning which the Gray Mouser cannily to bring the materials necessary for a spell into a dungeon in order to cast it. When a spell is cast, these materials are consumed, which creates a natural limit on the number of spells that a Wizard could cast during a given adventure.¹³⁷ In *Dungeons & Dragons*, Magic-users have the option to

choose a set of spells (within tier restrictions) depending upon their level;; this choice reflects the number of spells of each level that can be used (remembered during any single adventure). [OD&D1:19] The notion that Magic-users memorize spells is the salient change from the Blackmoor system to *Dungeons & Dragons* there is no concept in the latter that spells are manufactured in advance of adventuring (nor indeed that any material component is required for spell-casting), instead casting is merely a question of memorization. This concept has a significant grounding in fantasy literature, most importantly in the Dying Earth novels of Jack Vance;; Turjan of Miir, the subject (and title) of the first story in *The Dying Earth*, possesses librams setting forth the syllables of a hundred powerful spells, so cogent that Turjan s brain could know but four at a time. Thus, Turjan presumably makes a decision at any given moment as to which four spells, out of the hundred he might choose, he will have memorized.¹³⁸ In Vance *Eyes of the Overworld*, the untutored rascal Cugel the Clever raided the library of the great wizard Iucounu, where he managed to encompass a few of the most simple and primitive spells, although for Cugel, attaining even a single spell was a task of extraordinary difficulty. Many subsequent fantasy authors adopted Vance concept of spell memorization;; Elric, for example, in the story the Black Sword s Brothers is instructed to memorize the spell written in old runes on a white tablet, whereupon he studied the rune, learning not only how to verbalize it, but also the twists of logic which he would have to understand, and the state of mind into which he must put himself if it were to be effective.

Spell memorization has a certain ambiguity to it, however, since once a spell is ready to mind, it may presumably be cast as many times as the Magic-user likes, which is potentially problematic thus un-clarifying the point Arneson had resolved in Blackmoor. In Vance, memorized spells can be cast only once: the titular sorcerer in Mazirian the Magician because

found himself helpless after attempting to cast Felojun s Second Hypnotic Spell the mesmeric spell had been expended, and he had none other in his brain. Many referees found it necessary to interpret memorization more liberally, given the fragility of starting Magic-users. As will be discussed in Section 5.6, controversy about this point led to the development of many alternative magic systems for *Dungeons & Dragons*, including some based on the chance of spell failure.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ This construal of magic use in Blackmoor Arneson at Origins III (reported in the *Wild Hunt* carrying various accoutrements powders, eyes of newts, toes of frogs, and the like with which to l. Therefore lower-level types have fewer Spells less stuff, and once a Spell is used it it is to get these strange things. But E. Gary Gygax liked Jack Vance ¹³⁸ In *News From Bree* runs out of spells at the critical moment or finds he ha

¹³⁹ Gygax officially clarified the matter in *Strategic Review* *Dungeons & Dragons* insert the

confusion extend to *Chainmail* Further compounding that weakness, Magic-users forgo the use of all weapons other than daggers;; not only would Gandalf be compelled to surrender his sword Glamdring, but his staff would apparently need to remain a magical prop rather than a melee weapon. Magic-users can however employ and even create various magic items with offensive capabilities;; most wands and staves, with utility powers similar to those of magic swords, can be used exclusively by Magic-users. Only the most powerful Magic-users, in their retirement perhaps, can manufacture such magic items, which require a staggering investment and undoubtedly command an exorbitant sum in the marketplace from lonely Fighting-men in search of their steel sidekick. The primary function of the class, however, lies in the spell list itself, and in *Dungeons & Dragons*, Magic-users have a much broader field of agency than their predecessors in *Chainmail*.

The options available in the first tier exhibit an almost pacifist streak: of the eight spells a starting Magic-user might choose between, the most aggressive spell is Sleep, which causes a magical slumber. The remainder of the spells are either utility effects (causing light, allowing the Magic-user to read unfamiliar languages) or defensive (the ability to secure a door or create a protective circle). The second tier as well contains no spells that might directly harm a fiend lurking in a dungeon, though the utility functions available at this level are more useful (invisibility, locating objects, levitation). It is not until the third tier, after attaining the fifth level, that a Magic-user gains the ability to cast Fire Ball and Lightning Bolt, the mainstays of the *Chainmail* Wizard. It is in this regard noteworthy that the lowest-ranking Wizard in the *Chainmail* hierarchy is the magician, which is the level title of the sixth-level Magic-user;; as *Chainmail* is mapped onto *Dungeons & Dragons*, Magic-users must do a lot of work with very little chance of survival to get to the level of the weakest *Chainmail* Wizard. The rules acknowledge this openly, saying of Magic-users that survival is often

the question, unless fighters protect the low-level magical types until they have worked up. [OD&D1:6]

Of the seventy spells available to Magic-users, roughly sixteen derive from the original ten spells in second-edition *Chainmail* (the discrepancy is explained by duplication of some spell effects, such as the first tier Light, both of which follow the *Chainmail*

Light spell versus the second tier Continual Wizard Light, and division of the *Chainmail* Moving Terrain effect into the various sixth tier landscaping spells: Move Earth, Part Water, Lower Water). The remaining fifty-four are original, and while an exhaustive catalog of their conceptual origins would be unwieldy, as high-level clusters they reward further exploration.

As we noted above, the offensive arsenal of a Magic-user begins with magical slumber. Enchanted sleep is a familiar device in fairy tales, in the American consciousness perhaps most closely associated with the Disney films *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). In the Harold Shea novel *The Castle of Iron*, Astolph casts a sleeping-spell on Harold by pointing at him and reciting lines of verse that might as well be a bedtime nursery rhyme (fortunately, Shea had prepared a counter-spell which involved mentally reciting the multiplication table, apparently a sure remedy for drowsiness). The Elric story the Coming of Chaos begins when kidnappers abduct his wife after the responsible guards fall in magic slumber. One of Moorcock's other fantasy protagonists, Hawkmoon, has a sorcerer sidekick who neutralizes an adversary with a sleep spell:

spell just once per game or multiple times?

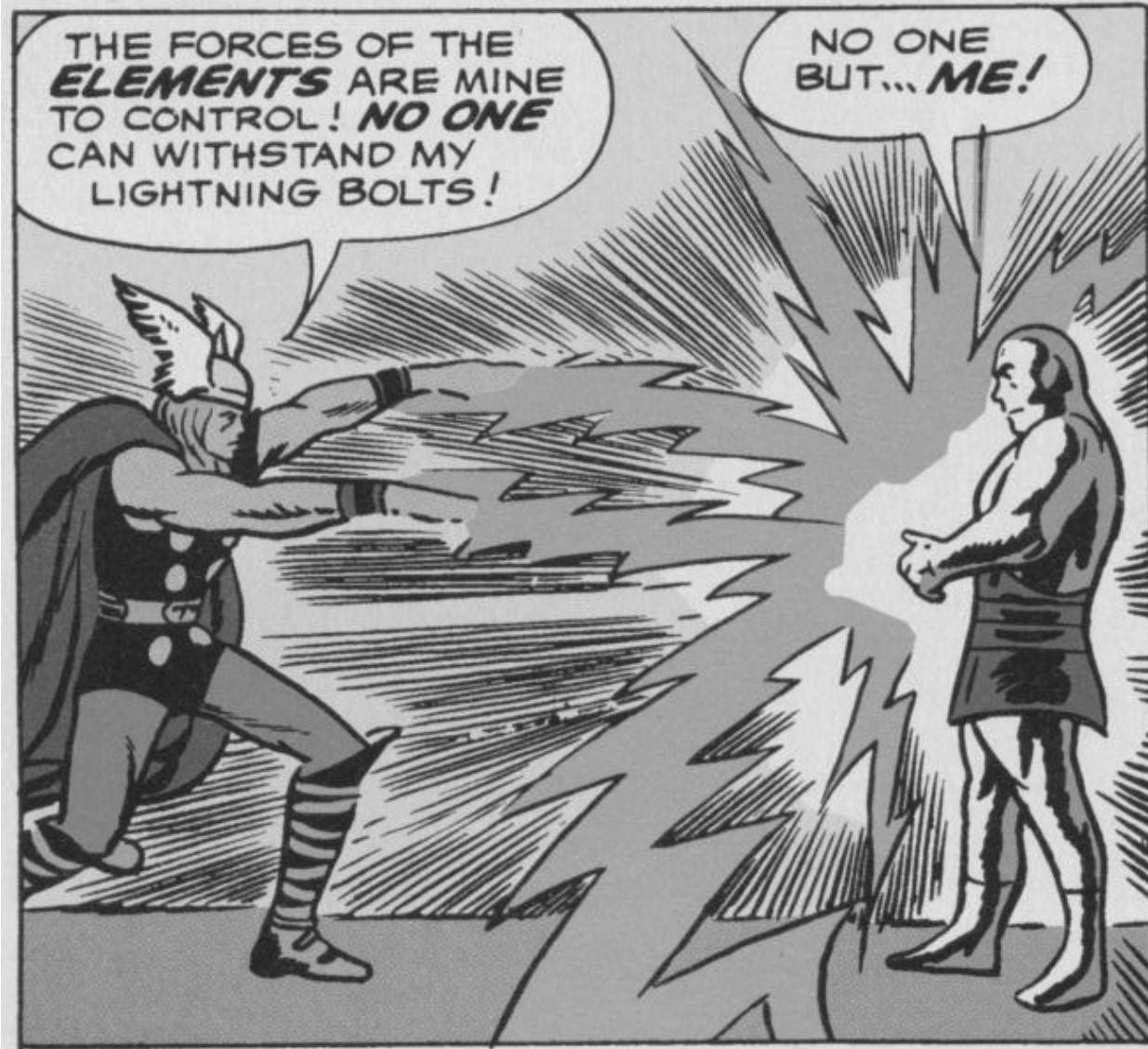


FIGURE 22: LIGHTNING BOLTS CAST BY THOR (JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #93)

Suddenly the little man flung up a hand, pointing and speaking in a cold voice, Sleep, Rekner! Rekner slumped to the ground, and his men cursed.¹⁴⁰

The primary weapons at the disposal of a seasoned Magic-user are the famous spells Fire Ball and Lightning Bolt. As was mentioned in Section 1.6, Gygax wrote in the description of these spells in *Chainmail* that fire ball is equal in hit area to the large catapult hit area. *Dungeons & Dragons* elaborates that a fireball explodes with a burst radius. While one might

imagine a catapult firing crude stones with no propensity to explode whatsoever, catapults may also shoot flaming pitch;; in the Elric story Black Sword s Brothers, naval catapults do launch such frequently described as fireballs fire-balls

at one another. Fire elementals in Moorcock are or depicted as shooting the same;; similarly, air elementals dispense lightning bolts with impunity. *Chainmail* holds that a lightning bolt is equal to a heavy field gun ;; in the Harold Shea novel *The Castle of Iron*, when magicians throw down thunderbolts at each other they crack like a cannon-shot. The harnessing

of lightning as a weapon is fairly common in fantasy novels, such as the aforementioned

electrical death-spells cast upon Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser at the beginning of the

Swords of Lankhmar. Even Gandalf conjures lightning in exigencies, such as the case in *The*

Hobbit when goblins massed six to each dwarf, and as they grabbed for Bilbo, Gandalf

intervened: There was a terrible flash like lightning in the cave, a smell like gunpowder,

and several of them fell dead.¹⁴¹ Hurling fireballs is less common in Vance, for example,

wizards summon a ball of fire to cast light rather than for assault but one must not ignore

a vivid example from cinema, when the Wicked Witch of the West throws a flaming sphere

at the flammable Scarecrow while cackling, Play ball! Fire, of course, comes in packages

other than balls, as when the sorcerer Atlantes summons a wall of fire around Castle

Carena in de Camp s *The Castle of Iron*, a predecessor of the Wall of Fire of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

In many fantasy novels, a powerful wizard functions as a quest-giver who compels

the hero, through enchantment or persuasion, to complete some arduous

labor. It is therefore fitting that the highest tier of magic contains the spell Geas, which serves precisely this purpose. When Harold Shea enters the mythology of the *Kalevala* in *The Green Magician*, he runs up against a type of geas a taboo, or, as an American associate helpfully explains for the benefit of the uninitiated, You got one of these geasa on you and you can't do the thing it's against even if it was to save you from the hot seat. This sense of a geas as a magical prohibition also appears in *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, where Holger Carlson identity cannot be ascertained because, as a wizard reports, a geas has been laid on every being which might have told me. In Fritz Leiber's *Swords of Lankhmar*, there is a sense of a geas closer to that of *Dungeons & Dragons*, a command rather than a prohibition, where Ningauble lays a geas upon Fafhrd to ring the bells to summon the Gods of Lankhmar;; Fafhrd stoically undertakes this extremely unwise endeavor with the thought, Yet a geas was a geas and must be fulfilled. Also, in the same novel (and throughout the Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser corpus) there are abundant instances of other forms of magical influence directing the actions of characters, such as when the Gray Mouser is under the Saruman, endured when they were far away, and ever they heard that soft voice whispering and urging them.

Many of the *Dungeons & Dragons* spells are narrowly scoped to dungeon exploration and survival, even those that might appear at first glance to have a different purpose entirely.¹⁴² Take the spell ESP, for example, which despite the implications of its name in parapsychology is described as a spell to detect the thoughts (if any) of whatever lurks behind doors or in the darkness. It can pass through up to two feet of rock, but is

obstructed by a thin coating of lead. Clearly, the design of this spell envisioned little use

other than dungeon exploration, although the broader concept of extrasensory perception

might suggest otherwise. The spells Clairvoyance and Clairaudeince have the same

applicability and the same short range, they merely add audio and video components to the

thoughts detected by ESP. While a magical spell enabling you to Read Languages

might sound broadly applicable to everyday life, it is in fact limited to the means by which

directions and the like are read, particularly on treasure maps. All of these divinatory

spells, however, can be cast by a Magic-user of modest level, and are valuable enough that

Fighting-men might consider it worthwhile to protect the otherwise underperforming

Magic-user in their midst.

Contact Higher Plane and Dimension Door imply that planes and dimensions are components of the setting of *Dungeons & Dragons* little other evidence in the initial

batch of rulebooks exists to substantiate that claim. Fantasy literature makes significant use

of these concepts, and although properly the term dimension is more common in science

fiction literature, there is little to differentiate the two ideas, both of which designate spaces

that cannot be reached by physically traveling in the real (or, in fiction, baseline) world,

though they can perhaps be entered via magical gates or imaginary scientific breakthroughs.

At the core of this idea resides the ancient mythological concept of spaces separated from

the world by the veil of death, for example the grim underworld () house of Hades of Greek mythology attested throughout Homer.¹⁴³ While ordinarily humans passed charm of Hisvet. A more famous charming voice belongs to

the wizard

its very sound an enchantment, for those whom it conquered the spell ¹⁴⁰ Gygax surely knew the Hawkmoon novels at the time;; he references them in an article in *Panzerfaust* #43 (Apr 1971).

¹⁴¹ g goblin affirms

¹⁴² Contrast these with the spells applicable to a miniature wargame like *Chainmail*, but seemingly less helpful in a dungeon environment on account of their very narrow definition. The spell apparently not any other form (despite the open-endedness of *Macbeth* , this spell seems very useful in concealing large portions of an army outdoors, but without an army, or terrain where an orchard might not seem o

¹⁴³

into this realm only upon their demise, intrepid adventurers might visit it and even escape, as does Orpheus to retrieve his wife. This underworld below naturally contrasted with a space above, the sky or heavens (); while the sublunar world is a place of discord and death, the eternal celestial bodies danced around the Earth in constant harmony. In Hesiod, this sky is personified as the ancestor of the gods;; the same Greek word was chosen by the authors of the New Testament to describe the residence of the Christian god. Over time, this cosmology grew more elaborate in both Greek and Christian theology, and both the underworld and the heavens developed many subdivisions and parallels. The story of Orpheus, retold in the Middle Ages, loses its association with the underworld and instead becomes the visit of Sir Orfeo to the world of Faerie. Instead of Mount Olympus, we have the heavenly Asgard of the Norse gods, which could be reached only through a supernatural rainbow bridge.

Planes and dimensions are both geometric concepts, employed metaphorically to express the separations between non-intersecting spaces and thus between parallel realities.¹⁴⁴ H. G. Wells freely speculated on the idea of dimensions in *The Time Machine*, in which the protagonist rhetorically inquires, why *three* dimensions particularly why not have another direction at right angles to the other three? Fantasy authors adopted these conventions as well: Leiber, for example, asserts of his famous heroes that those two swordsmen and blood-brothers, Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, have adventured not only in the World of Nehwon with its great empire of Lankhmar, but also in many other worlds and times and dimensions. De Camp's magician Karadur in *The Goblin Tower* calls our world a dimension

of base materialism, wherein magic is so feeble as to be well-nigh useless, but in practically the same breath mentions that the magicians on that plane, I am informed, are mostly fakers, illustrating that for him the terms plane and dimension were interchangeable. Elric is no stranger to the concept of planes;; he encounters his long-dead father while in his astral body, roaming through planes of existence unknown to living men. Doctor Strange often reconnoiters as his astral self, though he is more likely to call this ghostly spiritual projection his ethereal or even

ectoplasmic form. Poul Anderson writes in *The Broken Sword* about strange dimensions reached only by spells ; in Heinlein *Glory Road*, the protagonist knows about *Theogony* identifies as the home of the gods, was a real mountain in Greece, though its highest peaks remained inaccessible to climbers until the twentieth century. Odysseus sails west to reach the land of the dead, near where Hesiod asserts the island of the Elysian Fields lies, and later Aeneas would find an entrance to the underworld in the crater by Lake Avernus, outside Cumae (modern day Naples). These tales of pockets of the world that harbor genre, and the adventures of an Aeneas a sort of early visitation narrative. The association of the dead with the underworld must reflect burial practices, and the interring of grave goods for use in that world, from the humble obolus for the ferryman to the grandest treasury of a Pharaoh or the terracotta army of the first Qin emperor, exhibits a belief in human agency to affect circumstances of the deceased in that world and even to export material directly to that world.

¹⁴⁴ The conception of planes entered the twentieth-century primarily through the evangelism of Theosophists: Blavatsky writes extensively about planes in *The Secret Doctrine*, for example, repeatedly invoking

--

hodge-podge of sources, including Neoplatonist and Buddhist sources. The direct constructions *The Secret Doctrine*. By the advent of Doctor Strange, dimensions because he used to watch *Twilight Zone* on television, as anyone familiar with the voice-over introduction to the show will understand.

The ability to Teleport instantly from one place to another or to ferry around objects with Telekinesis (to say nothing of Telepathy, a power available to magic swords but not Magic-users) has a common etymology and a veneer of science, or at least pseudo-science a thread that runs through extra-sensory perception and the concept of dimensions as well. The term teleportation was coined by Charles Fort, the famous cataloger of

unexplained events, in *Lo!* (1931), one of his many compendia, as a general term for the mysterious relocations of animals or objects. While the word enjoyed some currency in pseudo-scientific circles of psychic research, the form of teleportation most immediately familiar to denizens of the early 1970s was the transporter beam of the television series *Star Trek*, which probably inherited its look-and-feel from the disintegrator-integrators of the film *The Fly* (1958). Overall, the conceit of teleportation is more common to science fiction than fantasy, though crossover works employ it freely;; for example, Heinlein *Glory Road* speaks of a character who used psi powers to teleport us eight and a half miles, and then apologetically explains that psi is a better word than ¹⁴⁵ Doctor Strange magics himself around this world and others all the time, but only in *Strange Tales* #166 when he faces a mad scientist who accomplishes the same feat with technology do we hear of teleportation tubes, a teleportation room and so on.

Telekinesis and the related word psychokinesis have similar grounding in paranormal investigations, though they date back closer to the turn of the twentieth century. In *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, Holger Carlson recalls that even where he came from, some people believed in telepathy, telekinesis, and so forth, and thus in the fantasy world where he found himself, he should not be too quick to deem these impossibilities. For their part, the titular sorcerers in Leiber's story the Lords of Quarmall divert themselves with a telekinetic game played on a board with black and white counters. Not all borrowings of scientific language crib from the jargon of psychic powers, however. The spells

Polymorph Self and Polymorph Other, for example, both derive their name from the biological term for marked diversity within a species as used by Darwin and his successors,

polymorphism, though perhaps by the 1970s the term would be more familiar from its Freudian connotation yet none of its scientific meanings imply altering the shape of a living organism. Even Disintegrate carries mostly scientific associations, as the name of the teleporters in *The Fly* suggests. Disintegration sounds more like something one does with a ray gun than with a magic wand, although the Gray Mouser Great Spell in the Lords of Quarmall readily disintegrated a number of minor sorcerers. When Doctor Strange witnesses two magic spheres colliding during an epic magical confrontation in *Strange Tales* #146, there is a mind-shattering explosion, as they disintegrate in a burst of terrible energy.

Magic-users have a number of ways of conscripting allies to do their fighting for them. Aside from charming unfriendly creatures, they can conjure elementals or animate the dead. Elric is most fond of conjuring elementals, a prerogative he exercises in the first short story in which he appears, the Dreaming City, wherein air elementals help a fleet of ships travel swiftly. Moorcock tells us that the elementals who controlled the winds were apt to turn upon the sorcerer himself if he was not more than careful, a warning that is essentially repeated in the text for the *Chainmail* spell Conjure Elemental. In the Stealer of Souls, the wizard Theleb K aarna attempts to battle Elric wind elementals by summoning rival fire elementals, and the result is a spectacular aerial clash of lightning and fire. Elric remarks in the Singing Citadel that my best allies serve neither Chaos nor Law, they are elementals: lords of fire, earth, air and water. Even the wizards of the Hyborian Age know spells that enthrall the elementals of the earth, as we learn in Hour of the Dragon, and in Heinlein story Magic, Inc. wizards consult and command elementals as a fairly routine matter. The spell Animate Dead creates skeletons or zombies that presumably obey the instructions of their creator;; the most memorable instances of animated skeletons prior to the release of *Dungeons & Dragons* were undoubtedly the claymation film sequences of Ray Harryhausen, especially in the *Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* (1958) and *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963), both of which prominently feature fighting skeletons.

Many other spells have clear antecedents in the literature. When Jagreen Lern captures Elric in Black Sword s Brothers, he ties Elric to the mast of a ship as they head into battle, but in order to preserve him for later vengeance he casts a protective charm around his body so that he will not be killed by a stray arrow probably an inspiration for the *Dungeons & Dragons* spell Protection from Normal Missiles. In the Adept s Gambit, Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser must contend with the body-swapping Egyptian sorcerer Anra Devadoris, who can be killed only be destroying his heart, which is hidden in a bowl of strange green liquid, as in the spell Magic Jar. Some wizards seem almost to step out of the pages of *Dungeons & Dragons*, like Khemsa in Howard s People of the Black Circle who first bends a hostile guardsman to his will (per Charm Person), then opens a locked door by placing his open hand on it, after which the portal buckled inward (per Knock), and finally dispatches a group of seven men by summoning a green cloud that envelopes them, from which they can only emit a strangled gasp before expiring (per

Cloudkill).

Not all of these spells are the exclusive purview of the Magic-user, of course. Many such effects can be performed by magic swords, and more still are available to Clerics.

¹⁴⁵ *Dungeons & Dragons*, though it figures in a supplement, as Section 5.8 details.

Chainmail admitted no

2.7.3 CLERICS

priestly type, and therefore Clerics require more investigation and explication than the classes familiar from *Chainmail*. When Gygax asserts that Tolkien influenced *Chainmail* more than *Dungeons & Dragons*, the absence of religion in Middle-earth typified this transition, one of the more substantial differences between the two games. Lin Carter ridiculed Middle-earth's impiety, arguing that in historical medieval societies, religious orders abound, and even if we leave aside all the Fantasy Supplement of *Chainmail*, the lack of holy orders in a realistic medieval wargame is a curious omission. The Castle & Crusade Society, in whose newsletter Gygax first published the proto*Chainmail* rules, set religion out of bounds;; the fourth issue of the *Domesday Book* notes that, in its feudal hierarchy, Such clerical titles as Bishop, Archbishop and Abbot have been omitted from the society, as have the orders of religious Knighthood.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ The precedence list in *Domesday Book* #9 does however list the Bishop, Archbishop and even

The absence of these believers from the ranking system of the Society did not obstruct their entry to the Blackmoor campaign: in *Domesday Book* #13, Points of Interest in Black Moor notes that among the minor nobility there is the village priest (a Bishop), and the church of that clergyman is visible on the included map. Mike Carr, the designer of *Fight in the Skies* and Pasha of the Barbary States in the Twin Cities Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, played this village priest. *Corner of the Table* records that in the fall of 1972, Mike Carr was a Village priest-Level III, and indeed, the level title for a third-level Cleric in *Dungeons & Dragons* became Village Priest. Bishop is however the level six title, and it is not especially clear why in Blackmoor a village priest should be a bishop as well. The nature of Carr's religious order may shed some light on this discrepancy, given that he was Bishop of the Church of the Facts of Life, who is the administrator of the doctrines of Whatever and the interpreter of the Great Commentaries of

wishy-washiness. [FFC:24]

It does not seem to have been an ascetic order. The Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger records that in an effort to convert our local magicians to the true religion our priest got drunk and engaged in a totally debauched orgy in Wizard s wood, for example, and that the gold that Bishop Carr retrieved from the dungeons he gives so generously to the poor serving wenches at the taverns. There is little evidence of any spiritual works undertaken by the Bishop and his congregation, though he did sell holy water to the Elves for repelling the vampires of Blackmoor Dungeon. [FFC:43] While he was hardly a pious fellow, and in fact may not have worshipped anything recognizably divine, this village priest is the clearest prototype of the Cleric class in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Intriguingly, *Dungeons & Dragons* has almost nothing to say on the subject of the divine, on the god or gods that might be revered by Clerics;; although later supplements fill this gap, the 1974 woodgrain box gives us priests entirely without religion.

The term cleric is an uncommon one in fantasy literature, certainly much less common than the term priest. When Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser took straight jobs in the classic story Lean Times in Lankhmar, for example, both ended up in the employ of rival holy men who worked the shifting pantheistic religious climate of Nehwon, but there is not a cleric to be seen on the Street of the Gods in Lankhmar. Howard s Conan as well deals with hordes of Stygian priests, but neither is there a cleric among them. In Poul Anderson s *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, Christian priests Elric crosses paths with a holy man in the Flame Bringers, plunder that it s bad luck to kill a priest.

This is not to say that clerics are unheard of in fantasy worlds, unlike magicusers. In Anderson s *Operation Chaos* (1971), a popular crossover fantasy book of the time, the term cleric is used interchangeably with priest. Clerics also figure in Anderson s short story the Merman s Children, which appeared in *Flashing Swords! #1* (1973), an anthology Gygax certainly knew.¹⁴⁷ Lovecraft peopled some of his temples with clerics, such as in the Case of Charles Dexter Ward and the Evil Clergyman. Lin Carter s *Under the Green Star* (1972), a variant on Burroughs s astrally-projecting Mars series, contains a

crusty old cleric. In Fletcher Pratt s early fantasy novel *The Well of the Unicorn* (1948), all similarly are abundant. Even and reminds his partners in

¹⁴⁷ That same anthology contains the Jack Vance produced magic items called IOUN stones. The *Strategic Review* added Ioun Stones as a magic item to *Dungeons & Dragons* late in 1975, with an explicit nod to the *Flashing Swords!*

Vance



FIGURE 23: BISHOP ODO IN THE BAYEUX



TAPESTRY, ELEVENTH CENTURY

users of magic are called clerks, harkening to the era when the term was synonymous education, both commodities.

One likely factor in the choice of the term cleric over priest is the latter word's close association, in the minds of the authors, with Christianity. Both Gygax and Arneson were practicing Christians at the time. Gygax and his first wife Mary were Jehovah's Witnesses, and neither seems to have taken their religion lightly;; Arneson, for his part, was associated with the Way

International, a Christian research group for which he would go on missions during the 1980s. Etymologically, the term cleric has its origins in the Greek word *kleros*, commonly translated as lot (as in an implement of randomness), though the term gained its religious connotations through its use in the First Epistle of Peter to refer to the allotted portion of humanity destined for salvation. While the term therefore has substantial grounding in Christianity, it had by the 1960s come to refer to religious authorities in a secular context. For example, during Gygax dispute over pacifism in the pages of the *Diplomacy* fanzine *Graustark*, the decidedly-irreligious John Boardman avows his sympathy with the views of certain antiwar clerics. [GRS:#184] Moreover, cleric has a medieval ring to it, recalling the time when literacy flourished only in religious circles, and to the illiterate peasantry the most elementary principles of natural science must have seemed magical.

Although Clerics may wear armor, they are permitted the use only of non-edged magic weapons (no arrows!). [OD&D1:7] Although game balance probably played a role in this design decision, it also has some historical foundation in the Christian church. The origin of the priestly interdiction against bloodletting probably lies in the Book of Genesis (9:6): Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. At the Fourth Lateran Council (1215 CE), many constraints on the behavior of clerics became canon, including bans on visiting taverns and playing games of chance (provisos unknown to the likes of Bishop Carr), but also prohibitions on the practice of that part of surgery involving burning or cutting as these actions violated the ritual cleanliness required to perform the Mass.¹⁴⁸ Presumably this would extend to any incisions performed with the intent to harm instead of help. Fortunately, Clerics in *Dungeons & Dragons* are welcome to bludgeon their foes dead, whereas the Fourth Lateran Council goes on to forbid clerics from executing sentences of death by any means. These mandates seem to have been honored in medieval society once they went into effect, though evidence of clergymen using blunt melee weapons in battle is scarce.

The famous Bayeux tapestry depicts Bishop Odo, half-brother of William the Conqueror, holding some sort of mace, or perhaps a baton, at the Battle of Hastings with literacy and rare medieval¹⁴⁸ For more on such obligations of the clergy in the Middle Ages see Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*. Clerical authorities also frowned on the practice of medicine

because it remained tied to pagan belief systems;; see DuBois, *Nordic Religion*, 117.

(1066), though it is doubtful that Odo actually fought personally that day. Creasy explicitly puts a mace in Odo's hand: He had a hauberk on, over a white aube, wide in the body, with the sleeve tight and sat on a white horse, so that all might recognize him. In his hand he held a mace, and wherever he saw most need he held up and stationed the knights, and often urged them on to assault and strike the enemy. Religious figures often play this sort of support role in combat;; Tacitus records how ancient German priests carried emblems from their sacred groves into battle, and with them supposedly brought the very presence of their deities.¹⁴⁹ Although holy men are more likely to wield such implements without swinging them at foes, in the *Chanson de Roland*, the basis of Anderson's *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, there is a Bishop Turpin who serves as one of Charlemagne's twelve paladins and fights with a weapon called Almace though it is not actually a mace of any kind, but rather a sword.

The inability of medieval clergy to perform surgery is at odds with the common notion of a Cleric as a healer. During the Crusades, Christian priests did minister to the wounded as skilled physicians, though in the course of treatment bloodletting and similar activities were relegated to less educated tradesmen such as barbers. Although this may sound counterintuitive to those familiar only with later editions of *Dungeons & Dragons*, the Cleric class was originally presented as a sort of hybrid between the Fighting-man and the Magic-user, rather than a class oriented especially toward healing. Clerics gain some of the advantages from both of the other two classes (Fighting-Men and Magic-Users)... plus they have numbers of their own spells. [OD&D1:7] As spellcasters, however, Clerics have a much smaller selection than Magic-users about a third as many to choose from, and of those spells, more than a third copy effects that Magic-users can employ. In all, there are only sixteen spells unique to Clerics, compared with fifty-four spells unique to Magic-users. The implication is that for class balance reasons, Clerics received fewer spell options in exchange for the ability to wear armor and wield more weapons. There is no explicit mention of religion in the description of Clerics;; the only suggestion that they are anything other than a hybrid of Fighting-men and Magic-users is the stipulation that higher level Clerics receive help from above when constructing strongholds and perhaps in that

faithful henchmen will serve powerful Clerics free of charge.

The spells unique to Clerics, however, relate primarily to healing, and those spells draw directly from the Judeo-Christian religious tradition: a Cleric might summon a plague of insects, turn sticks into snakes, create food and water, deliver a blessing or even speak with animals after the fashion of St. Francis of Assisi. Healing spells run the gamut from restoring wounded flesh to eliminating diseases or poisons and even raising from the dead, the ultimate Biblical miracle of the New Testament. While there are but few instances in the Bible where Christ heals non-lethal wounds resulting from violence, there is a notable one: during the arrest of Jesus, one of his disciples drew a sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. As told in Luke 22:51, after condemning the violence of his followers, Jesus touched his ear, and healed him. After the crucifixion, the followers of Christ inherited the ability to work miracles, according to the Acts of the Apostles though it pointedly notes that merely invoking the name of Christ was not sufficient to perform miracles (Acts 19:16). The eighth-century church historian Bede recorded a number of healing miracles performed in early medieval England: cures of blindness and disease, even a return from death. By the eleventh century, resurrection had become so routine that St. Stanislaus would raise a man from the dead on the sole pretext of soliciting his testimony in a property dispute. In the Christian medieval world, illnesses and afflictions acquired a spiritual dimension addressable through prayer or the intercession of saints, and the clergy-dominated literature of the day stressed the importance of combating the metaphysical causes of bodily damage versus treating physical symptoms. As such, many churches, clergymen, relics and natural springs developed a reputation for curative powers that overshadowed the scientific medicine passed down from the tradition of Hippocrates and Galen.

¹⁴⁹ Tacitus, *Germania*, Ch. 7.

Few if any Cleric spells in *Dungeons & Dragons* might cause harm to an adversary. Sticks to Snakes gives the Cleric command of the snakes, which have a chance to be poisonous. Otherwise, the supernatural abilities of the Cleric are almost entirely supportive and defensive. However, there is an intriguing note to the effect that there exist antiClerics who cast clerical spells with a reverse effect ;; for example, rather than cure disease one might cause it. [OD&D1:34] Even the spell that raises the dead is reversed into a death ray. A first-level evil Cleric, who can reverse the spell Cure Light

Wounds, might thereby do more damage with a spell than could a Magic-user until far higher in level. Malicious Clerics with these sorts of harmful powers are far more prevalent in fantasy literature, as adversaries of Conan and his imitators, than their benevolent counterparts. In Fantasy Wargaming and the Influence of J.R.R. Tolkien, Gygax quotes a suspenseful passage from A. Merritt's *Creep, Shadow* that depicts robed figures whispering in an ancient cairn, and glosses the text with

What evil god were these priests summoning?! Surely some such aspect of fantasy had to be included if the work was to be exciting and comprehensive. [LV:#4]

The distinction between a wizard and a priest in fantasy literature prior to *Dungeons & Dragons* is not a sharp one. Conan encounters both irreligious sorcerers and acolytes of dark gods, but their attitudes and actions are practically indistinguishable: both varieties are evil and rely on underhanded tricks rather than honest swordsmanship. Ironically, the very term magic comes from the Persian word *magos*, which means priest magic is what Greek and Roman witnesses originally attributed to Persian priests, and only later did the term come to encompass broader supernatural activities undertaken by any people. The basis of a distinction between the Magic-user and Cleric class, given the strongly JudeoChristian bent of Clerical powers, probably has its roots in Christian tradition. In the Biblical Acts of the Apostles, for example, Peter encounters Simon, who practices sorcery () openly in the city of Samaria. Although Simon nominally adopts the Christian faith, when he observes the manner in which the apostles transmit the Holy Spirit by laying on hands, he offers Peter money to teach him this power. Peter rebukes him, and suggests that he may have missed the point of Christ's teachings: Your heart is not right before God (Acts 8:21). Implicit in his condemnation is a fundamental distinction between the desire for piety and the desire for power;; clearly, Simon falls more into the latter category than the former. Once a Christian priesthood had emerged, later religious authorities stressed this distinction between magic and religion: at the Council of Toledo in 694, an edict ruled that it is not permissible for altar ministers or for clerics to become magicians or sorcerers, or to make charms, which are great bindings on souls.¹⁵⁰ *Dungeons & Dragons* follows these precedents. Clerics have a moral code associated with the use of their powers, whereas Magic-users are amoral which is not to say evil. *Dungeons & Dragons* cannily avoids the common terms black magic and white magic,

instead presenting magic as something akin to engineering, merely a set of practices that lead to a result.¹⁵¹ It is noteworthy, however, that one cannot change class from a Cleric to a Magic-user or vice versa, whereas it is possible to switch classes between the Fighting-man and Cleric, suggesting that the designers intended some fundamental incommensurability between priests and wizards.

¹⁵⁰ See Davies, *Grimoires*, 21.

The process of supernatural healing, when it is shown in fantasy literature, rarely takes the form of a holy man praying for wounds to close, or anything along those lines. Often it involved the application of some form of supernatural medicine known to the practitioner. The mythological sources underlying fantasy fiction describe curative herbs that miraculously heal the wounded;; for example, in the *Völsungs saga*, a raven (an emissary of Odin) brings such an herb to Sigmund in order to restore Sinfjotli. From these stories, a number of curative herbs make their way through the pages of sword-and-sorcery. In *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, a head wound sustained by Holger is addressed with a poultice of herbs bound over it with an incantation, which takes effect while he sleeps and finds him whole in the morning. Famously, Aragorn prescribes a dose of *athelas*, a curative herb, to aid Frodo when he is stabbed by the Nazgûl at Weathertop;; later, after the battle of Minas Tirith, this same herb effects the cure of Faramir and Merry, both of whom are gravely wounded.¹⁵² Aragorn's knowledge of the hidden virtues of plants seems neither arcane nor spiritual, however;; he merely crushes leaves of the herbs into hot water and lets the pungent fragrance waft its way to those who need its efficacy. Even Elric, who relies on vegetative reagents for various harmful sorceries, knows how to locate and apply healing herbs.

The more formal notion of casting a spell to heal is rarer in fantasy genre literature. Among the spells surviving from antiquity in the Greek Magical Papyri are procedures that cure various infirmities and even return the dead to life. Where they did not rely on the innate properties of plants, like the herbal remedies discussed above, the spells of ancient Greece and Rome invariably called on some higher power to realize their effect, usually by naming a god or intercessor directly, or less commonly through nonsense words or visual depictions. These did not however require the users of magic to claim adherence to any particular religion in order for gods to honor these appeals;; the invoked names reflect a hodgepodge of Greek, Egyptian and

Jewish elements befitting the highly pluralist and syncretic character of the period. The spread of Christianity did little to suppress the presence of such forbidden names, but it did add a variety of new ones to the vocabulary of magic: by the Middle Ages, a book of medieval medicine like the Anglo-Saxon *Lacnunga* mixed herbal remedies with prayers to Jesus and Pater Nosters, as well as occasional mentions of Odin and elves. Norse cultures preferred to carve these spells as runes: in Eddaic poems like the *Sigríðrífórmál*, we learn of runic formulae that heal the sick and close the worst of wounds if written on the bark of a forest tree with eastward-bending branches.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Moreover, as Section 2.8 shows, alignment is independent of class.

¹⁵² The tradition of herbal poultices effecting cures goes back to documents like the *Herbarium* of pseudo-Apuleius, which includes cures for poison (snake bites), wounds, burns, fever and so on. This book was translated into Old English and remained widely available in medieval times. See DuBois, *Nordic Religions*, 94.

All of these practices exerted influence on the fantasy genre and its depictions of healing magic. In *The Broken Sword*, after a bloody combat a that he might carve healing runes for his spouting wound. Norse magic in particular. In Gardner F. Fox's *Kothar*, a curative spell requires a pinch of yellow powder and the words let powder heal, let flesh be weal, whereupon: There was no more pain. Wonderingly, Kothar stared down at his left thigh, at the blood gouting from his wound. Before his eyes, the wound was closing over, the blood was drying, flaking, turning into a brownish powder that was slowly falling from his body. In a moment, there was no mark to show that he had ever known the bite of the ivory horn.

In Kothar case, there was nothing religious about this cure: the spell was cast by a necromancer (necromancer would become the tenth-level Magic-user title), a wizard down to the purple robe covered with gold symbols. There are fantastic worlds where the distinction between a Magic-user and a Cleric is sharper, however. In Randall Garrett's *Too Many Magicians* (1966), a novel Gygax favorably reviewed, there is a sharp division of wizards into Sorcerers and Healers, the latter of whom are representatives of the various religious traditions.¹⁵⁴ Another novel of the era that Gygax recommended, Kenneth Bulmer's *Kandar*, also links healing to divine agency: Kandar enlists the aid of a goddess who assumes many forms, one being that of

Umiris of the Healing Touch, who restores mortally-wounded allies by laying on hands.

It is unclear to what degree Bishop Carr, who seems to have been more of a Friar Tuck figure, had any such restorative responsibilities. In *Chainmail*, before the full development of the concept of hit points, Heroes did not require divine intervention to heal their wounds. While this will be discussed in greater detail in Section 3.2.2.2, the introduction of systems for managing non-lethal wounds necessitated the development of healing capabilities in the game, of which the Cleric class is largely a consequence.

One responsibility Bishop Carr did shoulder, as noted above, was to provide holy water to the elven custodians of the Blackmoor dungeons at a competitive rate, as well. The elves compelled adventurers to drink this concoction before descending, in order to establish that they were not undead, a certain vampire named Sir Fang having caused enough mischief that extraordinary precautions became necessary. The notion that undead are vulnerable to the clergy, and to Christian paraphernalia including holy water, made its way into *Dungeons & Dragons* as the capability of Clerics to turn away undead, or even destroy them, by virtue of their piety. The undead themselves range in a continuum from the hapless skeleton, whose most notable fictional incarnations are the clumsy claymation skeletons of the Sinbad films, up to the dreaded vampire. The very term undead surely acquired its current connotation in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (where he gives it as UnDead), a novel in which the pragmatic doctor Van Helsing held up his little golden crucifix troll must crawl to shelter so Not all drew so directly on before the vampire Lucy Westenra, and she recoiled from it. This same treatment successfully repels the Count himself later in the narrative. For the Blackmoor Bunch, however, Stoker's work was not the most immediate source of vampire lore: the soap opera *Dark Shadows*, which aired from 1966 to 1971, exerted a more immediate influence.¹⁵⁵ In the conceit of the story, Barnabas Collins, the sad, charismatic vampire of *Dark Shadows*, shares his antecedent's aversion to crucifixes.

¹⁵³ DuBois, *Nordic Religion*, 109.

¹⁵⁴ *The New War Reports*. [NWR:v2n3] A relevant passage in the erers, modified by the stark black-andwhite of the priestly Healers, and the additional touch of episcopal purple. The dark rabbinical dress of the occasional Jewish Healer was hardly distinguishable from that of a priest, but an occasional flash of bright color showed the presence of a very few

Hakime, Healers who were part of the entourages of various Ambassadors from the Islamic

When Van Helsing thrusts a cross at a vampire, however, there is no implication that he succeeds because of his piety: he deploys the instruments of Christianity because he has studied their effectiveness against the UnDead. In this respect, the clerical repulsion of undead in *Dungeons & Dragons* differs from *Dracula*. It is more like Peter's prayer to dispel the flight of Simon Magus, a demonstration of the power of religious truth rather than a canny exploitation of a previously-documented weakness. In *Dungeons & Dragons*, certainly a Fighting-man has no hope of frightening a vampire whatsoever, and even antiClerics lack the power to effect the undead in this regard. The property that entitles Clerics to perform miracles, and separates them from their compatriots, is righteousness but, Clerics can stray from the path and risk serious consequences.

2.8 ALIGNMENT AND PARTIES

The wargames sold by Avalon Hill usually pitted two players against each other, with each player commanding one army. Few historical battles involve more than two sides, even if the sides themselves are composed of forces under various commands with occasionally conflicting, or even shifting, loyalties. In *Gettysburg* there is the Union versus the Confederacy, in *Bulge* the Axis versus the Allies, regardless of how historical teams of generals might have shared the direction of a side. Miniature wargames as well almost always featured two warring powers, although it was more common for command to be divided among several players, each responsible for some subset of the miniature figures on the table.¹⁵⁶

Chainmail assumes, like any miniature wargame, that a battle will be staged between rival powers controlling opposing armies of miniature figures. The fantasy setting, however, brings with it wargaming units with predetermined attitudes toward one another. In Middle-earth, an orc and an elf share a certain natural enmity, whereas orcs and trolls form stable alliances. Tolkien helpfully paints opposing sides for us: as the quotation in Section 2.6 suggests, on the side of Sauron we can find orcs, trolls, wraiths, werewolves, wargs and some wicked men;; on the side of free people are men, elves, dwarves and hobbits. Sauron deploys his servants in open war against the people of Middle-earth, in a cataclysmic battle that overturns the previous order of the world.

In the medieval literature that Tolkien studied, this theme has a great deal of resonance. Eddaic literature constantly references the threat of *Ragnarök*, a battle that will bring about the end of the world. While forces massing for confrontation recur in many ancient religions notably in the a world-shattering Christian battle of Armageddon foretold in Revelation (16:14 16) the Norse account of *Ragnarök* supplies a list of various fantastic participants in the final showdown. The *Gylfaginning* (51), which quotes liberally from the *Völuspá*, describes the assault on Asgard led by the fiery sons of *Múspell*, the Midgard Serpent, the Fenris Wolf, Loki and the frost giants. On the opposing side are the *Æsir*, the Norse gods, including Odin, Thor and Frey. We know that Odin dispatches valkyries to recruit the spirits of valiant warriors killed in battle for his *Válholl*, where men daily practice their martial skills, so that these men can assist the *Æsir* when *Ragnarök* comes even though the outcome of the battle has been foreordained. As the battle-lines are drawn by the Eddas, we can see the prototype for a delineation of fantastic creatures and people into two camps. Although the *Völuspá* mentions both the elves and the dwarves in connection with *Ragnarök*, it assigns them no particular role in the upcoming battle. Giants are fated to oppose the *Æsir* at *Ragnarök*, but in some Eddaic stories giants and gods cooperate and even intermarry. The vague allegiances of these beings are not clarified in later folktales either. The elves of *Sir Orfeo*, for example, are ominous kidnappers, and the various beliefs in elf-shot imply antagonism towards humans;; the fairy tradition, however, furnishes lighter-hearted elves, like every elf and fairy sprite in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the fairy tales collected by Grimm, we see dwarves who are benevolent (Grimm #53) and malign (Grimm #161).

¹⁵⁵ Interest in *Dark Shadows* became so intense that Duane Jenkins apparently wasted a wish to transform his character into a vampire only to find that Arneson, exercising the latitude of the referee, exploited a loophole in his wording and turned him into a vampire rose bush. ¹⁵⁶ *Diplomacy* adopts a seven-player model which blends competition and collaboration. Chapter Four explores the ways in which *Diplomacy* contributed to the interpersonal dynamics of *Dungeons & Dragons*; see Section 4.3 in particular for more on the fantasy setting in *Diplomacy* variants, including

the representation of the various powers of Middle-earth in a *Diplomacy* framework.

Once again, the fundamentally-unresolved nature of fantastic creatures left future authors great latitude in determining which stood for good or evil. *The Hobbit*, for example, shows elves as imperious creatures, willing to imprison the dwarves, and in turn depicts the dwarves as greedy and often thoughtless. Only the great menace posed by Sauron and the One Ring in the later trilogy compels dwarves and elves to cooperate in the elimination of this greater evil, though not without frequent complaints about one another: at Elrond's Council at Rivendell, Gandalf advises that if all the grievances that stand between Elves and Dwarves are to be brought up here, we may as well abandon this Council. These grievances are overshadowed by the rise of evil, and thus the free races stand united in the *Lord of the Rings*. Evil as a quality ascribed to a person or even an item is common in the *Lord of the Rings*: we hear that Saruman has become evil, that the One Ring is altogether evil. Elrond dictates that The Company of the Ring shall be Nine;; and the Nine Walkers shall be set against the Nine Riders that are evil. Strider informs Frodo of certain men who became an evil people. Pippin tells Denethor of the evil wights who dwell in the barrows near the Shire. Even in the relatively innocent narrative of *The Hobbit*, Tolkien speaks of evil goblins and evil wolves. The abstract quality of good plays a far smaller role in the affairs of Middle-earth, except when contrasted with evil;; Boromir complains that his companions consider the One Ring only good, and we frequently read the construction good or evil see the word applied to people other than in the dubious self-appellation good Smégol. Good is, for Tolkien, the default state of his protagonists, maintained implicitly throughout, and evil is something branded on antagonists. Given the moral absolutism of most fantasy literature, the obvious approach in a wargame would be to divide the creatures of the various races into two categories of good and evil, and assume that the various human types might elect to fight for either side.

Gygax chose a way of defining the opposing sides of his fantasy wargame that diverges from Tolkien. *Chainmail* claims that it is impossible to draw a distinct line between good and evil fantastic figures, and instead creates a general line-up for three distinct camps: Law, Chaos and Neutral. The terms Law and Chaos, especially so of its evil uses not of its or good or ill but rarely capitalized, have a traceable pedigree in fantasy literature. At the root of the tradition is Poul Anderson and his own studies of Nordic

mythology. In *The Broken Sword*, Anderson carefully mingles the polytheistic Norse world of gods, trolls, elves and sorcery with the precepts of Christianity, much as the Germanic peoples embraced Christianized but continued to honor and document their pagan heritage. Among the great powers that shape Anderson's world, beyond gods and demons and men, is a force he struggles to name: Fate, Destiny, Law, Wyrd, the Norns, Necessity, Brahm and even Time. *Three Hearts and Three Lions* treads much of the same territory in the boundaries between paganism and Christianity, and as in *The Broken Sword*, stolid Christian faith overwhelms pagan trickery. As Holger Carlson explores the fantasy world of *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, Holger got the idea that a perpetual struggle went on between primeval forces of Law and Chaos. No, not forces exactly. Modes of existence? A terrestrial reflection of the spiritual conflict between heaven and hell? In any case, humans were the chief agents on earth of Law, though most of them were so only unconsciously and some, witches and warlocks and evildoers, had sold out to Chaos.

The distinction between Law and good, and equally the distinction between Chaos and evil, are not so easily grasped in *Three Hearts and Three Lions*. Since humans are entitled to choose either path, Holger is frequently questioned about his allegiances: Which side be ye on? Law or Chaos, Alianora asks him, to which he replies, after hesitating, Law, I suppose. For humans, bequeathed with Christian free will, siding with Law or Chaos is a matter of subscription to an ideology, much like choosing to act for good or evil;; for fantastic creatures it is essential to their nature, as Anderson reports that the Faerie, Trollheim, and the Giants are necessarily, essentially agents of Chaos. We may be surprised to see Anderson's faeries fall in with Chaos, where Tolkien's elves side with the free people of Middle-earth, but Anderson stays closer to the elves of *Sir Orfeo*, otherworldly beings that are no friends to mankind. On this point as well, Gygax ultimately followed the example of Tolkien. To side with Law is to side with Christian virtue and piety, to side with Chaos is to side with paganism, sorcery, impure thoughts and lascivious deeds. Holger is often subjected to sexual temptations, especially in thrall of the Faerie, and when his chastity lapses so does his resistance to charms and other evils, as will be discussed further below.

The starker association of Law and Chaos with moral absolutes comes when Holger Carlson (now revealed to be an incarnation of Ogier le Danois) returns to his time of origins, the Denmark of the Second World War. He observes that in the two frames of reference the same fight was being waged:

here it was the Nazis and there it was the Middle World, but it was Chaos against Law, and something old and wild and blind against man and the works of man. And in both worlds it was the time of need for Denmark and France, so Ogier came forth in both of them. The notion that German National Socialism represented something old and wild and blind, something akin to the evil of trolls and giants, almost glamorizes a banal evil, though when those words saw print in 1953 Nazi atrocities loomed quite close. Anderson cast Law and Chaos like the sides of a wargame, like the opposing forces in an Avalon Hill title whose contention eventually produces a clear victor.

Chainmail incorporates Law and Chaos as dispositions for the fantastic types along with a third option, Neutral. The categories of Law and Chaos are populated much as Anderson might lead us to expect, with giants and trolls on the side of Chaos and heroes on the side of Law, though since the fantastic races derive mostly from Tolkien, the distribution of those types emphasizes Tolkien battle lines. Anderson does not employ a capitalized Neutral nor its lower case (except to note that Denmark remained neutral in World War II), though Holger's ally Alianora initially identifies with neither side, asserting, I stand at peace wi most beings. In *The Roaring Trumpet*, when Harold Shea tours a Norse Midgard nearing *Ragnarök*, he inquires which side trolls will join in that apocalyptic struggle, only to be informed that it is thought that the trolls will be neuter. While this assessment of the allegiance of trolls is not followed by *Chainmail*, it further reinforces the notion that some entities might fight on neither (or either) side. Similarly, in *The Two Towers* when Merry asks Treebeard which side he is on, Treebeard replies, I don't know about sides. I go my own way, but your way may go along with mine (ents in *Chainmail*, however, side with Law, as do the ents of Tolkien eventually). The most detailed case for neutrality, however, is built by Moorcock, who famously adopted and popularized Anderson's framework of Law and Chaos in his successful Elric stories. As was already mentioned above, in the Singing Citadel are elementals, Moorcock's 1970 anthology named for the Singing Citadel there appears a story entitled To Rescue Tanelorn... (1963) which concerns the neutral city of Tanelorn, which exists under neither the Forces of Law nor the Lords of Chaos. Heroes attempt to preserve Tanelorn from the assault of a Lord of Chaos by appealing to the Gray Lords, apparent personifications of neutrality.¹⁵⁷

The notion that the continuum between Law and Chaos might be peopled with personified Lords or Forces figures prominently in Moorcock's work, especially in Elric adventures. Elric race, the Melnibonéan dynasty, has long served the Lords of Chaos, and Elric patron demon is the fickle Arioch. Even Elric blade, Stormbringer, is an instrument of Chaos, certainly not a sword that an adherent of Law could hope to wield; *Dungeons & Dragons* abounds with willful swords that demand a specific ideology of their wielder, going so far as to claim, naturally, the origin of each sword is either Law, Neutrality or Chaos. The runeblade Stormbringer, however, was endowed with a unique purpose: it was forged by Chaos to vanquish Chaos, as Elric contends in Black Sword's Brothers, a story in which Elric brings his fight to the very Lords of Chaos, who are often designated by the sobriquet the Dukes of Hell. Elric sidekick Moonglum argues in that story that there exists a law that should bind both Chaos and Law the Law of the Balance. The Supreme Spirit holds that balance over the Earth and it should be that Chaos and Law war to keep that balance straight. Sometimes the balance tips one way, sometimes another and thus are the ages of the Earth created. But an unequal balance of this magnitude is wrong.

This represents something of a departure from the cosmology of Poul Anderson, wherein Chaos is a necessarily negative and destructive force that is put to rest by the agents of Law. Moorcock instead shows us world where an excess of either force is undesirable, almost like vital humors of medieval medicine;; a surfeit of Law leads to a (1967), Elric explains, My best allies serve neither Chaos nor Law, they and indeed elementals are among the Neutral types of *Chainmail*. In sterile world, an overabundance of Chaos to an unstable one (the consequences of the extremes are shown explicitly in To Rescue Tanelorn... as Rackhir tours intermediate dimensions in his quest to find the Gray Lords). Only through keeping these opposing forces in check which he here calls Balance, though we might just as well call it Neutrality do we foster a comfortable world. When Elric has served his purpose, and the great battle for the fate of the world has been decided, he is even rewarded with a vision of ¹⁵⁷ Military wargames, from Reiswitz forward, balance two conflicting sides with the presence of a neutral umpire. A posture of neutrality has therefore been present in wargaming since the early nineteenth century. While Avalon Hill games lack a referee, the sorts of miniature wargames that inspired *Dungeons & Dragons* often recommend a neutral arbiter. The role of the umpire is detailed in Section 3.1.3.

a gigantic hand holding a balance... the balance began to right itself until each side was true.

Although Moorcock's version of Law and Chaos became iconic, several other authors cast the struggle between these two cosmic forces as the prime movers of their own stories. For starters, Anderson did not relinquish the framework after *Three Hearts and Three Lions*: in the introduction to *Operation Chaos* (1971), Anderson has his protagonist note that no matter how many parallel worlds might exist, the war of Law and Chaos surely goes on in them all. In the novels of Lin Carter, Chaos becomes synonymous with evil or hell: Thongor encounters a Demon of Chaos *Medusa* the phrase to Chaos with this is a

in *Thongor of Lemuria*, and in *Tower of the serviceable expletive*. John Brunner's Dunsanian Traveller in Black stories of the 1960s and early 1970s explore another world where order struggles to diminish the influence of entrenched and evil agents of chaos. Capital C Chaos also troubles the Amber universe of Roger Zelazny, where it is a sort of antithesis of the perfectly specified reality of Amber;; while there is no explicit Law in Amber, there is the Pattern, which enables Shadow to be shaped into meaningful structures.

Given all of this cosmology, what did the line-up of Law, Neutral and Chaos ultimately signify in *Chainmail*? The stated intention is to provide a general guide for the wargamer designing orders of battle involving fantastic creatures, in other words, for determining which creatures will constitute the two sides of a miniature wargame battle. Neutral forces may join one side or another as needed for balance. The line-up thus serves as nothing more than a means to ensure that creatures sharing a side could plausibly ally in a fantasy setting to prevent absurdities like a group of dwarves collaborating with orcs to destroy ents, rather than just falling on one another.

The table sorting the various fantastic types into the buckets of Law, Neutral and Chaos reappears in *Dungeons & Dragons* in an expanded form (the term Neutral is also upgraded to Neutrality) under the heading character alignment.¹⁵⁸ The tallies differ slightly, but in both, the category of Law has the fewest members;; in *Dungeons & Dragons*, the column of Chaos is almost twice as large as Law. The side of Law is also boosted by several creatures that merely lean toward lawfulness, such as elves, lycanthropes, rocs, dwarves and centaurs, all of which are also listed under Neutrality. Preceding this table is a blurb ascribing responsibility to the player to

determine what stance the character will take. spoken by its adherents, and sudden changes in alignment precipitate a drastic shift in linguistic capability;; as a design principle, this presumably helps sentient creatures avoid conflict with ¹⁵⁸ *War of the Empires* (1969), in which characters

- *War of the Empires* intended to

represent a continuum between roughly chaotic interests and roughly lawful interests, though it is easy for hindsight to project that significance on such very generic titles. The best descriptions of the parties appears in the *New War Reports*,

even this lack of understanding supports the underlying antagonism implicit in alignment. The ramifications of taking a stance for Law or Chaos receive no further explanation. *Dungeons & Dragons* does however note that character types are limited by the table in question, though without any clear indication of what this might entail: Men, for example, appear under all three of the categories, presumably reflecting their free will. The only character class explicitly limited in the alignment tables is Clerics: Patriarchs, Cleric counterpart, the Evil High Priest, It is noteworthy that the anti-Cleric is termed the Evil High Priest rather than, say, the Chaotic High Priest. In fact, virtually every level title for anti-Clerics leads with the word evil. Cleric spells can also Detect Evil or Dispel Evil or offer Protection from Evil again, notable all because they do not target Chaos, but evil attacks or evil opponents or enchanted monsters.¹⁵⁹ The dynamic of the Cleric versus the anti-Cleric is sketched in only a few simple system rules in *Dungeons & Dragons*, but this handful of sentences sheds considerable light on the concept of alignment. First of all, the text notes that Clerics of seventh level or higher are either Law or Chaos and that if a Patriarch Cleric, that is a Lawful Cleric of the eighth level, changes sides, they will immediately lose the various benefits of their station, including a cadre of faithful tithing men and divine assistance in real estate development. Additionally, for anti-Clerics (or, as the text says evil Clerics), the ability to turn undead is lost completely.¹⁶⁰ There are few reasons given why a Cleric might forsake Law for Chaos, but one unexpected way that a Cleric might be abruptly forsaken by Law is the misuse of reverse Raise Dead, a spell called The Finger of Death. immediate turn [the caster] into an anti-Cleric, and presumably at that time, the caster would lose all the aforementioned spiritual privileges. There

are also magical items, such as the Helm of Chaos, which may peremptorily reverse an unfortunate character's alignment until the effect can be dispelled.

So, like any form of virtue or devotion, siding with Law or Chaos is subject to lapses. The Faerie in *Three Hearts and Three Lions* dole out dangerous charms, but their spells would bounce like billiard balls off anyone in a state of grace;; ultimately, you could not be conquered unless you wanted to be. For Anderson, allegiance with Law offers protections, but conditional upon adherence to a roughly Christian moral code. The most striking illustration of this in the novel is the incident where Holger, mindful of his missed opportunities for dalliance with the Faerie, surreptitiously palpates the breast of the sleeping Alianora not exactly at his most pious. Virtually as soon as he does so, the party is attacked by a giant, whom Holger attempts to repel by invoking the names of the Holy Trinity. The giant replies dismissively, Too late for that, mortal, when you've broken the good circle by your sinful wishes and not yet made act of contrition. The causal relationship between Holger's lapse and the appearance of the giant, and his subsequent inability to invoke Christian appeals for protection, demonstrates something very like the fall of the *Dungeons & Dragons* Patriarch through evil deeds a Cleric loses the support of that is to say eighth-level Clerics, and their antiare listed under Law and Chaos respectively.

Cleric spells, such as the reversal of The text notes that misuses will the powers of good.¹⁶¹ Remember, however, that *Dungeons & Dragons* initially passed over theism in silence: Clerics are merely devotees of these abstract principles, rather than any specific god or avatar that might be propitiated or enraged, and so they remained until later supplements introduced gods into the mix.

¹⁵⁹ The dual-axis alignment system, where Good and Evil vary independently from Law and Chaos, was first revealed by Gygax in an article in the *Strategic Review*. [SR:v2n1] See Section 5.8 for more.

¹⁶⁰ In later editions, evil priests gain the ability to command undead, but not in the first edition.

While the consequences for spiritual classes like the Cleric are clear, it is less obvious in the original rules how alignment matters to the Fighting-man or the Magic-user. If a character dies and is restored to life with the spell Reincarnation, they will return as a creature of the same alignment (a Lawful character might return as a hippogriff, a Chaotic character as a manticore).

This is however a fairly remote contingency. The larger question is the relationship of alignment to the traditional wargaming concept of sides, and the meaning of sides in the context of *Dungeons & Dragons*. While in *Chainmail*, players command forces on opposing sides of a battlefield, in *Dungeons & Dragons* the players are, for the most part, on the same side, in a common opposition to forces lurking in dungeons and other places of adventure. The notion that player characters form a cooperative party has an important interaction with alignment, and more or less replaces the previous notion in *Chainmail* of a game where competing players representing good and evil battle for supremacy. As Section 1.10 previously noted, this remained the situation of the Blackmoor campaign in the fall of 1972, where the Blackmoor Bunch, nominally the forces of Law, continued their struggle against the Baddies who had decisively won the prior Blackmoor campaign. When Arneson demonstrated the game to Gygax at around that time, the Twin Cities characters had left behind the dungeons of Blackmoor Castle for exile in Loch Gloomen;; the forces in the dungeon, though nominally remnants of the forces of Fred Funk (who played the King of the Orcs) and other Baddies, were *de jure* non-player characters, as were the elves who took custody of Blackmoor Castle after the bungling of the Lawful crew. Gygax also saw Megarry's prototype of *DUNGEON!* at this time, a game where player characters do not fight one another directly, but compete to amass as much wealth as possible by slaying monsters in the dungeon and taking their treasure. The idea that denizens of the dungeon were under referee control, and that player characters had an incentive to slay those antagonists, certainly informed the concept of a collaborative party that appears in *Dungeons & Dragons*.

The idea of a fantasy party seeking treasure and adventure has its most direct antecedent in *The Hobbit*. That novel begins with one sort of party, that is, a celebratory dining experience, which leads abruptly to another sort of party, a band of fourteen adventurers who set out to rob a dragon. Tolkien first terms this alliance a party shortly after their journey commences: So after that the party went along very merrily, and they told stories or sang songs as they rode forward all day... This nomenclature appears only sparingly in the *Lord of the Rings*, where, for example, as the four hobbits take a ferry-boat near the start of their journey, Tolkien notes that Sam was the only member of the party who had not been over a river before.¹⁶² Poul Anderson also uses the term party to¹⁶¹ We must in these prohibitions hear

an echo of the story of Samson and Delilah in the Biblical Book of Judges;; Samson loses his strength when his hair is shaved because cutting the hair of the head violates the ascetic vow of the nazirite, from which Samson derives his strength.¹⁶² The preferred formal name for an association, in both *The Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings* is a group *en masse*

refer to Holger Carlson and his entourage of Hugi the dwarf and Alianora the swan-maiden as they make their way through the Middle World;; for instance, the party were too exhausted to do more than swallow a little food and roll up in their blankets. The manner in which these three creatures of very different origins agree to a common undertaking is a process of negotiation by alignment, more or less. When Alianora learns that Holger is on the side of Law, she replies, ... even if the minions o Law be often guzzling brutes, I think still I like their cause better than Chaos. So I ll gang along wi ye. It may be I can give ye some help in the Middle World.

The implication here is that she might not have been so eager to join with Holger, and assist him in his venture, if he sided with Chaos. Even Hugi the dwarf, who is far more noncommittal in his assessment of the merits of Law and Chaos, sides with Holger, in his own words, because ye re no foe o mine, indeed a good sort, no like some I could name. By way of contrast, while the world of Hyborea is similarly full of hunting-parties, warparties and even treasure-parties, Conan is virtually a one-man army, and thus his companions are more often love-interests than assistants;; throughout the original canon stories, his most effective fighting partner was probably his canine sidekick in Beyond the Black River. There is good and evil in the world of Hyborea, but Conan is not the sort to tap either for assistance. Only in stories where individuals benefit from banding together do they organize along ideological lines and form a party.

This is not to say, however, that parties of conflicting alignment cannot persist through their differences and accomplish their objectives. The most striking example in fantasy literature is the unlikely trio of Frodo, Samwise and Gollum. The hobbits embrace the wretched Gollum reluctantly, and he serves them with obsequious treachery, but this ultimately makes for a more engaging story than a harmonious association of steadfast heroes. Even Frodo, who stands as firmly in the camp of good as Gollum does in the camp of evil, ultimately succumbs to the influence of the ring and undergoes a last-minute reversal in alignment which is rectified only by Gollum s

selfishness a classic illustration of the self-defeating nature of evil. The betrayal of Boromir, when he attempts to take the ring from Frodo by force, follows from a similar reversal of alignment caused by the influence of the One Ring, and also has important dramatic consequences which advance the narrative of the story.¹⁶³ It is thus not impossible for characters of conflicting alignment to exist in the same party, and certainly the text of *Dungeons & Dragons* does not illuminate that matter either way, let alone prohibit it. This freedom of agency to choose a path of good or evil for a character provides a qualitatively different vicarious experience than one derived from reading a fixed text where a character weighs heroism and villainy another respect in which the visitation theme, when transposed from fiction to a game, adds a dimension that the fantasy genre always required. Forming coalitions and vying to control

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various alignment-warping magic items in *Dungeons & Dragons Republic*, which like the One Ring confers to its wearer the power of invisibility;; Plato speculates that were an ordinarily good man to wear a ring which allows him to steal or kill without consequences, it would inevitably dispose the man to evil. See Rateliff, *The History of the Hobbit* (Vol. 1), 174 for more on mythical

the direction of the party contributes an element of interpersonal dynamics to the game, which is further explored in Chapter Four.

The ostensible purpose of a party in *Dungeons & Dragons* is, appropriately enough, to explore dungeons and slay monsters up to and including dragons. There is only a certain amount of ideological accord required to collaborate on such a venture, really. When Thorin and Company enlist Bilbo Baggins in their party, to round out an unlucky contingent of thirteen to a less inauspicious number, they clearly mistake Bilbo for a hobbit of looser morals, and lesser aversion to risk, than he proves to be but nonetheless, although Bilbo dedication to the common good occasionally exceeds his lust for capital gains, he consistently demonstrates his value to the party. As a result, he is handsomely rewarded.

2.9 ECONOMICS AND EQUIPMENT

Chainmail is not a moneyed game. Nowhere does it discuss currency or the costs associated with the upkeep of medieval or fantastic armies. Because it is often desirable to bring equal powers to a miniature battle, *Chainmail* provides a point system for battle planning in which, for example,

an orc type costs two points and a dragon type one hundred points. Thus, in a two hundred point game, the side of Chaos could choose to deploy two dragons, or a hundred orcs, or one dragon plus fifty orcs, et cetera. Perhaps in a detailed setting these points would equate to the salaries of overlords, but *Chainmail* leaves the compensation plans of fantastic combatants unspecified.

By way of contrast, Dave Arneson Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, from its infancy, was largely a game of economics. The earliest documents associated with the campaign extend the rules of Gygax Napoleonic *Diplomacy* variant by assigning the wealth of each of the major European states of the era as well as their total reserves of manpower shortly thereafter followed the price lists.¹⁶⁴ Territorial holdings served as the font of wealth in the campaign, loosely following the model of *Diplomacy* where possession of supply centers allowed increased production of armies. In the process of conquest, a vast war chest therefore accumulated, bringing the means of more victories to victors. Wealth in the campaign was measured in an imaginary currency designated by an ampersand: an infantry man, for example, charged &5 for his services, whereas a large frigate cost &11,590. The economic model carried all sorts of hidden fees;; a horse cost &15, but if you wanted a saddle or harness for the horse, that would cost an additional &2. [COTT:69:v2n6]

Naturally, the Blackmoor campaign borrowed some of the economic elements of the Napoleonic campaign. But independently of Blackmoor, *Chainmail* as practiced by Gygax also came to hinge on the acquisition of lucre. Both of the accounts Gygax gives of fantastic battles he played in the year after the release of *Chainmail* featured a chest full of treasure as a victory condition. In the Battle of the Brown Hills (documented in the *Wargamer's Newsletter*) the side of Law is burdened with a war chest full of gemstones and gold. [WGN:#116] If Chaos managed to capture the chest, it would enable them to deploy more forces onto the field an in-game reflection of spending power. As it

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Strategos, most importantly Appendix G, which gives an account of the world economy with a special emphasis on trade balances and the price of essential commodities. Totten provides this data to better simulate the capabilities of nations in extended campaigns, much as does Arneson.

happened, the battle went disastrously for the side of Law, and in order to keep the game interesting, a marauding Dragon was introduced to prevent Chaos from taking the treasure without losses. The only other contemporary account Gygax gives of a battle is the case where for one match I built a chest of jewels as the object to be obtained to win.¹⁶⁵

The earliest narratives from the Blackmoor campaign illustrate that money played a major role in game events. In the first issue of the Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger, for example, the Wizard of the Wood pays restitution for the damages caused by the offspring of his pet dragon, and one of the guests in Blackmoor Castle is Inspector General John of Snider, a tax collector. In the second issue, there is much talk of the dungeons and the loot acquired therein;; a typical dungeon expedition bagged all the gold our bravados could carry.

only to come out with gold.

We already know that the village priest visits the dungeon

Gold, in both Arneson and Gygax *Chainmail* games, seems to be the currency of choice, if not the very object of the game.

Gold is the only currency meaningfully specified in the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*. All prices for goods are listed in gold pieces, commonly abbreviated gp. No items costs less than a single gold piece, though some fetch several thousand gold. Many monsters hoard copper or silver coins, however, which exchange at a rate of ten silver to the gold piece and five copper to the silver piece;; effectively, these coins offer only the inconvenience of additional weight. Curiously, electrum may be worth either twice or half as much as gold, while a single platinum piece trades for five gold pieces.¹⁶⁶

Gold pieces are used for gold coins in much nineteenth-century treasure-hunting literature, albeit both variants are common. This same literature introduced the treasure chests that *Chainmail* combatants coveted. In Poe's The Gold Bug, the treasure-hunters first unearth three or four loose pieces of gold and silver before finally striking upon an oblong chest of wood.

This box was three feet and a half long, three feet broad, and two and a half feet deep. It was firmly secured by bands of wrought iron, riveted, and forming a kind of open trelliswork over the whole... Luckily, the sole fastenings of the lid consisted of two sliding bolts. These we drew back trembling and panting with anxiety. In an instant, a treasure of incalculable value lay gleaming before us. As the rays of the lanterns fell within the pit,

there flashed upward a glow and a glare, from a confused heap of gold and of jewels, that absolutely dazzled our eyes.

¹⁶⁵ [WGN:#127] #127 appeared in October 1972, but owing to the transAtlantic round-trip time and the huge submission backlog Featherstone typically faced, Gygax probably wrote this note no less than six months before it appeared, and perhaps as much as nine months.

¹⁶⁶ The obscure metal electrum, an alloy of gold and silver, does figure in the history of real-world coinage. As the value of silver is uniformly less than gold, however, the notion that electrum might be worth twice as much as gold seems implausible, but this is the model that *Dungeons & Dragons* s from the oddmen

his fiction;; in his 1975 novel

precisely the value ordering used in *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*. Note that the *Dragon* #4 (Dec books as an influence well before the first *AD&D* books saw print.

Stevenson as well trades in pieces more so than coins, as when Billy Bones first arrived at the seaside inn of *Treasure Island* and threw down three or four pieces of gold to cover his expenses. Billy came equipped with a chest of his own, a seaman s traveling chest, at the very bottom of which is a canvas bag that gave a jingle of gold containing doubloons, and louis-d ors, and guineas, and pieces of eight. Of course, the most valuable content of the trunk is the famous treasure map leading to the pirate Flint s buried hoard;; as in Poe, in Stevenson the natural situation of treasure is underground. By the time the pirates reach the proverbial X on the map, it has already been excavated, leaving only a single piece of gold behind to infuriate the latecomers. The treasure, safely relocated to a nearby cave, proved representative of virtually all of the world s coinage. Upon their return to civilization, all of the heroes had an ample share of the treasure, and used it wisely or foolishly.

The gold pieces of Stevenson and Poe trickled down to Howard s Hyborian Age. Amalric, in the Hour of the Dragon, notes to himself that in these chaotic times it was not rare to find men willing to sell their souls for a few gold pieces. In the People of the Black Circle, 10,000 gold pieces is proposed as the ransom for a Queen, while in Tower of the Elephant, a more modest 300 silver pieces is the offered fee for trafficking an attractive young woman. These are high-end goods, however: In the glutton slave markets of

Aghrapur, Sultanapur, Khawarizm, Shahpur, and Khorusun, women were sold for three small silver coins, according to the story the Black Colossus. Amalric's observation holds true: in Hyborea, money largely changes hands to purchase humans. True to the sword-and-sorcery clichés he originated, Conan is often slumming in taverns, and in such humbler circumstances as the story *Shadows of Zamboula*, the fare is less costly: I ate a joint of beef and a loaf of bread... grunted Conan. Bring me a tankard of Ghazan wine I've got just enough left to pay for it. He tossed a copper coin on the winesplashed board.

During the itinerant phases of his life, Conan was not the sort to travel with riches. When he is apprehended in the Hour of the Dragon, his captors discover nothing of value on the barbarian except a few silver coins. So we see the three major varieties of currency copper, silver and gold, in ascending order of value all exemplified in the Conan tales.

Money is much more the subject of *The Hobbit* than the *Lord of the Rings*. In the end analysis, the former story is about the acquisition of treasure, and the latter story about the renunciation and destruction of treasure. The comparatively benign though not entirely harmless monetary treasure in *The Hobbit* comes from two major sources: the hoard of the dragon Smaug and the trolls defeated along the way to Smaug's lair. Smaug personal nest egg is staggering: countless piles of precious things, gold wrought and unwrought, gems and jewels, and silver red-stained in the ruddy light, in addition to all manner of mail, helms and axes, swords and spears... great jars and vessels filled with a wealth that could not be guessed. Bilbo is stunned by the splendour, the lust, the glory of such treasure. As is mentioned above, Bilbo acquires only a fraction of his promised share of this treasure per his letter of agreement with Thorin and Company, as well as the pots full of gold coin preserved from their earlier encounter with the trolls.

Structurally, *The Hobbit* is an adventure story much in the vein of *Treasure Island*, insofar as an inexperienced adventurer joins forces with a seasoned band, and after the requisite amount of danger and adversity, returns home with a life-altering share of the plunder. Its sequel *The Lord of the Rings* is no such capitalist enrichment fantasy;; while Frodo and the other hobbits return to the Shire with the gratitude of kings and tremendous honor, money is little discussed. In Bree, the hobbits purchase Bill Ferny's sickly pony for twelve silver pennies, though Tolkien hints this is about three times too dear. Neither Elrond nor Galadriel, however, charge the Company for

their room and board, and upon Sauron's defeat, no great coffers open up and spill their gleaming contents through the Black Gate.¹⁶⁷

Holger Carlson does not handle money in *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, though his is a story culminating in the acquisition of a magic sword, certainly a form of treasure. In an episode that blends two distinct scenes in *The Hobbit* (the riddle contest between Bilbo and Gollum crossed with the distraction of the trolls until the sunrise turns them to stone, recalling the Eddaic *Alvíssmál*), Holger enters into a riddle contest with the giant Balamorg, who offers him a helmetful of gold as a prize for victory. Holger poses an unsolvable riddle, which distracts Balamorg until the dawn petrifies him where he stands. Hugi the dwarf, Holger's companion, then exclaims, Gold, gold, gold! Ever they giants carry a purseful o' gold. Hurry man, slit yon sack and make us wealthier nor kings! And sure enough, the giant's drawstring wallet spilled forth coins. Holger and his party abandon this loot, however, as Alianora senses that it is cursed.¹⁶⁸

The economic setting of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser is markedly close to that of *Dungeons & Dragons* as the renowned story the Bazaar of the Bizarre begins, Lankhmar is a city where swords clink almost as often as coins. In the Howling Tower, one of their earliest stories (1941), the duo pays a guide two gold pieces to take them to a strange, intermittently visible tower. Leiber is generous enough to testify directly to the coinage of the world in Lean Times in Lankhmar.

Not one rusty iron *tik* (the smallest coin of Lankhmar) would he pay to extortioners... Instead he averred that every *tik* collected, every bronze *agol*, every silver *smerduk*, every gold *rilk*, yes every diamond-in-amber *glulditch!* would be saved.

The seminal tales of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser mostly concern treasure hunting. In their first published story, itinerary as a treasure quest Urgaan, we are to understand, was a sadistic architect who built this house as an eternal trap for the unwise and venturesome. Having won some unspecified treasure from demons, he decided to hide it in such a way that it would wreak endless evil on the world, and then wrote many provocative notes in diminutive red lettering in order to inform fools of his treasure and make them envious. Although the heroes manage to escape the sinister trap, it transpires that the treasure and the trap are more or less the same thing, and thus they return empty handed. Although much of their subsequent business amounts to variations on the treasure quest, they also

work for hire. According to the Two Best Thieves in Lankhmar, when the Mouser is hired to work for Prince Gwaay, the Lord of Quarmall, he is paid thirty gold pieces (negotiated up from twenty) at an inn called the Golden Lamprey. For his part, Fafhrd is paid only twenty-five rilks wage Two Sought Adventure, Fafhrd directly refers to their to plunder the treasure house of Urgaan of Angarnji.

¹⁶⁷ In *The Peoples of Middle-earth*, Tolkien, in his limitless articulation of detail, does reveal something from this detail currency seems to have been beneath his notice.

¹⁶⁸ In the quasi-scientific paradigm of the story, the curse is in fact radioactivity imparted by the transmutation of the giant from carbon to silicon during his petrification, as Holger deduces.

to serve a rival Lord, Prince Haskarl, and he negligently spills three of those coins on the inn-room floor.

Material wealth also comes in the form of gemstones, and in fantasy literature gems are often substituted for currency. In *The Eyes of the Overworld*, Cugel the Clever pilfered jeweled buttons from the garment of an erstwhile companion, and later offered one to settle his bill at an inn. Fix, if you will, a fair value upon this gem, subtract the score and give me my change in gold coins. This being a Jack Vance story, the proprietor can only reply, The total charges to your account exactly equals the worth of this trinket, though after some debate Cugel managed to extract change in both the form of specie and provisions. Later inns Cugel would simply rob, rather than maintaining any pretense of a fair exchange.

Aside from amply illustrating that fantasy literature operated on the gold standard, these examples highlight the acquisition of treasure as a theme running through the fantasy literature that influenced *Dungeons & Dragons*. It is not a theme that is entirely universal, of course. When Kothar, for example, receives his magic sword Frostfire from a lich, in the lich cache he may spy two chests heavy with jewels and golden coins, but the curse of the sword keeps him a pauper. Those loincloth-clad brutes who more closely imitated Conan eschewed purses, like Brak the Barbarian, who cared nothing for coin. It is important to remember, however, that Conan story arc follows him from a penniless northerner of ignoble birth to kingship, and while he may not have courted wealth and luxury, it was ultimately thrust upon him.

The rags-to-riches storyline of Conan constitutes a prototype for every successful *Dungeons & Dragons* character. Characters begin with little

power, but through trials and perseverance, they become rich and powerful. From the original 30 to 180 gold carried by a starting character, one can expect to deal in sums of thousands of gold relatively quickly. A chart in the third booklet of *Dungeons & Dragons* suggests that in the first level of a dungeon, adventurers can expect to recover tens of gold after defeating the monsters in a given room;; by the second level, hundreds of gold, by the fourth, a thousand or more gold pieces per encounter. [OD&D3:7] Increases in wealth are only one axis in which the character improves;; the character also gains levels of experience (which are detailed in Section 3.2.3) and superior equipment.¹⁶⁹ The focus on personal enrichment is, however, one of the most addictive aspects of the game, and an element that helps maintain the game's open-endedness, its lack of any acquisition of power, amassing wealth is adventurers interminability exploring deeper and darker recesses of the underworld, slaying fouler creatures and lugging away heavier chests of treasure.

Dungeons & Dragons was not the first popular game to simulate the ascent to plutocracy. The Depression-era game of *Monopoly* stages a competition among real-estate moguls, as do its many imitators. In 1968, the Twin Cities gamers tried a title called *Future* (1966) where one makes speculative investments on inventions;; Duane Jenkins won the game with one hundred billion dollars of profit from his predictions. [COTT:68:v1n3] However, wealth is merely purchasing power, and without any goods to purchase it would concluding condition for an endless undertaking, victory. Like the one which keeps hardly be a compelling incentive to adventure. *Dungeons & Dragons* allows you not only to accumulate money, but to spend it in more or less the same fashion that one spends money in the real world: on anything from clothes, to houses, to food, to transportation, whatever the player deems of interest to the character. Of course, some amount of money is required for personal upkeep (according to the rulebooks, characters must expend gold pieces equal to one percent of all experience gained for this purpose, at least until they are significantly advanced), and the occasional powerful Cleric may demand tithes or what have you, but an adventurer generally can regard most of his gains as disposable income.

¹⁶⁹ The acquisition of wealth drives both of those other forms of advancement, however, as raw gold pieces acquired are simply added to experience point totals for the character (and often dwarf the sums awarded

for slaying monsters) and money allows characters to purchase or commission the construction of exceptional items as well.

2.9.1 CONVENTIONAL EQUIPMENT

In an early article on the history of *Dungeons & Dragons*, Gygax reports that it was Dave Arneson who added equipment for players to purchase to the game, a concept that simply did not exist in *Chainmail*. [DR:#7] This is not to say that *Chainmail* Heroes did not have their choice of weapons, but simply that they received them gratis. The twelve melee weapons for sale in *Dungeons & Dragons* reiterate the weapons in the man-to-man melee table in *Chainmail*, preserving even the order. The list of missile weapons is actually smaller in *Dungeons & Dragons*, which excludes the horsebow and the arquebus. The cost of weapons is generally quite modest: a simple spear costs 2 gold pieces, a dagger 3, a sword 10 and a two-handed sword 15, all easily within the probable budget of a fledgling adventurer. Even plate mail, at 50 gold, is affordable for many. This price list shares much in common with the Blackmoor one Dave Arneson later reprinted in the *First Fantasy Campaign*: the sword, battle axe, morning star, flail and two handed sword have exactly the same cost, and others, while not identical, are very similar. [FFC:4] Beyond the armor and weapon types of *Chainmail*, *Dungeons & Dragons* adds three other categories of mundane belongings: transportation, dungeoneering supplies and various forms of monster repellent.

Horses, be they unnamed or as exceptional as Gandalf Shadowfax, are so integral to medieval settings and fantasy literature that their presence cannot require detailed explication. *Chainmail* presented a simple system for transportation, in which most pedestrian units had a variant type on horseback. Light footmen, for example, have a corresponding mounted unit which costs more in the point system of *Chainmail* to deploy than infantry, but is faster and also more effective in combat. In the fall of 1972 summary of the Blackmoor campaign status in *Corner of the Table*, Scott Belfry and Ross Maker both play Hero-type characters on Horse, Dave Wesely Super-hero commands a Super War Horse, Kurt Krey s anti-Super-hero, the leader of the Baddies, even rides a Tame Dragon. While *Dungeons & Dragons* does allow for taming dragons and other exotic mounts including griffons, they are not exactly on the price list at the average stable. The cost of ordinary horses is 30 or 50 gold, with warhorses setting equestrians back 100 or 200 gold. This is not far from the original &15 cost of horses in Arneson Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, nor the *First Fantasy Campaign* record of the Blackmoor cost of a light horse (20 gold) or a warhorse (up to 400 gold).

A saddle, however, costs a full 25 gold in *Dungeons & Dragons*, compared to just &2 in the horse-and-musket era (and 6 gold in Blackmoor).

As for ships, virtually all of the great fantasy heroes embark on a brief naval career: be it Conan stint as the dread pirate Amra, Aragorn and company riding the black ships to Minas Tirith, Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser blundering into the Sea King's daughters or Elric island nation of Melniboné and its fearsome ramming barges. The nautically-inclined can choose from a wide selection of medieval watercraft, from the modest raft at 40 gold, merchant ships from 5,000 to 20,000 gold and warships up to 30,000 gold. These expenses also stay within the same order of magnitude as the Napoleonic campaign cost-sheet, where a brig costs &2,645 and a 1st rate ship goes for &25,850, and likewise in the *First Fantasy Campaign*, which describes ship costs between 5,000 and 20,000 gold.

While mounts and boats provide rapid transit, they furthermore transport more goods than a party could ordinarily carry. Even without reviewing the encumbrance system of *Dungeons & Dragons* (see Section 3.2.3.2), one can intuit that defeating a monster with many thousands of coins could lead to serious logistical problems. In Poe's *The Gold Bug*, once the protagonists have exhumed the massive treasure chest, the three quickly apprehend that they will need to parcel out the loot for transportation and post a watch to return for the rest later. The enormous fortune extracted from *Treasure Island* similarly comes on board over many laborious days worth of installments. Even in *The Hobbit*, when no less than twelve dwarves are confronted with Smaug sprawling treasury, they gathered gems and stuffed their pockets, and let what they could not carry fall back through their fingers with a sigh. It was indeed easier to claim the treasury as their home than it was to solve the logistics of relocating it.

If lugging around martial implements and loot were not burden enough, no dungeoneer can neglect climbing gear, sources of light and of course sustenance. Dungeons are a hostile environment, often in a ruined state, in which gear like a ten foot pole, rope and iron spikes can handily detect and circumvent obstacles, be they born of malice or decrepitude. The virtues of rope are much touted in *The Two Towers*; for example, Frodo once falls into a pit and advises Samwise, You can't do anything without a rope! Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, who frequently sojourn through inhospitable outdoor terrain to find treasure, employ climbing ropes, spikes and poles to reach their destination, as in the story *Stardock*, where all three are required to ascend the pinnacle of an icy mountain. Burglary often calls for a bit of

rope-work as well, as Conan discovers when he teams up with Taurus, who conveniently supplies a grappling hook, in the Tower of the Elephant. Darkness is another impediment when plundering the underworld. Of course, a Magic-user can conjure unnatural light, as Gandalf does when the Company enters the Mines of Moria, whereupon he held his staff aloft, and from its tip there came a faint radiance. Those dungeoneers who cannot spare spells for this purpose can rely on torches (six for 1 gold piece) or lanterns (at 10 gold, with an additional 2 gold per flask of oil). In the Scarlet Citadel, where Conan explores the dungeon in which he was left as prey for a giant serpent, he creeps with sword in one hand and torch in the other. When he cannot risk torchlight, he shakes it out and then rekindles it with his breath after the coast is clear. *Dungeons & Dragons* lists two varieties of food that adventurers can purchase to sustain them below: iron rations and standard rations, with the former specifically earmarked for dungeon expeditions (at three times the cost of the other). While it is not uncommon for fantasy heroes to sup on rations Conan receives them in Beyond the Black River, and the term is used to describe carefully parceled food in the works of Vance, Anderson, Zelazny and others the term iron rations is a bit anachronistic for medieval fantasy literature.¹⁷⁰ Waterskins and wineskins are also available, as is wine, for the bare minimum price of one gold a piece;; Conan would undoubtedly feel overcharged.

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War, and then only to the emergency rations. It is unclear how this would make them relevant to dungeon adventuring, except insofar as they are intended for times of privation.

Furthermore, the standard equipment list contains mirrors, stakes & mallets, crosses, vials for holy water of the sort peddled by Bishop Carr in Blackmoor, as well as wolfsbane and garlic, all of which are transparently geared toward specific monsters one might encounter in a dungeon: mirrors for basilisks or medusae, crosses and holy water to repel undead, wolfsbane for werewolves, and stakes, mallets and garlic for vampires. There are even silver-tipped arrows available, not only for the more persistent lycanthropes, but also for spectres, which are vulnerable to silver. Belladonna figures into this list, though without any indication of its particular efficacy. None of these special-purpose items cost more than a few tens of gold pieces, but it is bothersome to stockpile such otherwise useless knickknacks for every remote contingency.

Aside from material possessions, characters may also spend money on leadership and even lordship. Any number of hirelings can be employed to work for a character, provided that the character is sufficiently management as the natural state of affairs: acquiring a regular entourage of various character types, monsters and an army of some form. [OD&D1:12] A minimum offer of one hundred gold suffices to attract a potential recruit, though discriminating prospects may have additional requirements (dwarves might want more money, Magic-users might demand magic items and so on). As was mentioned previously, high-level characters can expect to assemble both a significant base of followers and even a permanent fortified residence. Fighting-men of the ninth level or higher may become Barons, much like the Baron of Blackmoor, and build their own castles. The Blackmoor Bunch quickly established satellite holdings in the surrounding wilderness;; Greg Svenson character, The Great Svenny, built a castle called Svenny's Freehold fairly early in the campaign. The *Underworld & Wilderness* volume of *Dungeons & Dragons* shows the many structures that a castle architect might incorporate into their design: gate houses, towers, bastions, barbettes, barbicans, curtain walls, all with associated price tags from thousands to tens of thousands of gold.¹⁷¹ The total cost of such a structure could easily exceed 100,000 gold. Here, the divine assistance granted to Clerics in the construction of their strongholds pays off, as higher powers pick up half the tab for Clerics of eighth level and above, provided that they remain properly aligned. The owners of castles can flesh out a productive township by hiring specialists, such as smiths or alchemists, for some hundreds or thousands of gold per month. This expense can be offset by taxation of the surrounding countryside, which, aside from security, is the only material advantage of establishing a barony.

charismatic. *Dungeons & Dragons* views

It is likely that players will be desirous of

2.9.2 MAGIC ITEMS

Truly astronomical sums, beyond even those of castle construction, can be invested in the creation of magic items. Magic items are the only remaining category of equipment to be detailed, though their sheer variety rivals that of the monster or spell types. While not every magic item listed in the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* has an obvious precedent in fantasy literature, there are enough parallels for an exemplary, if not exhaustive, review.

¹⁷¹ See as well the *First Fantasy Campaign*, 5, for the likely Blackmoor antecedent. *Chainmail* included many of these structures for siege-style miniature warfare scenarios, and each had its associated point number to help keep the sides of the fight balanced.

The system for creating magic items bears some resemblance to the research system of Arneson Napoleonic Simulation Campaign. The players in the campaign may have assumed the game identity of early nineteenth-century political and military leaders, but as players they were, of course, inescapably denizens of the twentieth century, and consequently bits of future technology began to surface in the game as knowledge of the future directed weapons research. Arneson wrote an article about this tendency in *Corner of the Table* called How You Too Can Have the Ultimate Weapon! in which he establishes the costs to research technologies that would be breakthroughs in the Napoleonic setting (the game year then being 1800). [COTT:70:v3n2] Among them are balloons that carry up to twenty-five men, for a mere &2,500, or fifty horsepower steam engines, for &3,750. Railroads come at &900 per mile, plus &1,000 per car and &4,000 for the engine. Intriguingly, he also permits blind investment in new technology, with no promise of results, saying only that it will cost a pretty penny. Even spying on the research of others could cost up to &60,000.

The Napoleonic budgets would front these sorts of investments, and this general framework carries over to the Blackmoor campaign. Only the powerful can afford the exorbitant expenditures to create magic items: as a rough rule of thumb, the *First Fantasy Campaign* suggests that magic items cost one hundred times more than their mundane counterparts, such that a 10 gold sword might trade for 1,000 gold with an enchantment. Even that estimate lowballs the potential cost of more exotic implements. The development of magic items as it appears in *Dungeons & Dragons* is both expensive and time consuming: the worst offender among the examples given is an X-Ray Vision Ring, a very handy aide for dungeon exploration, which would cost 50,000 gold pieces and one year of labor to produce.

Apart from magic swords and armor, detailed in the section on Fighting-Men above, the primary categories of magic items are weapons, potions, scrolls, rings, wands, staves and the catch-all miscellaneous, which in turn includes amulets, crystal balls, helms, cloaks, boots, gloves, magical containers and more. Of these, the first category, magical weapons other than swords, is deemphasized given the tremendous superiority of swords for the

Fighting-Man. The only particularly notable entry is the magical war hammer, a thrown weapon that is especially efficacious against giants, which returns to the hands of its thrower when hurled by a dwarf. The relationship between dwarves and hammers has its origins in Norse mythology, wherein dwarves are the most renowned of smiths, and in particular served as the weaponsmiths for the gods. The *Prose Edda* depicts *Mjöllnir*, the hammer of the god Thor, as a giant-slaying implement created by dwarves that similarly boomerangs back to Thor after it pummels a target. In the Harold Shea story *The Roaring Trumpet*, Thor's hammer has been stolen by the giants, and Shea must help him recover it. As soon as the hammer is returned to Thor, he begins to take a terrible vengeance on the giants: Shea shot one glimpse as the hammer flew at Utgardaloki and spattered his brains into pink oatmeal, rebounding back into Thor's gloves. In order to even wield his hammer, however, the edda suggests that Thor must rely on two additional implements: the *Megingjard*, a belt that confers strength, and the *Járngreipr*, his iron gloves.¹⁷² These two items campaign assumed major governments with proportionate are almost certainly the inspiration for two of the miscellaneous magic items in *Dungeons & Dragons*, namely the Girdle of Giant's Strength and the Gauntlets of Ogre's Strength. In a further nod to Norse mythology, dwarves are remembered as smiths and miners in most twentieth-century mythological revivals;; to take just one example, in *Three Hearts and Three Lions* we meet the dwarf Unrich who wore a leather apron, and carried a hammer.

¹⁷² The Marvel comics character the Mighty Thor wields a magic hammer that similarly boomerangs back to his hands, as well as performing a number of utility functions. In *Journey into Mystery* #91 (Apr 1963), Odin themes in the Mighty Thor comics eventually inspired Stan Lee

Dungeons & Dragons lists some twenty-six types of potions, most of them essentially replicating the spells of Magic-users. In fantasy literature, a wizard seems capable of brewing a potion to cause virtually any desired result;; while love potions and sleeping potions are the most popular examples, their range is far broader. In *The Swords of Lankhmar*, Sheelba grants to the Gray Mouser a potion without describing its effects, but promises it will allow the Mouser to deal with the underground society of rats that threatens his beloved city. When the Mouser tries to guess what this concoction might do, he speculates: Give me an evil eye for rats, so my glance strikes them dead? Make me clairvoyant, so I can spy out their chief

nests through solid earth and rock? Or wonderously increase my cunning and mental powers?

It transpires that the potion shrinks him down to the size of a rat, ironically putting the cat on the same footing as his prey, but permitting him to infiltrate the rat-sized city. The Alice in Wonderland categories of Diminution [*sic*] and its antidote Growth, an effect also demonstrated in *The Swords of Lankhmar*, both appear as types of potions in *Dungeons & Dragons* as does Clairvoyance. It is very much the nature of potions to have an aspect of uncertainty about them: typically in fantasy literature they are manufactured by wizards and consumed by warriors with no small skepticism. Even Elric sidekick Moonglum, no stranger to sorcery, blanches when he discovers he's been drinking a magic potion of refreshment in Black Sword's Brothers. Jack Vance magicians are often to be found mixing potions, as is Mazirian the Magician when he vainly attempts to animate an artificial human created by a rival magician. In the *Eyes of the Overworld*, Cugel the Clever is granted by the wizard Zaraides a cure for demonic possession, a simple potion: sulfur, aquastel, tincture of zyche;; certain herbs: bournade, hilp, cassas... which Cugel gamely drinks. Even Conan, collapsing under many wounds in the Slithering Shadow, receives his remedy from a jade jar nearly full of peculiar golden-colored liquid. After his love interest administers the contents, Conan recovers from his stupor: I feel new life and power rush like wildfire through my veins. Surely this is the very elixir of life! As he rises, his consort protests, But your wounds! to which he replies, I do not feel them.... I swear I am aware of neither pain nor weakness. It is from sources like these, and the strange brew of the *athelas* plant concocted by Aragorn, that *Dungeons & Dragons* inherits potions of healing. The creation of potions is a comparatively inexpensive project;; a Potion of Healing requires an investment of only 250 gold pieces and a week's labor, for example.

While scrolls as parchments covered with writing figure in much fantasy literature, in *Dungeons & Dragons* a scroll has a more narrow sense as a repository for magical formulations which is read in order to cast a spell. Only Magic-users can read scrolls (with the exception of the various protection scrolls) and any Magic-user spell might be transcribed to a scroll.¹⁷³ While potions are unambiguously single-use items once drunk, the vessel is empty scrolls share the confusions about reuse of memorized spells in the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*.¹⁷⁴ The Gray Mouser, who

apprenticed as a magician before adopting a more roguish vocation, sometimes employs scrolls given to him by his wizardly master Sheelba. In the Lords of Quarmall, he carried parchment-crackling in his pouch a spell that inadvertently destroyed many of the wizards the Mouser aspired to assist, and it does appear that the spell can only be used once. In *Strange Tales* #155, Doctor Strange's powerful mentor, the Ancient One, reads from a scroll the Spell of Vanishment. So final so irrevocable is the dreaded incantation, that it can be used but once : the scroll disappears when the chant is ended. Other fantastic scrolls do not suffer from this limitation;; when Loki gives Harold Shea a very thin sheet of parchment, covered with spidery runic writing, Shea is able to repeat the spell many times to see through various illusions. Scrolls need not be written on paper as such Elric carries a beast-hide manuscript of an extraordinarily strong invocation used in summoning the Sea King in

¹⁷³ *Greyhawk* (1975) added the proviso that Thieves

Sad Giant's Shield though Elric personal laboratory houses all manner of scrolls, tables, books and sheets of precious metal engraved with ancient symbols. In Kenneth Bulmer's *Kandar*, the hero spends much of his time assembling an ancient spell, part of which is inscribed on The Ochre Scroll.¹⁷⁵ Scrolls are the best bargains for magical crafters, with first-tier spell scrolls requiring an investment of only 100 gold pieces, probably affordable to a Magic-user who had never stepped into a dungeon.

In order to memorize spells at all, a Magic-user must consult with a book of spells, in particular one book for each level. [OD&D1:35] Section 2.7.2 already reviewed the long pedigree of books of magic. While fantasy literature shows us many such grimoires filled with spells, surely the works of Jack Vance depict them most vividly, as in the *Eyes of the Overworld*, where the wizard Zaraides finds himself powerless without, as he puts it, my librams, my folios, my work-books! What spells, what spells! Even Cugel himself, upon discovering one of Zaraides' spell-books, could understand a spell within: four lines of words, thirty-one syllables in all. Cugel forced them into his brain, where they lay like stones. Doctor Strange consults his unique Book of Vishanti for all manner of mystical tutelage. Although it contains virtually every spell a wizard might require, the symbols are faded difficult to read, and Doctor Strange worries in *Strange Tales* #116 that, if I interpret them wrongly, anything can happen! Dare I utter the chant???

The magic rings of *Dungeons & Dragons* require no other source in fantasy literature than the looming influence of the One Ring and its subordinate instruments in *The Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings*. Rolling randomly for the powers of a magic ring, one has about a ten percent chance that it will confer invisibility, presumably more in the innocent vein of Bilbo first adventure than the rather weightier nature of Frodo's burden. Some of the powers of rings have more direct mythological antecedents, notably the granting of wishes, a famous idea from fairy-tales such as the Brothers Grimm's King of the Golden Mountain (Grimm #92), a story that also features a cloak that grants invisibility and boots that permit extraordinary travel. A Ring of Djinn Summoning surely derives from the story of Aladdin, as told in the *Arabian Nights*. The idea that a ring might protect against magic,

¹⁷⁴ That the writing on scrolls disappears after the spell is read is clarified in the *Strategic Review*.

Monsters & Treasure. ¹⁷⁵ The Ochre Scroll perhaps contribute

as does the Ring of Spell Turning, follows the precedent of the ring worn by Bradamant in the Harold Shea story *The Castle of Iron*; its wearer boasts the power of this ring against all enchantments whatsoever is very great. Most of the remainder of the rings reprise the abilities of magic swords. Curiously, rings are the only source in the original *Dungeons & Dragons* of the ability to walk on water, which as a Biblical miracle might seem like a choice candidate for a Cleric spell. From the very start, the authors of *Dungeons & Dragons* were painfully aware that humans are ten-fingered animals, and that power-mad adventurers might cram three or more rings on each finger if given the opportunity, so the rules stipulate that only one operable ring may be worn on each hand.

Just as magic swords can be wielded by Fighting-men alone, wands are solely the purview of Magic-users, as are some staves, with the remainder being either exclusive to Clerics or usable by both Magic-users and Clerics. While as Section 2.7.2 noted, Gandalf is first introduced as an old man with a staff, throughout *The Hobbit* Gandalf is sometimes described as wielding a wand, from which both light and lightning emerges as occasion demands; Tolkien treats wand and staff as interchangeable terms.¹⁷⁶ The distinction between wands and staves is not explicitly articulated in *Dungeons & Dragons*, though we might deduce that wands are smaller judging from the relative costs of cases for wands and staves. Sword-and-sorcery literature

tells us, however, that wands are essential to the practice of magic. They are used by a lowly wise woman like Gerd in *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, who draws concentric circles in the dirt with a wand that seemed to be of ebony and ivory. Even the Gray Mouser carries a thick black wand tipped with a silver star when he acts as Sorcerer Extraordinary to Gwaay, a Lord of Quarmall. Cugel the Clever travels briefly with Voynod, a mountebank vending minor magic items, among which is his wand which instantly affixes any object to any other. Conan deals with a formidable wand in Red Nails, when the sorcerer Tolkemec waves a curious jade-hued wand, on the end of which glowed a knob of crimson shaped like a pomegranate which can emit a beam of crimson fire ; those with the misfortune to be struck by it suffer shriveling and withering like a mummy as they perish. The wizards encountered by Harold Shea are also no strangers to wands, as in *The Mathematics of Magic*, when Cambina uses a prehensile wand to open locks. In *The Castle of Iron*, Atlantès of Carena fires his wand as a blasting instrument: Atlantès had pointed his wand again, and the group felt something rush past them in the air, and a rock on the other side of the road split in a blaze of light. When Doctor Strange moonlights in *The Amazing Spider-Man Annual #2* (165), he and the webslinger must join forces to rid an evildoer of the Wand of Watoomb, only one of many destructive wands he faces in his career. The wands of *Dungeons & Dragons* might throw familiar fireballs or lightning bolts, but among their potential powers are three new spell effects which, like the breath of a dragon, emanate in a cone in front of them: fear, cold and paralysis. The cold effect is more or less the same as the breath weapon of a white dragon;; the effect of paralysis only appears elsewhere in the system as resulting from the touch of a wight, like when Frodo fell victim to the Barrow-wight touch stronger and colder than iron which froze his bones. Wands are a rare source of the fear effect in the

¹⁷⁶ The primary reason to believe that Gandalf

Chapter Four of *The Hobbit* where Thorin and Company blunders into a goblin cave, where Gandalf struck a blue light on the end of his magic staff, and in its firework glare the poor little hobbit could be see kneeling on the hearth

establish that Gandalf first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* (the only other being the miscellaneous magic item Drums of Panic), though ultimately, this effect replicates morale failures that are familiar from many wargames, including *Chainmail*.

The most celebrated staff in sword-and-sorcery literature undoubtedly belongs to Gandalf, be he Grey or White at any given moment. Of course, not all staves are magical: Fafhrd spars with a quarterstaff on the deck of a boat in *The Swords of Lankhmar*. There are however many instances of enchanted staves in fantasy stories;; the authors influenced by Tolkien generally adopt his conventions for them.¹⁷⁷ Not all magical staves belong to conjurors, however;; in the Hour of the Dragon, Conan contended with Khitan assassins who wield staves cut from the living Tree of Death which licked out like the dart of a viper, dealing death where they struck probably deriving from the Biblical shifting of sticks to snakes, an antecedent for the Snake Staff of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Doctor Strange accepts the Staff of Polar Power from the god-like Nebulos in *Strange Tales* #162, and uses it to absorb the evil might of Baron Mordo. In Moorcock s Runestaff novels, the staff in question is practically a surrogate for fate itself;; rather than being wielded, it selects and wields those persons destined for great events. A staff in *Dungeons & Dragons* is nothing so grandiose: for the most part, each magic staff combines the spell effects of a few different wands or perhaps mimics other spell abilities. There are, however, two exceptional staves, the Staff of Power and the Staff of Wizardry, which possess a greater diversity of powers invoked at the discretion of their possessor, on par with, if not exceeding, the most powerful magic swords of Fighting-men.

The remaining magic items detailed in *Dungeons & Dragons* are miscellaneous, and some already have been touched on in the text above. Magical amulets are common in sword-and-sorcery literature, for example in the title of Moorcock s Hawkmoon novel *The Sorcerer s Amulet* (United States title *The Mad God s Amulet*). In Vance *The Dying World*, Turjan wears an amulet bearing Laccodel s Rune fastened to his wrist, which renders him immune to hostile magic, including a dangerous spell called the Excellent Prismatic Spray. Ourph the Mingol talks of wearing amulets to keep off evil magics in Leiber s Bleak Shore. Doctor Strange wears a mystical amulet around his neck that serves a great many purposes, especially after he receives an upgraded version, a more wondrous amulet, from his mentor in *Strange Tales* #127. Crystal balls have applications that go beyond the typical gypsy fortune-teller accessory;; indeed, the Palantir, the seeing stone of the *Lord of the Rings* used by Saruman to communicate with Sauron, is a crystal ball of a fashion. Salome



FIGURE 24: A LIFE--STEALING MIRROR, [REDACTED] FROM CONAN THE BARBARIAN #25

CONAN THE BARBARIAN #25

¹⁷⁷ 1960s and early 1970s, have a very similar picture of the relationship between wizards and staves. They are neglected here only because the

authors of *Dungeons & Dragons* indicate no contemporary knowledge of them.

scryes into a crystal ball to see the outcome of a distant battle a victory for Conan in A Witch Shall be Born.

Dungeons & Dragons offers the over-encumbered adventurer some respite in the form of a Bag of Holding, which can contain 10,000 gold pieces worth of weight while only requiring 300 gold pieces worth of strength to carry;; a likely inspiration for this item comes from the strange bronze ring (a metal circle large enough to fit a man through, rather than just a finger) containing its own private space belonging to Liane the Wayfarer in Vance Dying Earth. Vance also modernized the Brothers Grimm's magical boots that facilitate travel with the Live Boots worn by Mazirian the Magician, which allow monstrous leaps, though if overtaxed, the footwear itself apparently can die;; in *Dungeons & Dragons*, along these lines we see the Boots of Speed and Boots of Traveling and Leaping. The Horn of Blasting, which brings down walls with an effectiveness equal to a pair of *Chainmail* bombards, transparently derives from the horn blown in the battle of Jericho (Joshua 6:20 21). The Item of Effect syntactical format employed for so many magic items may also owe something to Doctor Strange, most obviously to his Cloak of Levitation;; that cloak may have directly inspired the Boots of Levitation in *Monsters & Treasure*.

Finally, beyond ordinary magic items there are artifacts, the most powerful of all magic items. While the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* offers no system for any of these super-powerful artifacts, it hints at the existence of a Teleportation Machine and a Crown, Orb and Scepter for each class, and suggests a few example penalties that adventurers might suffer for touching an artifact of opposing alignment, up to and including instant death. [OD&D2:38] Sword-and-sorcery literature provides several potential examples of puissant artifacts;; Moorcock uses the term in his Hawkmoon series, for example, to refer to the Runestaff itself, an item of unfathomable power.

2.10 BEYOND DUNGEONS AND BEYOND DRAGONS

The set of magic items described in *Dungeons & Dragons* may seem large, but it captures only the slightest fraction of the wonders invented in the sword-and-sorcery literary tradition. Where, for example, is the Blindfold of True Seeing given to Fafhrd by Sheelba in Bazaar of the Bizarre, the little bit of cobweb which renders its wearer immune to

illusions? Or the Dagger of Burning held by Holger Carlson during his courtship of Cortana? Or the Chaos Shield won by Elric?

The answer is that the enchanted loot of the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* is little more than exemplary: it serves to show what sorts of magical treasures might be adapted or devised for a particular campaign. In fact, all of the core categories of the setting avenues sanctioned commercial products by partners and of course unlicensed publications in fandom added depth to the game by augmenting each aspect of the setting with additional entries.

What endured about these categories in *Dungeons & Dragons* and its many successors is not the manner in which they were populated initially so much as the scoping of the categories themselves;; for example, once you have a notion of class, it is not a very great leap to observe that Cugel the Clever and the Gray Mouser seem to share a skill-set not specific to Fighting-men, and that perhaps they should properly belong to a new and distinct class of dexterous, stealthy, lucre-swiping scoundrels. Similarly, if you have elves race, monsters, classes, spells, equipment, magic items, even alignments are all of extensibility for the game. Official revisions by Tactical Studies Rules, and humans, surely by extension the likes of Elrond Halfelven might exist, as might halforcs and other potentially playable races. The setting of *Dungeons & Dragons* fixed these categories rather than their contents, and the unprecedented open-endedness of the setting truly distinguished *Dungeons & Dragons* from its ancestors in wargaming.

The extension of *Dungeons & Dragons* did not restrict itself to concepts mined from fantasy literature, however, and indeed to do so would neglect one of the most intriguing opportunities of the game. The precedent of the fantasy genre established the parameters of heroes, monsters, wondrous items and spells, and this taxonomy itself became a tool for the inventors of new additions to the fantasy canon. Where genre authors, who inherited these building blocks of fantasy from myths, could handle these fantastic elements without resolving the vagueness of the legends, *Dungeons & Dragons* forced monsters, spells and magic items to conform to its system, and thus made them specific enough that they could be simulated in a game. The genius of the creative apparatus of *Dungeons & Dragons* is how it lowers the bar for contribution to the fantasy genre: it creates, in effect, a do-it-yourself kit, a checklist that prospective monster-makers or spell-weavers need merely fill in with their own fancies. It is surely no coincidence that Gygax harbored thwarted ambitions to write fantasy fiction before *Dungeons*

& Dragons, nor that he turned some his earliest game sessions into short stories as a way of illustrating play (see Section 5.2). Within the support system of the taxonomy, players and referees who would never attempt to author a novel can accrue fantastic narratives and worlds on an installment plan, to share in the pleasure of invention.

The impact of *Dungeons & Dragons* on the fantasy genre, however, was felt less in these details than in its formal structure. *Dungeons & Dragons* conferred to the genre something that mere stories could not deliver: a way for fans to involve themselves personally in fantastic adventures. Where previously, the fantasy genre could only tantalize readers with the visitation theme, allowing them to experience second-hand what it would be like to enter a fantastic world, *Dungeons & Dragons* offered its players the ability to direct the action in that world, the responsibility for the triumph or shame of the hero and the freedom of agency to choose petty villainy over chivalry if so inclined, rather than merely watching over an author's shoulder as the protagonist's fate unfolds. Naturally, authors of fantasy genre fiction quickly incorporated *Dungeons & Dragons* into their visitation stories (as Section 5.9 will show) to appeal to the tastes of this new audience, but those narratives still lacked that critical interactivity with fans, that ability to transcend the static page and improvise, to truly explore a fantastic world. Once *Dungeons & Dragons* entered the equation, the possibility existed that the fantasy genre would one day be defined more so by games than by stories.

CHAPTER THREE: SYSTEM THE RULES OF THE GAME

The various practices we group under the word games share surprisingly little in common. Consider that under the rubric of games fall activities as disparate as baseball, I Spy and Avalon Hill *Tactics*. This great diversity is nothing unique to modern times: it was apparent to Geroloma Cardano, who began his *Liber de ludo aleae* (written around 1520) with the observation, Games depend on either agility of the body, as with a ball;; or on strength, as with a discus and in wrestling;; or on industriously acquired skill, as at chess;; or on chance, as with dice and with knucklebones;; or on both. Philosophers of language have much wondered that we conflate all of these fundamentally different diversions under the umbrella term game. Perhaps the sole factor that unites all games is that they have rules;; the rules of a

wargame constitute a *system*. Broadly, the system of a wargame is the set of mechanisms that simulate the conditions of the battle and allow for the resolution of conflict. *Dungeons & Dragons* inherits the bulk of its system from wargames, most directly the miniature wargame *Chainmail*, but since *Dungeons & Dragons* can model events other than wars, its system is more diverse and comprehensive.

In his classic study *A History of Board Games Other than Chess* (1953), H.J.R. Murray scopes wargames liberally as games which are obviously symbolical of different aspects of warfare. Chess falls under this definition, and there can be no doubt that board and miniature wargaming both claim chess as an ancestor;; identifying the point at which elaborate chess-like games ceased to be chess variants and became wargames is probably the first task for any historian of wargaming. Chess, after all, did not debut on the world stage in its mature form, but instead evolved its system incrementally over the course of centuries and even when it achieved its familiar incarnation, innovators continued to propose modifications, albeit few destined for longevity. While wargames owe their initial structure to chess, the previous chapter advanced a definition of wargaming which requires a setting, something that chess lacks, and this chapter will require of wargames several other elements not present in chess.

The system of any board game dictates the legal moves which can be made by players, including such factors as how many pieces might be placed or moved in a turn, what spaces they may enter, and what conditions result in victory. Consider the example of chess, where individual rules govern the movement of each piece: for example, a pawn moves only one square forward (or optionally two from its starting rank), and must capture diagonally, even if *en passant*, but must not expose check when so doing. The system furthermore determines the manner in which conflicts between pieces are decided, which is in chess exceedingly simple: the attacker has an absolute advantage over any enemy piece in its range of movement, and by moving legally into a space, an attacking piece thereby displaces any resident defender, even if it is the humble pawn assaulting the imperious queen. The combat system of an Avalon Hill board wargame has some commonality with chess, but significantly greater complexity: many pieces may move in a turn, the distance moved may be modified by terrain conditions represented on the board, and the manner of resolving conflict between pieces goes far beyond simple displacement a piece may well attempt but fail to destroy an enemy.

Upon its initial publication, *Dungeons & Dragons* took its place among the most complicated games ever marketed to the public. Its was not the sublime complexity of a game like chess, which might be learned in an afternoon but not mastered in a lifetime the complexity of *Dungeons & Dragons* came from the sheer size and inscrutability of its rules, spread across three booklets and littered with errors, omissions and ambiguities. One must stare hard and read between the lines to discover how the authors intended the game to be played and one must set aside familiarity with later editions, as many signature features of the system arose as clarifications or amendments to the imperfect first edition. Only after rediscovering the context of wargaming circa 1974, which the authors naturally assumed their readership would possess, can one make sense of many gaps in the system.

One must also, however, wonder how and why the authors ever arrived at such a lengthy and intricate set of rules. This answer too lies in the history of wargames, as initially *Dungeons & Dragons* aspired to be nothing more than a wargame in the fantasy setting. When wargames branched off the game of chess, they acquired ever greater levels of realism in the simulation of human events, not just of the combats but all of the logistical challenges that brought great armies to bear on one another. In the course of their history, wargames made tremendous breakthroughs in the application of mathematics to model the unreal, though these advances have largely escaped the notice of historians. This chapter therefore revisits wargames from the eighteenth century up until the time of Gygax and Arneson, and then in light of those works, shows how *Dungeons & Dragons* drew on the fundamental system concepts invented by the wargaming tradition to create a novel and compelling simulation of reality that went beyond modeling imaginary armies, and entered the new realm of modeling imaginary people.

3.1 A HISTORY OF WARGAMES

The heritage of wargames lies in chess, as the first games in the distinct category of wargames borrowed liberally from the boards, game pieces and mechanics of chess. The 1824 Prussian wargame of the younger Reiswitz would mark a decisive severance of wargaming from chess, but works in the preceding four decades, including Reiswitz s own father s initial rendition of the family wargame, shaped the practice of conflict simulation throughout the nineteenth century. Prussian wargaming, or *kriegsspiel* as they called it, fulfilled a long-recognized need for an inexpensive and easily repeated means of training officers for command. Military wargames almost always focus on the present the present day armies, technology and nations at the

time of their development. Much of the evolution of eighteenth and nineteenth-century wargaming reflects the relentless improvements in the tools and execution of warfare, and the resulting need to refine and update wargaming to match reality. Only when hobbyists began toying with these systems did they liberate the setting of wargames from the constraints of the contemporary and explore historical settings, as well as future settings and even impossible fantasy settings of the sort described in the previous chapter. Hobbyists furthermore rejected slavish reproduction of the conditions of battle in favor of a more lenient balance between realism and playability. By the 1960s, these playful wargamers had transformed wargaming from a means of instruction into a far more whimsical pursuit, one that could serve as the basis for modeling the events in a game like *Dungeons & Dragons*.

The history of wargaming that follows is divided into five subsections. After exploring how chess finally settled into its familiar system in the sixteenth century, we discover in 3.1.1 that the earliest German authors on chess promoted the game as a way to educate leaders about war and statecraft. While numerous eighteenth-century variants rendered chess less abstract and more like a modern battlefield, the seminal work of Hellwig (3.1.2) of Braunschweig (better known in English as Brunswick) first rethought board games from the ground up as tools for simulating warfare. Hellwig's ambitions were however impeded by vestigial elements of chess in his design. It was not until the work of the Reiswitz family (3.1.3) in the 1820s that wargaming freed itself from the abstractions of boards and figurines, as well as primitive conflict resolution mechanisms these gave way to mathematical principles of probability that decided game events. The Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel* tradition (3.1.4) dominated thinking about wargames for a full half-century, before two distinct reactions finally overthrew it: one that found its burgeoning complexity an obstacle to military instruction, the other that reinvented wargaming as purely a form of entertainment for hobbyists. The latter reaction intersected with the producers and collectors of model soldiers (3.1.5) in the seminal games of Robert Louis Stevenson and H. G. Wells;; the former, however, persisted in a military wargaming tradition (3.1.6) in the English-speaking world that grew in importance between the World Wars. Eventually, these diverse influences gave rise to political wargames (of which *Diplomacy* is a prominent example, as Chapter Four will show) and the tactical board wargaming tradition (3.1.7).

Throughout this history, those familiar with the system of *Dungeons & Dragons* will see its individual moving parts invented and forgotten with

some frequency. Here someone will invent a system for enduring damage that seems to prefigure hit points;; there another gamer will deploy a figure representing themselves as a commander on the field. In the earliest wargames, Hellwig assigned his pieces a quantified Strength that governed their relative efficacy in combat, though subsequent authors did not follow his lead. Venturini transposed wargames from a board onto a paper map, an innovation intermittently accepted by his successors. In the younger Reiswitz, we find the first recognizable referee who invents the general idea for a game and administers the world with complete authority, as well as the earliest principles of simulation, that is, of randomly deciding fictional events within a statistical model. Verdy du Vernois pioneered the improvisational exchange of game state through a spoken dialog between players and the referee. With centuries to develop and spread, systems circulated in obscure ways, at least until Jack Scruby's *War Game Digest* first gave hobby wargamers a commons to exchange rules and ideas. The subsections under Section 3.2 take the fundamental system components of *Dungeons & Dragons* and relate them back to the history of wargaming, exposing the likely means of transmission and the many alternative rules that did not become a part of the *Dungeons & Dragons* canon, but did set the stage for its eventual successors and competitors.

3.1.1 GAMES OF WAR BEFORE 1780

If it is difficult to discern the origins of wargaming among the ceaseless ephemeral innovations of chess enthusiasts, there are equally serious challenges in attempting to separate the practice of wargaming from that of merely representing military powers with tokens for the purposes of strategizing or diversion. Humanoid figurines are among the earliest representational artifacts produced by man, and those of a military bearing are common throughout antiquity. Many such figures held an obvious religious function, ranging from the small wooden servant figures in the graves of Pharaohs to the thousands of life-sized terracotta warriors entombed with the first Qin emperor (around 200 BCE).¹ It furthermore seems unlikely that the earliest military commanders did not employ figures and some form of miniature terrain to model the movement of troops.

¹ For more on miniatures in ancient and medieval times, see the first two chapters of Garratt, *Model Soldiers*.

The first known board games, which extend back into prehistory, offer many examples where figurines are moved across a board under various

competitive circumstances;; while they might not seem to prefigure modern wargames in any meaningful sense, they did exhibit seminal concepts so obvious that they can hide in plain sight. The very earliest board games already divided a board into cells or squares, and the movement of pieces entailed relocation from one cell to another.² Archaeologists have uncovered gaming boards in Egyptian tombs dating back well into the second millennium BCE, and although the rules of these games were not recorded, the materials themselves have much in common with simple board games today. There is a board delineating the possible positions, game pieces which can occupy those cells and lots, implements of chance, which most likely were cast to determine how many cells a piece should move. Thus we see the surprising antiquity of two properties: first, quantifying space on a board into cells at all, and second, using random number generators to decide how to alter the position of pieces. These techniques seem to have been common in ancient race games, and reappear more or less unmodified in the progenitor of modern commercial children's board games, the sixteenth-century *Game of Goose*, which is survived today by such racetrack-based descendants as the *Game of Life*, *Chutes & Ladders* and *Candyland*.

Board games and implements of chance are roughly coeval. Many lots were naturally occurring objects, like *astragali*, the polyhedral talus bones of common animals which tumbled randomly onto one of four possible sides, a likely inspiration for the invention of six-sided dice. Ancient man-made lots were often simple two-sided throwing sticks, cast in groups and tabulated into sums, though exactly how those sums were interpreted is unclear: were they religious or for entertainment? Even the distinction between ascertaining divine will and gambling may not have occurred to the dice-throwners of the day: when two gamblers cast a lot, and one is victorious, who is to say that victory does not signify divine favor? Even throughout Roman times, the use of lots for divination remained common, as Cicero recorded, and many gamblers ostensibly believed that the winning Venus throw of their dice games owed its appearance to the favor of the goddess herself.³ We can only conjecture about how the most ancient peoples understood the distinction between luck and fate, but that conjecture is informed by the gaming boards



FIGURE 25: A ROMAN ICOSAHEDRAL DIE, FIRST CENTURY CE

² On early board games, see Murray, *History of Board Games Other than Chess*, as well as Parlett, *Oxford History of Board Games History of Chess* is followed for much of the discussion of chess history in the following pages. Images of ancient Egyptian tomb figures appear as well in Baldet, *Lead Soldiers and Figurines*.

³ See Cicero, *De Divinatione*, Bk. II, xxi.

left in Egyptian tombs among many sacred implements, and the accompanying tomb paintings that depict the deceased gaming with the gods.

The figurines used in these earliest board games were crude, and bore no resemblance to any persons or creatures who might be considered the protagonists of the game. In many cases, the pieces were nothing more than abstract counters, sometimes colored differently for each player. Among the earliest surviving examples with any clear representation are a set of Egyptian gaming pieces consisting of long pegs with carved heads of either hounds or jackals (circa 1800 BCE), though perhaps these ornamentations are meant only to distinguish control.⁴ What, if anything, such pieces were intended to represent is also now a subject of guesswork due to the lack of any written record of play.

Greek and Roman authors documented their world zealously enough that even small matters of material culture merited descriptions in works that have survived the centuries;; we know about Greek games in antiquity from offhand remarks of Plato, as well as later authorities like Pollux. The Greek game of *petteia* and the Roman game of *latrunculi* meet Murray s definition of a battle-game, that is, one in which two players direct a conflict between two armies of equal strength upon a field of battle, circumscribed in extent and offering no advantage of ground to either army.⁵ Though customs differed from place to place, both games seem to have been played on a grid of squares, sometimes 8-by-8, perhaps less frequently as large as 10-by-13, where each square can accommodate one piece. Both games gave each side command of an army of undifferentiated pieces which started on the rank nearest the player, and could move across the board after the fashion of chess rooks. Pieces were captured by the method Murray calls interception: when two friendly pieces flank an enemy piece, the enemy is captured, somewhat in the manner of the ancient Chinese game of *weiqi* (better known by its Japanese title *go*). Other aspects of the *latrunculi* system more closely prefigure chess, especially in the rook-like movement across the grid and the starting positions of the pieces. It was a game that the Romans carried with them to the farthest reaches of their empire;; archaeologists have unearthed many *latrunculi* boards in the British Isles, for example.

Murray rejects the contention that these European games inspired chess, which he derives decisively from an earlier Indian prototype called *chaturanga*, a game which was well known on the Indian subcontinent by the seventh century CE.⁶ Although *chaturanga* borrowed the 8-by-8 square board of an earlier race game (*ashtapada*), it represented a complete departure from that game, as well as the western precedents previously

discussed. The name *chaturanga* signifies the four members, or branches, of the Indian army chariots, cavalry, elephants and infantry each represented by a piece with a unique appearance. Joining these soldiers on the board are two varieties of manager: the king and the vizier. Among the great innovations introduced by *chaturanga* is the different style of movements allowed to each unit in the system, which approximated the forces they represent. The chariot (*ratha*), for example, had an exceptional range of movement in a straight line, cruising like the rook in chess, while the cavalry (*turaga*) maneuvered sharply in the crooked line familiar to us as a knight's move.⁷ The object of the game was the capture of the opposing king, which could move but one square in any direction in a turn. With these different powers and properties, *Chaturanga* must reflect a systematic interpretation of the way the Indians of the era saw warfare. Significantly, since the distinct pieces behaved differently, and enjoyed different powers on the board, they needed to look different, and this led to pieces with discernible representational qualities.

⁴ For more on ancient Egyptian games see the discussion in Parlett, *Oxford History of Board Games*, 69.

⁵ Murray, *A History of Board-Games Other than Chess*, 53

⁶ The historian Joseph Needham has argued that *chaturanga* has its roots in Chinese divinatory practices see for example his *Science and Civilisation in China: Physics and Physical Technology* (Vol. 1),

314. Needham makes a case for the inspiration of chess in the practice of scattering iron figurines on a divination board equipped with a lodestone which caused pieces to bat against one another autonomously, but the connection between this practice and the race games that preceded *chaturanga* seems tenuous at best.

What makes the *chaturanga* figures unique in the tradition of figural game pieces is their visual differentiation to illustrate their role in the game. In one early chess set, each pawn is a man on one knee bearing a sword and a shield, and the king sits atop a throne on a carriage drawn by three horses all easily recognized at a glance in the course of play. During Murray's lifetime, archaeologists had not yet uncovered the treasury of eighth-century ivory chess pieces in modern Uzbekistan, which not only demonstrate the rapid dissemination of the game but furthermore suggest that such elaborately carved figural pieces may well have been the original norm for *chaturanga*.⁸ Later surviving sets followed a more abstract convention of

differentiating the pieces, most likely due to Islamic aniconism, discomfiture with the depiction of the human form;; these are more direct ancestors of recognized modern chess pieces.

Illustrations of *chaturanga* elephant pieces from a later date grace the cover of the *Avalon Hill General* of July 1970, under the title Earliest Known Troop Counters. [AHG:v7n2] Gary Gygax authored the cover story accompanying those illustrations, explicating something of the play of *chaturanga* to advance the claim that it constitutes the first attempt at actual simulation of battle in the history of gaming. In this treatment, Gygax pays much attention to four-player variants whose existence is attested in eleventhcentury sources, but which probably developed as a later addition after the entrenchment of a two-player version. As Gygax relates, the game quickly took strong root in the Persian empire under the same of *shatranj*. In Persian circles, the king of *chaturanga* became the *shah*, and as the name of that piece was spoken whenever a move threatened it, the exclamation *shah* persisted across linguistic boundaries and formed the phonetic basis of the various European names for the game (such as the German *Schach*), ultimately transforming into the English words chess and check and even checkers. Other pieces assumed Persian aliases as well;; the chariot became the *rukha*, a name familiar from the fantastic bird of the *Arabian Nights* but also, apparently, a simple name for a chariot, and a homonym of the English rook of chess. Around this time, the game most likely shed any discernible correspondence with the operation of Indian armies.

This proto-chess probably entered European culture from the southwest, via the Islamic territories of the Iberian peninsula, sometime before the year 900 CE. Though the movements of pieces resembled modern chess more than some of the reconstructions proposed for *chaturanga*, the system encouraged a slow pace of game development: for example, the queen piece, the *farzin* or later *fers*, moved diagonally as a bishop but only at one square per turn, making it among the weaker pieces. A given game of this transitional chess started so sluggishly that contemporary authorities believed the order of opening moves inconsequential. European influences quickly cast the rules in flux, and soon Europe boasted an offspring game distinct from the parent *shatranj*. Of course, *shatranj* did not arrive in a Europe ignorant of gaming;; remnants of the Greek and Roman traditions may have inspired some of the deviations from *shatranj*. While the board games of the Romans, like *latrunculi*, perished with their empire, the Germanic peoples of Europe learned the similar game of *tabula* during their

Christianization, which survived as *tafl* in various Scandinavian, German and English enclaves. As early an authority as Tacitus reports that the German people of his time (the end of the first century CE) loved games and were moreover inveterate gamblers, staking their own freedom or their very lives when they had nothing else to wager.⁹ Such board games were played widely among the northern European peoples, as both archaeological evidence and the testimony of the various eddas and sagas attests, until finally being displaced by the rampant popularity of chess.

⁷ It is likely that the original movement of the elephant (which eventually became the bishop) was far shorter than we would think: some accounts suggest the first elephant could only leap two squares diagonally. It is also likely that some early forms of *chaturanga* did incorporate dice. A surviving Persian account suggests that in the four-player variant of *chaturanga*, a six-sided die was rolled to determine which piece would move. See Murray, *A History of Chess*, 58–59.

⁸ The story of the find of the seven Afrasiab chessmen in 1977 is told in Williams, *Master Pieces*.

After a century or so of incubation in European society, chess became a favorite highbrow pastime and an essential component of a gentleman's cultural education. The rules, however, would seem foreign to modern readers at least until the sixteenth century, when the modern queen and bishop had taken the place of the weaker fers and alfil respectively, and when seminal chess texts such as Ruy Lopez's *Libro de la invencion liberal y arte del juego del axedrez* (1561) singled out the deepest and most inexhaustible incarnations of the game, which required both study and inspiration to play. The rise of chess formed one part in a broader cultural acceptance of social gaming at this time. Another, more casual example was playing cards, which invaded European parlors in the late fourteenth century. Card games had the great virtue of relying largely on chance, the proverbial luck of the draw, without resorting to dice: the humble die not only languished under *de jure* religious prohibition as an encouragement to gamble, but also *de facto* carried associations with the lowest classes of society. Like chess, cards came to Europe by way of the Islamic world, most likely Egypt in particular, though in this instance their ultimate source was probably China.¹⁰ The suitability of cards for various sorts of unobtrusive gaming in mixed company, situations which called for more than two players and minimal concentration, perhaps freed chess to indulge in true extremes

of intellectual rigor. Both chess sets and decks of cards were marketed by diverse parties, in adherence to loose international standards that admitted of significant regional variation, and thus were effectively the pioneering massmanufactured games.

The crystallization of chess into its complex, mature form did not diminish the popularity of chess variants. In the twelfth century, for example, a game called rithmomachy became popular among European intellectuals. Rithmomachy play transpired on a doubled chessboard one with sixteen horizontal ranks and eight vertical files. It was played with a variety of polygonal and strangely numbered pieces, and the capture of pieces required establishing a correspondence between the number of the attacking and defending piece, sometimes mathematically modified by factors like the number of an assisting piece, or the number of squares between the attacker and the defender.¹¹ Not all chess variants exhibited such a level of abstruseness and removal from the core chess system. From the thirteenth century forward, Germans enjoyed the simpler game of courier (*Currier-Spiel*) on an 8-by-12 (eight vertical ranks and twelve horizontal files) board, with each player commanding twelve pawns and a gamut of betters: beyond the familiar knight, rook, king, fers and alfil, they deployed the *Mann*, the *Schleich* and finally the powerful bishop-like ⁹Tacitus, *Germania*, Ch. 24.

¹⁰ Playing cards underwent numerous and frequent transformations after migrating to Europe, and thus it would be a hundred years before cards started to exhibit the four suits we would recognize today.

¹¹ On rithmomachy, see Murray, *A History of Board Games other than Chess*, 84.

Currier from which the game takes its name all in all, nine different pieces with distinct roles and movements, as opposed to the six different pieces in modern chess. An article by Gygax on courier chess, incidentally, appears in the February 1968 issue of the IFW *Spartan* and was subsequently reprinted in the *International Wargamer*. [IW:v3n1] This was only one of many pieces on chess variants Gygax authored in the early days of his involvement in the wargaming community which, if nothing else, illustrate that Gygax delved below the superficial aspects of gaming and researched its history and principles with a rigor and thoroughness uncommon in the hobby community of the day.

When the first German-language manual on chess appeared, the book *Das Schachoder König-Spiel* (1616), The Game of Chess or Kings, it

necessarily went beyond just the familiar baseline chess game: while principally composed of a translation (via an Italian intermediary) of Ruy Lopez's 1561 classic, it also detailed both the games of courier chess and rhythmomachy. The author of this book, Augustus the Younger, duke of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, published this treatise under the pseudonym Gustavus Selenus. Augustus was an exceptionally learned and traveled man for his era, who toured most of the great courts of Europe, even attending the coronation of James I of England in 1603. To Selenus, chess was more than just a game, it was a model of politics and strategy hence the title of his work, which equates the play of chess with kingship. Murray records that early Islamic authorities well recognized the potential value in simulating war because war is the most effective school for teaching the value of administration, decision, prudence, caution, arrangement, strategy, circumspection, vigour, courage, force, endurance and bravery.¹² Selenus believed chess exemplified a number of lessons for rulers, for example that the power of the sovereign cannot exist without the support of subjects, which is indeed a lesson that the weak king of chess might be construed to exemplify. As such, Selenus esteemed chess as a method of training for governance and war, and his conviction is probably the prime mover in the German-speaking world of the many later attempts to reinvent chess as a more direct method of instruction in matters of war and state. The practical need for schooled and experienced nobles was well exemplified within two years of the publication of *Das Schach- oder König-Spiel*, when the German states fell into the immense dispute over religion and sovereignty known as the Thirty Years War. In the great redistricting that concluded that conflict, Augustus assumed a new seat as the duke of the principality of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel.¹³

One of the earliest works following the lead of Selenus is Christoph Weickhmann's *New-erfundenes Grosses Königs-Spiel* (1664), The Newly-invented Great Game of Kings. It not only echoes the title of Selenus' work, but is actually dedicated to him (among others, though only his name AUGUSTO is in all capital letters) and elaborates his vision of a chess as an exemplar of governance. Weickhmann's game follows the general precedent of courier chess and similar chess variants, insofar as it expands the board and adds more pieces, but Weickhmann takes this much further. He presents fourteen different pieces, each with a unique way of moving (though always in a manner reminiscent of existing or past chess practice). Furthermore,

Weickhmann pieces bear a more plausible correspondence to the agents of a contemporary military government: there is a marshal, a colonel, various heralds, chancellors, of course couriers and in place of pawns there stand soldiers.¹⁴ Instead of the twenty-four pieces under the command of each courier player, Weickhmann players direct thirty pieces each and moreover, Weickhmann game is not limited to two players. In fact four, six and even eight players can contend in the *Grosses Königs-Spiel*.¹⁵ While the board of courier chess is larger than a chessboard and smaller than the rithmomachy board, Weickhmann board varies with the number of players. Moreover, Weickhmann abandons the traditional board built as a grid of squares for one made up of circles interconnected with horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines that show how pieces might move. Even the two-player variant, however, uses three chessboards worth of circles (195 total, 15 long by 13 wide);; the four-player game, vividly depicted by a plate at the start of the book, might at a quick glance be mistaken for five separate chessboards assembled into a cross shapes (a central 7-by-7 square of 49 spaces with four 7-by-6 fields of 42 circles connecting to each of its edges, for 217 total circles). When you consider that an eight-player game would bring some 240 pieces into play, obviously its board must be quite a bit larger: along the same lines as the four player version, it connects the eight 7x6 fields where each player's pieces begin with a vast 19x19 square, for 507 total spaces. The six-player game displays the most irregular shape a six-pointed asterisk whose ¹²
Murray, A History of Chess, 209.

¹³ In Wolfenbüttel, Augustus founded the famous *Bibliotheca Augusta*, then one of the great libraries of northern Europe and still today an unrivaled trove of hundreds of thousands of pre-1800 printed books and manuscripts.

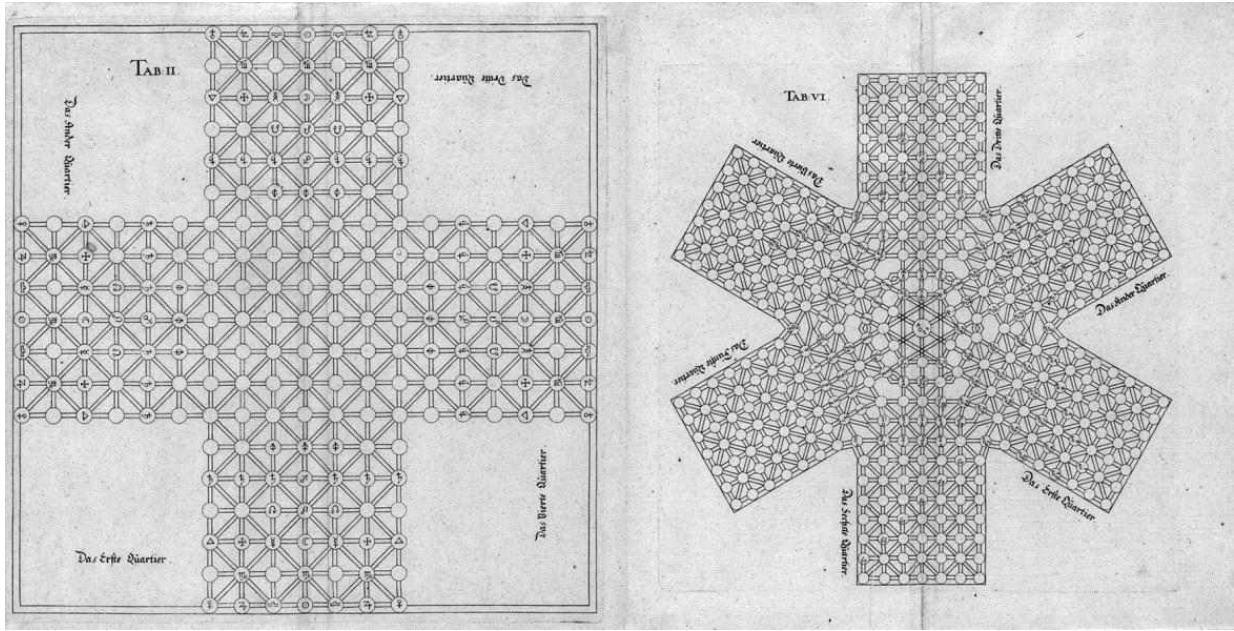


FIGURE 26: WEICKHMANN'S FOUR-- AND SIX--PLAYER KÖNIGS--SPIEL BOARDS

¹⁴ Since this is a matter of some confusion in secondary literature, the fourteen distinct pieces of the *Königs-Spiel* are: the *König*, *Marshalck*, *Colonell* and *Reuter-hauptmann* of which each player has only one each;; the *Cantzler* (Allgaier later gives a more modern spelling *Kanzler*), *Rath*, *Herold*, *Geistliche*, *Ritter*, *Curier*, and *Adjutant* of which each player has two;; the *Trabant* (a name for halberdier guards) and *Leibschütz* of which each player has three;; and finally the *Soldat*, of which each player has six, for a total of thirty pieces fielded per player.

¹⁵ The front piece of the work suggests there is also a three-player variant, but the contents do not seem to describe one, nor is a three-player board pictured in the back.

center contains progressively smaller concentric hexagons of circles wrapping around a large circle in the middle.

Despite its several innovations, Weickhmann variant does not seem to have directly influenced many subsequent authors;; although an abbreviated account of the *Königs-Spiel* is collected in Allgaier s 1796 anthology, the elder Reiswitz tellingly does not mention Weickhmann in his 1816 history of wargaming. The *Königs-Spiel* is a significant work, however, for its expansion of Selenus s aspiration to use chess to instruct rulers about conflict. Only about thirty pages of Weickhmann book deal with the rules of the *Königs-Spiel* the remainder of the 250-page work provides sixty lengthy

observations on the lessons to glean from the play of the game, reinforced in the typical manner of Renaissance scholarship with ample quotations from ancient authorities on governance.

The next century saw innumerable variants compete for the attention of chess aficionados, though few that could rival the sheer elaboration of Weickhmann invention. Mostly, new entrants fell into the genre of great chess, that is enlargements of the chess board, increases in the number of pieces, and potentially the addition of new variant pieces. A good example would be the game of the Duke of Rutland, introduced around the halfway mark of the eighteenth century. Rutland's board measured ten ranks by fourteen files, with each side commanding twenty-eight pieces in total. To help populate the broad back rank, Rutland introduced the hybrid concubine and crowned rook pieces;; the former moved as either a knight or a rook, the latter as either a king or a rook. Johann Mehler produced in Prague a variant similar to Rutland's game, which employed a smaller eleven-by-eleven board and twenty-five pieces per side, entitled *Neues Kriegsspiel, oder verbessertes Schachspiel* (1770), The New Wargame, or Improved Chess.¹⁶ Its author laments the lack of correspondence between the powers of traditional chess pieces and their namesakes, and thus modernizes the chessboard with bodyguards (queens), cuirassiers (knights), hussars and dragoons (both bishops) and fusiliers as pawns, though these pawns have greater spatial mobility they can move left, right and back at the expense of social mobility, since reaching the final rank of enemy territory will not grant them a promotion. The usage in the title of the German word *kriegsspiel*, for wargame, in this publication probably marks the beginning of that tradition, although it is a bit premature, as only the work initiated in the following decade by Hellwig triggered a clear break from the traditional principles of chess.

3.1.2 THE BRUNSWICK GAMERS (1780 1811)

Johann Christian Ludwig Hellwig (1743 1831) took the first step toward a wargame independent of chess in Braunschweig, that same city where Gustavus Selenus

¹⁶

edition, and van der Linde, *Geschichte und Litteratur des Schachspiels* (1874), records the same. In van der nineteenth-century catalogs corroborate that assessment. The 1783 *kriegsspiel* published explicitly its introduction, as well as comparable

brevity and style. Another later work, however, *Das preussisch National-Schach* (1806)

from this 1770 chess history, he gives only the name of the publisher (Hochenburger) rather than an author, but also admits that he knows this work only through the brief notice it receives in the preface of Firmas-Périés.

reigned and gamed a century before.¹⁷ Hellwig was born in Garz, a city in the northern German principality of Pomerania. After graduating from university in Frankfurt in 1766, he was appointed tutor to the fifth son of the current duke of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Karl I, a great-grandson of Selenus. Sadly, his young charge died late in the summer of 1770, but not before recommending Hellwig to his father. For the next several years, Hellwig taught in the secondary schools of Braunschweig;; he received his doctorate in 1778, and a year later, he was appointed the Master of Pages (*Pagenhofmeister*) of the city. It was in support of the education of the pages of Braunschweig, young men bound for military service, that Hellwig first developed his wargame, published under the name *Versuch eines aufs Schachspiel gebaueten taktischen Spiels von zwey und mehrern Personen zu spielen* (1780), Attempt to build upon chess a tactical game which two or more persons might play. Although the title of that work does not contain the term *kriegsspiel*, it is used throughout the text, and his subsequent, more mature 1803 version of the game adopts as its main title *Das Kriegsspiel*.

Hellwig game enjoyed some popularity in his lifetime, but his life was so rich in accomplishment that he might be disappointed to be remembered two centuries later primarily for *kriegsspiel*. As a professor at Braunschweig Collegium Carolinum (now the Technical University at Brunswick), he taught the natural sciences and mathematics;; in the latter discipline, he briefly instructed no less a student than Gauss, though Hellwig, recognizing his pupil s genius, deferentially suggested that Gauss need not attend lectures as it was perfectly obvious he would learn nothing from them. His work as a natural scientist, in entomology in particular, is also noteworthy, as his collection of specimens, combined with those of his two academic sons-in-law, formed the centerpiece of the entomological holdings of the University of Berlin.

More to our purposes, Hellwig tactical game introduced the lion s share of the underlying principles of wargaming, and the historical significance of these innovations to this study is difficult to overestimate. As the title of his

1780 work suggests, his initial design draws many foundational elements from chess, in part because Hellwig felt that retaining those familiar principles would ease the acceptance of his game. However, Hellwig from the start broke from traditional chess much more radically than Weickhmann. Hellwig fundamentally reconsidered movement and displacement, conceived of novel victory conditions and furnished his game with a concrete rather than an abstract setting, both in terms of terrain and combatants. He cast these system elements in a game with two distinct purposes: in his own words, first, to bring to life the rules of the art of war, and

¹⁷ Some sources, especially modern ones, spell as in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, an account of his life largely followed here: together those arg

spelling probably originated with Cramer, an early French translator;; from there it was adopted by the 1897 *Revue Militaire de l'étranger*, the history of wargames followed by twentieth-century English *kriegsspiel* histories like those of Sayre, McHugh, Young and their followers such as Perla and Parlett. A number of other minor but common inaccuracies can be traced to this same lineage. On the other introduction to his 1797 *kriegsspiel*, as does Allgaier in his 1796 survey of chess, *königspiel* and *kriegsspiel*. It is possible that some intermediate edition known to those two and Cramer might have instigated this trend, though if so, it is not an edition known to chess bibliographers such as van der Linde. Later contemporaries like the Grafen von Westphalen render the spelling as we do.

thus to serve students of this art. My secondary intention was to provide, to those who need no instruction, a pleasant entertainment through a game where nothing depends on chance, but rather all depends on the skill of the player.¹⁸

The nature of the board itself is among the most influential of Hellwig inventions. His board is a large grid, but unlike the abstract two-tone setting of the chessboard, each square in his grid contains one of a set of terrain types, coded by color. White signified ordinary ground, but the more interesting varieties included mountain (red), swamp (green) and water (blue) squares. Special terrain might impose restrictions on unit movement or confer combat advantages;; mountains, for example, are completely impassable, and crossing a river requires the deployment of a special pontoon unit. Cities, villages and even various fortifications can rise and fall on these

squares during the course of gameplay. At the start of the game, the available territory is typically divided between the two players by an explicit border, and players are free to distribute their forces throughout their territory provided that all their units begin more than one turn's march away from the border quite a departure from the assigned seating of chess pieces. Hellwig furthermore prescribes no particular size for his board;; while he notes that he usually employs a rectangular board of 49 ranks by 33 files (yielding 1,617 squares total), and in fact offers a board of those dimensions for sale with a fixed arrangement of terrain types, this is only the simplest of several layouts for his board.¹⁹ Even in his earliest edition, he encouraged experimentation and customization of the board to fit the needs of players. In the back of his 1782 expansion (which mostly runs through the moves of a demonstration game), he proposed a configurable board built from 2,000 six-sided cubes, which displayed a different terrain type on each face, all of which could be rotated independently and then ordered into a grid and arranged to form completely arbitrary battlefields at the discretion of players;; by 1803, he offered such an apparatus for sale in lieu of a board for the considerable sum of ten *Pistolen*, a gold coin of the era.²⁰ If 2,000 squares of terrain did not suit a particular customer, Hellwig happily sold smaller or larger configurable battlefields. His game thus allowed players to approximate real or fictional territories as desired for any given battle scenario. By 1782, Hellwig had already received notice of players recreating¹⁸ Hellwig, *Das Kriegsspiel*, 2.

¹⁹ the aforementioned 49-by-33 board, but (more sophisticated) game splayed out across a 40-by-66 board, for 2,640 squares. The usually reliable van der Linde in his 1874 chess bibliography dubiously ascribes those latter dimensions to the 1803 edition of Hellwig.

²⁰ The Pistole was an early modern unit of coinage inspired by Spanish doubloons which admitted of significant regional variance;; translating the spending power of money from this era to current times is exceptionally problematic. Ede, *A View of the Gold And Silver Coins of All Nations* (1808), values the ten-thaler Brunswick Pistole at one pound eighteen shillings ninepence, which, scaled against a conservative retail price index, suggests we might value the Pistole at around a hundred pounds in and a half Pistolen, though these figures probably only covered the boards, not the specialty pieces required for play. Competition emerged quickly, however. Note that Firmas-Périés (1815) is aware that Joseph Beiner in Kißlegg then

sold configurable Hellwig boards: at a cost of forty-four florins (of the French Empire) or four pounds sterling for a board of 1,617 squares;; he also sold the larger size (2,640 squares) at a cost of fifty-five florins or five pounds sterling closer to three hundred inclusive as well of the 940 figures required for the game. See *Jeu de Stratégie*, 22.

with his game the Battle of Krefeld (1758), an important encounter in the Seven Years War in which the Brunswickers did notable service.

In both the 1780 and 1803 editions of his *kriegsspiel*, Hellwig aspired to depict the conventional forces one saw on European battlefields of his time in this ambition, he recaptured the original intention of Indian *chaturanga* by distinguishing game pieces into the three contemporary branches of the military: as infantry, cavalry or artillery. While the treatment of artillery is essentially the same in both versions of the game, the treatment of infantry and cavalry in the earlier rendition merits a digression to illustrate how Hellwig transitioned away from the foundational influence of chess, and furthermore to reveal some surprisingly initial chess-based system.

In 1780, Hellwig infantry and cavalry involved assigning the traditional chess pieces to the contemporary branches of the armed services. He bases this assignment on the movement capability of the pieces;; since the speedy queen, bishop and rook have essentially unhindered movement along their permitted axes, he interprets them as cavalry, while pawns and even knights (despite their noted association with horses) fill the ranks of the infantry. Joining the cavalry are three new pieces, none of which would be out of place in the chess variants of the day: the elephant works exactly like the concubine in the Duke of Rutland's game (a hybrid of rook and knight), the jumping bishop acts as either a bishop or knight, and finally the jumping queen adds the knight's move to the queen's already deadly arsenal. To populate the expansive board, players at the start of the game are copiously supplied with these forces, including forty pawns, thirty knights, six queens, five jumping queens, eight jumping bishops, seven elephants, four rooks and four bishops. Intriguingly, Hellwig furthermore sorts these various chess pieces by a quantified strength (*Stärke*), where strength is equal to the number of styles of chess movement that a piece may exercise. A simple knight or bishop, each of which is capable of only one style of movement, has a strength value of one. Since a queen can move effectively in the style of a bishop or a rook, she has a strength of two, as do the jumping bishop and the elephant. Only the jumping queen, who may act as a bishop, rook or

knight, has a strength of three. These strength values do not come into play in the ordinary capture of pieces, which is roughly chess-like in the sense that one captures by displacement.²¹ Strength does however come into play in the attack and defense of fortifications, for which the combined strength value of all attacking units is compared to prescient aspects of his

method for modeling

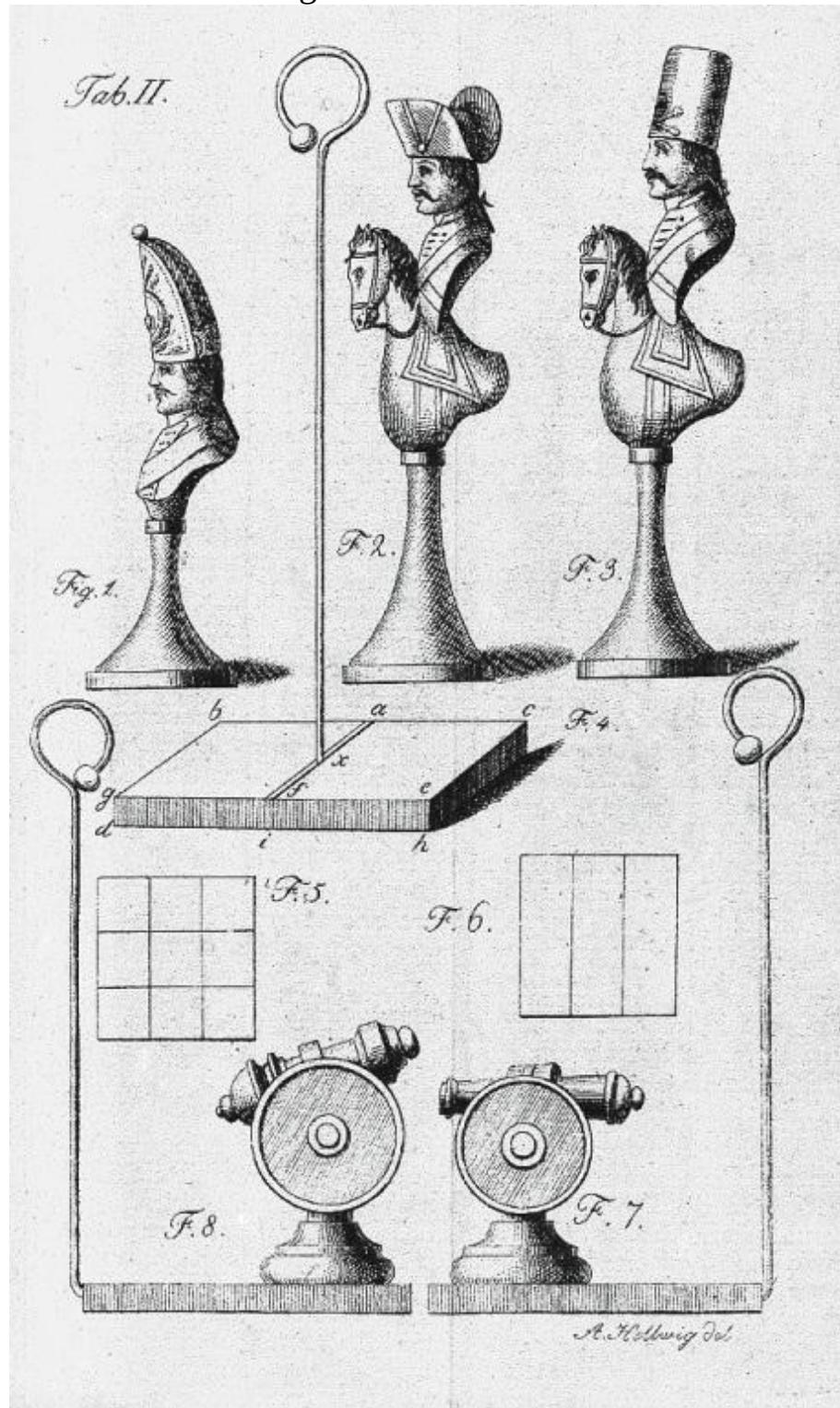


FIGURE 27: PIECES

²¹ The 1780 version of Hellwig is certainly chess-like for capture by infantry-type pieces;; cavalry pieces, however, can take as many pieces in a row as they can reach. In other words, a rook moving along a particular file can take any and all enemy pieces on that file during a single turn provided that its path is not blocked by some sort of terrain obstruction (which may include anything from rivers and mountains to ramparts or friendly pieces). The intention is to simulate a cavalry charge which may disperse multiple ranks of defenders.

the combined strength value of all defending units in order to determine the outcome of an assault. This is almost certainly the first instance of the use of a graded, quantified score for the power of units in a battle game, and it is especially noteworthy that it can be pooled by multiple attackers or defenders;; this is a remarkable prefiguration of the combat value systems rediscovered by Avalon Hill and others two centuries later.

The remnants of chess are completely discarded for Hellwig later and more considered 1803 edition. In place of the familiar and variant chess pieces there are completely novel miniature figures: grenadiers, light and heavy cavalry, and three varieties of cannon which must be manned by infantry pieces on the board in order to fire.²² For various aspects of conflict resolution, the system requires that Hellwig game pieces visibly face a particular direction, so these figurines depart from the symmetric abstractions of Arabic chess pieces and return to a more representational cast: his infantry and cavalry figures bear a visage that unambiguously overlooks a particular square. Each such figurine represents not just a single soldier on foot or horseback, but an entire battalion, an early rendition of the system of figure scale (see Section 3.2.4). In the scenarios that Hellwig recommends, a single player might deploy more than seventy battalions of infantry and twenty battalions of cavalry. Although he may field a multitude of units on the board, Hellwig goes against the precedent of chess variants like Weickmann by reducing, rather than expanding, the variety of pieces in play.

The movement of these 1803 pieces further breaks with the precedent of chess. Infantry and Dragoon cavalry share the chess queen's directions of

movement but not her infinite range: infantry can move only eight spaces at a time and cavalry twelve. Those movements transpire in a new turn structure that is far more complex than chess;; in essence, though each player may move only one piece per turn, after a movement has been made, any number of adjacent units may conflict with one another.²³ Infantry or cavalry may capture another piece in much the style of chess, through displacement;; infantry may capture any piece in the three squares touching in front of them. For those familiar with chess notation, for example, an infantry figure on a square equivalent to e4, and facing e8, could capture any unit at d5, e5 or f5, while the same unit at e4, if facing h4, could capture any unit at e5, e4 or e3. This separation of movement and conflict into two distinct phases within the same turn also anticipates later developments in the Avalon Hill tradition.

In the conflict of Hellwig's day, however, a battalion did not necessarily need to move to strike at an enemy, thanks to the growing power of firearms. Thus, shooting has its own innovative system model in Hellwig²² *Brückewagen* they are *Bruückentransporteurs*, a special case of the *transporteur* tray for moving multiple units at a time.

²³ Hellwig divides the possible actions that can be performed by a player into two classes: actions of the first class, of which a player may perform as many as he likes in a given turn, and actions of the second class, of which only one can be performed per turn. Relocating a piece from one square to another is an action of the second class, and thus, like chess, a player moves only one piece per turn. A player may however as a first class action change the facing orientation of any or all of his pieces, capture any piece that might legally be captured and discharge any firearms possessed by his pieces, including cannons. Although an aggressor does move to displace as it captures, this assault does not

1803 game. Infantry and artillery units may *kriegsspiel*; in the 1780 edition positioned to capture enemies, all such captures may legitimately be performed simultaneously. The changes to orientation are significant because in some cases it is not possible to capture a piece facing its aggressor.

discharge their firearms instead of advancing on an enemy;; if an infantry unit destroys an enemy with gunfire, that enemy is removed from the board but the infantry unit does not advance to occupy the vacated position. The efficacy of rifles rests largely on the orientation of the

opposing unit: infantry units facing one another enjoy effectively immunity to one another's gunfire, so only flanking fire had an effect. Artillery, however, functions in a manner even more removed from the traditional operations of chess: artillery fire targets multiple squares at a time, generally squares distant from the cannon itself in the direction it faces, and will not only destroy units in those squares but also, depending on the strength of the gun, might level buildings and bridges. This action at a distance, which models events that were unthinkable in the military setting that inspired *chaturanga* or the medievalism of chess, severs many of the bonds that tethered wargames to the abstraction and anachronism of early conflict simulation.

In both versions of Hellwig's game, the ultimate goal is not to force a king into submission there are no kings nor even middle management in either version of Hellwig *kriegsspiel*. Instead there is a fortress, ideally situated in the most remote position from the border on each side, and when a unit in your control occupies the enemy fortress peacefully for a turn, you win the game though in order to do so, one almost always must destroy virtually all of the enemy force. Given the sizable armies involved, whittling down opposing troops to the point of a plausible capture requires a lengthy tactical game.

This barest outline of Hellwig *kriegsspiel* must suffice so we can explore the further evolution of systems. We can only briefly mention that, even in its earliest incarnation, the game admitted a four-player incarnation with subordinate generals commanding subsets of the forces on each side. We similarly will skip the details of bridgebuilding or supply lines on the battlefield, and Hellwig elaborate ideas about modeling lines of communication which might be interrupted by enemy forces. Hellwig was almost certainly also the progenitor of an idea that later achieved much currency in miniature wargaming, the concept of grouping clusters of miniature figures together so that they might all be moved at once on a single tray. The overall complexity may appear daunting, but Hellwig insists that his students, the pages of Brunswick, all young men between thirteen and fifteen years of age, mostly learned the game by observation rather than studying manuals, albeit presumably under the author's direct tutelage and supervision.

Interest in Hellwig invention spread gradually through Europe over the next twenty years. In some circles, it was met with guarded appreciation, in others, some criticism Hellwig consumes virtually the entire seventeen-page

foreword to his 1782 wargame supplement with the refutation of a critic. Johan Allgaier published a 1796 anthology of chess variants including *königspiel*, rithmomachy, four-player chess and the new *kriegsspiel* of Hellwig, which Allgaier professes to be popular with the young and quite realistic, yet for all that tedious (*verdrießlich*), and consequently he proposes play on a greatly abbreviated board.²⁴ Others doubted its verisimilitude because a civilian designed it. Jakob Mauvillon, a professor of military history at the Collegium Carolinum in Braunschweig with a deep background as a soldier, initially opposed the game, but gradually came to embrace it when he observed how it stimulated the imagination of his own students.²⁵ He not only became a staunch defender of Hellwig game, but even worked toward a French translation until his death in 1794. Among Mauvillon's pupils was Johann Georg Julius Venturini (1772–1802), who, with Mauvillon's encouragement, set out to revise Hellwig's endeavor. While Venturini openly acknowledges Hellwig as the first to show convincingly the usefulness of wargames and praises the merits of that first *kriegsspiel*, he insists that it is natural that time and continued study must beget new inventions, new additions, and so on.²⁶

²⁴ Allgaier, *Der Anweisung zum Schachspiel* (Vol. 2). Allgaier proposes play on a 25-by-24 board (600 squares). This would not be the last time that a critic attacked a wargame for being too realistic and consequently lacking in playability, but it may very well have been the first time.

Said time and study resulted in Venturini's *Spiels zum Nutzen und Vergnügen, besonders aber* Description and rules for a new war-game, for improvement and for pleasure, but especially for use in military schools. Venturini, a fellow Braunschweiger and an engineering captain in the service of the duchy, wrote extensively on military strategy and theory in his brief lifetime, advocating that mathematics might better inform military decisions. His expansion of Hellwig's wargame is in many respects an elaboration of its themes: Venturini increases the variety of terrain, takes into account seasons and weather, vastly increases the sorts of entrenchments and fortifications that combatants might construct, and adds significant, but not necessarily exciting, detail to the feeding, equipping and support of forces in the field. His armies are much the same: infantry, light and heavy cavalry, as well as some varieties of artillery;; although the manner in which those forces contend differs from Hellwig, it does not differ in a manner that substantially advanced the evolution of wargames. The most lasting of Venturini's

improvements is to the representation of the setting: where Hellwig plays on an enlarged chessboard with colored squares, Venturini goes to war on a map (*Karte*).

A momentary digression into the history of cartography will quickly show the importance of this distinction. The invention of wargames depended on recent improvements to maps, which were, a century before Hellwig, only loosely anchored to the grid of longitude and latitude;; prior to that, their depiction of the world enjoyed a subjective liberty that appears almost childish to modern eyes.²⁷ Even the maps common throughout the eighteenth century were largely cadastral maps, which is to say, maps depicting political divisions, cities, roads and perhaps rivers and coasts rather than any properly-scaled topographic features of the terrain in question. Accurate topographic maps were a marvelous innovation in the eighteenth century, one that was of intense interest to the various military powers of Europe. Consider the difficulties of producing topographic maps in the early modern era, of dispatching teams of field surveyors with adequate education and equipment to determine positions and elevations in sufficient detail for the resulting map to serve as a basis for civil or military planning. To give some sense of the magnitude of this undertaking, the first topographic map of France was begun by Cassini in *Beschreibung und Regeln eines neuen Krieges zum Gebrauche in Militairschulen* (1797),

²⁵

edition. The fact that Mauvillon, a free-thinker of French Huguenot descent, is known to have been a member of a contemporary radical Freemasonic group known as the *Bayerische Illuminaten* can be of no consequence in his disapproval or subsequent advocacy of wargaming, and is for no overarching reason divulged.

²⁶ Venturini, *Beschreibung*, xviii.

²⁷ See Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, 144, on the tradition of medieval maps, which are based on a concept of geogra

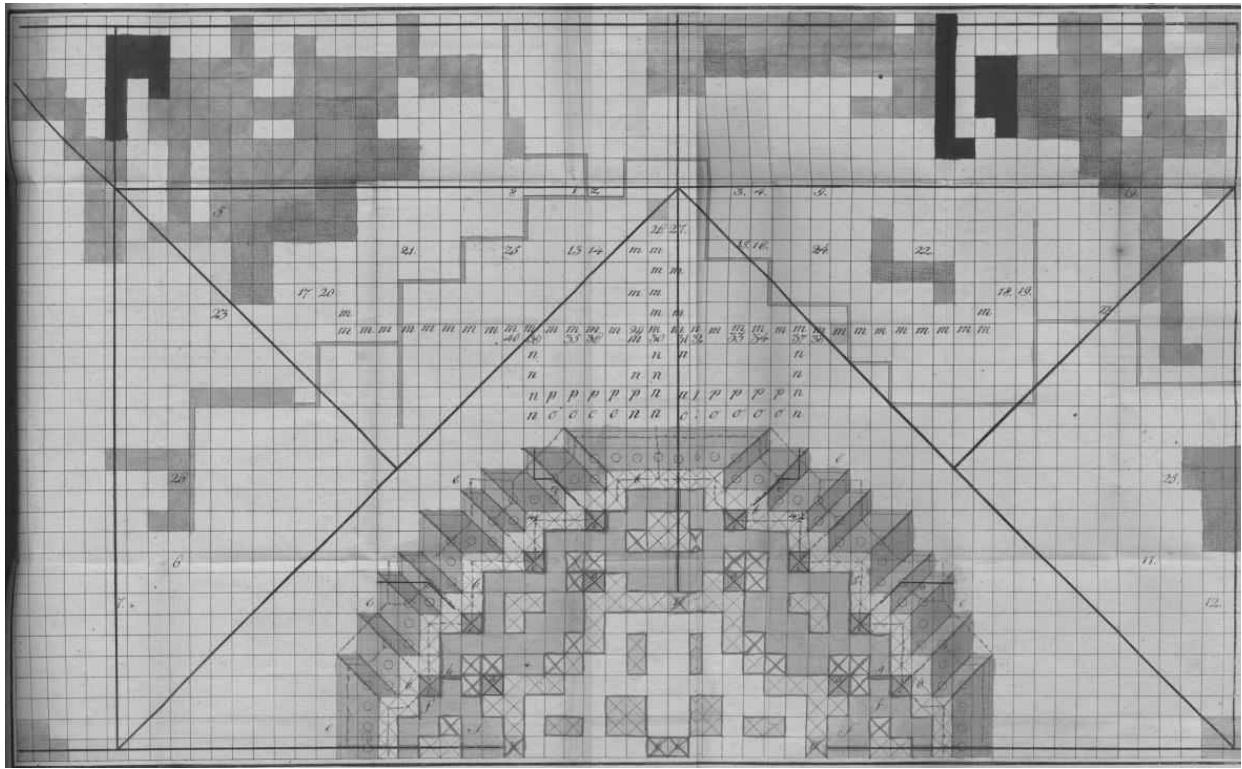


FIGURE 28: VENTURINI'S WARGAME MAP (1797)

1670, continued by his son, and subsequently by his grandson, who took it over as a slightly expanded project in 1744 and succeeded in delivering a map (in some 180 sheets) in 1789, just in time for the French Revolution.²⁸ The appearance of the national French map quickly induced the governments of other European nations to embark on similar projects, such as the British Ordnance Survey, which began a comparable endeavor in 1790. It is no coincidence that Venturini's work appeared soon after this fanfare for detailed mapping, nor that Hellwig's work, which appeared before it, features only a simple board of colored checkers.

Modern maps have a specific scale: one inch on the map corresponds to some larger number of inches in the real world, depending on the resolution level of the map. The Cassini family's map, for example, had a scale of 1:86,400. Although Venturini replaced the wargame board with a map, he still imposed a one-inch square grid over that map, and he imagined each square of the grid to be two thousand paces (*Schritte*) across, which if we assume a German military pace of roughly thirty inches, means his game employs a scale around 1:60,000, or a bit shy of one mile per square. The

size of map was of less importance to Venturini than its scale;; he felt any map sized between five feet by three feet (2,160 squares, or 60 ranks by 36 files) and eight feet by six feet (6,912 squares, or 96 ranks by 72 files) would be equally suitable for his game.²⁹ Venturini includes a full-color map of that smaller size in the back of his book, as well as a tinier tactical map (36 by 24, or 865 squares) that shows rivers, fortresses, bridges and similar terrain features. The ability to map his game onto real and detailed terrain allowed Venturini to claim a more realistic *kriegsspiel*, one suitable for military schools which trained officers.³⁰

²⁸ See Ehrenberg, *Mapping the World*, 149.

²⁹ , a claim followed by Perla and Parlett, which is in any event not substantiated by the earliest editions of Venturini. Venturini is not the only victim of such confusions: the claim in the 1897 *Revue Militaire de l'etranger* (which is reiterated by Sayre, McHugh and all derivative accounts) that the game of Hellwig was a fixed 1,666 squares is not confirmed by any of the three original Hellwig editions (presumably, that board would be 49-by-33). In any event, the notion that either of these wargames were intended for play in some fixed number of squares is quite explicitly refuted by both Venturini and Hellwig, both of whom allowed for variable board sizes.

Once you have a map with a scale, even one as rough as one square equaling two thousand paces, you have opened the door to a far greater degree of realism in wargaming. In wargames, scale is a tool that binds the system to the setting. Given that soldiers in the game march a certain number of squares in a turn, that number can now be converted into an absolute distance, of which we can ask, how long would it take real soldiers to cross that distance? That gives us a sense of the real duration of turns. We can then research the distance that light and heavy cavalry might plausibly travel in the same duration, and determine whether or not their movement is realistically proportioned to that of infantry in the game system. We might similarly compare the actual distance that various forms of artillery can shoot with the established spatial distance of game squares, and tune the game behavior of artillery accordingly. With a consistent scale, a game ceases to be an abstraction like the game of chess, and begins to evolve toward something entirely novel: a simulation.

Both Hellwig and Venturini helpfully supplied their subscription list in the first edition of their games, and thus we have some insight into the original distribution of *kriegsspiel* through the German-speaking world.

Obviously, Hellwig sent copies to his patron the Duke and other interested parties in Braunschweig, but his distribution list spans quite a few Germanic states and includes aristocratic, military and academic audiences, with several copies going out to the regional superpower Prussia, including one copy to its ten-year-old Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, soon to rule as Friedrich Wilhelm III. For his part, Venturini dedicated his work to the Crown Prince of Denmark, and although most of the copies of his first edition were intended for the Danish military, some few remained in Braunschweig, and three copies were dispatched to the engineering academy of Prussia. The ties between Braunschweig and Prussia had gradually strengthened in the eighteenth century, especially after the marriage of Karl I, Duke of Braunschweig to one of the daughters of Frederick the Great, the King of Prussia. When Karl I died in 1780, the same year that Hellwig game first appeared, his son Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand assumed the dukedom;; he was simultaneously a Field Marshall in the Prussian army. It is in Prussia that *kriegsspiel* would take its deepest root, and Venturini game would be remembered as a seminal contribution, if not always in the most positive light.

The release of Venturini in 1797, along with the revision of Hellwig in 1803, inspired a wave of *kriegsspiel* publications in Germany, Austria, Italy, France and England over the next twenty years. One author of the era, Georg Emmanuel Opiz, claimed that his father Johann Ferdinand Opiz (1741–1812), a former Jesuit and a well-known writer of his time, had actually invented *kriegsspiel* sometime around 1760, though the Opiz game did not see print until 1806, when *kriegsspiel* deriving from Hellwig already enjoyed widespread acclaim.³¹ By 1804, Hellwig appeared in French, no doubt prompting le Comte de FirmasPériés to produce his very Hellwig-inspired *Le jeu de Stratégie, ou les échecs militaires* in 1808. In Italy, Francesco Giacometti circulated his *Nuovo Giuoco di Scacchi, ossia il Giuoco della Guerra* first in an Italian edition in 1793, and then, given certain changes in the political situation of Italy, in a French-language edition of 1801, *Nouveau jeu des éches ou jeu de la Guerre*. Major J. J. von Glöden in 1817 issued a German-language *kriegsspiel*, as did Johann Gottlieb Perkuhn that same year. Some openly acknowledged their debt to Hellwig, like the *Zusätze zu den Regeln des Hellwigschen Kriegsspiel und Veränderung dieser Regeln* (1818). No less than fifteen European authors had weighed in on wargaming before the first quarter of the nineteenth century had passed.

While the great interest in wars and gaming owes a real debt to Hellwig landmark inspiration, it perhaps owes still more to the extremely volatile military situation in Europe at the time. *Kriegsspiel* was birthed by Germans, and significantly, came into its celebrity in an hour in which the Germanic people's militaries had suffered crushing defeats before the armies of the French Empire of Napoleon Bonaparte.

³⁰ Venturini does, however, acknowledge the need to alter maps of the real world in order to prevent granting an advantage to either party in the game.

³¹ In the fo

other wargame designers;; presumably he learned of these claims as he circulated his advertisement for subscriptions. He received a letter from a Prussian Colonel named Raumer who claimed to have played a wargame for the past fifteen years;; Raumer received a copy of the 1780 edition, and it is refutes in the foreword

3.1.3 REISWITZ, FATHER AND SON (1811 1824)

From its origins as one of many independent Germanic principalities of north central Europe, Prussia emerged as a kingdom in 1701, when the Margrave of Brandenburg a title that rendered its holder one of the seven prince-electors of the Holy Roman Emperor crowned himself King in Prussia, but it would not be until the 1740 1786 reign of Friedrich II (better known as Frederick the Great) that Prussia became a world power. After the positive outcome of the Seven Years War, Prussia seized a sizable amount of real estate in central Europe, greatly increasing its wealth and population. Frederick himself also set an example of learning and sophistication, cultivating the society of eminent intellectuals, personally performing music in court and raising cultural landmarks such as the Sanssouci Palace in Potsdam, just west of Berlin.

Prussia fought but did not destroy France in the Seven Years War;; however, the kingdom of France died of internal discord in the revolution of 1789, and in its place there arose a militant Republic under the sway of the charismatic General, subsequently Consul and finally Emperor Napoleon I. Napoleon territorial ambitions were for a time compatible with an independent Prussia, but in the fall of 1806, during the rule of Friedrich Wilhelm III, the alarming expansion of French interests prompted Prussia to join the War of the Fourth Coalition. It was a disastrous blunder for Prussia: a mere nineteen days later, after the battles of Jena and Auerstedt, Napoleon

had defeated Prussia utterly, forcing Friedrich Wilhelm to flee with his family to the far east of his kingdom as Napoleon armies marched into Berlin. One casualty of the Battle of Jena was Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand, the duke of Brunswick;; his duchy became a constituent state of Napoleon new Kingdom of Westphalia. Hellwig Collegium Carolinum consequently spent the next seven years as a Napoleonic military academy, where Hellwig taught mathematics and probably said little of wargaming. Prussia fared slightly better in its defeat: although the Holy Roman Empire dissolved formally in 1806, Prussia remained an independent state, albeit with significantly reduced territories, an onerous debt of restitution and many operating constraints applied by its conqueror.

who was working on a similar idea. While it is impossible to say whether these existing practices and credited with being the first to take these ideas to the public.

Friedrich Wilhelm III resumed his seat in Berlin in the final days of 1809, accompanied by his two princely sons: the elder would rule after the death of his father as Friedrich Wilhelm IV from 1840 to 1858, the younger succeeded his brother as Wilhelm I and ruled until 1888.³² When the French defeated Prussia 1806, however, the princes were aged only eleven and nine respectively, though soon they, like their nation, began preparing quietly for a war of liberation. Even the most conservative thinkers then opened their minds to new advances in military science, which led to sweeping reforms. Gerhard von Scharnhorst oversaw the modernization of the Prussian army during this period, in which leadership became divorced from hereditary privilege and a standing professional army finally replaced the obsolete structures of Frederick the Great. Napoleon warily restricted the size of this improved military, and as such an overt rebellion against French dominion remained infeasible until Napoleon lost his *Grande Armée* in Russia, whereupon Prussia joined the Sixth Coalition against France in 1813.

That fortunate turn of fate could not have been predicted in 1811, however, while the Prussian leadership still struggled to grasp the enormity of their ignominious defeat. It was in that year that Prussia began to carry the torch of wargaming forward. The tutelage of the two princes at that time had an understandable military slant their governor served as a colonel in the Prussian army, and they received instruction in the various military arts from the administrators of the cadet school in Berlin. The boys mother, the beloved Louise of Prussia, had died the previous summer in her mid-thirties,

to the deep grief of the princes and the near despair of their father the king. When the princes were offered the opportunity to see a newly-invented wargame advanced by a Prussian civilian from the region of Silesia, a territory annexed for Prussia by Frederick the Great, they were undoubtedly relieved by the prospect of a diversion.

The inventor of this new wargame was Georg Leopold von Reiswitz (1760 1828), at this time a resident of the city of (Breslau to the Germans) in modern day Poland then an important Prussian metropolis, where the king would soon relocate his government after reigniting conflicts with France. Reiswitz was born to a father who had settled near Pszczyna, Silesia, after the War of Austrian Succession, in the comfort befitting a captain in Frederick the Great's armies, which had secured those very lands. In his youth, Reiswitz studied military history and chess under the direction of his father. Family connections to the local nobility afforded him the singular opportunity to test his military skills against the young Prince Friedrich Ferdinand of Anhalt-Pless, for Friedrich possessed a newly-invented extravagance that few youths could afford at the time: one of Hellwig's wargame sets.³³ The reach of Hellwig's wargame outside of Braunschweig must have been very small at the time, and Reiswitz surely numbered among its earliest adopters. We played constantly, he recalled in 1812.³⁴

³² Technically, the reign of Friedrich Wilhelm IV extended until his death in 1861, but due to health issues his younger brother ruled as regent from 1858 forward. Wilhelm I governed for the great Prussian military victories of the 1860s and 1870s and thus became the first German Emperor. Wilhelm I was the grandfather of the more famous Emperor Wilhelm II, the Kaiser Wilhelm who led the German people during the First World War.

³³ -

Dessau. At the time, that would have been Leopold III, who, like Friedrich Ferdinand, was born into the House of Ascania. Leopold was however not of a warlike temperament;; perhaps he passed on his copy to a more interested relative.

³⁴ From the foreword to Reiswitz's *Anleitung zu einer mechanischen Vorrichtung um taktische Manoeuvres*

While Reiswitz had originally aspired to enter the military, an injury to his left arm consigned him to a civil career, which led him to studies in Halle. Reiswitz shared his passion for wargaming with his college friends, but the purchase of a Hellwig set was beyond their collective means. Thus,

he and his classmates built their own simple wargame terrain and represented the exotic pieces of Hellwig with simple blocks painted to indicate their role one might regard this reproduction as the first act of piracy in the history of wargaming, and evidence that piracy of wargames is as old as wargames themselves.³⁵ In collaboration with his fellow students, Reiswitz elaborated the game apparatus, and even devised a correspondence system for playing by mail when graduation parted their tiny group. Upon his return to Pszczyna in 1785 as a referendary, Reiswitz presented to his old playmate Friedrich Ferdinand the fruits of his labor: a game board in bas-relief, provided with many engraved rivers and hills. Later, in Prussian *Freiherr* (a rank of nobility often translated as counselor to the local government on matters civil and military, despite his lack of direct military experience.

In 1807, however, Reiswitz lost his civil post in the wake of the Napoleonic invasion and the subsequent upheavals in the administration of . During a period of idleness in the city of Gliwice, he taught his variant wargame to his thirteen-year-old son, who like many young men of the day cultivated a patriotic interest in things military. Then, Reiswitz read in the June 1809 issue of the *Schlesischen Provinzialblättern* a criticism of the recently-published wargames of Opiz and Hoverbeck, a piece to which Reiswitz attested his forthcoming invention in part owes its origin.³⁶ The author of that review, a certain Rector Günther of Ol (a city in Silesia, in Reiswitz s time known as Oels), attacked the unrealistic representation of terrain in existing wargames. Günther challenged the advocates of these games to could be conjured up in a maneuvering because, as Friedrich said in his lessons to his generals, on a single square mile there are a hundred possible positions. This last point, where Günther slightly recasts one of the famous principles Frederick the Great (that in every two leagues of terrain there are two hundred possible positions), is what apparently caught Reiswitz s attention: the , as an affluent and educated Baron), Reiswitz served as a

show how the most memorable battle theaters of Silesia room with the Opiz figures thereupon multifariously *sinnlich darzustellen* (1812). The elder Reiswitz provides a great deal of autobiographical detail in this and his 1816 work, which is followed by the account below. As a supplement to that account, all English-speaking students of wargaming owe a debt to Bill Leeson, the translator not only of the

uccessors in Prussian military circles, but also numerous short articles on the history of the younger and elder Reiswitz and their games, including the history every particular. For example, Leeson prefers the spelling favored here;; we follow the family name as given in the 1812 and 1816 editions of the elder Reiswitz, despite the fact that the 1824 edition of the younger Reiswitz

³⁵ At the time Hellwig published his wargame, our notions of intellectual property simply did not apply to learned publications, especially of ideas related to games. Chess and card games, which were freely described and manufactured, must have positioned the earliest wargames as the communal property of interested parties. The abridgement of Hellwig printed by Allgaier surely was not intended as an act of plagiarism, but rather as an improvement that acknowledges the original author. Reiswitz and his collegiate chums must have viewed their improvisation as an homage, instead of a threat, to Hellwig.

³⁶ This account follows the autobiographical notes in Reiswitz, *Literärisch-kritische Nachrichten über die Kriegsspiele der Alten und Neuern* (1816).

notion that the grid imposed on the wargames of Hellwig and Venturini significantly limited the capacity of these systems to represent the position of troops realistically. Effectively, in a board wargame divided into squares of a scale mile across, there is only one position that troops within a mile's range could hold.³⁷

Thus, Reiswitz began to experiment with games played on model spaces without grids. He reunited with one of his school chums over the winter of 1810, and together they determined to bring this wargame to the public. Reiswitz traveled to Berlin the following year with their combined notes and a preliminary apparatus. He found that the best manner to model terrain was with a table covered with damp sand on which one could sculpt threedimensional topographic elements. Through military interest societies and committees of civil councilors, word of Reiswitz's experimental wargames spread through educated Prussian circles, eventually attracting royal attention.

For his 1811 demonstration to the Prussian princes, Reiswitz brought to Berlin Castle just such a sand table in lieu of a board, and with hardened sand-sculpted hills, valleys, rivers and roads, all at a very exacting level of detail. The modeled scale was 1:2,373, almost thirty times higher resolution than Venturini's maps. The troops themselves, however, were not

recognizable miniature figurines, but instead wooden cubes with colored designs on their faces. While no witnesses recorded the exact subject of his exhibition battle, the game immediately captured the imagination of the young princes, who shared their enthusiasm with their father. When Reiswitz learned that the King himself had expressed a desire to witness a game, his sense of propriety forbade him to present a sandbox to the King, but he resolved to return with a rendition of the game worthy of kingly interest.

In 1812, by which time other pressing matters in European politics had nearly driven any recollection of Reiswitz and his game from the King's mind, the residents of the palace were somewhat astonished by the arrival of the following: It was in the shape of a large table open at the top for the terrain pieces to fit into. The terrain pieces were 3 to 4 inches square, and the overall area was at least six feet square. The small squares could be rearranged so that a multiplicity of landscape was possible. The terrain was made in plaster and was colored to show roads, villages, swamps, rivers, etc. In addition there were dividers for measuring distances, rulers, small boxes for placing over areas so that troops who were unobserved might make surprise attacks, and written rules which were at this stage not yet in their fuller form. The pieces to represent the troops were made of porcelain. The whole thing was extremely well painted.³⁸

This strange little cabinet, which bore the legend *Taktisches Kriegs-Spiel* on its side, contained the fruits of Reiswitz's ingenuity. Reiswitz employed the aforementioned small squares, housed inside easily accessible drawers, to model terrain in lieu of a sand table.

³⁷ With the caveat that the orientation or facing of pieces might constitute a different position but four positions is still a bit shy of one hundred.

³⁸ From an anonymous article in the *Militär-Wochenblatt* of 1874 (no. 73), translated in Leeson, *The Reisswitz Story*, 2. Leeson suspects, on reasonable grounds, that the information within came directly from Wilhelm I.

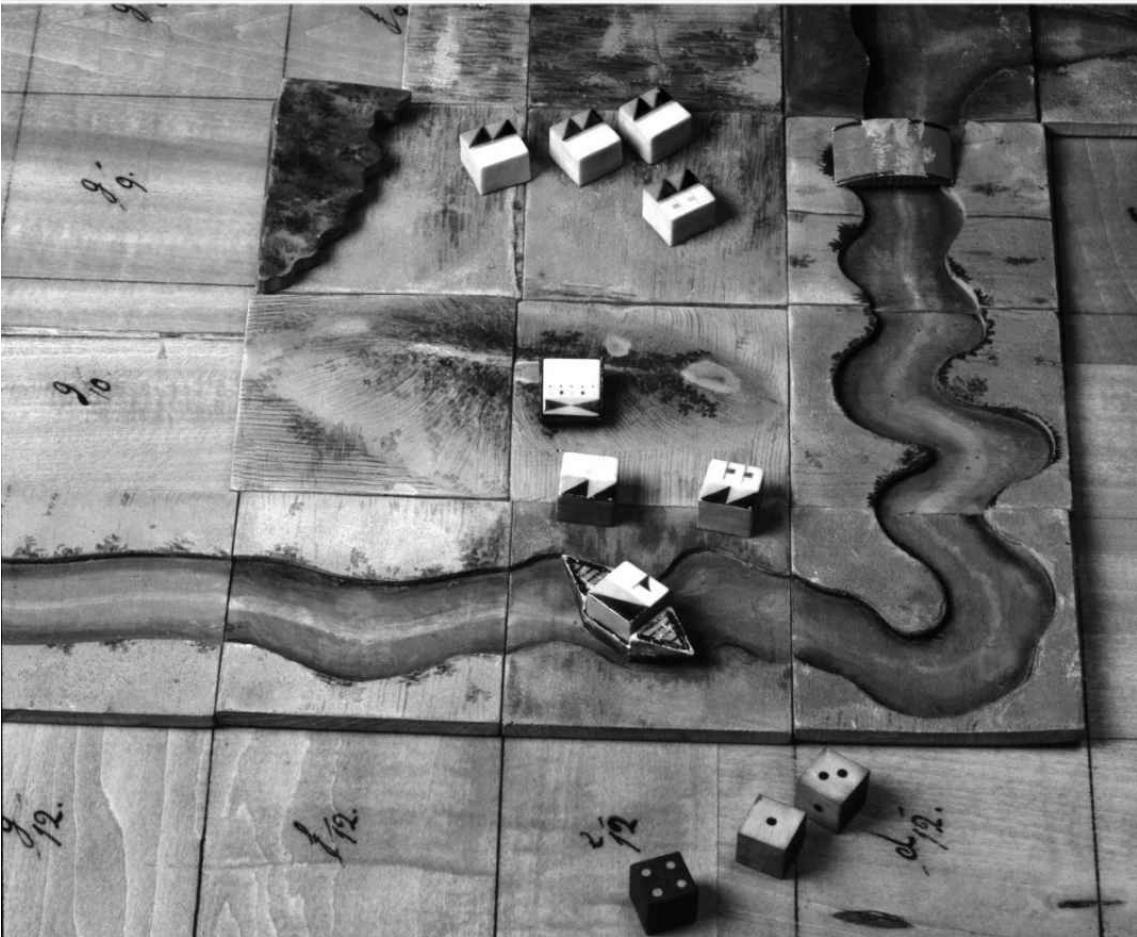


FIGURE 29: REISWITZ TAKTISCHES KRIEGS--SPIEL (1812)



Unlike a chessboard, the plaster terrain tiles were not small squares of the world which could harbor only one game piece;; they were instead modular blocks of countryside that could substitute for the malleability of sand, a way of modeling arbitrary terrain by configuring preconstructed segments into a suitable battlefield.³⁹ A block might depict a particular terrain feature hills, rivers, forests, et cetera and much as was the case with Hellwig configurable board, multiple terrain squares containing a river could be assembled together to create a table-spanning current. The board measured twenty tiles long by fifteen wide, and most of the tiles represented a five hundred square foot area;; some squares occupied only half that area, however, and others were oblong shapes. While this approach offered some flexibility, it also had its limitations: these squares did not admit of stark differences in elevation, and thus the 1812 game is a flat game, one is almost tempted to say a board wargame. We must disqualify it as a candidate for a board game, however, as pieces moved irrespective of the boundaries of the terrain tiles players measured the distance that units moved with a ruler, rather than simply counting squares like in the games of Hellwig or Venturini. There was no question of whether troops could move forward, or diagonally, or in the manner of chess knights troops moved in any direction across the terrain that a ruler might be pointed from their starting position, a fundamental break from the chess movement system.

Along with the cabinet itself, Reiswitz provided written rules, but as the account cited above suggests, they were unfinished and not yet in their fuller form. With the attention consequent on royal renown, Reiswitz subsequently published two hundred copies of a formal account of his wargame in Berlin under the title *Taktisches Kriegs-Spiel oder Anleitung zu einer mechanischen Vorrichtung um taktische Manoeuvres sinnlich darzustellen* (1812, Tactical Wargame, or instructions for a mechanical device to show realistic tactical maneuvers). Throughout, he assumes his readership s familiarity with the now-famous trials of his wargame apparatus, which suggests news of the favorable royal reception of his game had traveled fast. However, on April 21, 1812, as the French Grand Army mobilized toward Russia through Prussian territory, Reiswitz was assigned to a post in Kwidzyn (at the time known as Marienwerder, a major metropolis of Western Prussia), only a very

short time after he delivered this manuscript to the printers. Even in Reiswitz's absence, the royal family often enjoyed games in the autumn and winter at Sanssouci Palace in Potsdam, especially during these final years of Napoleonic occupation. One can only conjecture if the king found some solace in table-top victories which he could not yet secure in the real battlefields of Europe.

Prussia reentered the struggle against Napoleon in 1813, and in another two years, the French dominion over Germany ended. The costs for all of Europe were substantial. The people of Brunswick, who had lost a duke in the Battle of Jena in 1806, now lost his successor in the battle of Quatre Bras, only two days before Napoleon defeat at Waterloo in 1815. One of Hellwig sons emerged as a famous resistance leader in the uprising, and the duchy of Braunschweig in this era is remembered for the fierce Black Brunswickers with their distinctive dark uniforms and skull-embossed cap.

³⁹ Reiswitz credits this innovation to one of the war councilors, a Herr Phemel. In his 1812 work, Reiswitz bemoans named Patzig made the terrain pieces for his apparatus.

During the next few years, Reiswitz made several attempts to finalize his wargame rules, even traveling to Berlin to see it done, but during wartime one could hardly divert the attention of Prussia from Napoleon. When the war concluded favorably, he returned to the project; however, after some playtesting, he identified so many potential modifications that he felt a completely fresh start was needed. Even had he perfected this text, Reiswitz's wargame was not intended as a commercial offering, like that of Hellwig or Venturini it was a lavish, custom-built gift for a monarch, with an apparatus fit for a museum;; costeffective manufacturing of the *Taktisches Kriegs-Spiel* cabinet was simply out of the question. Whether he could have distilled it into a successful mass-market product is difficult to say, but a decade later, this problem would be tackled by a new collaborator.

Among the young Prussians who enlisted to overthrow Napoleon was Reiswitz's teenage son: Georg Heinrich Rudolf Johann von Reiswitz (1794–1827). The younger Reiswitz quickly advanced in Prussian military ranks, earning an Iron Cross in combat in 1813. After the defeat of the French forces, the younger Reiswitz became attached to the Prussian artillery, eventually serving in the Guard Artillery Brigade of Berlin. There, he enjoyed the society of many up-and-coming young officers, including Heinrich Ernst Dannhauer (1800–1884), who would achieve the rank of

Major General in the Prussian Army by the end of his long career. It is largely through Dannhauer account, written in 1874 (in *Militär-Wochenblatt* No. 56) that we know the life and character of the younger Reiswitz. He remembers Reiswitz as a confident, athletic youth with a strong wit which unfortunately was now and then misconstrued.⁴⁰ Reiswitz improvised on his violin capably and incessantly, which might be seen as following the example of Frederick the Great, another musical soldier.

Dannhauer records that the younger Reiswitz took up his father's work in wargaming during his time stationed at Stettin, between 1816 and 1819. The elder Reiswitz's interests seem to have drifted away from *kriegsspiel* after the standalone publication of his history of wargaming (*Literärisch-kritische Nachrichten über die Kriegsspiele der Alten und Neuern*, 1816), so his son assumed charge over the ongoing development of the game.⁴¹ It was in Berlin, however, in the company of Dannhauer and other junior officers, that the younger Reiswitz refined and expanded his father's work into a deeper simulation of military activity, culminating in the 1824 publication of his famous *kriegsspiel*, which would serve as the basis for a century of military wargaming in Germany and around the world. The incompleteness of the work of the elder Reiswitz his references to unwritten rules and incomplete refinements complicates the untangling of the father's original game from his son's thoroughly-specified successor, however, so for the most part the combined innovations of the two games are discussed jointly here.

The methodology that guided the improvements of the younger Reiswitz is simply stated: he wanted to convey a realistic picture of events on the battlefield.⁴² In the purism

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Reisswitz Story, 5.

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Militär-Wochenblatt of 1874 (No. 56), translated in Leeson, *The to raise funds for the Potsdam orphanage, an institution which was understandably strained by the results of the Napoleonic Wars, though Reiswitz concedes the possibility that some academics might find his history interesting. Subsequently in the 1820s, the elder Reiswitz published several works defending the German Mennonite population from persecution, leaving work on *kriegsspiel* to his son.*

⁴² Translati *Anleitung* by Leeson, *Von Reisswitz Kriegsspiel* (1989), vi.

of his aspiration, he only reluctantly termed his project a game, though he found no better description. With the benefits of his father's study and experience, he understood well the failings of Hellwig and earlier wargames with respect to realism. He laid some of the blame for this on the primitive state of cartography, as discussed above, given that few, and only incomplete terrain maps had been published, and those were typically of insufficient resolution to model plausible movements of units. Moreover, the younger Reiswitz concurred with his father in recognizing the shortcomings of prior attempts in which the landscape had been forced into squares... with rivers, seas, villages, mountains, valleys, etc., pushed out of their natural shapes and into straight lines.⁴³ Obviously, the elder Reiswitz first rectified this deficiency in his 1811 game, where he dispensed with this rigid spatial apportioning entirely. The younger Reiswitz still found many areas in need of improvement in his father's creation, however, which he presented in a new edition of the *kriegsspiel* in 1824.

The first was the scale, which the elder Reiswitz set at five hundred feet per terrain tile, a number that captured more detail than even the finest tactical maneuvers might require. The younger Reiswitz thus worked from a broader scale of 1:8,000, where one inch (a Prussian *Zoll*) represents four hundred paces. He forewent his father's sculpted or tiled terrain for flat maps a bit of a throwback to the system of Venturini, but the 1824 *kriegsspiel* borrowed the superior tactical-scale topographical maps of Johann Georg Lehmann issued as lithographs by the Prussian General Staff in the 1820s⁴⁴; they were both accurate and familiar to Reiswitz's target audience. Lehmann's method conveyed differences in elevation graphically, so this degree of realism was not lost entirely. The Reiswitz family furthermore took Venturini's concept of scale to its logical conclusion by defining turns in terms of their simulated duration. In the elder's game, each turn represents one minute of in-game time, and thus he allows in each turn only the movements and actions that a given type of soldiers could make and accomplish in one minute.⁴⁵ His son allowed a slightly more generous time budget: Troops will only be allowed to move as far in one move as they would be able to march in reality in two minutes. The effect of fire within a single turn, be it from artillery or small arms, is similarly reckoned to be the damage such missiles could do in the course of two minutes. So, for instance, infantry will usually march no more than 200 paces in two minutes, and they will only be advanced this distance on the map in one move.⁴⁶

While one might presume that the elder Reiswitz's liberation of unit position from the rigid grid of the chessboard heralded the advent of miniature wargaming, neither Reiswitz the son nor father fielded miniature figurines that resembled the soldiers they depicted *a la Hellwig* and they broke with this precedent with good reason. The rectangular unit counters of the Reiswitz games (which indeed look much more like an Avalon Hill chit than anything fettled in Jack Scruby's forges) were intended to represent the actual dimensions, in paces, of the formations into which the troops in question would assemble. For example, a close infantry block is 75 paces deep and 125 paces long. It represents two companies side by side making up 450 men in three ranks, or half a battalion.⁴⁷ The corresponding rectangular lead block for this troop formation occupies those dimensions on a map scaled to 1:8,000. As troops contend and the numbers in a particular formation diminish, those blocks might actually be replaced by smaller blocks as units reorganize into a more modest arrangement. Presciently, Reiswitz grasped the necessity of characterizing these units in terms of a number of points worth of damage they might sustain. In his idiosyncratic system, however, for different types of formations, points of damage correspond to different numbers of soldiers. So, for infantry in a threerank formation, one point of damage corresponds to the loss of five men, but for infantry in a two-rank formation, three points corresponds to ten men, and for cavalry in ranks two points corresponds to three riders. To attack another unit, opposing game pieces are moved into an adjacent location, and then the combat system deals these points of damage;; only rarely does this lead to the complete removal from the game of a losing piece following combat. In the games of both father and son, the number of points of damage a particular unit counter has taken are tracked with physical damage markers, at least until personnel are reduced to the threshold where the counter can be exchanged for one representing a smaller force. Defeat, consequently, is not a binary phenomenon, unlike displacement in chess;; Section 3.2.2.2 will explore degrees of defeat in more detail.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Reiswitz (1816) indicates that the elder Reiswitz was already using the Lehmann maps in his abandoned revision of the game, so it can certainly be argued that this innovation belongs to the father rather than the son.

⁴⁵ Reiswitz, *Taktisches*, 6.

⁴⁶ Translated in Leeson, *Von Reisswitz Kriegsspiel*, 1.

Two critical elements appear in the published game of the younger Reiswitz but not in that of the elder: umpires and dice. The umpire (*Vertraute*, a word with connotations of a trusted party or confidant) in the 1824 edition of Reiswitz is defined as a player, and thus the smallest *kriegsspiel* exercise requires three players two opponents and the umpire, though Reiswitz allows an unlimited number of subordinate commanders on the two sides. The responsibilities of the umpire development and description of the general idea of providing a natural and interesting scenario which will allow for either side to gain its objective.⁴⁸ Reiswitz is careful to note that the objective of the game is not so rigid a thing as it was in Hellwig, say, where victory is secured by occupying the enemy fortress: The winning or losing, in the sense of a card or board game, does not come into it. The purpose of the *kriegsspiel* exercise is the simulation of actual wartime conditions, which might not always involve equal forces meeting on a battleground which offers no advantage to either combatant, in the classic manner of chess. Since the umpire decides the size and composition of the two forces, they can be as dissimilar as necessary to serve the general idea. Reiswitz notes that a retreat is not always the sign of faulty leadership or a lost game because it may be that one side has to hold their ground against superior numbers for a are many, but commence with the (*General-Idee*): The umpire has the task⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁸ Translated in Leeson, *Von Reisswitz Kriegsspiel*, 22. Some later authors, for example Meckel, preferred the term *Unparteiischen* Schmidt, retain *Vertraute*. For the discussion

Leeson employs in his translation of Reiswitz just as Baring used it in his free translation of Tschischwitz this text surely

Blackmoor and *Dungeons & Dragons*. From the perspective of the discussion of alignment in Section which is neutral in effect, the presence of the umpire builds in a notion of neutrality to wargaming. It is furthermore noteworthy that Reiswitz, who brings the concept of dice to *kriegsspiel*, also brings the concept of an impartial referee there is an important sense in which the impartiality of dice is extended to the umpire, who without dice might be viewed as partisan.

certain length of time to fulfill their objective still a popular prototype for the design of wargame scenarios nearly two centuries later.⁴⁹

In addition to establishing the general idea and the composition of the opposing forces, the umpire serves as an intermediary for virtually all

actions in the game: all movements, all communications and all attacks channel through the umpire, in writing. The players transmit written orders, authored to their units in the persona of a commander, and for the most part the umpire enjoys significant leeway in deciding how these orders will be interpreted. The players begin the game with only such information as the referee deems they might reasonably have garnered, and thus they are most likely mutually ignorant of the plans and positions of their enemies. Unlike the games of Hellwig or the elder Reiswitz, in the younger Reiswitz game pieces are not set on the board for all parties to see: instead, the umpire places on the public map only those units of which both sides are aware.⁵⁰ Thus, commanders must issue broad orders to their units and assume that as the enemy is discovered, units will exercise informed discretion;; in a multiplayer game with subordinate commanders, that discretion might be outsourced to a player. The umpire makes the allimportant decisions about whether or not an attacker has a situational advantage over the defender, determines ranges for all manner of missile fire and is the ultimate arbiter of conflict. As such, Reiswitz points out it is critical that the umpire enjoy complete authority for the duration of the game. The decision of the umpire is final... at the end of the game either side may give a critique, but during the game itself any discussion is forbidden.⁵¹ This responsibility is certainly not to be taken lightly;; Reiswitz anticipates that at first sight it may seem that the umpire s job is a very difficult one that might not attract many volunteers, but he sells the job with the claim that the umpire s situation is an interesting one in itself because he sees his ideas being interpreted and carried out.⁵²

The younger Reiswitz furthermore reinvented the combat system, the manner of resolving missile and melee conflicts between units. His father simply scaled the damage dealt by gunfire against the range and size of the target: the farther away the target, the less damage would be dealt, and cavalry suffered more hits from gunfire than infantry. The younger Reiswitz s insight, which is still in the service of giving a more realistic picture of events, represents a fundamental break from the *kriegsspiel* of the past, and the first step toward the systems that would be favored by miniature and board wargamers in the twentieth century. To put it in his own words: Anyone who has observed the effect of fire power at the [artillery] ranges will know that the results achieved can differ considerably, even when circumstances are the same. The difference in performance is likely to be

even more pronounced in battle, when gunners⁴⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁰ for placing over areas so that troops who were unobserved might make may be affected by the excitement of the moment, and when errors may be made in estimating the range.

edit of troops and their *Truppenverberger*
can hide game pieces. We c

contained entirely on his apparatus, whereas the younger Reiswitz allows the referee to maintain secret information not shown on the map. The mechanism is similar to the cards later employed by Stevenson for maintaining secrecy of troop movement.

⁵¹ Translated in Leeson, *Von Reisswitz Kriegsspiel*, 25.

⁵² Ibid., 4.

If, therefore, we were to give fixed results for fire effect we would arrive at a very unnatural situation.... Only when the player has the same sort of uncertainty over results as he would have in the field can we be confident that the *kriegsspiel* will give a helpful insight into maneuvering on the field.⁵³

The aspiration to give the player the same sort of uncertainty as a field commander is by itself worthy of note, independent of the steps taken to implement it. It is a key component of the state of immersion described in Section 1.2, where the player adopts the perspective of a person in the game and may act only upon the knowledge that this in-game character would have. For Reiswitz, of course, the purpose of this immersion is didactic, to grant the military trainee helpful insights that will translate into better future decisions on the actual battlefield. Much of his design is tailored to deliver this result: the lack of perfect information about enemy goals and deployment, the reliance on maps that closely resemble those used by officers to make deployment decisions, the inability to command units imperiously and exactly as one does in chess, but instead to give only general orders in writing which a human being must interpret. By inserting further uncertainty into the results of fire effects, as well as most other forms of combat resolution, Reiswitz takes us another step away from the chessboard. When one moves a chess knight into a square occupied by an enemy pawn, one is always certain that the assault will succeed: there is no chance that the pawn will defend itself and miraculously defeat its mounted antagonist. In Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel*, a pre-ordained result is stultifying because it deprives the player of uncertainty. The skillful commander will be

prepared for a good or bad outcome... If we want to create these conditions with the apparatus we must put the player in the same position with regard to probability.⁵⁴

Consequently, Reiswitz devised a system in which there were many possible results of discharging firearms: some good effects, when the attackers enjoy an advantage over the defenders (such as elevated terrain), and some bad effects when the defenders have an advantage over attackers (for example, concealment), and the result that would arise from a particular use of firearms in the game was determined by the throw of dice. The use of dice for this purpose represented a crucial departure from the principles of Hellwig wargame, where by design nothing depends on chance. Reiswitz would undoubtedly retort that the roll of a die need not be blind chance, but instead, a resolution of probability. That distinction is critical for understanding the employment of implements of chance in simulating game events.

Probability is so crucial to the invention and advancement of combat simulation that it merits some historical background.⁵⁵ As a mathematical discipline, probability dates back less than two centuries from the time that Reiswitz's game appeared. This is not to say that gamblers had not long since understood the gross mechanics of dice, including that when three six-sided dice are rolled at once, they are much more likely to yield a sum total of 10 or 11 than they are the sum of 3 or 18. The author of the medieval poem *De vetula* already recognized the fundamental combinatorial truth that there is only one roll each that results in 3 or 18 yet there are twenty-seven different combinations of three six-sided dice that can add up to 10 or 11. Understanding those combinations is, however, a far cry from abstractly understanding the odds. Most historians of mathematics attribute the discovery of the formative ideas of simple probability to Gerolamo Cardano, author of *Liber de ludo aleae* (Book on games of chance), a book which did not see print until 1663, nearly a century after its author's death. Cardano had no small experience with gambling, and his study represents the seminal abstract reasoning on probability. Cardano observes that after three rolls of a die with six faces, there is an even chance of any particular face having turned up (one-half the total number of faces always represents equality), and thus a wager on the appearance of any particular face in one out of three throws would be a bet that either party is equally likely to win, in which both sides should provide an equal stake for a wager. To bet on the appearance of

a given face on one of only two throws, however, is not an equal chance, and thus fair gamblers will adjust the size of their wagers accordingly: the one betting for the appearance of the face will stake less than the gambler betting against. While Cardano uncovered the elementary mechanics of probability, his influence on posterity suffered from his long-delayed publication, as more or less the same principles were independently uncovered, and widely disseminated, in the correspondence of Blaise Pascal and Pierre de Fermat about a decade before Cardano's book on games of chance finally saw print. Pascal and Fermat also came to these notions through an analysis of the proper stakes in gambling.

⁵³ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁵ See Bennett, *Randomness*, for a more detailed coverage of the history of probability and dice.

The invention of probability is only one half of the story of its use in wargaming, however, since it alone cannot explain the application of probability to events other than the behavior of dice. In order to expose the relevance of probability to events such as a warfare, an intermediary must bridge the gap: namely, statistics. Statistics were largely an invention of the eighteenth century, a means for governments to understand their aggregate population, productivity and wealth; indeed, it is no accident that the word statistics contains the root state. The capability of governments to accumulate and process raw data about their subjects and territories increased radically in the early modern period, though its roots can be seen as far back as the Domesday Book (the medieval original from which Gygax wargaming periodical took its name), the survey of the wealth of England commissioned by William the Conqueror in order to establish a taxation system. By the seventeenth century, the tabulation of statistics began to confer predictive powers. For example, the famous London Bills of Mortality, a weekly publication of births and causes of death throughout the London parishes, helped city officials to predict the spread of the plague, a recurring visitor in the era, by tracking fluctuations in the proportion of London's citizenry dying from plague, as opposed to other ailments, in a given area and interval. The accumulation of these statistics provided valuable stores of data for budding probability theorists;; Christian Huygens, an author of a late seventeenth-century work on probability, used the London Bills of Mortality to pose questions like: A man of 56 years of age marries a

girl of 16. How long may they expect to live jointly before one or the other dies? Applying probability and statistics in this fashion, Huygens was able to make predictions about real world events. The most immediate practical application of predictions about mortality rate was for the purposes of calculating annuities and related insurance instruments;; Edmund Halley, the famed comet-spotter, wrote a treatise on the subject in 1693 using data from the birth and death tables published by the city of , the future home of the Reiswitz family. Later in his life, even Hellwig used his mathematical expertise to design a renowned pension and annuity system for the duchy of Braunschweig.

Jacob Bernoulli, in the fourth book of his *Ars Conjecturandi* (1713), takes the applicability of these predictions further, into the realms of economics, civil administration and even morality;; his nephew, the editor of that posthumously-published work, wrote his legal dissertation on the use of probability in courts of law. Bernoulli crystallized the manner in which the outcomes of many empirical experiments could be compounded and used to deduce the approximate probability that such outcomes would be seen in the future.⁵⁶ He even acknowledged the fundamental distinction between calculating odds for something artificial like the roll of a die, as Cardano had done, and determining the probability of a real world event: we can determine the odds of rolling a particular face of a die because the die is designed to exhibit equal probability for its faces, but Bernoulli understood that what cannot be ascertained *a priori*, may at least be found out *a posteriori* from the results many times observed in similar situations, since it should be presumed that something can happen or not happen in the future in as many cases as it was observed to happen or not to happen in similar circumstances in the past.⁵⁷

It remained only to make of warfare something empirically reducible to statistics before the work of Reiswitz on probability in combat would become possible. The late eighteenth century saw many works of this fashion enjoy a good reputation in Prussia, especially after a royal ordinance of 1790 plainly stated that mathematics exert a particular influence on military things, on tactics and on all of the operations of war. As we noted above, Venturini wrote several works on the application of mathematics to warfare before he turned his attention to wargaming. No less a military scientist than Gerhard von Scharnhorst, the great Prussian reformer, advocated the treatment of tactics as a branch of applied sciences. Colmar

von Goltz, a Prussian Field Marshall of the latter half of the nineteenth century, would later parody this excessive zeal for mathematical speculation with his quip that a strategy of that era for leading three men over a ditch could no longer be credible without a table of logarithms.⁵⁸ At the time, however, mathematics brought a number of advantages to military strategists, especially through the young disciplines of probability and statistics.

During a period of intense Napoleonic scrutiny, when Scharnhorst was compelled to retire from public affairs, he published a work entitled *Über die Wirkung des Feuergewehrs* (1813), On the Effects of Firearms, a manual quantifying the performance of various guns in the field. The work came a bit too late to influence the elder Reiswitz, but coincided nicely with the start of his son's military career. The younger Reiswitz cited the data in this work in particular as his primary source for the underlying probabilistic account of firepower in his *kriegsspiel*. Scharnhorst's work is of interest to this study not just for the manner in which he quantifies the effect of firepower, but also for the way that it depicts this information visually through charts and odds, both of which apparently influenced Reiswitz immensely. Mathematically, Scharnhorst relies on only the most basic tools of probability and statistics: inference from empirical data to compute what is largely a simple arithmetic mean. His study is divided into two parts, the first on various sorts of field guns, the second on small arms. To gather his empirical data, Scharnhorst conducted experiments where the various arms are packed with different amounts of gunpowder or types of ammunition and shot multiple times at a target at different ranges. His preferred target was a six foot high wall, usually one equal in width to an advancing infantry formation. Averaging out his data, he draws conclusions with the following form:⁵⁶ More precisely, Bernoulli developed a general system for understanding the benefits of multiple empirical trials and identifying the point of diminishing returns.

⁵⁷ Translated by Edith Dudley Sylla in Bernoulli, *The Art of Conjecturing*, 327.

⁵⁸ From Goltz, *Rosbach und Jena Ein echter Stratege jener Periode glaubte, ohne Logarithmentabelle nicht mehr drei Mann über die Gosse führen zu können* instances may have contributed to the lamentable educational standards for Major Generals at around the time of W. S. Gilbert. Goltz famously criticized Venturini for overcomplicating military endeavors

and subjecting the participants to so many nuisances as to make the game virtually unplayable.

Experience teaches that one will hit a six foot high wall at 800 to 1,000 paces with approximately half of the cannonballs, at 1,500 paces with around a sixth to seventh of the cannonballs, and at 1,800 paces with only a twentieth. At greater distances, there are only coincidental hits with lobbing arc shots. Therefore, if firing against an infantry line at 1,500 paces, even when we know the exact distance and aim precisely, out of one hundred shots artillery will hit with only around fourteen to sixteen cannonballs.⁵⁹

Scharnhorst further elaborates the variations in the probability (*Wahrscheinlichkeit*) of scoring a hit when the size of the target wall is altered, and is particularly fond of establishing through empirical examination a range of variance in expected strikes. When, as we noted above, the younger Reiswitz says of firepower that the results achieved can differ considerably, even when circumstances are the same, he practically paraphrases the name of one of the sections in *Wirkung die Feuergewehrs* (S25, *Die Verschiedenheit der Wirkungen bei gleichen Umständen*).⁶⁰ The conclusions Scharnhorst draws from this data are of immediate use to commanders: he advises on how to adjust the elevation of cannons in the face of advancing troops, the ideal amount of gunpowder to be used in various circumstances and the relative quality of the rifles issued by the major European powers. It is less the conclusions than the data itself that would inspire the Reiswitz family, however. A year before Scharnhorst's book came out, the elder Reiswitz provided his own statistics to describe the effects of gunfire, but only in a very anecdotal and deterministic fashion: one hundred troops, he reckons, can fire four hundred shots in a minute, but only a twelfth of those shots will hit at three hundred paces, whereas an eighth will hit at two hundred paces. These translated directly into the consequences of infantry fire in his wargame, which provided loss markers with fractions like one eighth that one could set on a damaged game piece after fire. The younger Reiswitz a decade later extracted from Scharnhorst's compilation the cumulative effect of artillery bombardment, or small arms fire, for given intervals of time, along with the effects of terrain, the minimum and maximum effective range of guns and the decline in performance over increasing distances.⁶¹ Scharnhorst mostly provides this quantitative information in charts displaying his raw experimental data, from which the probability of the success of a particular use of firearms must be

inferred. In some cases Scharnhorst even gives direct odds;; for example, in describing the behavior of a gun he says, The hitting of rifles and smooth-bore guns against the target at 200 paces behaves as 2 to 1, at 300 paces as 4 to 1.⁶²

⁵⁹ Scharnhorst, *Wirkung*, 1.

⁶⁰ This section in particular concerns *Kartätschschusses*, that is, grape-shot, which necessarily admits of extraordinary variance in its effect.

⁶¹ Reiswitz did supplement Scharnhorst at the firing range in his capacity with the Prussian Artillery and naturally Scharnhorst expresses his debt to the Prussian Artillery for the trials they conducted for the purpose of his study.

⁶² Scharnhorst, *Wirkung*, 2.

It was this direct statistical information which provided the younger Reiswitz with a foundation for determining the results of simulated *kriegsspiel* gunfire with implements of chance, owing to the ready availability of implements that could decide those odds. Bringing together dice and statistics in this manner could not have been obvious at this time, however it was a breakthrough of far-reaching implications that make this initial implementation especially noteworthy. There are in Reiswitz's *Anleitung* three cases where a die roll is used to determine the outcome of events: artillery fire, infantry fire and melee combat. All of the corresponding system is needlessly complicated, even by the standard of twentieth-century wargames, but given that this represents the seminal application of probability to event simulation, it warrants exploration if for no other reason than to understand the completeness of Reiswitz's insight. Reiswitz included five six-sided dice with his apparatus, though not dice marked with the familiar one through six pips. The faces of his customized dice (numbered I through V) are crammed with discrete bits of information intended to apply to distinct cases where a roll is required, and as a consequence the dice are difficult to interpret. The same system would later be instantiated by rolling conventional six-sided dice and then looking up the results in various tables depending on the circumstances of the roll, though Reiswitz apparently felt that inscribing the information on the dice was less confusing than cross-referencing charts. Perhaps Reiswitz also avoided the use of conventional dice in order to downplay any association with gambling.

The results of melee combat depend on die rolls against odds derived from any difference in the size of contending forces. If the troop numbers of the two sides meeting in hand-to-hand combat are equal, within a margin of one sixth, then the odds are considered even (1:1). If however one force is larger than another by between a sixth and a quarter, the odds of victory become 3:2 in favor of the larger. If one side is half again as strong as the other, the odds shift to 2:1, and a force twice as strong enjoys a 3:1 advantage. Still greater forces, up to a further two thirds stronger than the lesser power, are accounted a 4:1 advantage;; any greater disparity renders the combat a foregone conclusion. For each of the odds given above, one of the five six-sided dice supplied with the game is rolled to determine the outcome. For 1:1 odds, for example, Die I is rolled. As one might expect, Die I is divided into 3 outcomes positive for the black side and three outcomes positive for the white side. The outcomes are defined in two ways simultaneously: by a letter code (one each of R, G or T for each side) and a numerical value representing the points of damage suffered by each side in the melee *Points* for the quantification of those losses. form of defeat, and the die face bearing this result also tells the number of points of damage taken per half battalion of the defeated force;; the loser furthermore suffers a brief inability to launch an attack. G signifies *Geschlagen* (defeated), a more serious form of defeat, in which the point losses are higher and the remaining soldiers cannot muster an attack or defense for a protracted period (six turns). T is for *Total Geschlagen* (totally defeated), and troops who suffer this indignity endure the greatest point loss and cannot hope to rally and attack for ten turns.

The prospects of Die I are thus equitable: each side has a chance to inflict or suffer one of each of the three outcomes. Die II, used in 3:2 odds, has only five faces of results and one blank face;; if the die lands on the blank face, the umpire must reroll it until it lands on one of the other five. The best result the lesser force can hope for on Die II is R : two faces grant R to the lesser force, and the remaining three grant R, G and T to the curiously, Reiswitz employs the foreign word R signifies *Ruckzuge* (repulsed), the mildest greater force. At 2:1 odds, Die III is rolled, and on this die both forces have two chances for an R, while the greater force has a further chance for a G or a T. Die IV (3:1) has two blank faces, only one R for the weaker force and one of each result for the stronger. Finally, Die V (4:1) has four positive outcomes for the larger force (one R, two G and one T), a blank face, and one meek R to console the outnumbered party. Each face

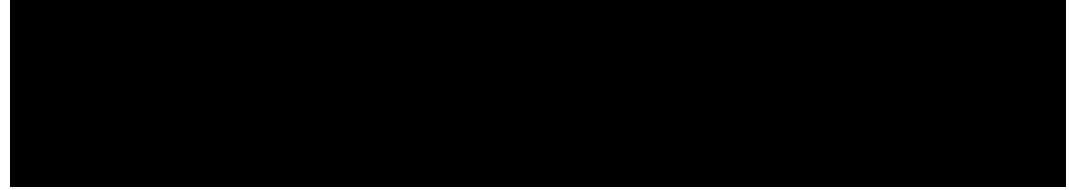
of Dice I, II, III and V also bears two columns of data, one used for artillery fire and one used for infantry fire. The data itself is merely the number of points of damage dealt, though each column consists of four different numbers that correspond to different ranges. Artillery under a good effect, for example, uses Die III, whereupon a six-pound battery at a range of 425 yards might deal as much as 40 points of damage or as little as 10 points of damage depending on which face is rolled. The same battery under bad conditions rolls Die V, and can hope for only 20 points of damage at best, and perhaps as little as 8. Infantry fire follows a similar model, mostly using Die I. Other markup on the die, including flames attached to the central circle, applies to the efficacy of artillery against buildings.

In hindsight, the use of dice and probability to determine the outcome of a game situation seems intuitive, if not obvious, but it is difficult to overestimate how revolutionary this idea was in the 1820s. Probability was itself a young science in that day, and its initial application to real-world events, like guessing people's lifespans for actuarial purposes, constituted only a prediction there is a vast conceptual distance between a prediction and a simulation. A prediction will prove either right or wrong, but a simulation is neither, it is merely a fictional outcome which derives from a set of inputs that approximate, with a greater or lesser degree of realism, a targeted circumstance. In a military context, a commander might study predictions, based on calculations of probability, in order to decide on one of several possible courses of action. For a commander to simulate a theoretical encounter, however, or to replay conditions of some past battle, and to allow probabilities to influence imaginary military performance, sheds a very different light on how to make decisions. It granted the experience of command in an experimental context, one where error yielded no catastrophic penalty. This is, of course, only an extension of the aspirations of Selenus, Weickmann, Hellwig and Venturini to educate players by enacting, on the microcosm of the game board, a simple model of real-world events which can be explored inconsequentially. Where Reiswitz departs from these precedents is in his embrace of controlled chaos, of the improbable and unexpected events that afflict commanders in

		Schritt		
Treffende Points eines halben Bataillons in geschlossenen Gliedern.	et.	100 ..	30.	I.
		200 ..	20.	25.
		300 ..	10.	15.
		400 ..	4.	8.
			96.	2.
			10.	

Treffende Points einer Batterie von 6 Kanonen und 2 Haubitzen	Kleine Karteitschen	50.	III.	50.
	Große Karteitschen	25.	R.	20.
	Bogenschuß.	10.	18.	12.
	Hollschuß.	7.	6.	10.

FIGURE 30: ILLUSTRATION OF TWO DIE FACES, FROM REISWITZ'S ANLEITUNG (1824)



real situations, but which Hellwig, in his game where nothing depends on chance, seems willfully to ignore. The end result is a game where the players have a less iron grip on events, where intentions influence the world only imperfectly and yet the outcome of game events is still determined in a manner that feels provides a far more compelling approximation of the experience of a field commander, who must constantly prepare for unforeseen eventualities and thus act more conservatively than the chess player, who at plausible. This realistic and a glance at the board sees all that his opponent can see and never fears that his knight will be repulsed by a lowly pawn. By allowing chance, if only wearing the shackles of probability, to participate in his game, Reiswitz brought the mind of the player into a much more persuasive simulation than did his predecessors. The invention of event simulation through combining empirical probability with implements of chance has no obvious precedent in intellectual history, and

represents a paradigm shift that underlies a great deal of the science of simulation that followed in the twentieth century.

3.1.4 THE KRIEGSSPIEL VOGUE (1824 1881)

The younger Reiswitz and his social circle of junior officers played his *kriegsspiel* once or twice a week in the early 1820s, gradually honing the system and maximizing the realism of the simulation. Eventually, as their player-base widened, Prince Wilhelm, now in his mid-twenties and a commander of the 2nd Guard Division and the 3rd Army Corps, rediscovered the game. By this time, Napoleon had expired in exile on the island of Saint Helena, and Prussia basked in regional dominance, especially over those German states that had collaborated with Napoleon until after the point where their assistance might have abetted the insurgency.

At the Prince's request, the younger Reiswitz demonstrated his improved *kriegsspiel* at Berlin Castle early in 1824. Back in the dark days of Napoleonic supremacy, the Prince undoubtedly saw the game as a tie that held the family together;; after his father set up the game in the Queen Louise Salon of the Sanssouci Palace in Potsdam, the two princes and their father often played the game well into the night, long after they would ordinarily have retired to their separate chambers. Prince Wilhelm so valued the elder Reiswitz's game that during the winter of 1817, Wilhelm had actually improvised a rendition of it in Moscow for the benefit of Grand Duke Nicholas (soon to be Nicholas I of Russia) on a terrain built of multiple card tables with topographic features marked out in colored chalk. The revised 1824 version, which the Prince personally played against members of Reiswitz's circle (I will never forget the honor, Dannhauer attested), rekindled Wilhelm's enthusiasm, and upon his recommendation to the king and the Prussian General Staff, the younger Reiswitz received an opportunity to demonstrate to the highest echelons the value of his *kriegsspiel* as a tool for the Prussian army.

Fortunately for Reiswitz, the Chief of the Prussian General Staff was Friedrich Karl Ferdinand von Müffling, no stranger to the application of maps and surveying to military planning. Müffling had in point of fact been Director of the Topographical Survey of Prussia, where he introduced several conventions for representing declivities and other terrain features.⁶³ More famously, Müffling served as the Duke of Wellington's liaison to the Prussian forces at the Battle of Waterloo, and afterwards as the governor of Paris. His role in this signal victory assured the favor of his monarch and

enormous influence over Prussian military direction. Though Müffling seemed skeptical of Reiswitz's presentation at first apparently, Reiswitz assigned Müffling the responsibility of formulating the general idea for the demonstration according to Dannhauer account Müffling gradually became intrigued, then enthusiastic, and eventually pronounced that it was no ordinary sort of game, this is schooling for war. I must and will recommend it most warmly to the army.⁶⁴

⁶³ The *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1911 goes so far as to suggest he was accused of indulging his taste for topogr

The life of the younger Reiswitz changed after that historic endorsement. With the recommendation of the Prince, the King and the Chief of the General Staff, *kriegsspiel* was destined for universal deployment. In a statement in the February 1824 issue of the *MilitärWochenblatt*, Müffling praised the game and encouraged its further distribution throughout the military. Disseminating the improved *kriegsspiel* to the entire Prussian army would require a more modest apparatus approach than that of the elder Reiswitz, who provided a single elegantly-crafted instance of his game to the royal family consider that even Prince Wilhelm could not acquire another for the royalty of Russia. To convert this to a massmarket venture, the younger Reiswitz organized a workshop to manufacture the game, which included a tin foundry, painters and carpenters, as well as the support of the Royal Lithographic Institute to manufacture maps of the appropriate scale. In his advertisement in the *Militär-Wochenblatt* (appearing in the same issue as Müffling's endorsement), Reiswitz described the apparatus as consisting of:

- 1) Troops for each side 26 battalions, 40 squadrons, 12 batteries, 1 pontoon train
- 2) Rulers and dividers for finding the correct march and firing distance
- 3) Dice for deciding fire effect, and results of hand-to-hand attacks
- 4) A small book of six chapters containing the introduction to the use of the equipment and rules [better known as *Anleitung zur Darstellung militairische Manover mit dem Apparat des Kriegsspiel*, 1824]
- 5) A map covering 4 square miles, 1:8,000

All of this could fit into a box ten inches long and six inches wide, costing 30 Thalers (23 Thalers wholesale) not a trivial sum, but from a marketing perspective quite an improvement over the kingly apparatus contrived by the elder Reiswitz.⁶⁵ The clever packaging is another first in the history of wargaming, no doubt. Reiswitz once or twice a week served as

umpire for games between the royal heirs, under the administration of the General Staff. Those sessions were attended by foreign dignitaries and sometimes the King himself, leading Dannhauer to remark, Naturally the acceptance of the value of the game in the highest military circles was very favorable to the wider acceptance of it within the army. The King awarded Reiswitz the Order of Saint John in recognition of his invention apparently, he was the first member of the artillery branch ever to receive this honor. The game quickly spread among the officer corps, giving rise to a number of small *kriegsspiel* clubs. Among its early adopters was the future Chief of the General Staff and legendary Prussian military genius Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke, who was at the time a topographer working on military surveys. The younger Reiswitz was even temporarily loaned to the aforementioned Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia, where he won some converts to his *kriegsspiel*.

Despite the enthusiastic support of the loftiest reaches of Prussian society, the Reiswitz *kriegsspiel* was not universally embraced. Even the 1824 edition of *Anleitung* concedes in its introduction that the wargame can be misused and alludes to criticism aimed at suppressing this invention. To this Reiswitz retorts somewhat pedantically, His Majesty, our most gracious king, has ordered that every regiment of the army be furnished with the apparatus. Can anyone suppose that this would be done without the closest examination of the principles involved?⁶⁶ Dannhauer tells another side of this story, and while he defends his old friend most vigorously, he nonetheless confesses that Reiswitz⁶⁴ *Das ist ja kein Spiel in gewöhnlicher Art, das ist eine Kriegsschule. Das muß und werde ich der Armee auf das wärmste empfehlen.* *Militär-Wochenblatt* of 1874 (No. 56).

⁶⁵ At the time, a Thaler was worth around three British shillings. Scaling that against a retail price index, that would value the Reiswitz *kriegsspiel* money.

did manage to provide these opponents of his invention with a certain amount of ammunition through many witty remarks, which harmless as they were in intention could have been misinterpreted.⁶⁷ None would dispute his unfailing rectitude in the line of duty, but Reiswitz was free with his words, and some of those words were repeated and caused misunderstanding. Exactly what was said can only be a matter for speculation, but given that Reiswitz as an umpire oversaw the *kriegsspiel* performance of many high

ranking officers, to say nothing of royalty, it is not unlikely that he voiced judgments on persons above his station. Another anecdote in the *Militär-Wochenblatt* of 1869 (No. 35) gives some indication of Reiswitz's personality when it suggests that, during his stay in Russia, he was not able to resist the temptation to simulate an earlier Russian defeat, the Battle of Lützen (1813) against Napoleon, in which one of his players, Field Marshall von Diebitsch, had personally been involved. It was not only a blow to [Diebtisch's] self esteem but a reminder that the *kriegsspiel* could be upsetting to military authority. The author of that article suggests this was a contributing factor in Russia's failure to embrace *kriegsspiel*.

Dannhauer recalls with circumspection that a certain friction was generated which reached a point in 1826.⁶⁸ Reiswitz received a promotion that year to the rank of captain, but instead of being posted in Berlin, Reiswitz was assigned to distant Torgau, a transfer he perceived as a banishment, probably justly. It seems inevitable that Reiswitz had grown accustomed to the society of eminent persons, perhaps even familiar, and this sudden deprivation must have been crushing. I only saw him once more, Dannhauer reports, during a short leave in Berlin, and found him transformed. His former humor and cheerfulness were gone. He seemed dissatisfied with himself and with the world.⁶⁹ In , on September 1, 1827, Reiswitz the younger shot himself to death. His father died the following year.

This dramatic turn in the fortunes of the Reiswitz family threatened the acceptance of their *kriegsspiel*, for obvious reasons. However, the most immediate consequence of this tragedy was the disassociation of the *kriegsspiel* from its troubled inventor. In 1828, which is to say in the immediate aftermath of these events, the *Berliner Kriegsspiel-Verein* (Berlin Wargame Association) issued a revised set of rules which makes no mention of Reiswitz father or son, nor even of its own membership it presents *kriegsspiel* without any of these potentially unpleasant associations. The BKV is almost certainly the first wargaming club to recognize and title itself as such, and is thus a distant ancestor of groups like the International Federation of Wargaming a century and a half later. When it first debuted to the public, it had nine members three from each branch of the military (infantry, cavalry and artillery) all of whom were undoubtedly among the circle of junior officers who advocated so vehemently for *kriegsspiel*. Perhaps they first banded together to determine how to continue the tradition

after Reiswitz was exiled to Torgau. His death was a shock to his followers, many of whom revered Reiswitz: ⁶⁶ Translated in Leeson, *Von Reisswitz Kriegsspiel*, vii.

⁶⁷ *Militär-Wochenblatt* of 1874 (No. 56), translated in Leeson, *The Reisswitz Story*. 11.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

We imagined Reiswitz as a free spirit of genius who had chosen to occupy himself with the discipline of intellectual work from which he could only occasionally find release a kind of military Faustus, who from his lofty spiritual realm was above earthly claims of pleasure.⁷⁰

The same source goes on to report that after Reiswitz's death there was considerable resistance to any mention of Reiswitz in some circles and that it was unclear how the game could overcome the antikriegsspiel party. The strategy of the BKV seems to have been to issue a new set of rules, establish a new authority and community of evangelism for the game, and to do so with as little mention of Reiswitz as possible. The success of this publicity campaign in the long term is amply demonstrated in an article by Captain A. Schmidt appearing in the magazine *Daheim* in 1873 (to be discussed in more detail below) which suggests only that the wargame had its origins corps of the artillery, along with the surprising contention that handed down verbally and did not appear in print until 1846, thus completely lacking mention of either the younger or elder Reiswitz. Restoring the Reiswitz family's place in history largely motivated Dannhauer to author his account of early Prussian *kriegsspiel* in 1874.

Reiswitz's methods, however, proved timely in the middle of the nineteenth century, and their adherence to emerging doctrine about warfare ensured their continuing relevance. Foremost is the rejection of certainty in warfare, in favor of the perspective of an enlightened commander who realizes that much in war is beyond human control. Consider the philosophy of warfare advocated by Scharnhorst most brilliant pupil, Carl von Clausewitz, in his *On War* (1831).⁷¹ Of warfare, Clausewitz says no other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up with chance. This is not to say that war or its outcome are random, nor that theories describing strategy and tactics are pointless but such theories cannot be separated from uncertainty: Absolute, so called mathematical, factors never find a firm basis in military calculations. From the very start there is an interplay of

possibilities, probabilities, good luck and bad. The use of the term probabilities here is significant. What conceptual framework could more faithfully instantiate these principles of Clausewitz than the *kriegsspiel* of Reiswitz? As a means of teaching officers these principles, *kriegsspiel* would be practically indispensable.

For the next forty years, *kriegsspiel* remained a component of military education in Prussia. It went through some transformations over time, most of which constituted only slight elaborations of the *Anleitung*. The 1828 revision of the *kriegsspiel* by the BKV, for example, added two more dice for deciding events (one of them to resolve the new category of 5:1 odds), and introduced the interesting concept of emergency dice that could be thrown when a commander risked an improbable feat, simulating the results of bold leadership;; accordingly, the chances of success were poor and even victory had only amongst the officer the rules have been minor consequences.⁷² It also tuned the behavior of artillery, which the BKV believed to be too powerful. As the years went by, *kriegsspiel* moreover required maintenance to reflect the introduction of new weapons and tactics in the real world setting it emulated for example, improvements in the design of rifles quickly made obsolete Scharnhorst data on ranges and rates of fire, a key conceptual underpinning of the Reiswitz game and its further elaborations in the emerging tradition of Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel*.

⁷⁰ *Militär-Wochenblatt* of 1869 (No. 35), given in *The Reiswitz Story*, 19.

⁷¹

edition.

Fortunately, the BKV was not the sole torchbearer for the legacy of the Reiswitz family nor *kriegsspiel* in general. In the first place, translations of the younger Reiswitz's *Anleitung* already began to appear in the decade after its publication: a French edition was submitted to the general staff of that nation in 1829;; a Dutch translation appeared in 1836. The game maintained a following among the Prussian officer core through several clubs of various sizes;; the future Field Marshall Moltke, then the Chief of Staff of the 4th Army Corps, famously administered the club in Magdeburg. The overall pace of new wargame development seemed to slow in Europe, however, as the original flurry of reaction to Hellwig invention subsided. Perhaps this resulted from a general satisfaction with the approach presented by the Reiswitz game, but more importantly Prussia and its neighbors entered an unusual period of prolonged peace after the threat of Napoleon had been

quelled, and the popular imagination had the luxury to drift elsewhere. Diplomatic relations stabilized in central Europe around the diarchy of Prussia and Austria, who vied bloodlessly for regional dominance. In 1840, Friedrich Wilhelm III died, and his elder son ascended to the throne as Friedrich Wilhelm IV, ushering in a relatively conservative and introspective era for the nation. Of course, despite the dull times for militaristic folk, the dedicated *kriegsspiel* players of the BKV remained engaged enough to issue a bottom-up revision of the Reiswitz game in 1846 and an amendment in 1855; both added to the length of the rules, taking into account more cases and contingencies, without any fundamental change in the character of the game.⁷³

In 1861, Friedrich Wilhelm IV was succeeded by his younger brother, Wilhelm I of Prussia. Under Wilhelm, the character of Prussia in Europe changed immensely. Unlike his more cerebral and spiritual older brother, William preferred military circles over the court, and had served with distinction against Napoleon in 1814. His passion for *kriegsspiel*, intense enough in his youth that he improvised an apparatus for the court of the future Tzar Nicholas, survived his boyhood, as is demonstrated by his intervention on behalf of the younger Reiswitz's game in 1824. After the appointment of the imperialistic Otto von Bismarck as Chancellor of Prussia in 1862, war became an inevitable component of his grand design for unifying the thirty-nine independent states of the German people, and ensuring that they united around Berlin rather than Vienna. These ambitions required a commensurate elevation of the military budget and kindled enthusiasm for all manner of martial innovation. The reversion of France to an Empire in 1852, and one governed from the bloodline of a familiar nemesis in the person of Napoleon III, amplified calls for a deterrent force. As these gears began to turn, *kriegsspiel* came back into the fore of Prussian military thought.

⁷² These additions appear in the 1828 *Zeitschrift für Kunst, Wissenschaft und Geschichte des Krieges* (Vol III.)

⁷³ Published as *Anleitung zur Darstellung militärischer Manöver mit dem Apparat des Kriegs Spiel*, still without reference to Reiswitz or indeed any particular author other than the BKV.

Only a year after Wilhelm's accession, the new wave of *kriegsspiel* began with the first edition of the rules of Wilhelm von Tschischwitz, *Anleitung zum Kriegsspiel* (1862), a work very much in the Reiswitzian

tradition. The most pressing motivation for his system revision was the rapid pace of change in the technology of warfare. Consider that at the end of the preceding decade, during the war of Italian unification (a conflict remembered as the Third Italian War of Independence), railroads conveyed French troops deep into Italy

Appendix. III.

Table. A.

For deciding on Possibility of Attack, on Success of Attacks,
and on losses inflicted in the attack by the Arme Blanches (bayonets or sabres).

N.B. R. Repulses; D. Defeats; T. Total Defeats.

RED	Faces of the Die						BLUE	
	Number of faces for success	0.1.1. or against	•	•	•	•		
-V	5.1	12 15 18 22 30 35	5.1	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	Ayant	R D D D T T	on					
-IV	4.1	12 12 18 22 30	4.1	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	Ayant	R R D D T T	on					
-III	3.1	12 12 18 30	3.1	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	Ayant	R R D T	on					
-II	2.1	12 12 18 18 22 30	2.1	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	Ayant	R R D D D T	on					
-I	3.2	12 12 18 18 30	3.2	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	Ayant	R R D D T	on					
0	12 12 18 18 24 22			Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	Even	R R D D D D	Even					
+I	3.2	12 12 18 18 30	3.2	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	on	R R D D T	Against					
+II	2.1	12 12 18 18 22 30	2.1	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	on	R R D D D T	Against					
+III	3.1	12 12 18 30	3.1	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	on	R R D T	Against					
+IV	4.1	12 12 18 22 30	4.1	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	on	R R D D T	Against					
+V	5.1	12 15 18 22 30 35	5.1	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	Loss per Battalion	Loss per Squadron	
	on	R D D D T T	Against					

Losses of Victors

In calculating the losses of the Victors, the following rules must be observed:

1... In action of Cavalry against Cavalry, the victorious party loses half as many men as the beaten party, if the latter be "defeated," one-third as many if the latter be "totally defeated." For each more during which the pursuit continues, the beaten party loses as many men as they lost originally in the attack; the pursuers, one-sixth as many. If a second line be in support, beaten Cavalry are never to be considered as more than repulsed.

2... In cases of Infantry against Infantry, the Victors suffer a loss of a third when the adversary is "totally defeated," one-half in other cases.

FIGURE 31: COMBAT TABLE FROM BARING'S TRANSLATION OF TSCHISCHWITZ

74

Sheehan,

German History, 1770 1886, 903.

before the Austrians could adequately mobilize, the first use of trains in large-scale warfare in eleven days, delivering troops a distance that would have required a two-month march.⁷⁴ The Prussian military's rising star, Field Marshall Moltke, promoted railroads in both the interest of strengthening the military and as a personal investor in railway concerns. The Prussian state also adopted the telegraph in the 1850s, vastly increasing the size and agility of forces it could readily control. Manifold developments in the technology of rifles and artillery made the front line more deadly than ever. Reiswitz could not have anticipated these novelties, but when you choose to set a game in the present, then if the game survives the era of its birth, it must contend with the relentless advance of technology. Looking back on the Reiswitz system from the vantage of the military technology of 1874, Dannhauer singles out the deployment of the rifled breech loader, a longrange accurate cannon with terrific penetrating force, as one that made essential differences in the game upon its revision. Tschischwitz takes into account both rifled and unrifled artillery in his 1862 edition, though as the former shortly would more or less entirely supplant the latter in the field, by the time of his 1867 edition he left out smooth-bore cannon entirely. Most significantly for the history of wargames, Tschischwitz furthermore abandoned the custom dice of Reiswitz for ordinary six-siders, enshrining the odds and results of combat in charts printed in his rulebook: perhaps the earliest combat results table.

In that first decade under Wilhelm I, Prussia tucked some remarkable military victories under its belt. Territorial disputes with Denmark, which had flared into armed conflict periodically for more than a decade, led both Prussia and Austria into open war with Denmark in 1864. Victorious but unable to agree on a division of the resulting spoils, Prussia and Austria took arms against one another in 1866, with many of the remaining German states forced to side hastily with one or the other. To the surprise of observers, the Prussians, under the brilliant leadership of Moltke, bested their long-time rivals, who had long been considered among the greatest of continental

powers. For an encore, Prussia answered a French declaration of war (one largely engineered through the machinations of Bismarck) with a rapid and decisive victory over a second major continental military force, in the process once again extinguishing the imperial ambitions of France. This time, the Prussians led a broad coalition of the German states against their old enemy, and with that threat neutralized, Wilhelm was crowned German Emperor (*Kaiser*) within the Hall of Mirrors in the French palace of Versailles.

The reaction from the remainder of the world, especially Germany's neighbors, mingled admiration with concern. Many had long ago written off the Prussian state as an underperformer, especially its armed forces. Friedrich Engels (who served in the Prussian Army in 1841, in his early twenties), writing two weeks before the decisive engagement in the Austro-Prussian War, derided the Prussian forces as a peace army, with the pedantry and martinism inherent to all peace armies. No doubt a great deal has been done latterly, especially since 1859, to get rid of this, but the habits of forty years are not so easily eradicated.⁷⁵ This had been the prevailing assessment of Prussia for some time in England, where a *Times of London* article in 1860 observed that Prussia was present in Congress, but absent in battles... She has a large army, but notoriously one in no condition for fighting.⁷⁶ Europe resonated with surprise, and no small alarm, to see Prussia trounce two of the greatest continental powers within five years and emerge with the trappings of empire. Naturally, commentators of the day sought some explanation for this unexpected success, especially by the time Wilhelm I took his crown in Versailles. Inevitably, the imagination of the public, and military leaders around Europe, was captured by the Prussian predilection for *kriegsspiel*.

What role, if any, the practice of *kriegsspiel* played in the Prussian victories of the 1860s and 1870s is difficult to assess. Moltke, the chief of the General Staff and the architect of the Prussian strategy in both conflicts, was certainly an avid wargamer, but who can say if *kriegsspiel* improved his military genius or merely delighted it. Since *kriegsspiel* remained a particularly Germanic pursuit, however, it was easy for the jealous nations of the world, grasping for some vital difference between the Prussian military and their own, to light upon it. The large volume of *kriegsspiel* publications in the 1860s certainly rendered the game conspicuous. Tschischwitz went through three editions by 1870, and Thilo von Trotha, who attempted to

rethink the game from first principles and arrived at very much the same Reiswitzian system, also printed three editions in rapid succession beginning in 1869. The Vossichen Bookshop on Schönberg Street in Berlin sold all manner of *kriegsspiel* books and accessories: game pieces, dice, rulebooks, 1:8,000 scale maps and boxes to carry it all in. A good set of the necessary equipment for two sides in a wargame, colored red and blue, could be purchased there for 20 Thalers in 1869.⁷⁷ Talk about wargames filled the pages of the *Militär-Wochenblatt*. To observers outside of Germany, *kriegsspiel* looked to be something the Prussians took very seriously indeed.

⁷⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, June 20, 1866.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 510.

⁷⁷ *Militär-Wochenblatt* of 1869 (No. 35)

A resulting *kriegsspiel* vogue swept the military intelligentsia of the world first in Europe, and eventually in the United States and even the Far East. Translations of German wargaming systems, most commonly Tschischwitz, began to appear in the early 1870s. A loose English adaptation of Tschischwitz, *Rules for the Conduct of the War-Game* assembled by Captain E. Baring of the British Royal Artillery, appeared early in 1872 at the behest of the Secretary of State for War along with a royal recommendation that officers should avail themselves to the utmost of this useful means of instruction. The same year two Frenchlanguage *kriegsspiel* sets appeared: one for France and one for Belgium. The Italian Staff Corps promulgated instructions for map maneuvers based on Trotha in 1873;; a Russian manual derived from the same source appeared in 1875. Germans lectured on *kriegsspiel* to great public interest. The international celebrity of *kriegsspiel* had two important consequences, which brought about a virtual bifurcation of wargaming: in the first place, it caused radical transformation in the practice of wargaming within the German-speaking world, as new enthusiasts reacted to the rule-heavy Reiswitzian legacy;; in the second place, it evoked a new civilian interest in wargaming, especially within Great Britain, that would eventually lead to the creation of hobby wargames emphasizing entertainment over education (which we leave to the following section).

Captain A. Schmidt s aforementioned article on *kriegsspiel* in *Daheim* magazine (April 19, 1873, No. 29) a *familienblatt*, a popular magazine of the late nineteenth century similar to its British counterparts discussed in the beginning of Section 2.1.1 details for a general audience how the game was

played in the early 1870s, and is thus historically invaluable, especially since it grants us insight into discrepancies between the written rules and their implementation. Given the significant complexity of the rules of the day, one might question whether it was even feasible for an umpire to perform the required calculations of ranges, losses and so on. Schmidt nominally operates with the Tschischwitz rules, which are in most high-level particulars identical to Reiswitz: the umpire decides the general idea, consults dice as necessary to resolve combats and interprets written orders representing two minutes of game time. Players see only a map depicting the forces of which they are aware, while the umpire conceals a master map preserving the position of all game pieces. There are similar combat resolution tables, with six dice for resolving the results of conflict (per the 1828 amendments to Reiswitz) and a detailed table for converting arbitrary odds into die rolls. Schmidt's account, however, ignores the notion that firearms may include variable points of damage determined by the dice;; instead, the umpire of Schmidt's game simply interprets the R, G or T results described above according to his own judgment and explains the results to the affected players. This sort of simplification would have made the administration of the game less tedious for the umpire and probably more realistic as well, as the umpire's judgment of circumstances can smooth out any absurdities that a stricter adherence to the rules might dictate.

This abbreviation of Tschischwitz rules exemplifies a fundamental trade-off in wargaming system design that would be much discussed after the dawn of hobby wargaming as a compromise between *realism* and *playability*. The Prussian wargames, like the Brunswick games before them, adopted as a setting the real world of their present day, and with the preponderance of statistics characterizing the performance of various weapons

given in *The Reisswitz Story*, 22.

and the overall behavior of troops, a *kriegsspiel* designer faced an unrelenting pressure to make their games more realistic. This inevitably entailed adding more tables, more rules, more systems, introducing distinctions to limit the battlefield conditions under which a particular result is likely, depicting more varieties of weapons, down to the level of individual manufacturers instead of broad categories of weapon design, providing maps at different scales for distinct operations or layers of the command chain and thus, in every respect, increasing the depth and detail of the simulation. As a consequence, they games became less playable for

umpires remember that players barely interact with the system at all, merely giving general written orders which the umpire is then expected to execute with rulers, maps, dice and rule tables. In practice, umpires arrived at their decisions through the means they found appropriate, and Schmidt's description in *Daheim* gives us an example of what that might have been for a playable interpretation of Tschischwitz.

If Schmidt's narrative constitutes an implicit rejection of the rule-heavy legacy of *kriegsspiel*, an explicit critique to this effect arose from another quarter that same year, when a Prussian Lieutenant, and later a lecturer at the War College of Hannover, Klemens Wilhelm Jacob Meckel, published his *Studien über das Kriegsspiel* (Study of wargames). In it, Meckel acknowledges the importance of wargames in military education, but observes that the very officers who would benefit most from its teachings seem least willing to embrace it.⁷⁸ He ties this sorry truth to four fundamental deficiencies in existing wargames: first, that the umpire's judgment is constrained by the rules;; second, that the rules themselves are too rigid to apply to realistic battlefield situations;; third, that the calculation of points of damage is overcomplicated and ultimately of little value to the simulation;; fourth and finally, that the complexity of the rules is a discouraging impediment to learning the role of the umpire. These criticisms, once they became known to the *kriegsspiel* establishment, elicited a backlash;; Colonel Trotha, for example, apparently sensed an attack on his own system, which he refuted at some length.⁷⁹

Two years later in 1875, Meckel published his proposed reinterpretation of wargaming (*Anleitung zum Kriegsspiel*), which notably considered martial activities on three

game at a map scale of 1:6,250 which emphasized the study distinct scales: a detachment of minute tactical details, a movements of forces, and finally a strategic the 1:6,250 detailed tactical maps that borrow his name, the Meckel maps, for which he is largely remembered: he emphasizes that the maps should depict in sufficient detail such terrain features as rivers and villages that the tactical benefits of stationing troops in these locations will be clear from the map. His greatest contribution to the future development of wargaming, however, is the idea that a single action might be considered at several scales, and thus effectively in several modes. For example, there might be a strategic-level map showing the breadth of an entire campaign on which opposing commanders maneuver their armies into place;; when those

forces meet, they would be resituated on a more detailed, tactical-level map where subordinate commanders would direct a battle with only general guidance from above. This two-mode approach to wargaming is a feature of many later games, including the campaign games of Scruby, Bath, Gygax and Arneson. The

grand war game at a scale of 1:12,500 governing the larger game at the massive scale of 1:100,000. It is simplification Meckel hoped to inspire, however, failed to manifest for all his protestations about the needless difficulty of managing quantified fire effects, Meckel wargame still endorses the use of dice and the computation of losses for tactical games played out at this scale.

⁷⁸ Readers in search of an English version of Meckel may find a decent approximation in H.O.S. of August and October 1897, which provides a decent condensation of both the 1873 and 1875 works of Meckel.

⁷⁹ See Trotha's *Zum Kriegsspiel* in the *Jahr Bücher für die Deutsche Armee und Marine* (Jan Mar 1874).

To liberate *kriegsspiel* from dice and charts entirely required a higher authority. Exactly that came from Julius von Verdy du Vernois (1832-1910), a member of the Prussian General Staff who, as the head of the intelligence section, had served as a principal aide to Moltke himself during critical passages of the Franco-Prussian War. His subsequent work as a military scientist, especially the seminal *Studien über truppenführung* (Studies in Troop-Leading, 1873), garnered high esteem from readers worldwide. When he elected to weigh in on the subject of *kriegsspiel*, consequently, his opinion was not to be taken lightly no doubt to the disappointment of Reiswitzian loyalists, he sided with Meckel, and indeed felt that Meckel had not gone far enough.

Verdy du Vernois in his *Beitrag zum Kriegsspiel* (Contribution to Wargaming, 1876) expresses many sentiments similar to the criticisms levied by Meckel: that when a student of military sciences suggests playing a wargame, an all-too-common response is, We have no one here who knows how to conduct the game properly.⁸⁰ Probing more deeply into the root causes of this, he found the defect to lie chiefly in the purely technical part of the conduct of the game, the novice failing to understand the rules, or the use of the dice and the table of losses this last table referring to the computation of points of damage against units.⁸¹ Verdy du Vernois therefore proposes the obvious: to simply remove those entirely from the game, and to

allow the umpire's assessment of the tactical situation to determine the outcome of any encounter. He recognizes that there are certain risks in this change, noting that dice... provide an apparent security against partiality in the decisions.⁸² This is not an insignificant concern, as the discretion of the umpire may be subject to all manner of conscious or unconscious bias. More materially, Verdy du Vernois feels that a fundamental flaw is exposed when an officer fluent in operations is intimidated by the prospect of administrating a wargame the dissonance being that if the wargame is truly supposed to train officers for war, how can seasoned officers lack the capability to conduct wargames? Furthermore, as Meckel points out, the manner in which umpires render decisions has always been hidden from the view of players, in all Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel* the umpire could be consulting entrails for all the players know, they see only the results of the process by which the umpire decides combat. If the abandonment of dice causes no change in gameplay discernible to the players it is meant to edify, how could dice be essential to the goals of the wargame?

Operating from these principles, Verdy du Vernois provides a detailed, narrative-heavy example of the operation of the game, one much in the style of Schmidt's earlier piece written for a general audience. In it, his umpire even dispenses with the necessity of written orders, and instead merely interrogates the commanders and their subordinates regarding their intentions at a particular time. For example:⁸⁰ From the translation of J. R. MacDonnell as *The Tactical War Game* (1884), ix.

⁸¹ Ibid., x.

⁸² Ibid., xi. As the previous section noted, dice and umpires became connected to wargaming at the same time, and the god-like situation of the umpire does require some protection from partiality obviously, in a one-sided exercise where the referee controls one of the forces, as is the case in *Dungeons & Dragons*, this impartiality is essential to check the aspiration of the referee.

The Umpire: If you reach Connewitz unmolested, do you purpose to advance beyond it with both your squadrons?

Lieutenant D: I shall advance in the direction of Zwenckau until I feel the enemy. The Umpire: What orders do you give to the detached half-troop of the 1st squadron? Lieutenant D: To advance as far as Döllitz, and thence to send out patrols on the further road leading southwards and on the left bank of the Pleisse towards Zwenckau. [Ibid., 15]

Verdy du Vernois wargame unfolds through this sort of dialog, where the umpire prompts the players to state their intentions, and, sometimes after retiring to deliberate, renders verbally any changes to the game's state, afterwards requesting new intentions from the players.⁸³ In seclusion, the umpire may still perform cumbersome operations in order to establish a realistic state of the game;; in Verdy du Vernois example, the umpire maintains a very strict timeline and spends quite a bit of energy calculating troop positions and movement speeds in order to determine exactly where and when (down to the minute) enemy troops will encounter one another. Combat, when it occurs, is decided through the referee's judgment of the tactical situation, where a great deal relies upon the exact timing of the offensive. In one example he gives, two equal forces will meet in battle, and there is nothing about the situation that would grant either an obvious and unconditional victory. The result is nothing like Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel*, where one side is repulsed and another victorious, or what have you: instead, after minutely calculating when various clusters of troops will charge, and how long various hand-to-hand phases will last and with what outcome, the umpire reports the disposition of each individual squadron: who is pursuing who, who lacks rear support and is thus reforming, and who has charged through to their destination. The commanders of these units then have another opportunity to react to the new state of affairs.

The contribution of Verdy du Vernois enjoyed a very positive reception. To some degree, this can be attributed to his rank and reputation: in the past, *kriegsspiel* publications had come largely from ambitious junior officers, but to have a member of the Prussian General Staff, and an intimate familiar of so eminent a commander as Moltke, propose a *kriegsspiel* had no precedent. The rules also had the great virtue of simplicity, and many who were previously daunted by Reiswitzian charts could now share in the advocacy of *kriegsspiel* without committing themselves to the rote memorization of innumerable statistics. At the close of the nineteenth century, Verdy du Vernois less structured rendition of *kriegsspiel*, which came to be known as free *kriegsspiel*, crowned the achievements of nearly one hundred years of German wargame design.

The great esteem for *kriegsspiel* propagated through the English-speaking world. The first rules to cross the Atlantic were probably those of Tschischwitz, in the aforementioned 1872 translation by Baring. At the time, William R. Livermore, an American captain of the Engineers, advocated

vociferously for the adoption of those rules by the United States military.⁸⁴ By the late 1870s, the game enjoyed some popularity at West Point, and there, it came to the attention of Charles Adiel Lewis Totten (1851 1908), who was assigned to special duty at West Point between 1878 and 1880. As a result of that fateful encounter, Totten wrote the oldest wargaming rules in our history that the designers of *Dungeons & Dragons* knew firsthand: *Strategos, the American War Game* (1880). In actuality, *Strategos* is two very different games under one wrapper: a Battle Game in something of the vein of Hellwig wargame, played on a board, and an Advanced Game more resembling Tschischwitz and suitable for play on maps or other terrain representations.⁸⁵ Its two volumes and apparatus (or as it was called the outfit) of board and game pieces sold for \$75 American over \$1,500 in 2010 money. Totten claims in the introduction that *Strategos* held the unique position in literature of the first independent study of wargaming, as opposed to a translation, that has appeared in the English language. This is not an entirely unbelievable boast, though it is worth noting that Livermore own wargame, *The American Kriegsspiel*, which finally appeared in print in 1882 (but with a copyright of 1879), had circulated unpublished at West Point for some time prior to the publication of *Strategos*.

⁸³ We will return to dialogs of this form, and the posture of the interrogative umpire, in Section 3.2.1.1 and beyond.

⁸⁴ In this evangelism, Livermore joined forces with a party on the Navy side: William McCarty Little, who would lecture to the Naval War College on *kriegsspiel* in 1887.

Totten claim that *Strategos* was the result of several years of private study, unassisted by reference to any foreign code until it had become a finished system is, however, a somewhat less credible claim.⁸⁶ The debt that his Advanced Game owes to the Reiswitzian tradition would be obvious to any cursory reader. The referee yes, Totten calls the administrator of the game a referee rather than an umpire provides a general idea for a scenario, including special instructions for each of the two sides (colored red and blue, of course), the player-commanders and their subordinates submit their orders in writing, and turns represent a five-minute interval of game time (a slight expansion of Reiswitz s two minutes). Topographic maps (at a scale somewhere between 1:6,000 and 1:12,000) are recommended for play, ideally with three map instances used simultaneously: one maintained as the

secret master copy of the referee marking the authoritative position of all units, and one for each of the two contending sides showing only their perspective on the battlefield. The game pieces in play are wooden blocks scaled to the size that formations would assume on the map. When combat or other circumstances requiring judgment arise, the referee first calculates the ratios of possibility from the magnitude of the involved forces and the tactical situation, and dice resolve the conflict. Victory is⁸⁵ *Strategos* less than six brief pages neither is a game, however, but instead a method of using the *Strategos* board and pieces to demonstrate tactical formations and movements outside the context of a game, for the purposes of educating students in the composition of armies and the manner of their arrangement. Several similar products appeared in America in the nineteenth century, including *The Game of War The Automaton Regiment* (circa 1859), which some historians mistake for war games. In *Strategos*, the Battle Game follows, or as the case may be reinvents, many principles of Hellwig and Venturini. It is played on a board of 1,920 squares (48 files wide and 40 ranks long) where each square is scaled to be 150 yards across, though the map does not typically feature terrain types: the battlefield is considered to be an age is achieved by concentrating several units on a single target, artillery removes enemies from the game at range and so on. The two reviews of the game reprinted in Appendix L of *Strategos* both suggest that the Battle Game is an easily digestible extension of chess. It does offer one significant innovation, however: the (unspent balances carry over to the next turn), and various activities such as movements and captures all require a slight point expenditure. Extraordinary actions cost larger sums, some up to 40

times of crisis or opportunity. This system foreshadows some aspects of the original Avalon Hill game, *Tactics* (1954) which will be described below.

⁸⁶ *Strategos*, xi.

incidental to the game and largely undefined;; the general idea dictates the circumstances of battle, and the players themselves are left to understand when it is appropriate to withdraw from contention. Totten would not have needed reference to any foreign system to assimilate these ideas, which were more than fifty years old and circulated through many channels among students of military science long before the *kriegsspiel* vogue brought actual translations to America, but they are unmistakably the principles of Reiswitzian wargames.

If his ignorance of German work is corroborated by any particular, it is that Totten shows a tendency toward exactly the faults that Meckel and Verdy du Vernois hoped to eradicate: the proliferation of rules and tables. Most of the rules of the Advanced Game are committed to a set of tables lettered A through W. His Table I, for example, lists some thirty-six exceptional situations which might arise in a wargame, with the corresponding probabilities and the canned result of a successful roll surely derived in form and content from the Special Circumstances tables in Baring's translation of Tschischwitz. Some seem almost laughably overspecified: for example, No. 15, Artillery fire unanswered, if heavy, may a bridge be constructed under it? (2:1 odds in favor of no). Or after a battery sets fire to a wooden building, consider No. 27, The fire, having taken and 5 minutes having elapsed, has it spread? (again, a 2:1 chance that it has). Table R shows the many multipliers applied to the calculation of losses (points of damage) due to any number of tactical circumstances: natural or manmade cover, slopes in the ground, morale of troops, quality of weapons, beneficial formations, *ad nauseam* Table R lists no less than 147 numbered Cases that might prevail. In an example Totten gives where the dice indicate thirteen men in an artillery brigade would have been affected by gunfire skirmishes, he then shows how to apply modifiers: The several multipliers that affect the result are given in Cases 9, 16, 54 and 62. These modifiers are respectively 1/15, 7/8, 2/1, and 5/1;; hence, by the above rule, we have $1/15 \times 7/8 \times 2/1 \times 5/1 = 7/12$, and $7/12$ of 13 = 7 7/12, say, 8 men, or about 1 killed and 7 wounded.⁸⁷ The prospect for a referee of sifting through these Cases for applicable instances and multiplying the resulting cluster of fractions whenever combat occurs is nothing less than nightmarish. These are precisely the sort of rules that Meckel and Verdy du Vernois abhorred, stipulations that are seemingly ignorant of the enormous gulf between their narrowness and the great breadth of circumstances likely to arise in a practical game, to say nothing of their sheer impracticability.

Reiswitzian influences aside, it would be a mistake to dismiss Totten game as devoid of original work. The statistics underpinning his tables are lavishly documented in the appendices, drawing on official records of the American Civil War as well as many contemporary military authorities. Consider that for the performance of the .45 caliber Springfield rifle alone, in Appendix F Totten provides no less than eight references to sources he consulted, the majority of them official ordnance reports of the United States

government. He writes of up-to-the-minute research in the implementation of Gatling guns (now permitting rates of fire up to twelve hundred rounds per minute) and bemoans that the pace of technological advancement renders a literally contemporary wargame impossible. Totten research even tabulates the budgets and commerce of the major world powers, including a detailed chart of the value of particular import and export goods over the three years leading up to his publication (in Appendix G), so that national budgetary constraints could factor into strategic wargaming.

⁸⁷ *Strategos*, 88.

The most impactful of Totten innovations concern the use of dice. The employment of his Table T, for the resolution of melee engagements, calls for players rolling dice themselves under the supervision of the referee. The significance of this might not immediately be apparent, but consider that in traditional Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel*, dice are the exclusive purview of the umpire, who consults dice in seclusion and presents the results of combat to the players in much the manner that commanders would receive reports of the results of a battle in the field. That is indeed the whole point: Reiswitz wanted the experience of the players to resemble the experience of a field commander, and thus the umpire's responsibilities for determining the state of the world are conducted at a remove. Totten notes that diced results for hand-to-hand battles are the stage of the game where disputes particularly arise, and that putting the dice in plain sight gives players access to the same data that the referee consults to shape the game result.⁸⁸ More importantly, however, Totten wants the responsibility for the die roll to lie with the player rather than with the referee. In the operation of Table T players sometimes may throw dice again, up to a determined limit in the system, if they dislike their initial roll, and thus truly a player may have some personal responsibility for the face of the final throw, as Totten describes it. Totten stresses that this process will bring into prominence the *individuality* of the players, i.e., their power of leadership, taxing their personal judgment.⁸⁹ By engaging players in the operation of the system, Totten lessens their immersion into the role of a military commander, but he exchanges that for something akin to the thrill of a gambler trying to decide when they should stay in a round of blackjack. This change undoubtedly made *Strategos* more lively than some of its predecessors.

Totten also devised an intriguing manner of dealing with more complex probabilities than the traditional stable of Reiswitzian 1:1 through 5:1 odds

for example, 3:2, 4:3, 7:2 and even 11:1 (in *Strategos*, only 12:1 odds are truly considered a foregone conclusion). This statistical flexibility is achieved by the introduction of a new implement of chance to be used in lieu of traditional six-sided dice: a twelve-sided teetotum. A teetotum is effectively a type of spinning top or dreidel which lands on a flat side, and thus can easily be made with an arbitrary number of faces. Enclosed with the *Strategos* apparatus was a teetotum with twelve numbered sides which could be compared to a table in Appendix I to decide more probabilities than previous *kriegsspiel* games. This versatile implement of chance is quite a prescient breakthrough, although it would be nearly a century before wargames rediscovered dice with other than six sides.

For all his adherence to the flaws of Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel*, there is some reason to believe that Totten was aware of Meckel attempted reforms.⁹⁰ In the first place, Totten forsakes the 3-letter system of results (R, G and T) for a five-result system (temporary success, difficult victory, brilliant victory, easy and decided victory and complete victory per Table T), which follows Meckel. Totten similarly seems to share Meckel's ambivalence about dice, a stance half-way between Reiswitz and Verdy du Vernois, one where dice are available to the referee, but the referee's judgment must be the⁸⁸ *Strategos*, 98.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Note that in the preface to *Strategos*, Totten does list both the 1873 and 1875 works of Meckel in his bibliography of wargaming, as well as the 1876 work of Verdy du Vernois, though this is not blame for this can likely be lain at the feet of the *Organ der militärwissenschaftlichen Vereine* (XIII Bd. 1876), though probably with one or more accomplices.

ultimate arbiter in all matters. Of course, even in Baring's translation of Tschischwitz there is much language emphasizing the unimpeachable authority of the umpire over the players, but nothing that suggests that the umpire is anything but subservient to the rules. Remarking on the tendency of experienced referees to neglect tables and exercise their own judgment, Totten concludes that this is in full keeping with the object of the advanced study, and simply shows that those concerned have become educated.⁹¹ Totten furthermore expresses the open-endedness of command in *kriegsspiel* in a way that is not incompatible with either Reiswitz or Verdy du Vernois,

but nonetheless seems more radical: the key precept, which should be familiar from Section 1.9, that in a wargame *anything can be attempted*. The *advisability* of an attempt is another thing.

If Totten merely recapitulated traditional Reiswitzian principles, why did his work catch the eye of Dave Wesely in 1967 when he found *Strategos* in the library of the University of Minnesota? In some respects, this is less a testament to the prescience of Totten than it is to the fateful manner that books reach across the centuries and resonate with new readers in ways that their authors could not possibly have imagined. Wesely understood *Strategos* within a tradition of wargaming that was only just beginning at the time of Totten publication: that is, hobby wargaming, the sort of wargaming one might do for pleasure. Wesely did not recognize the principles of Reiswitz because in the intervening eighty years between Totten and the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, this hobby tradition developed largely in ignorance of its *kriegsspiel* heritage.⁹²

3.1.5 TOY SOLDIERY (1881 1914)

The evolution of military miniature figurines parallels that of wargames, and it is somewhat remarkable that they only intersect a century after Hellwig *kriegsspiel*. Of course, Hellwig prescribed for his game the use of chess-like pieces with a human face, in order that the orientation of the pieces on his board be unambiguous. But Reiswitz and his successors found the use of simple rectangles of the same shape and scale as actual troop formations on the map a more realistic approach to battlefield modeling, and this remained the standard for *kriegsspiel* throughout the nineteenth century, rather than any more representative figurines.

For most of recorded history, military miniatures built as toys or ornaments existed independently of wargaming. Before the late eighteenth century, metal miniatures remained scarce, largely due of cost;; in antiquity, wood was the most common medium for making all sorts of figurines. For the wealthiest Europeans, however, military miniatures were a luxury commodity produced with the same lavish detail as their other extravagant furnishings. The *Weisskunig*, a compendium of illustrations glorifying the early sixteenth-century Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, depicts in one of its plates (Ch. 17, Second Part) the young Emperor at play with a pair of bronze knights deployed in imagined tournaments;; in 1516, he bequeathed a similar pair of miniature knights, made on commission by an armorer, to the child king of Hungary. John G. Garratt, a British author whose *Model*

Soldiers (1958) remains the best English-language work on this subject, identifies these as instances of a tradition of jousting-knight miniatures which can unhorse one another when pulled into conflict by a string several extent copies reside in the collections of European museums. The seventeenth-century kings of France, notably Louis XIII and the Sun King Louis XIV, possessed opulent armies of silver soldiers as children.⁹³ William of Orange, later King William III of England, was especially forward-thinking in using his collection of thousands of toy soldiers to simulate battle plans. Perhaps these stories of William's hobby inspired the first great English replicator of battles in miniature who happened to be fictional.

⁹¹ *Strategos*, 76.

⁹² Totten is probably the most plausible ambassador of the nineteenth-century *kriegsspiel* tradition to the wargamers of the late 1960s, given that *Strategos* is in English and is the least unlikely work to appear in an American library.

Were he only real, Uncle Toby, a character in Laurence Stern's *Tristram Shandy* (1759), could claim to be one of the earliest English military modelers. His interest in military reproduction came as a consequence of a wound he sustained at the Siege of Namur (1695) during the War of the Grand Alliance, a campaign of William III. During his convalescence back in England, Toby and his servant Corporal Trim began constructing models of the towns attacked by the Duke of Marlborough's forces in Flanders. They built these miniature reproductions outside, in the bowling green next to Toby's country home, raising hills of earth and installing miniature buildings to scale as required. It might seem surprising, however, that in his model of sieges, Sterne makes no mention of one critical component: miniature figurines representing the soldiers themselves. While they might have been the playthings of royalty since the days of the Egyptians, mass-manufactured toy soldiers had not disseminated to the point where even landed gentry like the Shandy family might find them available for purchase.⁹⁴

If life can in this instance imitate art, Uncle Toby's pastime found a real devotee in his countryman John Clerk, Esq., whose *Essay on Naval Tactics* (1790) analyzed British military shortcomings at sea through the use of a number of small models of ships which, when disposed in proper arrangement, gave most correct representations of hostile fleets, extended each in line of battle;; and being easily moved and put into any relative position required, and thus permanently seen and well considered, every

possible idea of naval system could be discussed without the possibility of any dispute.⁹⁵ For the most part, however, Clerk was forced to rely on models of his own construction, rather than anything prefabricated for purchase.

The scarcity of miniature figurines ended before the close of the eighteenth century, largely thanks to Johann Gottfried Hilpert (1732 1801), a pewter artisan in the Bavarian city of Nuremberg, which is situated near an abundance of tin mines. Hilpert effectively founded the commercial miniatures industry. Inspired by the Prussian victories in the Seven Years War, Hilpert reused the flash metal left over from the manufacture of tableware to produce military figurines, or *Zinnfiguren*, depicting Frederick the Great and his adversaries. Hilpert made a specific type of two-dimensional miniatures now called flats : basically, millimeter-thick renderings of people, which rested on a wider base in order to

⁹³

Heroard, who covers the years 1601 silversmith Nicolas Roger to make three hundred miniatures for her son, Louis XIII. In 1650, another miniature army, designed by Georges Chassel and crafted by the goldsmith Merlin, is identified in *Musée de Cour* by Perdon de Subliquy as a possession of Louis XIV. That king in turn arranged a sizable miniature army (including ten battalions of infantry) for his own eldest son. Similar examples are known in Germany and Sweden. See Garratt, *Model Soldiers*, Chapter 3

⁹⁴ Toby did, however, deploy various surrogates for artillery batteries, including something that sounds suspiciously like a modified hookah.

⁹⁵ Clerk, *Essay*, xxxiv.

stand upright. These came to be distinguished from full-round figures or solids, miniatures rendered in three full dimensions. Because of their low production cost and retail price, flats remained popular well into the twentieth century. Although the Napoleonic invasion interrupted these first German forays into miniature soldier manufacture, the tradition was resumed later in the nineteenth century by several new firms in Nuremberg and beyond, notably that of Ernst Heinrichsen, who standardized a 30mm miniature scale and reportedly cast millions of flats from 17,000 distinct molds.

While some of these inexpensive figures may have found applications in military training, most made their way into children's playrooms. From there

they permeated popular German mythology and imagination, especially after a generation raised on flats matured to adulthood. No less an influence on Germanic culture than Goethe fondly recalled playing with military figurines in his youth. Toy soldiers feature prominently in fairy tales like E.T.A. Hoffmann's Nutcracker and the Mouse King (1816), and Hans Christian Andersen imputed human emotions to miniatures in the Steadfast Tin Soldier (1838). The popularity of toy soldiers quickly spread outside the German-speaking world;; foundries sprang up in France shortly after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and on both sides of the Rhine, flats, solids and intermediate half in the round figures targeted domestic and export markets. By the 1850s, Creasy speaks with familiarity of the admirable model of the ground, and of the conflicting armies, which was executed by Captain Siborne depicting the Battle of Waterloo: it took some eight years to create with tens of thousands of tin soldiers. Uncle Toby would have loved it.

One market where these figures received a very positive reception was Great Britain, and it would be British enthusiasts who linked toy soldiers with wargaming to create a new genre of hobby wargames distinct from the military original though not until the German *kriegsspiel* tradition became a subject of popular interest. England's romance with wargaming was triggered by the *kriegsspiel* vogue in 1871, but this is not to say that prior to that decade the principles of wargaming were unknown across the English Channel, nor that England wanted for commercial games where pieces depicted military forces. Van der Linde records an English translation from the German of The Game of War (almost certainly a modified version of Hellwig or Venturini) appearing in London as

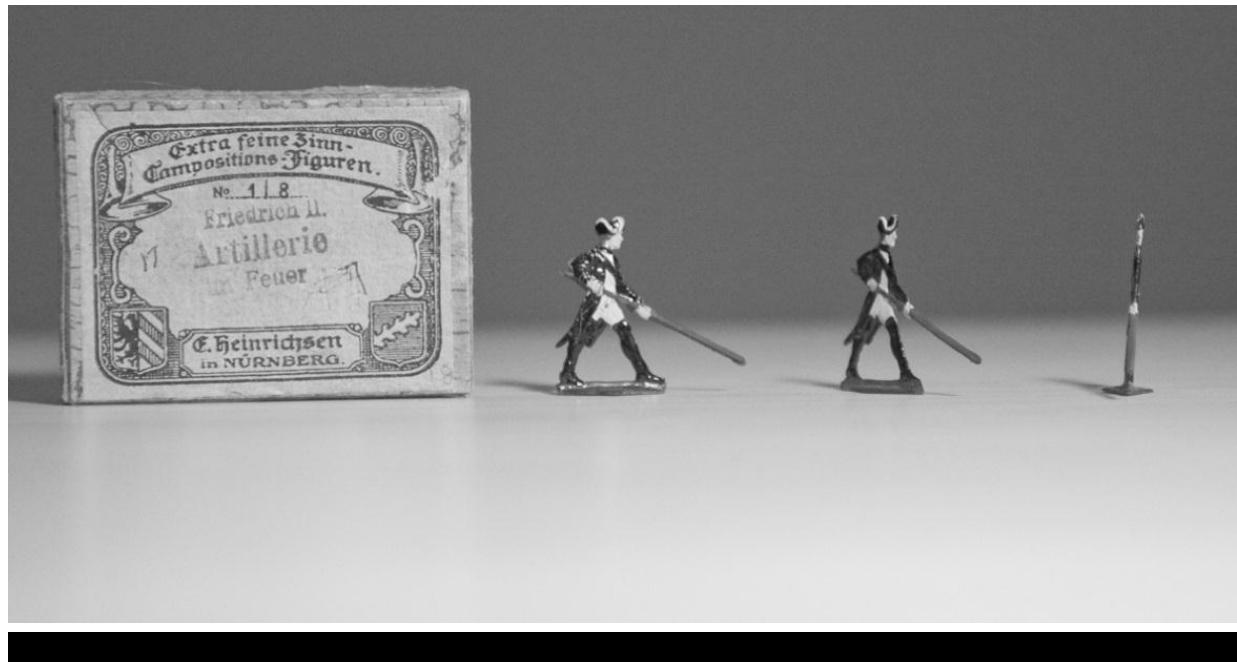


FIGURE 32: HEINRICHSEN FLATS, EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

early as 1798. Jacques and Son, a British game company founded in 1795, published a pair of war-themed board games in 1860: one centered on the use of pontoons and the other, *Hexagonia*, transpired on a board of 130 hexagons, with thirty figures divided into infantry, cavalry and artillery its object was to safely guide one s king to the center of the board.⁹⁶

There are however good reasons to think that the drafters of these mid-century English games were ignorant of the German wargaming tradition: instead, they simply explored the possibilities inherent in commercial board games as products for the general public. Those games appeared in a decade of great innovation in board gaming on both sides of the Atlantic: in 1860, Milton Bradley created his famous *The Checkered Game of Life*, which adapted a 64-square checkerboard into the setting of a race game, returning a favor that *chaturanga* paid to its own ancestor. *Life* enjoyed immediate success throughout the United States, especially during the Civil War, and paved the way for many future commercial game offerings.⁹⁷ In 1864, D. A. Peachery published in Britain *Battalia*, subtitled a new Game of Skill upon military principles designed to supersede Chess. In his ambition he sounds like a true follower of Hellwig, but five years later, Peachery placed a notice in a popular correspondence journal of the day (something more or less the Victorian equivalent of an Internet forum), as follows: I find it stated that in 1815 Comte de Peries made known to the Parisians a game denominated

Strategy, or Military Chess. It was played upon a large chequered board with two armies divided into the three modern military services. Can any of your readers oblige me with further particulars, or put me in the way of obtaining them? In 1864 I published the rules of a game entitled Battalia, or Military Chess , intended to be an actual imitation of a modern campaign, and I am anxious to discover how far I may be amenable to the charge of pirating the ideas of the Comte de Firmas Peries.⁹⁸

What is striking about this advertisement is that Peachery is worried about plagiarizing a relatively minor work like Firmas-Périés's *Le jeu de strategy* (1808), an imitation of Hellwig that expanded wargame armies to encompass some 940 figures. This throws into relief Peachery's ignorance of the German *kriegsspiel* tradition: his words are not those of a man who was aware to have imitated any pre-existing practices. By this point, Hellwig's ideas had been in circulation for some eighty years, and it is possible that via some indirect channel they may have influenced Peachery's design, but the basic idea of modernizing chess is not particularly unobvious, and it seems at least equally plausible that Peachery lighted on the idea independently. Two years after Peachery's game came out, a Confederate Colonel named Charles Richardson produced *War-Chess, or the Game of Battle*, a board game incorporating infantry, artillery and cavalry movement with a few modest complications, like river terrain bisecting the board and the necessity of taking enemy cities or supplies for a victory. Not dissimilar to the precedent of Hellwig, but the prospect that Richardson knew any European wargame seems a very remote one.

By 1871, however, the German wargaming tradition could hardly be ignored in England. The popular attitude toward wargaming necessarily changed with the vast and sudden increase in German standing in continental politics. Admiration for German methods was inseparable from a certain anxiety over German ambitions. Just as popular magazines like *Daheim* then carried pieces for the German-speaking general public about *kriegsspiel*, so did Victorian magazines of the time carry pieces describing this curious Prussian diversion. An article in *Fraser's* in February 1872, for instance, details a lecture given by a Prussian military attaché, Major Roerdansz, on the new celebrated Kriegsspiel used by the Germans. It introduces the subject by asking the question on every Englishman's mind: But what shall we say of a nation who, during a long period of profound peace, learned to play the terrible game of war so excellently that the results of three

campaigns hardly display a false move or an erroneous calculation? The article goes on to describe, at a high level, the principles of Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel*: the presence of an umpire who provides a general idea and determines the results of actions, the use of topographic maps and lead blocks to represent troop formations, and the throw of dice against calculated tables of probabilities to resolve conflicts. Roerdansz argued in his lecture that the steady practice of *kriegsspiel* conferred to its adherents first-rate instruction in tactics, practice in the reading and use of maps, in writing out dispositions, in giving clear and decided orders, and in appreciating the value of time and space. The author of this article (James Anthony Froude) gratefully acknowledges the evident good will of the Prussian military toward England in conducting this lecture, but cannot resist a mention of a recent serial in *Blackwood's* entitled *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), a sort of British disaster novel which hypothesizes a German invasion of the isle of Albion, mostly as a polemical device to encourage greater military spending and preparedness.⁹⁹ This wariness of Germany motivated a careful study of their military techniques, of which *kriegsspiel* seemed the most distinctive and, in all likelihood, the least dull. Thus, in the preface to his 1872 translation of Tschischwitz, Baring remarks, it is certain that within the last few months increased attention has been paid to the game not only in England, but on the Continent;; the numerous articles on the subject in English and foreign military periodicals abundantly testify to the truth of this statement.

⁹⁶ Pritchard, *Popular Chess Variants* asserts an 1864 date for this game, and the use of 125 hexagons rather than 130. Here our account follows van der Linde

⁹⁷ On early American board games, see Hofer, *The Games We Played*.

⁹⁸ *Notes and Queries*, Fourth Series (Vol. 3), Jan-Jun 1869.

Fascination with *kriegsspiel* spread through the civilian audience as well. Henry Spencer Wilkinson (1853 1937) introduced the game to Oxford University while still enrolled there, having purchased a set during studies abroad. Oxford's University Kriegspiel [sic] Club, which he founded in 1873, is probably the earliest non-military wargaming organization. It attracted the attention of many professors and students over the next two decades. Among them was C.W.C. Oman, later known as Sir Charles Oman, MP, who found that wargaming complemented his interest in military history;; his tutor, H. B. George, was at the time president of the club. Oman

s election to the Kriegspiel Club during his fifth year at Oxford (1882–1883) was almost exactly contemporaneous with his authorship of a famous essay on medieval military history, which won the Lothian Prize in 1884 and was published a year later by Oxford under the title *The Art of War in the Middle Ages*. A subsequent expansion of that work, the two-volume *A History of the Art of the War in the Middle Ages* (1923), heavily influenced Gygax's modeling of medieval combat in the game *Chainmail* and subsequently in *Dungeons & Dragons*, as is described in Section 1.4. Although Oman was no statistician, one might say that for *Chainmail*, Oman was to Gygax as Scharnhorst was to Reiswitz: the trusted authority on the real circumstances that the game aspired to simulate. While Oman did not introduce any wargaming material into his historical pursuits, in his *Memories of Victorian Oxford* he gives a lively account of the activities of the University Kriegspiel Club:

⁹⁹ *War of the Worlds* echoes of the invasion fears expressed in *The Battle of Dorking*.

It played war-games in the German style on the old set of Prussian official maps for the campaign of Sadowa, and occasionally, for a change, on the ordnance survey maps of Oxfordshire, or the vicinity of Aldershot. I was greatly fascinated by the war game and its ingenious rules and conventions, looked on as a learner for some months, and was later on permitted to take a share as a company or battalion commander.... Kriegspiel remained one of my favourite amusements for many a year, and I ended with being a frequent umpire in the bloodless battles of the younger generation.¹⁰⁰

Wilkinson, for his part, advocated the popular adoption of wargaming long after his days at Oxford. He circulated a pamphlet entitled *Essays on the War-Game* (1887) describing the activities of the Manchester Tactical Society, a volunteer group aspiring to increase British readiness for war. Wilkinson's book incorporated his articles written for the *Manchester Guardian* describing a wargame played in 1881, as well as a lecture he delivered to the Manchester Geographical Society in 1886 on the history of *kriegsspiel*, surely among the earliest English-language accounts of Hellwig and the Reiswitzian tradition. British military circles also sustained their enthusiasm for wargaming: the army published an update and reorganization of Tschischwitz's *Rules for the Conduct of the War-Game* (1884), which came to be known as the Aldershot rules, from the name of the military base where they were conceived.

All of this popular *kriegsspiel* interest in the United Kingdom during the 1870s and 1880s did not escape the attention of literate society. When Robert Louis Stevenson conducted a wargame in the frigid attic of the Chalet am Stein in Davos in the long winter of 1881–1882 (the Stevensons arrived in September and left in April), could he really have been unaware of the *kriegsspiel* tradition? No pre-existing text, like Baring's *Tschischwitz*, formed the basis of the Davos game, however. Lloyd Osbourne, Stevenson's stepson and wargame opponent, wrote in his 1898 account of the game that it began with a simple row of toy soldiers and a marble for artillery, humble origins indeed.¹⁰¹ Some impetus prompted Stevenson to elaborate on that childhood game, relying on text-books and long conversations with military invalids, before arriving at rules innumerable, prolonged arithmetic calculations, constant measuring with foot-rules, and the throwing of dice.¹⁰² One work he consulted at the time was Edward Hamley's *The Operations of War* (first published in 1867, though probably known to Stevenson in one of several subsequent editions), a study of the movement and management of military power grounded in recent historical events, and a work frequently cited by Totten in *Strategos* a couple years earlier. Stevenson left behind no ruleset intriguingly, he seems to have operated a bit like Arneson, scribbling notes in books and constantly adopting and discarding new mechanisms, with never a thought for organizing his work into a coherent system suitable for dissemination. From Osbourne's account, however, we can glean enough about the operation of the game to see how it differed from traditional *kriegsspiel*, and the influences its design might have exerted on posterity.

¹⁰⁰ Oman, *Memories*, 108–109.

¹⁰¹

An *Intimate Portrait of R.L.S.* (1924).¹⁰² (Dec 1898), 75.

The first and most obvious departure from Prussian *kriegsspiel* is the presence of toy soldiers in place of accurately-scaled blocks representing troop formations. The concept of scale in Stevenson is thus much looser than that of a Reiswitzian game: the map itself was chalked on the attic floor of the Chalet am Stein, depicting terrain features such as mountains and rivers as well as man-made settlements, fortification and roads. The action transpired in an imaginary country, one including such fanciful cities as Yallobally, Glendarule and Sandusky. Aside from a few tactical maps sketched in Stevenson notebook, there survives a small wood engraving of the entire country, though its name, if indeed its creator bequeathed one, is

now lost. Between them, Osbourne and Stevenson possessed six hundred toy soldiers, and in the game each figure stood for around one hundred soldiers (a figure scale of 100:1). A group of four soldiers formed a regiment (Hamley teaches that a regiment encompasses four detachments of around a hundred men each), the minimum number required for the operation of a cannon. Each turn lasted an entire game day.

For Stevenson, who suffered poor health throughout his life, toy soldiers were companions to his bedridden childhood, as he commemorates in his poem *The Land of Counterpane* : And sometimes for an hour or so
I watched my leaden soldiers go,
With different uniforms and drills,
Among the bed-clothes, through the hills.

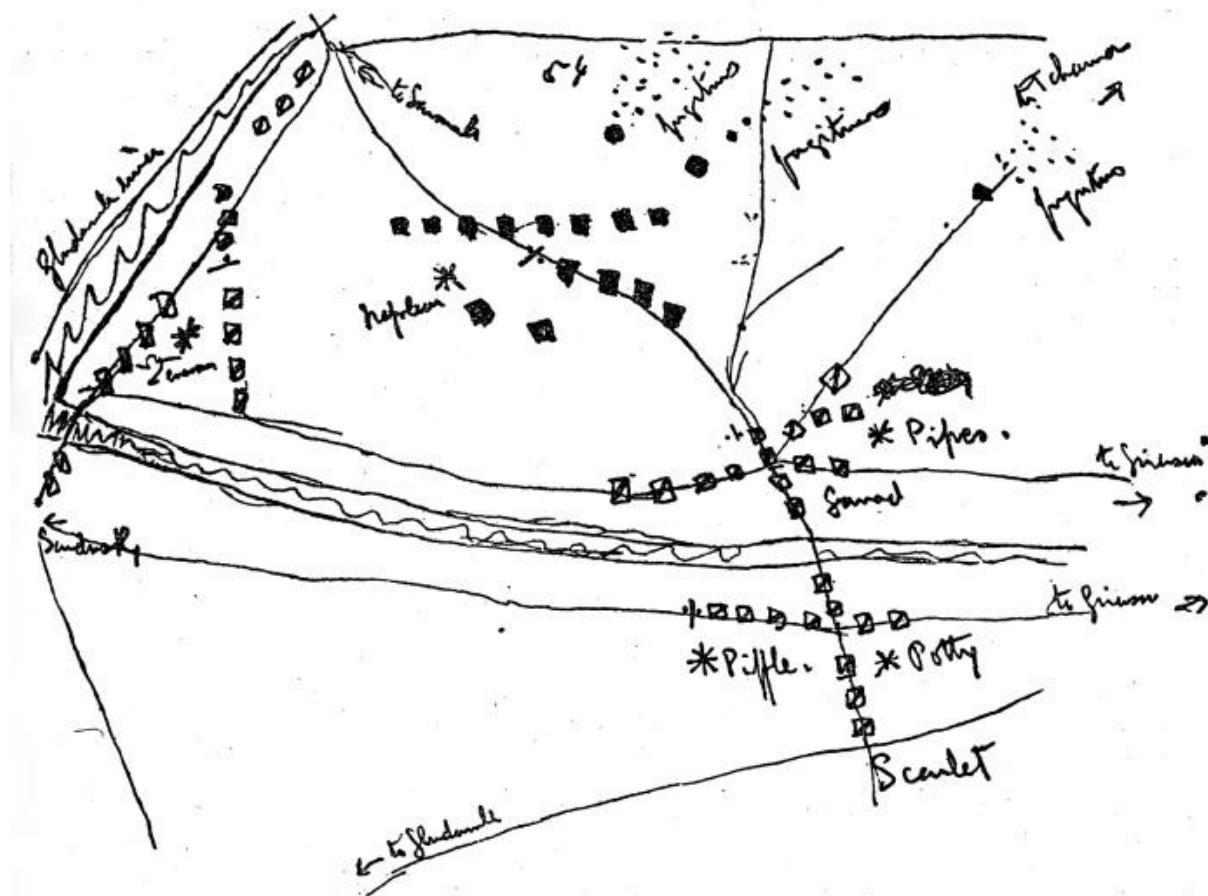
Many of the poems in his *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1895) were composed in Davos, and return to the theme of miniature soldiers: The Dumb Soldier entirely concerns the accumulated experience of a model grenadier stationed in a lawn, and The Unseen Playmate mentions soldiers of tin animated by a child's imaginary friend. That Stevenson returned to toy soldiery during his later convalescence in Davos is thus unsurprising. He also maintained a toy theater, for which he painted sets by hand and staged elaborate performances for his family, sliding tin actors on and offstage on flat shuttles. For his thirteen-year-old stepson, whose mother married Stevenson only the year before, a shared interest in toy soldiers undoubtedly eased the adjustment to a new family.

Of the manufacture of the soldiers, Osbourne tells us little, though they were undoubtedly of Germanic origin.¹⁰³ They do seem to have represented a ragtag assortment, ranging from local Swiss soldiers to exotic Arabic fighters, and even noncombatant figures such as musicians. Most were on foot, but some were cavalry. A Napoleon, probably an inevitable resident in any collection of toy soldiers, rode among them. Even General Stevenson and General Osbourne took to the field;; the former was corpulent with solder, a detachable midget who could be mounted upon a fresh steed whenever his last had been trodden under foot. All of these figures took a generous amount of physical abuse due to the manner that the game modeled artillery fire.

In place of measuring artillery ranges and rolling dice against a firing table per the Reiswitzian tradition, Stevenson and Osbourne shot a pop-gun: a wooden-barreled

¹⁰³ Garratt, in *Model Soldiers* whereas Osbourne fielded mostly flats by Heinrichsen

Garratt confidently and no doubt correctly deduces that the figure of General Stevenson was a Heyde.



Defeat of Napoleon on the afternoon of the 17th.

Poty's light division under Pipper passing through Savoy, supported by Piffle's whole corps d'armée. Stevenson taking Napoleon in flank from the Sow-line of the Sundsbury and Savoy wash.

FIGURE 33: MAP FROM STEVENSON'S CAMPAIGN

Victorian toy, which typically expels a cork stopper under pressure from a pump. They experimented with a wide variety of projectiles launched in this fashion, including buttons, sleeve-links and the aforementioned marbles which brought doom to enemy soldiers in the earliest incarnation of their

game. The pop-gun is a poor approximation of the effects of artillery in a battlefield so poor that it is clearly not intended to be any sort of simulation of realistic battle conditions. In place of mathematical statistics describing the accuracy of gunners, Stevenson game employs a surrogate skill: the skill of aiming with a pop-gun, and the degree of skill that the players command in this art determines the precision of their artillery in the game field. Losses with the pop-gun equal the number of soldiers who topple under bombardment, a number ascertained without reference to tedious charts. The natural instability of some models of toy soldiers relative to their fellows therefore hugely impacted the tactical play of the game, as did the tendency for one precarious soldier, when tumbling, to jostle and unsteady his nearby comrades. A wise tactician would front advancing infantry columns with fat, sturdy cavalry who covered for shakier footsoldiers. These disparities among the models amounted to little when compared to the variance in skill with a pop-gun between a thirteen-year-old Californian boy and an invalid thirty-yearold Scottish writer, however, which canceled out any advantage that mature years might impart to the elder strategist.

Every regiment was entitled to take a shot each turn, provided the enemy lay within range;; a regiment either towed light artillery (shooting pellets from a pistol pop-gun), which permitted twelve inches of movement per turn, or heavy artillery (shooting sleevelinks from a long-barreled rifle pop-gun) at a lumbering pace of four inches per turn. The operation of artillery furthermore depended upon adequate supply, which traveled in carts through the field of battle in the form of letter m s from Osbourne s miniature printing press. One m must be expended per shot with the lighter pop-gun, or four with the heavy gun, and this placed a natural bound on the power of artillery in the game. Unfortunately, Osbourne gives us little idea how the system resolved melee engagements between infantry and cavalry. He records the presence of dice in the wargame, but only for some auxiliary functions, including two that were tested but abandoned: determining whether the morale of soldiers will fail, and deciding whether the unhealthy conditions of warfare, especially near swamps, would infect troops with diseases there is perhaps here an echo of Stevenson own persistent health problems. The combat system also includes many particulars familiar from the *kriegsspiel* tradition, including the construction and destruction of bridges and fortifications, the capture of prisoners and the disruption of supply lines.

For all that might be unfamiliar in this wargame to a Prussian enthusiast, the most striking absence is that of an umpire to manage tactical conflicts and guard secret information. Players moved their own troops on the communal battlefield there was no room nor inclination for separate maps in that frigid attic with rulers, under the watchful eye of their opponent, and conflict resolution via pop-gun required no intermediary to calculate losses. Rather than reducing the tactical situation of the game to something like chess, where the disposition of the opponent's every unit is always obvious, Stevenson and Osbourne deployed and maneuvered numbered cards on the battlefield instead of miniatures in the early stages of the game, to preserve the uncertainty of commanders. Only when opposing units approached one another would the cards be turned over, revealing a written description of the units they represented, which then assumed their place on the field. Thus, decoys and similar ruses abounded, and Osbourne intimates that the dice also influenced the outcome of reconnaissance missions intended to expose the enemy's position among this camouflage of cards.

The only contemporary documentary evidence of this game, a battle report covering one of several campaigns fought during that long winter, Stevenson consigned to a Samoan chest, where his opponent rediscovered it nearly twenty years later Samoa is apparently the final venue where Stevenson staged his wargame, then for the amusement of his step-grandson. One might well ask why Stevenson did not publish notice of his wargame during his all-too-brief lifetime. Lloyd Osbourne relates at least one plausible motivation for Stevenson to remain silent about this project, an instance when they were interrupted at play by another British adult: He was a robust, red-faced John Bull sort of person, and I shall never forget his standing there in the doorway with tremendous guffaws at finding R.L.S. thus employed. Stevenson crimsoned to the ears, and though he pretended to laugh too, our play was spoilt for the morning.¹⁰⁴

Although he elevated the vocation of the miniature military figurine to the play of a wholly original and entertaining game, Stevenson could not escape the popular perception that model soldiers are children's toys. The notion of an adult applying them to any worthwhile purpose inevitably incited ridicule. It was beneath the dignity of a gentleman to crawl around on the floor pushing around toys, and it was equally undignified be they toy soldiers or blocks or dolls. To the uninitiated observer the underlying game system and its subtle strategies would be entirely invisible. It is likely that

Stevenson felt comfortable sharing his invention with his young stepson, but deeply uncertain about its acceptance in the broader world;; as it turns out this embarrassment would be shared by many future wargamers. Before long, Stevenson would presumably rise above such worries. These experiments with wargaming came directly before the publication of *Treasure Island* (1883), Stevenson s first real success as an author, to say nothing of the popularity of his subsequent *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), a short novel that would sell unprecedented hundreds of thousands of copies before the turn of the century. The enormous acclaim for these stories rendered every scrap of Stevenson forgotten production precious after his death in 1894, and the eager audience for new Stevenson material welcomed Osbourne s article on Stevenson at Play in the December 1898 issue of *Scribner s*. Nor would this article lapse into obscurity;; after the dawn of hobby wargaming, it enjoyed frequent notices and even reprints in various periodicals.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Lockett, *Stevenson at Davos*, 143.

Stevenson was not the only *fin de siècle* British author to devise a *kriegsspiel*. The same year that Stevenson at Play appeared, Fred T. Jane, a British illustrator, science fiction author and naval enthusiast commenced a series of yearly publications entitled *All the World s Fighting Ships*, with the bold aim of describing the appearance and capability of every warship currently sailing in a military fleet around the globe. Eventually this serial would become famous among naval aficionados as *Jane s Fighting Ships*, and it continues to be updated at the time of this writing. This catalog of vessels, sorted by nationality, serves several purposes, the first of which is to teach recognition of warships on the open sea. For this purpose, Jane s own sharp technical illustrations, both from a side vantage and a bird seye view, supplemented new-fangled and somewhat grainy photographs.

Furthermore, Jane assigned to each ship a numeric class signifying the overall quality of its weapons and armor;; among fully armored ships, for example, the continuum of weakest to strongest ship corresponded to Roman numeral V through I. The quality of particular guns bore an upper-case letter designation where A is the most powerful gun and F the least;; similarly armor ranged from the thinnest lower-case f -rate plating through the hefty a and then into multiples of a, where the thickest is rated aaaaa. This system of classification permitted Jane to quickly summarize the capabilities of ships through a sort of formula. For example, a behemoth English ship like the

Formidable, which first sailed in 1898, a class I battleship, has 4 A guns, 12 D guns, and 16 F guns, and its armor ranges from a class at the Belt, to aaaa hoods covering its primary guns.

To accompany this wealth of nautical information, Jane introduced a maritime *kriegsspiel* entitled *Rules for the Jane Naval War Game* (1898). Like Stevenson, Jane was himself a civilian, but he oriented his game toward the training of naval officers, whom he believed could learn his game from only five minutes of study;; it relied heavily on an umpire to intermediate events and judge damage caused by ship guns, and featured a complicated chain of command, including an admiral who submitted written orders to subordinate flag captains. All communication was mediated through the umpire once hostilities began, even ship-to-shore wireless. In the annals of toy soldiery, Jane's game is notable for introducing full in the round scale models of ships, sculpted out of painted cork to match the technical drawings, with guns and masts represented by wires one example game of the era describes ship models 15 inches long.¹⁰⁶ While his game has its share of deficiencies, this system of ship classification proved of tremendous value to future wargamers.

¹⁰⁵ The article reappears in its entirety in 1963 in #10 through #14, for example, *Guidon* (Vol. 23 No. 4, Vol. 24 No. 1, and Vol. 24 No. 2) (1965-1966).

¹⁰⁶ g is accomplished without

use this stick to attempt to poke a hole in a scaled image of the target ship on a piece of paper: different scales of the target ship are given for different firing ranges, so at a range of 8,000 the shooter is attempting to pin the tail on quite a small donkey. To add uncertainty to the aiming hoose from one of several strikers at random and quickly attempt to perforate the target. An umpire inspects the results and decides, on the basis of the precise location of the pinhole and the type of gun that is firing, exactly what damage should result.

In the years between 1882 and 1898, a further bolstering in English popular opinion of toy soldiers came from a new object of national pride. In 1893, an English toymaker named William Britain, Jr. marketed a process for producing hollow metal figurines full in the round, a method that promised significant savings in cost of materials. This lower overhead, combined with a family name that was an unbeatable patriotic brand on the isle of Albion, finally allowed a British concern to challenge the

longstanding German monopoly on metal miniature figures. These figures, marketed as Britains, soon flooded British nurseries and furnished an emerging generation with homegrown implements of miniature warfare.¹⁰⁷ The hands that manufactured them were entirely British, and initially, Britains depicted only the troops of the United Kingdom. The earliest models they produced included the unmistakably English 1st Life Guards, followed shortly thereafter by the equally recognizable Royal Horse Guards and the 5th Dragoon Guards, all following the designs of the military artist Richard Simkin. By 1896, Britains had produced around forty different models of two-inch (54mm) hollow-cast soldiers, and began introducing miniatures with movable arms perhaps the first mass-market action figures. There were one hundred different models of Britains by 1900, and for many English boys after the turn of the century, German models were basically unknown. An article appearing in 1910 in *Boys Own Paper*, a juvenile periodical of the era, quotes business manager Alfred Britain as declaring, There is scarcely a German-made soldier to be had in the toyshops of the present time. By this point Britains turned out some 200,000 toy soldiers per week, requiring around six tons of lead. Sets of eight infantry or five cavalry commonly sold for one shilling.

The suitability of these miniature figures for some sort of military game occurred to Britains quite early. In their 1905 catalogue, for example, they advertise a New Military Display and Game, a board on which various toy soldiers and cannon might be mounted, each on an individual swiveling base. A mechanism beneath the board permitted these soldiers to be toppled while still remaining attached to the base, and by rotating the entire board all toppled soldiers would immediately be righted. The advertisement notes that A GOOD GAME can be played by knocking over the soldiers with either a pistol or toy gun (Britain's 4.7 Naval Gun being most suitable). Mounted Officer counting 5 points, Colour Bearer, Gunner, or Bugler 3 points each and Privates 1 point each. The first to score 50 points being the winner. We will return to the 4.7 Naval Gun in a moment, but the idea here is only a slight elaboration of Stevenson original wargame of lining up soldiers to knock over with marbles.

Three years later, Britains elaborated this volley of bombardment into the *Great War Game for Young and Old* (1908), a sixteen-page pamphlet of wargaming rules.¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰⁷ L. W. Richards wrote an article on the history of Britains, Ltd. in the

Bulletin of the British Model Soldier Society for the July 1955 issue (No. 6) which is closely followed here. Much historical data *Toy Armies* (1982).

¹⁰⁸ Garratt, *Model Soldiers*

versed in both

works would have to concur with this assessment, which makes the omission of any mention of the

1908 Britains work by Wells quite surprising, if only denial of sources were not the rule rather than

the exception among wargame authors. One might contrast the Britains 1908 pamphlet with another

early wargame adaptation for boys: *War Games for Boy Scouts* (1909) by A. J. Holladay, a sergeant in

the British military, which describes the use of modest numbers of toy soldiers (less than twenty to a

side) in a red-versus-blue umpired tactical battle. If Holladay hoped to appeal to the youth, however, rules claim no attribution other than the initials C.P.H. in an introductory letter, which represents the author to be 35 years of age, although he confesses with familiar embarrassment that my brothers and I played this game ever since I can remember;; and hush! whisper! we play it yet. And as we grew older, our increasing intelligence suggested many new rules and improvements, that added greatly to the realism and excitement of the game.

Unsurprisingly, the virtually anonymous author encourages the purchase of a great quantity of Britains miniatures rather than having one game piece stand in for a regiment, Britains preferred that every soldier have a representative figure in play. Each side in the *Great War Game* ideally fields an army corps made up of two infantry brigades and one cavalry brigade;; the former should consist of either two or three Regiments which in turn contain three or four Companies of ten to twenty men in each, for a maximum of around 480 foot soldiers per army, for example. To represent the third branch of contemporary military service, the rules advise the further purchase of four or eight guns and for this, as well, Britains had in mind the perfect solution.

The weapon in question is Britains No. 1264, the 4.7 Naval Gun. Always topical in its marketing, Britains released this miniature in 1902, after commanders in the Boer Wars repurposed the long-range QF 4.7 inch gun, a common armament on British cruisers of the day, with a set of wheels for

field usage. The Britains toy version, which sold for two shillings, contained a simple mechanism capable of launching a small projectile. Prior to 1893, Britains spent nearly a half century manufacturing comparatively expensive mechanical contrivances as toys, and that know-how resurfaced periodically in their early miniatures, including the famous 4.7. As one enthusiast would later describe it, It fires a wooden cylinder about an inch long, and has a screw adjustment for elevation and depression.¹⁰⁹ The same source especially praises its range and accuracy with the somewhat dubious claim that it is capable of hitting a toy soldier nine times out of ten at a distance of nine yards odds that would have impressed Scharnhorst, no doubt. The very existence of the 4.7 differentiates this *Great War Game* from Stevenson precedent, which



FIGURE 34: A BRITAINS 4.7 NAVAL GUN

transpired more than two decades beforehand: Stevenson and Osbourne deployed a piece in the game field representing artillery, but since it could not actually shoot projectiles, they situated their oversized pop-gun at the location of the firing artillery when the occasion for a bombardment arose.

Stevenson also aimed at much smaller, denser soldiers than the tall and hollow Britains, which were undoubtedly a far more attractive target for missiles.

he made his game far too dependent on Aldershot-style calculations;; one contemporary reviewer

¹⁰⁹ Wells, *Little Wars*, 5.

The *Great War Game* does not mandate the use of the Britains 4.7;; it acknowledges that the most effective, exciting and quickest method is to fire by throwing with the hand, and suggests that large dried butter beans might serve well for this purpose. The 4.7, however, offers a very realistic method of firing. Following Stevenson, the *Great War Game* does require troops to pull along the ammunition for the guns in carts. The game has a relatively simple movement system: infantry may move six inches per turn, cavalry twelve inches. Anticipating later developments, the *Great War Game* recommends that during larger actions entire companies might be moved at once on a board or tray. As with Stevenson, the combat system for artillery is more clear than for the other branches, though the text does refer to infantry fire as well as artillery fire, and suggests using a smaller projectile for the former, such as hand dried peas. Regardless of the size of the missile, loss of balance due to physical blows forms the basis of all miniature damage. A miniature that is only partially upset, left leaning against a comrade for example, is considered wounded, and may be dragged to a field hospital where it has an even chance of surviving and returning later to the battle.¹¹⁰ If two forces collide on the battlefield, presumably after all of the dried peas on hand have been launched, a larger force can surround, subdue and imprison a force half its size. Prisoners must be escorted off the field under guard, and may be rescued by their companions, though to rearm themselves liberated captives must return to the base camp and baggage. They might also be exchanged after the hostilities concluded for the day also a good time for a war correspondent, unmistakably appropriated from Stevenson, to dramatize a vivid picture of the events of the day in writing. The last two pages of the booklet provide such a partisan battle report of a costly Napoleonic action near Leipzig between Russian and French forces, with each side losing around 350 troops.

As a system, however, the *Great War Game* leaves many unfilled gaps in our understanding. The rules say nothing about turns, and thus restricting movement to some number of inches at a time is of dubious consequence. In

some places the rules seem to imply what later authors would call simultaneous movement, in others, a player with a numerical advantage can claim to fire twice to his opponent s once. The only inkling of a clock is the notion that a day passes in roughly two hours, of which fifteen minutes constitute a quick night where troops can move in darkness (wargamers might honor this by lowering the blinds or turning down the lights to permit secret movement.) The game assigns responsibilities, and recommended locations, to various officers and so on, without articulating what purposes they serve. One can, however, easily envision the target audience compensating for these deficiencies and using the core ideas, which are certainly more specific than Osbourne s account of Stevenson s system, as the basis for a richer game.

The target audience was not made up entirely of youths. H. G. Wells, who was sixteen years Stevenson junior, had reached adulthood well before Britains dominated the toy market, but fortuitously he had a son born in 1901 and another in 1903, and thus he accumulated some hands-on experience with twentieth-century toy soldiery. His book *Floor*¹¹⁰ Anticipating that the average British child of the time lacked dice, the *Great War Game* provides an alternate implement of chance I've *red* and the other six *black*. Place them in a box or bag and shake well up. Then without looking in the box or bag put your in and take on piece of card out. If it is a *red* one the soldier lives, and if a *black*

available reinforcements, a similar method is used to arrive at a random number between 1 and 10:

hou *Games* (1911) described several informal children s games played with blocks and toys;; he claimed to have tried them all and a score of others like them with my sons, and thought them worthy of publication in the hopes that what we have done will interest other fathers and mothers, and perhaps be of use to them... in buying presents for their own and other people s children. He recalled: Toy soldiers used to be flat, small creatures in my own boyhood, in comparison with the magnificent beings one can buy to-day. There has been an enormous improvement in our national physique in this respect. Now they stand nearly two inches high and look you broadly in the face, and they have the movable arms and alert intelligence of scientifically exercised men.... We three [Wells and his sons] like those of British manufacture best;; other makes are of incompatible sizes.¹¹¹

At the time he wrote these words, Wells had secured a reputation and a fortune as a novelist, and thus discloses his delight in children's games with more confidence, apparently, than did Stevenson at Davos. Wells's contributions to popular literature had come early, on the very heels of Stevenson: *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898), three novels which posterity remembers as foundational stories of science fiction, were to a contemporary audience received as challenging meditations on society. More recently, in the manner of a statesman, Wells wrote with gravity on various social issues and the impending threat of war in the continent, for example in 1909 in his essay *The Possible Collapse of Civilization* he discusses how the introduction of new technologies, flight in particular, rendered warfare a fundamental threat to civilization itself.

His novels were not all weighty social matters they began to hint at his interest in exploring games for adults as well as children. The year before *Floor Games* appeared, Wells bestowed the protagonist in his novel *The New Machiavelli*, a fellow named Remington, with a game invented in conjunction with his intriguingly-named friend Britten: We developed a war game of our own at Britten's home with nearly a couple of hundred lead soldiers, some excellent spring cannons that shot hard and true at six yards, hills of books and a constantly elaborated set of rules. For some months that occupied an immense proportion of our leisure. Some of our battles lasted several days. We kept the game a profound secret from the other fellows. They would not have understood. Even fictional fanciers of toy soldiery, it seems, feared that their pastime would be discovered by unforgiving peers.

But not so Mr. Wells. In *Floor Games*, he describes unapologetically several children's games in which he is an active collaborator, including the Game of Wonderful Islands where the British exercise their colonial ambitions on pastoral islanders, and the Building of Cities in which the construction of a metropolis is followed by the elaboration of incidents for its population. Although both games had two young players in the Wells household, they featured no competitive or cooperative system;; each describes how blocks and miniature figures can be used to construct imaginary locations where a youthful fancy might stage events. Only on the last page of *Floor Games* does Wells hint that there was another variety of game, the war game, full of battles and campaigns and strategies and tactics. However, he teases that of the war game I must either write volumes or nothing, and thus for the moment he wrote nothing.

¹¹¹ Wells, *Floor Games*, 13.

His promised description of wargaming, subsequently published as *Little Wars* (1913), began serialization in the December 1912 issue of *Windsor Magazine*. From the first section of his account, which describes the origins of the game, it is clear why its contents did not belong in *Floor Games*. For one thing, although Wells characterizes *Little Wars* as a game for boys, he notes that these would be boys aged from twelve to one hundred and fifty tellingly, the elder of Wells's sons would not quite be twelve at the time of its publication. While in *Floor Games*, the description of play is inextricably linked to particular antics of his two sons (whose initials appear liberally in the text), in *Little Wars* the players are not children, but middle-aged men, acquaintances of Wells, with whom he developed and refined the wargame.¹¹²

Like Stevenson before him, Wells elaborated his game from a simple contest to decide which of two competitors could first knock over an opponent's row of toy soldiers with projectiles. Wells makes no mention of Stevenson game in his account, and is moreover happily free of many of the unnecessary complexities entertained in the Davos attic; the only English antecedent he references is the great modeler of *Tristram Shandy*, Uncle Toby, whose method, he fancifully reckons, was inaccurately observed and insufficiently recorded by Laurence Sterne. He does, like Osbourne before him, invoke the word *kriegspiel* [sic] as a category to which his game belongs;; his later writings (described further below) suggest that like many English-speaking enthusiasts he knew of the Prussian wargaming tradition by reputation but not through any direct experience. Perhaps he read an article like the one about Prussian gaming in *Fraser's* mentioned above. Wells, however, insists that his wargame owed its existence to a specific invention that did not appear until after the turn of the century: the working miniature figurine of a breechloading field gun. By this he meant of course the 4.7 made by Britains, though Wells admits no reliance on the *Great War Game* promulgated by Britains in the preceding decade.

Little Wars details the evolution of the game at some length before enumerating the rules, which occupy only about four and a half pages fortunately not the volumes that Wells threatened in *Floor Games*. Excepting the obscure *Great War Game*, these rules were the first commercial wargaming system to be sold to the public for the purposes of entertainment, and Wells did not create this work purely to promote miniatures sales. From

a marketing perspective, *Little Wars* has something of an advantage over the work of, say, Totten, which sold with its outfit for \$75 American. The only apparatus required for the play of *Little Wars* were toy soldiers and artillery, which could be purchased incrementally with the occasional shilling or two. The rules themselves sold for two shillings sixpence (\$1.20 American for the contemporaneous Boston printing). Wells assumes that the game will appeal to those already in the business of accumulating military miniatures, either for themselves or for younger dependents. Commonly, he played with eighty infantry, fifty cavalry, three or four naval guns and a field gun on each side.¹¹³ To purchase an army this size from scratch would cost around thirty shillings, and thus an entire war could be acquired for an outlay of three pounds or so. Though in this era, especially in the United Kingdom, what home to the young-at-heart could want for Britains entirely?

¹¹² -male players shall be covered toward the end of the next section.

¹¹³ Wells recommends an underlying ratio of twenty to twenty-five infantry and twelve to fifteen cavalry per gun, in order to prevent guns from prematurely going out of commission for want of gunners (as will be described later).

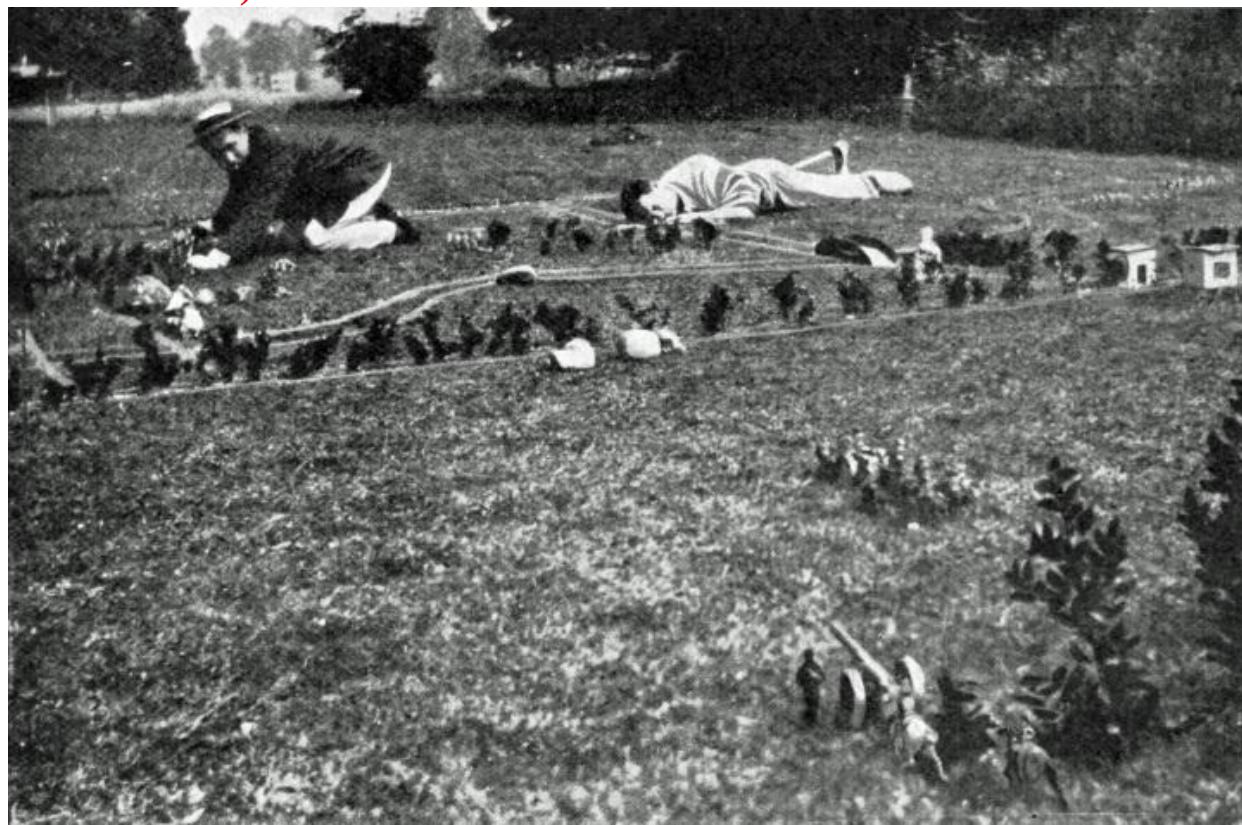


FIGURE 35: EARLY PLAYERS IN *LITTLE WARS*

The sums above ignore any expense in the construction of the country, the terrain upon which *Little Wars* are conducted. Where the elder Reiswitz would not dare to present a sandbox to his king, the more egalitarian Wells has no compunction about tasking his audience with cobbling together their own battlefields. For this he recommends precisely those techniques he previously described in *Floor Games*, especially the liberal use of children's blocks. Either the floor of a parlor, provided it be of linoleum or cork carpet construction, or a Shandean lawn like Uncle Toby's bowling green serve equally well as ground. On them one might pile boards to create hills, stack blocks into the shapes of buildings, lay garden stones to represent rocky outcroppings, and even align plush twigs into miniature forestation. For rivers, chalk outlines suffice, and block architecture can form bridges as needed. The rules stipulate, however, that any structures must be of solid construction, incapable of housing model soldiers or artillery, as extensive experience demonstrated that building interiors complicated play unnecessarily. At the beginning of each little war, one player is tasked with the arrangement of the country, while the other player decides where their army will enter;; the intended effect is to encourage the countryside's designer to avoid any bias granted by the initial configuration of the map.

Once play commences, there is no elaborate system for disguising the tactical situation, like the mysterious cards and decoys devised by Stevenson. Wells does recommend that if the battlefield permits, a large sheet be hung to prevent players from reacting to one another's initial placements;; the sheet drops before the first turn, however, and subsequently the position of all units is obvious to both players. Since there is no referee, players must act under one another's vigilant recognizance. For instance, each player has only a limited time to move all their units during a turn. Wells recommends that the duration of a move be scaled to the number of figurines in play: one minute should be allowed per thirty soldiers to be moved, plus one minute for each gun to be fired. It is the responsibility of the player who is not moving to maintain the clock, to notify the moving player of the remaining time periodically and to cut off movement when the hourglass has run out.

During each turn of the game, every soldier may move, and every gun may either move or fire but not both time permitting, of course. Infantry move up to one foot, and cavalry two feet, double the movement rate of the

Great War Game; Wells suggests cutting two lengths of string for measuring this limit (a solution in many respects superior to the ruler-sticks of Reiswitz). Artillery has no move of its own;; it may however be carried along with any four infantry or cavalry as a side-effect of their normal move, without incurring any penalty for the additional encumbrance;; unmanned guns may even be commandeered in this fashion by the opposing side. In order to shoot, artillery must similarly be flanked by four soldiers within six inches;; provided this condition is met, artillery shots, supplies may take up to four without concern for or provisions familiar from Stevenson.¹¹⁴ Friendly soldiers in the vicinity may lie down temporarily to avoid the barrel of the mighty 4.7 gun. A toy soldier knocked over by an artillery shot is removed from the game, as are any tumbled by a domino effect.

While neither Osbourne nor the *Great War Game* left us with any clues as to how melee combats resolved in their respective games, Wells provides a solution for this which is simple and effective. During the course of a turn, soldiers (be they infantry or cavalry) may move into a proximity of one eighth of an inch of enemies. Upon the conclusion of the turn, all opposing units within six inches of the forces in that proximity are considered part of the melee. The total number of soldiers on each side of the melee is tallied, and on the basis of those raw numbers alone the results of combat are decided. First, like amounts of units kill one another: if the force is five against five, all are killed. If the forces are unequal, then the consequences for the lesser force depend on whether it is considered isolated or supported : that is, whether it is removed from its comrades or if reinforcement is near.¹¹⁵ An isolated force will not be completely exterminated: some of its number may be subdued and taken prisoner by the surviving victorious troops, and those prisoners potentially might be rescued at a later time. A supported force, however, fights to the last man, simply canceling out an equivalent number of the victorious figures;; for example, a supported force of three attacked by eleven is killed, leaving eight survivors among the victors. While this combat system perhaps borrows from the *Great War Game* in its accumulation of captives, its melee rules are so intuitive that they proved one of the most enduring of Wells's system inventions.

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of Wells's wargame, however, is his particular vision of a campaign. He identifies in the last section of his rules several varieties of game which differ only in their victory conditions or objectives. During playtesting, Wells observed that if he assumed each battle

to be self-contained and without any implications other than its own internal resolution, then in the endgame play became very unrealistic the toy soldiers on the losing side had nothing to live for, and their commander squandered them in implausible ways, making sacrifices unknown in the history of warfare. In an attempt to restore realism to routs, Wells stipulated that each individual battle be considered part of a larger campaign, and that at the conclusion of the battle, point totals be assigned to the victor and loser alike depending on the disposition of their surviving forces. Of course, to the victor go the lion's share of the spoils, but Wells awards each side a point bonus for every gun and soldier they save, and greater compensation for enemy prisoners than for enemy graves. Thus, in order to win the campaign, a commander will take greater care in withdrawing from a losing position. Our campaign, Wells clarified, was to a battle what a rubber is to a game of whist, as Chapter One already noted, though perhaps this analogy says a great deal about the target audience of *Little Wars*: adults who would be familiar with the social card games of polite society.

¹¹⁴ In *The New Machiavelli*,

wagons in our war game, and where there were guns, there it was assumed the ammunition was ¹¹⁵ Technically, a force is considered supported if friendly forces equaling at least half its number are within one move of its position. So, for example, a force of six soldiers would be considered supported if there are three friendly infantry within twelve inches of its position. If a force of eight soldiers attacked an unsupported force of six, four on each side perish, but the remaining two of the losers would be prisoner to the remaining four of the attackers.

To indoctrinate an audience that surely had no background with wargames, Wells provides a lengthy and useful example of play, the Battle of Hook Farm. The account is copiously supplied with photographic illustrations, a luxury unavailable to the Prussian *kriegsspiel* authors. For the purposes of dramatizing this battle, as is discussed in Section 1.2, Wells undergoes his Jekyll-and-Hyde transformation into the persona of General H.G.W. The author plays Blue against an unspecified antagonist's Red, and although the account is partially fictionalized, it does not reach the levels of literary entertainment provided by Stevenson war correspondents, especially the critic of General Osbourne who is executed for his libelous rants. The battle ends in victory for Blue.

The original rendition of *Little Wars* in the *Windsor* magazine concludes with Wells's passionate argument that his game is a tool of pacifism, that his little wars are infinitely preferable to the mess he calls Great War, and his sincere conviction that the proponents of Great War ought to be locked up in a room with a lorry-load of Britains to satisfy their belligerent impulses. In the edition published in book form, by way of conclusions Wells hints at a few ways that his game might be expanded, including the incorporation of some of the complexities of Stevenson. He proposes, for example, that toy soldiers could be moved still in their boxes, concealing the numbers of their forces, until discovered by cavalry scouts a very close approximation for Stevenson decoy cards. Ammunition carts, another old friend, follow shortly thereafter. In an Appendix, Wells relates that he has received a considerable correspondence from readers of the *Windsor* article acquainting him with the state-of-the-art in military *kriegsspiel*, and that: They tell me what I already a little suspected that Kriegspiel, as it is played by the British Army, is a very dull and unsatisfactory exercise, lacking in realism, in stir and the unexpected, obsessed by the umpire at every turn, and of very doubtful value in waking up the imagination, which should be its chief function.

His readership apparently impressed upon him the desirability of adapting *Little Wars* to a more instructional military exercise in which the element of the umpire would be reduced to a minimum. Somewhat tentatively, in the manner of a thought exercise, Wells provides some guidance as to how this might be accomplished, developed in coordination with a Colonel Mark Sykes. Many of the proposed changes expose the anachronism in Wells's game, incorporating fifty-year-old military technologies Wells had originally elided such as railroads, exploding shells, and perhaps most strikingly rifle fire for infantry, given that in the *Little Wars* systems infantry and cavalry effectively fight in melee range.¹¹⁶

Curiously enough, the anachronistic setting can itself be considered an innovation in *Little Wars*. The wargaming tradition in Germany strove toward the goal set by Gustavus Selenus, who sought to use games as a means of preparation for real-life leadership. Many of the early chess variants leading up Hellwig attempted to modernize chess, to replace its feudal trappings with the three modern branches of service, in order to better approximate the experience of command. Technological change often precipitated the various updates to the Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel*: from the introduction of rifled artillery to railroads to telegraphy, wargame designers

worked under constant pressure to keep their games up-to-date, to make sure that play trained players for today's warfare, not the warfare of yesteryear. Wells, however, intentionally wrote about warfare of yesteryear, and he did so not out of ignorance, but rather fear, of modern warfare. Wells wrote extensively about the impact of the newly-invented airplane on warfare in the years leading up to *Little Wars*, and in 1912 his curiosity even prompted him to take a test flight. Certainly he knew that any forthcoming war would have an aerial component, and his foresight had even encompassed tanks (see *The Land Ironclad*, his 1903 story). The reason he neglected these elements must not be mere ignorance. It could be as simple as working with the available tools Britains did not exactly make tank models in 1912 or it could be that the fantasy of older, simpler warfare soothed his fears of the future. Whatever the motivation, Wells untethered wargaming from the present day, and the many designers he influenced took significant advantage of that freedom.

¹¹⁶ Other deficiencies in the *Little Wars* system identified by Sykes include: the aforementioned lack of supplies and ammunition;; the absence of engineers;; the inability of cavalry to charge;; and the lack of a system for building and destroying useful terrain improvements. The movement system and the map are also reconsidered to allow cavalry greater mobility and to create an effect on travel based on ascending or descending gradients. A hierarchical multiplayer structure, allowing many subordinate players to report up to a commander in chief through a communication channel, also was needed to meet military requirements.

Wells did not endorse Sykes's recommended changes heartily, and not just because he found anachronism pleasant. Throughout *Little Wars*, Wells continually attests that its rules are perfect. He even entreats his readers, with less irony than he might intend, to show by a groveling devotion your appreciation of this noble and beautiful gift of a limitless game that I have given you. Through a lengthy development cycle, Wells discarded any elements that subtracted from the enjoyment of the game, and he was loath to reintroduce clutter that would make the game-play less compelling, regardless of whether or not it rendered the game nominally more contemporary or realistic. Of the systems for ammunition supply and hidden movement derived from Stevenson, Wells gently confessed to have never even trialed them: his battles take long enough already, he noted, and these changes demanded too much of the players.

In any event, it is certainly unclear that the intended market would see much value in these elaborations. It is to the general public, and largely to the young, rather than aspiring Napoleons, that Wells addressed his work. To say that this civilian market remained untested at the time would be something of an understatement. It is difficult to compare *Little Wars* to any prior publication, to file it away into some convenient niche. Perhaps it was most like a book of rules for a card game sold without a deck of cards, presuming that customers likely had a deck of cards already or could easily lay hands on one. Initial critical reception was mixed, though to understand it one must remember that in 1913 Wells was known more as a social thinker and activist than as a titan of science fiction. The *New York Times* judged that it is like a game of chess, with rules for each move, but more dramatic, an engrossing game for an afternoon and an evening, and many reviews testified that the lure of play was irresistible. The *Boston Transcript*, on the other hands, suspects that peace-loving parents will frown upon H. G. Wells for writing *Little Wars*. In the *American Review of Reviews*, one writer disapprovingly concedes that many an English author has turned aside from his more serious writing to pen such a serio-comic volume but wonders whether parents would or should be willing to let their children entertain war thoughts.¹¹⁷

The year after *Little Wars* reached booksellers, few children in England could hide from war thoughts. Whatever further influence *Little Wars* might have exerted over the popular imagination, the outbreak of the First World War, or as it was known at the time the Great War, curtailed it. The readership of the day might well have derided Wells's hope that his little wars would expose the intolerable costs of Great War, as it was a time when even intolerable costs had to be borne. During the resulting upsurge in British patriotism, Wells did himself no favors by famously criticizing the alien and uninspiring court of the United Kingdom's German-descended monarch. It would be some forty years before the seed of *Little Wars* grew into a hobby wargaming community in Britain, but some few sprouts of activity emerged on both sides of the Atlantic during the intervening decades.

¹¹⁷ These reviews are culled from the *Book Review Digest* (Vol. 70, 1913), 560.

3.1.6 WARGAMING AND THE WORLD WARS (1914–1945)

Amid the maddening waste of warfare, the effects on the advancement of a hobby

must pass unnoticed. Many a child who might otherwise have enjoyed the simulation of combat early in the twentieth century instead became its victim. During the First World War, the British army eventually encompassed a quarter of the male population of Great Britain and Ireland, as volunteers or conscripts. Universities emptied as the government grew desperate for eligible recruits; by the end of the war in 1918, the army stood at over four million soldiers, and nearly half the infantry was aged nineteen or younger. It is no exaggeration to say that the British audience for wargaming, those who survived, had experienced enough war for a lifetime, and not the idealized, pre-Napoleonic combat depicted by *Little Wars*, but a brutal modern war of entrenchment, mustard gas, machine guns, minefields, zeppelin bombers and rampant disease. Colonel Sykes's suggestions for the modernization of wargaming neglected all of those elements. Nearly a million of Albion's soldiers never returned.

The metal destined for toy soldiers also dutifully quit its civilian occupation in the name of patriotism. On the eve of the Great War, Britains, Ltd. faithfully produced miniatures of the various continental powers, but the popular enthusiasm for equipping children with these exploding trench reward with a sharp bang when a flag on its exterior is struck, shortly after its debut in 1915.¹¹⁸ When the war overwhelmed civil society completely, more or less eliminating the toy soldier market, Britains was fortunate to secure a contract to manufacture shrapnel balls on government commission, which kept the factories and their workers afloat through trying economic times. They also produced the metal tokens spent by soldiers in lieu of money at government-operated canteens. At the conclusion of hostilities, thanks to significant overstocking, Britains was able to buy back many of these products from the government at a very favorable rate, giving them a leg-up on raw materials in the post-war market. In 1923, Britains began rolling out enormously popular miniature village and farm toys, which would sell by the millions domestically and abroad in Germany as well as the United States. We turned our swords literally into ploughshares, Dennis Britain quipped.

While the civilian population of the 1910s had no stomach for the games and toys of war, within the military, the situation necessarily differed. Even prior to the outbreak of the Great War, the advent of civilian wargaming with toy soldiers had not stunted the growth of traditional *kriegsspiel*, even if Colonel Sykes and many like-minded officers implements soon began to

wane. Britains hastily withdrew an contrivance, which spring-launched its resident Tommies to their doubted its optimality. The British soldiers heading for the front in 1914 might have trained with a wargame called Bellum, an umpired tactical game played on a single map, but with a dividing screen to maintain the secrecy of the opponent s movements.¹¹⁹ Various new authorities of the era promoted wargaming as an educational tool for officers. In the German-speaking world, the Reiswitzian torch was carried into the new century by Friedrich Immanuel and his contemporaries. The creator of the Schlieffen Plan for the 1914 German assault on France, Alfred von Schlieffen, reportedly based his strategy in part on the findings of gamed simulations.¹²⁰ Although the nephew of that brilliant wargamer Moltke conducted the initial German push in World War I, the alacritous German assault did not achieve its complex strategic objectives, leading to a four-year stalemate of trench warfare. This lack of real-world victories did not quell German enthusiasm for wargaming, however. Wargames factoring in the delicate political situation of Germany between the wars helped decide how the ambitions of the *Reichswehr* might be pursued. Leading up to the Second World War, the outcomes of wargames also helped shape the strategic postures of the British, Russians and Japanese.

¹¹⁸ In Germany, the firm of Heinrichsen duly manufactured its share of miniature mines, flamethrowers, machine-gunners and faceless troops in gas masks.

Throughout the 1920s, the civilian population of Europe still lived in the shadow of the Great War. While Germany languished under vast war debts after its defeat, the economic situation in England was hardly less dire. Given the persistence of antiwar sentiment, the market for military-themed diversions needed significant time to recover. It would not be until 1931, when the shock of the Great War had sufficiently receded, that Britains released its first depiction of the German combatants in that war, attired in their field gray uniforms and steel helmets. A few segments of the German toy soldier market avoided both the shortages of metal and the stinginess of consumers by resorting to alternative materials. The Hausser brothers, Max and Otto, founded their toy soldier company in 1904 on the strength of a composition consisting primarily of sawdust, glue, kaolin and linseed oil which traded under the name of Elastolin. In the dismal post-war economic climate, their low-cost figures sold well, although the French occupying force forbade the production of any military figures that might stir

patriotism, thereby inaugurating a long tradition of historical Elastolin figures, initially including historically distant subjects like Frederick the Great and politically, as well as geographically, distant objects of youthful delight such as the American Wild West. Later, medieval Elastolin figures would inspire *The Siege of Bodenburg* and serve Gygax and Perrin as armies for *Chainmail*, as was discussed in Section 1.3.

As the disdain for militarism faded in England, Britains, Ltd. introduced new lines of soldiering miniatures. The coronation of George VI in 1936, for example, provided an excellent pretext for the sale of a great many miniature parade troops. After Hitler's rise to power in 1933, and especially following the Sudetenland crisis, the rearmament of the United Kingdom similarly inspired modern revisions to Britains' lines of soldiers. The patriotic enthusiasm for these ambassadors of the British military reached the highest levels of society. Through the 1930s, the royal family of England famously submitted an order every year for the latest Britains, a behavior that suggests the mentality of a collector and if the royal family collected Britains, why should anyone else hesitate to?

¹¹⁹ This game is described in *Illustrated War News*, November 25, 1914 with due credit to Donald Featherstone for unearthing this reference and including it at the beginning of his *War Games*.

¹²⁰ This subject is treated in more detail in Chapter Two of Wilson, *The Bomb and the Computer*.

It was at the commencement of this revival that a German-born émigré to England named Otto Gottstein (1892-1951) became a major figure among British toy soldier collectors or as they preferred to be called, model soldier collectors.¹²¹ A successful fur merchant by trade, Gottstein commissioned and personally oversaw the manufacture of many tin flats on historical subjects in his native Leipzig. There, he participated in the celebrated 1930 Leipzig Exhibition of miniature figures (the *Internationale Ausstellung Kulturhistorischer Zinnfiguren*, which ran from mid-September through the end of October), which encompassed more than one hundred dioramas assembled by the most prominent collectors in Germany most of whom personally forged at least some of their collectibles. These collectors banded together in an organization called the *Leipziger Sammlervereins der Klio*, an association which marked a growing recognition that there was such a thing as an adult collector of model soldiers. Stevenson and Wells, although they enjoyed playing with miniature figurines immensely, were perfectly content

to bash and bludgeon them to pieces with projectiles, as one of Stevenson poems (*A Martial Elegy For Some Lead Soldiers*) vividly depicts. This profligacy is unthinkable to the collector, who preserves model soldiers in pristine condition, and most likely casts and paints them as well.

Gottstein, who was of Jewish ancestry, relocated to England when the political situation grew precarious in Germany. Once in Britain, he evangelized tirelessly for broader awareness of miniature casting and collecting as a recognized hobby. Within five years of his arrival in 1932, he presented a collection of thirteen dioramas illustrating British military history to the Royal United Services Institution Museum in Whitehall, for example;; Garratt remarked that Gottstein made many figures that he painted and gave away with extraordinary liberality to publicize the hobby. After first reading in the *Observer* of a schoolmaster who was a fellow model soldier enthusiast, Gottstein eagerly made contact and learned that they were not alone. In order that these disconnected English collectors might pool their knowledge and resources, Gottstein called a meeting in the Jacobean Room of the Rendez-Vous Restaurant in Soho on July 8, 1935, attended by fifteen miniature figure aficionados including Dennis Britain, grandson of the firm's founder and chairman of the company until 1978. The result of this gathering was the formation of a group known as the British Model Soldier Society (BMSS).¹²² Three years later saw the premier issue of the Society's newsletter, the *Bulletin*, which would carry some of the first articles to explore the continuing relevance of Wells's *Little Wars*, and in the 1950s would print the bylines of Jack Scruby and Tony Bath. Indeed, for many years in the first half of the twentieth century, the nascent hobby wargaming community, such as it was, subsisted as a dependent of a larger miniature figure collecting hobby.

By 1939, many of the pioneers of English miniature wargaming had already entered the hobby. Captain J. C. Sachs, who became associated with Gottstein cabal in September 1935 and eventually served as a Lifetime Vice-President of the Society, initiated a wargaming Tactical Cup Challenge within the BMSS as of 1939, a tournament which he ran yearly under his own personal miniature wargaming rules.¹²³ Broadly, Sachs eight pages of rules dragged *Little Wars* into the twentieth century, incorporating many elements that Wells neglected in his intentional anachronism: machine guns, tanks, trenches, pillboxes, barbed wire and even aviation. The core system borrowed liberally from Wells: artillery fire is still simulated with

mechanical breechloading spring cannons, and that artillery makes four shots per turn, for example. The rates of movement halved *Little Wars* at six inches for infantry and a foot for cavalry. Melee combat is slightly less deadly: when equal forces meet, only half the troops on each side are eliminated, and for unequal forces, the amount of the inequality is the initial number of troops deducted from the losing side, though each side then subsequently loses half its (remaining) force.

¹²¹ Much of the information given on Gottstein here comes from Krog and Krannich, *Otto Gottstein*.

¹²² Originally, it sported the more cumbersome sobriquet The British Society of Collectors of Model Soldiers. A useful history of the BMSS, which informs this paragraph, appears in the December 1956 issue of the *Bulletin*. Note that Krog and Krannich, *Otto Gottstein*, 37, gives an earlier date of May 15, 1935, for the first meeting of the BMSS in the Jacobean room; the *Bulletin* of December . Gottstein was

The most radical departure from Wells in Sachs rules is the notion that both players move simultaneously perhaps Sachs discovered this idea in the *Great War Game for Young and Old*. The full implications of this cannot be appreciated without remembering that turns involve firing physical projectiles with miniature cannons. The spectacle of two adult men hurriedly pelting one another's troops with these diminutive contraptions must have been comedic, though Sachs duly warned, in Rule 32 (which is, as Jack Scruby observes, a classic in the history of war game rules): It is permissible to fire at the enemy artillery when it is firing at you;; a smart rap on the knuckles is likely to spoil the aim, and the author, after playing this game for over 20 years, has never found an opponent so foolish as to put his face near a gun when the enemy artillery has been firing at it.

To facilitate simultaneous movement, Sachs stipulated (Rule 3) that each commander must start moving his troops from his own left and must finish on the right, a measure obviously intended to prevent an over-zealous commander from surreptitiously moving the same piece twice in a given turn. Whatever its drawbacks, allowing both sides to move simultaneously undoubtedly speeds up play of the game. Sachs added other measures that probably slowed the resolution of combat, however, including a version of Stevenson supply and ammunition rules. Unlike Stevenson tiny printing letters lugged in a cart, in Sachs game the ammunition shot from the toy cannons is physically carried on the board by miniature lorries. Running out

of ammunition is thus a serious consideration, especially given that cannons shoot four times a turn, though infantry on the field can recover ammunition that has been shot. Sachs also required larger forces to use written orders to manage separate bodies of troops, and detachment from the line of communication for more than four turns results in automatic destruction of the estranged units.

Equally revolutionary in Sachs was the notion that infantry might actually discharge their rifles as firearms rather than merely lunging with them as bayonets per Wells's troops. Rifles and machine guns have a range of twelve inches, though their effect is partially determined by another concept Sachs reinvented from the antiquity of wargaming, this time from Hellwig: the direction that guns are facing. In attempting to approach a company of riflemen, a body of troops will take firing damage that gets worse as they get closer. Sachs applied to the base number of riflemen several modifiers and multipliers to the intensity of fire, which results in a number called the firing strength as opposed to the actual strength, the raw number of riflemen. If riflemen are facing the approaching force, their firing strength is a quarter stronger than their regular strength (for example, a force of 13 men has a firing strength of 16); where if the riflemen are entrenched, meaning they remain in the same place for more than six turns, their firing strength is double their actual strength. Flanking maneuvers that approach a body of troops from a side or behind similarly reduce the firing strength of the defenders to only those troops that can turn and face the aggressors. This firing strength then determines losses among the approaching force: one attacker is killed for every four points of firing strength at the range of 12 to 6, but from 6 to melee fire is more intense, and one attacker is killed for every three points of firing strength.¹²⁴ Once the approaching force reaches the riflemen, all notion of firing strength is discarded, however, and combat is adjudicated as a melee above. The very notion of quantifying firing strength as something abstract that admits of mathematical modifiers is a huge advance over Wells (though something anticipated by Hellwig), and is a clear step toward the Avalon Hill concept of a quantified

¹²³ The most accessible edition of these rules is Jack Scruby final issue of *War Game Digest* (1971). Some of the Tactical Cup Challenge write-ups in the early issues of the BMSS *Bulletin* provide additional insight. combat factor representing the strength of troops in later wargames.

Sachs devised many other novelties, perhaps the most whimsical of which is a system for aeronautics in which model planes are strung on a wire above the battlefield, and players drop plastics bombs from the models in the hope of striking enemy units below. Rather than sprawling across a floor or lawn, Sachs preferred to play on ping-pong table, though one elevated slightly higher than usual in order to give the commanders less of a birds-eye view of the battlefield. In the many battle reports of the Tactical Challenge Cup recorded in the BMSS *Bulletin*, Sachs frequently acted as a sort of umpire, issuing a Reiswitzian general idea of the scenario and even special orders for the two opposing sides. Aside from determining the winner of an inconclusive afternoon engagement, however, there is little for a referee to do in this game like Wells's game, Sachs seems easily playable by two unchaperoned enthusiasts. The Sachs system became the official, and copyrighted, rules of the BMSS, and were sold to the membership for a modest two shillings sixpence the same price that Wells charged for his *Little Wars* thirty years earlier.

This seminal organization of model soldier collectors in the United Kingdom began some years before comparable activities sprang up in America, which lacked any native model soldier industry comparable to the Britains of Britain. The American counterpart of the BMSS, the Miniature Figure Collectors of America (MFCA), first assembled in 1941, and its newsletter, *The Guidon*, would also eventually have a great deal to say on the subject of hobby wargames. By that point, however, toy soldiers had long been a fixture of American toy stores. When post-war Britains and Hausser miniatures voyaged across the Atlantic, they found a receptive audience. Not only had the United States enjoyed a decade of prosperity (up until the market crash at the end of the 1920s), but it had waged a far shorter fight against the Germans than its Continental allies. Moreover, American casualties during the Great War were not much more than a tenth of those of the United Kingdom, and considered as a percentage of the national population they were substantially less impactful Stateside. As awful as the American experience of the First World War was, it was not so terrible that toy soldiers, even German toy soldiers by Hausser, were unwelcome at Macy's in New York before the end of the decade in the 1920s, Hausser sold the bulk of its figures in the export market, faring particularly well in the United States.¹²⁵ For its part, America seemed unable to sustain a native toy soldier industry. Before the war, virtually all American miniatures were copies

(more accurately, pirate issues) of European models, and even these surfaced only in the lowest volumes. Enormous tariffs on the import of foreign toys did little to stimulate domestic miniature production between the two wars.¹²⁶

124 The defending riflemen also take losses according to virtually the same formula, but their losses are determined by the actual strength of the attackers rather than any firing strength.

The American military wargaming tradition begun by Livermore and Totten continued in the early twentieth century as well, and occasionally these efforts received wider publicity. Captain Farrand Sayre of the Army Staff College at Fort Leavenworth published in his *Map Maneuvers* (1908) an account of *kriegsspiel* thoroughly versed in the advances of Meckel and Verdy du Vernois. Aside from giving a cursory history of the evolution of wargames, it provides an overview of the post-1900 work of Immanuel and General von Litzmann of the German Staff College. Sayre's treatise is especially notable for its mention of one-sided wargames, tutorial games in which the umpire, rather than another player, controls the enemy forces in addition to administering the game;; one-sided exercises remained a fixture of American military training into the 1960s.¹²⁷ The naval branches of the military ardently encouraged wargaming as a means of teaching tactics;; the popularity of this sort of simulation in twentieth-century navies may owe something to their familiarity with the complex calculations required to target enemy vessels at sea, which already required modeling movement and accuracy in ways similar to wargames. Immediately prior to the outbreak of the First World War, William McCarty Little published his work *The Strategic Naval War Game or Chart Maneuver* reflecting his ongoing activities at the United States Naval War College.¹²⁸ In 1914, *McClure* magazine (#43) reviewed for a general audience the wargames of William Chamberlaine of the Coast Artillery Corps, who staged massive wargames on a large green board (twenty-five by forty¹²⁵). The arrival of the Great Depression in America, however, coincided with a certain cultural shift toward games for adults. A generation beforehand, the board games of Parker Brothers and Milton Bradley, for example, were almost exclusively marketed to children, and *Shambattle* is probably best understood as a publication in that rough tradition, especially in its reliance on chance. Adults, who are likely to find blind chance stultifying, demanded that games require a greater degree of skill. The gloomy economic situation

undoubtedly helped to advance the fortunes of *Monopoly* (1933), and the inventor of *Scrabble* (1938) turned to game design after being laid off as an architect in 1931. Even sophisticated boardgames that had previously failed to connect with an audience, like George S.

Chivalry (1888) reissued in 1930 as *Camelot* found acceptance.

¹²⁶

widespread

Bulletin 1952 (No. 6) for some exceptions, such as the Noveltoy soldiers introduced by the makers of Lincoln logs in 1928, and finally the establishment of Comet miniatures in 1935.

¹²⁷

from which he includes a lengthy citation: an article on this subject in the *Revue Militaire Generale* of attributed only to a Commander S. The author of

that piece observes that two interest in

them is often lost... Like two students of the art of fencing who have been permitted too early to

fence freely with each other, the two sides slash away without learning anything... In studying tactics

it is necessary to practice with the instructor for a long time that is to say, to handle one force at a ¹²⁸ In the 1912 edition (Vol. 38) of the United States *Naval Institute Proceedings*, 1213 1233. Ross Collins, an early hobby wargamer, reminisced about his circa 1916 wargaming experiences at the Naval War College in *War Game Digest* in 1959. [WGD:v3n1]

feet) depicting ships attacking American coastal strongholds. ¹²⁹ Refinements to these military exercises continued between the two wars, though ultimately, military developments of this era had little influence on the tradition of hobby wargaming that eventually led to *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Hobby wargames, as opposed to their military cousins, struggled against the American perception of toy soldiery as exclusively a childhood pastime. The first native rules for hobby wargaming, *Shambattle* (1929), aim squarely at the preteen market for example, the authors (Lieutenant Henry G. Dowdall and Joseph H. Gleason) apologetically introduce the words effective and ineffective with the proviso, these words are quite long but their meanings are very simple. *Shambattle* is divided into three progressively more complex games, sorted by age group: a Lieutenant s

Game for children aged seven or eight, a Captain s Game suitable for children under ten years of age, and a General s Game, wherein to become a General, a boy should be at least twelve years old. While the rules make no mention of Wells, they borrow his century-old battlefield where bayonets are preferable to rifle fire, horses are the swiftest mode of transport and artillery dominates the field. For American audiences, however, there are no cannons which might endanger the eyesight of the players ; instead, artillery fire is modeled with a three inch square frame which is held over a target group of figurines and scores a hit (killing all that fit inside the frame) one out of six times. As the required random number generator, the authors recommend a spinner of the variety included with many children s race games which produces a number between one and six, though they concede that if such a spinner cannot be located a scandalous six-sided die will suffice. For an infantry melee, *Shambattle* once again employs the spinner to determine the victor, and although the precise mechanic differs in the three variants of the game, in all of them a particular soldier has a fifty-fifty chance of survival. Indeed, for virtually every use of the spinner other than artillery fire, flipping a coin would serve equally well. The General s Game, the most elaborate of the variants, includes machine guns, terrain elevation and medical corps that aid wounded soldiers, as well as mechanisms introduced in the Captain s game such as spies and difficult terrain like swamps or forests. While *Shambattle* may have inspired a handful of young wargamers in America, it certainly lacked the depth necessary to attract an adult following.¹³⁰

By the 1930s, a few unrelated groups of American adult enthusiasts had already embraced large-scale civilian wargames. The two most influential games, both staged on the island of Manhattan, were those of the industrial designer and futurist Norman Bel Geddes and of the science fiction and fantasy author Fletcher Pratt. The work of Bel Geddes in this space has largely escaped the notice of historians of wargaming, though as the designer of such high-profile work as the famous Futurama pavilion at the 1939 World s Fair, as well a number of military scale models published in *Life* magazine in the early 1940s, his

¹²⁹

and four commanding the attacking navy, not counting an umpire for each side and a chief umpire to resolve disputes. A separating curtain allowed for secret movement of the ships between firing obviously, a combat resolution table drawing on recorded statistics. The game is clearly in the Reiswitzian

tradition.

¹³⁰ It is however amusing to note that Jack Scruby, commonly regarded as the father of American miniature wargaming, was thirteen years old at the time it was published old enough to have been a General.

activities often attracted the attention of the contemporary press. A profile of Bel Geddes in *The New Yorker* (February 22, 1941), for example, reports that: Around 1915, he invented a fantastically involved war game which was played on a table 16 ft. long and 4 ft. wide, covered with a colored relief map of two mythical countries. There were 14 people to each side, and moves were made with colored tacks that represented infantry, cavalry and artillery. Geddes spent most of his spare time for several years in elaborating this game, ending up with a 45-page book explaining the rules... Thirty minutes of play constituted the equivalent of a day's fighting;; during the 20s, Geddes and his friends played it every Wednesday from eight in the evening until midnight. Some wars lasted two or three years... The game occasionally took a tragic turn. Rear Admiral William B. Fletcher, long a regular player, lost eight capital ships one night and was so humiliated that he never returned. Another friend, after being court-martialed one evening for losing an entire army, lay on a sofa and cried.

Given this claim that the game was invented so soon after the publication of *Little Wars*, we can hardly neglect the potential influence of Wells on Bel Geddes's project. Like Wells, Bel Geddes believed that wargames taught the preposterousness of warfare, and in fact Bel Geddes was even jailed briefly for writing articles opposing the First World War. While the rulebook described above never made it into print, as the Bel Geddes game was a series of longstanding campaigns rather than a commercial product on the market, several contemporary accounts allow us to piece together a good picture of how the game worked.¹³¹ As *The New Yorker* suggested, it was a mass-combat, with fourteen players to a side, though those numbers reflect a hierarchy of generals and subordinate commanders. The officers of each side, who occupied segregated headquarters tables at some remove from the central board, filled out Field Order forms on a per-turn basis to issue instructions to the troops;; those written commands were individually numbered and retained in a loose-leaf notebook so that the whole war might someday be reviewed through those records.

The mythical countries of the Bel Geddes campaigns were called Yelozand and Redegar, presumably names reflecting the colors of the units

deployed by the opposing sides. By 1933, apparently eight campaigns had transpired between those countries. Those units contended on a three-dimensional board not a sand table, but instead a board molded from layers of cork, which were then covered with colored paper. Rivers, cities, mountains and similar terrain features would be named and labeled, and incredibly, the board featured some nine thousand cities and towns. Some twelve-thousand tacks and pins for units representing infantry, ships, tanks, or even planes could be deployed on the field. During half-hour turns (each representing twelve hours in the time scale), of which each side played four per night, every unit might both move and fire, with fire governed by a complex combat results table that apparently relied on a mechanical contrivance: an intriguing contemporary report from 1933 suggests that hits are determined by a machine,¹³¹ See for example the high-level account in *Arts and Decorations* for February 1933 and Ted Haskell *War Game Digest*. [WGD:v4n4] Scruby himself had also learned of Bel Geddes from an eyewitness, as his remarks in that same issue confirm. The most influential of the accounts of Bel Geddes, however, is that of Raymond, which will be further described below. Several later historians (notably Young) credit Raymond as an independent wargame inventor without acknowledging his well

Raymond describes the game with little care for distinguishing elements of his own invention from those of Bel Geddes.



FIGURE 36: BEL GEDDES PLAYING HIS WARGAME

the chance elements of which are in accordance with actual war percentages.¹³² Bel Geddes possessed an extensive library of war records

which inspired these calculations. Since the board was broken down into numbered squares, movement orders would specify to which exact position a game piece should relocate, though ostensibly each turn of movement represented the actual distance a real unit might cross in twelve hours.

Bel Geddes gamed at his apartment on 37th Street with his Manhattan social circle, which included both local artists and players with more of a military background. He never tried to find a larger audience for his game among other civilians or the army at large indeed, he apparently discouraged the military of the day from attending his sessions. His game was rescued from obscurity, however, by an article written by Lieutenant E. A. Raymond of the United States Field Artillery Reserve, in concert with Harry W. Baer, Jr., Ph.D. It appeared in November 1938 in *The Reserve Officer*, an organ of the United States Army Reserve, as a follow-up to a previous piece on the history of wargames, which covered chess, Reiswitz and Wells, among others. In this second piece, Raymond champions the work of Bel Geddes;; while he concedes in something of an understatement that the original game was elaborate and costly, he reports that the main idea has been utilized by others with far less trouble and expense. Raymond suggests, for example, that those lacking Bel Geddes talent for scale modeling might, instead of millimeter-accurate layers of cork, use a large map, tacked on boards, though ultimately one that will produce a terrain combining rough and level ground, waterways, coastlines, roads, railways, cities, and mountains for as many types of warfare as possible. Once perfected, this map should be covered with graph paper ¹³² Arts and Decoration. While this tantalizing mention of a mechanical random number generator might sound implausible, - racing simulator which may shed some light on his ingenuity in this space. Pickering describes how had its own motor, set by dial at the percentage point based on its past performance

practically invisible, which went the length of the track and disappeared ove element of chance... this machine kept fourteen large steel ball bearings in perpetual motion and shuffled them mechanically across twenty pair - this sort of apparatus for a horse-racing game, Bel Geddes may very well have found it within his powers to devise a satisfactory mechanical random number generator to settle wargame events as well. It is also possible that this machine more resembled Liverm marked in centimeter and half-centimeter squares. Raymond recommends a 4-by-10 foot playing surface, somewhat less ungainly than the 4-by-16 foot space Bel Geddes employed.

For a movement system, he proposes that the distance traveled by units scale to their type and the terrain traversed: An infantry pin would move four squares on a road;; a cavalry unit, eight. Off the road, on level ground, the infantry could make two squares a move;; in rough country (which may be shown in green) one square. His notes on the resolution of combat are vague, but fire efficiency is determined partly by chance and partly by range, as infantry will only be able to assault enemies in their immediate environment.¹³³ Raymond greatly reduces the number of participants to only three on a side, one of whom is the commander-in-chief, and as such pares down the length of turns to only fifteen minutes.

If, he stipulates, it is considered desirable to bring the war to some definite conclusion... one city can be marked off as the capital on each side, and if one of these is captured, the war arbitrarily ends. Intriguingly, Raymond does not rely on a referee or any means of managing secret information;; while he acknowledges that as a consequence almost completely eliminated, since the players can view the whole board, view this as a fatal flaw.

While Raymond's article kept alive knowledge of the Bel Geddes system among army reservists, it hardly reached a wide audience. The other, more famous civilian game of the 1930s eventually saw print as *Fletcher Pratt Naval War Game* (1943). L. Sprague de Camp recalls that the game originally transpired monthly in Pratt's Manhattan apartment, sharing space with the marmosets Pratt raised in cages. It may have begun as early as 1929.¹³⁴ When it outgrew these cramped confines it eventually drew forty or fifty players for an evening the game migrated to an 18-by-18 foot hall on East 59th Street. Pratt prided himself on the large number of players his game could accommodate from two to two hundred, he claims. Writers including Theodore Sturgeon and L. Ron Hubbard could be found among the regular participants, but players came from all walks of life: a broker, a real estate man, a photographer, a botanist, two or three advertising men, several artists, several writers, a chemist.¹³⁵ Little mention is made of participants with a military background;; from the range of represented careers, this game obviously had a broad civilian appeal.

Pratt's game relies on the prior work of Jane, but not so much on his naval wargame as on his compendium *Jane's Fighting Ships*. As in Jane's game, players command a waterline model of a warship, a commodity in those days available at any department store, which is moved along a large

surface, typically the floor of a good-sized chamber. Movement of ships is measured in knots, and the scale of the map is thus to the knot rather than any other unit of measurement: for his own play, Pratt kept to a scale of 14mm to the knot, with ship models at a scale of 1:666. The game is refereed (Pratt does prefer referee to umpire), but the players are responsible for the movement of their own ships and for designating precisely how their ships will attack. The duty of the referee is to verify that the players are moving fairly, and to determine the results of their attack.

surprise is

he does not Pratt borrowed Jane s method of classifying ships, especially his notation for measuring arms and armor. The thickness of armor and the size of guns are quantified and compounded in an elaborate mathematical formula, to which additional figures are added for amenities like torpedoes or the ability to carry aircraft. This sum is multiplied by the speed of the vessel in knots, and finally the tonnage is added to determine a value for the ship. Ship values tend to be large: one example boat given in the rules has a value of 23,034.

Guns, when they score a hit with a shell, inflict a certain number of points of damage depending on their size;; the weakest 37mm guns might inflict 23 points of damage, the standard 4.7 cannon hits for 244 damage, while the implausibly large 16 cannon deals a whopping 10,550 points of damage. As a ship suffers points of damage, it begins to lose capabilities, including movement speed and the use of its guns.¹³⁶ For the convenience of players, a ship card typically lists all of these attributes and details exactly which capacities are sacrificed at the various levels of disrepair. When it has taken damage greater than or equal to its value, a ship is sunk. Pratt is the first civilian game to revive this Reiswitzian concept that units are not atomic, but rather endure a finite number of points of damage before they are destroyed.

¹³³

made if three dice are used, all the spots on each dice [sic] being blocked out except the one-spot. For each white spot thrown an enemy u

¹³⁴ The Time

date for Pratt.

Taking damage, of course, presumes that a hit has actually been scored. In lieu of written orders for firing, players lay down a cardboard arrow next to their ship pointing in the direction they wish to fire, and write the desired

range, in inches, on said arrow.¹³⁷ This firing range is an estimate of the distance to the target that the player formulates by sight alone. The referee then measures from the cardboard arrow with a tape measure and marks the locations where fired shells land. If they land on another ship, then a potential hit has occurred, provided that the gun is powerful enough at the range in question to penetrate the target ship's armor. Typically, a player fires a barrage of shells across a range, firing for example a spread of ten shells, the first at 80', the next at 79', and the last at 71', in order to compensate for the uncertainty of range estimation. If a hit is scored, penetration of the shell is then ascertained (shells that fail to penetrate do half their rated damage). A naval 4.7 gun, for example, can penetrate no more than 5' of armor, and then only at pointblank range;; at a distance of 30' as the tape measures, it can only hope to penetrate 3' of armor. At point blank range, a 10 gun can hope to penetrate 16' of armor, and a gargantuan 16 gun could breach that same armor at a range of 58'. These figures Fletcher Pratt commits to a handy chart allowing the referee to determine the efficacy of gunfire at a glance. The correspondence of this whole system to the reality of warfare is defended in one pat assertion: Experimental calculations, taking the recorded hits at the Battle of Jutland as a basis shows it comes out almost exactly right for a genuine naval battle in the long run.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Resources like speed and cannon are lost in very even increments. For example, if a ship has a speed of 31 knots, then for each 1/31st of its total value suffered in damage, it loses one knot of h of its total value lost the ship loses the ¹³⁷ To some degree, this practice was anticipated by Livermore *American Kriegsspiel*, in which commanders placed next to units on the map two separate types of xiphoid physical pointers (or a great variety of distinct pointers to represent different durations and intensity of fire, however, and did not have any corollary to range estimation.

As a result, the task of the referee is simpler than in a traditional *kriegsspiel* or the naval wargame designed by Jane. There are however two interesting complications in the referee's vocation. The first is submarines, as these require the umpire to guard secret information from the players. For that purpose, a submarine commander inscribes movement and firing orders on paper, since the position of underwater vessels must remain unknown to other commanders;; submarine commanders not at periscope depth are similarly exiled from the game room, as the military technology of the day made it equally difficult for submarines to track events on the surface.

Surface ships may attempt to listen for submarines or launch depth charges, and the referee is tasked with intermediating between the surface commanders and submerged forces to make these measures somewhat realistic. The second complication is cheating. Since players are entrusted with movement and the designation of firing ranges, there are various ways in which players can attempt to twist the rules: moving too far in a turn, say, or firing a gun beyond its stated range. To each of these transgressions Pratt ascribes a penalty that the referee should impose, and in so doing he effectively routinizes these minor misdeeds into a component of the game. For example, if a player turns a ship too sharply (no ship can turn sharper than a right angle), the ship suffers a steering-gear breakdown, and must turn in circles for at least three moves more. Enforcing these penalties rigidly, of course, entails that referees double-check the work of players;; but perhaps like enforcing a speed limit for roads, the potential imposition of penalties results in a sufficient level of lawfulness provided that referees occasionally strike down the most egregious offenders, and thus literal duplication of every player's work is unnecessary.

Pratt system incorporates several more novel features, including a system for torpedoes similar to gunnery, and a remarkable system for aircraft, though Pratt confesses that handling airplanes in the game is a complex and difficult business, a headache all the way.¹³⁹ Airplane models are attached to a notched pole, where each notch measures a level of elevation at which craft may fly. This pole moves around the room in much the manner of a ship, though of course also allowing a plane to ascend and descend the pole as desired. The real complexity comes from the interaction with ships, especially in how ships fire on planes and vice versa. One must also allow planes to attack submarines, and of course dogfights between planes are de rigueur. Nonetheless, the absence of aerial combat in a modern naval wargame would be a stark anachronism, and Pratt is thus forced to make provisions for flying machines.

For all these system innovations, however, perhaps the most startling novelty in Pratt wargaming sessions was the presence of female players. Once his group had embraced the system, the sweethearts-and-wives influence became manifest. One of the latter appeared as a spectator of what was originally intended to be a purely stag game. In the midst of the ensuing red-hot engagement she was discovered flat on her stomach, aiming the guns of a cruiser and muttering something like I'll get the so-and-so this time.

From that date on there was no checking the rising tide of feminism. Today there are nearly as many players of one sex as of the other;; and one of the feminine delegation has been praised by a naval officer as the most competent tactician of the group.¹⁴⁰

139

Ibid.,

22.

140

Ibid.,

2.



FIGURE 37: A FEMALE GAMER IN PRATT'S RULEBOOK



¹⁴¹ *Little Wars*, 6.

Even the illustrations in Pratt rulebook, which were drawn by his second wife Inga Stephens Pratt, show a skirted woman alongside her male counterparts kneeling on the game floor, angling a cardboard firing arrow at her target. The significance of this development must be understood in terms of some remarks of H. G. Wells, whose *Little Wars* is a game for boys... and for that more intelligent sort of girls who like boys games and books. While those words are relatively enlightened for his chauvinist era, perhaps slightly less generous is Wells's anecdotal complaint of being interrupted during a wargame by a great rustle and chattering of lady visitors. They regarded the objects upon the floor with the empty disdain of their sex for all imaginative things.¹⁴¹ Between the time of Wells and Pratt, the cause of women's rights advanced quite far on both sides of the Atlantic: consider that the Nineteenth Amendment passed in 1920, only a decade before Pratt's games began. Pratt's circle is the first to attest to female wargamers. Since the armies of the day accepted only male soldiers, the attendance of women at the nineteenth-century Prussian or Aldershot military wargames would have been an unlikely proposition. While America offered the first suffrage for female gamers, it apparently extended only to those attending as the sweethearts-and-wives delegation of the invited men.¹⁴²

All of these advances were buried, however, in history. Pratt rules appeared under the Harrison-Hilton imprint in 1943, just in time for Pratt to make some remarks concerning his creation very reminiscent of Wells, namely that his game may be considered, in fact, as a release or catharsis of the war spirit;; and if Mr. Hitler and Mr. Stalin had had such a game available, they might not have resorted to killing thousands and disorganizing the lives of millions in order to read dispatches before their eyes, responsive to their wishes.¹⁴³ Pratt must be forgiven for his apparent understatement at the time he wrote those words, the full extent to which Hitler and Stalin had disorganized lives must have remained unknown in America.

The Second World War repeated the disastrous effects of its predecessor on wargaming and toy soldiers, only much more so. Britains, Ltd. once again switched to armament production in 1941, though as a military target its factory actually suffered some damage in the German aerial¹⁴² Coed wargaming was not entirely unheard of by the days of the IFW, but was rare enough to incite comment;; Mark Goldenberg, in a 1969 note

Sex have been known to participate in wargames, so how come an organization such as ours

gap as *Dungeons & Dragons* found its broad audience. ¹⁴³ *War Game*, 3.

assaults on London. As late as August 1950, a correspondent in the *Bulletin* bemoans the failure of Britains to resume production. The BMSS itself endured significant attrition, contracting down to only seventy-one members, as a post-war history in the *Bulletin* notes that the active life of the Society was interrupted and monthly meetings became quarterly ones, and the collector once more became an isolated individual. [BMSS:1956n10] In Germany, however, the history of wargaming suffered immeasurably greater losses. Gone was the Braunschweig where Hellwig and Venturini gamed, incinerated by Allied bombings. Gone was the White Salon of Berlin Castle where the elder Reiswitz first demonstrated his invention to the Prussian princes, indeed gone was Berlin Castle entirely. Gone were the foundries of the *Zinnfiguren*, and the records of their manufacture. Gone from the great libraries were the many volumes that told the story of *kriegsspiel*, to be replaced with the notice *kriegsverlust*. It is a small miracle that the *Taktisches Krieges-Spiel* table presented to Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia by the elder Reiswitz survived the war. Today, it is sometimes shown in a quiet chamber in the New Wing of the Charlottenburg Palace, in the garden grounds of which is buried the game's great advocate, Kaiser Wilhelm I, along with his mother and father.

3.1.7 THE CIVILIAN REVOLUTION (1945 1968)

There is little left to tell now of the evolution of wargame systems before we encroach on the immediate prehistory of *Dungeons & Dragons* already detailed in Chapter One. What remains is the story of how hobby wargaming elevated itself into a community, a fandom and finally a commercial industry. Hellwig, at the very inception of the German wargaming tradition, recognized that his work served a dual purpose, both to educate soldiers and to provide a diverting way to pass an afternoon;; while he happily sold his game to any interested parties, it was no mass-market venture, and his immediate followers steered wargaming away from casual use and into deeper principles of simulation. The elder Reiswitz found a board too limiting to capture reality, and in conjunction with his son he transformed wargaming from a parlor game, where squares confine the inspirations of players, into a rarified thought experiment, where general descriptive orders are processed into events by an expert referee. Meckel then recognized that

meticulously simulating the military theater could reach a point of diminishing returns, and Verdy du Vernois illustrated precisely how little the behind-the-scenes calculations of the umpire stipulated by Reiswitz contributed to the experience of the players. Once that reaction had sunk in, Stevenson, Wells and Pratt all principally authors of popular fiction, surely no coincidence devised games that emphasized the imaginative and social elements over the rigid dictates of education. None of these efforts, however, brought wargaming beyond isolated pockets of enthusiasts to a wider audience.

A veritable revolution might have transpired directly after the publication of *Little Wars* had a civilian world inherited that work. Instead, its words were drowned out by the fury of two Great Wars and ill-suited to the slow recuperation that bridged them. In the 1950s, the conditions finally came into place for the widespread popularization of wargaming as a hobby. By this point, a clear divide had formed between military and hobby wargaming, which allowed the latter to articulate its goals without compromising fun for education. Military wargames, in America particularly, swung away from table-top tactical simulation and into realms that civilians would not follow.

The first catalyst of this shift was a new addition to the military arsenal: the atomic bomb, and shortly thereafter its carriage by long-range rocketry. Once the atomic bomb entered the repertoire of the world's military powers, the simulation of present-day conflicts had to address the nuclear option. But how could one bring nuclear war to the board of Hellwig or the parlor of Wells? In 1956, the year that J. C. Sachs died, an early British wargamer named Charles Grant was aware of a miniature system for atomic strikes that left circles of total destruction on the table of eight feet diameter! the irony being of course that few wargaming tables were likely to exceed those dimensions. [BMSS:1956n8] Only slightly less helpful was the earlier satire penned by R. Sterchi which, in the tradition of firing physical projectiles from Britains 4.7 guns to topple soldiers, proposes that each side will be supplied with two regulation hand grenades;; these will represent atomic bombs. [BMSS:1953n1] Both of these accounts, as clever and cynical as they aspire to be, seem in hindsight to miss the point: atomic bombs fell on no battlefields full of soldiers in Japan, nor would their threatened use in the Cold War be the elimination of masses of troops. Instead, nuclear weapons brought warfare to noncombatants in population centers, entirely bypassing battlefields where the tactical situation of troop maneuvers might be

relevant. This unprecedented and horrific style of warfare simply did not lend itself to a sand table peopled with small metal figurines representing soldiers and tanks. Since military wargaming focused on training its players for contemporary war, and required constant maintenance to keep pace with technological advances, military training transformed to meet the new needs of the modern tools of battle. Civilian or hobby wargaming, on the other hand, took refuge in the shelter Wells had built long ago anachronism, and in particular the world prior to 1945, to which we shall return shortly.

Another technological breakthrough of the era radically changed the military approach to simulation, placing military wargames entirely beyond the grasp of the civilians of the 1950s: electronic computers. An early and well-documented example is the Navy Electronic Warfare Simulator, or NEWS, conceived in 1945 and operational by 1958. Its four thousand miles of wire and thirteen thousand electronic tubes, marshaled across three floors of a building, at a cost of around US\$10M exceeded the means of even the most enthusiastic hobby wargame clubs.¹⁴⁴ Much of this cost reflected the sophistication of the facilities housing the players and umpires, which replicated command centers then in service to run a real-time game in the actual spaces of command. Players, situated in any of a number of individual chambers, experienced a user interface tailored to their position in the battle, through which they viewed and changed the state of the game, including a visual display of blips on radar screens and a control panel for weapons systems. Referees had the slightly less enviable responsibility of operating analog computers for calculating damage (which involved a great deal of physical configuration with knobs and levers), but this job probably amounted to less hassle than computing sums manually. Any technological marvel that takes thirteen years to build will be obsolete upon its completion, however, and by the end of the 1950s punchcard-operated digital computers ran manmachine games and even machine-machine simulations of strategies and tactics.

A third influence further steered military wargaming away from the interests of civilian tactical hobbyists, this one introduced by civilians, ironically. The United States Air Force contracted with the RAND Corporation to research the rapidly changing nature of warfare and to recommend new strategies, particularly in light of the Air Force's newfound custody of the American nuclear arsenal. At first, this work fit nicely into the tradition of tactical wargames, and indeed, evidence linking the work at

RAND to the Reiswitzian tradition abounds. In the early 1950s *kriegsspiel* enjoyed a vogue among young mathematicians at Princeton University, and RAND recruited a number of them to work on leading-edge problems relating to strategy, incorporating both game theory and war games;; Alexander Mood, one of the Princetonians, devised an early wargame played on a distinctive honeycomb hexagonal grid.¹⁴⁵ A pioneer of these games, Olaf Helmer, explains that

¹⁴⁴ *The Art of Wargaming*, which emphasizes throughout the naval leadership in American military wargaming.

A hexagonal grid has been chosen in preference to a square grid for two reasons: aircraft can move across the board more smoothly, without having to dog-leg too artificially;; and the essentially circular ranges of active defenses can be simulated more readily.¹⁴⁶

System details of the early RAND games feature in the paper *Some War Games* (1952) authored by R. M. Thrall and John Forbes Nash (later winner of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics, whose colorful life was popularized in the book and film *A Beautiful Mind*). Nash wrote about a simultaneous-move ground wargame played with incomplete information a la *Kriegsspiel* with an umpire on three copies of the same 21-by25 board (525 hexes) with colored chips representing troops and trucks, in which the objective is to conquer enemy cities. Combat resolution cast no dice, but instead relied on a simple rule of two-to-one superiority: any two units attacking a single enemy would destroy it, and since no more than three allied chips might occupy a hex, any six coordinated units had the unstoppable power to clear territory. Nash concluded his section of the paper with the possibility of dispensing with the umpire, and playing on a single board with alternate moves. Thrall sketched an aerial wargame based on similar principles, though his game takes place on two boards with a divider preserving secrecy during moves and involves capturing airports as well as cities.¹⁴⁷ Otherwise, these games largely followed the tradition of Hellwig, though they introduced an intriguing concept of production, that is, a notion that possession of cities (even cities originally controlled by the enemy) entitles their holder to a new unit produced there every so often as turns pass.

¹⁴⁵ John Nash invented and promulgated an abstract strategy game played on a hexagonal board while at Princeton, one that apparently bore his name.

¹⁴⁶ From Helmer *Fundamentals of War Gaming* devotes a -27, at least in its third edition of 1966, and thus it may well have existed in the 1960 printing) which more precisely explicates the value of hexagons: m is used for generalized games in which the forces are permitted to move only from one square to an adjacent square, a force may move in any one of eight directions. However, if it moves diagonally, it covers about 1.4 times the distance that it does when it moves vertically or horizontally. Hexagonal grid patterns, on the other hand, equalize the length of moves further notes that the system was in use by the RAND Corporation.

¹⁴⁷

(1953), a project of the University of Michigan, where Thrall held an associate professorship: a good indication of the porous boundaries between the work at RAND and academia. Nash taught at MIT -hearted effort, designed to justify his employment at RAND and... A *Beautiful Mind*, 149.



FIGURE 38: HEXAGONAL WARGAME BOARD AT RAND

As simulations and training exercises, these early RAND games proved quite successful with their target audience, and a picture of an air wargame (probably Thrall s) in progress even appeared in a *Life* magazine photo shoot at RAND for the May 11, 1959, issue. Otherwise, these wargames remained in a murky state of confidentiality under defense contracts, especially as suspicions of espionage grew during the Red Scare. When nuclear stockpiles swelled and rockets became the obvious delivery mechanism of the future, military simulation and planning had to adapt. As even planes no longer factored into the equation, tactics alone could not describe the arena of warfare. A new style of game, pioneered by Herbert Goldhamer in his 1954 paper *Toward a Cold War Game*, approached modern strategy and simulation by confronting the potential for nuclear warfare in a complex politico-military game of economics, social science, diplomacy and brinksmanship.¹⁴⁸ The games themselves took the rough form of free, umpired *kriegsspiel* where players were assigned the key roles in several world governments, effectively competing as teams. Teams responded to unfolding events, after much internal debate in turns lasting several hours, by generating elaborate written orders then processed and resolved by the umpires. An official from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1964 characterized play as follows, with a very interesting choice of words: In short, we are talking about role-playing games in which we try to represent several international actors, usually governments but sometimes other factions, against a world background in which a myriad of forces and influences are at work. For role players in the JCS games, we have the unique advantage of being able to cast top officials of the US government.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ *The Crisis Game* (1965) is a good first-hand account of the play and history of these games. *The Bomb and the Computer* (1968) also contains valuable detail on simulations of nuclear war throughout the 1960s and especially the role of computers in simulations.

Indeed, the term role-playing game befits these political wargaming exercises where seasoned officials or student players assumed leadership positions of a real or fictional nation. As we shall see in Chapter Four, which explores the roots of role-playing, the term encompassed a variety of educational, business and psychological uses in the 1960s. The Cold War Game simulations themselves danced around the edges of nuclear conflict, and thus frequently proceeded through diplomatic feints and wary alliances in lieu of fighting. Academics in the defense establishment quickly spread

these games to universities, where they enjoyed considerable popularity in the social sciences throughout the 1960s as various instances of a model United Nations, particularly one in crisis mode. Unsurprisingly, the American military leadership, veterans of a successful two-front war only a decade beforehand, questioned the predictive powers of these exercises and their value as simulations. No one, however, could consult any historical precedent before waging a nuclear war, and thus the veteran commanders of conventional warfare had no stronger claim to authority in this sphere than civilian scholars. While these strategic roleplaying simulations almost certainly influenced Calhamer 1959 board game *Diplomacy* (as Section 4.1 covers in greater detail), they offered little inspiration to the tactically-minded wargamers on the periphery of the British Model Soldier Society these wargaming practices had little to do with miniatures or table tops.

For all the attention lavished on potential nuclear holocausts, it is possible to overstate the impact of the bomb on the real wars practiced in the era. Despite the prophecies of Wells, atomic weapons did not end all wars, and America had already joined a conventional conflict on the Korean peninsula in 1950 where its nuclear arsenal played no overt role traditional battlefield tactics prevailed. Consequently, even at the end of the 1950s, one-sided and two-sided tactical map maneuvers and war games still factored into the courses taught at American military schools like Fort Leavenworth, according to John P. Young's 1959 *Survey of Historical Developments in War Games* (1960). Young observes as an aside that from time to time games based on early forms of *Kriegsspiel* reappear and are played enthusiastically as parlor games.¹⁵⁰ It was in this environment that Charles S. Roberts authored his first wargame, *Tactics* (1954), a game that decidedly ignores contemporary warfare in favor of the actions of yesteryear. While an overview of *Tactics* already served to introduce the fundamentals of board wargames at the start of Chapter One, placing it in the context of the wargaming tradition here exposes where Roberts innovated and where he retreaded long-discovered ground.

Reconsidered in light of early German wargaming, *Tactics* immediately appears reminiscent of Hellwig *kriegsspiel*. It is played on a grid on 56 files and 43 ranks, for a total of 2,408 squares, dimensions roughly comparable to those recommended by Hellwig.¹⁵¹ The map affixed to its board is drawn to no particular scale, though it is regional in character rather than displaying only a confined field of battle. The depicted terrain on the map admits of

several types in the style of Hellwig, including mountains, forests, roads, rivers, cities and water squares, and these terrain types affect the movement of units in the system. Unit counters are labeled cardboard squares sized for the half-inch confines of the grid;; each side commands forty-four units. The objective of the game is to occupy the enemy s cities for a turn without resistance, or barring that to destroy all enemy units, victory conditions that Hellwig would have recognized.

¹⁴⁹ McDonald in Greyson, *Second War Gaming Symposium Proceedings*, 65.

¹⁵⁰ Young, *Survey*, 96.

¹⁵¹ Note that the 25th anniversary edition of *Tactics* ships with a slightly smaller board of 54 files by 43 ranks, for 2,322 squares.

Absent from *Tactics*, however, are the cavalry and artillery familiar in Hellwig in place of cavalry there are armored divisions, but they can move no more rapidly than infantry. All movement is governed by the concept of a Basic Turn Allowance, a pool of thirty squares worth of movement which can be divided among units as the commander sees fit;; consequently, a single infantry division might move twenty-nine squares in a turn while an armored unit moves only one, if that allotment suits the commander s aims. Artillery have no corollary whatsoever in *Tactics*; all combat is conducted by placing opposing units adjacent to one another, there is no ranged combat of any kind. Despite the lack of modern ships or airplanes in *Tactics*, there are amphibious troops and paratroopers whose movement system implies access to those vehicles behind the scenes;; one cannot however perform an aerial or naval bombardment. Overall, *Tactics* emphasizes infantry movement at the expense of adherence to the realities of twentieth-century warfare.

The focus on infantry is unsurprising given, as its box cover advertises, that *Tactics* was a game designed and perfected by an infantry officer. After serving as an enlisted man in the National Guard for some years, Roberts received his commission in 1952. When he subsequently sought to practice war on a board he discovered that there were no such wargames available, and thus began to design his own.¹⁵² As always, we must look at this disavowal of any precursors with a healthy amount of skepticism. At that time,

COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

	1—6	1—5	1—4	1—3	1—2	1—1	2—1	3—1	4—1	5—1	6—1
1	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	2 back 2	Defender Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim (1 Pris)	1 Elim (1 Pris)
2	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 back 3	Exchange	Exchange	Exchange	Exchange	Exchange	1 back 4	1 back 5
3	1 back 6	1 back 5	1 back 4	1 back 3	1 back 2	Defender back 2	1 back 2	1 back 2	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim (1 Pris)
4	1 Elim (1 Pris)	1 Elim (1 Pris)	1 back 4	1 back 3	1 back 2	Attacker back 2	2 back 2	1 back 2	1 back 3	1 back 4	1 Elim
5	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	Attacker Elim	Exchange	Exchange	1 back 3	1 Elim	1 Elim
6	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	1 Elim	Attacker Elim	2 Elim	1 Elim (1 Pris)	1 Elim (1 Pris)	1 Elim (1 Pris)	1 Elim (1 Pris)

The figures running vertically on the extreme left of the table represent the figure thrown on the cubit. The first top row of figures represent the odds comparison. THE ATTACKER'S ODDS (COMBINED FACTOR VALUE) ARE ALWAYS FIRST — THE DEFENDER SECOND. For example, 3-1 means the attacker has 3 factors and the defender 1. Note that an attacker has little chance when the odds drop lower than at least 1-1 and that he has increasingly good chances as the odds build in his favor. Odds of more than 6-1 represent an "automatic elimination" of the defender. The defender cannot be removed until the end of the attacker's turn.

"Elim" on the table means "eliminated from the board." "1 Elim" means of course that the player with the factor of 1 is eliminated. "1 Back 6" means that the player with the factor of 1 moves back 6 spaces on the board, the exact direction to be determined by the winner. "Exchange" means that each player loses by elimination 1 combat factor. In the case of an armored division involved in an "exchange" remove the armored division and replace it with a previously eliminated infantry division only.

"(1 Pris)" means that the loser is captured under optional Rule J-1.

FIGURE 39: THE TACTICS COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

152 *Silver Jubilee* publication.

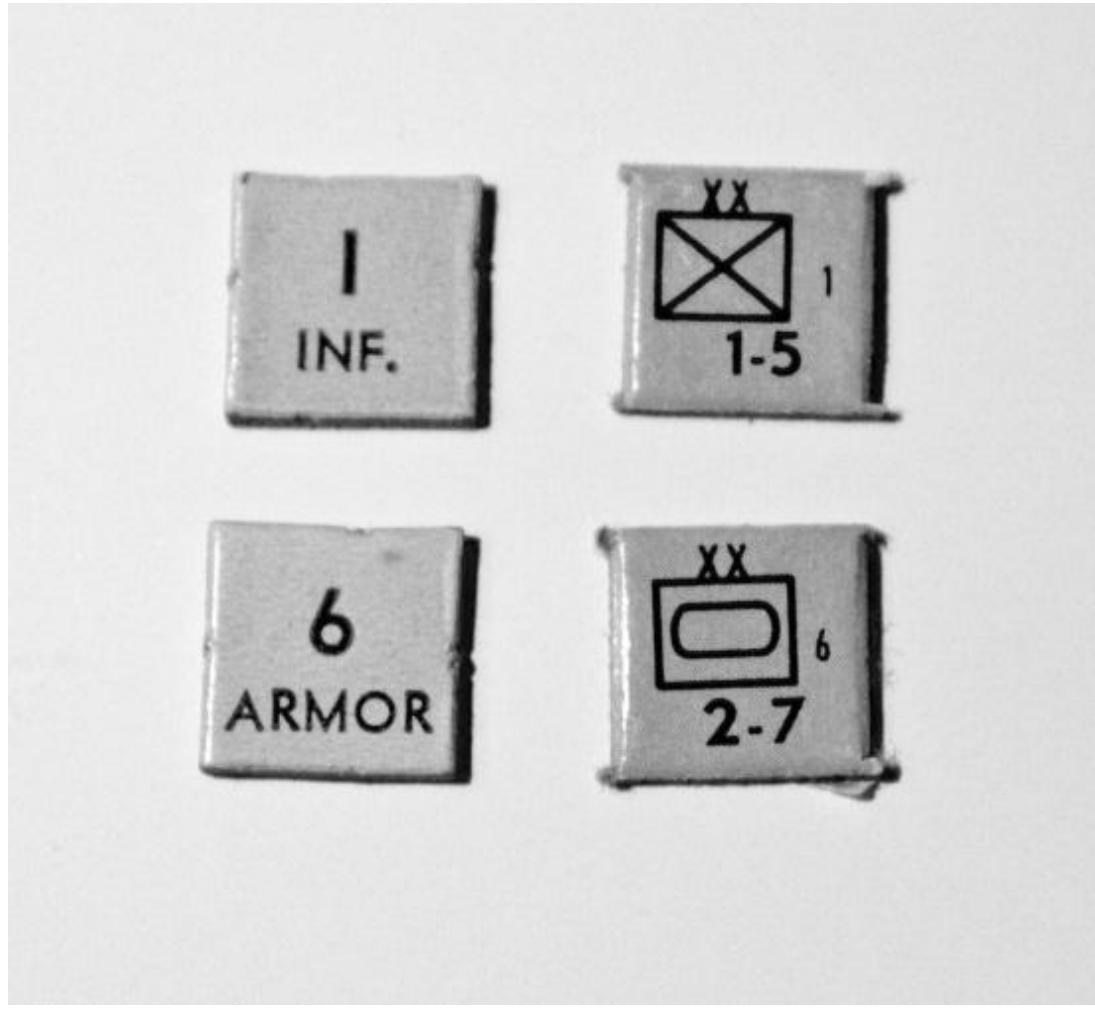
wargames in the vein of Hellwig had existed for over 150 years, and although it is very unlikely Roberts knew Hellwig works directly, it is certainly within the realm of possibility that during his military education he encountered an overview source like Sayre (then in print for almost half a century), which outlines the basic system concepts behind most of the major contributions to German wargaming. Perhaps he read Raymond's gloss on the Bel Geddes system in the *Reserve Officer* a decade beforehand in it, he would certainly have found the basic board grid and terrain concepts. Once you replace the pins and tacks of Bel Geddes with the die-cut cardboard counters of Roberts, the resemblance becomes more striking, especially in that Raymond has no referee overseeing the game, but instead allows two players to maneuver their forces in plain sight of one another without secret information. Roberts would not have found in Raymond, however, another aspect of *Tactics*, one more closely linked to the Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel* tradition: the Combat Results Table, or CRT.

The seminal Avalon Hill CRT owes an obvious conceptual debt to the Reiswitzian model. During a turn in *Tactics*, an attacker moves troops adjacent to defenders, and at the end of the turn, all units in that proximity are considered to be part of the melee. The odds of combat depend on the comparative numerical strength of the contending sides, deriving from the combat factor (described in a moment) of involved units. A six-sided die, which Roberts delicately renames a cubit to disassociate it from gambling, is then rolled and compared to the CRT. Odds range from even through a sixfold advantage, where 1-1 odds have only a modest chance of success, but 6-1 odds result in eliminating a defender five out of six times. To that extent, the system is completely derivative of Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel*, an influence Roberts might have inherited from any number of intermediaries writing after the English *kriegsspiel* vogue;; just to take one example, the 1884 Aldershot rules contain a Table C which is a veritable blueprint for the Avalon Hill dice-based resolution of combat odds, one that could easily have inspired Roberts.¹⁵³ The CRT of *Tactics*, which virtually all subsequent Avalon Hill wargames appropriated and elaborated, does however introduce some new features.

Units in *Tactics* have a combat factor (CF) which quantifies their efficacy in battle.¹⁵⁴ Only armored divisions have a CF of 2, everything else makes do with a CF of 1. In determining the strength of opposing forces for the purpose of deciding odds, it is the combined CF, rather than the raw number of contending units, that is employed for the calculation. A further nuance is that the attacker decides which units in a combat are conflicting with one another. In other words, if Blue is attacking, and two Blue armored divisions and a Blue general infantry unit are adjacent to one Red armored division and one Red mountaineer division, then the Blue commander determines how the assault is targeted: all three Blue units could attack the Red armored division ignoring the mountaineer entirely, for example (yielding base 5-2 odds), or perhaps one Blue armored division along with the infantry might attack the Red armor (at 3-2 odds) while the other ¹⁵³ To gauge the likelihood that Roberts saw a *kriegsspiel* odds-based combat results table, merely inspect the other systems of the era -Bantock system, or the RAND diceless system and note how fundamentally they differ from one another and from Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel*. That Roberts should have somehow inadvertently lighted on exactly the same table structure, range of odds, and set of outcomes without the reference to some *kriegsspiel*

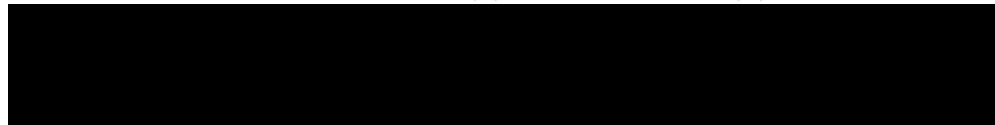
precedent is completely incredible.

¹⁵⁴ Do note, however, that the 1780 edition of Hellwig operates in a similar manner, as is detailed above.



FIGURE

40: GAME PIECES FROM TACTICS (L) AND TACTICS II (R)



Blue armor harries the mountaineers (at 2-1 odds). Since the CRT covers only whole odds (i.e., 1-1 and 2-1 but not 3-2), when odds like 5-2 or 3-2 arise they are rounded off, with a coin toss or its equivalent determining whether the odds are rounded up or down. The consequences of victory or defeat on the CRT, following those previously seen in the Reiswitzian tradition, are either repulsion (losing units withdraw) or defeat (losing units eliminated). The calculation of losses is greatly simplified, however. In almost all cases, a loss removes one CF worth of units from the losing

force;; optional rules also allow for taking prisoners in more decisive victories. Repulsed troops move back a certain number of squares under the direction of the victor. These particulars appear far too close to the Reiswitzian precedent to be mere coincidence.

Tactics can thus be seen as something of a fusion of Hellwig board mechanics and Reiswitzian combat, varying more through simplification than elaboration. In its original 1954 incarnation, however, *Tactics* lacked some of the mature features that formed the core of the Avalon Hill system, and as subsequent games acquired them, they only came more to resemble the work of Hellwig and Venturini. The unusual *Tactics* movement mechanism, with a budget of thirty squares of movement divided across all units, was replaced in the 1958 *Tactics II* with a much simpler movement factor (MF), a maximum number of squares that each unit could move in a turn.¹⁵⁵ In the manner of later Hellwig, players could move all, some or none of their pieces, and each could move any number of squares up to its MF. By 1960, every printed unit bore its CF and MF on its face for easy reference;; with the benefit of hindsight, one might say that each unit had an early precursor of a character sheet printed on it. Avalon Hill's other famous 1958 release, *Gettysburg*, restored Hellwig idea of unit orientation: each unit counter bore an arrow depicting the direction it was facing, and with that came a system for flanking vulnerabilities. No Battle of Gettysburg could be complete without cannons, and Roberts faithfully delivers artillery that destroys units at range. *Gettysburg* also resurrects Venturini fidelity to terrain: it has a definite scale (1 inch equaling a quarter mile, or 1:15,840) and a topographic map of the actual area where the historical battle was fought, including elevation markings which confer benefits to firing units. Up until 1961, the map of *Gettysburg* sported the same square grid overlay as *Tactics II*, though thereafter it upgraded to the hexagonal honeycomb overlay that Avalon Hill popularized in the commercial board wargame industry.¹⁵⁶ Both *Tactics II* and *Gettysburg* also have random weather systems, another feature familiar from Venturini.

¹⁵⁵ The Basic Turn Allowance approach may be an echo of the point-expenditure system in the *Strategos*. In Rob -player game to verify that an opponent has not exceeded the BTA than it is to remember if each individual enemy unit had already moved its MF in a given turn.

¹⁵⁶ Many have speculated that Roberts learned of hexagonal gaming boards from a close inspection of the *Life* magazine of May 11, 1959, though by

1960 a number of unclassified sources described the high level wargaming practices of RAND and the Air Force.

Furthermore, *Tactics II* featured optional rules for nuclear weapons, including atomic and hydrogen bombs of varying magnitudes delivered by artillery, by rocket or by intercontinental ballistic missile. The effect of an atomic weapon lobbed via artillery is simply to eliminate the defender in one square not exactly a weapon of mass destruction. Hydrogen bombs, which arrive on short or long range missiles, destroy all units within four squares of their point of impact. In both cases, the weapon effect may seem somewhat understated, albeit we assume that the effective map scale of *Tactics II* is a very large one. Even these modest nukes, however, would be unbalancing to the game were they not rationed by the designer: only one may be unleashed per delivery method per game, for a total of three. In an article for the *Marine Corps Gazette* (January 1956) unrelated to wargaming, Roberts outlined the implications of nuclear weapons for modern warfare as he saw them, and indeed the vocation he recommended for them is largely tactical. He noted that as battlefield weapons they suffer from a number of limitations a proclivity to kill friend and foe alike being foremost and that the most effective countermeasure to a nuclear strike is to avoid massing troops at all costs. Only a handful of years later, after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the surgical use of nuclear weapons against a troop massing would seem quaint, perhaps even darkly comical, when compared to the doom that hung over the entirety of civilization. Ultimately, deployment of such catastrophic weapons ill fit a wargame. As the Avalon Hill catalog grew in the 1960s, its designers reached back again and again into pre-1945 history: the American Civil War, World War I, and most especially pre-Hiroshima World War II. After that brief foray into armageddon at the dawn of the nuclear age, Avalon Hill wargaming became largely an exercise in historical reenactment.

This first stirring of board wargaming in the 1950s remained completely unknown in Great Britain. Around the time that *Tactics* debuted, Captain Sachs's declining health dealt a serious blow to the gaming circle centered around Bushey, a university suburb in northwest London, as well as an end to the BMSS Tactical Cup Challenge. As a founder of the BMSS and a holder of a lifetime Vice Presidency, Sachs established the viability of wargaming for a generation of miniature figure collectors. Sachs withdrawal, however, also removed an effectively stultifying influence on the development of wargaming rules in the Society a territory Sachs had carefully monopolized for decades. A mention in the *Bulletin* of a

wargaming ruleset other than his own the official and copyrighted rules of the BMSS, as he frequently pointed out would often elicit a defensive letter from Sachs. This was unfortunate, because Sachs own rules were not easy for the uninitiated to interpret. All of the Tactical Cup Challenges of the Society had been conducted under Sachs personal supervision, and thus the referee always had a parental fluency with the exercise of the system which smoothed over any difficulties. When Ken Green, an American member of the BMSS, received a copy of Sachs rules in the mail and attempted to run a game in California, the results were rather more disappointing. With two zealous players and two impartial but inexperienced judges, the game immediately devolved into mutual accusations of illegal play, and even the two judges declared war on one another over many delicate points. [BMSS:1952n7] Eventually, after some correspondence with Sachs, the judges learned how to administer the rules more harmoniously, but that this adjudication required the personal intervention of the author speaks volumes to the clarity of the printed rules.

Starting in the mid-1950s, conversations within the BMSS about new miniature wargaming systems grew bolder. Britains probably also stoked interest in wargame rules when they began, in their 1955 catalog, to distribute and promote a reprint of Wells s *Little Wars* with the assertion that the book should be on the shelves, or more usefully in the hands of all those who have some Britains soldiers. Early luminaries of British wargaming such as Charles Grant and A. W. Saunders began publishing more ambitious pieces on wargaming in the *Bulletin* at the time, though these remained largely anecdotal accounts rather than publications of formal playable systems. Grant, for example, described early in 1954 his experiences with Alistair Bantock s rules, or as they would shortly be known the Cass-Bantock rules, a system that determined fire effect and troop morale with dice.¹⁵⁷ In 1955, Saunders sketched a high-level system for aerial wargames based on bombing runs, and Grant described his own inventions for an American Civil War campaign. For the purposes of the present study, the most notable of these early articles appeared in the two summer 1956 issues of the *Bulletin* (Nos. 6 and 7) under the title War Game of the Middle Ages and Ancient Times, authored by Tony Bath (1926 2000) of Southampton. Bath, who is justifiably famous for his epic Hyborian campaign (which will be detailed in Section 4.5.1), had previously advertised in the *Bulletin* in 1955 searching for Mediaeval type models, having discovered the medieval

period and miniature figure collecting in one fell swoop: What really brought me back into the world of models was the film Ivanhoe [1952], which started off the trend in mediaeval soldiers. When I went to see the film in the foyer of the theatre were displayed all the models of the characters, and I was so struck by their excellence that there and then I decided to start collecting once again. In those days in provincial England, just beginning to recover from the blitz, model soldiers were none too quite by chance I learned of the existence of the British Model Soldier Society, and joining it opened up a whole fresh field of interest. [WGD:v1n4]

Bath served in the Royal Navy during the Second World War (during which his own father's grocery was bombed), and it is experiences of what Wells would call Great War, in a remote historical period where battles evoked little of modern combat (see Section 2.2 for similar sentiments). The publication of Bath's medieval wargame is in the first place remarkable because it was unabashedly a full system, presented without preamble or anecdote, just a set of organized instructions for wargaming that any reader of the *Bulletin* could sit down and play. Leveraging the *Bulletin* as a means of distributing wargame rules was essentially unprecedented, and from some remarks in the issue subsequent to Bath's publication it is clear that these rules languished in the submission queue for some time before seeing print, possibly waiting on indecisive editors.¹⁵⁸ Giving away rules for free was not the established precedent: Sachs sold his official mimeographed eight pages of rules through the club secretary, rather than offering them up for communal consumption in the BMSS's newsletter. Bath's ruleset, at six pages divided between two issues, did not weigh in much lighter than the eight-page Sachs game. Bath can thus be viewed as a pioneer of circulating wargame rules in a periodical without any compensation, a practice that drove a readily understandable that Bath found his Little War after his of choice

¹⁵⁷ [BMSS:1954n2] A. C. Cass, who often contributed to the *Bulletin* under the pseudonym Cassius Maximus, introduced modifications to the Bantock ruleset designed by Alistair and his son

-Bantock

¹⁵⁸ In the *Bulletin* for suggesting that no small amount of time had passed.

great deal of the collaborative spirit of the wargaming community in the next several decades.

These rules have a further historical significance for *Dungeons & Dragons* as the first published medieval miniature wargame rules and thus as a precursor to *Chainmail*. While H. G. Wells glossed over comparatively recent military inventions in his slightly anachronistic wargame system, Bath intentionally chose a bygone era with fundamentally different armaments that required a wholly original model to simulate: a world of arrows, armor and castles. Gygax explicitly acknowledges his debt to Bath in one of his 1969 articles on medieval wargaming in the *International Wargamer*. [IW:v2n9] It is extremely unlikely that Gygax knew Bath's medieval rules in their 1956 incarnation, but Bath's system constantly evolved, as did most miniature wargaming systems, and the more widely-circulated 1966 pamphlet of his medieval miniature rules is almost certainly the version Gygax praises. In the seminal 1956 edition, we already find departures from the precedent of Sachs and the adoption of mechanisms foreshadowing the common wargaming practices of the 1960s and 1970s.

Specifically, Bath abandons the simultaneous move in Sachs, allowing players to supervise the actions of their opponents for rules violations, and thus further obviating the need for a referee. There remains essentially no secret information in Bath's game that might require a referee to administer. The firing of physical projectiles is also deprecated in favor of dicing for fire effect. In those particulars, Bath follows the example of the CassBantock system. Bath furthermore divided the quality of troops into high-level categories: heavy and light cavalry, heavy and light infantry, and missile infantry.¹⁵⁹ The respective strength of these units in melee combat Bath attempts to quantify and modify very much in the vein of Sachs: for instance, fortification gives a 50% bonus to the strength of defenders, such that sixteen fortified men fight as twenty-four, in much the same way that Sachs positive modifiers upgraded the actual strength of a group of soldiers into a more effective firing strength. Once the quantified strength of the sides is determined, the resolution of casualties proves very similar to Sachs: The defeated side loses three-quarters of the number of the victors, the victors lose half the number of the loser (i.e., 12 attacking 8 kill them all and lose 4 themselves, 9 attacking 7 kill 6 and lose 3). Unfortunately, Bath muddies the melee resolution with a complicated set of quantified equivalences between¹⁵⁹ spectrum of cavalry types runs from heavy to

medium to light, the example followed by *Chainmail*. The other significant changes in the 1966 edition follow. Bath dedicates quite a bit of space in the 1956 rules to castle sieges and the behavior of siege weapons (perhaps inspired by the storming of the castle in *Ivanhoe*); this is completely elided in the 1966 edition, where instead there is a section on troop morale wholly absent from the earlier ruleset. The later rules also have a two-step system for resolving fire effects: the first determining that a hit was scored, the second rolling a saving throw to determine whether or not the target survives the hit (though unlike later systems, it is the saving throw that factors in the protective value of armor rather than the to-hit roll fire adopts the same convention). The 1966 edition also enables the capture of prisoners always quantifications of troop strengths, they still depend on a different assessment of relative combat heavy infantry if they can throw a 5 or 6. If attacked by them they must throw a 4, 5, 6 to stand, otherwise break and are diced for... If fighting takes place, one throw per 5 men, militia lose half total, no saving throw, cavalry lose one units to settle their respective powers;; for example, in a combat between light cavalry and heavy infantry, each heavy infantry counts as two for determining which side will prevail, whereas in a fight between heavy infantry and light infantry, each heavy infantry counts as three. This becomes very difficult to interpret when groups of mixed unit types face off against one another, especially for larger forces. In missile fire, curiously enough, all units are equally easy to slay with arrows (a throw higher than 3 on the die is a kill), with the sole exception of dismounted heavy cavalry (which falls only on a throw of a 6).

After the appearance of Bath's medieval rules, Charles Grant wrote a lengthy reply which, although somewhat critical in nature, ushered into the pages of the *Bulletin* detailed analysis of wargame system design. From that point forward, skeptics could hardly deny that the constituency of the British Model Soldier Society encompassed enough wargamers for such systems to be deemed a subject of general interest. The BMSS then numbered almost four hundred members dispersed about the globe, many of them grouped into smaller satellite societies which had merged with the BMSS as a parent organization. Such was the case for the Southern California Miniature Collectors Society (or *Miniaturas Militares*, its regional name being somewhat misleading as its membership hailed from all corners of America), which merged into the BMSS as a chapter organization late in 1953;; within two years that chapter alone had more than fifty members. So large and diverse had the BMSS membership become that the administration mailed

out a survey intended to ascertain what we collect in 1956;; by the middle of the year, they had received 130 replies and published a few conclusions about their demographics. [BMSS:1956n6] Their findings included that a goodly number of members reported an interest in wargaming, even though the questionnaire posed no specific inquiry about it. It is probably no coincidence that the very issue announcing this finding contained the first installment of Bath's medieval rules.

Emboldened by the prospect of an organized worldwide community of interest in wargaming, Jack Scruby (1915-1988) of California, a member of the Southern California Miniature Collectors Society, placed a notice in the last 1956 issue of the *Bulletin* advertising the next logical step: Our plan is to put out a Quarterly Publication, the War Game Digest, containing news and views of war game addicts throughout the world. The entire publication will be devoted to the War Game and is especially designed for the war game player. It will be illustrated with maps and photographs and we hope that through the Digest war game players can exchange ideas and use it as a clearing house for news and views. [BMSS:1956n10]

Scruby stressed that this was to be a collaborative effort of the subscribers: We hope all war game players will contribute articles, ideas and rules to us, presumably in much the manner that Bath had submitted his rules to the *Bulletin*. Scruby observed that within the BMSS war games have been relegated to a secondary place, and while there is evidence that this tide had begun to turn, by establishing a new venue specifically for wargaming, Scruby commandeered that interest and effectively steered it away from the BMSS and into a new, self-governing community. No doubt as a consequence of this dedicated resource for table-top commanders, there appeared no articles in the *Bulletin* on the subject of wargaming in the following year.

Who was this American who so abruptly claimed the venue for the future evolution of wargaming? John Edwin Scruby was born in Seattle, and attended high school in Beverly Hills before enrolling at the University of Chicago on a football scholarship.¹⁶⁰ The Great Depression, however, prompted Scruby to join the workforce instead of completing his studies. In the late 1930s, he went where he could find work from Death Valley to Alaska, working on oil tankers, then mining, sticking to vocations that granted deferments from the draft board after the start of the Second World War. Finally he settled into a business partnership with his father on a cattle

ranch in the Sierra Mountains. When he and his wife Wanda had children, for the sake of their education they relocated to Tipton, California, where Scruby found steady employment as a distributor of gasoline and oil products, his day job supporting an insatiable miniature figure habit.

During a boyhood trip to Europe in the mid-1920s, while touring the battlefields of the Great War, the young Scruby fell in love with some miniature diorama installations of thousands of lead soldiers reenacting the circumstances of a decade before. From that point forward, he received boxes of Britains for every birthday, though in adulthood his passion for these figurines was forgotten until he regained his taste for it vicariously through the fascination of his own son. Scruby, however, was not satisfied merely to possess toy soldiers he wanted to make them himself. His wife Wanda, fortunately, taught arts and crafts, and in 1951 she imparted to Scruby the basics of constructing plaster molds suitable for figure casting. After an initial success constructing a knock-off of one of his favorite Britains (the Cameron Highlander), Scruby branched out into various models of his own invention. It was not until 1952 that he made contact with the enthusiasts in the Southern California Miniature Collectors Society, including his figure-casting mentor Frank Conley, who often painted the miniatures Scruby sold in the 1950s. Through the Society, in 1953 he met Pat Gorman, who introduced Scruby to wargaming on the basic model of Wells. Another member of this circle, Society President Robert Fowler, taught Scruby to cast from plastic rubber molds, and when he perfected this process, it enabled him to go into business (part-time) manufacturing miniature figures. By the time he submitted his advertisement to the *Bulletin*, Scruby had amassed thousands of figures of his own construction, including six or seven miniature armies of different periods suitable for wargaming. For Scruby was not the sort to polish up his soldiers and admire them under glass: I am not and never have been a bona fide collector of lead soldiers. Since earliest youth I've always loved to fight with my troops. [WGD:v2n4] Jack Scruby byline is not to be found in earlier issues of the BMSS monthly, but he figured significantly in the activities of the Southern California Miniature Collectors



FIGURE 41: JACK SCRUBY (L) AND HOMER DELABAR (R)

¹⁶⁰ *Digest*, [WGD:v2n4] with some *Table Top Talk*. [TTT:v1n5] Some later Scruby reminiscences vary in certain particulars, but these older sources are preferred.

Society, and in its journal, which also appeared under the common title the *Bulletin*, but is best known by its organizational title *Miniaturas Militares*. Scruby served as the Corresponding Secretary of the journal in 1955, responsible for the printing and mailing of its issues, experience which undoubtedly readied him to launch his own periodical.¹⁶¹ In the pages of the May 1955 edition of the journal, Scruby wrote a piece introducing Miniature War Games, which says little of rules and much of the proper arrangement of surfaces for wargaming in constrained environments like a typical American

apartment. [MM:v3n2] Between his own efforts and those of another member of the Society, Ted Haskell of Michigan, Scruby ensured that wargaming had its fair hearing in the pages of *Miniaturas Militares*. In one article written in the middle of 1956, Scruby described himself as a war game fanatic of long standing who had enjoyed several years of fighting with lead soldiers. [MM:v4n5] Scruby also hosted, on July 21 and 22, 1956, the All Western Conference for Collectors of Military Miniatures, a gathering of sixteen Society members which stands among the earliest conventions of military miniature fanciers in America.¹⁶² The conference (following the account in *Miniaturas Militares*) took place in the town hall of Visalia, where fifty feet of table housed miniature displays, and various authorities from northern and southern California conducted lectures and disputations on topical subjects. [MM:v5n1] This gathering evolved into a yearly tradition, though not one in which wargames played any notable role. For wargames to enjoy the attention they deserved, they needed their own exclusive community and venue.

In March 1957, Scruby dispatched the first issue of the quarterly *War Game Digest* to forty-odd wargaming

founding subscribers a virtual who s who of the Old Guard of as a purely non-profit enterprise, and over the next half-decade it dominated and defined the miniature wargaming community. The first issue contains something the community sorely needed: a baseline set of simple rules covering the horseand-musket and modern periods though Scruby does suspect, presciently as we shall see, that it undoubtedly is impossible to get an exact set of rules that all players would use, since each player likes to make up many new ones of his own. To Scruby care, subscribers committed their wargaming rules, battle reports, letters of comment, autobiographical tidbits and recommendations for purchases. The original subscriber list (as given in the second *Digest*) closely paralleled the parties expressing interest in wargaming in response to the BMSS what we collect survey, though with some American additions from the Southern California Miniature Collectors Society, including seminal figures like Charles Sweet of Connecticut and the aforementioned Ted Haskell. As an editor, Scruby made a point of accepting everything submitted (which became a point of contention, as we shall see shortly), though for reasons of space he sometimes compiled a summary article drawing on similar contributions from several subscribers. While the

magazine operated at a perpetual loss financially, Scruby advertised the sale of military miniatures of his own manufacture in its pages, or via inserts enumerating his current stock, so ultimately any deficit he bore personally could be considered a promotional expense. Scruby did not maintain a monopoly on advertisements, however: classifieds appeared under the heading of a Trading Post now and again.

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¹⁶² The Miniature Figure Collectors of America (founded in 1941), largely an east coast phenomenon based out of Philadelphia, has a reasonable claim to still earlier conventions, if we charitably

As well as the *Digest*, the spring of 1957 also saw the emergence of the first adult American book on toy soldiery: author Bob Bard's *Making and Collecting Military Miniatures*.¹⁶³ Himself a subscriber to the *Digest* (his book received a review in the second issue), Bard covered the casting, painting, conversion and arrangement of miniatures, but more significantly included a chapter of some twenty-five pages on wargaming which includes an overview of Wells and a few very early pictures of Scruby's own miniature battles. This volume raised public awareness of wargaming and steered more potential converts in Scruby's direction.

Through a constant exchange of ideas among its participants, the *War Game Digest* more or less exhaustively explored the problem space of miniature wargaming. Often, Scruby ordained a theme for upcoming issues to solicit contributions on a particular subject, such as morale or cavalry or artillery; the last was the theme of the September 1958 issue, which leads with an editorial by Scruby summarizing the modeling of artillery through physical shooting of toy guns, dice tables of fire effect and even a range estimation method reminiscent of Pratt, which Scruby himself seems to favor. [WGD:v2n3] For the most part, these systems retained an anachronistic perspective on warfare, rarely modeling circumstances after the Second World War.¹⁶⁴ Some notions that were much discussed in the *Digest* like Scruby's own brainchild, the idea of continuous combat, a series of micro-turns simulating volleys of assault between opposing units ultimately had little impact on the subsequent evolution of miniature wargaming. Others nicely anticipated the future course of wargame development;; Scruby even experimented with play-by-mail wargaming that recorded troop movements on mimeographed maps.¹⁶⁵ The overall project tested the points of consensus in the wargaming community, exposing areas of agreement and

areas of controversy. In an editorial, Scruby notes the common system elements that seem to appear in all miniature wargames rules for movement, for melee, for fire effects but insists that the rules cannot be fixed, as constant change is what keeps the war game so interesting. [WGD:v3n2] Tony Bath, in a letter in the same issue, argues for the impossibility of lasting consensus: Most people, it seems, have evolved rules which suit themselves and their conditions, and are extremely reluctant to alter them to any degree. Many experiments attempted to draw the community toward something of a standard for wargaming. Art Mikel, for example, devised an International War Game played by mail on maps in a strategic mode, and in person with miniatures in a tactical mode on a make believe world. Ultimately, Mikel's effort attracted a sizable amount of *War Game Digest* subscribers.

¹⁶³ Not far behind is *Garratt Model Soldiers*, which was completed in 1957 but unpublished until

1959;; it is largely a historical account of miniature production, but its final sentence notes the appearance of Jack Scruby *Little Wars* and its subculture.

¹⁶⁴ The autumn of 1957 furthermore brought the launch of Sputnik on the back of an R-7 rocket, the first intercontinental ballistic missile, and the beginnings of the resulting cultural upheaval. The first *War Game Digest* of 1958 even contains a blurb covering the Soviet space program and the resulting paranoia about rockets, though curiously it contextualizes rocketry as a development familiar to the nineteenth century, as a certain ditty that mentions

remind us. [WGD:v2n1] Once again, wargaming satisfies a nostalgia for simpler and less perilous eras of warfare, even casting terrible modern innovations in the safety of historical context. In a later issue, Gregory Kurdian proposed a wargame system for Congreve rockets of the early nineteenth century. [WGD:v2n3]

¹⁶⁵ effectively as a board, even suggesting that a map might be a unit can move in a turn. Perhaps it is thus more a postal board wargame than miniature wargame. The system depends on the ingenious marking of these disposable maps, each of which represents one turn worth of moves, and exchanging the marked maps between opponents. Although as a postal board wargaming system, it surely appeared far ahead of its time, it did have one glaring flaw the resolution of artillery damage still required the roll of a die,

which presumably one player conducted and the other trusted as well as they could.

By the year 1960, the *War Game Digest* had enrolled a further one hundred subscribers beyond its original Old Guard. Among them was one Charles S. Roberts of Avalon Hill, whose games received an occasional mention after 1958 (note, for example, Jack Goltry's article on *Gettysburg* [WGD:v3n3]). The work of administering the *Digest* began to exceed Scruby available time, and consequently, he recruited editorial assistance from across the Atlantic in the person of Tony Bath. Bath was assisted by his regular wargaming opponent, Donald F. Featherstone (b. 1918), a physical therapist who began gaming with Bath in 1957 after answering a classified advertisement Bath placed in the local Southampton newspaper seeking opponents (no Opponents Wanted yet existed). Jointly, Bath and Featherstone agreed to edit two of the quarterly issues per year, and thus there came to be alternating American and British editions of the *Digest*, commencing with the first issue of 1960. [WGD:v4n1]

From the start of the British edition, it was clear that Featherstone shouldered the bulk of the editorial burden, although submissions and fees passed through Bath. In equal evidence were Featherstone strong opinions about the relative worth of contributions to the *Digest*. In his very first editorial, Featherstone ruminated dubiously about wargamers who make their written battle reports so much resemble those accounts of real battles... Why must everyone lavish extravagant phrases and verbose wording in their reports, talk of smoke drifting across the field ... wounded dragging themselves away etc etc. Featherstone here takes exception to written narratives vividly dramatizing the events of a wargame, a tradition at least as old as Stevenson war correspondent, the *Great War Game for Young and Old* and Wells's Battle of Hook Farm.¹⁶⁶ Such reports had appeared in the *Digest* since its very first issue, to which Ted Haskell submitted a vivid dramatization of his Battle of Cooper's Farm with a nod in Stevenson's direction. While Featherstone expressed reservations about this approach, at this stage he remained intent on starting a constructive dialog within the community about authoring battle reports. In later issues, his criticisms are less magnanimous. A year later, Featherstone led with an editorial to the following effect: On occasions we have felt that the tone and trend of one or two articles was becoming a bit off-beat, that certain writers are trying to mesh the reasonably simple procedure of wargaming with a complicated,

pseudo-technical aura... Personally, I don't like this trend and hate the occasional article that makes me wonder at first if it is written in Chinese because I can't make head or tail of it. So far, I haven't had to type any of these contributions as oddly enough they seem, if I may be pardoned for saying, largely an American angle.

¹⁶⁶ In Section 4.5, we shall return to this distinction between dramatized descriptions of the game battle and strictl did not weaken over time he makes the same argument nearly ten years later (May 1969) with ample references to his March 1960 original. [WGN:#86]

That rather lengthy preamble is merely to emphasize that, so far as this British edition is concerned, our policy is to keep the game straightforward, uncomplicated and as realistic as possible without becoming bogged down with what we feel is often unnecessary detail. [WGD:v5n1]

The proximate cause of Featherstone remarks was probably the publication of Gerard de Gre's Terrain Coordinates in Simultaneous Play, admittedly a dense piece by a college professor that advocates an unapologetically complex approach to wargaming.¹⁶⁷ In the issue following Featherstone critique, a response from Art Mikel on the cult of simplicity argued that a certain amount of complexity is necessary to wargaming. Any attempt to create a game that oversimplifies the issues involved merely results [in] a complete loss of reality, Mikel asserts. As he attempts to define realism more concretely, he concludes that the rules must reproduce the fighting styles, casualty rates, etc. of the various weapons in vogue of the historical periods being considered... Each simplification represents a compromise with a condition that exists in reality but which the person devising the rules decides to ignore. While Featherstone made no specific reply to Mikel, when Scruby persisted in printing articles of the offending type, Featherstone finally put his foot down in an article called Is this a Hobby or a Military Exercise? [WGD:v6n1] Citing articles by de Gre among others, Featherstone openly accused the authors of attempting to spread an aura of pseudo-science over what is a pastime. The enjoyment in a war game, Featherstone continues, deteriorates in almost direct ratio to the degree of realism attempted SO we now have a cardinal principle that if realism interferes with enjoyment then out goes realism! Featherstone then issued his famous bull to the effect that it is the editorial policy of the British edition of *War Games Digest* not to accept such articles!

Jack Scruby peremptory response to this presumptuous shift in editorial policy appears in the same issue (Scruby still printed the issues that Featherstone and Bath edited, affording him an opportunity to sneak in a word edgewise). As the founder and publisher of *War Game Digest* I have always felt it essential to hold a policy that everyone and anyone is entitled to put into its pages whatever they considered of importance to further our hobby... Thus, I cannot go along with Don Featherstone and his statements... I do not believe he, or anyone else can attempt to limit the type of articles that are sent to *War Game Digest*. Scruby concludes, Because of this difference of opinions I have decided not to have any more so-called British editions of WGD. Scruby accepted Featherstone resignation;; just prior to the publication of this issue, Tony Bath had already stepped down as co-editor of the *Digest*, nominally because of time constraints.¹⁶⁸ This schism dealt a fatal blow to the *Digest*, which would publish only two more issues.

In the following issue, an important article by Charles Grant entitled Rules and Realism gets to the heart of the controversy that Featherstone so indelicately handled. Grant's remarks bear some similarity to the complaints that Meckel and Verdy du Vernois raised in response to the elaborate Reiswitzian systems of Tschischwitz and Trotha. They also echo the reluctance of Wells to embrace the more complicated mechanisms that would have made *Little Wars* more suitable as a tool for military training. Grant saw that in the wargaming community:

¹⁶⁷ [WGD:v4n4] De Gre taught at Bard College, and among the students he introduced to wargaming was Joseph Morschauser.

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imperious tone, one can only speculate. Bath would soon go on to found the Society of the Ancients, a wargaming society particularly devoted to pre-industrial settings. Its newsletter *Slingshot* would not appear until September 1965, however, and Bath does seem to have played a less visible role in the wargaming community in the intervening three years.

There were two quite different attitudes involved that of the realist and that of for want of a better word the gamesman . The realist's rules are designed to create a game as close to the real thing as circumstances and model soldiers will allow, while the latter chooses rules which permit a player to win a game, not by tactical skill, but by simply manipulating the rules to give an unfair advantage. [WGD:v6n2]

While his characterization of the gamesman is not a very charitable one, Grant firmly distinguishes two competing incentives among players of wargames and designers of wargame rules: those who wanted the most compelling simulation of events versus those who wanted the most compelling game. While the exchange between Featherstone and Mikel casts the distinction as one between simplicity and complexity, Grant takes this a step further and shows the ends which complexity and simplicity are means to achieve: the creation of a game that is more realistic or, as the community would later cast it, more playable. The design decision to favor either realism or playability is perhaps the most fundamental in wargame design, and throughout the 1960s it remained the single most hotly contested issue in the wargame journals.¹⁶⁹

The last regular issue of the *War Game Digest* (Winter 1962) set the stage for the miniature wargaming community that would succeed it. Its contributors include Fred Vietmeyer, one of the prominent Napoleonic wargamers of the 1960s, and even a blurb from the young Jeff Perren, almost a decade before he would co-author *Chainmail* with Gygax. Scruby gives a somewhat puzzling reason for discontinuing the *Digest*: In 1957 I started with 40 readers for *WGD* in 1962 I had 180 readers. For five years of publication this is not much growth, and leads me to believe that only a hard core of war gamers are truly interested in a publication like *WGD*. Scruby no doubt found this sluggish growth especially disappointing in light of the publicity that the *Digest* had enjoyed outside of the

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the consensus favored playability by about 60 to 40. defined itself by holding realism [AHG:v6n1] or [AHG:v6n4] For a take more directly impactful to the history of *Dungeons & Dragons Domesday Book* is perhaps the most elucidating. He quotes Perren

[DB:#3] Gygax recognizes that these incentives are irreconcilable, but also that neither is absolute, though one may perhaps hear a slight favoritism they make it. The In a letter to the *General*

around to the school which says playability in a game is far more important than realism how real -playing will also hear in this distinction the first stirrings of Glenn Blacow - *Different Worlds* #10 (1980);; these ideas were most recently recycled on Internet forums by Ron Edwards as the distinction earlier objection to vivid dramatizations as well.

insular wargaming community. Articles in the September 1958 *Mechanix Illustrated* and the December 1960 *Look* (the latter's cover boasts a circulation of some 6,300,000) both mention the *Digest* and Scruby himself by name, and after their publication Scruby expressed great expectations for a sudden jump in his readership, one which never came. That he had been unable to extract subscription fees from some fifty of the subscribers he did have may also have been a factor in his decision to throw in the towel. Scruby pledged to continue with his side project, *Table Top Talk*, a much smaller newsletter with a slant toward showcasing Scruby's own miniature products. His production and sale of miniatures grew into the proportions of a business rather than a hobby note, for example, that by 1972 Don Lowry resold Scruby medieval and Napoleonic miniatures right alongside the products of manufacturers like Airfix and Minitanks.¹⁷⁰ When he mailed out the first edition of *Table Top Talk* in January 1962, Scruby sent some four hundred copies well beyond the circulation of the *Digest*, it must be conceded, but it would also be some time before he charged subscribers for *Table Top Talk*. As for Don Featherstone, he commenced his own *Wargamer's Newsletter* in April 1962, and Scruby duly notes its availability in the last issue of the *Digest*. It would be those two publications *Wargamer's Newsletter* and *Table Top Talk* that would carry the miniature wargaming community until the emergence of *Strategy & Tactics* and the club fanzines later in the 1960s. The importance of these two publications to the era is difficult to overstate. It was in the pages of *Table Top Talk*, for example, that Dave Wesely would rendezvous with other Twin Cities gamers to form the group where Dave Arneson would learn miniature wargaming.

The impetus behind the *Digest* may also have waned because 1962 saw the first general-interest books devoted entirely to the subject of hobby wargaming as opposed to Bard's earlier work, which stuffed a chapter on games into a book mostly about collecting and casting miniatures. Scruby had long harbored aspirations, expressed as early as 1958, to author a book about wargaming, given his perception that no book since Wells' *Little Wars* has come out on war games. [WGD:v2n4] To remedy this oversight, Scruby prepared his *All About War Games* (1959), though it would be generous to deem it a book: it shared the same print stock and printer as the *Digest*, yet at twenty-three pages made up only a fraction of the size of a typical *Digest* issue, and moreover certainly was not in any sense available to the general public. The landscape changed two years later in April 1961, however, when

the Hutchinson Group, a publishing conglomerate including the Stanley Paul brand, approached Don Featherstone to write a book about wargaming as part of a series on adult hobbies in Britain (others in the series covered bird watching, gardening and model theaters). Featherstone completed the book in September, and it appeared the following May under the title *War Games* (1962). A high-level overview intended for the beginner, *War Games* covers the acquisition of soldiers and construction of battlefields, as well as basic rules for the common wargame settings.¹⁷¹ The American introduction to wargaming came from the pen of Joseph Morschauser, the journalist who had written the article in *Look* magazine mentioned in the preceding paragraph;; his *How to Play War Games in Miniature* was scheduled for an October 1962 release, though it languished in delays well into the new year. With the publication of these two hardcover volumes, a nascent miniature wargamer no longer had only Jack Scruby *Digest* to consult for information about the hobby, and those books would be the first of many: Featherstone soon followed with *Naval War Games* (1965) and *Air War Games* (1966), and in America the slimmer volume *Modern War in Miniature* by Michael F. Korns, which will be detailed in the next section, found significant traction among hobbyists. As overviews of miniature wargaming, these works collectively contain only the briefest account of its history, and neither looks back farther than Stevenson with more than a cursory, one-sentence mention that miniature soldiers may have assisted earlier generals and princes in an educational capacity.

¹⁷⁰ As we will see in Chapter Five, Tactical Studie miniatures.

¹⁷¹ To give a sense of the broad influence and staying power of *War Games*, seven years later in 1969, speaking to a perceived want of systems for miniature play, Gygax wr

Indeed, the *War Game Digest* itself had little to say on the subject of the history of wargaming, nor any lessons that might have been learned from the *kriegsspiel* tradition. Scruby published an article called Books on Kriegspiel which describes research performed by a *Digest* reader at Harvard University on the wargaming books known to its library. [WGD:v3n4] A brief excerpt listing only seven titles (with no attribution or even authorship given for any of them) reveals the 1884 Aldershot rules, Jane's Naval War Game in its 1897 edition, a translation of Meckel but apparently none of these volumes were known to Scruby or indeed to his readership. An article

by a Jerry Glover of Tennessee recommends Sayre's *Map Maneuvers* with the quick aside that this book has a history of our hobby with its origin and development. [WGD:v4n3] Morschauser briefly mentions Fletcher Pratt naval rules in a 1959 letter to the *Digest*.¹⁷² Ted Haskell explains the Bel Geddes wargame in the last *Digest* of 1960, and in an editorial aside Scruby notes his own second-hand knowledge of that system. [WGD:v4n4] To find an account of Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel* written for the miniature wargaming community of the 1960s, however, one must look ahead to the May 1964 edition of *Table Top Talk*, where there appears an article called The Other Side of the Coin by Francis J. McHugh the same McHugh whose *Fundamentals of Wargaming* (1960) served as a shaky foundation for many later histories of wargaming. McHugh mentions Reiswitz only in passing as he describes the advances in contemporary military war gaming for training purposes, up to and including the use of computers. [TTT:v3n3] Recent American military wargames which McHugh terms professional wargaming overall had a very infrequent showing in the *Digest*: one reprint of an article covering these recent developments from the US Army Command and General Staff Magazine *Military Review* attracted particular ire from Featherstone for its incomprehensibility.¹⁷³ The hobby wargamers of the era played in blissful ignorance of the cumbersome but seminal ideas associated with military wargames.

Thus, the classic principles of Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel* exemplified in *Strategos* must have appeared completely novel when Dave Wesely and his associates rediscovered that volume in 1967, only five years after Scruby discontinued his *Digest*. Foremost among the unfamiliarities they unearthed was the notion of an omnipotent referee, a concept that Wells and Stevenson had ignored, and that most readers of the *Digest* would have found confusing if not unwelcome. The referee, by interpreting arbitrary commands, necessarily opens the door to the idea that *anything can be attempted* a freedom that provides as much peril as opportunity. In Stevenson's unique situation, of course, there were only two hobby wargamers in the world and thus they acted under their mutual supervision: if one became an impartial referee, the other would want for an opponent. It is probably no coincidence that a very similar situation prevailed for many subscribers to the *Digest*; wargamers were scarce and sparse in their distribution. Accordingly, the role of the referee silently fell by the wayside, outside of the requirement for supervision in the sorts of tournaments Captain Sachs ran in the BMSS.

Umpires and other mainstays of nineteenth-century military games thus skipped a generation of hobby gaming passing virtually unmodified into the primordial soup from which *Dungeons & Dragons* emerged.

¹⁷² Pratt, who wisely acquired a large circle of loquacious players and an independent reputation as an author of history and fiction, never quite faded into obscurity, and thus his game stayed afloat as well. Note, for example, the early 1960s *Sports Illustrated* coverage of his game (December 18, 1961, and September 23, 1963). A thorough account of the history of the game and the rules appears in Featherstone *Naval War Games*, and a decent high-level overview figures in an early *Strategy & Tactics*. [S&T:v1n5]

¹⁷³ [WGD:v5n4] The piece Scruby reprinted there does cover Venturini, Reiswitz and Verdy du Vernois though this article was not written for the hobby audience, and focuses mostly on WWIIera wargaming.

3.2 SYSTEM IN DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

To recap, in the two centuries after a chess variant first deemed itself a *kriegsspiel*, the simulation of conflict steadily grew richer and more complex. Despite the countervailing influences of authors like Wells, who favored simplicity and playability over realism and educational value, the board and miniature wargame traditions circa 1970 abounded with sophisticated mechanisms derived from Reiswitz. Relatively isolated wargaming clubs of the era might build a whole campaign around an author like Bath or Totten, whose works would be completely unknown to wargamers only a few hundred miles away. The members of a national organization like the IFW, through periodicals and conventions, saw far more of the diversity of wargaming across the English-speaking world, however, and thus could draw on many sources in designing new games. Unsurprisingly, *Dungeons & Dragons* emerged from just such a milieu.

The remaining subsections in this chapter chart the debt that the system of *Dungeons & Dragons* owes to wargaming by showing how the sources and ideas discussed throughout Section 3.1 influenced Gygax and Arneson in their design. For all its longwindedness, *Dungeons & Dragons* is hugely underspecified: many of the core principles of its system are tacit ones, so familiar to the authors that they were blind to the need to record them. Only by a very close reading of the earliest rules, and by placing elements in their proper context in the tradition of wargaming systems, can we even conjecture about the intention behind these ambiguities and omissions. As usual, our familiarity with later versions of the game hinders us rather than

helps us;; we must forget what the game became in order to discover how and why it got there. Section 3.2.1 begins by exploring the unusual implements of play of *Dungeons & Dragons* the replacement of a board or group of miniatures depicting the state of the game with the simple dialog between the referee and players, the curious polyhedral dice, as well as other idiosyncrasies and demonstrating where those practices have clear roots in the wargaming tradition. In two subsections, 3.2.2 takes on first the concept of to-hit rolls against armor class, and second the life-saving properties of hit points and saving throws, both of which had prefigurations in board and miniature wargames. The accumulation of experience points and advancement through levels, features repeatedly singled out as an innovation in *Dungeons & Dragons* by early reviewers, are plumbed for precedents in 3.2.3. Finally, 3.2.4 considers the shift from the management of armies of homogeneous soldiers to the management of single heroes, who may have unique names, individual weapons and particular aptitudes all to themselves.

Much of the coverage in the next four subsections ventures into realms of detail that may lie outside the interest of the general reader, in particular, through the technical examinations of the many variant accuracy and endurance systems, or the varieties of stratification in wargames. This material appears here precisely because the decisions made by the designers of *Dungeons & Dragons* were so widely challenged in the years after the game's release;; authors of variants, as well as competing commercial games, often inadvertently reinvented practices discussed in these next sections, as Chapter Five will show. The dependence of later sections on this background justifies its inclusion here, as do the several places where comparatively minor design decisions help to illustrate the respective contributions of *Chainmail* and the Blackmoor campaign. Readers in whom this justification does not spark an eagerness to explore the minutiae, however, should not hesitate to skim over the technical detail in the rest of this chapter.

3.2.1 THE INSTRUMENTS OF PLAY

Dungeons & Dragons billed itself as a wargame. Like Charles S. Roberts before them, the authors of the game seemingly entertained no premonition of founding a separate industry upon the game's release. They certainly harbored a conviction of its potential for success: Gygax asserts in the foreword that Tactical Studies Rules believes that of all forms of wargaming, fantasy will soon become the major contender for first place, but those are not the words of a conscious creator of a new game category distinct from

wargaming. Like any product in an established genre, *Dungeons & Dragons* contains a mixture of innovations and familiar elements, though in fairness, the size of the market it targeted meant that few were in a position to appreciate the familiarities. The system of *Dungeons & Dragons* derives from a clear pedigree of wargames, one concluding with *Chainmail* and the *Strategos*-based tradition of the Twin Cities, but the proximity of those two games to the creators of *Dungeons & Dragons* inevitably disguises the larger web of influence supporting them.

3.2.1.1 MAPS AND DIALOGS

Dungeons & Dragons requires the establishment of a scenario to serve as the specific setting of a campaign or game instance, exactly like its forebears in wargaming. The encouraged scenario is proverbially an underground dungeon, not exactly an environment that lends itself to realization on a sand table. The creation of a dungeon map with paper and pencil is therefore stipulated as essential for playing the game: Before it is possible to conduct a campaign of adventures in the mazy dungeons, it is necessary for the referee to sit down with pencil in hand and draw these labyrinths on graph paper. [OD&D3:3] Elsewhere, the rules more narrowly affirm that the referee must draw out a minimum of half a dozen maps of the levels of his underworld. [OD&D1:5] The recommended graph paper size is six lines per inch, where each inch of the dungeon map corresponds to ten feet of game space: an effective map scale of 1:120, microscopic in comparison to most previous wargames, though comparable to the stated scale of *Chainmail* of one inch per ten yards, or 1:360. Various ranges relevant to the play of the game, such as movement distance per turn and missile ranges, are defined in these ten foot increments: In the underworld all distances are in feet, so whenever distances are given in inches convert them to tens of feet. [OD&D3:8] Even the width of dungeon passages is usually fixed at ten feet as a facilitating assumption.

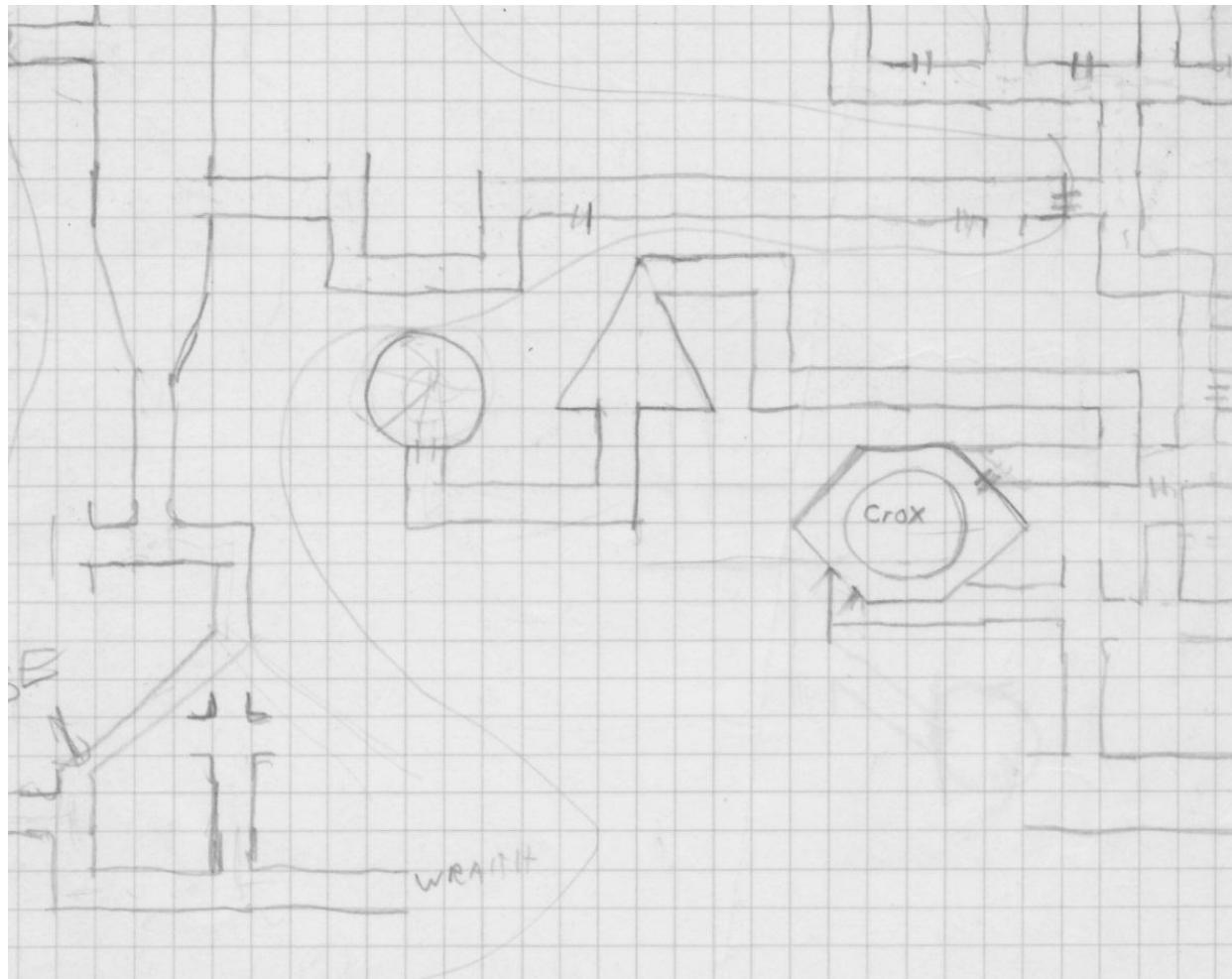


FIGURE 42: DUNGEON MAP FROM GREYHAWK, DRAWN BY MORNARD

A map with a grid overlay of six lines to the inch cannot accommodate miniature figurines;; even the most diminutive figures rest on bases that would straddle many such squares, and thus one cannot possibly hope to mark the location of an entire party on the map in this way. Despite the proclamation on the cover of *Dungeons & Dragons* that it is playable with paper and pencil and miniature figures, the role of miniature figures in *Dungeons & Dragons* is downplayed throughout the text. Even in the foreword, Gygax confesses that in fact you will not even need miniature figures, albeit he tacks onto this although their occasional employment is recommended for real spectacle when battles are fought. These spectacular battles defer entirely to the *Chainmail* rules, and thus there is no further mention of miniatures in any of the three books of *Dungeons & Dragons* other than a reiteration of the assertion that their use is not required.¹⁷⁴ The presence of the term miniature figures on the cover of the woodgrain box is,

consequently, a tad misleading. This confusion did not impede the sale of fantasy miniatures, as Section 5.3 will demonstrate, and already by the end of 1973, Lowrys Hobbies had finally begun to peddle a few in support of the *Chainmail* rules.

Even if graph paper maps had been sized for miniatures, players still could not mark their location on the referee's dungeon map because that document is not exposed on the table for communal inspection. The referee's authoritative dungeon map remains a secret. Rather than revealing a visual depiction of the world, the referee instead provides a verbal description of the immediate environs, in response to which the players propose where and how they attempt to move. Throughout *Underworld & Treasure* there are many hints to referees for designs intended to prevent players from accurately mapping a level, causing fits for map makers among participants and frustrating those setting out to map a level implying, though never explicitly directing, that players must literally draw their own maps as they go. Regardless of whether or not players dabble in cartography, the secrecy of the dungeon map is a fundamental design innovation of *Dungeons & Dragons* which fosters one of its three distinct modes of play: a *mode of exploration*. In this phase of a game session, the party attempts to navigate an unfamiliar environment like a dungeon, uncertain what might lie around the next corner. In order to preserve the suspense of the mode of exploration, the layout of the game world and the position of monsters or treasures must remain a secret from the players.

To appreciate the novelty of the exploration mechanic in *Dungeons & Dragons*, one must contrast it with previous uses of secret information in earlier wargames. Among the hobby wargaming community, the followers of Stevenson and Wells, secret information had little attraction, since these games almost exclusively pitted two players against one another without the benefit of a referee to guard any secrets. In the military tradition of umpired *kriegsspiel*, however, secret information abounded, including limited maps for players and authoritative ones for referees yet from Reiswitz onward, the wargaming maps of players and referees differed not in topographical data, but only in the placement of forces on the landscape. The referee served to shield each player from knowledge of opposing troop placement, but not to obscure from players the terrain itself. Totten followed the Reiswitzian precedent in his Advanced Game in *Strategos*, encouraging that the game be played upon three maps where each commander will have upon his map only such pieces as represent his own troops, those being drawn from the Referee

as needed.¹⁷⁵ In *Dungeons & Dragons*, the referee similarly hides from the players the location of opposing forces namely monsters until their discovery in the course of play, but the practice of obscuring the very dungeon terrain leads to a novel and intuitive gameplay mechanic for adventuring.

A few precedents existed in the hobby wargaming community for guarding the secret location of enemy forces: one was the umpired management of submarines in Fletcher Pratt wargame. As Rule 6c in his wargame states, a player handling a fully submerged submarine is sent out of the room and marks his moves on a sheet of paper. In this manner the referee tracks, on paper, the location of vessels below the surface which cannot be revealed to the rest of the players, who merrily push their ships around in plain sight. Pratt does not actually maintain a secret map of the underwater zone, but nonetheless his system may have inspired later games that took things to that next logical step. The employment of pencil and paper for drawing an underground area has its most important precedent in the pages of *Chainmail*, in the system for modeling mines tunneled under defenses during a medieval castle siege.¹⁷⁶ These operations are only possible to conduct on paper, *Chainmail* advises, since presumably the castle walls and opposing forces reside on a miniature battlefield, and even the most ardent realist would not attempt to install soil and props beneath the surface to simulate the activities of sappers.¹⁷⁷ Crucially, *Chainmail* continues that a third party is necessary to act as judge for these operations, since the attacker and defender would not be cognizant of the exact position of opposing subterranean digging parties. Although tunneling below walls and exploring underground structures have little in common as endeavors, in a game system they do share a common need for a referee to maintain the obliviousness of players. In both Pratt and in *Chainmail*, the judge became responsible for explaining the state of the secret information about events below ground, using words in lieu of showing a board.

Unlike in *Chainmail*, in *Dungeons & Dragons* these same principles of obscurity apply above the surface of the world as well as below: The terrain beyond the immediate surroundings of the dungeon area should be unknown to all but the referee. [OD&D3:15] In addition to the dungeon map, a referee should possess¹⁷⁴ Later, t

so desire, but miniatures are not required, only esthetically pleasing;; similarly, unit counters can be employed with or without figures although by themselves the bits of cardboard lack the eye

¹⁷⁵ See *Strategos*, 112.

¹⁷⁶ As was noted above, Stevenson did employ cards as substitutes for troops to conceal enemy activities, and his games began with a cavalry scouting phase which does constitute a form of exploration. By the 1970s, similar mechanisms for managing secret information in two-player games

a wilderness map unknown to the players. It should be for the territory around the dungeon location. When players venture into this area they should have a blank hexagon map, and as they move over each hex the referee will inform them as to what kind of terrain is in that hex. [OD&D3:16]

For play on the wilderness map, *Dungeons & Dragons* advocates a close adherence to the rules of Avalon Hill recent release *Outdoor Survival* (1972, available September 1 of that year).¹⁷⁸ A copy of *Outdoor Survival* is listed under the Recommended Equipment in *Men & Magic*, an endorsement roughly equal in emphasis to that of *Chainmail* itself. *Outdoor Survival* is not a wargame, but rather an adult game in the tradition Charles S. Roberts intended for Avalon Hill sometimes their marketing literature called it a peace game. The object of *Outdoor Survival* is to navigate a wilderness, though there are five scenarios would be familiar to any gaming enthusiast from popular board game titles like *Stratego* or *Battleship*. Ken St. Andre, in his prefatory notes to the first edition of his *Tunnels & Trolls*, struggles to find any analogy for the exploration mode something like *Battleship*

The game is played *Battleship* (a game sold by Milton Bradley and others, in various incarnations, since the 1930s), each player effectively builds a simple secret map on the grid, and attempts through a trial-and-error process to learn the structure earliest commercial versions of *Battleship* (notably *Salvo*) were played on graph paper with pencil markings;; see Whitehill, *Games*, 23. The analogy to *Dungeons & Dragons* may seem superficial, but the *Chainmail* precedent for subterranean graphing, in which the two sides direct their mining tunnels in secret, and the counter-miners attempt to intersect the miners, bears a bit more resemblance to *Battleship*.

¹⁷⁷ *Chainmail*, 29.

¹⁷⁸ According to the Avalon Hill *Silver Jubilee*, 14, the inspiration for *Outdoor Survival* came from Stackpole Books, the same company that initially distributed *Tactics*, though now their focus had broadened from military subjects to outdoorsmanship. Avalon Hill solicited an initial design

from Jim Dunnigan, which Tom Shaw pared down to a more marketable package and finally gave to Donald Greenwood to complete. [AHG:v9n2] The review in *Strategy & Tactics* #43 somewhat cattily contends *First Fantasy Campaign*, d we began to use the the use of *Outdoor Survival* in conjunction with *Dungeons & Dragons* began in Blackmoor.

providing distinct justifications for doing so: for example, lost players returning to civilization at the edges of the map or racing to find the object of a search party. Given that the board itself is not a secret from the players (*Outdoor Survival* has no referee), some other means is required to simulate being lost in the woods, since the players necessarily command a bird s-eye view of the environment. Dice therefore determine whether or not players are lost, and if so, in which direction they will wander. The board is overlain with a hexagonal grid, segmenting the board into hexagons about 1.5 centimeters across;; as there are six possible directions on a hexagonal board to move, a six-sided die can easily dictate the orientation of lost players. Each hex contains a particular terrain type, in much the manner of Hellwig: there are mountains, swamps, rivers, deserts, plains and even roads (well, trails).

Dungeons & Dragons appropriated *Outdoor Survival* for its wilderness mode of exploration with only minor tweaks. In contrast to the requirement that a referee specify in detail the dungeon that players will explore, the surface wilderness is flexible enough for off-hand adventures charted directly on the published *Outdoor Survival* board: the referee has no obligation to specify their own outdoor map when a simple die roll to determine terrain types can fill in the details. *Dungeons & Dragons* stipulates that the distance across a hex is five miles, for a gargantuan scale of roughly 1:190,000.¹⁷⁹ The board is slightly reinterpreted for the medieval fantasy setting catch basins are castles, buildings are towns but the exploration of the surface defers its play almost entirely to the original *Outdoor Survival* rules. There is even a chance in *Dungeons & Dragons* that players will get lost, and move to a hex dictated by the whim of a six-sided die.

Movement rates in *Dungeons & Dragons*, above and below ground, follow board wargaming conventions: they are defined in terms of how many squares (below) or hexes (above) a party traverses in a turn. The length of a turn varies between those two environments: in the wilderness a turn consumes an entire day. A wilderness party on foot, for example, covers

three hexes per turn, whereas on light horse they might cover ten. This being a fantasy game, there exist more extravagant means of conveyance, including dragons, griffons, rocs (traveling some 48 hexes per turn, a distance exceeding the length and breadth of the *Outdoor Survival* board), brooms, carpets and so on, above and beyond conventional vehicles like carts or boats. In the underworld, the length of a turn is ten minutes, and the distance that a party can move during that time is determined by the amount of weight they carry, or their encumbrance, as will be detailed in Section 3.2.3.2.¹⁸⁰ Cautious parties may opt to explore more slowly, searching for the proverbial traps and secret doors as they progress.

While the necessity for secret information precludes reliance on visible game boards, maps or sand tables that would reveal to players the very environment which the mode of exploration uncovers, there must be some means for a referee to depict and update the state of the world, and for players to communicate their intentions. *Dungeons & Dragons* discloses the world verbally, in a dialog between the referee and the players, where the referee has tremendous latitude in how much or little to reveal in response to the actions and inquiries of players. Moreover, portraying the world verbally, in a dialog, capitalizes on the flexibility of language to represent fantastic creatures or abilities, things difficult or even impossible to represent in a physical model: the description of a firebreathing dragon in a story can be more evocative, and more credible, than a visual or sculptural depiction. Whether exploring a cramped basement or on an open prairie, the party must convey its attempted movements to the referee verbally, as this dialogic example illustrates (where CAL represents the caller who relays the actions of the party to the referee):¹⁷⁹ The board is 34 ranks by 43 files, for 1,462 squares. The *Outdoor Survival* rulebook suggests it is intended to model 13,200 square miles of wilderness.

¹⁸⁰ Briefly, a light load (equivalent in weight to only 750 gold pieces) results in a move of 120 feet, where a heavy load of twice that amount reduces movement to 60 feet. Confusingly, in the underground, turns consist of two such movement phases, so a lightly encumbered party might cover 240 feet of dungeon in ten minutes.

REF: Steps down to the east.

CAL: We're going down.

REF: 10 , 20 , 30 a 10 square landing steps down to the north and curving

down southeast.

CAL: Take those to the southeast. [OD&D3:12]

Astute readers may find this exemplary dialog of play reminiscent of a similar quotation given in Section 3.1.4: the dialog between the umpire and a lieutenant in Verdy du Vernois 1876 *Beitrag zum Kriegsspiel*. The free *kriegsspiel* tradition of Verdy du Vernois embraced this interactive approach, even if, for various reasons, his method is not as immediate and real-time as gamers a century later would expect. While it is extremely unlikely that Gygax or Arneson read Verdy du Vernois himself prior to their work on *Dungeons & Dragons*, this dialogic approach to wargaming persisted through many Englishlanguage intermediaries in the twentieth-century. Sayre, in 1908, provides detailed examples of dialogs between referees and players in much the same vein, for example: Director: The Reds continue to advance and you now see another three in all. Lieut. D.: I dismount my party by signals to fight on foot and take a position, under what cover I can find, on the Burns ridge. The horses are placed in the ravine south of the ridge, under cover east of the road.

Director: Your men are concealed by weeds. When you are in position the three Reds have passed Dolman. They do not appear to have seen you.

Lieut. D.: I order the sights laid down and open fire at will.¹⁸¹

In Totten's *Strategos*, one does not read in the passage governing orders and their interpretation (114 115) any indication that the referee engages in so free a dialog with the participants, though Totten does not preclude this explicitly and demand that all orders be written. Totten consistently expresses a preoccupation with the size of forces and the time required for an advance squadron to report intelligence to commanding officers;; his requirement that players can take no advantage of indications of hostile parties, until such time as information could really be communicated to him must necessarily slow the process of acting and reacting to a level where written correspondence is more appropriate than verbal speech, especially when commanders are at a significant remove from troops. Typically, however, this reflects the relationship between a commander whom a player controls and a large number of subordinates under the direction of the referee a situation in which the player can only control troops through messages delivered after a considerable period of time, ruling out moment-by-moment micromanagement.

Dungeons & Dragons assumes a more condensed command structure, however, one in which allied troops are unlikely to stray out of earshot of one another. Up to this point, we have maintained a dangerous silence on the subject of parties dangerous because this is a point where readers familiar with the later evolution of *Dungeons & Dragons* are very likely to substitute their preconceptions for the paucity of information on parties in the 1974 edition. Very limited guidance is given on the nature of parties in the text, and the little that can be gleaned comes mostly from inference. The recommended number of players in a campaign is between four and fifty. Whether this means the authors literally intended for fifty players to participate in a dungeon adventure simultaneously is unclear, though obviously the Blackmoor campaign had many geographically dispersed players, only a few of whom attended any particular campaign session. Even the number fifty, however, is not the upper bound on the number of characters that might be in the dungeon, since each player may employ one or more hired non-player characters (NPCs); the text suggests that it is likely players will be desirous of acquiring a regular entourage of various character types, monsters and an army of some form. [OD&D1:12] Army? Indeed, the authors demonstrated their willingness to design for very substantial groups: for movement in the wilderness, for example, the rulebooks advise that parties numbering over 100, including pack or draft animals, will incur a 1 hex penalty. Parties over 1,000 incur a 2 hex penalty. [OD&D3:16] Parties of such an extravagant size clearly would clog the passages of a dungeon, however, and rules relating to dungeoneering imply parties of three or perhaps six members. Even in a larger dungeon-exploration party, the group is surely in a position to act as a coordinated body under the command of single authority who communicates the actions of the group to the referee in real-time. The caller in the quotation above, responsible for dialogic interaction with the referee, presumably acts as a commander preventing party members from issuing contradictory instructions.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Sayre, *Map Maneuvers*, 100.

A precedent for a more immediate verbal dialog between the referee and players, at the individual or squadron level, circulated in the American wargaming community in the mid-1960s: Michael J. Korns *Modern War in Miniature* (1966). These rules were certainly known both in Lake Geneva and the Twin Cities prior to the authorship of *Dungeons & Dragons*.¹⁸³

Korns adopted the principles of free *kriegsspiel* out of his conviction that one¹⁸² in the game is never explained, nor does the term actually appear in the text anywhere outside of that example.

¹⁸³ Like seemingly all wargaming rules designers, Korns insisted that he developed his rules without any knowledge of existing wargames. He wrote to *Table Top Talk*

with you [Scruby] was the first I had with the outside world of collectors... During these years I built up a nice 54mm war game army and made up my own rules, which strangely enough resembled the

product of 1966;; solely by virtue of reading *Table Top Talk*, for example, Korns may have learned of verbal dialogs in wargames before publishing his rules. [TTT:v3n3] Korns book is advertised in the July 1966 *Table Top Talk*, and reviewed positively in the September 1966 issue, though with reservations surrounding its complexity. Representatives of both the Twin Cities (such as Wesely) and Lake Geneva (such as Perren) had made their presence known in the *Table Top Talk* readership by that time. More decisively, a modern war game at GenCon IV using Korns refereed by none other than Mike Carr, a key participant in the Napoleonic Simulation and -for-1 WW II Battle using Korns

DW:#3] In Lake Geneva, Mike Reese (one of the authors of *Tractics*, along with Gygax) recommends the purchase of Korns as early as November 1968. [IW:v1n7] Leon Tucker (another *Tractics* co-author) cites the Korns rules in a February 1970

must be able to place oneself in the position of the soldier in the field in order to become interested in the game. He recommended the use of a sand table and miniatures but only for referees, not for players. Players must have only their maps with the positions of their own troops... and they know only what the judge tells them that their troops can hear or see. Where Totten chose a time scale of five minutes per move (and, in Appendix D of *Strategos*, Totten relates that it takes on average thirteen minutes of real time to determine the events of five minutes of game time), Korns favored a scale far closer to real time: two seconds per move. The example of the dialogic interaction between the player (P) and judge (J) in Korns demonstrates a greater excitement and immediacy than the previous citations: JUDGE: There he is again! He just stuck his head around the corner of that white building about 30 meters in front of you. Here, he's looking around again. P: Am I in the ditch now?

J: Yes, you've been here about 2 seconds now.

P: All right, then I'm firing my Schmeisser at him in a long burst.

The shorter time-scale aside, this exchange appears livelier because it dramatizes the moment-to-moment events of a battle. The orders in Totten hardly relay the events of the moment, but instead aim to give clear directions for future actions. In *Dungeons & Dragons*, events are far closer to Korn's timeframe. The goal of exploration is not to chart chthonic regions for the betterment of the cartographer, but rather to discover opportunities for adventure and to wrest treasure from the hands of its current owners, the monsters of the underworld, in battle.

Upon encountering a monster, the mode of exploration is suspended, and the game transitions into a mode of combat, which will be subject of Section 3.2.2. As with movement, the manner in which the world is provisioned with monsters and treasure also differs between the upstairs and downstairs of the game world. As a general rule, *Underworld & Wilderness* advises, there will be far more uninhabited space on a [dungeon] level than there will be space occupied by monsters. [OD&D3:6] The referee should thoughtfully situate the most important treasures, presumably in keeping with the principle that successive levels... should be progressively more dangerous and difficult, and accordingly more remunerative. For the balance of the levels, however, the referee can

switch to a random determination randomness plays a role in the appearance of monsters both in the dungeon and in the great outdoors.

The prototype for the random encounter system of *Dungeons & Dragons* is found again in *Outdoor Survival*. The encounter mechanic in the latter game is as follows: at the end of each turn, players consult a six-sided die which, if it rolls five or six, heralds a wilderness encounter. The players may select an encounter of one of three types: natural hazards, personal or animal/insect. The result of confronting an animal may be damaged health, or may be an increase in food supplies;; *Outdoor Survival* relegates the consequences of the encounter to a simple die roll without any further elaboration of its nature, leaving players to imagine a scuffle with a mountain lion on the one hand and perhaps trapping a wild rabbit on the other. *Dungeons & Dragons* expands on this earlier model while still conforming to its basic outline. When the party explores the wilderness, the referee rolls a

rity with Korn in both of the regional communities that contributed to *Dungeons & Dragons*.

six-sided die at the end of the day. The chances of an encounter vary depending on the terrain of the hex where the party rests. In woods, river or desert, a five or six results in an encounter as it does in *Outdoor Survival*, while in a city or plains the chances of an encounter are lesser (on a six only) and in the swamp or mountains they are higher (four, five or six). In *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, players would never accept a simple die roll to determine their fate in a wilderness encounter, and thus tables are supplied to determine the particular sort of monster one encounters in the wilderness. A very similar mechanic applies to wandering monsters, as they are called, in dungeons. At the end of every turn the referee will roll a six-sided die to see if a wandering monster has been encountered. A roll of 6 indicates a wandering monster has appeared. [OD&D3:10] This is quite an aggressive threshold, a one in six chance of a monster appearing every ten minutes that a party spends in the dungeon, or on average once per game hour.

3.2.1.2 DICE

The tables supplied within *Underworld & Wilderness* identify the monsters that might be encountered on various dungeon levels or varieties of wilderness. Of the six monster generation tables for dungeons, one table requires a random number between one and eight, three tables require a random number between one and ten, and two tables require a random number between one and twelve. As it is not easy to get any combination of six-sided dice to generate numbers in those ranges, more exotic devices are required. Under recommended equipment, the rules list 1 pair 4-sided dice, 1 pair 8-sided dice, 4 to 20 pairs 6-sided dice, 1-pair 20-sided dice, 1 pair 12-sided dice. [OD&D1:5] All, of course, are available from TSR.

Polyhedral dice are a signature feature of *Dungeons & Dragons*, so much so that their likeness conjures up role-playing games even in the minds of the uninitiated. This strong association implies that polyhedral dice existed in comparative obscurity before *Dungeons & Dragons* rendered them prominent. The authors of *Dungeons & Dragons* did not, however, invent polyhedral dice, and they can be found in a number of obscure corners of the gaming world in the 1960s before their sudden rise to super-stardom.

This history has postponed detailing the origins of dice until now despite the enormous importance of dice to wargaming. Implements of chance are effectively as old as human civilization, and some of the most ancient tombs of the affluent preserve recognizable dice. At the beginning of this chapter, we have already mentioned the *astragali* or knucklebones that tumble

somewhat fairly onto one of four sides, which archaeologists suspect inspired the common cubical dice of our day. Crafted dice, however, also stretch back into prehistory: baked clay dice from the third millennium BCE survive from Mesopotamia and the Indus valley;; both dice and *astragali* remained common in Egypt from

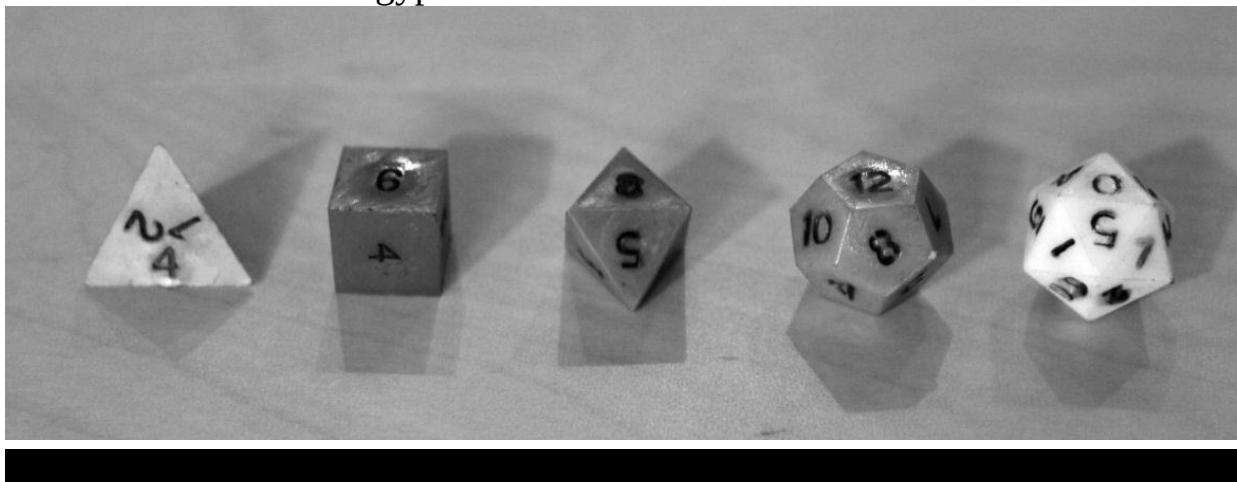


FIGURE 43: POLYHEDRAL DICE FROM THE BASIC SET

the second millennium forward.¹⁸⁴

Ancient Greek civilization knew that a cube is only one instance of a set of polyhedrons that share a certain set of geometric properties, in particular a symmetry that yields a perfect center of gravity, rendering these shapes equally likely to land on any of their faces when rolled as dice.¹⁸⁵ Plato popularized these shapes in his dialog *Timaeus* (360 BCE), in which he speculated that each of the four elements (earth, fire, air and water) owed its nature to a particular type of polyhedron: fire, he conjectured, felt sharp as if it were made up of tiny tetrahedrons (four-sided), whereas water rolls around smoothly like a mass of minuscule icosahedrons (twenty-sided). Earth clumps into firm shapes, just as cubes (six-sided) can stack and hold their position. The resemblance of air to octahedrons (eight-sided) is a bit more fanciful, and as for the dodecahedron (twelve-sided), it apparently helps prop up outer space as the legendary fifth element. Mythology aside, artisans crafted polyhedrons corresponding to Platonic solids in the ancient world, and some Roman icosahedral dice survive today, though the significance of the markings on their faces remains a matter for speculation.

Whatever their original purpose, these unusual dice did not enter the gaming traditions of ancient European societies. Cubical dice suffice for a broad number of interesting games, and indeed game design often conformed to the constraints imposed by the use of cubical dice;; once these

regular and intuitive dice became a *de facto* standard, the alternatives faced a high barrier to entry. Since many dice games involved gambling, proposed deviations from the norm would undoubtedly arouse suspicions about fairness. Game designers for the most part structured their systems around the assumption that only random numbers between one and six, or sums derivable from throwing multiple six-sided dice, were readily accessible.

When the younger Reiswitz added dice to wargaming, he considered only six-sided dice, and in retrospect this handicap rendered his system needlessly complicated. As was discussed in 3.1.3, Reiswitz provided five customized cubical dice with his wargaming apparatus, each pertaining to the resolution of distinct combat odds: Die I for 1:1 odds, Die II for 3:2 odds, Die III for 2:1 odds and so on. To make dice conform to these odds, he sometimes left faces blank and instructed referees to re-roll the die when it turned up a blank face. For example, Die IV has two blank sides because the spread of results Reiswitz needed (3 good faces to one bad face) required only four faces worth of die, and yet he had to accommodate six presumably if he could have manufactured a four-sided die for his apparatus, he would have. Remember as well that his custom die faces did not display mere pips, but contained all of the information needed to decide the results of combat and calculate losses. By the era of Tschischwitz and Trotha, however, the information crammed onto the surfaces of Reiswitz's cubes had migrated into reference charts, eliminating the requirement for custom dice. Any six-sided die could resolve combat in their wargames;; the umpire did not change dice when the odds changed from 2:1 to 3:1, but merely interpreted the results of the die roll by reference to a different chart. The long and unwieldy Table A of Appendix III to Baring's 1872 translation of Tschischwitz shows odds ranging from 5:1 through 1:5 charted against the roll of a single ordinary die, with the various consequences including numerical losses listed in the proper places in the table.

¹⁸⁴ See Bennett, *Randomness*, 18. More recent excavations of the Bronze Age civilization in the ce, complete with familiar pips designating numbers, dating to around 3200 BCE.

¹⁸⁵ For the more geometrically minded, these convex regular polyhedrons are isohedral, isogonal and isotaxal shapes: that is, their faces are all congruent regular polygons that intersect only at their edges and, at each vertex of the polyhedron, the same number of faces meet. Each

face of an isohedral polyhedron has the same relationship to the center of gravity, and thus ideally it rolls fair.

Totten surely recognized that the tables employed by previous *kriegsspiel* authorities strained the limits of what a single die roll might accomplish. He therefore proposed several alternative means of handling combat odds beyond the 5:1 threshold. Famously, as discussed above, Totten offered a twelve-faced teetotum in his apparatus that emulated a dodecahedron, and in Appendix I he described how the teetotum might resolve combat odds of up to 11:1, including several unusual fractional odds such as 7:2, or 6:5 or 5:3. His table includes twenty-three distinct probabilities that can be decided via the teetotum. In the 1960s, Dave Wesely reportedly embarked on an arduous quest to acquire such a teetotum for use with these rules, but it is telling that neither *Strategos N* nor the subsequent Blackmoor rules required non-cubical dice Arneson attested in 1977 that they had no funny dice back then.¹⁸⁶

The teetotum alone did not liberate Totten from the shackles of six-outcome implements of chance. Totten also recognized that multiple six-sided dice rolled together produced more nuanced results. The combinatorial sums of rolling three six-sided dice had long been understood by gamblers, as Section 3.1.3 already illustrated.¹⁸⁷ Totten relies on these general principles in Table K of *Strategos* to allow a referee to decide several irregular probabilities. When rolling multiple six-sided dice, the odds greatly favor sums in the middle of the possible range;; for 3d6, it is vastly more likely that the resulting sum will amount to 10 or 11 or 12 than, say, 3 or 18. Applying these odds to wargaming, if a referee needs to resolve an event whose chances are only 1 in 14, one could establish a model where the event occurs only if a roll of three six-sided dice results in the sum of 7. For a much more rare event, with prospects of only 1 in 71, a sum of 4 is needed from three dice. Since there is only a 1 in 215 chance of rolling a three with three six-sided dice, Totten dutifully reports this as a further probability resolvable in Table K, albeit in a real battle troops are unlikely to attempt a venture with odds near 215 to 1. The casting of multiple dice, or at least multiple die rolls, is a feature of several other tables in *Strategos*, notably Tables M through Q, which model the efficacy of firearms (from infantry rifles to fancier Gatling guns) by consulting three successive die rolls: the

first determines whether the effect is good or poor, the second distinguishes those categories into good effects of

deadly or heavy fire and bad effects of ordinary or ineffective fire, and the third roll resolves the resulting numerical loss, modified by the range of targets.

Up until the 1960s, these kludges allowed wargamers access to more rarified probabilities without having to resort to any exotic dice imitating the four less popular Platonic solids. For most combat odds, however, the roll of a single six-sided die remained sufficient. Virtually all Avalon Hill Combat Result Tables (CRTs) relied on the generation of a random number between 1 and 6. As the 1960s progressed, however, new influences on the hobby wargaming community drove the adoption of more diverse ranges of probability.¹⁸⁸ Korns *Modern War in Miniature* (1966) catalogs combat-related percentile probabilities, derived from military sources in the great tradition of Scharnhorst (and Totten's many appendices) in their statistical analysis of the accuracy of soldiers with their firearms. The following is a representative sample: The base accuracy of either a bolt action or semi-automatic rifle fired at a stationary 1-meter-square target at a distance of 200 meters is seven scores per each ten shots fired, or 70%.¹⁸⁹ Korns hoped that referees would use these statistics to decide results during the course of a game, but there is no obvious way to employ a six-sided die for this purpose. Thus, Korns supplies an Appendix containing a Table of Dice to Percentages which equates certain rolls of one or two six-sided dice into five-percent increments between zero and one hundred percent;; for example, when two dice are rolled, the odds that their pips will add up to 11 is roughly 5.5%, which Korns offers as the closest approximation to a 5% chance, while for a 35 percent chance, a roll on one die of either a 5 or 6 (really a 33% chance) is recommended.¹⁹⁰ The results adhere closely enough to the margins of uncertainty for Korns statistical data to support a compelling simulation. Significantly, these 5% increment approximations established a precedent for resolving percentile events with implements that generated one of twenty outcomes, rather than one of a hundred.

¹⁸⁶ In this same passage in the introduction to the *First Fantasy Campaign*, Arneson notes that the dungeon of Blackmoor initially had six levels specifically to allow random placement with a six-sided die. He goes on to suggest, however, that characters had starting hit points between 0 and 100, a sum that would surely be generated with percentile dice (assuming he

meant 1 100, as zero hit points sound self-defeating). However, in a 1974 letter (cited below in Section 3.2.2.2) Arneson describes an earlier incarnation of the Blackmoor hit point generation system that relies only on sixsided dice;; the 0 readily available.

¹⁸⁷ See Bennett, *Randomness*, 57, on *De vetula*. Although *De vetula* presents Ovid as its author, the poem is commonly attributed to Richard de Fournival.

McHugh, in his *Fundamentals of War Gaming* (Appendix A and B), was perhaps the first author on wargaming to catalog a variety of methods of resolving statistical events in games with implements of probability. Like Korns, he displays tables for the probability distributions of throwing two six-sided dice, and notes that two dice can be used to generate a number between one and ten, if desired, through an ingenious mapping of the results to three iterations of the numbers one through ten (rolls of a six on the second die are always re-rolled, allowing 5 by 6 or 30 results). He notes the existence of books of random numbers generated by various military research organizations, and even mentions computer-generated randomness. More intriguing, however, is his notice of the availability of the following curious artifact in Japan: Somewhat reminiscent of an early World War II put-it-together-yourself approximation of the globe is a relatively new and simple chance device, the 20-sided or random number generating die. It is in the form of an icosahedron, one of the five regular polyhedra. Each of the 20 bounding surfaces is an equilateral triangle, and each of the 10 digits, 0 to 9, appear twice on its faces.¹⁹¹

It may seem wasteful to roll a twenty-sided die in order to derive a number between one and ten, but recall that ten-sided polyhedra are not among the Platonic solids,

¹⁸⁸ An early advocacy of percentile probability can be found, for example, in one hundred numbered cards for generating random numbers in this range. The advantage of this ¹⁸⁹ *Modern War in Miniature*, 33.

¹⁹⁰ This table was incorporated into the fourth edition of Mike Carr *Fight in the Skies* (1972), and as a part of those rules certainly became familiar to both Gygax and Arneson. It was previously abbreviated in the 1968 version of the *FitS* rules, though without explicitly listing the percentages associated with the die rolls.

¹⁹¹ McHugh, *Fundamentals*, A-3.

and in fact the construction of a fair ten-sided polyhedron required no small ingenuity (as will be discussed below);; note as well that ten-sided dice are not among the recommended equipment in the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*, as twenty-sided dice served double duty to resolve chances ranging over half their number of faces. The Japanese dice described by McHugh are, as he continues: useful for simulating an event with a probability of success of say, 0.41. A red die might be selected for the first digit of the number;; a yellow for the second. Since with two dice there are 100 equally likely ways of turning up a two digit number, 00, 01, 02... to 99, then 41 of the numbers, usually 01 to 41, or 00 to 40, are selected to indicate success. When paired, icosahedral dice thus serve as percentile dice, which can decide any statistical events expressed in percentile terms. Three dice can equally well produce a random number up to 1,000. In a footnote, McHugh helpfully relates that sets of 3 one each of red, yellow and blue are manufactured and sold by the Japanese Standards Association... the price is \$2.50 per set, plus \$0.70 postage. Buried at the end of a book little known outside of military circles, however, this endorsement could not have brought much hobby business to the Japanese Standards Association.

Rumor of the existence of these exotic devices spread slowly through the wargaming community, because there existed little immediate demand for generating numbers in these ranges: readers of Korns, after all, could rely on the approximations with cubical dice described in his appendix and save themselves a few dollars. The icosahedron snuck in a number of cameo appearances in the wargaming club journals of the era before its full utility became evident. For example, in the last issue of the IFW *Spartan* (December 1968), Lenard Lakofka wrote an article entitled Icosahedron: A Game of Tactics which helpfully informed the readership of the existence of twenty-sided polyhedra and even gives directions to construct one from a collection of colored cardboard equilateral triangles. Primarily, he intends the icosahedron for use in an obscure chess-like game of his own contrivance with kings and queens leaping between the triangles on its surface;; however, he does note at the end of his article another application for this invention: As a means to resolve battles... merely put a number one in two blue triangles, a two in the remaining two blue triangles, a three in two orange triangles, etc. [IW:v1n8] The result would be, like the dice from the Japanese Standards Association, a twenty-sided die that generated numbers between 0 and 9.

What use would an icosahedron be in resolving the sorts of battles that concerned the readership of the *Spartan*? The answer lies in another influence that caused randomization to expand beyond the range of one through six postal wargame play. In play-by-mail games, both sides require publicly verifiable random numbers to serve instead of die rolls given the heated competitions detailed in Section 1.1, neither party to a postal wargame is likely to accept the other's testimony about a die roll that took place in private a thousand miles away. The most widely publicized source of uncontrollable and unpredictable numbers being the stock exchange, the number of shares of a chosen stock traded on a particular (future) date served as the most common surrogate for a die in postal gaming. A representative description of this method, and one which was certainly known in Lake Geneva, is given in Gygax *War of the Empires* (August 1969): The New York Stock Exchange is used to resolve battle as in Avalon Hill PBM. This is done by choosing a stock listed on the exchange and a date to be used. Then on the chosen day the defender looks up the number listed in the Sales in Hundreds column for the listed stocks and uses the last digit in the quote as the die roll. Note that the PBM results tables are numbered from one to zero to account for this.¹⁹²

As promised, the CRTs in *War of the Empires* all have ten outcomes numbered from 1 to 0 (with 0 standing for 10). It was precisely for use with these systems that Lakofka proposed his icosahedron in 1968: This produces a ten number pattern of resolution as used in PBM games. This saves you the time of using two dice, or converting your strategy from a 6 to 10 number system each time you play a wargame. Typically, the process of adapting Avalon Hill games to postal play did entail converting their existing CRTs, oriented toward six-sided dice, into postal CRTs resolved by the stock market, which used a number between 1 and 10. Lakofka therefore argues that rather than converting back and forth between the two, it would be simpler to stick with the ten-result CRT, since with the aid of icosahedrons, the same system could apply to both play in person and by post. However, it is utterly unreasonable to expect wargamers to construct fair icosahedrons from cardboard or wood themselves, as he suggests, and thus it can hardly be surprising that his proposal gained little traction.

Dissatisfaction with the predominance of cubical dice provoked other, even stranger inventions.¹⁹³ Leon Tucker, a professor of statistics and a

member of the Lake Geneva gaming circle, proposed in June 1969 a contraption called the TOAD

Tucker's Original Adjustable Device. [IW:v2n6] The idea went as follows: take one hundred beads, ninety-nine of them black and one white, and place them in some sort of bag or bucket. Then, acquire a transparent tube just wide enough to admit said beads, and craft a stopper that can be inserted into the tube and positioned anywhere along its length with ease (presumably it would rest on the end of some sort of stick of roughly the same length as the tube). Finally, line the outside of the tube with graduated, numbered marks from one to one hundred so that, when the stopper is pushed to a given number, the tube can accommodate exactly that number of beads. In order to determine whether or not an event of a certain percentile probability has occurred, simply set the stopper to the number in question, shake up the beads and then pour them into the tube if the white bead is within, then the event has occurred. While this invention is perhaps slightly more practical than Lakofka's proposal, it still falls short of the ease of use demanded by the average wargamer. If nothing else, it illustrates Tucker's fervent desire to perfect random percentile number generation for his ongoing work on simulating modern war games in collaboration with Mike Reese and Gary Gygax, soon to be published as *Tractics*.

Toward the end of 1969, Donald Featherstone included this blurb in the Must List of *Wargamer's Newsletter* #92: I have received details of 20-sided Random Generating Dice obtainable from the Japanese Standards Association with the endorsement these dice have very large applications to wargaming. By this time, a set of 3d20 cost \$6.00 (including postage), about double the price that McHugh had recorded three years earlier.

¹⁹² *War of the Empires*, 8.

¹⁹³ Tony Bath found his own non-standard solution, as he relates in his *Setting Up Wargames Campaigns* itself was pretty useless, but it contained a number of unusual dice: each had one side left blank, and they were divided into evens and odds, the odds having the other sides numbered 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and purposes like rolling the age of characters. Bath also used a deck of cards to determine the personality of his non-player characters in a manner reminiscent of a tarot card reading;; see Section 4.5.2 for more.

From this point forward, knowledge of the potential use of icosahedral dice spread quite rapidly through the hobby wargaming community. Two

issues of *Wargamer's Newsletter* later, a letter from Mike Blake claimed, We have the British patent on these fiendish devices... Originally, they were designed to go with our Advanced Modern Rules, but we now hope to sell them independently.... The dice themselves are able, in pairs, to throw numbers from 1 to 100 with an exactly equal chance on every number. [WGN:#94] It appears that Leon Tucker was not alone in his ambition to apply percentile-based combat resolution to modern warfare. Blake, along with his partners Steven Curtis and Ian Colwill of what came to be known as the Bristol Wargames Society, promised to sell the dice separately for ten shillings a piece, a substantial discount over the stated Japanese price.¹⁹⁴

The commencement of Gygax participation in *Wargamer's Newsletter* coincided with this ongoing discussion of twenty-sided dice. Observe, for example, that the note from Blake appeared in *Wargamer's Newsletter* #94 an issue we know Gygax read, since he appropriated for the LGTSA medieval miniature rules the mercenaries system appearing in Wesencraft article in that same issue. In the February 1971 issue of *Wargamer's Newsletter*, Gygax presents a high-level description of the emerging *Tractics* ruleset with an explicit description of its reliance on percentage-based event resolution: Most of the factors that affect accuracy of weapons (target, range, movement, cover, etc.) are easily dealt with when computing the percentage chance of hitting the target fired at by a system of adding to and subtracting from a base number. The base number used depends upon whether it is a small arm or large caliber weapon firing direct or indirect fire. 5% increments are used, and I imagine that sales of 20 sided dice will pick up when Mike Reese starts selling the rules.¹⁹⁵

A few months later in the May issue, a certain Lou Zocchi weighed in on the discussion about polyhedral dice. After noting from back issues the growing interest in dice which can provide more than 6 sides for combat resolution, he floated his own proposal: I have an idea which I would like to have put to an expert on dice. I believe that a 10 sided die can be constr [WGN:#110] While the description that followed bears little resemblance to the pioneering architecture Zocchi later invented for ten-sided dice, these first steps toward his seminal dice-manufacturing business illustrate how readily the community recognized and in turn satisfied the market for polyhedral dice.

As fervent as this interest became, the authors of *Tractics* could not include a twenty-sided die in the first run of their game in the summer of

1971, no doubt owing to the cost and uncertainty of importing dice from overseas. The rules do however require a device to generate random numbers from 1-20, and they helpfully suggest that if you do not have access to a die with 20 sides, it is easy to construct a random number generator. As Section 1.7 already noted, by this juncture, Tucker had adopted a simpler design for his randomizer: a set of twenty poker chips, labeled 1 through 20, that could simply be pulled out of a hat.¹⁹⁶ In the end analysis, responsibility for finagling a way of generating these numbers devolved to the purchaser of *Tractics*; no helpful table in an appendix explained how two six-sided dice might approximate the results of casting an icosahedron.

¹⁹⁴ In fact, the Bristol Wargames Society *Advanced WWII Rules* is first advertised in *Newsletter* in October 1971 well after the development of *Tractics*. The icosahedral dice then sold for

42 pence, or US\$1.20, for a pair. [WGN#115]

¹⁹⁵ [WGN:#107] Note, however, that Gygax writes in response to *WGN* #102 in this issue, so the publication in February 1971 reflects the usual massive transatlantic lag perhaps as much as five months. Gygax probably wrote this piece late in the fall of 1970, which explains why he as yet has no inkling that Guidon Games will publish *Tractics*, but instead lays that burden on Mike Reese personally.

Given that *Tractics* was the most expensive and complex offering of the Guidon Games product line, Don Lowry naturally hoped to complement it by selling these fashionable new twenty-sided dice *à la carte*. Importing the dice from Japan probably made little sense economically, and perhaps the Bristol Wargames Society did not offer a level of service acceptable to business customers. Luckily for Americans, domestic sources of polyhedral dice began advertising around this time. In the spring of 1972, a notice in the *Courier*, a New England miniature wargaming club periodical, told of polyhedra dice available in 4-6-8-12 & 20 faces available from Creative Publications, Inc... Palo Alto, Cal Set contains one of each die and sells for \$1.35. [CO:v4n3] When Lowrys Hobbies added polyhedral dice to their 1973 catalog, they almost certainly resold the set from that supplier.¹⁹⁷

Customers might well ask what they were supposed to do with their excess four, eight and twelve-sided polyhedrons, given that the *Tractics* rules called only for the icosahedron. Gygax June 1973 article Dice... Four & Twenty and What Lies Between introduced and endorsed these underrepresented polyhedral dice to Lowry's customer base.

Obviously, Gygax begins, all of us continually use dice of the normal 6-sided variety... let's take a look at the others. [LG:#5] His examination mostly takes the form of enumerating the various probability spreads resulting from the throw of pairs of four-sided and eight-sided dice. The table for combinations on the 12-sided die is too lengthy to give here, he laments, and as for cubical and icosahedral dice, he defers to their immediate applicability to the wargames of the day. If anything, his enumeration of the probabilities yielded by pairs of dice may have been intended only to persuade readers to buy two sets and drive up badly-needed revenue for Lowry. Ultimately, there is only one exotic die for which Gygax has an immediate purpose in mind: Of course the most useful are the 20-sided dice. These are numbered consecutively 1-0 twice. Roll one for ten-percentiles and two for one-hundred-percentiles. Color in one set of numbers on the side, and you throw for 5% perfect for rules which call for random numbers from 1-20 (such as *Tractics*)!

¹⁹⁶ Drawing poker chips from a hat to calculate percentile probabilities had already been proposed in *Table Top Talk* in March 1967 by John Cape, another gamer frustrated with the confines of cubical sides, and to get any obvious that Cape was unaware of the existence of other polyhedral dice at the time. ¹⁹⁷ Originally, the 1973 catalog listed a set of 5 polyhedral dice for \$1.35. Later (in *Lowrys Guidon* #5), Lowry corrected the price to \$1.85, suggesting that perhaps he initially neglected to add any sales should both sell for \$1.35, given the scarcity of commercial sales of these dice at all, it is a

-level recollection of finding the dice in a school supply catalog from California. Gamers in Boston later discovered that Creative Publications

was the source of the dice resold by TSR;; Kevin Slimak reports in the *Wild Hunt* #8 (1976) that dress of Creative Publications.

Gygax held that a set of polyhedral dice opened a whole new field for boardgamers to redesign combat results tables.¹⁹⁸ As we noted in Chapter One, this article contains an early, if oblique, public reference to *Dungeons & Dragons*; Gygax goes on apologetically, I regret to state that I have been so busy working up chance tables for a new fantasy campaign game of late that I have had no time to experiment with any CRTs. Even the most cursory inspection of the tables in that fantasy campaign game reveals that Gygax

did not neglect four or twenty or anything that lies between. The random encounter tables that sent us on this digression into the history of polyhedral dice, which require the use of eight, ten and twelve-sided dice, are just one instance of the diverse dependencies on polyhedral dice in the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* though certainly in later incarnations, polyhedral dice became a far more pervasive aspect of the game.

In summary, and to tally the recommended equipment in *Men & Magic*, we have: *Outdoor Survival* (\$10 retail), *Chainmail* (\$2 from Lowry), two sets of polyhedral dice (\$1.85 each) and many more cubical dice (amortized from board wargames of yesteryear), graph paper, and finally various drafting equipment and drawing implements (a school supply budget of \$3, perhaps). The core *Dungeons & Dragons* rules themselves sold for US\$10, so the whole shebang could be amassed for an outlay a little under \$30, though this neglects a few intangibles appended to the shopping list: Imagination, 1 Patient Referee and Players.

In this eclectic set of tools, we find all the means at a player's disposal to interface with *Dungeons & Dragons*: dialog with the referee, amateur cartography or notetaking, and the rolling of polyhedral dice. Regardless of whether or not Gygax and Arneson set out to found a new industry in the design of their game, these interfaces, these means of interacting with the game, diverge fundamentally from the precedents of wargaming. If it was a miniature wargame, where were the miniatures? If a board wargame, where was the board? By exchanging only words, the referee and players free themselves from the constraints that boards and game pieces impose they share in the same freedoms that authors of fantasy fiction enjoy to bandy around impossibilities. When things take a turn for the unexpected, and players suddenly attract the attention of four giants, or get lost and wander off the map to an unfamiliar town, there is no need to reach for any representation of these entities and places aside from words and the imagination that fuels them. Although the system borrowed liberally from the wargaming tradition, as the remainder of this chapter illustrates, *Dungeons & Dragons* brought these rules into a new context, one with only tangential connections to its predecessors.

3.2.2 AVOIDING DEATH: HIT POINTS, ARMOR CLASS AND SAVING THROWS

The aspect of *Dungeons & Dragons* that most resembles the precedents of wargaming is, quite naturally, the combat system. The transition from the mode of exploration to

the *mode of combat* occurs when parties encounter adversaries, at which point the play of the game changes fundamentally. No longer does the referee selectively reveal a vast secret environment to the players instead, there is a comparatively obvious tactical situation in which the players confront forces controlled by the referee. Each mode of combat is, in effect, a brief wargame played in the middle of a *Dungeons & Dragons* session, where these wargames are linked by the broader framework of exploration. In this respect, *Dungeons & Dragons* performs a shift very similar to the two-mode strategy-tactical wargames of Meckel, Bath and Scruby: strategic maneuvering (exploration) on the paper map concludes when forces meet (parties encounter monsters), and then a separate, tactical game occurs on the sand table to decide the results of the battle.¹⁹⁹ The strategic mode maps onto the mode of exploration, and the tactical mode maps onto the mode of combat. A trip to a dungeon continually flip-flops between exploration and combat until, as the rules prophesize, the party leaves the dungeons or, are killed therein. [OD&D3:14]

¹⁹⁸ The original text of this sentence has a typo: enjoyed the widespread usage it obviously deserves.

Differences in time scale further demarcate the mode of combat from the mode of exploration. In the mode of combat, each turn is broken into ten rounds in which characters take combat actions;; the set of things one does in combat tends not to overlap with the mode of exploration. Altering the time scale places many actions performed in exploration mode outside the reasonable scope of action during combat;; for example, finding secret doors requires an entire turn, an eternity in combat time. The objective of combat is to establish superiority, under most circumstances by killing all adversaries, though also perhaps by compelling foes to flee or surrender. To this end, a Fighting-man employs weapons, a Magic-user casts spells and a Cleric does either. Spells in the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*, as Section 2.7.2 noted, predominantly offer utility functions over means of damaging enemies: only five out of the seventy Magic-user spells actually cause direct harm to a target.²⁰⁰ The remainder of the combat system is predicated on the use of weapons.

We shall examine the combat system of *Dungeons & Dragons* primarily through the three defensive attributes of characters, all of which are prefigured in the history of wargaming: hit points, armor class and saving throws. All three vary from character to character depending on other

statistics: level, class, race and equipment. Moreover, all three have immediate antecedents in the prior work of Gygax and Arneson, especially *Chainmail*, but also their collaboration *Don t Give Up the Ship*.²⁰¹ These three defense mechanisms¹⁹⁹ As the system was originally conceived, one might even say that *Dungeons & Dragons* was the strategic campaign rules which linked battles run under *Chainmail* tactical miniatures rules. The influence of strategy-tactical wargames on the formal structure of *Dungeons & Dragons* is further discussed in Section 4.3, especially with regards to the use of *Diplomacy* for the strategic mode.

Diplomacy variant served as the initial .

²⁰⁰ Those spells are Fireball, Lighting Bolt, Cloudkill, Disintegrate and Death Spell. Some passive effects, like the Wall of Fire, harm enemies who blunder into them, but do not target them as such. Note of course that the reversals of some spells cause damage or harmful effects (Stone to Flesh is a good example), especially the reversals of curative Cleric spells.

²⁰¹

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level or armor class, much less any role-playing aspects in [first edition] *Chainmail* -

four preceding it hit points, class, level and armor class all do appear conceptually in *Chainmail*, albeit not under those precise names. While descending into debates of attribution is not the goal of this section, to clarify history we must sometimes contradict the later testimony of even the most important contributors to the genre. For example, cursory *Chainmail* would lead any impartial historian to believe that it included armor class. Notably, the second edition of *Chainmail* ultimately serve the same purpose in the system: to forestall the death of characters. In many prior wargames, the invocation of one or more of these mechanisms reduced the deadliness of combat;; in *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, all three serve jointly as a lifesupport system, allowing players to preserve their characters through many combats in order to advance them within the system, a goal defined in the next section as personal progression. For the desired dramatic atmosphere, however, players must roll their dice and genuinely fear that their character s lives are at stake the challenge for the designer is to make that die roll quite unlikely to murder a character under ordinary circumstances.

Broadly speaking, armor class in *Dungeons & Dragons* provides the property of *avoidance*. When a character wears armor or is otherwise more difficult to hit with weapons, avoidance systems model the resulting reduction in the chance of a hit. Section 3.2.2.1 considers avoidance jointly with its opposing property, *accuracy*, which typically in *Dungeons & Dragons* is codified in the famous to-hit roll. The purpose of hit points is to provide *endurance*, the ability of characters or monsters to sustain a particular quantity of damage so that a single hit does not end a game. Saving throws allow for the *mitigation*, that is the partial or complete nullification, of damage that would be dealt to a character, typically from sources (like spells) that do not roll to hit. The distinctions between endurance and mitigation are further explored in Section 3.2.2.2. While previous wargames may not use the exact terms hit points and armor class as such, they do contain various concepts of avoidance, endurance and mitigation, and the combat system design of *Dungeons & Dragons* owes clear debts to those precedents. The distinctions between these mechanisms, while slight, do illuminate the sources that inspired *Dungeons & Dragons* and map the design space that alternative systems would later explore;; the technical details, however, are not easily assimilated, and readers with no appetite for the minutiae of system design can safely gloss over the finer points.

3.2.2.1 AVOIDANCE AND ACCURACY

Avoidance systems in wargames are mechanisms in which a unit has a quantified, probabilistic resistance to being hit. While most wargames have some mechanism along these lines, it is best understood by contrasting it with systems where avoidance plays no part, where an attacker has an equal chance to hit any target in the game. A knight taking a pawn in chess can never miss, provided the move is legal. In Fletcher Pratt's naval war game, when one warship fires on another, players estimate the range between the ships, and it is solely the accuracy of that estimate rather than a die roll attempting to score within a range of probability which determines whether or not a hit is scored. Thus, there is no concept of avoidance in that game, though there is mitigation, as armor may deflect shells that have struck a ship, and there is endurance, in that the quantified damage caused by a single shell hit is usually not sufficient to sink a vessel.

To understand how the avoidance system of armor class and to-hit rolls developed in *Dungeons & Dragons*, one must look to the system of *Chainmail* and its ancestors. The LGTSA medieval miniature rules,

published in *Domesday Book* #5, that form the nonfantasy core system of *Chainmail* owe a large debt to Tony Bath's 1966 medieval rules, which in turn derive their basis from the Cass-Bantock dice system favored by members of

appear in *Chainmail*.

the BMSS in the late 1950s. The division of cavalry into light, medium and heavy grades in the LGTSA rules follows the 1966 Bath rules exactly. While the LGTSA also divided footmen into light, heavy, and armored, and Bath has only light and heavy infantry, special rules in Bath apply to formidable dismounted knights, and the LGTSA rules list dismounted knights as one of the categories of armored footmen. In Bath, archers fire in volleys of five men at one time;; *Chainmail* allows groupings of up to ten to be evaluated simultaneously. Most tellingly, melee combat in *Chainmail* is handled as a long list of pairwise contests between unit types, just like the Bath 1966 rules. In Bath, for example, there is one set of probabilities for when light infantry attacks heavy infantry, but another is used when heavy cavalry attacks heavy foot, *ad nauseam*, and the LGTSA rules in *Domesday Book* obligingly recite a similar list of probabilities. Fortunately, when *Chainmail* appeared under the Guidon imprint, the authors consolidated that enumeration into a handy table, a far more legible approach. Both Bath and the LGTSA have cavalry charging rules, and rules for morale. The similarities are so pervasive that not a few commentators remarked on the obvious influence that Bath exerted on *Chainmail*. To his credit, Gygax made no attempt to conceal it in his early ancient miniature rules serialized in the IFW monthly zine from 1969 to 1970, Gygax nods in Bath's direction several times.²⁰² Indeed, the first installment of his rules in the *International Wargamer* begins with the phrase Full credit is hereby given to Tony Bath, and he recommends consulting Bath's work for any questions not covered by his rules. [IW:v2n5] A later installment freely admits, I wish to mention I have been reviewing Tony Bath's *Rules for Ancient Wargames* and *Rules for Medieval Period*, the latter being the 1966 edition of Bath. [IW:v2n9]

The primary difference between the LGTSA rules and the 1966 Bath rules is that they model the effect of armor in combat in divergent ways. For missile fire, both systems have the concept of a die roll to determine the number of hits scored by a group of archers;; the LGTSA rules sometimes use the term accuracy die, and *accuracy* is a good term for the offensive property of which *avoidance* is the opposing defensive corollary. Bath

determines missile fire for single archers by a six-sided die roll which factors against range at longer range, only a 6 hits, at closer range, anything 4 or higher hits which must be intended to model accuracy. Armor, however, is in Bath handled by a separate roll, a saving throw, which grows easier to make the greater the amount of armor worn.²⁰³ An arrow may hit the target, in this model, but only if the subsequent armor check fails does the arrow actually damage the target. Thus, at medium range, an unarmored target gets no saving throw, heavy infantry must roll a 5 or 6 to be saved and heavy cavalry a 4, 5 or 6 prospects for survival improve with the amount of armor worn. In the LGTSA rules, by contrast, targets

²⁰² As Section 1.4 already mentioned, these ancient r
(1976), as revised in 1974 for his series in .

²⁰³

in wargaming, thanks to its popularization in Donald Featherstone
Classic Warfare

time it was a common term *War Games* (1962), which
saving th

shield the majority of light infantry needs a 6 to save him;; if he is in armour
or carries a shield, a

hit. Note that Arnes *Dungeons & Dragons*. prior to of missile fire receive no saving throw. Instead, the roll of the accuracy die is evaluated against one of three different charts, each scaled to the level of armor worn by the target survival depends far more so on the chart selected than on the die roll. For example, five archers firing at an unarmored enemy group will hit either two or three targets (50% chance of either);; if they turn their aim on a group of lightly armored troops, they will hit two (100% chance), but for fully armored targets only zero or one (again, flipping a coin to determine which). The die rolls introduce little variation to the number of kills compared to the armor level of the target. The LGTSA rules thus incorporate the effect of armor into the accuracy die roll, whereas Bath separately modeled the difficulty of hitting targets at range as an accuracy check, and then performed a separate mitigation check for hits scored to see if armor obstructs the missile file. From a system perspective, the LGTSA approach speeds up combat considerably, since where Bath s rules require two rolls the LGTSA rules make do with one, though only by discarding the effect of range on missile fire, which the LGTSA rules ignore.²⁰⁴

The melee system follows a similar pattern. Bath's melee is bloody: when a body of light infantry clashes with a body of heavy infantry, each side rolls a die for every five soldiers in the combat, and halves the resulting score (the sum of those dice) to determine the hits to the opposing side. Thus, the hits scored by light and heavy infantry to one another are statistically even. Armor comes into play for Bath, once again, during a second roll for a saving throw: light infantry are saved only by a 6, but heavy infantry by either a 5 or a 6. Of course, Bath does not model all units as so equal in power; when light cavalry attack city militia, for example, the same throw is made (a die per five men on a side) but the cavalry lose only a quarter of the resulting number while militia lose a half, and the militia get no save in this case whatsoever. As with missile attacks, the LGTSA rules dispense with the concept of a saving throw or any sort of mitigation.²⁰⁵ Instead, the rules vary the number of dice rolled according to the comparative strength of the combatants, and each roll must exceed a certain number in order to result in a kill. When a group of heavy footmen assaults superior armored footmen, for example, the heavy footmen roll one die for every two men on their side, and only a roll of a 6 results in a hit on the armored foot and thus a kill. The same heavy foot attacking even more powerful medium horse, however, cast only one die for every three men, and again only a roll of a 6 may kill. Medium horse against a far weaker opponent, such as light footmen, roll two dice per horseman, and kill on a 4, 5 or 6. Thus, once again the LGTSA rules collapse the accuracy check with the evaluation of armor into a single die roll, which could result in a speedier game than the Bath system. However, more dice tumble in that single roll: in the most extreme case, the LGTSA rules call for rolling four dice per man, which in a moderate engagement could entail rolling twenty or more dice at a time. Merely tabulating the results could slow gameplay.

We've seen thus far that the LGTSA proto*Chainmail* design skipped Bath's secondary defensive mitigation roll and instead implemented an offensive accuracy roll that

²⁰⁴ Note however that an earlier incarnation of the LGTSA rules does indeed specify for each

much the same, the rules recommend modifying the die

[PZF:v5n1]

²⁰⁵

a saving throw table, where a throw of 6 is required to save against melee or

missile if wearing no armor or shield, though anything above a 3 suffices if wearing armor and a shield. [IW:v2n8]

depends on the target's avoidance. While this is not a trivial difference, these two medieval miniatures systems share an unmistakable kinship when compared to other wargames of the era. They do not, for example, employ an Avalon Hill combat results table, let alone the tables used in the *kriegsspiel* tradition of Totten nor his successors playing *Strategos N* in the Twin Cities. This is despite the fact that both of Gygax board game releases in 1971, *Alexander the Great* and *Dunkirk*, based their system on the Avalon Hill model. Even Gygax early medieval game *Crusader* (1969), from the dark days before he decided that the medieval period required the more versatile framework of miniature warfare, adheres to board wargaming conventions rather than the miniature wargaming systems pioneered by Bath.

In the finished 1971 *Chainmail* booklet, the closest ancestor to *Dungeons & Dragons*, the LGTSA rules from *Domesday Book #5* reappear almost verbatim. They are however supplemented by an alternative system for one-on-one combat (as opposed to mass melees) given in Appendix B and referenced by the Man-to-Man Rules section. At the core of this system is a chart indexing weapon types against the Defender's Armor Protection Type.²⁰⁶ The prototype for this chart is undoubtedly the set of unattributed medieval rules in *Domesday Book #7*, which incorporated a table entitled Score Required for Disabling Blow.²⁰⁷ Its horizontal axis listed eight possible degrees of armor, a progressive continuum from unarmored to knight with shield ; the *Chainmail* chart follows this model and lists on its horizontal axis eight ratings ranging from no armor to plate armor and shield, though it includes a further two for mounts, a shortcoming of the older chart that Gygax editorialized in the *Domesday Book* (What about hits on horses?). The vertical axis of the original chart enumerated eight weapons opposing these various armor types, while the later *Chainmail* list contains twelve they overlap on six weapons, though the unattributed rules elsewhere include a more complete listing of eleven weapons that overlaps with *Chainmail* on eight. The unknown author in *Domesday Book #7* specified that the attacker casts two six-sided dice and aims to roll a low number: to score a hit with a lance on an unarmored target, for example, one needs to roll a 9 or lower with 2d6, whereas to hit a knight with a dagger, only a 2 will suffice. The *Chainmail* chart partially follows this precedent by

calling for a 2d6 roll for accuracy, but it inverts the desired result by stipulating that a score equal or greater than the number shown kills. To hit the equivalent of a knight (someone wearing plate armor without a shield) with a dagger thus requires a roll of 12; to hit an unarmored target with a lance, only a roll of 5 or higher is needed, perfectly symmetrical with the unattributed system.

Rolling dice in pairs leads to a statistical distribution well known to Gygax, who disputed in his *Domesday Book* editorial comments several of the probabilities proposed in the unattributed rules: Do you think a morning-star would bop a platemail knight, with

²⁰⁶ *Chainmail* first appears in print early in 1972. [IW:v5n1] It is informative to question why this latter system of arms vs. armor applies only to one-on-one combat, and not to the unit-versus-unit tables for mass combats. The answer, presumably, is that a single man is provisioned with a specific armament, where a group of soldiers will possess a diversity of weapons: this one a sword, this one a mace, and so on. The consequences of this are further explored in Section 3.2.4, in the discussion on figure scale.

²⁰⁷

of medieval miniatures rules. Foolishly, I had made no notation as to who wrote them or who sent them to me, so unless one of the readers can enlighten the res

MAN-TO-MAN MELEE TABLE

Roll two dice, score equal to or greater than the number shown kills.

ATTACKER'S W E A P O N	DEFENDER'S ARMOR PROTECTION TYPE								HORSE NO BAN ED AR- MOR
	NO ARMOR.	LEATHER OR PADDED ARMOR	SHIELD ONLY	LEATHER ARMOR + SHIELD	CHAIN, BANDED, STUDDED, OR SPLINT MAIL	CHAIN MAIL + SHIELD CHAIN +	PLATE ARMOR	PLATE AND SHIELD	
1. Dagger	6	7	8	8	9	10	12*	12*	8 10
2. Hand Axe	7	7	8	9	10	10	11	12	9 11
3. Mace	8	8	8	9	8	8	7	8	10 12
4. Sword	7	8	8	9	8	9	10*	11*	8 10
5. Battle Axe	8	8	8	8	7	7	9	10	7 9
6. Morn. Star	6	6	7	7	6	7	8	8	8 8
7. Flail	7	7	7	7	6	7	6	7	6 8
8. Spear	8	8	9	9	10	10	11*	12*	7 9
Pole arms	6	6	6	7	7	8	99	10	6 8
9. Halbear	8	8	8	7	6	6	7	8	7 9
10. 2 Hnd. Swd	6	6	6	6	5	5	6	7	6 8
11. Mtd. Lance	5	5	5	5	6	7	8	9	5 7
12. Pike	8	8	8	8	8	8	9	10	5 7

* If man dismounted and prone dice score of 7 or better kills

FIGURE 44: CHAINMAIL "MAN--TO--MAN MELEE TABLE" shield, 27 3/4% of the time, while a mace will only have an 11% chance? [DB:#7] Gygax thus rebalanced many of the weapons while transplanting this system into *Chainmail*, lowering the battle axe from its vaunted position in the earlier rules and generally modeling medieval combat so that bulky weapons could prove less effective against lightly armored targets than they do against unwieldy knights. These variations do not alter the dependency of his system on avoidance to preserve units in combat: a single hit, in the medieval rules of *Chainmail*, removes any mundane target from combat, without any possibility for mitigation or quantified damage endurance. In this medieval system, death comes quickly and the mundane figures in battle are largely interchangeable. Neither the one-on-one mechanic nor the Bath-inspired mass combat rules of *Chainmail* make any allowance for the competency of the individual, either it is the clothes, in this case, that make the man. A figure wielding a dagger is as proficient in its use as any other figure wielding a dagger, and donning a suit of armor transforms a hapless peasant into an indestructible knight.

Thus far, we have dealt only with mundane medieval combat in *Chainmail*, ignoring the fantasy elements which made that pamphlet famous. To model fantastic combat, Gygax and Perren blended many of the system elements described above for mundane medieval play. *Chainmail*'s first step into the fantasy world of *Dungeons & Dragons* was the Fantasy Combat Table (Appendix E), which provides in much the style of Bath a vertical list of attackers against a horizontal list of defenders, with the body of the chart containing a number that must be exceeded by the attacker with a roll of two dice to kill the defender. The attackers and defenders this time, however, are dragons, elementals, balrogs (excised in later editions), Heroes, Wizards and so on, for a total of thirteen. Dragons fare well against most opponents: they kill a Hero on a roll higher than 5, whereas a Hero as attacker needs a 12 to slay the proverbial dragon. These simple rolls are the core of the combat resolution system for fantastic figure types in *Chainmail*. However, Appendix E shows only how the fantastic fights the fantastic, just as the earlier LGTSA chart, following Bath, showed only how the mundane fights the mundane. The two worlds finally meet in Appendix D, the Fantasy Reference Table of *Chainmail*, which describes battles between the fantastic and the mundane. For that special case of combat, *Chainmail* developed a system beyond simple avoidance, which incorporated mitigation and endurance both, as will be detailed in the next subsection.

More important for the conceptual history of avoidance in *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, is the notion that in order to hit targets, one casts dice and aims to roll higher than a particular target number: that a score equal or greater than the number shown kills. *Chainmail* uses two six-sided dice for this purpose, as did the unattributed medieval rules in the *Domesday Book*. [DB:#7] The suitability of 2d6 for accuracy dice warrants some closer scrutiny, however. Most Americans of the era who threw 2d6 did so while playing *Monopoly*, a game that likely derives its dice system from the ancient game of backgammon.²⁰⁸ Gygax surely knew, as we can ascertain from the previous section, that the probability distribution for pairs of dice favors sums in the middle disproportionately;; thus, the accuracy dice for *Chainmail* are far more likely to roll a 7 than a 12. The resulting bell curve creates all sorts of anomalies when you aim to roll over a given number;; for example, a modifier that adds or subtracts 1 from the sum of throws can skew the results by different percentages depending on what the dice yield. Designers can scale the requirements to hit a target accordingly, but the

subtle differences in likelihood may not be apparent to the players themselves. Unfortunately, with only six-sided dice as implements of chance, the options available to designers are limited, and *Chainmail* had no funny dice. Korns method of rolling 2d6 to decide events with percentile probability is neither very intuitive nor memorable to simulate a 75% probability, for example, Korns suggests rolling two dice and judging the event has occurred if the roll is anything other than 2, 3, 4 or 10 (roughly a 74% chance). The casting of 2d6 with the aim of rolling over a target number in the fashion of *Chainmail*, as an accuracy roll to determine the success of an attack, is unknown in Avalon Hill games prior to 1971 or in Korns. In the Cass-Bantock tradition, the modern rules of Lionel Tarr (reprinted in Featherstone's *War Games*), in which an attacker rolls 3d6 attempting to exceed a target number depending on the defender's armor, are perhaps the closest antecedent.²⁰⁹

We must dwell so long on the system of *Chainmail* precisely because *Dungeons & Dragons* imports those rules to its own combat system. In the tables where *Dungeons & Dragons* lists the combat efficacy of the Fighting-man, Magic-user and Cleric, it describes each class in terms of their equivalents (in regular men, Heroes or Super-heroes) in *Chainmail*, stating that this is a key to use in conjunction with the *Chainmail* fantasy rule, as modified in various places herein. [OD&D1:18] The first printing of *Dungeons & Dragons* updates *Chainmail* explicitly in some small respects: the spell Fireball, for example, has a burst radius of twenty feet, slightly larger than in *Chainmail*. For the most part, however, the text merely confirms the guidance previously given in *Chainmail*. The tactical situation in a *Dungeons & Dragons* game can always migrate to a sand table for a *Chainmail* battle;; in the naval combat rules given in *Underworld & Wilderness*, even boarding action melees use

²⁰⁸ Both *Monopoly* and backgammon use 2d6 to determine the number of spaces that will be moved. *Monopoly* allows an extra move if one owes some debt to the

²⁰⁹

target, then a hit and a kill is scored. The Defense Points must model tank armor;; ordinary infantry have no Defense.

man-to-man rules as found in *Chainmail*.²¹⁰ This is one of the reasons why the public received *Dungeons & Dragons* as a miniature wargame: not because it prescribed any role for miniature figurines which it really did not

but because its rules conspicuously imported the miniature wargaming tradition.

Beyond this reliance on *Chainmail*, the rulebooks also offer a novel alternative system of combat, one for those who prefer a different method. [OD&D1:19] Attack Matrix I: Men Attacking and Attack Matrix II: Monsters Attacking in *Men & Magic* are based upon the defensive and offensive capabilities of the combatants;; such things as speed, ferocity and weaponry of the monster attacking are subsumed in the matrix. Note the conceptual departure here from the Man-to-Man Melee Table in Appendix B of *Chainmail*, which models weaponry and armor, but does not reflect the ability of wearers and wielders. One could say that the Fantasy Combat Table in Appendix E of *Chainmail* incorporates the inherent aptitude of the monsters in question, though it certainly makes no attempt to quantify any aspect of that aptitude, it simply lists the creatures by name and calculates their prospects versus peers. These two new attack matrices for *Dungeons & Dragons* provide an alternative to both Appendices B and E of *Chainmail*. In the matrices, armor runs along the vertical axis, and although the same eight fashion alternatives appear in the same order (from No Armor or Shield past leather and chainmail to Plate Armor & Shield), they are now accompanied by a quantified armor class. Unarmored targets have a high armor class (9) whereas those encased in plate armor brandishing a shield have a low armor class (2).²¹¹ The major departure from the *Chainmail* precedent is in the [OD&D3:31] We would be remiss not to sketch briefly the naval and aerial combat rules in *Underworld & Wilderness*, effectively two mini-games embedded within *Dungeons & Dragons* jointly, they span twelve pages, a third of the entire third pamphlet. The naval system owes an unsurprising debt to . Although nineteenth-century seamanship made few provisions for medieval foibles like oars or ramming, *DGUTS* does give some optional rules for these practices that are expanded in *Dungeons & Dragons*, while cannons and sailing capabilities unsuitable for a medieval wargame are discarded. Thus, in *DGUTS* there is in *Dungeons & Dragons* *DGUTS* nicely. The recommended ship scale is 1:1,200. Dice determine the initial wind direction and any changes therein as turns pass. Players write secret orders at the beginning of the turn and may move simultaneously. Ships themselves can withstand a certain total points of damage from missile (catapult) fire before sinking. Grappling and melee one another, and when ramming, one must be mindful of sheering off oars.

Since boarding combat is deferred to *Chainmail*, the morale rules of *DGUTS* have no parallel in *D&D*, though the latter does introduce some interesting Charisma-based rules for maintaining control of forces. The aerial combat section, which probably evolved from the preponderance of dragon mounts in the Blackmoor campaign, unapologetically incorporates concepts from Mike Carr *Fight in the Skies*

ead, wing, body and tail, just as WWI fighter planes are divvied up in Carr. Missile fire aims for one of these sections, critical hits in the first edition of *D&D*, though later editions applied this concept to ordinary combat as well. Dogfight maneuvers are richly articulated in *FitS* but receive less attention in *Dungeons & Dragons* apart from mundane dives and climbs.

²¹¹

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whereas in *Dungeons & Dragons* it runs through 2 through 9. This table appeared in the second (1972) and subsequent editions of *Chainmail*.

International Chainmail running from 1 through 8, horizontal axis of the matrix: rather than a list of weapon types as in *Chainmail*, the matrix for Men Attacking is broken into six gradations of level, and the matrix for Monsters Attacking is broken into eight gradations of Monster's Dice #.

The subject of level will be explored in Section 3.2.3.1, but for the moment we can simply say that level and hit dice are quantifications of the offensive and defensive capability of combatants, of their absolute power relative to one another. As the level of the attacker goes up, the rolls required to hit a target become easier to make, and as armor class goes down (remembering that the most armored target has the lowest armor class) the rolls required to hit a target become more difficult. The lowest level attacker has the least chance to hit a target wearing plate armor, and the highest level attacker the highest chance, in all cases;; as a corollary, at any given level the most armored target is the hardest to hit, while the least armored target proves the easiest. This is a far more intuitive avoidance system than the hodge-podge man-to-man charts in *Chainmail*, where the efficacy of a particular weapon in some cases even increases as targets don more armor it may have been more realistic in terms of the historical results of combat, but it certainly lacked playability. Moreover, both the missile and melee accuracy rolls are combined in the *Dungeons & Dragons* matrices, avoiding the need for the separate Individual Fires with Missiles table in *Chainmail*.

The die cast for the *Dungeons & Dragons* attack matrices is an icosahedron, a d20. The presence of a d20 and the characterization of the accuracy roll as to hit should alert us to the influence of *Tractics*, which coined the term to-hit number. *Tractics* appeared shortly after *Chainmail* and well before *Dungeons & Dragons*; as Section 1.7 noted, Gygax authored its infantry rules. The accuracy versus avoidance check in *Tractics* for infantry fire follows the same basic pattern as the armored vehicle system (which surely must be attributed to Tucker and Reese): take a base value (in that case +15), add various modifiers for circumstances like range, cover, and ammunition to arrive at the final number, and then generate a random number between one and twenty which signifies a hit only if it is less than or equal to the final number. Range penalties therefore impose negative modifiers;; firing at the greatest distance incurs a penalty of -12, and thus the attacker must roll a 3 or lower on a d20 to score a hit. Positive modifiers accrue from the deployment of explosive shells, or repeatedly attacking a stationary target. The infantry system follows the rules for armored units in virtually every particular, though small arms fire has a lesser base chance to hit (+12) and the variety of extenuating circumstances (there are a few dozen to choose from) yield more drastic modifiers being charged can set the attacker back -8, but on the other hand a flamethrower, with a +40 bonus to hit, can easily make up the difference and then some.

Dungeons & Dragons incorporates this d20 system faithfully, but like *Chainmail*, inverts the desired result from the *Tractics* method of rolling lower than the target number to a desired result of rolling higher than a target number. A starting Fighting-man, for example, attempting to hit a target wearing chain mail, must roll at least a 14, but to hit plate armor needs a 17. Arguably, this is a more intuitive way of employing implements of chance, as we are accustomed to thinking of larger numbers as better than small ones. As in *Tractics*, certain circumstances may modify the base score to hit in *Dungeons & Dragons*, including missile range (targets grow easier to hit when closer, much as they did in Bath and the early version of the LGTSA rules in *Panzerfaust* [PZF:v5n1]) and the equipping of magical armor or weaponry. Modifiers to the roll of a d20, as opposed to the bell curve of 2d6, have a much more predictable result on the probabilities associated with event resolution. Owing to negative modifiers, the number required to hit a target could easily exceed 20, in which case, following the similar rule in *Tractics*, swinging at all is futile.

The situation of a spellcaster in *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons* differs from that of a mundane swordsman or archer. A caster need make no accuracy roll in either game.²¹² In *Chainmail*, however, certain types do receive saving throws against the dreaded fire ball and lightning bolt missiles hurled by wizards, which otherwise destroy any men or creatures which are struck by them.

Super-heroes, wraiths, and giants

The only creatures that can hope to save are Heroes, (dragons are forced to retreat, as are elementals confronted by magic of an elementally opposite nature). Both of those spells affect a range of terrain rather than targeting any particular occupant of that space, and thus this form of saving throw is, like Bath s saves, a mitigation mechanism. 2d6 are cast for *Chainmail* saves, with a result greater than a target number desired: a Hero saves on a 9 or higher, while his big brother the Super-hero saves on a 6 or higher.²¹³ The saving throw thus mirrors the accuracy roll, only the former is made by the defender and the latter by the attacker.

Saving throws borrow for spells the same mechanism as accuracy rolls in *Dungeons & Dragons*, but invert it: by casting a d20 and achieving a sufficiently high result, the target of a spell may mitigate its negative consequences. A Saving Throw Matrix in *Men & Magic* charts class and level on a vertical axis against a set of categories of harmful magical effects: death rays (including poison), wands, petrification, dragon breath and finally spells (including all effects of staves). [OD&D1:20] As characters grow higher in level, their prospects for making saving throws improve. ²¹⁴ Various classes may further exhibit superior resistance to particular sources of harm: Clerics fare particularly well against death magic, for example, and Magic-users are the least susceptible to petrification. Race also modifies saving throws;; both dwarves and hobbits save as if they were higher in level. The absence from the rulebooks of a companion chart showing the saving throws for various types of monsters is surprising, though surely an oversight on the part of the authors who, for example, describe in the text for the spell Disintegrate a dragon rolling a saving throw. Even certain magic items must save against Fireball and Lightning Bolt or equivalent effects. The results of a saving throw depend on the nature of the resisted effect.

Many

²¹² Note that in *Chainmail* - s of another *Dungeons & Dragons* , it is never specified, presumably leaving the original *Chainmail* mechanism in place.

²¹³ *Chainmail*, 38. *Chainmail* does not use the explicit term-like Note that although he cast only 1d6, Bath also saved on higher rolls rather than lower rolls in the 1966 medieval rules.

²¹⁴ Early players understood the relationship between saving throws and to-hit rolls, and the implications of this for higher-level spellcasters. John Sapienza, for example, discerned early on that for

system in D& -level defenders. A higher-level attacker casting a spell like Fireball rolls a larger die pool, however, increasing the minimum damage the spell does in the event of a save, and moreover higher-level casters have a larger arsenal of spells, and can thus throw another Fireball if the first is ineffective.

spell effects have a binary outcome they either succeed or they do not, as the target of a Charm Person spell is either charmed or not charmed, there can be no meaningful middle ground. For spells like Fireball and Lightning Bolt, however, which cause quantified damage, saving throws halve that total but the benefits of halving damage are only meaningful in terms of hit points.

3.2.2.2 ENDURANCE AND MITIGATION

In the absence of an endurance mechanism, the welfare of units in wargames is essentially binary and atomic: they are either completely whole or they are utterly destroyed, with no intermediate state. This situation prevails in the game of chess, where there is no sense in which a piece can sustain damage if a piece is attacked, it is removed from the game. It cannot exist in a state of moderate health between wellness and death. At the very dawn of wargaming, during the heyday of Hellwig and Venturini, wargame units still retained this binary state of wellbeing as a holdover from chess. The Reiswitz family first conceived of non-atomic wargame units. The peculiar colored blocks pushed around their maps, shaped like formations of scores of troops, simulated a crowd rather than some unitary and indivisible being. Naturally, a crowd can be divided, partially slaughtered, or completely eradicated, depending on the magnitude of the misfortune it suffers.

Thus Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel* bequeathed to posterity the concept of quantified losses: the representation of damage to a wargame unit by a

number, and a corresponding system for subtracting that amount of cohesion from the target unit. Already in 1824, this entailed some amount of abstraction;; the numbers generated by his tables did not correspond one-to-one with soldiers eliminated from the targeted unit. As was noted in Section 3.1.3, all sorts of contingencies and modifiers affected the resulting reduction: one point of loss removed five men, if the infantry marched in three ranks, but if they marched in two ranks, then the effect of fire is lessened, and ten men are lost for every three points of damage. For widely-scattered skirmishers, two points of damage resulted in the loss of only five men, and the calculation of losses differed even more when cavalry or artillery came under fire. In the complicated model of the Reiswitz system, tallying the damage inflicted on a unit required careful accounting: upon taking enough damage to destroy all of its component troops, the referee withdrew the unit from the table.²¹⁵ By rejecting the prior atomicity of units, Reiswitz inaugurated a tradition of *endurance* in wargaming, systems wherein a unit can sustain quantitative damage which Reiswitz referred to by the English word points without being destroyed. Hit points in *Dungeons & Dragons* are fundamentally descended from this idea of endurance.

Quantified combat losses figure in virtually all *kriegsspiel* after Reiswitz, despite the skepticism of Meckel and Verdy du Vernois about the necessity of these calculations. The mathematical operations required by Totten's *Strategos* are nothing short of diabolical, encumbered with innumerable multiplicative modifiers (see Section 3.1.4 for the example of Totten's twisted Table R) intended to convey additional reality of the tactical situation. The hobby wargaming tradition, however, began in ignorance of this arithmetical heritage, in the attics of Stevenson and parlors of Wells, where accuracy with toy projectiles counted more than proficiency with an abacus. Their targets, like chess pieces, had a binary fate: they were either upright or toppled, with no meaningful teetering state of damage in the middle.²¹⁶ Even when the work of Sachs admitted to civilian wargaming some modifiers that multiplied the firing strength of a group of soldiers, such damage affected individual figurines that had no property of endurance, not Reiswitzian wooden blocks representing clusters of soldier which might be only fractionally eliminated.

²¹⁵ For the sake of realism, Reiswitz insisted that the block on the table representing, say, a battalion be replaced with smaller blocks representing fractions of that force when it sustained certain damage thresholds. This

additional element the notion that a unit grows weaker when it sustains damage reappears in several other wargames, most notably naval games such as the Jane and Pratt rules, but is not a component of the original *Dungeons & Dragons* system.

Fletcher Pratt first introduced the concept of endurance to hobby wargaming, and even a cursory investigation reveals the absolute necessity of endurance in a game structured like his. Realism dictates that a battleship is not sunk by a single plink, and that heavy war vessels might trade several volleys of artillery fire without either sustaining crippling damage;; in a famous engagement of the Second World War, the German battleship *Graf Spee* withstood perhaps as many as sixty hits during an engagement with three British cruisers and still limped away. There is, however, an even stronger argument for endurance from the perspective of playability. In Fletcher Pratt naval wargame, each player is the commander of a single ship, and thus effectively their ship is their entire army. A lost skirmish in Stevenson's wargame might deprive a commander of a handful of figures, but that is a handful out of scores on the field. For Pratt players, however, ships that perish from a single blow would not make for an entertaining game. The excitement of a wargame mounts with risk and drama, as the capabilities of both sides gradually erode until eventually one emerges decisively stronger than the other the time-honored tension of chess. Fletcher Pratt naval game thus treats a warship as a composite entity, one that slowly relinquishes its capabilities (movement, speed and firepower) as it withstands enemy bombardment. The responsibility of the referee for tracking the damage suffered by each ship is, given one boat per player, greatly simpler than that of a *kriegsspiel* umpire, who contends with hundreds of units that might individually suffer wounds.

Though Pratt naval game fell into abeyance during the Second World War, the hobby community gradually rediscovered it in the 1960s, and through his rules the hobby gained a working knowledge of endurance systems. In response to *War Game Digest*'s 1959

theme issue on naval wargames, Joe Morschauser informed the world that he had located a copy of Pratt.²¹⁷ Donald Featherstone second book, *Naval War Games* (1965), contained a detailed restatement of Pratt's rules, one which whetted the appetite of many maritime enthusiasts. The Twin Cities gamers eagerly sought an original copy of the rules, and in early June 1968, sent a contingent (including Dave Arneson) to retrieve a copy of Pratt

text from another group of hobbyists in Chicago. [COTT:68:v1n3] By 1969, when Arneson²¹⁶ Remember, however, that the *Great War Game for Young and Old* did recognize exactly this intermediate state for imbalanced soldiers left leaning against one another without falling completely, who then had a fifty-fifty chance of survival if escorted to a hospital not quite an endurance mechanism. This also ignores the prisoner capture mechanic of the *Great War Game* and of Wells, though the state of being a prisoner does not imply any degradation of health.

²¹⁷ Fletcher Pratt's *Naval War Game* rules, and reworked and modernized them. This booklet, by the way, is long since out of

September 1967, John D. Clark (see Section 2.1.3, Clark introduced de Camp to Pratt) wrote to *Strategy & Tactics*

wo [S&T:v1n8] However, a couple issues later in the spring of 1968, George A. Lord

such an edition. [S&T:v2n2]

attended his first GenCon, he had thoroughly assimilated the rules and even brought some handmade 1:1,200 scale ship models compatible with Pratt to auction at the convention.

The Pratt system became hugely influential, but prior to its resurgence, the aforementioned March 1959 naval theme issue of *War Game Digest* revealed that the hobby community had already reinvented and embraced the core idea of shipboard guns dealing points of damage. Virtually every submission talked about the quantification of damage as points dealt when a hit is scored. George Dunlap's article on Modern Naval War Games reads, Damage to a ship will be counted on a point system, with the following values: for a battleship, 27 needed to sink, 23 needed to put out of action, 18 needed to make motionless. For a carrier or cruiser, 18 needed to sink, 14 put out of action, 9 to make motionless. [WGD:v3n1] R. L. Patterson and R. W. Dickinson, in separate articles, both describe their shared local system. Patterson provides a handy chart which enumerates the Points to Sink and Reduce to 1/2 Speed After totals in damage points for various ship classes;; for a battleship, 20 to sink and 15 to halve speed, for a cruiser, 16 to sink and 12 to slow, and so on. Art Mikel's naval system also focuses on calculating damage done by hits, and further notes that particular types of missile fire between ships may cause different amounts of damage: Missiles are arranged in order relative to their hitting power and assigned a number of points depending on how much damage each size can do. The number of hits

is known and the points times hits gives the damage. From this we can definitively assert that both the concepts and vocabulary of hits, points and damage (though not the precise construction hit points) had spread throughout hobby wargames, at least naval games, even before 1960.

In Mikel's system, there is another element that warrants closer examination: what he calls the resistance of the target. He describes this property as the armour or built-in structural strength of the ship. While Mikel provides no concrete details of the effect of armor, he hints that it reduces the magnitude of damage, an effect we associate with mitigation systems. Pratt already proposed a role for armor in reducing damage, depicted in a handy graph articulating the interplay of range, armor thickness and gun size.²¹⁸ Even before the hobby wargaming community became acquainted with Pratt, the *War Game Digest* occasionally printed rules which quantified damage and assigned to units a maximum threshold they could withstand, even for ordinary infantry combat systems. In only the third issue of the *Digest*, A. W. Saunders submitted a modern armor system distinguishing the gun value from the armor-speed value of tanks, wherein an attacker must roll damage (added to their fighting rating) at or above the target's armor-value in order to destroy them. So, for example, if an inferior armored car with a gun value of 2 attacks a superior Royal Tiger tank with an armor-speed value of 18, then to succeed the inferior car must roll a 16 or higher on three six-sided dice;; if the superior Tiger with a gun value of 6 attacks an inferior tank with an armor-speed value of only 10, then to win the superior tank

²¹⁸ If a gun is of too small a bore or is shot from too vast a distance (or both) at armor of reasonable penetrate armor cause 1/2 their rating damage in points for a gun of the calibre firin *Fletcher*, 17. Very thick armor may prevent light shells from causing any damage whatsoever. The resemblance to damage-halving saving throws in *Dungeons & Dragons* surely cannot be accidental.

need only roll a 4 or higher with three six-sided dice. Armor-speed value, however, remains unchanged after absorbing attacks in this fashion.²¹⁹

We have already defined systems where points of damage are in this way absorbed by some passive quality as *mitigation* systems, and we thus classify these in the same bucket as the saving throw mechanisms discussed at the end of the previous subsection which eliminated or halved damage

from a source.²²⁰ The significant difference mitigation and endurance is that in mitigation systems, damage is not cumulative recorded and preserved, as are the losses against a particular wooden block in Reiswitz endurance system. If in the Saunders system, the inferior tank fails to slay the superior tank on a roll of 14, then the superior tank is left no worse for the wear, and the next foe must still contend with its armor-value of 18, not some lesser number. This makes things much simpler for the referee than tracking which individual figures among massive armies had suffered injuries during the course of play. This is not to say that keeping track of damage is always infeasible: for example, in Jack Scruby's description of naval battles in the *War Game Digest*, in which a transport must score two hits to sink a sloop, Scruby recommends the first shot will be marked (with chalk) on the sloop to differentiate the dented from the whole. [WGD:v3n1] But once totals go beyond one or two hits, tallying them across a game of potentially hundreds of figures becomes an enormous administrative chore. Thus, quantified damage in most miniature wargames counted against a mitigation system rather than a cumulative endurance system.

Bearing these early uses of endurance and mitigation in mind, we can now look directly to how these system concepts entered *Chainmail* and eventually influenced the design of hit points in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Before the publication of Perren and Gygax LGTSA medieval rules, a significant precedent for endurance in medieval miniature between it is not wargames already existed: Henry Bodenstedt's *The Siege of Bodenburg*. In *Bodenburg*, each figure has a combat value such that a man is considered killed, and must be removed from the game, as soon as he has received the number of hits equaling his combat value. [S&T:v1n8] To help us distinguish this endurance mechanism from a mitigation system, Bodenstedt carefully notes each hit must be carried (hang marker) until the end of the game or until the man is killed. The combat values of most units are small: an archer has a combat value of only one, a heavy footman of two, and a mounted knight of three. Bodenstedt reserves still higher combat values for siege engines and fortifications themselves, which might take six or even nine hits to destroy with catapult or gun fire, and as always hits are accumulated and carried until the end of the game. Early on, this mechanism captured Gygax imagination;; it can be found in his early ancient miniatures rules, for example, in which every figure has a Melee Value which equates to the number of hits required to kill them, thus it takes two hits to eliminate a

heavy cavalry figure and only one to eliminate a light infantry man. [IW:v2n8] However, this is a point where subsequently the LGTSA rules in *Domesday Book* #5 ignore the precedent of *Bodenburg*, and instead follow Bath medieval rules in emphasizing avoidance and mitigation over endurance, as already described above.

²¹⁹ After describing these principles fo system could easily be used in other games. For instance a medieval war game. One could give knights a points value for skill at arms, to be subtracted from the armour value of any opposing knig *Digest*, Saunders conjectures that the same principles could model the unequal combat between experienced and inexperienced modern soldiers.

²²⁰ As these concepts are critical for understanding the design of *Dungeons & Dragons*, note that mitigation and endurance systems are completely orthogonal to how hits are determined. Mitigation takes place after an accuracy or avoidance check (if any, as in the spellcasting case in *Dungeons & Dragons* there is none) has already occurred, only when the resulting damage is absorbed in whole or in part. Failing to hit a target altogether (typically because of -hit results in a similar lack of damage, but that must be considered separately as avoidance from the perspective of system design. Confusingly, mitigation and endurance in different systems might be the rationalization for withstanding damage is, however, also separable from the manner in which its behavior is systematized in a game. Furthermore, when they do model different properties, endurance and mitigation are not mutually exclusive. While they serve similar purposes (forestalling the loss of units), they are sometimes e

have a property of endurance, a pre-established number of points of damage they can take, and a property of mitigation, an amount of damage absorbed by armor. To take a specific case from Pratt, when relatively weak guns with a caliber less than 5.9 inches fail to penetrate armor, then the armor absorbs up to 50 points worth of damage (rule 4C1). A hit for 40 points would not be subtracted from the endurance total of the ship it would simply be mitigated, entirely absorbed. A hit for 65 points of damage, however, would cause 15 points of cumulative endurance damage after the mitigation resolves.

While the mundane medieval system of *Chainmail* ignores endurance, the fantasy system in *Chainmail*, from its first edition forward, does implement an endurance system, though it does so quietly and with significant ambiguities. The first inklings of it appear in the descriptions of

fantastic creatures, among the small subset that are vulnerable to normal attacks, meaning attacks from mundane soldiers. Ogres, for example, have a melee capability of six Heavy Foot, and ogres are killed when they have taken an accumulation of six missile or melee hits in normal combat. Rocs, for their part attack as four Light Horse and defend as four Heavy Horse, and thus require cumulative hits equal to a number sufficient to kill [four] Heavy Horse to be killed themselves.²²¹ While giants remain unspecified (though mentioned) in the first edition of *Chainmail*, the missing text for their system appears in the *International Wargamer*, which clarifies that they defend as 12 Armored Foot, and Giants must take cumulative hits equal to a number sufficient to destroy 12 Armored Footmen before melee or missiles will kill them. [IW:v4n8] The key word shared by those sentences is accumulation or cumulative, suggesting again that the hits aggregate over the course of the game until the limit is reached and the creature is killed. The fantasy rules in *Chainmail* therefore already exhibited an endurance system that prefigures the hit points of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Contrast this with another figure type in *Chainmail*, the lycanthrope. Although they defend as four Heavy Foot, it takes four simultaneous hits, from either missiles or melee, to kill a Lycanthrope in normal combat.²²² Basilisks follow this same rule: they defend as a Lycanthrope. The rules here draw a distinction between cumulative hits and simultaneous hits: simultaneous hits, presumably, must all be dealt in the same turn. Although the rules are not entirely explicit about this point, the implication of this

²²¹ *Chainmail*, 43 44. The first edition of *Chainmail* e, like all mundane

the second and third editions. Four here is thus an educated guess, derived from the fact that they *Monsters & Treasure* eventually awards them six hit dice. ²²² *Ibid.*, 41.

distinction is that if a werewolf suffers no more than three hits in one turn, then it is effectively undamaged, and can withstand another three hits without perishing the following turn, and again the next turn, and so on. As such, the management of simultaneous hits is effectively a mitigation mechanism rather than an endurance mechanism. This is especially significant in the *Chainmail* rules because precisely this language applies to Heroes and Super-heroes as well: Four simultaneous kills must be scored against Heroes (or Anti-heroes) to eliminate them. Otherwise, there is no effect upon them. This second sentence, there is no effect, explicitly

identifies the simultaneous rule as a mitigation system and informs how we should read the text about lycanthropes. Without a great deal of clarity, the rules for Super-heroes state they act as Hero-types in all cases, except they are about twice as powerful. In the Fantasy Reference Table at the back of *Chainmail*, however, we find a more precise specification that Superheroes attack and defend as eight men, and from that we can infer that they require eight simultaneous kills to vanquish. The rules for Wizards are too vague to secure any definitive interpretation, stating only that they will fight as two Armored Foot, or two Medium Horse if mounted presumably this means that two hits would destroy them.

The poor specification of these rules left players a great deal of latitude. It is unclear how often these simultaneous or cumulative rules even came into play, however, given that they apply only when units from the Fantasy Supplement fight mundane medieval troops. In one of the few surviving *Chainmail* battle reports of the era, the Battle of the Brown Hills, we learn that Count Aerll, a Super-hero, fell to the Anti-Super-hero of Chaos in a 3rd turn roll of 11. [WGN:#116] Surely this means a roll on *Chainmail*'s Fantasy Combat Table (Appendix E), in which a Super-hero requires a simple accuracy roll of 8 or higher on 2d6 to kill another Super-hero a far more achievable goal than eight simultaneous hits from lesser men. Appendix E must have seen more frequent use in these fantasy-heavy battles than endurance or mitigation. But given the complexity and doubtful specificity of these rules, it is difficult to speculate how Arneson interpreted hits and mortality when he began the Blackmoor campaign in the Twin Cities with *Chainmail* as its basis. What is clear is that he adopted an alternative system, one that he attempted to communicate to Gygax when their collaboration on *Dungeons & Dragons* began, though Arneson apparently evolved the mechanism further and obsoleted his own proposal repeatedly. In his system, characters began with a variable number of points of damage they could withstand, determined by an initial die roll upon character creation.²²³ At a high level, *Dungeons & Dragons* embraced this model.

²²³ The hit point system of preD&D Blackmoor, as described by Arneson in a letter in 1974, differs considerably from both *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons*, either in its first or later editions. He says (one dice roll for the number of dice you roll for the number of damage points that they take) 1st throw is a three meaning you [GPGPN:#16] To paraphrase, players throw one d6, the result of which is n , and then for their hit point total throw $nd6$.

This difficult but comprehensible description of beginning hit points numbering from 1-36 is more plausible than the one written three years later in the introduction to the *First Fantasy Campaign*, which suggests characters received between 0 and 100 hit points at creation time a range implausible a) because of the presence of zero, b) because of the claim in generate percentile numbers, and c) that range is simply too wide to be balanced given the likely magnitude of damage sources. Assuming then an initial range of 1

der to hit and take The published 1974 version of *Dungeons & Dragons*, while retaining the ambiguous *Chainmail* system as one combat resolution method, offers as an alternative a universal concept of hit points possessed by all men and monsters, be they magical or mundane. At a high level, these hit points resemble those of Fletcher Pratt: sources of damage quantify their magnitude in points, and targets of damage have a set and finite threshold of damage points they can withstand before perishing. Between the publication of *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons*, Gygax and Arneson nautical project *Don't Give Up The Ship* (1971-1972) appropriated much of the vocabulary and system of Pratt;; for example, damage is scored on hits equivalent to the poundage of the guns firing... simply, one point of damage is inflicted for every pound of shot weight.²²⁴ These ships, however, have a complicated relationship with damage they can either take damage aloft (to their sails) or low (to their hull). When their low damage equals the tonnage of the ship (for ships of the line, say, between three hundred and fifteen hundred), the ships sink more or less immediately;; high damage destroys sails and masts, immobilizing the vessel.²²⁵ Nevertheless, the basic concept is the same: ships can only suffer a predetermined quantity of damage before they sink, just as men and monsters in *Dungeons & Dragons* endure a finite amount of punishment before death.

Unlike its naval forbearers, *Dungeons & Dragons* bases the hit points of a creature on a die roll. The table in *Men & Magic* entitled Statistics Regarding Classes field listing the dice for accumulative hits jargon reminiscent of [OD&D1:17] This indicates the number of dice which are rolled in order to determine how many hit points a character can take. A starting Fighting-man, for example, rolls one die (all dice for hit points in the first edition are d6) and adds one to the total (2-7 hit points);; a starting Magic-user or Cleric receives only the one six-sided die without any bonus (1-6 hit points).²²⁶ As characters go up in level, this total increases;; the

progression mechanisms governing that increase are covered in the next subsection. Heroes (fourth-level Fighting-men) in *Dungeons & Dragons* roll 4d6 for their hit points, and Super-heroes (eighth-level Fighting-men) roll 8d6 and then add two just as a Hero took four hits in *Chainmail* and a Super-hero eight. Creatures also gain these hit dice, as enumerated in the contains a *Chainmail*.

more damage as they progress. Instead they were to take the same amount of hits all the time (with the exceptions of spells, magic, etc.) while becoming more talented in inflicting hits and avoiding the same. This has a great equalizing

gained more avoidance or mitigation but not more endurance in Blackmoor (the *First Fantasy Campaign* manner of Bath were rolled after hits thus a mitigation system). Whether or not this would have been as successful as the system in *Dungeons & Dragons* is an open question, but what seems unquestionable is that the *Dungeons & Dragons* hit point mechanism resembles original *Chainmail* more so than Blackmoor. Several later role-playing games emphasized avoidance over endurance in character progression successfully, so the original Blackmoor mechanic is certainly not unusable.

²²⁴, 8.

²²⁵ *Fight in the Skies*

portion of an aircraft to cause a crash;; as Chapter Five shows, many later *Dungeons & Dragons* systems (including the one presented in the *Blackmoor* (1976) booklet) apply these hit location principles to the bodies of characters and monsters as well.

²²⁶ The supplement *Greyhawk* (1975) introduced the more familiar rule that fighters roll their hit points on an eight-sided die, Magic-users on a four-sided die, and Clerics on a six-sided die. That

ghters and lowering Magic-users

Monster Reference Table of *Monsters & Treasure*. Our friend the ogre, for example, has four hit dice, and our friend the giant has eight or more (giants being broken into subtypes of varying degrees of power) numbers that follow the precedents for hits taken in *Chainmail*.

Because of the murkiness of the system, it is difficult to expose the linkage of the hit points in *Dungeons & Dragons* to the *Chainmail* cumulative hit mechanism. A determined reader can extrapolate, however, that hits in *Dungeons & Dragons* cause a standard 1 6 points of damage.²²⁷

In other words, all mundane weapons from the slightest dagger to the heftiest axe deal 1d6 worth of damage to their target on a hit. Even monsters are almost entirely relegated to this same level of effectuality;; a lowly goblin and a hulking hydra deal the same slap of damage, just 1d6. There are however notable exceptions: for magical effects, be they cast as a spell, projected by a magic item or generated by a monster;; and as well for some brawny creatures, like colossal giants and sea monsters which might deal 2d6 or even 3d6 of damage on a hit. But in the context where cumulative hits applied in *Chainmail* to cases like mundane Fighting-men attacking a giant the parallel is inescapable: a hit in *Dungeons & Dragons* deals the same range of damage that a hit die grants, and a certain number of hit dice in *Dungeons & Dragons* provide the same system effect on average that the ability to take that certain number of hits provided in *Chainmail*. A giant could withstand eight cumulative hits in *Chainmail*, and so a footman would need to score eight hits on the giant to kill it. If a giant in *Dungeons & Dragons* has eight hit dice worth of hit points, how many hits would a Fighting-man need to slay the giant in *Dungeons & Dragons*? If we go by the arithmetic mean of 3.5 for a d6, then an eight hit die giant would have 28 hit points, and eight hits from a Fighting-man (also dealing an average of 3.5 each) would suffice. Statistically, it takes the same number of hits in both systems.

Studying the averages, however, obscures the critical distinction between hit points and the cumulative hits of *Chainmail*. Hit points introduce uncertainty and variance. A giant may be an average giant, but a giant may also be below or above average extraordinary ²²⁷ While later editions add to Table I of *Men & Magic*

Men & Magic

ng (nor on the correction sheet circulated for it). In fact, combat receives little consideration other than deference to *Chainmail*

empty. [OD&D2:5] One must look to the descriptions of monster damage, especially that dealt by elves and trolls, to get a sense of the baseline amount of damage dealt by a blow. In a July 15, 1974,

elves and trolls, to get a sense of the baseline amount of damage dealt by a blow. In a July 15, 1974, & *Treasure*

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[OD&D2:5] The precedent for this comes from *Chainmail Monsters*

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presumably in a single round. *Chainmail* The example of combat in the *Strategic Review*

that hits by a fourth -dice of the attacker to the defender, and would reduce the number of attacks that could be made on higher hit-die targets, but is very vaguely specified. Presumably, however, this means that under ideal circumstances in the envisioned system a twelfth-level Fighting-man could do 12d6 damage in a round. Later iterations of the system would stipulate a more conservative number of attacks per round, but potentially far higher damage per attack than merely 1d6.

strong (with 48 hit points) or sickly (with only 8 hit points) as the dice fall when the giant is generated. A Fighting-man might slay a sickly giant in two solid swings, but it might also chance that the Fighting-man lands glancing blow after glancing blow dealing only one point of damage each. The end result is that a Fighting-man simply cannot predict how many hits it will take to defeat a foe a significant departure from *Chainmail*, where a great deal of strategy goes into arranging the right number of hits in a turn to bring down a target. In that too there is uncertainty: uncertainty over whether or not hits will be scored at all, owing to the avoidance mechanism. In *Dungeons & Dragons*, even when the prospects of a hit are near certain, the damage dice provide another potential survival mechanism via endurance, another way of forestalling death and increasing the drama of combat.

Sources of damage other than melee swings can whittle away a stash of hit points at a far more alarming rate. When a Magic-user has learned Fireball or Lightning Bolt, they deal amounts starting at 5d6 of damage, and potentially that damage reaches reams of adversaries at a time. Such a ball of fire may be, at the whim of the dice, a roaring conflagration or a piddling spark. In some respects, the confidence of spellcasters is perhaps even less than melee combatants, however, because of saving throws. If a target in the area of a Fireball or Lightning Bolt makes their saving throw, they take only half its damage: an average 5d6 fireball clocks in at 17.5 damage, which halves to around 9 points, a number sufficient to dispatch entry-level adversaries but not more seasoned foes. However, provided that a spell causes damage, and the desired targets reside in its area of effect, the spellcaster is assured that they will at least suffer some injury.

As characters advance in level, and as monsters increase in formidability, they enjoy a commensurate gain in hit points. Endurance therefore scales in a way that avoidance, strictly speaking, does not, and this is an important

limitation to the design of Attack Matrix I of *Men & Magic*. Armor class in the first printing of *Dungeons & Dragons* ranges exclusively between 2 through 9, and although the system contains magic items that grant additional avoidance modifiers (say, the +3 Shield featured in *Monsters & Treasure*), there is no indication that armor class can dip below 2. Instead, the bonus of magical armor and shields subtracts from the accuracy roll of the attacker;; penalties for range have the same effect. Extrapolating from Attack Matrix I, given that a starting character must roll a 17 on a d20 to hit armor class 2, and every step up in armor class lowers that number by one, we can surmise that every step down in armor class might raise the to-hit number by one, and that an effective armor class of 1 might thus require an 18 to hit by starting characters, and so on the rules give no indication that readers should make this leap of intuition, however. The most powerful characters (level 16 and up) have a very good chance to hit armor class 2: they need only a roll of 5 on Attack Matrix I. At higher level, therefore, the system relies increasingly on endurance to guard against precipitous deaths.

Reducing the hit points of foes to zero is, as this section stated earlier, the most common way of exiting the mode of combat. Alternatives to mortal resolutions include flight, surrender and subdual. Most noteworthy among the candidates for subdual are dragons, surely a nod to the prevalence of dragon mounts in Blackmoor. The example of dragon-taming in *Monsters & Treasure* is one of a very few illustrations of subdual in the rules, though any non-player monsters may also surrender following a failure in morale. *Dungeons & Dragons* says a great deal about morale, especially in the description of creatures which never need make morale checks, but without really specifying how these morale checks might be made.

Men & Magic does contain a reaction table, against which players roll 2d6, which superficially appears to serve a completely different purpose than a morale system: it describes the various ways that a monster might react to the prospect of serving a player character. [OD&D1:12] Potential reactions range from sudden assault to enthusiastic servitude. Curiously, the only rules about morale checks in *Dungeons & Dragons* read as follows: Non-player characters and men-at-arms will have to make morale checks (using the above reaction table or *Chainmail*) whenever a highly dangerous or unnerving situation arises. [OD&D1:13] The implication is that this applied to hirelings in the employ of player characters, and indeed the table seems most applicable to attempts to impress a subdued creature into an employment contract, rather than determining whether or not a creature is

subdued in the first place. This gap in specification would later be rectified.²²⁸

Chainmail includes a rich and nuanced morale system, mostly applicable to cases where a body of troops suffers severe losses, prompting the survivors to flee. The 1966 Bath medieval rules, which so shaped the initial direction of *Chainmail*, contain their own morale system which depends on the casting of a single die, though it is intended for use mostly upon the death of a leader a precedent for reacting to an unnerving situation by quitting the field. The *Chainmail* morale roll is the familiar 2d6, and the spirits of soldiers depend, like so much else, on the quality of their equipment: peasants losing a quarter of their force will flee unless they roll an 8 or better with 2d6, whereas a halved body of mounted knights flees only on a roll of 2 or 3. These rules complement subtler procedures for managing the outcome of an indecisive clash, the Post Melee Morale rules in which survivors on the losing side of an exchange may retreat, or even surrender, if they are greatly outnumbered. Any surrounded troops attempting to flee blunder into captivity;; *Chainmail* also supplies some prisoner-management rules.

Morale and prisoners arose at the very inception of hobby wargaming: Lloyd Osbourne, for example, records Stevenson's unsuccessful attempts to integrate a sort of pre-emptive, diced morale check into his wargame which represented the courage necessary to launch an assault in the first place: The innovation was so heart-breaking to the loser, and so perpetual a menace to the best-laid plans, that it had perforce to be given up. Wells allowed the capture of prisoners when large bodies of troops overwhelmed smaller, isolated forces. Neither idea seems to have figured in Sachs's rules, though Charles Grant reported in 1954 that morale has a high place in the original Bantock rules, and he went so far as to criticize Tony Bath's 1956 medieval rules for giving no consideration to morale (a gap Bath had remedied by the time Featherstone included his ancient system in *War Games*). [BMSS:1954n2] Once the *War Game Digest* began, its pages teemed with references to morale. Morale served as the theme of the fourth issue, and Scruby's lengthy editorial summarizing the existing morale systems in 1957 illustrated how thoroughly the concept pervaded the wargaming community. [WGD:v1n4] It also, however, reflected the diversity of opinion about the application of morale. Some used morale pre-combat, in the model of Stevenson;; some post-combat, like the Post Melee Morale of *Chainmail*.

Still others modeled morale very differently, as the innate superiority of forces with high morale over

²²⁸ The *Strategic Review*

clarifies this, addressing morale in some detail. It distinguishes that player characters, as they are monsters fight until

referee, the system in *Chainmail* is referenced as a serviceable example.

forces with low morale when deciding the results of combat, and further detailed the manner in which novice soldiers gain morale through familiarity with the circumstances of battle a quality not infrequently termed experience.

3.2.3 STRATIFIED PROGRESSION

In the game of checkers, some pieces are innately more powerful than others: an ordinary piece can only move forward, while a king can move both forward and backward. By undergoing a process within the game, however, lowly pieces can receive a promotion and enjoy the privileges of the most puissant king. In this simple precedent we find the essence of the system of levels and experience in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Levels represent a quantitative distinction between the capabilities of characters, and the accumulation of experience is the process within the game that causes advancement in level. For the purpose of this study, we say that systems that distinguish the relative power of units by assigning a hierarchical value like level have the property of *stratification*, and that systems that allow units to advance in power exhibit the property of *progression*. In *Dungeons & Dragons*, the ability of characters to advance in level we therefore term *stratified progression*.²²⁹

3.2.3.1: LEVELS AND EXPERIENCE

There is an unavoidable ambiguity in that definition of stratification, however, as distinctions in capability do not divide cleanly into hierarchical categories. Take the game of chess, for example. The diversity of unit types in chess does not easily break down into a hierarchy. Some units are clearly superior to others: a queen can move everywhere a pawn can and then some, for example. But it is more difficult to rank the knight and bishop into a hierarchy. There is a concept much like progression in chess, where a pawn reaching the eighth rank can transform into another unit of its choice. While in most circumstances pawns become queens, in rare cases a knight is the proper choice. The different types of pieces in chess are perhaps more

accurately analogous to the classes of *Dungeons & Dragons*: they differ in capability, but not always in a manner such that one dominates the other. Distinctions of level, on the other hand, always dominate. It is always better to be a secondlevel Fighting-man than a first-level Fighting-man, just as it is always better to be a king in checkers than a regular piece. The advantages of a particular class, on the other hand, tend to be situational: the value of a Magic-user versus a Fighting-man very much depends on the circumstances to be overcome. Stratification, therefore, almost always exists when units possess a superset of the capabilities of weaker units.

In a relatively early history of *Dungeons & Dragons* (appearing in the *Dragon* #7, June 1977), Gygax wrote of his initial exposure to Blackmoor that he found the idea of measured progression to be very desirable. Robert Kuntz, also a player in Arneson demonstration of the Blackmoor game in Lake Geneva, very similarly notes that Arneson took fantasy a step further than *Chainmail* when his players were awarded victory or experience points for the collection of these treasures or for the successful killing and/or subduing of creatures. [WG:#1] As we shall see throughout Chapter Five, many initial reactions to *Dungeons & Dragons* heralded this quality of the game as a remarkable one. From this response, we can glean that the system of stratified progression, as packaged by *Dungeons & Dragons*, appeared novel, perhaps even disruptively innovative, to its early audience. No small part of the game's appeal derives from this innovation, and thus the development of progression holds a special interest for posterity.

²²⁹ Some later role-playing games lack discernible strata and yet still have forms of progression;; we should therefore strictly understand that progression does not depend on stratification, though in wargames and early role-playing games, progression is not seen without strata. There also exist in *Dungeons & Dragons* some forms of unstratified progression, notably the accumulation of material wealth. Those are discussed later in Section 3.2.3.2.

Stratification, if we handle the term a little carelessly for a moment, has existed in some form since the very beginning of wargaming. Hellwig 1780 edition ranks its variant chess pieces with a number between one and three corresponding to the set of moves the piece can make: the leaping queen, which can move as a knight, bishop or rook accordingly is a triple, an ordinary queen (moving as a bishop or rook) a double, whereas a rook with its single type of movement is simple. This is not a true system of

stratification since, for example, an ordinary queen does not dominate a simple knight, but certainly the leaping queen dominates all doubles, and each double dominates two simple pieces. Another early wargaming author, Giacometti, included a system with a marked resemblance to stratified progression, where pieces that distinguish themselves for bravery with feats such as assaulting the enemy castle can receive a promotion.²³⁰ The system of promotions works in accordance with a strict hierarchy, though one with many caveats. First of all, a piece may only be promoted if a position has been vacated by the death of a higher-ranking piece: the lowest-ranking *Fantassin* (pawn) thus can only pass to the next-highest grade of *Général* if at least one General has already died presumably this restriction is in part motivated by the need to recycle pieces. A piece can however jump several grades in the hierarchy at once, if vacancies exist only in the upper echelons: thus a brave *Fantassin* can leapfrog his immediate superiors and assume the mantle of the *Général en chef* if that is the only job on the market. The hierarchy described by Giacometti is not, however, one where the capabilities of higher-ranking pieces always dominate those of subordinates;; in both Hellwig and Giacometti, following the tradition of chess, the differences between the powers of units are closer to the *Dungeons & Dragons* divisions of class than of level.

As the chess influence gradually faded in early wargames, however, these notions of stratification and progression also fell into abeyance. Hellwig simplified unit types in his 1803 edition undifferentiated infantry, cavalry and artillery in place of variant chess pieces became the standard for the Reiswitzian tradition. While cannon might differ in size and thus raw power, all cannon of the same size share essentially the same effectiveness. This is not to say that Reiswitz ignores circumstances that grant advantages to a particular side in combat, such as position. He also distinguishes in some tables between fresh and tired troops with different degrees of effectiveness. The Reiswitzian tradition eventually specified many such temporary hindrances or benefits in the massive tables of circumstances or modifiers common to games of the late nineteenth century. In Baring's English translation of Tschischwitz we find troops that are slightly shaken or much shaken, surprised or moving into various forms of hostile fire all bestow some advantage on their adversaries. These conditions are transient, however, and not essential to the units.

Circumstantial modifiers most commonly reflect the debilitating properties of exposure to battle. Troops become shaken or surprised or tired as a consequence of combat, rather than experiencing some improvement with exposure to warfare. In a battle conducted by Wells or Stevenson, both sides inevitably finish in worse condition than they were when they started, even if one side established superiority in the process. Wells's campaigns must have whittled down great armies into bands of stragglers as infantry canceled one another out while artillery thinned the ranks. This narrative handily illustrated his pacifist agenda: armies grew weaker through fighting, rather than stronger, and the use of military power extracted an enormous cost even from the victor.

²³⁰ *Nouveau jeu des échecs ou jeu de la Guerre* (1801).

A countervailing school of thought held instead that troops benefited from battle, and that the more combats soldiers survive, the more useful they would prove in future conflicts. Perhaps the most famous historical example in favor this principle were the Old Guard of Napoleon, the fabled *Grognards* those so deep in Napoleon's counsel they could grumble to the Emperor without fear of reprisal who served that commander from the start of his campaigns. Their experience as veterans made them more effective in combat than unseasoned units. Napoleon demonstrable faith in the capacity of his *Grognards* perhaps inspired a quote often attributed to him: moral power is to physical power in war as three parts out of four.²³¹ The elite and experienced soldier has a mental state providing a decided advantage over that of novice troops, and this extraordinary ability outweighed factors like numerical inferiority. On some level, wargaming itself is a didactic process derived from a similar hypothesis, long ago articulated by Gustavus Selenus, that the experience of a game might prepare players for real-world leadership. All of the hours spent by staff officers at wargames simulating the responsibilities of command served only to prepare for real future battles, when officers would respond with the sagacity learned from many successes and failures in fictional struggles. While Wells hoped his game would teach the futility of warfare, the Prussian strategists and their English-speaking followers aimed to impart a very different lesson, to increase the effectiveness of their players in actual conflict. If commanders are bettered by this experience, why should not the subordinate miniature figurines on the field also improve when they survive battles? There is in this something

of Nietzsche's famous maxim, that which does not destroy me, makes me stronger.²³²

British enthusiasts first integrated stratification into hobby wargaming in the 1950s. In 1956, as an addendum to his seminal medieval miniature rules, Tony Bath noted that he had added a class of figures elevated above the common warrior called Champions: Each one is given a numerical value in proportion to its importance, and can only be slain by an opposing Champion or by missile fire in the latter case a six having to be thrown by the archer... In combat between Champions, each side throws the dice in turn. If the first to throw scores a six, his Champion is automatically victorious;; if not, the man with the higher score slays his opponent unless the difference between their scores fails to outweigh a points difference between the Champions;; i.e., if a champion worth 4 attacks one worth 7 and scores 4 against his opponent's 3, he cannot slay him. In this case the²³¹

This quote may be apocryphal (the French original remains obscure), but it was linked to Napoleon by the mid-nineteenth century and it became commonplace in books of quotations in the late nineteenth century. It is sometimes after the 1880s given in a form

Champion with the lesser throw is wounded;; he retires one move and remains stationary the next.²³³

²³² From the *Twilight of the Idols*. In the idea that wargaming teaches one to wage war, we can also detect an echo of Hugo Gernsback this relationship between the projects of science fiction and wargaming, especially around the turn of the twentieth century, may help to explain why there is so much overlap between the wargaming and science fiction communities, in the persons of Wells, Jane and Pratt.

This rings clearly of stratification numeric values are assigned to Champions, and from what we are told Champions of a higher value dominate those of lower value. Bath describes no means of progression, however;; the only reason he gives for assigning the status of a Champion to a figure may seem a peculiar one. He made Champions of his favourite pieces among his models, presumably those he favored on aesthetic grounds. There is no reason this cannot lead to a balanced wargame, of course, provided that each side has an equal value of Champions in play at the start. Bath is certainly correct to surmise that most collectors favor particular figures, for whatever reason, and that the relationships that develop between wargamers and their miniatures often led to privileging particular soldiers

over their brethren. We shall return to this practice in the final section of this chapter, with Jack Scruby's noteworthy figure Sergeant la Duc.

The early issues of the *War Game Digest* amply substantiate the popularity of privileged soldiers, be they Champions or, more commonly, designated as veteran or elite or something along those lines. The fourth issue of the *Digest* proposed an amendment to the modern miniature rules of A. W. Saunders to differentiate veterans from rookies on the basis of experience, and give veterans a far higher chance of victory in combat. Intriguingly, Saunders deems this a system representing morale, as if the term morale encompasses all of the virtues that experience might teach. Ken Bastian's morale rules, also in the *Digest*, further classify soldiers by fighting ability into buckets including Chief, Champion, Veteran and Replacement. [WGD:v1n4] In his work, morale rating derives not from progression in game, but from simply dicing before play begins. Each such mechanism, as Scruby asserts, gives a smaller force a chance to beat a larger force words that nicely conform to the Napoleonic assessment of moral power. Scruby himself proposed a system he called Increased Fighting Value in the *Digest* where each melee victory brings a half-point increase in the quantified fighting value of units: infantry ordinarily starts with a fighting value of one, and light cavalry with a fighting value of two, so after two victories an infantry unit would be on par with a starting light cavalry. [WGD:v4n4] Scruby suggests marking a slip of paper to record the advances of units, though as with hit points, it seems unlikely this would scale to a wargame with hundreds of units.

Figures representing officers also walk the battlefields in some miniature wargames, and naturally the principle of experience extends to them as well. Ted Haskell wrote of the Great Captain's Kriegspiel in which each Officer is given a rating. This rating sums up his ability, courage and morale. [WGD:v4n2] As the rating ranges from one to six, dice may assign it without difficulty, or all officers may start with a rating of three. An officer figure may accompany other troops into battle, and the resulting battle factor for the army is the sum of the number of units engaged plus the rating of the officer and an additional random morale factor. Haskell's system is especially noteworthy for one critical addition: officers in a victorious engagement rise one level in rating, whereas losing officers decline one level in rating. Progression systems, as we shall see, almost always reward survival with some incremental benefit, but only revoke experience under rare and

exceptional conditions.²³⁴ Tony Bath, in 1960, explains a very similar system of

²³³ [BMSS:1956n8] Bath notes that he owes this idea to a suggestion from A. W. Saunders, who frequently published in the *Bulletin* notes regarding his modern-era battles with Lionel Tarr.

Generalship, one where: the skill or lack of skill of the commanding generals... have some influence on the results of battles. All generals will be classed initially as C and by promotion or demotion will be graded i . [WGD:v4n3] In Bath s model, two successive wins cause a promotion, and two successive losses cause a demotion. These two systems exhibit many of the properties of stratified progression, though one hesitates to call it progression when it is so easy to regress. Should an officer not learn as much from a disastrous defeat as a victory if not more?

This regular discussion of stratification and progression mechanisms provided the underpinnings for the experience systems that emerged a decade later. The major miniature wargaming magazines of the 1960s, *Table Top Talk* and *Wargamer s Newsletter*, continued coverage of morale, unit strength, officers and the ways they benefited from experience. One exemplary submission is that of Jeff Perren, who later co-authored *Chainmail* with Gygax. He wrote to *Table Top Talk* in February 1963 to sketch his own simple progression system: I have something going on with my Napoleonic army dealing primarily with morale. Each regiment has its own standards... after a game I take notes on which regiments showed extreme bravery... before the next battle I glue battle ribbons to the staff (white ribbons). Units with more ribbons than others get increased morale.²³⁵

As Perren adopted this system so early, the Lake Geneva wargamers of the late 1960s could not have been ignorant of precedents in this space. One of the first play-by-mail wargames Gygax joined also incorporated many of these elements: Tullio Proni s original *War of the Empires* (1967). In the February 1969 issue of *Galaxian*, an IFW-related science fiction gaming zine, Gygax lists aspects of the game that he felt contributed to its appeal. He singles out especially its reward and ranking system. Ranks merely reflected the percentage of victories the player had secured, and thus something in the manner of the officer gradings of Haskell or Bath, a player risked their rank on every new battle, though it does not appear that rank innately conferred any benefit to troops. Rewards, however, had a much more practical impact

on play. Rewards were given in the form of Credits given for enemy ships destroyed and planets captured... With these [the victor] could begin to purchase his own space fleet, changing its composition from that of the Standard one otherwise assigned to any player, and thus accrue an advantage in the next game. This system of plundering and expending credits in an economy of ongoing conquest is a good example of progression: a system where repeated success in a game grants a player incremental bonuses that assist in achieving future victories against more formidable foes. The more specific mechanism, that of an economy, is an unstratified form of progression;; each new parcel of wealth is not a separate rank or level, but nonetheless directly affects the player's power in the game.

In 1969, Gygax took over both the rules design and the administration of *War of the Empires*, publishing a revised edition of the rules which expanded the use of credits to include purchasing rank in the game. Around the time he produced these revisions, the summer of 1969, he met Dave Arneson at the second GenCon, and they agreed to collaborate on a certain naval rule set for the Age of Sail. August 1969 also saw the publication of Gygax *Diplomacy* variant Napoleonic Diplomacy II in *Thangorodrim*, one of the inputs to Arneson Napoleonic Simulation Campaign in the Twin Cities. *Diplomacy*, incidentally, has its own more abstract form of progression through plunder, in that the capture of supply centers in the game entitles a player to support larger armies with greater prospects for victory in combat.

²³⁴ In early *Dungeons & Dragons*, these conditions would include the level-draining abilities of certain undead creatures, for example.

²³⁵ [TTT:v2n2] Perren

The Twin Cities Napoleonic campaign from its inception integrated a concept of progression, and Arneson even referred to it as experience. In the *Ramsey Diplomat* of March 1970, for example, we see an admonishment from Arneson that troops will be credited for gaining experience in a battle only if a battle report is submitted citing the units involved and the nature of the action. [RD:v2n4] Arneson urges that battle reports provide a narrative detailing which particular units or ships accrued experience in a session. The precise nature of this experience unfolds in a contemporary issue of *Corner of the Table*, which gives a few rules additions beginning with the further stipulation that no troops or ships will be given increased morale without a battle report, linking experience to morale as did early miniature wargaming systems. [COTT:70:v3n2] A further rule states that reserve troops (as

opposed to active attached troops) have a morale of 2, and that they may not increase beyond this even for combat experie The previous issue of *COTT* also suggests that troop morale value might be raised a notch by training infantry, cavalry or sailors for some in-game months. [COTT:70:v3n1] In that same article, a further chart shows a hierarchy of troop quality starting with Irregular troops, whose morale cannot improve, and then rising through a stratified continuum of potential improvement: Conscripts, Regulars, Experienced, Veterans, Elites and Guards. In order to ascend these strata, a Conscript (with a morale of 1) becomes a Regular (morale 2) after one or two battles, and a Regular in turn becomes Experienced after three or four battles. Ten battles are required to reach the level of Guard, with a total morale of 6. Interestingly, there seems to be no way to lose position in this chain of progression other than dying: experience goes up when troops win, but if they lost they aren't around. Units that prevail in battle continue to gain in experience, and thus become superior, until they die, in true Nietzschean fashion. This ranking system bears a striking resemblance to the later Blackmoor concept of level.

For the nautical system, always his favorite milieu, Arneson describes the implications of the experience system in much greater detail: With actual combat experience crews gain confidence... so for every successful boarding and capture raise the crew factor's effectiveness by 1% for every four enemy guys in excess of your own armament and 10% in general for capturing any ship over half your size. Experience affects not only combat, but general sailing ability as well, incrementally increasing the movement speed of ships for every month of sailing, presumably as the crew gains their sea legs, though once at port, the sea-dogs quickly soften, losing their speed bonus at the same rate that they gained it. In almost this exact form, these rules appear in the pre-publication version of *Don't Give Up the Ship* serialized in the *International Wargamer* under the heading of experience, although the rules for sailing improvement are slightly restated: Add 3% to movement per month at sea. Deduct 3% per month in port. [IW:v4n10] As both a coauthor of those naval rules, and of course as a long-time participant in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, Gygax could hardly be ignorant of the practices surrounding experience in the Twin Cities three years before the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

By jumping ahead to *DGUTS*, however, we inadvertently skip *Chainmail*. *Chainmail* has its own system of stratification, though admittedly it is implicit in the rules rather than explicit. The original LGTSA

medieval miniature rules lack any concept of stratification or progression: even the morale rules fall into the category Scruby labeled Post-Melee Morale. The fearsome Swiss *Landsknechte* pikemen possess unique powers that differentiate them from ordinary infantry, but this is clearly more a qualitative difference in type of unit rather than in degree of capability. The Fantasy Supplement of the Guidon *Chainmail* booklet, however, introduces a recognizable system of stratification. The most obvious element is the relationship of the ordinary medieval footman to the Hero and Super-hero types. Of Heroes, the first edition of *Chainmail* says, They have the fighting ability of four figures, the class being dependent on the arms and equipment of the Hero type themselves, who can range from Light Foot to Heavy Horse.²³⁶ Super-heroes are defined only as about twice as powerful as Heroes. Thus, the types of Heroes and Superheroes build on the existing medieval figure types of the LGTSA rules, and for each of those types offer two strata above it. In a game using the *Chainmail* fantasy rules, one can have a regular Armored Foot, say, and then a Hero Armored Foot or Super-hero Armored Foot who are progressively more powerful than the base figure. This is a true stratification system in that each tier dominates the one before it: Super-heroes have better saving throws against Wizard spells than Heroes, a better chance of shooting down a passing dragon with an arrow or slaying a True Troll, and of course fight as eight base figures rather than merely four.

While the first edition of *Chainmail* alludes to the idea that a similar hierarchy exists among Wizards, it provides few useful details other than the suggestion of dicing to determine which is the stronger of two Wizards for the purposes of determining the difficulty to effect a counter-spell. Gygax further elaborated sorcerous stratification in the *Chainmail* Additions divided the Wizard [IW:v5n1] These four distinct strata Magician, Warlock, Sorcerer and Wizard, in ascending order bring both better and more abundant spells to practitioners of the higher ranks. Fantasy genre literature, as Section 2.7.2 described, amply substantiates the precedent for disparities in power among Wizards.

Much as with Heroes, however, *Chainmail* never formalized these strata of wizardry into numerical ranks of any kind. Moreover, *Chainmail* offered no system of mobility among the strata, no progression with one small but not entirely insignificant exception. The first edition of *Chainmail* explains that Elves equipped with Enchanted Arrows should be treated as Hero-types

for purposes of missile fire against fantastic targets. As Heroes build from base types, the notion of a Hero Elf is not incoherent in *Chainmail*. While this alone hardly constitutes a system of progression, later in the *International Wargamer*, Gygax expanded this ability of items to confer an elevated strata with a new rule for Magical Swords: Treat normal figures armed with magical swords as Heroes.²³⁷ Of the first issue of the *International Wargamer* of 1972, wherein he type into four classes of persons endowed with magical ability.

²³⁶ *Chainmail*, 36.

²³⁷ [IW:v5n1] This idea has a pedigree in fantasy literature: the most obvious example being Elric of Melniboné, the weakling prince who becomes a master swordsman when he takes up the magic blade Stormbringer. Another, perhaps even more direct example is that of the comic book hero the Mighty Thor, who lived as the mild and feeble Don Blake until stumbling over the magic hammer,

he picks up the hammer, he is transformed into a superhero, costume and all, yet course, there is no evidence that Gygax intended this to be a progression system, or even that he thought clearly about the different types he had created as strata that units might climb if he had, he certainly would not have found the notion of measured progression in Blackmoor so revolutionary.

However, this kernel of an idea may have helped to inspire the system of progression in Blackmoor. Given that Arneson Napoleonic Simulation Campaign already had a concept of soldiers advancing in strata after winning a certain number of battles, it is only natural to surmise that Arneson installed the *Chainmail* strata ordinary medieval soldiers, Heroes and Super-heroes into that experience mechanism and thus produced a true system of stratified progression. It is also possible that the mechanic of a magic sword turning ordinary figures into Heroes contributed to the initial implementation of progression in Blackmoor;; if so, that would certainly explain the tremendous emphasis placed on magic swords in Arneson game.²³⁸ We do know for certain that by the time Arneson demonstrated the system to Gygax, later in the fall of 1972, his system of measured progression had evolved to the point where it captivated his audience.

A few hints in the periodicals of the era provide significant insight into the particulars of stratification in Blackmoor. By the fall of 1972, the quality of level characterized the power of Blackmoor's Wizards. In the notation of

Corner of the Table, it appeared as a Roman numeral: John Soukup played a Level IX Wizard, for example. [COTT:72:v4n6] In contrast with the *Chainmail* stratification system in the *International Wargamer*, where each strata of spellcaster had a unique descriptive name like Magician or Warlock, it is level alone that distinguishes strata in Blackmoor. Only a non-player character of Level XII has the distinct title Sorceress, and this is almost certainly because of her gender alone. The choice of the term level for strata strongly implies a connection to dungeons, where levels of wizardry correspond to levels of the underworld perhaps a Level II Wizard measured up to the challenges on the second level of a dungeon, but would find the third level challenging and the first level dull. Arneson certainly did intend to correlate the power of monsters on a level with the level itself, as he wrote in a 1974 description of the Blackmoor dungeons: Weaker creatures are on the upper levels... also the wandering creatures are supposed to be wandering in levels where they would normally be found inhabiting. [GPGPN:#16] The implication is that any given creature has a particular dungeon level where it is supposed to reside, and it would be out of place if it appeared elsewhere. Thus, monsters of a certain degree of power could be said to be adversaries of a certain level of the dungeon but remember that the malefactors lurking in the underworld of Blackmoor were sometimes human. Issue No. 2 of the Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger identifies one such human denizen of the dungeon: Wizards. An expedition bagged the evil wizard of the dungeon, and as for another dungeon

if he is parted from the hammer for more than a minute, he reverts to his original person.²³⁸ Greg Svenson, one of the Blackmoor game in Blackmoor. While as a reminiscence thirty-five odd years after the fact, it cannot be taken for ironclad evidence, it does contain an intriguing anecdote about progression and magic swords: on the ground.... one of the players tried to pick it up. He received a shock and was thrown across the room. The same thing happened to the second player to try. When Bill tried to pick it up he was successful. We were all impressed and Dave declared Bill our leader venture, they supposedly got a wizard that time too.²³⁹ Wizards, therefore, seem to have been a fairly standard foe of the dungeon underworld. Once the designation level had been used to denote the power of evil non-player Wizards in the underworld, applying this same standard to Wizard adventurers would come naturally. As we shall see shortly, the published

system of *Dungeons & Dragons* is certainly compatible with this interpretation, whether this exactly captures the invention of level or no.

Curiously, the idea of level in Blackmoor did not extend to heroism. In the notation of *Corner of the Table*, *Chainmail* terminology remains for the strata of Heroes and Super-heroes. Blackmoor did apparently adopt a more colorful term for beginners, the non-heroic ordinary soldiers: flunkies, as in, No major person was killed, although a couple dozen flunkies bought the farm. [COTT:72:v4n6] John Snider later used the same terminology to describe his own character, whom he had raised from a two-bit flunkey to a mighty superhero. [DW:#5] Most of the established Blackmoor Bunch (and Baddies alike) exemplified combination figures, a type defined in *Chainmail* combining the proverbial swords and sorcery. Arneson allowed types like hobbits to become Heroes as well, notably Mello the Hero-Hobbit. Thus, in many of the character descriptions in *Corner of the Table*, we see a hybrid of *Chainmail* strata with level. Dave Wesley is designated as Super-Hero-Magic Weapon--Level I Wizard--Super War Horse, Anti-Super-Hero--Level IV Wizard--Tame Dragon.

whereas the Baddy Kurt Krey is an ²⁴⁰ Why Arneson applied the concept of levels to Wizards but not Heroes remains an open question though as the previous paragraph speculates, it might just be because spellcasting dungeon adversaries had the property of their appropriate level in the dungeon and the great number of dungeon Wizards simply set the precedent for player characters.

Whatever was the propensity toward level that Heroes lacked, Wizards shared it with the new figure type of reported to be Level III. but not to hulking Heroes, we might hypothesize, with a generous helping of tentativeness, that the finer granularity of strata for spellcasters helped to facilitate mapping onto a level requirement for casting spells of a certain spell level, what in Section 2.7.2 we called the spell tiers. *Chainmail* began to implement these restrictions in its second edition (1972), once the stratification of the Wizard type enabled the rules to stipulate that some spells could not be cast by the lower-ranking strata of spellcasters, although initially this applied to only one spell, Moving Terrain, which was a spell possible only to a Wizard. Arneson 1977 description of the original Blackmoor Magic System in the *First Fantasy Campaign* affirms this conjecture, that progression reflected the increasing ability of the [Wizard] to mix spells of greater and greater complexity. [FFC:74] The *First Fantasy*

Campaign furthermore outlines a system in which spells themselves have tiers expressed as a Village priest played by Mike Carr, who in *Corner of the Table* is [COTT:72:v4n6] As level applies to both varieties of spellcaster Roman numeral, and in which higher-tier spells had an increased complexity and resulting chance of failure.²⁴¹

²³⁹ [COTT:72:v4n3] As Arneson found inspiration for his Blackmoor campaign setting in the Conan tales, it should be unsurprising that the narratives are largely about heroes overcoming evil wizards.

²⁴⁰

both a Super-hero and a Level I Wizard, bear in mind that some magic swords conferred spellcasting ability in Blackmoor. In the *First Fantasy Campaign*

whose last owner was Dave Wes

holder three spells to cast. [FFC:65] The sword generation rules specify both the level of magic that

ately a Level I Wizard, or merely had comparable abilities through a magic sword, is unclear.

How did this translate into *Dungeons & Dragons*? To recap the discussion of Section 2.7.2, early in *Men & Magic*, we learn that Magic-users face a long, hard road to the top, and to begin with they are weak. [OD&D1:6] In *Chainmail*, entry-level spellcasters had less of a hard lot: even the fledgling Magician could throw Fireballs or Lightning Bolts. The two damage-dealing spells only become available to Magic-users in *Dungeons & Dragons* of fifth level or higher, and thus all of the *Chainmail* figure titles map onto the higher levels of magic use in *Dungeons & Dragons*: Magician is sixth level, Warlock eighth level, Sorcerer ninth level and Wizard eleventh level. While second edition *Chainmail* Wizards receive a certain number of spells per battle (the Magician only three, the Wizard six or seven), *Dungeons & Dragons* Magic-users receive several helpings of spells broken down into the various tiers. The authors explicitly equate tiers with complexity, a somewhat subjective determination, but in general, Magic-users know more simple spells than complex spells. For example, a common spell of the first tier is Light, a very useful minor magic for conjuring illumination in dungeons when torches are running low. At the fifth tier, a Wizard can Teleport, instantaneously traveling from any one place in the world to another irrespective of distance a bit more of a feat than filling in for a burning stick. A sixth-level Magic-user knows four spells of

the first tier, two of the second and two of the third. A full-fledged Wizard, on the other hand, knows four spells of the first, second and third tiers, as well as three spells each of the fourth and fifth tiers.

Dungeons & Dragons extended Blackmoor concept of level beyond spellcasters: the Fighting-man class (replacing the Hero of *Chainmail*) now admits of level. Also, instead of deciding between numerical levels and *Chainmail* titles like Magician or Sorcerer for strata, *Dungeons & Dragons* chose to do both. Each level of the three classes (Fighting-man,



Magic-user and Cleric) thus has its own level title, up a point. A Fighting-man starts as a Veteran and becomes, after much toil, a Lord;; a Magic-user begins as a Medium and ends a Wizard, a Cleric takes orders as

an Acolyte and may eventually assume the mantle of a Patriarch. After the eighth Cleric level, the ninth Fighting-man level, and the eleventh Magic-user level, the level title remains the same, though it is qualified by the level number;; for example, Patriarch, 9th Level, followed by Patriarch, 10th Level, and so on.

Remember that the authors hoped *Dungeons & Dragons* could be transposed into *Chainmail* battles when appropriate, which requires a clear method of converting the characters of the former into the figures of the latter. The level titles, as well as some secondary indicators, give us insight into the manner in which *Chainmail* and Blackmoor mapped onto these new levels in *Dungeons & Dragons*. The Wizard strata in *Chainmail* all map onto mid-to-high Magic-user levels, as we saw above. A fourthlevel *Dungeons & Dragons* Fighting-man holds the level title Hero, and an eighth-level Fighting-man that of Super Hero. This follows from the principle that the *Chainmail* Hero fights as four soldiers and Super-hero as eight soldiers. With this foundation, the conversion to *Chainmail* is simplicity itself: a second-level Fighting-man fights as two ordinary soldiers, a third-level Fighting-man as three, and so forth. As for the Cleric class, which lacks an antecedent in *Chainmail*, we can observe only that a third-level Cleric holds the level title Village priest, just like Mike Carr Village Priest--Level III in Blackmoor. Also following the Blackmoor precedent, the races of hobbits, dwarves and elves transition into the class and level system as well, while retaining their *Chainmail* powers though with important limitations on their progression.

²⁴¹ Whether a Wizard Level III could cast a Level III spell, or if (as in *Dungeons & Dragons*) a wizard of the fifth level is required to cast a third-tier spell, cannot be determined from the available evidence.

If *Dungeons & Dragons* has an object of play, it is progression. Any scenario may have its own internal objectives: bagging the evil wizard in the dungeon, for example, but insofar as a character may survive any number of scenarios, the overarching reward for play is unending self-improvement. Levels serve as a universal status symbol, permitting players to track and compare their advancement with numerical milestones. There is no theoretical limit to how high a character may progress, *Men & Magic* asserts;; although the system runs out of rules, more or less, at tenth level for Fighting-men and Clerics and sixteenth level for Magic-users, the text concedes that in theory nothing prevents characters from reaching level

twenty or higher. That claim neglects non-human characters, however, the elves, dwarves and hobbits: none of whom may become Clerics, among whom only the elf can play a Magic-user, and all of whom suffer strict upper bounds on level. As a Fighting-man, a dwarf can rise no higher than sixth level, whereas the elf and hobbit may aspire to nothing greater than the fourth level. Presumably, these level restrictions balance the inherent racial powers of mythical beings, which humans lack entirely. These fantastic characters therefore start with greater power than mere mortals, but their growth is stunted and persistent humans will surpass them.

The distances between the milestones of level are measured in experience points. We saw above this mechanic in a simpler incarnation looking at the progression between strata in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, where for each unit, the referee maintained a tally of battles won, and after every two battles or so a unit advances in strata. Experience points derive ultimately from this sort of tally, growing with each victory over enemies. This system models the principle that practice makes perfect: the more fighting you do, the better you will fight in the future. Level reflects the manner in which practice augments characters hit points and improves their offensive abilities as swordsmen or sorcerers. As Arneson assigned levels to Wizards first, his remarks on the progression of Wizards in the original Blackmoor system from the *First Fantasy Campaign* are salient: Study and practice were the most important factors involved. A MU [Magic-user] did not progress unless he used Spells, either in the Dungeon or in practice (there was no difference) sessions.... So to progress to a new level one first learned the spells, and then got to use that spell. There was no automatic progression, rather it was a slow step by step, spell by spell progression. [FFC:74]

Dungeons & Dragons introduces two significant modifications to these initial inputs. First, experience point awards differ on the basis of the sorts of battles won, most drastically varying with the power of the foe vanquished. The total needed between levels also scales with the strata, however, so if defeating a particular monster yielded, say, onetenth of the experience needed to advance to second level, the same monster might only yield one-twentieth of the experience needed to advance to third level.²⁴² Successful characters accumulate experience points and eventually achieve the target sum for their class to advance to the next level. For example, a starting Fighting-man requires 2,000 experience to progress to second level, while a

Magic-user requires 2,500 and a Cleric 1,500. Unhelpfully, the original edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* gives little guidance to referees on awarding experience points for defeating monsters, other than an offhand mention that a seventh-level monster might be worth 700 experience points, which one could recklessly extrapolate into the principle that slain monsters yield 100 experience points per level.²⁴³ Second, experience points derive from a source other than winning battles as well from the acquisition of loot. As characters meet monsters in mortal combat and defeat them, and when they obtain various forms of treasure (money, gems, jewelry, magical items, etc.), they gain experience. [OD&D1:18]

3.2.3.2: ENRICHMENT AND LOGISTICS

From a perspective of realism, it might appear counterintuitive that the acquisition of material goods translates directly into experience. *Chainmail* offered the precedent of a magic sword turning an ordinary soldier into a Hero, though Gygax probably did not

²⁴² Moreover, there is a further scaling mechanic sketched in *Men & Magic* that reduces the experience yield for a monster when its level is significantly less than the adventure who slays it;; e.g., -

the denizens slaughtered there. This further encourages characters to pick on someone their own size rather than farming experience by massacring hordes of weaker adversaries. The scaling mechanic has one baffling component, however, which is that even experience derived from the treasure found killing the creature is scaled in this fashion. The difference between finding an equally-sized pile of gold on the fifth level of a dungeon versus the seventh is never satisfactorily explained.

²⁴³ The most important early clarification from Gygax on this score appears in September 1974, *D&D* may be somewhat misleading (I know damn well it is!), for it suggests a flat 100 per level. This is ridiculous, as anyone can see that potting off a few orcs isn GPGPN:#12] He then supplies a copy of the table used in the Greyhawk campaign

of hit dice, modified by especially dangerous properties of monsters such as poison or regeneration. In that model, the base value of a monster with a single hit die is 10xp, 5 hit dice translate to 150xp, 15 to 1,500xp. The later *Strategic Review* FAQ, while attempting to rectify this oversight, provides monster is equivalent to its hit dice, and additional abilities add to the level in this case. A gorgon is certainly worth about 10 level factors, a balrog not less than 12, the largest red dragon not less than in *Dungeons & Dragons*.

One curiosity of this reward structure is the surprisingly small ratio of experience to cash in the monster-slaying business. The only example given in *Men & Magic* of the rewards for slaying a monster suggest granting ten times as much money as experience: 700 experience for slaying a troll who guards 7,000 gold pieces. [OD&D1:18] Since each gold piece, rewards can come from the money alone, as if the actual process of combat itself yielded little benefit to its victorious participants.

I intend this to reflect any intrinsic change in the wielder so much as the benefits conferred by wielding the sword itself. Ultimately, the accumulation of wealth in *Dungeons & Dragons* is tantamount to the growth of power, as it is in the real world. Money can buy transportation, superior armor and weapons, even magic items, castles, and perhaps most importantly, mercenaries, with greater expense improving both their quality and quantity. These commodities can forestall death, and bring ruin to enemies, just as well as gains in level. For that reason, wealth and level must remain correlated in order for the system to balance properly: gathering riches is a progression system, though an unstratified one. Starting characters cannot command vast fortunes, and an omnipotent wizard cannot languish in penury. Plausibility rules out either of those extremes: affluent weaklings would simply lose their fortunes to impoverished master sorcerers. The story of a successful adventurer is therefore a rags-to-riches story, like many a sword-and-sorcery story arc. Adventurers start with ten times $3d6$ (30 180) gold pieces, a sum unlikely to entice any potential hirelings of worth, and certainly far below the amount necessary to purchase magic items which can easily cost tens of thousands of gold. But the treasure guarded by even first-level monsters can yield thousands of gold, as the Treasure Types in *Monsters & Treasure* indicate, with the proviso that the adventurers pillage the lair of the creatures instead of just stripping the coins from their purses. The lair of a dragon could have sixty thousand gold *and* one hundred thousand silver pieces, to say nothing of gems or magic items.

Experience shares something else in common with wealth no amount is enough. Having more hit points is always preferable to less, and the same goes for the other bonuses associated with level. The personal self-improvement fantasy of experience in this respect mirrors the capitalist fantasy of perpetually swelling treasuries: it promises in the Nietzschean vein that dangerous experiences always educate or exercise us, rather than rendering us less fit on account of wounds or mental trauma, say. Of course, if we players of *Dungeons & Dragons* dedicated ourselves to exercise and

education with the same vehemence as our characters, our returns would be far more modest;; the accelerated pace of rewards in *Dungeons & Dragons*, be they financial or physical or mystical, is a great part of the allure of the game. For our investment of time and risk (our character's risk, which we incur only vicariously), we feel disproportionately well-rewarded. We feel that we have taken risks and done work for wealth and power, but they come much more easily in *Dungeons & Dragons* than they do in life.

One of the challenges in running the game, however, is striking the proper balance between labor and compensation. If dungeons are too perilous and rewards are too stingy, players will be discouraged;; if dungeons are harmless and rewards are lavish, players will be bored. This dilemma might seem unique to *Dungeons & Dragons*, but any Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel* where an umpire sets the general idea can betray these same flaws, albeit in military schools umpires have a captive audience, whereas hobby players can easily extricate themselves from tedious gameplay.²⁴⁴ The level system, that is the correspondence of²⁴⁴ The educational incentives to run a *kriegsspiel* in a military college are clear, but why would anyone ever want to run *Dungeons & Dragons*? Don Lowry voiced precisely this concern when Gygax pitched the system, arguing that no one would ever want to go to all the trouble that the role of the referee requires drawing dungeon maps and populating a world on the fly as needed. As Ted Johnstone would later remark -sum game;; the Referee, or Dungeonmaster, wins if the players *Dungeons & Dragons* referee receive more attention in Section 5.4.

dungeon levels with experience levels, and the recommended Treasure Types facilitate matching characters with challenging adversaries and adequate pay. It allows players to apprehend when they have passed into a region of extreme danger or extreme ease, and this predictability enables the player and the referee to adjust the difficulty of play collaboratively. Some *Dungeons & Dragons* referees configure their underworlds too liberally, others too adversarially, but the influence of level softens the negative effects of these imbalances.

Economics and material goods, and in particular the relationship of gold in *Dungeons & Dragons* to the fantasy genre tradition and the antecedents of Blackmoor, has already been discussed in Section 2.9. In summary, the source literature argues that money and valuable items found during adventures can be as much of a burden as a boon. Burden, here, should be understood literally: the process of physically removing treasure from a

dungeon, and dealing with its dispersal afterwards, is a significant component of the game of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Because of the factor of encumbrance, the material a character brings into a dungeon limits the amount of new items that can feasibly be acquired. Even when plunder has been removed from the dungeon, coins must be stored and other prizes must be sold, if only to get them off an adventurer's back. With newfound lucre, characters may re-equip themselves, research new spells, or put a down payment on that citadel in the hills. The resulting administrative tasks themselves constitute a third game mode in *Dungeons & Dragons*, beyond the previously described modes of combat and exploration: the *mode of logistics*.

Most commonly, the mode of logistics arises whenever items enter or leave a character's possession. When a character purchases a set number of arrows to carry into the dungeon, that is logistics, but furthermore, so is the decision of which spells a Magic-user memorizes for a particular spelunking session. When a party divides up a heap of hard-won gold among its members to transport back to town, that is logistics;; when a character invests thousands of gold into the design of a new magic item, that is logistics;; when a character collects taxes from a feudal barony only to expend them to pay its upkeep, that also is logistics. Most of the activities conducted during downtime, in town or in any event outside of the areas where characters explore for adventure, take place in this mode.²⁴⁵ Into the dramatic structure of *Dungeons & Dragons*, the mode of logistics injects some muchneeded banality: after the suspense of exploring and the adrenaline of bloodshed, the chores of logistics, even when they border on tedium, serve as an important counterweight to adventures. The necessity of performing these mundane tasks also contributes to the realism and immersion of the simulation;; surely administering the removal of loot would pose almost as much of a challenge in the overthrow of dragons as the messy slaying.

Logistics has a venerable history in wargaming. In the hobby tradition, it stretches back to Davos, where Stevenson cannons fired ammunition drawn from adjacent wagons filled with letter m's from Lloyd Osbourne's printing press. Each such wagon, however, could only hold twenty m's each, and thus generals must deploy these stores of ammunition judiciously. In Sachs's wargame, it was often easier to retrieve spent shells from the field to restock artillery dumps than to wheel in fresh firepower from the stores. *Chainmail*'s

medieval rules emphasizes that loot was usually foremost in the thought of the medieval soldier, though when attempting to plunder the enemy baggage, would-be thieves effectively leave the game. Even in Gygax fantasy *Chainmail* scenarios, the management of loot and plunder seems to have served as a primary motivation for the action. In the Battle of Brown Hills, as we saw earlier, the side of Law is encumbered with three wagons containing a war chest of gold that would, if lost, provide Chaos with the monies to equip more forces ;; unfortunately for the side of Chaos, a passing dragon loyal to no one in particular took its own interest in that purse of loose change. [WGN:#116] These financial elements undoubtedly paled in comparison to the burgeoning complexity of Arneson Blackmoor campaign, which, like the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign before it, simulated logistics at effectively a national level.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ For our purposes, however, the mode of logistics is restricted to the activities of characters, not of players, albeit the administrative tasks of players often reflect the logistical activities of characters.

The management of personal inventory is perhaps the largest province of logistics in *Dungeons & Dragons*, as it affects even characters with no other assets than the meager belongings on their persons. The maximum encumbrance that a character can carry is 3,000 gold pieces worth the choice of the gold piece as the base unit of weight measurement is certainly a wise one, given the expected course of gameplay. At any encumbrance above 1,500, characters must move at half their normal speed. This threshold is surprisingly easy for a Fighting-man to reach;; an example in *Men & Magic* of a character with plate armor, a helmet, a shield, a flail, a dagger, a bow with a twenty-arrow quiver and a few miscellaneous sundries already wears 1,200 gold pieces worth of encumbrance, and thus can pick up only 300 more without incurring a penalty. [OD&D1:15] Consider, for example, that plate armor costs 50 gold pieces, but weighs in at 750 worth, and thus an adventurer would be foolish indeed to strip plate armor from the dead and carry it back to town for resale, if instead there were gold to carry;; shields also weigh fifteen times as much as they cost. Even for picking up nothing but coinage, a budget of 300 measly gold pieces worth of weight cannot suffice for a mildly successful dungeon sacking. In an encounter on the first level of a dungeon, one might find thousands of coins, and without a substantial party, hauling the stuff out of pits requires serious logistical preparations. Copper and silver pieces seem to exist in *Dungeons & Dragons*

for no reason other than to value themselves less than gold pieces and encumber their finders. Hirelings, and to some degree mules, can mitigate these difficulties, but both require supervision, to ward against attack and wanderlust both the proclivity toward the latter probably increasing with the value of the baggage. Even leaving much of the loot *in situ* and making multiple trips back and forth between town risks claimjumpers or other self-appointed custodians of the stash. These logistical problems of dungeon exploration bear a more than passing resemblance to mining for precious metals, which prompted some early gamers to refer to the dungeon as the Gilded Hole (as Chapter Five will detail further).

Underworld & Wilderness notes the existence of towns and villages where adventurers will be most likely to base themselves in between their dungeon runs. [OD&D3:14] The advantages of selecting a venue for adventure near civilization should be obvious;; Blackmoor and Greyhawk are cited as examples, and in each, one can expect to find bazaars, inns, taverns, shops, temples, and so on. The description of Blackmoor in *Domesday Book #13* (which is entirely replicated in the *First Fantasy Campaign*) notes that the merchant class includes the Village innkeeper, the owner of the local store, and the local shipper who has three vessels in his service, as well as other minor peddlers. Merchants first and foremost collectively provide the equipment list in *Men & Magic*, enabling characters to purchase mundane items like armor and weapons, as well as food, torches, ropes, poles and other mainstays of dungeon exploration. They also, presumably, exchange plundered goods for cash and vice versa as characters require, no doubt with some small surcharge.

²⁴⁶ The initial section of the *First Fantasy Campaign* gives some indication of the types of expenditures available to the four main factions in Blackmoor (the town itself, the Egg of Coot, the Duchy of Ten and the Great Kingdom).

This highlights one of the more significant differences between experience points and money characters rid themselves of funds, but not experience. Experience points remain even when characters spend the money that granted those points.²⁴⁷ The experience point tally grows ever larger, like a pinball score racking up as long as the ball is in play, and while characters monetary compensation scales upward at the same rate, that increase may only affect cash flow rather than savings. In fact, the system needs certain checks to prevent a sort of psychological inflation where

players hoard obscene, dynastic levels of wealth that can never realistically be expended, a condition which removes the rags-torches incentive for adventuring in the first place. The risk of this becomes especially dire when higher-level characters begin to manage estates or followers that generate revenue independently, like investment instruments. Castles and magical inventions, as far as hobbies go, are expensive ones, but given the fortunes guarded by higher-level monsters, they could be entertained without seriously impacting a pennywise senior adventurer's finances. Relatively early in the Blackmoor campaign (before the end of 1971), Arneson therefore began to find various inventive ways to drain the coffers of the Blackmoor Bunch.²⁴⁸ Taxation of dungeon plunder, with an Inspector General played by John Snider to oversee proper revenue reporting, must have dented many wallets. When Gerti the dragon gave birth to a rambunctious litter, her keeper, the Wizard of the Wood, had to make restitutions to the populace for the vandalous rascallions, and fines of this sort apparently reached rapacious levels as the adventurers blundered around high society. Theft also reduced treasures: on an occasion while the Blackmoor Bunch obsessively looted the dungeon, the Baddies apparently raided the undefended castle, taking all the loot the Bunch had stored there from previous dungeon adventures.

In Blackmoor, characters had further incentives to empty their savings: rather than bequeathing experience for the acquisition of money alone, Arneson granted experience points only for expending said monies on the character's interests. The proclivities of the Blackmoor Bunch liven up the pages of the Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger Bishop Carr, for example, gives so generously to the poor serving wenches at the tavern. [COTT:72:v4n3] For his part, Baron Jenkins has on several occasions been seen partaking of the local recreational facilities along with his company of men that all but ruined the tavern during one fling. When gypsies come to town, several private performances by individual female members of the troupe up at the castle ensue. It is thus unsurprising that the interests into which characters might empty their wallets for the sake of experience, as recounted later in the *First Fantasy Campaign*, included wine, women, song, wealth, fame, religion and hobbies. Even seemingly harmless entries like song read as follows: The player proceeds to the local tavern and expends his wealth on other players present... damages assessed by the tavern owner are counted towards a player's expenditures in this area. [FFC:75]

Banqueting and wenching, it must be conceded, do have a pedigree in fantasy genre literature that cannot be ignored, and moreover conformed with the evident interests of the players, as well as the characters, in Blackmoor. It is probable that vestiges of this system inspired the equivalence of gold and experience in *Dungeons & Dragons*, if only in a form sanitized for a broader audience where personal interests, regardless of their salacious details, have no consequences for the system.

²⁴⁷ The dispersal of funds begs all sorts of questions about the logical implications of these rules: under what exact circumstances does the reception of cash yield experience? Presumably, only after the defeat of its previous owner in combat. If the owner is slain by a party, does each member of the party get experience for every gold piece found? Or just the amount that turns out to be their share? What if shares are adjusted or items redistributed?

initially recovered from the dungeon on account of encumbrance, but is returned for later? For these and many other ambiguities, the system as specified in the original *Dungeons & Dragons* has no real answer.

²⁴⁸ Note that Arneson also forced the retirement of characters when he deemed them too powerful to continue adventuring, and he records that one of his players, Greg Svenson, intentionally prevented his character from advancing past fifteenth level or so in order to retain his job.

Dungeons & Dragons carefully recommends that the experience rewards of any particular adventure be curtailed if a character will amass enough to advance more than a single level. [OD&D1:18] The implication is that characters leave the dungeon and return to their base, probably a local town, where they may trade and perform any logistical tasks associated with their new level. An easily overlooked consequence of deferring progression to the mode of logistics is that experience, like gold, is something brought back from the dungeon and dealt with later. This is only one of several system factors that create a need for downtime, the pause between adventures. Encumbrance is itself an incentive to make several short trips to acquire moderate amounts of treasure, rather than trying to drag home a pallet of plunder from a single protracted expedition. Aside from magical intervention, be it clerical or sorcerous, resting is the only way to restore lost hit points, though only at a glacial pace of a single hit point per day of repose. *Underworld & Wilderness* offhandedly remarks that this can take a long time, as it surely can for high level characters. [OD&D3:35] From a

perspective of dramatic pacing, the mode of logistics is also the weekend of adventurers, providing a necessary lull in the stress of exploration and the strain of combat. It furthermore allows players to squirrel away the spoils they have accumulated to date, so as not to risk them while adventuring.

If a town serves as a base for adventurers, within it they must have some sort of safe house where goods are stored while adventuring, be it simply a latched inn room, a vault in a merchant's heavily guarded basement or a very powerful character's own personal crenellated tower. The mishaps which befall adventurers are many and varied; it is not at all uncommon for characters to endure capture and privation at the hands of monsters or even their fellow humanoids. Especially as players invest a significant amount of time in a character and accumulate a treasury worth retaining, the prospect of losing it all to an unlucky roll in some distant pit is a source of increasing discomfiture. Warehousing possessions during adventures is therefore attractive, although not without risks of its own as the Blackmoor Bunch learned when they left their own unattended. Any possessions secured in a safe house will eventually default to new owners should the party perish or perhaps sooner if a reasonable argument for the probable death of the party can be made by those standing to benefit.

Men & Magic therefore allows players to assign an heir, specifically a relative to inherit his possessions if for any reason the participant unexpectedly disappears. Upon presumption of a character's death, this relative then inherits the treasury. The relative must start at the lowest level of the class he opts for, but he will have the advantage of inheritance. [OD&D1:13] This system introduces the intriguing possibility that a player's investment in the game might carry over across characters, if only after a ten-percent tax is levied. The motivation, ultimately, for this sort of system is to increase a player's tolerance for risk, to keep powerful characters adventuring even when common sense might lead them to retire in opulent luxury.

For the most powerful of characters, there is a far more satisfying manner of averting the risk of death simply reversing death when it occurs. The most powerful Magic-users and Clerics can reincarnate or raise the dead, respectively, though for some mysterious reason, hobbits cannot be revived by either spell, only humans, elves and dwarves. The avenue of reincarnation is not radically different from designating a relation to inherit one's goods: the character does not personally survive the process, instead in some metaphysical sense the character returns to life as a completely new

entity potentially, not a human or even humanoid one, simply one rolled up on the alignment table including everything from unicorns to dragons with a random level between one and six.²⁴⁹ The Cleric spell Raise Dead, on the other hand, does return a dead character to life directly, and it only requires two weeks of recuperation to shake off the lingering effects of the grave. From one of Gygax early battle reports describing the play of *Dungeons & Dragons*, the narrative that appears in the May 1974 issue of *Wargamer's Digest* (not to be confused with Scruby's earlier periodical), we gather that that the Clerics of Greyhawk performed resurrections routinely. In that account, one of Gygax own characters, the Lord Yrag, dies beneath the sword of an iron golem: The Lord gasped, his visage mottled green, and died. After the golem falls to his compatriots, however, it was time to gather the treasure and bring the body of Yrag back into the clean air and daylight of the surface in order to entreat the Patriarch of Greyhawk to restore his life (regardless of the cost!) Death, it seems, is merely another drain on the purse.

To someone with the stereotypical perspective of a wargamer, in which any two Armored Footmen are interchangeable, there may seem little distinction between resuming play after a death as a long-lost twin brother, or a reincarnation of the original character, or a miraculous resurrection. Through a variety of means, *Dungeons & Dragons* forges an especially strong bond between players and characters, however, a bond strong enough to withstand temporary sojourns to the grave;; players often identify with their characters, and enjoy them just as much for their form as for their function. It is precisely this identification that makes personal progression elicit such a strong immersive reaction from many players. As shall see in Chapter Five, the first gamers to encounter *Dungeons & Dragons* as a commercial product praise the compelling system of progressing a specific, named character through adventures until they rise from a novice to a master. The uniformity of this reaction should make us suspect that personal progression is one of the key catalysts that triggered the new style of gaming which emerged in 1974, in combination with unprecedented freedom of agency and the dramatic pacing that comes from judicious transitions between modes of exploration, combat and logistics. These other elements alone, however, do not impart the necessary sense of continuity and identification with a particular character, as opposed to command of generic, undifferentiated pawns. In the system of *Dungeons & Dragons*, every

character is unique or at least, the potential variety in characters is so great that they appear as individual as human beings.

²⁴⁹ Reincarnation after suicide is therefore, with reliable wizardly connections and a bit of luck, one of the faster ways to get from first level to sixth level. Some early adopters of *Dungeons & Dragons* employed reincarnation as a way to play dragons or other powerful monsters.

3.2.4. INDIVIDUATION, PERSONALITY AND REQUISITES

Armies famously encourage conformity in their ranks. It is therefore unsurprising that, like the pawns of chess, all the infantry pieces in the later wargame of Hellwig are effectively interchangeable. Aside from their assignment to a branch of military service, the game pieces in the wargame of Hellwig can be differentiated only by position: they are simply infantry, cavalry or artillery, with no particular aptitudes or exceptional qualities. In Reiswitz, there began a trend to distinguish units by maintaining their state. If a unit has sustained losses, or if it is shaken or steady, that distinguishes the piece from its brothers in arms. The concept of sustaining losses in his work was based on endurance, which for him meant that the number of troops which a game piece represents had declined due to casualties. The ratio of the number of soldiers represented per game piece we have called the figure scale of a game. Hellwig set the precedent that an infantry figure represents a battalion not a fixed unit of measurement, though in the armies of the time it often represented several hundred men. The younger Reiswitz gave specifics of the intended composition of his units: A battalion is 900 muskets with a frontage of 250 paces including battalion intervals. A squadron of 150 has a frontage of 100 paces. A battery of 8 guns has a frontage of 200 paces when the guns are placed 24 spaces apart.²⁵⁰

For Reiswitz, figure scale varied depending on the type of game piece, but due to endurance it can also vary with the circumstances of the game: Reiswitz gave his infantry battalion pieces a starting figure scale of 900:1, for example, but during the course of play, as conflicts led to losses, the number of soldiers represented by a particular piece would decrease. This introduced a requirement for *kriegsspiel* referees to track the declining population of troops. Reiswitz offers an innovative method of so doing, in the form of a printed table which matrixes unit types against thresholds of losses. The referee maintained a labeled metal pin corresponding to each unit in the game, and as losses occurred, the referee stuck the pin representing the damaged unit to a position in the chart reflecting its current state of loss until

the last number is reached, and then either a block is removed or an exchange piece is used, where exchange pieces represent smaller units such as halfbattalions.²⁵¹ With a quick glance at this chart, the referee could thus distinguish a wounded unit from a whole one, and each game piece exhibited a certain degree of individuality. Unlike the pawns of chess, which are all interchangeable in their various positions, these infantry, cavalry and artillery blocks had quantified differences in their power resulting from the endurance system. This mechanism inaugurated a lengthy tradition of individuating units through some sort of external record of their state.

Endurance is not the only way that the *kriegsspiel* tradition differentiated units: wargames also fielded some special-purpose pieces with a far smaller figure scale. Reiswitz makes provisions for tiny groupings of troops, down even to the granularity of five soldiers, for which he includes with his apparatus a set of very small blocks to represent field posts or patrols. Obliquely, Reiswitz implies in his discussion of lines of communication that commanders themselves have some position on the map. In most games of Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel*, commanders must provide high-level written direction for their subordinate units to the umpire;; when a combat subsequently breaks out, it would be a significant breach of realism if players could instead instantaneously micro-manage each fighting soldier under their command. Thus, in Reiswitz, a commander will only be allowed to issue direct verbal orders to [troops] if he is on the same spot, and failing that he will have to issue his orders through the umpire as usual.²⁵² This idea, that a miniature representation of the commander and thus the player must be in a particular spot on the board at some proximity or distance from troops, figures in several later Reiswitzian games. Most notably in *Strategos*, Totten maintains that communications between parties of the same side will be regulated as in actual service: if parties are at the same point, it is allowable, and must be brief;; if they are upon different parts of the field or campaign theater, such communications must be sent by messengers... regard must be paid in their transmission to the actual distances, and thus to the time necessary for their transit.²⁵³ The logical conclusion of this is that each player will be represented by name upon a slated piece placed upon the map, and indicating *where* he is supposed to be at any given moment, and such players can take no advantage of indications of hostile parties, until such time as information could really be communicated to him. This slated

piece on the map acts a surrogate for the player, and the situation of that piece constraints the player's actionable knowledge of the game world.

²⁵⁰ *Anleitung*, 5. ²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

Roughly contemporaneous with *Strategos*, Stevenson first hobby wargame also encompassed surrogates for the commanders, figures that represented individuals, rather than groups of soldiers. Osbourne remembered the figure representing the formidable General Stevenson Other figures in Stevenson's setting shared the names of famous generals: Napoleon and Lafayette, as well as civil war celebrities like Delafield and Green. From Osbourne's description, it sounds as if these officers risked the same fate as ordinary soldiers in his army despite his sturdy build, even General Stevenson might topple under enemy artillery barrages from the toy cannons. From Stevenson battle report, we can infer a probable figure scale of 100:1, where a typical miniature figure represented one hundred soldiers;; though of course Stevenson did not require the realism of Reiswitzian loss calculation, and thus his figures had no property of endurance. Wells preferred his soldiers anonymous and uniform, though the emendations proposed by Colonel Sykes in the appendix of *Little Wars* introduced a General, who will be represented by a cavalry soldier, and even suggested, in something like the manner of Totten, that the player share the vantage of that surrogate piece. The player who is General must stand at or behind his representative image [i.e., the miniature figure of the General] and within six feet of it.²⁵⁴ The vulnerability of a General is explicitly substantiated by the text, and moreover players may themselves share in the misfortunes of their surrogates: If the General falls within the zone of destruction of a shell he must go out of the room for three moves (injured), for example.²⁵⁵

The hobby miniature wargamers of the 1950s, who thoroughly studied the examples of Wells and Stevenson, expanded the idea of individuation in manifold ways.²⁵⁶ The very process of creating miniature figures casting and painting yielded a varied crop of soldiers, completely unlike the indistinguishable line of pawns deployed in chess. These miniatures were individual, in their stance, their attire, their armaments, and the quality of their workmanship. It was only natural that players would prefer some figures over others and award them privileges in their games. As early as 1953, one disgruntled contributor to the BMSS *Bulletin* Sterchi, the same fellow who modestly proposed using real hand grenades to model the effect of atomic weaponry on a miniature battlefield (see Section 3.1.7) parodied

the increasing individuation of wargaming units with a *reductio ad absurdum*:²⁵² *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁵³ *Strategos*, 106.

²⁵⁴ *Little Wars*, 74.

²⁵⁵ These perils of taking the field as a General starkly contrast with the security and detachment of command in many other wargames, where the player can order legions into enemy fire without any risk of losing their command.

²⁵⁶ Early hobby wargames adopted figure scale conventions;; in 1957, at the very birth of the hobby community, Ted Haskell

To make the game more individual why not give every figure his name and rank, promote him after the game has been in progress for a few weeks. I love to pour individuality on my figures;; i.e., Corporal Sebastian Gridiron suffers from bunions, he can therefore only move 10 ins. whilst his comrades move 12 ins. [BMSS:1953n8] While this level of specificity far exceeded the ambitions of wargamers of the era, many table top generals did elevate particular figures to positions of superiority in the system, and sometimes only for the sake of aesthetics, as Tony Bath designated his favorite pieces among his medieval collection as Champions. Appearances differentiated a miniature figure from its companions, but stratification, as well as endurance, individuated these game pieces from their brethren at a system level.

Once game pieces in the 1:1 figure scale became so distinguished, players necessarily bestowed upon them more personal qualities: names and even attributes of character. Jack Scruby recounted in the first issue of his zine *Table Top Talk* (January 1962) the adventures of some miniature figurines who rose to a level where their names grew worthy of remembrance. Pierre la Duc was a 54mm Napoleonic figure cast by Scruby, set apart from the other five units of this squadron because la Duc points forward with his right arm as he kneels, as if to lead his fellows into battle. La Duc began his career as a light infantryman in the *Grande Armée* controlled by Scruby s opponent Homer Delabar. In the Napoleonic system that Scruby and Delabar employed at the time (the mid-to-late 1950s), a simple stratification system designated la Duc s unit as elite, meaning that la Duc enjoyed longer moves, more accuracy of fire, and at that time had a bonus in that they had a split move this last ability allowed a unit to move into range, fire and then move out again in a single turn in order to avoid

enemy retaliation. [TTT:v1n1] At the Battle of Estarro's Farm, despite Scruby best efforts to exterminate Delabar's light infantry, the tenacious la Duc made a heroic last stand, killing eight or ten of Scruby men single-handed with his split move before finally meeting his bitter end. Obviously, in their diced Napoleonic combat Delabar hit a lucky streak when rolling on behalf of la Duc, but in Scruby narrative account of the event, this extraordinary success reflected merit rather than chance: Posthumously, la Duc was raised to Sergeant and was decorated. From that time onward la Duc was an immortal, and even today that glory that was his remains as he kneels in my shelves.

The career of la Duc did not end there, however, as the Napoleonic contest between Scruby and Delabar continued, and figures were too scarce and precious to reserve for a single conflict in a campaign. Now a Sergeant, la Duc returned for a Russian segment of the Napoleonic wars. Mindful of the achievements of this potent adversary, Scruby
way we let six infantry equal one Battalion, twelve equals a regiment;; six horse to the squadron and periodicals of the era.

researched and cast a squadron that would stop la Duc and his men, a group of Russian Jagers led by Sergeant Vladamir. The Sergeant was an old timer with white beard, and his history showed that he was at least 60 years old, and had been with the 37th Jagers for almost 45 years and he looked the part, and of all the men I had made for my 54mm Napoleonic army, I thought him the best. One wonders how often Scruby authored such Like la Duc, Vladamir and his cadre had the necessary split move capability to wreak havoc among enemy ranks. With this secret weapon, Scruby laid a trap for la Duc. Alas, the planned ambush at a chicken house came to naught through a freak accident in positioning, Vladamir blundered directly into la Duc's line of fire and, by their rules of the time, thus died automatically, in his first battle, without ever firing a shot. Scruby wails, from that game onwards, Vladamir and the 37th Jagers NEVER DID ONE DAMN THING RIGHT IN ANY WAR GAME THEY WERE IN! thanks to the foulest luck one could imagine. Nevertheless, he cannot tell this story without revealing his fondness for Vladamir. I still love this old character, Scruby confesses, despite how he lost his life ingloriously in a chicken house. [TTT:v1n2]

Scruby informal mention of character here begins to anticipate the subject of the next chapter, but for our current purpose the tales of la Duc and Vladamir teach us how a wargamer might begin to think of their game

pieces as individuals even when nothing in the system elevates them above the herd. Although la Duc and Vladamir started as elite troops, that alone did not warrant bestowing on them proper names or enduring remembrances instead, their exceptional performance in battle, be it heroic or ignominious, set them apart. Nor was Scruby alone in assigning proper names to particular pieces in a wargame: in the same issue of *Table Top Talk* where he first related the success of la Duc, another contributor mentions an ancient wargame where a certain Caliph John won a one-on-one contest against an assassin. Whether or not these entities constitute characters in the sense that *Dungeons & Dragons* popularized is a complicated question, but it is clear that Scruby did not view Vladamir as a representative of himself on the field of battle, that is as a surrogate Vladamir served as one of many soldiers in Scruby army, and victory did not hinge upon that one figure's fate.

There are however some early hobby wargames in which players truly field an army of one, a single game piece on the battlefield. Throughout this chapter we have much discussed Fletcher Pratt naval game, wherein players control only one figure in the action: their personal warship. We can logically consider a model boat as a compound entity like one of Reiswitz's blocks, insofar as we presume many tiny hands scramble on its deck, but even in Reiswitz, players have many blocks at their disposal, not just one on which they rest all their ambitions. Pratt radically individuates each ship, to the point where every player receives a ship-card, giving the characteristics of the ship represented by the model, which details speeds, guns, armor and of course the total value of the ship in points, the endurance mechanism in Pratt. Following Jane's precedent and taxonomy, the description of accoutrements like guns and armor admits of meticulous detail, and in amounts that preclude memorization and require constant reference to written records. Once referees determine hits for a turn, players must record any lasting damage to their vessels on their

ship-cards as well, and thus these cards help to manage the state of the game.

Not every naval wargame exhibits this one-to-one correspondence between players and figures, but most miniature naval wargames operate at a 1:1 figure scale, where one figure represents a single ship instead of a squadron. Throughout the 1960s, the 1:1 scale also received some attention in land-based miniature wargaming circles, often under the name of skirmish wargaming. Featherstone prefers the name Close Wars in an appendix to his 1962 *War Games* as he describes battles between small numbers of men.²⁵⁷

This scale enjoyed special popularity for modern warfare, probably owing to the emphasis on armored vehicles (tanks being, as Wells foretold, the ironclads of the land) as well as the deployment of mixed-composition infantry squads with a membership differing in arms and capabilities, as opposed to endless columns of Napoleonic soldiers all marching with the same rifle over their shoulder.²⁵⁸ Aircraft share the atomic quality of boats: an aerial board wargame like *Fight in the Skies* set in the First World War era typically focuses on dogfights between individual planes. This permits a large degree of individuation in the endurance system: in *Fight in the Skies*, different amounts of damage could be withstood by the various components of different airplanes. Exotic models also sported additional guns, and some planes even required two crewmen to operate. Gradually, this individuation shifted from planes to their pilots. As Mike Carr notes in *Aerodrome* #11 (April 1970), in *Fight* you control only one man, and in a sense, the way he performs is an extension of your personality. While Section 4.3 will explore the implications of that claim in more detail, narrowing the player's attention to only one man rather than a whole army created a greater bond of identification between the player and this man, although the scope of agency in an aerial dogfight wargame left players little to do with these impulses other than dramatize the backstories and battles of their pilots.²⁵⁹ These were among the first steps towards a system that no longer simulated armies, but instead simulated people.

Simulating people in wargames at the 1:1 scale also satisfies our naïve intuitions looking at a miniature battlefield filled with human figures, as Pat Condray wrote in *Wargamer's Newsletter* #83: Most of us, whenever we first got down to wargames with rules instead of simply throwing dirt lumps, assumed that one figure represented one man. There he was, after all, one head, one torso, two legs, and unless some accident had overtaken him, two arms. A prominent example reviewed in that same periodical in June 1970 is the *Western Gunfight Wargame Rules* of the Bristol Wargames Society the same English gamers who popularized the use of the d20 for percentage dice in their later *Advanced WWII Rules*. The *Wargamer's Newsletter* blurb deems these American Wild West rules a most interesting innovation in that neglected but fascinating field of one-man-on-the-table representing-one-man-in-real-life style of wargaming. [WGN:#99]

Western Gunfight applies many of the more sophisticated features previously discussed in this chapter directly to the simulation of individual

combatants. Gunfighters divide into strata of Novice, Average and Professional.²⁶⁰ Each player has a surrogate in the game: At the start of the game each player must select a personal figure which will be in charge and will act as the player wishes. The surrogates are not, however, the only units on a side: All other figures are given individual orders and will attempt to
²⁵⁷ Featherstone, *War Games*, 150.

²⁵⁸ For an example of a modern squadron-based 1:1 figure scale miniature wargame, see for example

²⁵⁹ While later version of *Fight in the Skies* (from 1975 forward) support vastly greater individuation in pilots, including stratification and progression mechanisms, those were not present in the 1968 or *Aerodrome* #38 (late in 1973), and surely was influenced by the progression mechanisms of Blackmoor and *Dungeons & Dragons* rather than vice-versa.

²⁶⁰ Quotations here are taken from the 1971 edition.

carry out these orders for the rest of the game, though the Bossman figure can issue new spoken orders to subordinates, with a reasonable prospect that they will be accepted. Each game move represents only two and a half seconds of time, and games should last no more than ten or so moves. Figures are individuated by a number of factors. The selection of weapons begins with generic implement like the knife but comprises almost twenty different varieties of guns for the aspiring high-plains drifter, everything from one-shot Derringers to revolvers, muskets, carbines, shotguns and even repeating rifles. Traveling gunfighters may own horses, though *Western Gunfight* falls short of specifying any other belongings that are not germane to combat. Another, more substantial form of individuation in the system comes from the

there are three: the hand-to-hand, rifle

talents assigned to each figure, of which and revolver talent. Each talent has a numerical factor, a value which is added to the accuracy die when attempting to hit a target. Novices, appropriately enough, demonstrate little talent they can have no talent higher than +1, while Professionals can have talents up to +10. For detailing these talents, as well as accounting for ammunition and wounds, *Western Gunfight* prescribes a record sheet for each figure.

If nothing else, the substantial promotion of *Western Gunfight* in *Wargamer's Newsletter* testifies to the prominence of the 1:1 figures scale in 1970 and 1971, the period of *Chainmail*'s development.²⁶¹ By 1973, there

were even examples of board wargames that adopted a 1:1 scale, notably SPI *Sniper!*²⁶² Gygax alludes to his familiarity with the 1:1 scale as early as 1969, where in an article on ancient and medieval miniature rules he notes that Romans in groups of 10 figures works very well at the 1-1 ratio;; at a 1-10 ratio they became centuries and at 1-50 the unit is a cohort. [IW:v2n4] The LGTSA medieval miniature rules, in their *Domesday Book* #5 incarnation, adhere to a figure scale of 10:1, though the 1971 Guidon edition of *Chainmail* prefers a 20:1 scale for all but the tiniest figurines, in the which case it reverts back to 10:1. The first edition of *Chainmail* also of course offers Man-to-Man Combat rules, where instead of using one figure to represent numerous men, a single figure represents a single man. The Fantasy Supplement lacks any specific figure scale, though it implies that humanoid fantasy figures represent groups of creatures (in the Fantasy Reference Table, dwarves, orcs, goblins and so on fight as ordinary light foot or heavy foot) but a figure for a dragon almost certainly represents a single creature rather than a gaggle. Heroes also stand for a single hero, rather than a dozen or so Fafhrds in a phalanx;; ultimately, the fantasy stories reviewed in Chapter Two are not about masses of anonymous soldiers, they are about individual heroes of renowned stature and notorious name.²⁶³

²⁶¹ In the May 1973 *Newsletter*, Gygax

particularly glad to have chance to read how the rules play, for although I have heard some good reports on the *Western Gunfight Wargaming Rules* [WGN:#134] This notice appears well after the publication of *Chainmail*, but before *Dungeons & Dragons*. It does establish, however, that Gygax certainly knew of *Western Gunfight* and had read an overview of its operations prior to *Boot Hill*.

²⁶² *Sniper!* not only exhibits a 1:1 figure scale, but also an endurance mechanism (soldiers have four wound

sold *Moves* #18 reveals that Dunnigan had studied Korns during his design process for *Sniper!*, and certainly the game inherits many of its novel properties (including endurance and stratification) from earlier miniature wargames.

Heroes and Wizards in *Chainmail* are individuated gunslingers in the *Western Gunfight* system, Heroes possess equipment, up to and including horses. Wizards, on the other hand, distinguish themselves with their customizable knowledge of spells. A *Chainmail* Wizard may hurl either Fireballs or Lightning Bolts, but not both, for example, and each Wizard

selects their own set of utility spells. From what we know of the way Gygax played *Chainmail* from the Battle of Brown Hills, Wizards brought three or four spells into battle. [WGN:#116] The Warlock Huldr ap Skree prepares himself with Fireball, Phantasmal Forces, Darkness and Conjunction of Elementals;; while the Magician of the Cairn s arsenal consisted of Lightning Bolt, and then the milder Wizard Light and Circle of Protection. These spell choices starkly individuate the Wizards, as of course do their names. Only two other figures in the Battle of Brown Hills have proper names, including the Giant King Verdurmir and Count Aerll, a Super-hero further individuated by a magic sword. Merely being a Hero does not entitle a figure to a proper name, however;; there are three Heroes and three Anti-Heroes on the opposing sides acting as infantry leaders who apparently merit no particular distinction. Even for the named figures, the level of individuation remained modest enough not to require a formal record sheet.

In Arneson and Gygax vessel requires a Ship Data Sheet 1972 Guidon edition includes a sample Ship Data Sheet as a gatefold. The Data Sheet recorded more than a dozen pieces of information: some strictly quantitative attributes required by the system such as speed, tonnage, the Sail Factor and Crew Factor, but also purely cosmetic information like the name of the ship, its nationality, even its fictional captain and the name of the player. These are all static properties of the ship;; the Data Sheet also records dynamic properties such as the amount of high and low damage taken, repairs made or the crew morale, as well as turn-by-turn events and orders. In terms of the sheer amount of individuation, the unique vessels in *Don t Give Up The Ship* far exceed the specificity of Pratt or the *Western Gunfight* system.

Given that *Don t Give Up the Ship* served as the naval house rules for Arneson Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, this advanced degree of individuation spread to other components of the campaign. It applied most of all to the surrogates of the players, the figures in game that represented the players and typically even shared their names. The campaign modeled these surrogates through a system of personality, a sort of narrative of the life and circumstances of the ruling dynasties of the setting. The *Corner of the Table* lists several events that have befallen the personalities in the campaign: assassinations, sibling rivalries, abdications. [COTT:71:v3n5May] These ideas about personalities extended to games unrelated to the Napoleonic era, such as the 1870s-era Western game run by Duane Jenkins that pitted Dave Arneson s bandit El Pauncho (and his wily subordinates El Wino, El Superbo and the Sunstruck Kid) against Marshall Fant and the forces of the

law. Ultimately, much of the treatment of personalities undoubtedly derives from practices in *Diplomacy*, which Section 4.1 will detail.²⁶⁴ Personality, as understood by Arneson, did in different ways. Like particular weapons and collaboration *Don t Give Up The Ship*, however, every in keeping with the Pratt tradition of the ship-card. The strongly individuate the various campaign rulers, though only rarely were these rulers incarnated as figures on miniature wargaming tables. Dave Wesely s Braunstein introduced that dynamic to the Twin Cities group, as Section 1.9 related, and from there it entered the Blackmoor campaign.

²⁶³ The case of Heroes and Wizards still admits of some ambiguity, as a figure might represent a Hero surrounded by ten or twenty myrmidons, say.

²⁶⁴

In Blackmoor, the concept of personality remains, but the sense of the term shifted subtly. It still designated characters for example, we read that during the Bunch s sojourn at Loch Gloomen several of the more prominent personalities have gotten wiped out. [COTT:72:v4n6] But beyond that, the personality system extended to represent the set of abilities that specified a character mathematically, capturing and quantifying the most important qualities of a person. A surviving character sheet from the Blackmoor campaign, that of Pete Gaylord s character the Wizard of the Wood (best known from the brief biography in the *First Fantasy Campaign*), offers great insight into this new form of individuation at a critical transitional stage between *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons*.²⁶⁵ It displays a number of features we should expect of a Blackmoor Wizard: stratification and progression, for example, as the listing for level originally had a 7 in pencil, but an 8 has been written over it in red ink. On the reverse of the sheet, under the heading Personality, we see a list of seven qualities, each of which has been assigned a numerical value: Brains, Looks, Credibility, Sex, Health, Strength and Courage. In a second column, there are skills more specific to vocations: Horsemanship, Woodsmanship, Leadership, Flying and Seamanship;; though an odd man out, probably a later addition to the system, follows as Cunning. The original penciled values of each of these numbers ranges between 2 and 11, although more than half of the first seven qualities have been crossed out and replaced in blue ink with higher numbers, which now range up to 14. Given that the original values include four 7s, and that 7 is by far the most common number rolled with to the personalities of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign are drawn.

²⁶⁵ nformation linking it to the Blackmoor campaign, there is significant evidence for placing it before the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*. First of all, as the *First Fantasy Campaign*

aign, which suggests that a character sheet for the Wizard of the Wood could not be any later than *Dungeons & Dragons*. [FFC:28] Note as well that internal correspondences seem to have run shorter than real years (Loch Gloomen, for example, arose not at the end of the third calendar year as the *First Fantasy Campaign* might suggest, but in fact the Blackmoor Bunch arrived there no later than eighteen months after the start of Blackmoor per the *COTT*

clues that suggest quite an early date: 1) it has level, but no listing of later *D&D* terms such as hit

Appendix B in , which appears only in the first edition of *Chainmail et cetera*), as well as by including several items that *Dungeons & Dragons* later excluded, notably the arquebus

hence Gertrude;; 4) the mention in *Different Worlds* #3, where ased on animal-type, vegetable-type or mineraltype with a hodge *First Fantasy Campaign* , and later mentioned by John Snider in his recollections of Blackmoor as well. [DW:#5] This evidence makes it overwhelmingly likely that this sheet was created during a fairly early segment of the Blackmoor campaign.

<p>Wizard Gaylord</p> <p>Organic Type 814</p> <p>Level: 9 (3 without source) 10</p> <p>Source of Power: Super Berry/Wizard wood</p> <p>Protection of Home Area: 16 spells</p> <p>Extends: "Tiger" - Full Scale (size) Dragon</p> <p>Weapons Classifications:</p> <table border="0"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dagger 7</td> <td>Pole Arms 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hand Ax 8</td> <td>Halberd 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mace 6</td> <td>2 Hnd. Sword 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sword 6</td> <td>Mtd. Lance 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Battle AXE 10 + 5</td> <td>Pike 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Morn, Stng 6</td> <td>Aquabos 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flail 7</td> <td>STONE 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spear 5</td> <td>Crossbow 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Longbow 6</td> <td>Lt Cat 10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Composite 6</td> <td>Hvy Cat 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Bombard 5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Dagger 7	Pole Arms 8	Hand Ax 8	Halberd 8	Mace 6	2 Hnd. Sword 3	Sword 6	Mtd. Lance 9	Battle AXE 10 + 5	Pike 7	Morn, Stng 6	Aquabos 7	Flail 7	STONE 6	Spear 5	Crossbow 4	Longbow 6	Lt Cat 10	Composite 6	Hvy Cat 6		Bombard 5	<p>PERSONALITY</p> <table border="0"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Brains 113</td> <td>HORSEMANSHIP 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Looks 913</td> <td>Woodsmanhip 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Credibility 7</td> <td>Leadership 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sex 7</td> <td>Flying 11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health 1014</td> <td>Spearmanhip 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strength 68</td> <td>Cunning 11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Courage 7</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Brains 113	HORSEMANSHIP 5	Looks 913	Woodsmanhip 7	Credibility 7	Leadership 4	Sex 7	Flying 11	Health 1014	Spearmanhip 3	Strength 68	Cunning 11	Courage 7	
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FIGURE 45: BLACKMOOR "WIZARD GAYLORD" CHARACTER SHEET 2d6, we might surmise that such dice rolls originally determined these values, and that through some form of in-game event or progression, they could rise.

Originally, the Wizard Gaylord's highest personality trait was Brains, penciled in at 11 on the sheet, though after the transformations of the blue ink, Brains at 13 now plays second fiddle to Health at 14. Initially Strength (5) ranks lowest in the Wizard's personality, though after the emendations there is a three-way tie for last place between Courage, Credibility, and Sex. As it emphasizes brains over strength, the personality of the Wizard Gaylord conforms to our stereotypical expectations for a magician. Crucially, these attributes cover a range of activities that go well beyond combat: properties like Looks and Sex flesh out a more fully-rounded character whose activities are not limited to dungeon exploration. The Wizard Gaylord sheet, unlike Pratt's ship cards or even the specifications of *Western Gunfight* cowboys, shows us a system for more than just a wargaming unit: it aspires to be a system for simulating a person.

Not all of the abilities of a personality in Blackmoor modeled such general properties. The first side of the Wizard Gaylord's sheet also lists an

individual skill level with each of the *Chainmail* weapons something that might seem peculiar for a Wizard, though *Chainmail* Wizards have a well-articulated melee capability. Games like the *Western Gunfight Wargame Rules* established a precedent for individual figures having a rated skill with particular weapons, and for that skill to be added to accuracy dice to counter avoidance or other circumstantial penalties. More abstract qualities such as Brains, however, have different precedents. Most notably, Tony Bath devised a system governing the non-player characters in his Hyborian campaign, originally only for the nobility of countries but eventually covering military officials as well. This system allowed Bath to generate life-events randomly for important characters in his game: marriages, diseases, accidental deaths and so on which impacted the state of the game world and occasionally served as the context, or pretext, for a battle. He termed this general process characterisation, and it seems to have figured significantly in his game by the mid-to-late 1960s. In an article called Characterisation in Hyboria in *Slingshot* #29 (March 1970), Bath further discusses the numerical ratings granted to military commanders as a part of this process. These included loyalty, disloyalty, ability and slowness. determined the probability that a subordinate might obey orders, whereas all efficacy in combat and slowness determined the rate of responsiveness. Bath assigned a rating for each category between one and five, and various strategic and tactical benefits accrued to those with superior ratings: for example, a unit commanded by a character with an ability of one or two fires before any other unit. Bath and his opponents consulted these traits when game events hinged on the performance or reaction of one of these nonplayer characters. In this mechanism we can certainly detect traces of its ancestor, the early stratification system of Generals described by Bath in the *War Game Digest* (see the previous section). [WGD:v4n3] The world of Hyboria even offered progression for these individual ratings through the establishment in several Hyborian countries of Universities and Staff Colleges, attendance at which is liable to increase ratings and improve efficiency. [SL:#29]

Although Bath sometimes alluded to the use of characterisation in his frequent articles about Hyboria, the full extent of his characterisation system did not see print until his *Setting up a Wargames Campaign* (1973). For this incarnation of Hyboria, Bath adopted a system invented by Richard Nelson, which comprised statistics intended to help referees select a course of action for subordinate non-player characters through abilities that governed how

effective those individuals might be.²⁶⁶ Among the characteristics are Intelligence and Appearance, as well as a Popularity Factor which determines how responsive followers will be to a character's leadership. Other attributes specify something closer to the *Dungeons & Dragons* concept of alignment, including Morals, Generosity and Loyalty. For political and military efficacy, this system separates a baseline aptitude from experience thus each character has an innate Military Aptitude, which is partly determined by Intelligence, and a separate Military Experience. This experience is a direct form of stratified progression: in order to increase by one grade in Military Experience, a character must serve a certain tenure as an officer, though the higher the rank, the less time is required to advance a grade. All of these characteristics are rated between one and six, and while Bath generated most with a roll of a d6 to flesh out the competence of functionaries in his world, the experience abilities accrued only through in-game actions. The aggregate military capability of a character derived from the sum of Military Aptitude with Military Experience, thus a figure between 2 and 12, much like the personality traits in Blackmoor.²⁶⁷

All of these systems modeled personal attributes in a manner intended to make possible the simulation of people in games that involved combat but did not focus on it. The first two ability modeled exclusively. While it is possible, in the manner of Scharnhorst, to build mathematical models for the effectiveness of firearms or other weapons, building a system around more abstract quantities like intelligence poses a greater challenge. However, quantification of general human attributes had many familiar manifestations in the 1970s, including the measure of brainpower through the intelligent quotient (IQ). Among the educated suburban youths who formed the primary audience of wargames, IQ tests enjoyed a special prominence as a status symbol explicitly ranking them above others perhaps most importantly among younger enthusiasts eager to quantify their superiority over less cerebral classmates. Len Lakofka *Diplomacy* fanzine *Liaisons Dangereuses* (May 29, 1972), for example, contained a ninety-question IQ test adapted from a 1963 book on selfanalysis.²⁶⁸ Another, perhaps more pervasive form of quantitative ranking familiar to the young in the early 1970s was the Selective Service classification, such as the 4-F which spared Dave Arneson a trip to Vietnam. Finally, one cannot entirely discount the possibility that baseball statistics influenced the quantification of human ability in wargames. Games such as *Strat-o-Matic Baseball* (1962) applied the

statistical information beloved of all collectors of baseball cards to the simulation of entire fictional seasons of baseball;; in the mature incarnation of the game, a card enumerating the statistics of each player their batting averages, success in the field, and so forth determined the outcome of simulated games in concert with die rolls, a 3d6 for each at-bat determining whether a pitch is hit and what base if any the batter reaches. In late 1968, Scott Duncan wrote up a review of this system for the IFW monthly, and in 1970 Gygax briefly maintained a column on wargaming for the *All Sports Digest*, the house organ of the Strat-o-Matic company. Surely, Gygax knew well the operation of this and other similar sports simulation systems;; Avalon Hill produced several athletics-themed games themselves.

²⁶⁶ *Setting up a Wargames Campaign*, 41. It furthermore generated some high-level bullet points on the personality of non-player characters women, opense character traits.

²⁶⁷ But did these practices influence Blackmoor? Bear in mind that by the time *Setting up a Wargames Campaign* saw print around the middle of 1973, Arneson had already demonstrated Blackmoor to Gygax;; the snippets such as the ratings of generals listed above, however, had certainly launched these ideas into the milieu of wargaming well before the publication of *Chainmail* or the start of the Twin Cities campaigns.

Regardless of their precedents, these personality qualities appeared novel enough to Gygax to warrant his mention that Arneson had expanded the character descriptions significantly beyond the *Chainmail* system in Blackmoor. [DR:#7] Between the creation of the Wizard Gaylord sheet and the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, the concept of personality gave way to the abilities, a set of six qualities which the referee generates by rolling 3d6. [OD&D1:10] For players, these abilities serve as a hint to aid them in selecting a role. The abilities of Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Constitution, Dexterity and Charisma may not correspond exactly to the personality traits in Blackmoor: on a strict reading, they share only the first element of that list in common. Brains, of course, maps onto Intelligence, as Health probably does onto Constitution (a combination of health and endurance).²⁶⁹ The personality traits of Credibility, Looks and Sex presumably all conflate into Charisma, which is described as a combination of appearance, personality, and so forth. Courage has no analog in first edition *Dungeons & Dragons* and nor does Cunning, should we take that to be a basic personality trait. On the *Dungeons & Dragons* side, neither

Wisdom nor Dexterity have any corresponding value on the sheet of the Wizard Gaylord though of course we have scant insight into the role that personality traits played in Blackmoor, so we cannot simply assume that a need for these qualities went unsatisfied.

²⁶⁸ Whether or not such tests can measure an innate quality of intelligence is a more doubtful proposition today. The test Lakofka reprints is populated almost entirely with questions of general knowledge or mathematics. Interestingly, Stephen Jay Gould points out in his *Mismeasure of Man* that many exponents in favor of IQ tests proposed a minimum required IQ level for certain professions, which indeed seems to be a precedent followed by *Dungeons & Dragons* and later role-playing games. ²⁶⁹ It is unclear how the Blackmoor endurance system described in Section 3.2.2.2, where one dices for initial hit points, connected up with these abilities. Arneson attested to that system some two years later, so it might not yet have been implemented. It is also possible that this Health ability represented hit points themselves, and that only later did Constitution become a separate ability.

In its first edition, *Dungeons & Dragons* specified a narrow application for abilities in the system: it classifies Strength, Intelligence and Wisdom as the prime requisites for the classes of Fighting-men, Magic-users and Clerics respectively. Characters with a high prime requisite for their class receive a substantial experience bonus 5% for higher than 12, 10% for higher than 14 and will therefore progress faster with a superior prime requisite. Low scores in the prime requisite incur an experience penalty. Thus, the manner in which these scores aid a player in selecting a role is rather heavy-handed;; a player would be foolish not to select a class that conforms with the referee's die rolls for requisites. The non-requisite abilities of Constitution and Dexterity confer combat-related benefits: Constitution over 14 adds 1 to the character's hit points per level, and Dexterity over 12 improves accuracy with missile weapons;; though for low scores, hit points or accuracy are comparably penalized. Charisma facilitates management of hirelings or pliant monsters and, the rules hint, a high Charisma might help a witch to decide whether to turn a player into a pig or keep him enchanted as a lover.²⁷⁰

The six abilities, *Dungeons & Dragons* suggests, should be committed to a record of a character, along with the character's name and class, as well as current experience point and gold piece totals. These collectively constitute

the bare-bones information necessary to specify a character. Indeed, for the purposes of system, those six requisites, along with hit points, armor class, saving throws, race, level and possessions provide the lion's share of the data a player requires to participate in the game world. Considered as a whole, they individuate characters nicely, and allow for the simulation of a person who does more than just adventure. Dicing for the six abilities alone allows for more than sixteen million distinct results, albeit many of them with dim prospects for dungeon adventuring. With the separate rolls for hit points, player selection of spells, varying amounts of starting gold and other equipment, the odds are slight that any two characters will have identical statistics.

Dungeons & Dragons characters are so radically individual that it would be unthinkable to represent them in groups on a sand table with a single Reiswitzian block though it would be problematic to ascribe any figure scale to *Dungeons & Dragons* at all, since, as was mentioned above, miniature figurines serve no ostensible purpose during gameplay. For all that, the act of generating a character need not be an intensively creative or personal one. The process of joining a game entails that a player invent at least one character;; the rules do not stipulate a one-to-one correspondence between players and characters, however, and the process of hiring mercenaries or charming monsters into service entails that the player may ultimately manage a regular entourage of various character types. All the prime requisite system in *Men & Magic* stipulates is that a player notes his appropriate scores and then opts for a role that same volume reinforces that players must decide what role they will play in the campaign, human or otherwise.

²⁷⁰ In the original edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*, it is however surprising how little else these abilities actually affect. Intelligence over 10 allows characters to learn additional languages, but, for example, great Strength does not make sword strikes more damaging. *Men & Magic* hout any further elaboration. [OD&D1:10] Dexterity initiative system is given in the original edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Later versions of *Dungeons & Dragons* significantly increased the bonuses and penalties associated with non-average scores.

[OD&D1:6] Thus the decisions of race and class lie with the player, but it is unclear what other creative responsibilities devolve to the player during character generation, other than presumably choosing a name: Xylarthen is

the sample Magic-user moniker. But how well does a player have to know Xylarthen in order to play him? Does a player need to know his parentage, how he takes his tea, where he studied magic and what color sash he favors?

Ultimately, nothing in the published system of the original *Dungeons & Dragons* encourages players down a path to deeper identification with their characters. Nothing advises them, as Totten advises a player of *Strategos*, that he can take no advantage of indications of hostile parties, until such time as information could really be communicated to him a rule intended to restrict a player's actionable knowledge of the world to that of an in-game surrogate, a character. How far did the authors of *Dungeons & Dragons* intend for the simulation of people to go? The lengthy example excerpted above of a dialog between the referee and caller in *Underworld & Wilderness* contains no instances of players speaking in the voice of their character, nor of any comparable behavior from the referee, nor any notion of how players or characters in a party might interact among themselves.

It may therefore seem fitting that the term role-playing does not appear in the initial edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*, as nothing in the system steers players in this direction. However, all of the earliest accounts of *Dungeons & Dragons* do incorporate imaginative characterization. The first battle reports Gygax published to advertise *Dungeons & Dragons* exhibit highly idiosyncratic character behavior in a dramatization, and even quite a bit of immersed dialog of the sort one might read in any of the fantasy fictions described in Chapter Two. We will return to these battle reports in the next section, as they fit better into a broader examination of the precedents of characters in games. One does not have to look far to find evidence of role-playing in the *Diplomacy* community of the 1960s which, interestingly enough, consisted of an intersection of wargamers and fans of science fiction and fantasy. This very community met *Dungeons & Dragons* with tremendous enthusiasm, and it deserves no small part of the credit for the rapid popularization of the game outside of hardcore wargaming circles. These veterans of genre fandom and of social challenges certainly needed no explicit instruction to approach *Dungeons & Dragons* as a social game that simulates people, to bring to their characters a depth of background that was uncommon in the broader wargaming community. The evolution of the concept of character in role-playing games, and the manner in which this concept incubated in the circles of genre fandom and the peripheries of wargaming, is the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: CHARACTER ROLES AND IMMERSION

The term role-playing entered the English language from German, like the term wargame. Originally, *rollenspiel* denoted an exercise in group psychotherapy, the psychodrama invented by Jakob L. Moreno. When he immigrated to the United States from Austria in 1925, Moreno began importing his existing work to English;; in 1943, he wrote that the term role-player is a literary translation of the term *Rollenspieler* which I have used, and in that same article he invokes the now-familiar form role-playing.¹ These instances are effectively the introduction of that construction into the English language, at a time when Gary Gygax was five years old and Dave Arneson would not be born for four more years. This hyphenated compound was around thirty years old when *Dungeons & Dragons* appeared only a handful of years younger than Conan.

The role-playing prescribed by Moreno required patients to improvise in a situation dictated by their therapists: effectively, to simulate a person in that fictional circumstance. In Moreno behavioral framework, all human beings take roles at various points in life, and perform those roles as a part of their fundamental social interactions.² Moreno recommended exploring roles as a means to understand or improve role performance in real situations. Role playing may be considered as an experimental procedure, a method of learning to perform roles more adequately.³ In Moreno psychodramas, patients literally take to a stage and enact roles and scenarios jointly with the psychodramatist (the therapist) and assistants who assume various other parts necessary to construct the situation. Role-playing is never something performed alone: it is an interaction between more than one person. A psychodrama ideally transpires before an audience, in order that participants act in a context of social observance. Moreno debt to theatrical convention derived from an experimental theater group he founded in Vienna in the early 1920s called the *Stegreiftheater*, the Theater of Spontaneity. The *Stegreiftheater* was an open improvisational environment which blurred the distinction between the audience and performers. It built initial scenarios out of topical situations, usually drawn from the day's newspapers in order to prove that the performance could not have been extensively rehearsed. Although professional actors (including a young Peter Lorre) participated, anyone present in the forty-person theater could interject and influence the direction of the piece. In these artistic experiments, Moreno discovered the

potential cathartic psychological properties of improvisation in a group context.

This conceit that improvisational theater could produce a salutatory effect in the mentally ill predates Moreno. He relates a dramaturgical precedent, that of no less an ¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites these usages in Sociological Association) translate *kriegsspiel*

- *rollenspiel*

Sociometry VI (a journal of the American

-

- *spiel* in German

² The term *Roll* in German has much of the same versatility as its English counterpart;; the younger *Die Rolle welche dem Vertrauten* in his game. Moreno

-verbal children like

³ Moreno, *Who Shall Survive*, 48.

author than Goethe, whose little-known work *Lila* features a liberal helping of group psychotherapy. The eponymous protagonist has fallen into a delusional belief that she inhabits a world of elves and fairies. The doctor Verazio, who attempts her cure, enlists a number of cohorts to play the fantastic denizens of her madness in order to lure her into a scenario where she can accept reality again. Her doctor aims, as he puts it, to cure fantasy through fantasy. While Moreno psychodrama applies to less radical mental states, it too aspires to transform the everyday life of patients through the enactment of unreal situations, forcing subjects to step outside of their traditional roles and to confront a jarring conception of themselves and their relationships to others. The key to the efficacy of psychodrama is improvisation: Moreno narrowly scopes role-playing as a practice which permits the individual some degree of freedom, as opposed to reciting rehearsed lines of a play. Insofar as the patient dictates the actions of a person in a fictional setting, we might say that *anything can be attempted* provided it is in character, and that the psychodrama will illustrate the consequences of these attempts as it plays out. Unlike the player of a wargame, who merely decides and implements the actions of a fictional person, the protagonists in psychodrama must do more: they must act out the character. Whereas a commander in Reiswitz has the leisure to jot down curt, direct instructions to subordinates, the subjects of psychodrama must improvise the dialog of their personae, dramatizing these roles with their

voices and their stances, and even look their fellow participants in the eye as they await a reaction.

The fictional situations of psychodrama yield insights that help the patient to be more effective in everyday life perhaps in much the same way as Gustavus Selenus held that chess taught statecraft, a parallel rooted in the edifying character of many forms of play. In the mid-twentieth century, role-playing was used less as a means of treating mental illness than as a means of education, and Moreno promoted these alternative didactic applications of role-playing diligently. Writing in the 1953 edition of his *Who Shall Survive?*, Moreno proudly asserts of his coinage role-playing that the present popularity of the term and concept derives from the value it has proven to have as a training device in various social, occupational and vocational activities.⁴ Between 1943 and 1953, roleplaying had entered the vocabulary of many educators. By way of introduction to the book *Roleplay in Business and Industry* (1961) a volume dedicated to Moreno the authors acknowledge the rapid spread of the term role-playing.⁵ They catalog four distinct varieties of role-playing, none of which are therapeutic. The four are: 1) theatrical, in the sense an actor plays a role ;; 2) sociological, in the sense that all social behavior represents a playing of culturally determined patterns ;; 3) dissimulative, given that the spy in enemy territory or the employee who is polite to a disliked superior are playing roles ;; and finally 4) educational. Since this last sense is the particular focus of the authors, they further subdivide educational role-playing into three categories: diagnostic, to provide better understanding of the roleplayers by seeing and hearing them in action ;; informative, to give the audience and spectators information on how certain roles should be filled ;; and training, to provide the roleplayers with knowledge and skills by permitting them to experience a near-veridical situation. This last variety practically paraphrases the aim of Reiswitz, to induce in players of his wargame a mental state that closely approximates actual combat command.

⁴ Moreno, *Who Shall Survive*, 48.

⁵ The annotated bibliography in the back of that volume details no less than 102 references to industrial role-playing alone written after Moreno but before 1960. The authors note that the term might be spelled with or without a

the general tendency in the English language for associated words to be first hyphenated and then

Such an expanded stable of applications for role-playing includes many longstanding human endeavors which Moreno obviously did not invent, but all share a common core of interpersonal improvisation which Moreno isolated and emphasized. In so doing, he shed new light on the methods of educators, actors and others. Unbeknownst to its compilers, however, this catalog of role-playing disciplines of the era misses one crucial niche of role-playing which began to develop in the mid-1950s, within a small and secretive community in California: the political wargaming centered around RAND, an offshoot of the *kriegsspiel* tradition which will feature in the following section.

In these diverse role-playing practices, there emerged prefigurations of a new way of simulating people, one grounded in a strong association between players and some specific characters whom they control in a setting. These settings need not have been intended to serve for games, and players might interact with them on paper or in person. As the beginning of the previous chapter suggested, games as a general category resist definition, and a component of play can arise spontaneously in all sorts of serious or mundane activities;; some types of role-playing, like the Coventry phenomenon in Los Angeles fandom or the Society for Creative Anachronism described below, exist on the boundary between games and collaborative authorship or performance. Within these fictional settings, the bond between player and character exceeds that of the typical wargamer and his multitudinous armies, even given the favor that wargamers might show to a beloved figure like Scruby's Sergeant la Duc albeit the systems of individuation that wargames developed to handle those privileged entities certainly facilitated the development of the concept of character in wargames. At its most intense, this bond begins to display the property of *immersion* which was introduced back in Section 1.2, the state in which a player experiences the game in a vivid, impactful manner comparable to real events. It is typically a link between a player and a particular imaginary individual, a surrogate for the player in the setting. We have seen that many wargamers enjoy dramatizing past battles in a literary tone that adopts the perspective of some protagonist in a battle, and it is easy to imagine how some gamers might have brought that tone out of the past tense and into the present during the course of play.

As this chapter will show, the trend toward playing a character manifested in tabletop games, in postal games and perhaps most starkly in costumed meetings where players truly immersed themselves in their

characters. Unsurprisingly, fans of fiction, and in particular science-fiction fandom, drove these ideas of character across a wide variety of collaborative activities;; the sections in this chapter describe several ways that science fiction fans played characters in settings, and how these approaches eventually blended into wargames. By the early 1970s, these activities had entrenched themselves in several distinct communities, and we shall see the authors of *Dungeons & Dragons* participate in some of them. When *Dungeons & Dragons* reached the public, however, its three rulebooks said nothing on the subject of role-playing, of how a player should relate to or act as their character. The precedents discussed in this chapter show what seasoned role-players read between the lines of *Dungeons & Dragons*, the tacit assumptions that both the authors and the players of the game derived from their previous experiences. One constant among these role-playing precursors is their reliance on interpersonal dynamics more complicated than the traditional red-versus-blue dichotomy of wargaming: they emerged from environments where a multiplicity of players had the opportunity to conflict or collaborate, and in that rich web of interaction, to discover a persona worth embodying.⁶

4.1 COALITIONS AT RAND AND IN DIPLOMACY

In the early 1950s, wargaming at the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California, followed the precedents of rigid *kriegsspiel*. Many Princetonian mathematicians summered at RAND, and they brought with them a hobbyist s passion for the wargames which had swept Princeton in the 1940s, much as German *kriegsspiel* swept Oxford in the 1870s. The first RAND wargames, pioneered by Alexander Mood, R. M. Thrall and John Forbes Nash, followed the board wargaming tradition of Hellwig: two conflicting sides governed by small teams pushed counters across boards (in this case, hexagonal ones) to conquer cities and defeat enemy forces. That form of warfare, however, soon became anachronistic.

The advent of nuclear weaponry quickly rendered the exercise of conventional military power a risky proposition. RAND discerned that the rapid proliferation of the bomb had elevated diplomatic and economic strategies to an unprecedented importance in establishing dominance among world powers the Cold War required new thinking. Initially, the scientists at RAND attempted to formalize political and financial factors into a mathematical system susceptible to their existing methods of analysis, especially game theory as articulated in the seminal *Theory of Games and*

Economic Behavior (1944) by John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern. While the mechanics of the tactical battlefield translate reasonably well into the simple combat systems discussed in the previous chapter, the human rituals of diplomacy admit of no similar calculus. Every attempt to systematize these more abstract political factors introduced a simplification: as hobby wargamers would debate in the pages of *War Game Digest* later in the 1950s, a trade-off between realism and playability always arises, and systems run up against fundamental limits when they attempt to represent the full richness of the world. RAND's early attempts to develop a rigid wargame accounting for politics thus produced no satisfactory outcome.

With their broad mandate from the Air Force to develop an effective strategic posture for the changing military landscape, RAND hired scientists who thought very differently about modeling the world situation and welcomed the opportunity to abandon the rigid *kriegsspiel* tradition. The Social Science Division of RAND included sociologists and economists disposed toward more experimental procedures for simulating political situations. The first major work on an alternative direction came from Herbert Goldhamer, whose 1954 paper *Toward a Cold War Game* effectively founded a new direction of political gaming. In the conceit of Goldhamer's game, the government of each country was to be represented by a separate player or group of players instead of merely representing the military of a nation. The game did not attempt to model an entire world of nations, but only a subset of the powers contending in a single region;; though the United States, ever a meddler, always stuck in its oar. The moves in these political wargames

⁶ Furthermore, not a few of these precedents take place in a fantastic medieval setting, though this coincidence becomes less striking when we remember how much of the literature that constructed longing to shrug off modern life and find a heroic niche, we could hardly be surprised to discover the likes of Poul Anderson, author of the seminal visitation fantasy *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, among the first in line to don armor and clash swords in real life when the opportunity arose, as we will see in Section 4.4. constitute a set of written orders from the team representing a government. Goldhamer placed no constraints on the contents or subject of these orders. As he rather craftily put it: Such formalization would beg many questions that we regarded as the proper subject of discussion and inquiry within the exercise itself or as resolvable only by research outside the game. Rather

than work from highly simplified and schematic assumptions up to a richer and more complex game world, we followed the opposite approach.⁷

A team of referees evaluated the moves in secret and determined what, if any, consequences resulted. Governments also explicitly stated their motives and the expected results of any actions in their written orders. At their discretion, referees might challenge the appropriateness of a move on the grounds of feasibility or plausibility. Provided that governments could persuade the referees that the stipulations of their orders met this bar, moves admitted literally any imaginable type of agency truly, in the spirit of *Strategos*, this was a game in which *anything can be attempted*. Governments might mobilize armies, spread disinformation, issue threats to peers, raise money with bonds, anything that a real government might do. Intriguingly, these orders, and any text generated by the referees, constituted the entire state of the game: game play required no boards nor miniatures, everything was entirely descriptive. While descriptive does not necessarily mean dialogic, a world accessed and altered purely through words adheres more closely to the play of *Dungeons & Dragons* than prior wargames such as *Strategos*, where referees maintain a physical model of the world as it appears to a player.

On the basis of the written moves, referees updated the state of the game world, though they maintained secret information as necessary under the label game classified. Drawing from a prospectus establishing the initial configuration of the world, the referees doled out appropriate starting intelligence tailored to each government, much as in Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel* a referee sets the general idea scenario for the game and then may provide a private specific idea to the opposing factions apprising them of their own goals or intelligence. The referees of Goldhamer's game went beyond Reiswitzian impartiality insofar as they assumed the mantle of nature, that is, all of the uncontrollable forces in the world that impacted the political situation. At the whim of nature, one country might benefit from a technological breakthrough, or suffer from a famine or massive industrial strike, or whatever else might help to steer the game in a productive direction. The political game furthermore eschews the traditional opposition of red and blue in favor of many shades of gray rather than two contending sides, Goldhamer admits as many different parties as the situation of the game world requires, each of whom may adopt a posture of opposition to or alignment with the interests of any other government.

The multiparty aspect of Goldhamer's political game warrants further exploration. RAND's studies of multiparty games fell out of von Neumann work on game theory, which supplied a famous matrix for measuring the different possible outcomes of twoparty games of strategy. The *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* also proposed a model for multiplayer games, or n -party games, which the RAND Corporation tested in the early 1950s. Among the fascinating experiments in this space were four, five and even sevenplayer games of enforced coalition-building which had only minimal system but required significant interpersonal deliberations between players. In a typical instance, a referee instructed the players that they would be awarded money for forming coalitions, with larger coalitions typically receiving larger sums;; in the seven-player game, for example, a sixperson coalition received forty chips, a four-person coalition received twenty chips, and any single player left outside of a coalition lost forty chips.⁸ Within a coalition, however, players could divide up the money in any way they chose. No player had any motivation in the game to join or avoid any particular coalition other than the economic outcomes. In the largest games, this resulted in intense, even frantic bargaining, and surprisingly unequal distributions of the money within coalitions as leaders or holdouts insisted on greater compensation. Goldhamer's political games, though more nuanced from a system perspective, also exploited this primal essence of coalition-building, where certain factors outside of the scope of quantitative analysis determine why some people self-organize into a lasting coalition to the detriment of others. As the author William Poundstone wryly notes in his book *Prisoner's Dilemma*, the results of these experiments with n -party games did not follow the predictions of *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* so much as they did *Lord of the Flies*.

In 1955 and 1956, RAND conducted several trials of Goldhamer's multiparty Cold War game, the last of which focused on the great conflict of the time: the interaction of the United States with the Soviet Union. It took place in the near future (the setting ran from January 1, 1957, into the summer of that year) and unfolded over the course of three realtime weeks. The players in this game even included officials from the US State Department. At the conclusion of the game, the referees revealed all moves and other data even the secret game classified documents to all of the participants, and in the course of several days worth of discussion, everyone collaboratively explored the implications of the game for American policy.

This simulation ostensibly helped to identify the probable trend of future international affairs and the most likely consequences ensuing from policies and military postures that might be adopted by the United States or other countries.⁹ Moreover, the referees quickly understood the game's value as an education tool. The political game provides a lively setting in which students of politics, acting as observers or apprentice participants, can learn a good deal.... factual information takes on a new interest and importance when it is required for intelligent participation in the game, for example. Even individuals with considerable political training and knowledge can learn from political gaming, as it allows them to amass relevant information that might lie outside their specialty. Finally, the game does give players a new insight into the pressures, the uncertainties, and the moral and intellectual difficulties under which foreign policy decisions are made.

Given these avowed educational benefits, and the large overlap of part-time RAND staffers with various academic departments, RAND could hardly withhold this new tool from the nation's colleges. Commencing in 1956, its researchers frequently socialized the core tenets of political gaming in American universities, such as Stanford, Yale, Princeton, Harvard, MIT and Northwestern. Hans Speier, the head of RAND's Social Sciences Division, personally presented a summary of the experiment to the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford in 1957. At the time, Harold Guetzkow and Richard C. Snyder were attached to the Center, and the following year while at Northwestern they instigated a new gaming project called the Inter-Nation Simulation. As Guetzkow notes in a July 1959 paper in *Behavioral Science*, the efforts in simulation at Northwestern were stimulated by two streams of intellectual endeavor, one represented in the war game and other deriving from the social psychological group experiment. The former influence came from RAND and the latter owes a not-insignificant debt to Moreno in the circles of group psychology, role-playing now enjoyed widespread esteem.¹⁰ It is thus unsurprising that Guetzkow's description in that same 1959 paper on the Inter-Nation Simulation includes the following, certainly among the earliest statements linking wargaming and role-playing:

⁸ Interestingly, two- and five-player coalitions merely broke even (zero chips) and three-player coalitions actually lost twenty chips. These results have some clear implications;; for example, if a stable four-person coalition forms, the remaining three players have a negative incentive to form a three-

person coalition, and thus the only plausible outcome is the formation of a two-person breakeven coalition and one person left out in the cold to suffer a forty chip loss. One can only imagine the nature of the bargaining between those three. In most variants of the game, players could also form various side-deals, exchanging chips in any way they saw fit; surely coalition-building sometimes involved desperate bribes or perhaps charitable compensation for accepting a chip loss. The nature and results of these trials (and others of the games with four or five persons) are detailed *n-* and Nering (RM-948).

In the war game, however, there is more role-playing, in which the actors need to imagine many features of the military situation and respond to each other's moves in terms of these self-imposed role conceptions.¹¹

In the three instances of the Inter-Nation Simulation undertaken at Northwestern in the 1957 1958 school year, the games involved five nations. Typically, two persons were designated as decision-makers per nation, one for internal decisions and one for external decisions these were the roles that might be played. Each nation formulated and strove toward its goals (for example, security, domination, cooperation or internal growth), but decision-makers needed to remain within carefully-delimited policy grounds or risk removal from office. The external decision-makers engaged in direct international diplomacy, either bilaterally or in multilateral congresses with their counterparts in other nations. Nations could either leverage their strategic strength solely for intimidation or by declaring open war on other nations, be it alone or jointly in an alliance. A world newspaper reported key game events to all parties, though external decision-makers might also insert misleading propaganda into its pages. Initially, the Inter-Nation Simulation involved fictional nations only, rather than having participants role-play particular countries, such as Spain or Indonesia. Would not such encouragement toward role-playing tend to secure reactions in terms of the presuppositions each participant has as to the nature of a particular country's reactions in a foreign policy situation?¹²

Political simulations where participants took on the characters of national leaders continued to evolve throughout the 1960s, and the term role-playing accompanied them as they spread. Tracing its origin and dissemination, Richard A. Brody of Stanford (another early protagonist in the development of the game) termed RAND's style of conflict simulation Role-Playing Crisis-Playing Games.¹³ In addition to the universities

mentioned above, Brody notes that variations on the basic RAND theme also thrived at West Point and the Air Force Academy. It is therefore unsurprising to find, as Section 3.1.7 has already reported, that by 1964 a representative of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff could report on their own role-playing games in which we try to represent several international actors, usually governments.¹⁴ Even the Inter-Nation Simulation formed its own longstanding tradition, especially in the environs around Chicago, the home of Northwestern University. A later iteration was staged to considerable acclaim at GenCon III in 1970, after which it received a positive notice in the IFW newsletter: The major draw on Sunday being the INTERNATIONAL SIMULATION which drew 50 persons on Sunday that had not come on Saturday.¹⁵ The game, as of then marketed in a 1966 edition by Science Research Associates, received a favorable review in the *International Wargamer* as well, which called it the panacea for political wargamers and mentions an ongoing one hundred person play-by-mail instance of the game. [IW:v3n6] Before 1970, political gaming had inspired several independent play-by-mail games;; for example, early in 1969 Gygax recalled his involvement circa 1967 with the Ad Hoc Committee for the Reinstitution of WWII run by students at Stanford, in which he played the Chinese military commander. Like the Inter-Nation Simulation, the AdHocCom split command of each nation between several stakeholders, three military and one civilian. The entire thing folded for numerous reasons, Gygax relates, probably the biggest being that the rules were too blasted complex!¹⁶ Remember that Gygax only began to participate in the national wargaming community toward the end of 1966, and thus his experiences in the AdHocCom must have been formative ones.

¹⁰ More particularly, for two sources on the social psychology of groups Guetzkow in *Simulation in International Relations* cites *Small Groups* (1955) by Hare, Borgatta and Bales, which has a chapter on *Moreno Group Dynamics, Research and Theory* (1953), which also deals significantly with Moreno -

¹¹ Guetzkow, et. al., *Simulation in International Relations*, 27.

¹² Ibid., 36.

¹³ Ibid., 202.

The basic RAND theme of political gaming also took quick and deep root at MIT. Goldhamer reported on no less than four distinct activities conducted there prior to 1959. In the same academic year as the original

Inter-Nation Simulation at Northwestern, W. Phillips Davison of RAND, then a visiting professor at MIT, applied political gaming to one of his graduate seminars and introduced a major innovation by dispensing with written orders. Instead of committing their intentions to paper, players sat around a large table and could make their moves orally, although a fairly detailed written record was kept closer still to the dialog-driven approach of *Dungeons & Dragons*.¹⁷ Goldhamer notes that this style generated intense interest among the students, who continued the game at lunch and at other informal gatherings. Lincoln P. Bloomfield of MIT ran sessions for undergraduates at the Center for International Studies as early as September 1958 modeling¹⁴ -Militia

in *Second War Gaming Symposium Proceedings*.

¹⁵ [IWS:Sep70] Robin Laws, *40 Years of Gen Con*, 15, even has a picture of the Inter-Nation Simulation in progress in the courtyard. Intriguingly, that picture was taken by Mike Carr, a participant in both the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign and Blackmoor thus at least one member of the Twin Cities gaming circle saw this game first-hand in 1970, an important time in the evolution of role-playing in the Twin Cities, and perhaps others from that group took in the game as well. Note that the Inter-Nation Simulation returned to GenCon from time to time;; years later we see that Saturday. [DR:#17]

¹⁶

organized wargaming, learned of it there.

the United Nations an organization then only thirteen years old. When Bloomfield wrote up his experiences for the *American Political Science Review* issue of December 1959, in his article playing.

Three Experiments in Political Gaming, he made extensive use of the term roleHis aim, he attested, was to ascertain whether student role-playing here would yield results of a nature that could not be equally produced by normal procedures of classroom lectures, seminar discussion, readings, or the preparation of individual papers. Bloomfield did criticize the tendency of his students to play-act as well as role-act, but he concludes that a certain amount of histrionics is doubtless a necessary price for authentic role-playing, and within limits it should probably not be discouraged. To add flavor to the games, participants occasionally spoke in a foreign language and the directors arranged in advance to provide expert translations.¹⁸

Once the participants in a political game participate in person rather than on paper, the simulation necessarily moves beyond the political situation and to the character of the individuals that conduct politics. If a player speaks, do they speak in their own voice, or that of their character? Bloomfield notes that these dramatizations of character make roleplaying more authentic, and through the rest of this chapter we will see many early roleplayers striving for greater realism and immersion in the simulation of their characters.

While these games transpired at MIT, a few blocks up Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge a certain Allan B. Calhamer (b. 1931) worked toward a new sort of game about diplomatic relationships. As an undergraduate at Harvard, Calhamer studied history and political science until his graduation in 1953, after which he briefly attended that institution's prestigious law school before taking the foreign service exam and spending some months posted abroad. Upon his return to Massachusetts, Calhamer drafted rules for a board game which, in its 1958 manuscript form, bore the working title *The Game of Realpolitik*. It represented the culmination of ideas Calhamer had developed during his time at Harvard, although it was not until 1958 that Operations Research people played many games and offered many suggestions for improvement.¹⁹ The academic discipline of

¹⁸

¹⁹ From *Games & Puzzles*, January 1974. In that same article on the history of *Diplomacy*, Calhamer the game was completed in 1954 and [has] undergone relatively little change since made similar pronouncements in other venues;; in a 1966 piece in *Diplomania* #12 I began *Graustark Diplomacy*, 1953

final tallies of supply centers held. It is difficult to ascertain how much these early efforts resembled differences between the 1958 and 1959 rules demonstrates that the variance could be quite large. In the *Diplomania* article, Calhamer reports of early versions around 1953 notes passed from favor of verbal communications;; the 1958 manuscript, however, still requires written a bit *Diplomacy* (from provinces in each power;; at another England opened the game with a fleet in Gibraltar, and Switzerland had a defensive army with which it could resist encroachments on Swiss territory by other powers. An English supply center in Ireland, a Turkish center in Egypt, and a neutral center in operations research, a fashionable one at the

time, incorporated many of the military topics and practices researched at RAND, and by the mid-1950s many operations research professionals at universities or in the employ of private think-tanks had adopted RAND methods. On the strength of his manuscript for *The Game of Realpolitik*, Calhamer found employment in operations research at Sylvania, a defence contractor. However, when Sylvania made no use of his creation, Calhamer took matters into his own hands. Contracting for the printing of five hundred copies with his own money, he began selling the game from his living room, following the precedent of many a game designer before him including, not so long ago, Charles S. Roberts. Calhamer game sold under the title *Diplomacy* (1959).

The setting of *Diplomacy* is Europe in the years leading up to the First World War, a period of intense diplomatic manoeuvring.²⁰ It concerns the interaction of seven Great Powers of the day: England, France, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Turkey. The actions of each nation are dictated by a single player, which made for a seven-player game. In some particulars, *Diplomacy* resembles a conventional board wargame in the Avalon Hill tradition it is perhaps no coincidence that Calhamer produced his 1958 manuscript the same year that the success of *Gettysburg* introduced board wargaming to the popular market. Unlike an Avalon Hill game, the board of *Diplomacy* lacks a grid superimposed over its map;; instead, the board shows a European map divided into eighty provinces along political lines. Typically, the name of the province corresponds to the largest city in the region, for example Berlin, London, Marseilles or Constantinople, though other provinces represent less populous nations or strategic zones, such as Belgium, Finland or North Africa. It is thus at a strategic, rather than a tactical scale certainly a map scale in excess of 1:100,000. Starting with Spring of 1901, only two turns pass per game year, a Spring and Fall turn.

The system of *Diplomacy* is exceedingly simple, as far as wargames go. There are two types of units: armies and fleets, which are confined to the land and sea respectively, though an army may ride passively upon a fleet as conveyance to a destination. Either type of unit may attempt to move to any adjacent province on a given turn no unit may move more than one such space at a time. Attacking involves attempting to move into an occupied square, but an attack succeeds only if other units (controlled by any player) eligible to move into the contested square opt to support the attacker in lieu of other movements;; specifically, a greater number of allies must support

the attacker in this fashion than support the defender.²¹ A defeated unit must retreat to an adjacent unoccupied square, and only in the absence of any adjacent empty province is the defender removed from play. *Diplomacy* is not, however, a war of attrition in the manner of chess or *Tactics II*; the size of a Great Power's army is dictated by the number of supply centers it holds. At the start of the game, twenty-two of the thirty-four supply centers on the board lie within the initial borders of the Great Powers. Each Great Power accordingly begins the game with two armies and one fleet, except for England, which appropriately receives two fleets and one army, and mother Russia, whose massive girth supports four: two armies and two fleets. Only by annexing the unclaimed twelve supply centers of the non-player lesser powers or capturing those of a rival Great Power can a nation expand the size of its military. If a Great Power controls either more or less fleets and armies in play than it possesses supply centers, for any reason, then according to the rulebook, before the next Spring turn each player's number of units is adjusted to equal the number of supply centers his country controls. Thus, a Great Power's armies diminish only if it loses supply centers to rivals, at which point its prospects rapidly dwindle; by claiming new supply centers, conversely, Great Powers field larger armies. Victory comes from controlling a target number of supply centers.

Iceland were onc *Games & Puzzles* article, that chess and the card game *Diplomacy*; it seems almost certain, however, that *Diplomacy* owes some debt to both the rigid and free wargaming mechanics popularized at RAND.

²⁰ And one that had already served as the subject of an early Inter-Nation Simulation though their simulation focused only on the six weeks leading up to the Great War. See Guetzkow, et. al., *Simulation in International Relations*, vi.

²¹ M. Thrall and John Nash, where units similarly collaborate to displace a defender, and the number of attacking units must exceed the number defending though the RAND game required a 2:1 ratio for victory, and summarily destroyed defenders rather than forcing them to relocate.

Aside from some minor wrinkles of complexity in execution, the above describes the scope of agency in the system of *Diplomacy*. When it is time for players to make their moves, they write down on a piece of paper whether each unit under their command will stand, move, or support, and if it will not stand, where it will move or whom it will support. All players keep these instructions secret while drafting them and reveal their orders

simultaneously to the designated referee: the rules recommend that a different player act as the referee each turn, since the duties of the referee are purely mechanical and easily supervised by the other players. *Diplomacy* requires the supervision of a referee because some attempted moves may not succeed;; for example, if two players attempt to move unsupported units into the same square, neither succeeds.

Viewed through the system and setting alone, *Diplomacy* hardly appears deep or innovative. The genius behind *Diplomacy* lies elsewhere, in a new dimension orthogonal to how either the system or setting play out. It is described in an unassuming paragraph at the start of the 1959 edition of the rules: Combinations and agreements among the players may affect the course of the game a great deal. These are determined during the diplomacy period which takes place before each move. This period lasts 30 minutes before the first move, and 15 minutes before each move thereafter... During these periods a player may say anything he wishes. Usually the players go to another room or off to a corner in two s and three s... The conversations usually consist of bargaining or joint military planning, but they may include such things as exchanging information, denouncing, threatening, spreading rumors, and so forth. Public announcements may be made, and documents may be written and made public or not as the players see fit. The rules do not bind a player to anything he says;; deciding whom to trust as situations arise is part of the game.²²

²² This innovation was anticipated by the work of Goldhamer and Guetzkow discussed earlier. By represents the Foreign Office and General Staff of his country, exchanging diplomatic messages and sending orders to the armies and fleets of his state. Communications between players are made by private written message only. Alliances are as binding as the players are willing and able to make diplomatic machinations, thus players presumably exchanged these written messages during the course of play. The absence of clearly delineated periods of diplomatic negotiations undoubtedly led to a tremendously different game than 1959 *Diplomacy*. Note that Goldhamer explicitly introduced



FIGURE 46: DIPLOMACY BOARD (1959)

The starting situation of the Great Powers in *Diplomacy* represents a detente: the positions of the various nations may not be precisely equal, but none commences with a decisive advantage. In order to get ahead, players must negotiate with one another and form coalitions, though with an odd number of players the resulting interpersonal dynamics leave plenty of opportunity for treachery. Supremacy, in *Diplomacy*, thus derives from persuasion, bluff and outright prevarication. The lean system focuses the entirety of the player's imagination on the intervals of diplomacy, in which a player may say anything he wishes. In these words we may detect an echo of Totten's *anything can be attempted*, and certainly in that spirit a player may behave as honestly or fraudulently as deemed appropriate to the situation of the game. As we will see shortly, this freedom of diplomatic speech eventually gave rise to monumental embellishments, whole fictional narratives overlaid on the framework of *Diplomacy*.

The rules of *Diplomacy* do not instruct players to adopt any particular personae or to role-play during diplomatic phases. They merely leave the door open for players to approach the diplomatic phase in any way that might further their interests in the game. Some common varieties of agreement are obvious and self-enforcing, for example, two Goldhame - Nation Simulation -five minute interval is

-makers to develop communications and negotiations, and to enter , *Simulation in International Relations*, 46. Perhaps this phased approach to diplomacy derived from the operations research community Calhamer consulted.

neighboring powers might agree to leave a buffer province between them empty as a mutual security guarantee, a pact which neither can breach for any immediate gain. The sort of diplomacy that gets results, however, involves violations of trust. For example, a player might secretly propose, in exchange for peace, alliance with each of two powers currently in conflict, and blithely offer to support both in their contest for a critical province and then decide at the last minute which treaty to honor and which to contravene. These sorts of betrayals, or stabs in the lingo of the game, are essential to breaking the balance of the power, the deadlock of the game s starting configuration. Choosing the proper occasion for stabbing is the foremost skill in *Diplomacy*. Self-selecting coalitions of players also discourage large disparities in power, since all players are likely to gang up on any single dominant force on the board. The clever diplomat maintains an appearance of equality with allies, preys on the weak without getting too far ahead, until securing victory in a sudden precipitous coup.

This game was far too promising to languish in small amateur print runs. Calhamer only had to produce and sell *Diplomacy* himself for a year before he found a willing publisher: Games Research, a company of Harvard graduates who had just released a multiplayer board game called *Convention!* (1960).²³ With the backing of an existing business, *Diplomacy* found a wide general audience, one certainly larger and more visible than the hobby wargaming community of the day. Games Research continued to produce the game until Avalon Hill acquired it in 1976, though *Diplomacy* s inaugural mention in the *General* (July 1965) observes cattily that the only drawback, its critics state, is the fact that it is no fun as a two-player game. It should be played by six or seven players. [AHG:v2n2] An Avalon Hill gamer of the era, as Chapter One suggested, had a hard enough time finding a

single local opponent to play against, let alone six. *Diplomacy*, however, enjoyed a critical advantage in the marketplace: simplicity. With a maximum of thirty-four units on the board at a time, it had only two more pieces in play than chess, and with far less variety in styles of movement. For its depth and complexity, *Diplomacy* relies not on complex statistical models of the performance of military instruments but instead on the unfathomable core of human interpersonal relationships, something that Goldhamer in 1954 realized no system could model adequately. Calhamer solved the problem of marrying the interpersonal coalition building studied by RAND with the visualization and mechanics of a simple strategic board game. The result appealed to virtually anyone, not merely the diehard military historians and young geeks of the early hobby wargaming community. That much said, as the president of Games Research reported to *Time* magazine (December 13, 1963), some people can't adjust to the atmosphere of betrayal required to succeed in *Diplomacy*, but everyone can instantly understand it, however distasteful it might be. As a result, *Diplomacy* enjoyed visibility in places that Avalon Hill's early products simply could not go. Henry Kissinger avowed himself an early fan of the game, and the London Daily Mail reported in 1962 that it was played at the White House.

By the end of the 1960s, both Gygax and Arneson had long histories with *Diplomacy*; some of their exploits receive consideration in the later sections of this chapter. The influence of *Diplomacy* on *Dungeons & Dragons* is subtle, but not insignificant. In something of the same manner as *Diplomacy*, *Dungeons & Dragons* stipulates the existence of coalitions of players that is, parties but without in any way defining how players might ally and cooperate in a party. The cooperative model of *Dungeons & Dragons*, the way the game pits parties against non-player adversaries controlled by the referee, is one of the game's signature qualities, yet for all that, the earliest rules pass over these coalitions in silence, aside from the notes on alignment already discussed in Section 2.8. Little in the history of two-player, or at best two-sided, wargames prefigures it.²⁴

²³ A game somewhat in the tradition of *Careers, Convention!* has its players contend over who will emerge from a political convention as the presidential candidate.

How are we to understand the party in *Dungeons & Dragons*? Given a random selection of players, how cooperative are they likely to be, and how competitive? If, at a fork in the dungeon, three players want to go left and

three want to go right, how is the matter decided? The example in *Underworld & Wilderness* relies on the presence of a caller, presumably some executive acting on behalf of the party who reports the actions of all party members to the referee as a means of precluding contradictory direction. However, *Dungeons & Dragons* says nothing about how to select callers, nor about how callers maintain the consensus of the party;; moreover, some matters, such as deciding which character will receive a ring that grants a wish, go beyond contradictory directions and well into fundamental social dynamics that will involve the players in a dispute, caller or no caller, and in these disputations players will advocate on behalf of their characters.

These operations, like any exercise in coalition-building, must conform to the same obscure laws of interpersonal dynamics that governed the political games at RAND, and within them must lie some of the enjoyment in *Dungeons & Dragons*, as it also is no fun as a two-player game. The way that players behave as they organize into parties and advocate for the interests of their characters forms a first connection between *Dungeons & Dragons* and the circa 1959 conception of role-playing as it was understood by the inventors of the Inter-Nation Simulation and the social scientists of that time.

4.2 FROM LET S PRETEND TO COVENTRY

As we noted as the start of this chapter, the world did not wait for Moreno to bequeath the term role-playing to our language before engaging in the activities we now group under that umbrella term. Since time immemorial, spies have dissembled and actors have ad-libbed without any overarching theory governing these activities. The fundamentals of role-playing existed long before social scientists recast them for diplomatic research in political wargames: politics played a part in still earlier military simulations, as did assuming the role of a political leader. Not long after Goldhamer published his article Toward a Cold War Game, for example, there appeared under the title *From a Soldier's Life (Aus einem Soldatenleben)*, 1958) the memoirs of Erich von Manstein, Field Marshal of the Third Reich. Manstein recalled a sort of political wargame that transpired in 1929, as Germany prepared for a military conflict with Poland. High-ranking diplomats played the parts of the German and Polish Foreign Ministers, as well as representatives to the League of Nations. The resulting game demonstrated how the international community might procrastinate in the face of aggression, and, as Goldhamer relates, the inventiveness of the

player representing Poland in alleging German provocations left his German counterpart²⁴ In fairness, Section 3.1. -

referee controls an adversarial force pitted against the players. Typically, these one-sided games served only to instruct players in the basics of wargaming prior to attempting two-sided wargames. Moreover, the coalitions in the wargames of military schools must conform to the prescribed ranks played by the characters one will have command over all other subordinates, and the purpose of these exercises is in part to teach officers to issue and execute well-formed orders in combat situations. There is thus little by way of jockeying for power, as there will be in *Dungeons & Dragons* parties. Military school gaming also is saved the bother of worrying about how to divide up plunder among players, and so on.

.²⁵ Goldhamer cites similar examples in pre-war Japan and post-war Russia. At best, the political wargames at RAND merely codified and popularized longstanding practices.

Pretending to be someone else, and acting in that character, comes naturally to human beings, especially in childhood. When Moreno stipulated that role-playing is a method of learning to perform roles more adequately, his words surely apply to the childhood process of experimenting with the appealing roles of adults for young boys, usually the most boisterous roles involving weapons or noisy machinery, heroism or villainy. In interviews later in life, Gary Gygax stressed that investigators seeking the origins of role-playing needed look no further than the childhood game of Let's Pretend. While Gygax correctly links adult role-playing to this primal source, he glosses over many more sophisticated precedents to which he was undoubtedly indebted, as Sections 4.3 and 4.4 will show. But in fairness, one cannot understand later role-playing without exploring the ways that youthful play constructs characters, and in particular how the impulse to pretend connected with the emerging fantasy and wargaming traditions in the 1950s.

4.2.1 CHILD S PLAY

In a series of autobiographical articles published in 2004, Gygax relates the boyish antics favored in the 1940s neighborhood where he grew up. The kids on one side of the street styled themselves Pirates, and their rivals across the way assumed the part of Indians. He recalls, I had a full back yard, so I generally got to call what make-believe game we would play.²⁶ We must detect here an echo of his future gamesmastering, as later in life his

sand table would lure fellow miniature wargamers into his Lake Geneva basement. Gygax ascribed especial historical significance to the realistic games of Let's Pretend he played with his childhood friend Jim Rasch, in which they acted out various scenarios from westerns and gangland adventures. Recollecting some sixty years after the fact, Gygax describes these free-form game sessions as lacking any rigid system like the games described in Chapter Three, but nonetheless adhering to the logic of the setting and the state of the game as agreed by the players. By highlighting the childhood practice of assuming an adventuresome character and improvising exploits in collaboration or competition with other children, Gygax elevates Let's Pretend more than he deprecates role-playing. Significantly, he does not single out the imaginative play of an isolated individual: the word let's implies a group sharing some fantastic situation.

Child's play yields little to scholarly analysis of its purpose or meaning. The flights of fancy experienced by young children resist easy categorization, and the very process of describing these phenomena poses enormous difficulties for observers: both when the young explain them, in which case there is a great risk their descriptions will be influenced by their examiners, and when adults retrospectively explain them, in which case they must struggle against their own conceptual filters and the vagaries of memory. Only rarely does make-believe take on enough structure that it leaves behind any tangible evidence that might be studied, and when it does, it is usually not a fantasy confined to a single child, but shared among a group, most often of siblings or other relatives. There are classic case studies of childhood fantasy that feature striking correspondences to the practices of later gaming, where a group of players control specific characters in a persistent, consensual imaginary environment.

²⁵

²⁶ *The Crusader*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

The most well-documented instance of this communal Let's Pretend must be that of the Brontë children: Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne Brontë. As the three girls would each become authors of great renown, this example speaks to the proclivities of gifted children, but perhaps even more so to the tragic circumstances of the family. These included the loss of their mother to cancer and subsequent loss of their two eldest sisters to tuberculosis, all before any of the surviving children had seen their tenth birthday. Homeschooled in an isolated Yorkshire parsonage next to a

cemetery, the four Brontë siblings read voraciously under the tutelage of their Cambridge-educated father, himself a published writer. In that bleak environment, the children must have felt their insurmountable removal from the elite society depicted in their steady diet of literary periodicals like *Blackwood's*. Their gifts did, however, afford them an alternative form of entertainment. The catalyst for their shared make-believe characters came in the form of a box of twelve wooden toy soldiers, a gift for Branwell on the occasion of his ninth birthday in 1826. Each of the four children adopted one of the miniature figurines as their own: in keeping with topical subjects from their reading, Branwell chose a figure whom he identified as Napoleon, Charlotte another she modeled after the victorious Duke of Wellington. The younger Emily and Anne eventually named their figures after the celebrated arctic explorers, Parry and Ross. Soon thereafter, these toy soldiers began to feature in Plays collaboratively invented by the Brontë children. The four siblings designed the action of these narratives and of their surrogates, fancying themselves as Genii who oversaw the fates of their fictional mortals: Branwell, for example, assumed the identity of the Chief Genius Brannii.²⁷ Charlotte recorded several of these improvisational Plays between 1826 and 1827 the Young Men, Our Fellows and Islanders. To understand the social dynamic which gave rise to these Plays, consider Charlotte's account of the origin of

Islanders (from the introduction to Tales of the Islanders): One night, about the time when the cold sleet and stormy fogs of November are succeeded by the snowstorms, and high, piercing night winds of confirmed winter, we were all sitting round the warm blazing kitchen fire, having just concluded a quarrel with Tabby [their housemaid] concerning the propriety of lighting a candle, from which she came off victorious, no candle having been produced. A long pause succeed, which was at last broken by Branwell saying, in a lazy manner, I don't know what to do. This was echoed by Emily and Anne.

Tabby. Wha, ya ma go t bed.

Branwell. I'd rather do anything than that.

Charlotte. Why are you so glum to-night, Tabby? Oh! suppose we had each an island of our own.²⁸

²⁷ *Tales of the Genii* (1764), an orientalist collection of fables modeled after the *Arabian Nights*, in which the Genii at their discretion aid or hinder mortals in their affairs. A referee in Reiswitzian *kriegsspiel* arguably has a

similar vocation.

²⁸ Brontë, *Juvenalia*, 5.

From there, each child chose a particular island, peopled it with important political persons of the day they knew from periodicals and began devising its story. The Play of the Young Men, the twelve adventurers represented by the wooden soldiers, or the Twelves, as they came to be known, proved the most enduring, at least for Charlotte and Branwell. From its humble beginnings as an improvised romance about the Twelves setting out to colonize an African coast controlled by hostile Ashanti natives, the story evolved into an epic of politics and society, spanning several African nations, articulated in volumes of text generated by Charlotte and her brother. As the children matured, the story and characters evolved to fit their tastes. Branwell sketched a map of the colonial African setting, based on the coast of Guinea, where one might find a province assigned to each of the Brontë children: Wellington's Land, Parry's Land, Ross's Land, and Sneaky's Land, Sneaky being an epithet applied to Branwell's own Napoleon-figure, whose French roots branded him an antagonist. Eventually, these territories united into the Kingdom of Angria, and Branwell tirelessly specified its population, finances, defense, trade and so on throughout the 1830s. Charlotte, for her part, focused more on society, on the relationships between the heroic potentates of Angria, as well as the beauty of the land itself. Both generated untold hundreds of pages on the history of Angria. By 1832, the two younger Brontë siblings retreated to their own private world of Gondal, of which comparatively little written work survives. Angria, however, is the subject of many volumes of Charlotte Brontë's juvenilia.

Angria exerted so powerful a hold on the imagination of Charlotte that she struggled, even in her twenties, to free herself of its influence. By then, she frequently described Angria the way one might regard a dependency, something one does not entirely control, yet which satisfies a certain need. In trance-like states, she wrote of Angria in longhand with her eyes closed, blotting out anything of the world around her;; only the ongoing process of writing about this imaginary world, as opposed to merely contemplating or reviewing it, immersed her to a satisfactory degree, and her craving for this state of

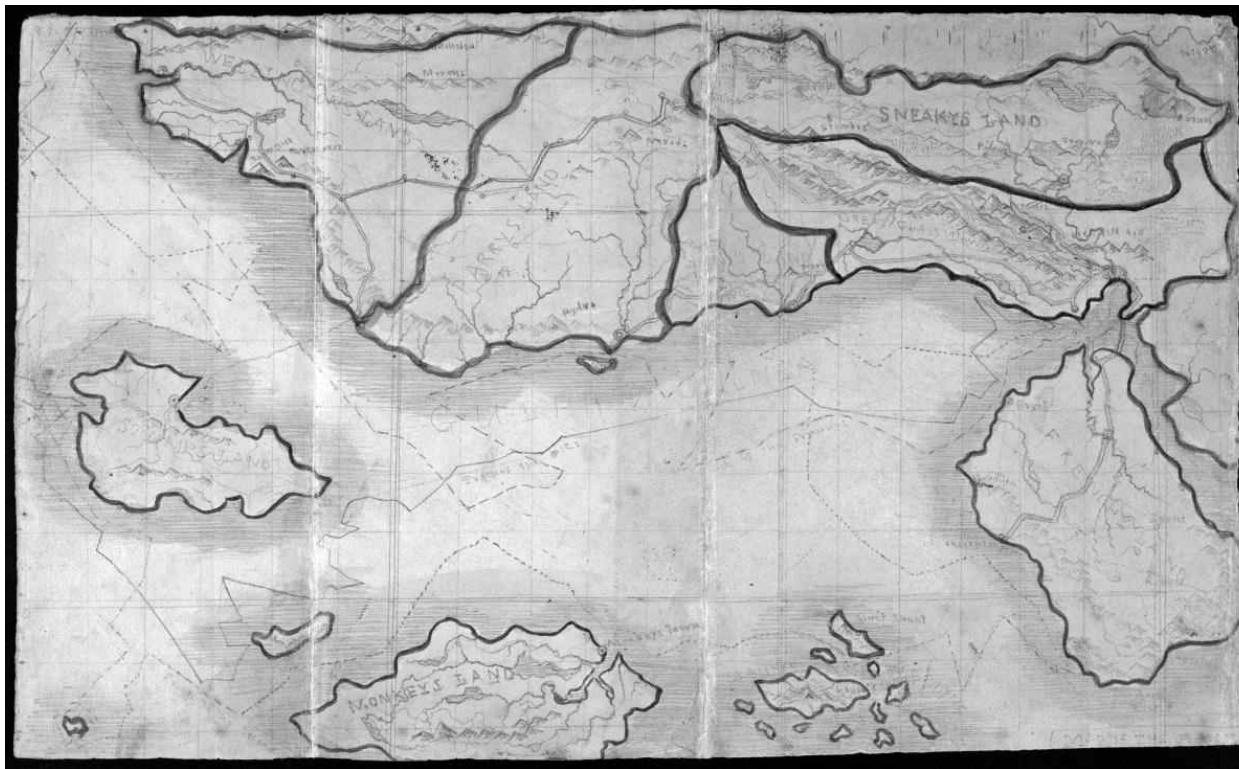


FIGURE 47: MAP OF ANGRIA BY BRANWELL BRONTË

immersion spurred her to almost incredible levels of prolificacy.²⁹ She endlessly elaborated the doings of Angria's elite, especially the Byronic Duke of Zamorna, a character continuous with her original Duke of Wellington, who so beguiled her that she even saw him by day when her mind wandered.³⁰ She reacted with horror when her brother penned the demise of a beloved character, often unable to think of anything else until she had written a reaction or, in extreme cases, a retraction. Charlotte later believed, however, that Angria did prepare her for adult life, perhaps in much the manner that any child's play bestows experience with roles and situations required in adulthood. It is very edifying and profitable to create a world out of one's brain and people it with inhabitants, she wrote in a letter in 1840. By conversing daily with such beings and accustoming your eyes to their glaring attire and fantastic features you acquire a tone of mind admirably calculated to enable you to cut a respectable figure in practical life.³¹ By the end of her Angria period, Charlotte identified most strongly with her character Charles Townsend, like her a writer peripheral to the society of Angria, and an observer resoundingly skeptical of the supposed heroism of its protagonists.

Angria, with its thorough specification and rich stable of personalities, illustrates that we should be careful not to take Let's Pretend lightly. Developmental psychologists studying childhood creativity have found that these sorts of consensual fantasies are not restricted to persons of genius, though of course in highly creative children they must be more likely to manifest.³² They tend not to be the product of any solitary imagination, but instead a collaboration, often with a sibling or other close relative. It is not surprising that the sickly six-year-old Robert Louis Stevenson, for example, articulated his island kingdom of Encyclopaedia with a map and the concoction of elaborate and tumultuous history in collaboration with a cousin.³³ During a period of especial isolation outside Belfast, C. S. Lewis, the future author of the Narnia books, began detailing a world in collaboration with his brother known as Animal-Land, as he relates in his autobiography *Surprised by Joy*. We might not be surprised, then, to read in the beginning of one of the Narnia books (*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*) Lewis's observation that most of us, I suppose, have a secret country but for most of us it is only an imaginary country. Edmund and Lucy were luckier than other people in that respect. Their secret country was real.

As the case of Branwell Brontë illustrates, toy soldiers often triggered these youthful experiments with imaginary statecraft, and once toy soldiers became involved,²⁹ See the General Introduction by Gérin to Brontë, *Five Novelettes*, 16. These behaviors hint that the passivity of reading a story or watching a film, say, is always an impediment to immersion when compared to the process of creative involvement a major theme in the evolution of gaming.³⁰ From Ingham, *The Brontës*-room at Roe

³¹ Quoted in the General Introduction by Gérin to Brontë, *Five Novelettes*, 20.

³²

d and

experienced these paracosms. Surveying adults who had similar experiences in childhood, they end their paracosms with one or more *Organizing Early Experience*, 176. Their results do not however report that paracosms were universally consensual. Paracosms involving two children have been popularized, with some alarmism, in such films as *Heavenly Creatures* (1994) and *Bridge to Terabithia* (2007).

³³ Furnas, *Voyage to Windward*, 53.

these activities necessarily encroached on wargaming. Would we say that Stevenson's game, littered as it was with imaginary countries, preserves an imaginary world shared between his young-at-heart self and his stepson? At the very inception of the hobby wargaming community, Captain Sachs noted that several British Model Soldier Society members had written accounts of rudimentary war games as played in their youthful days. [BMSS:1954n7] In some cases, as Charles Grant relates in the *Bulletin*, these games little differed from pitching marbles at a line of soldiers, apparently the starting point of Stevenson and Wells alike. [BMSS:1955n5] Others, however, invented as a stage for these conflicts fictional nations or worlds in which they had considerable investment. In a 1961 article in the *War Game Digest*, Art Mikel relates the youthful wargaming experiences he and a friend shared as teenagers in 1937 concerning their invented planet Emanon. [WGD:v5n4] While Mikel does not mention having any particular character, he remained even in adulthood emotionally involved in the existence of one of the principal countries of the planet, Montania. [WGD:v6n3] Another early wargamer, Carl Reavley, recalls in issue #4 of *Wargamer's Newsletter* (July 1962) the creation in 1940 of his state of Midgetania. After the Second World War, when the hobby wargaming community began to coalesce, these sorts of fictional worlds frequently served as the setting for wargames, be they of a gamer's invention or adapted from some known fictional work. From the 1950s forward, fantasy genre fiction served as a major source of inspiration to world-making in the wargaming community, as with Tony Bath's Hyboria, to which we shall return in Section 4.5.1. Bath's considered appropriation of Howard's world for his famous campaign, however, differs from the way that younger fans of fantasy incorporated the genre into their fancies and games.

4.2.2 THE MARIPOSAN EMPIRE

In that seminal decade when board wargaming, miniature wargaming and *Diplomacy* all took shape, a game of Let's Pretend was the case with the modest game of

could take on surprising new dimensions. Such Countries played in the Los Angeles suburb of Pasadena, California, in the early 1950s, which rose from its humble beginnings into a phenomenon which influenced many of the later developments in role-playing discussed in this chapter. Not more than a dozen boys, all on the cusp of being teenagers, assumed control of the eponymous countries, each amounting to a city block worth of territory, typically the block on which the child in question resided. Initially, their

game little differed from the Pirates and Indians game of Gygax hometown neighborhood: countries battled one another with wooden swords or what have you as circumstances required. One of the participants in the game later distinguished Countries from other forms of child s play in that we were perhaps, at least some of us, a little more imaginative than most kids... several of us had gone to the trouble of writing up our country s constitutions and histories.³⁴ Two brothers Paul and Jim Stanbery assumed secretarial responsibilities for the Countries, cataloging the documents generated by players, and bequeathed a more distinctive name to the proceedings: Mariposa. They christened the entire system of nations the Mariposan Empire. Thus, for example, the state of Stanberyland (later Stanberia) faced off against catty-corner neighbors, the Tarpin family and their state of Tarpinia, in a manner that Branwell Brontë surely would have recognized.³⁵ Eventually, Paul and Jim annexed the city blocks comprising their paper routes as the home territories of separate nationalities, and then, eventually, imaginary planets.

³⁴

³⁵ Paul Stanbery governed Stanberia, whereas his brother Jim, having affected for the purposes of

One regular Countries player went by the name rich brown and controlled the country of Linn under the character of Jommor Lynn. Together with Paul Stanbery, brown developed an ardent enthusiasm for science fiction and fantasy literature around this time, and it thus became inevitable that their paths would intersect with the vibrant Los Angeles science-fiction fandom community. The history of organized science-fiction fandom in Los Angeles extends back well into the 1930s, and owing to its proximity to the entertainment industry, the local fan base boasted quite a number of noteworthy authors and screenwriters, names like Ray Bradbury, Fritz Leiber, Larry Niven, even the animator Ray Harryhausen. By the 1950s, the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society (or LASFS) had a long-established culture, weekly meetings that drew dozens of members and a dedicated core group of participants who collectively generated a portfolio of amateur periodicals. Stanbery and brown attended their first LASFS meeting late in the summer of 1956, and by 1957, they tried their hand at generating a fanzine.

Fanzine culture is an essential component of science-fiction fandom, one that has received considerable attention in other studies and will thus receive

only a cursory treatment here.³⁶ Early science fiction fans suffered some of the same difficulties as early wargamers, since they were few in number and geographically dispersed, and thus periodicals served to unite fans who might otherwise have remained isolated. Why did community matter so much to science-fiction fans? After all, wargamers need opponents in order to play, and it might initially seem that appreciation of science fiction would not diminish in solitude this, however, misunderstands the nature of mid-twentieth-century fandom. As Section 2.1.2 already established, the first fans shared Hugo Gernsback ambition to advance science and society through the speculative power of fiction, not a goal that can be accomplished solo. This spirit of technological utopianism never entirely vanished, though it faced growing challenges, especially in the disillusionment after Hiroshima. Discussions of science and science fiction, moreover, necessarily referenced other interests and the fans themselves: fans contemplated fandom and its broader relationship to the culture of the day at least as much as they did science fiction, and thus fandom became largely a forum for people of a common culture to interact socially. These socializations transpired over several media, including face-to-face meetings, either local in scope like the weekly LASFS club meetings or in large conventions such as the muchtouted annual World Science Fiction Society s Convention or WorldCon, as well as zines, which themselves admitted of enormous variations in size and sophistication.

Some science-fiction fandom zines represented one lone author, and others a local club or group of individual still others pooled several independent publications into mass mailings known as amateur press associations or APAs. The basic concept behind an APA is as follows. A central editor prepares an edition at every pre-established interval (say, quarterly). To fill that issue, each member who wishes to submit to an edition sends the editor their section, duplicated as many times as there are members of the APA. The editor s job is thus simply to collate the copies of the various received articles into a distribution of one bundle per member, each bundle containing one copy of every received article. The editor incurs little cost, since each member is responsible for their own duplication, and moreover the editor has no conventional editorial responsibilities, as members submit finished copy directly. H. P. Lovecraft had some involvement with amateur journalism in the National Amateur Press Association, as Section 2.1.2 already mentioned, before beginning his

professional career as a writer, and it is from Lovecraft that the idea of forming APAs entered science-fiction fandom. The legendary science fiction editor Donald A. Wollheim began publishing the first science fiction APA, the *Fantasy Amateur Press Association* (*FAPA*, though known at the time as the *Fantasy Amateur*) in 1937, right around the time of Lovecraft's death.³⁷ Fandom historians like Harry Warner, Jr. identify *FAPA* as the virtual progenitor of the philosophy of fandom for fandom's sake, as opposed to fandom focusing on science fiction or the future.³⁸ By the 1950s, four such APAs existed in fandom: *FAPA*, the *Spectator Amateur Press Society* (or *SAPS*), the *CULT*, and a United Kingdom APA entitled the *Off-Trail Magazine Publishers Association* (or *OMPA*). Many members of early Los Angeles fandom contributed to these APAs in those days, one could without insurmountable difficulty become an omniapan, a member of all the extent APAs. LASFS also published a member zine entitled *Shangri L Affaires*, a name derived from Los Angeles's fannish pseudonym Shangri-LA.

the Mariposan Empire the name Sir Bradford Trenser (Bradford being his actual middle name), founded Trensenia. Both place-names, as well as Tarpinia, echo in St Gimble #2, for example.

³⁶ *The Immortal Storm*.

A Wealth of Fable is indispensable;; his earlier *All Our Yesterdays* also nicely counterpoints the somewhat histrionic account by Moskowitz. The anthology *Science Fiction Fandom* edited by Joe Sanders provides a later and more diverse perspective.

Paul Stanbery and rich brown entered the world of fandom with the most elusive of aims: to found a magazine that would eventually turn a profit. Many fans labored night and day on a fanzine with the aspiration that they would someday convert their effort into a prozine, a magazine with the reach and stature to support its publisher financially, typically by attracting the fiction of famous genre authors. Stanbery and brown, aged roughly fifteen at the time, collaborated first on a zine called *Eternity*, and then a follow-up called *Equation*, both of which contained fan-generated fiction and artwork along with ample self-reflection on their endeavor, half apologetic and half boasting, provided by the authors. Simultaneously, brown joined *SAPS*, to which he contributed a brief zine entitled *Poor Richard's Almanac*. For the most part, *Eternity* and *Equation* typify amateur efforts of the era, though *Equation* is noteworthy for Stanbery's early enthusiasm for Tolkien *Lord of*

the Rings, and his impassioned defense of Middle-earth as entirely fantasy in nature despite the attempts (baffling today) of some reviewers to classify it as a work as science fiction.³⁹ In the pages of *Equation*, Stanbery often writes himself and rich brown into fictional settings familiar from the *Lord of the Rings*, including the Inn of the Prancing Pony in Bree, where the young fans converse with Gandalf on fannish topics. The game of Countries receives no direct mention by name in this zine though rich brown does comment in a biographical digression on Paul Stanbery that his favorite pastime is getting groups of kids in the neighborhood into batches and having fights in the park. There are, however, a few oblique references to Stanbery's fictional setting;; in a narrative aside, Gandalf claims, I've been down in Stanberia lately studying some ruins, for example. Tolkien Middle-earth began to merge with the invented countries of Stanbery's neighborhood game;; at the end of the next *Equation*, Stanbery signs off with his whereabouts listed as Inn of the Prancing Pony, Cowpertown (New Atlanta Sector), Buckland, Stanberian Empire.

³⁷ Wollheim, already mentioned in Chapter Two as the instigator of the unauthorized paperback edition of Tolkien in America, would later go on to a crucial editorial role at Ace (under its imprint he was the first to publish William S. Burroughs, for example) and to form the DAW Books science fiction publishing company. Intriguingly, he also collected miniature figurines his name can be found in the want ads of the British Model Soldier Society *Bulletin* throughout the 1950s. Wollheim was a LASFS member in the 1960s, though he seldom attended meetings.

³⁸ See Sanders, *Science Fiction Fandom*, 69.

³⁹ See *Equation*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1958). At around this time, Stanbery also undertook a radio adaptation of *The Hobbit*, and in cooperation with his brother Jim he dreamed of making a motion picture version of the entire saga.

During the brief run of *Equation*, Stanbery's old Mariposan Empire and its constituent states from the game of Countries somehow fused with science fiction, Tolkien and other fantastic influences into a curious pastiche, a new imaginary environment called Coventry. Because of the incessant elaboration of this setting over the next four years, the initial setting of Coventry little resembles its final state, but throughout its life Coventry always took the form of an enormous disc-shaped spacecraft that transported a flat expanse of Earth-like terrain. In 1957, the launch of Sputnik and the

subsequent rocket experiments by the American government convinced many science fiction fans of the imminence of large-scale space travel, and Coventry must owe a certain debt to those events. More specifically, Coventry borrowed liberally from several science fiction yarns of the 1950s, including Heinlein short story Coventry for some of its social science, the film *Forbidden Planet* (1956) for its notion of a primitive surface world resting above a technologically advanced underworld and the series of novels *Cities in Flight* by James Blish for the architecture of the spaceship itself.

By this point, Stanbery had devised an elaborate, confusing and somewhat contrived back-story for Coventry, one worth summarizing if only to show the lengths that Let's Pretend can reach. Stanbery detailed the structure of Coventry's thousand-milewide silvery ellipsoid hull and glassy dome, under which lies bodies of water and continents patterned after the Isles of Coventry on Earth.⁴⁰ These islands corresponded to the Countries of Stanbery's youth, with the proviso that some place-names owed to early immigrants from various fantasy settings, hence Gondor, Lankhmar and Aquilonia would all appear as locations in Coventry. As progressively lengthier written histories would clarify, Stanbery's Coventry isles lay off the west coast of Norway, and throughout his alternate world history of the Renaissance and early modern era, those isles served as a battlefield for various colonial powers. In the early twenty-second century, mankind had mastered space travel, colonized Mars and Venus, and accepted a peaceful Utopian society under the Antarctic government, but as a consequence of their contentment, humankind's ingenuity and artistic drive had atrophied. When an ancient outpost of the extinct Krell civilization (appropriated from the film *Forbidden Planet*) was discovered beneath the surface of a distant asteroid, one of the great intellectuals of Earth proposed that the asteroid be repurposed as a complete replica of the Terran Coventry, the museum of mankind ... and that the giant disc be sent off into space as a sort of nail to hang our hopes on, in case the heritage of man should be lost on Earth by either too much war or too much peace.⁴¹

Two hundred thousand volunteer inhabitants of this museum were transplanted from the earthly Coventry islands, but in order that the flying replica truly simulate the pre-stagnation human condition, its denizens had to remain ignorant of the true nature of their environment. In effect, they became a society of historical reenactors, endlessly playing out the past. A

class of 144,000 Guardians capable of piloting the asteroid and maintaining the illusion thus occupied the futuristic Krell underworld of Coventry, creating a societal structure that bears a more than passing relationship to Plato's *Republic*. For the Guardians themselves, the planners of the space-bound Coventry similarly stole from the past, in this case identifying an obscure 20th century writer-composer-actor who embodied the characteristics... desirable in a Guardian. Although this first Guardian is not immediately named, it is obviously Stanbery himself, who returns to life with the assistance of advanced cloning technologies.

⁴⁰ *Gimble #2*. ⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Coventry launched into space in 2125, with a mission to return humanity to a situation of conflict in order to trigger a golden age of creativity. While the denizens of the surface museum zone of Coventry sacrificed their memories when they volunteered, the few among their number who somehow discovered the secret of Coventry became known as the Amaranths, ostensibly a religious order, though one controlled by the Guardians. Although the Coventrian states, true to their earthly heritage, remained in a perpetual state of war and intrigue, the weapons of Coventry did not kill, but rather included guns which shot paralysis rays and vibro-blades which paralyzed within the field of their . The immobilized victims of these implements, once delivered to the Church for consecrated burial, would meet the Guardians, learn the true nature of Coventry and choose to either join the ship's crew, take orders in the Church or what have you.

This overgrown Let's Pretend world of Coventry came to the attention of Los Angeles science-fiction fandom through an unlikely vector: an exchange of mocking satirical fiction between a pair of feuding fans.⁴² The one who popularized Coventry was a young Pasadena resident who participated in fandom under the name Ted Johnstone, a pseudonym that he assumed because his own real name bore too close a resemblance to that of a well-known fan.⁴³ Johnstone did not participate in Countries, but Stanbery knew him, at least in part because of Johnstone efforts in support of the 1958 WorldCon in the Los Angeles Area he receives a favorable mention in *Eternity #2*, for example. Johnstone had apparently worn an amateurish medieval costume to a Halloween fandom party in 1958, which was subsequently mocked in a piece of fiction that Steve Tolliver wrote for his fanzine *Gyre*; Tolliver incorporated the character of a sneak-thief named Tedran attired in shabby medieval garb, obviously a caricature of Johnstone.

Johnstone, an aspiring writer, decided to retaliate by satirizing Tolliver's piece with his own short fantasy story;; the resulting vignette, entitled Dawn Meeting, featured a more charitable rendition of Johnstone in the form of a different character who thus employed the different spelling Tedron.⁴⁴ When Stanbery read a preliminary version, the tale struck him as the sort of thing that might transpire in the world of Coventry, and under his instruction Johnstone thus refitted Dawn Meeting with a few Coventrian locations and arranged for Stanbery to provide some accompanying context. In 1959, Johnstone published the first issue of his zine *Gimble* (mirroring the title of Tolliver's zine) through FAPA, which contained the two-page Dawn Meeting with An Introduction to Coventry in one page by Stanbery and a map of the region of Coventry known as New Scotland where the action in Tedron's story transpires.

⁴² #2 (Aug 1961).

⁴³ al name was David McDaniel, a name that will feature in the next section, though overall this study will follow his own usage of pseudonyms and real names to refer to his activities.

⁴⁴ *Gyre* is in form and *Gyre* #4. Tolliver in turn drew heavily from Fritz Leiber. *Gyre* distributed with FANAC.

The story Dawn Meeting in *Gimble* #1 takes place more than two hundred years after the launch of Coventry, and introduces Ted Johnstone surrogate character, Tedron, as a minstrel, rogue and incidentally the undercover Duke of the province of Methylonia. Upon his own resurrection in Coventry, Stanbery recommended to the cloners the construction of a number of individuals he had known namely, other members of Los Angeles science-fiction fandom and locals of Pasadena, and hence Tedron truly stands in for Johnstone himself. The brief story adheres to the Fafhrd/Gray Mouser blueprint, where Tedron approximates the Mouser and a passing barbarian, Rontel of Linn, stands in for Fafhrd. In subsequent installments, Johnstone delves further into the world of Coventry: Tedron socializes with Paulus Edwardum Rex III, Stanbery's own character, the Emperor of New America and chief among the Guardians. *Gimble* #3 also features a story about Bruziver of Heorot, the Grand Marshall of Linn, written by his real-life counterpart, Bruce E. Pelz.⁴⁵ Pelz relocated from Florida, where he had published the SAPS zine *Speleobem* about his local caving activities, to Los Angeles in 1959 to study at the University of Southern California. Upon his

arrival he became one of the most active members of LASFS, and indeed all of science-fiction fandom, for the next four decades.

From these humble beginnings in the pages of *Gimble*, and with its somewhat preposterous back-story, Coventry gradually captured the imagination of Los Angeles fandom including that of its adult participants. Johnstone felt it served as an excellent backdrop for fiction, and insofar as he found inspiration telling stories in that environment, he championed it tirelessly. In their collective enthusiasm and evangelism for Coventry, Johnstone and Pelz far exceeded the comparatively modest advocacy of Stanbery, who found himself beleaguered with questions and sometimes struggling against Johnstone to preserve his original vision of Coventry. Moreover, as Johnstone and Pelz introduced other characters obviously meant to correspond to resurrected members of LASFS, Coventry became something of a *roman à clef*, one so exact that in 1961 Pelz produced a short zine called *Who's Who in Coventry* that mapped from fictional characters to the real world.⁴⁶ Once tagged as characters in Coventry by Pelz or Johnstone, LASFS members felt some level of engagement with the setting, and might feel obliged to take ownership of their own character's story: as Johnstone reported around the same time, People keep writing to me people I've never heard of asking when the next issue [of *Gimble*] will be out;; people who were given characters in Coventry have suddenly started taking themselves seriously and working at running their kingdoms;; people have started clamoring to get in on this.⁴⁷ Los Angeles fan Bjo Trimble, then in her late twenties, provided a contemporary account (*FAPA* #101, in 1962) that gives a good indication of how local fans became involved:

⁴⁵ Pelz amassed during his lifetime one of the most extensive private collections of fanzines (numbering over sixty-five thousand), now housed at the University of California at Riverside. This *A Wealth of Fable*, rich brown first mentioned Coventry in fandom circles when replying to a question posed in one of Pelz SAPS zines, *proFANity*, asking readers which imaginary world they would prefer to inhabit. Brown answered Coventry, precisely because it had become an amalgam of virtually every fictional world beloved of fandom, incorporating both science fiction and fantasy elements with equal aplomb.

⁴⁶ Some few non

⁴⁷ *Gimble* #3.

When they found that their personalities had been incorporated into Coventry they felt they had a right to demand some control, at any rate. Somewhere along here, I found that Barana, Queen of Trantor, was the Bjo personality;; at this time I was trying to establish a better friendship with Bruce Pelz and [Ted Johnstone], so I went along with the game. It was mildly interesting to evolve costumes, and build castles on Barana's domain. After a while, tho, the real world's problems became too pressing, so I withdrew, and let Coventry spin away without me...

Participants elaborated on the Coventry setting by suggesting actions for their characters, creating costumes to dress up as their characters or filling out parts of the world that their character controlled. Not everyone developed a long-term relationship with Coventry, as Trimble's account suggests. For fans susceptible to its peculiar allure, however, Coventry seemed to offer a veritable reinvention of fandom, a deeper level of engagement in which fans literally became characters in a science fiction story. Pelz exemplified this radical interpretation of Coventry. He wore a Bruziver of Heorot costume to LASFS club meetings, and sometimes even on public streets. To many outsiders it seemed that the core Coventrianians never left character a difficult charge to refute, given that everyone in Coventry assumes the role of their resurrected future selves.

Pelz openly hypothesized about using hypnosis and drugs to actually put the mind into a preselected fantasy world [e.g., Coventry], and maybe even leave it there, a project he called Operation
which, along with other Flip-back

perceived provoked community.⁴⁸ The reaction began early in 1961 with the appearance of We, the Guardian, a character controlled by an anonymous player, and one not to be confused with the Guardians inhabiting Stanbery's Coventry, ridiculed the notion that anyone old enough to participate in fandom would find a game of Let's Pretend compelling.⁴⁹ To emphasize these excesses of a backlash

Coventry, from the

the Krell underworld in canonical account. This attacked the canon of

and

more

particularly



FIGURE

COVENTRY [APA--L:#61]

⁴⁸ *Dauringa #2.*

⁴⁹ *A Wealth of Fable*

Dickensheet, the primary sources indicate that Mitch Evans (in Coventry, Mik the Minstrel) was the #3 for the most definitive statement from a

points, the Guardian brought his propaganda into the real world culminating in an incident involving the appearance of the Guardian Symbol (a stylized blue trident) at the USC library, and more disturbingly, the defacement of a driveway and sidewalk outside of Stanbery's home with anti-Coventry graffiti.

The escalating tactics of the Guardian unprecedented step: he called an in-character meeting Coventry participants. They met, in full Coevonian costume, late in May 1961. In attendance were Stanbery, Johnstone and Pelz, as well as many key Los Angeles fans, including Fred Patten, Jack Harness, Rick Sneary, Lee Collins and Bjo Trimble. In the character of Emperor Paulus Edwardum Rex III, Stanbery first conducted some Coevonian business, announcing a treaty between New America and the territory of Linn. Later in the proceedings, however, Stanbery attempted to defuse the situation with the Guardian by presenting a document acknowledging that Coventry is imaginary and insisting that all signators to the document will refrain from vandalism of Mariposan (in Coventry-speak, Mariposan was now the short-hand adjective applied to the real world) property for the sake of Coventry. Naturally, the very idea of an in-character meeting of Coventry only further infuriated We, the Guardian. A fanzine expressing that rage called *Dauringa Extra* (supposedly the work of a W. T. Dauringa, where Dauringa is an anagram for Guardian and thus W. T must be We, The) appeared shortly thereafter, annotating the day's events with a generous helping of scathing contempt, especially as to the quality of the costumes.⁵⁰ During the Council, Bjo Trimble, in the character of the Empress Barana, intimated that she knew the identity of the Guardian, but owing to a geas she would not reveal it unless circumstances left no alternative. The *Dauringa* fanzine treated this conceit with especial derision, which goaded Trimble to voice her suspicions, and that in turn elicited rash words directed at Trimble

in particular in the subsequent issue of *Dauringa* 101. Without delving any deeper into the resulting politics, suffice it to say that the bitterest quarrels in fandom seem to be fought over the lowest stakes, a truism that the wargaming community would continually reaffirm.

While much of the Coventranian inner circle took offense at the Guardian's antics, Stanbery eventually concurred that LASFS took Coventry too seriously. Frank Coe, a fan sympathetic to the Guardian, remarked that Stanbery seemed to be the only one who has been able to take a joke. At the end of *Gimble* #3 (published in November 1961), Stanbery announced the formation of the CIAWOT Society a slight variant on an acronym known to every fan of the era, FIAWOT for Fandom Is A Waste Of Time founded on and continuing the worthy work of W. T. Dau We, the Guardian. Stanbery furthered the Guardian's agenda by keeping a tighter rein on the antics of Coventranian characters. The Society charged no prompted Stanbery to take an a Council of Warlords of the dues, but required all members to sign a pledge known as the Glark Registration to perform no action on behalf of Coventry as a member which shall be deemed official and binding without the written approval of the City Fathers in other words, to publish no fiction in the Coventry setting, or otherwise alter the setting, with allowing Stanbery to approve the alterations. Although Stanbery went to college in Seattle that fall and Johnstone hopped south to San Diego for the same reason, Stanbery continued to run the CIAWOT Society jointly with Johnstone, Pelz and rich brown, publishing an in-setting newspaper called the *Coventranian Gazette* which detailed incremental changes to the world. He furthermore corresponded with participants in Coventry through personal CIAWOT Business letters;; for example, some lengthy correspondence between Stanbery and Rick Sneary on the nature of the Rimland (the edge of the artificial world under the dome) survives. Stanbery's drive to preserve his vision of Coventry competed with his very real aspiration to enable creative contributions from others. As Stanbery remarked in *Coventranian Gazette* #2: *periodicals by Johnstone and others corroborate this indirectly. Stanbery also identifies Evans as the Guardian in Gimble #3.* Given the first person plural name of the Guardian, one could reasonably suppose that the writings and effects of We, the Guardian involved a group effort;; Dean Dickensheet was certainly another vocal critic of Coventry, as was Frank Coe, a.k.a. Doktor Destrukt, who continued publishing the *Dauringa* zine when Evans withdrew as the Guardian after tensions threatened to cause legal action. This was in order to avoid involving his famous family in a scandal

Hayworth and cousin of Rita Hayworth.

⁵⁰ Costuming by itself already had a rich heritage in fandom circles, which will be discussed below.

Coventry itself is a dreamworld out of my childhood, and sometimes it seems hardly moral to dredge it out of my memory and have it parade around at costume balls. But since there is so much interest in it now, I feel a great compulsion to keep a control on the scale of things, to try to present a balanced picture.

In the third issue of the *Coventranian Gazette*, Stanbery advertises a number of planned Coventry publications, including one tantalizingly titled Rules of War. If Stanbery intended to formalize something like a wargame system for Coventry, it apparently never came to fruition. Stanbery did, however, implement a stratification system for participants in Coventry and a means of ascending through the strata by acquiring service credits. A participant received service credits for authoring fiction that Stanbery accepted into the canon, and even for correctly answering quizzes in the *Coventranian Gazette*. The strata are called phyle, were five in number, and range from the lowliest Brood to the most exalted Amaranth, a rank achieved by acquiring a total of seventy-five service credits. Ultimately, however, these phyles are much like the Society ranks that Kuntz and Gygax would later develop for the Castle & Crusade Society they served to stimulate written contributions more than affect the state of any game world. In its most mature form, Coventry never quite managed to become a game it remained a setting without a system, a fictional narrative outsourced to several authors by one authoritative editor, and thus a phenomenon largely in the same category as Angria, though the technology and culture of fandom permitted it to spread beyond the bounds of Let's Pretend shared by a handful of children.⁵¹ By the time Stanbery had laid out his vision of a reformed model for participating in Coventry, however, interest began to wane. *Gimble #3* and the first *Coventranian Gazette* received considerable negative feedback when Johnstone promulgated them through SAPS in 1962. The controversy involving the Guardian permanently alienated some dedicated fans. Moreover, living in a collegiate environment, both Stanbery and Johnstone had many other endeavors competing for their attention. For want of that most valuable resource in fandom, fanac short for fan activity Coventry fell by the wayside.

⁵¹ A few years before he passed away, rich brown wrote in his untitled history of Cove in many ways similar to modern role totally mystifies me. As far as I know, the only Coventry involved writing fiction about Coventry which conformed to the basic mythos. is much talk in fandom circles that Coventry introduced role-playing concepts which directly influenced the creators of *Dungeons & Dragons*, Coventry simply lacked the sophistication that legend ascribes to it, although as subsequent sections of this chapter will illustrate, Coventry does hold a place in the complex web of influences that set the stage for the emergence of role-playing games. The even more dubious claim that either Gygax or Arneson participated in Coventry must be without merit;; surviving lists of Coventry characters and players lack their names, to name just one of many challenges that contention would need to overcome.

As a postscript, after Johnstone finished with college and returned to Los Angeles, he assumed the editorship of the LASFS club fanzine, *Shangri L Affaires*. When he had the temerity to print a Coventry story therein, Jack Harness's Thrilling Gondor Tales, the legacy of Coventry in Los Angeles became amply clear. Bjo Trimble, for example, asserted in LASFS newly-begun *APA-L* that Coventry draws on personalities (without their permission) and does it with malice aforethought. [APA-L:#18] An editorial in those same pages bluntly asserts, We pretty well had our fill of Coventry crap last time around. By a vote of around two to one, the club banned any future Coventry material from its periodical. Even Fritz Leiber, a regular LASFS member at that point, weighed in against it, despite the great debt Coventry owed to his writing. In *Who's Who in Coventry* #2, incidentally, Leiber appears as Grand Marshal Lord Fritz of Aquilonia, Commander, VII Corps, Linn. While Coventry itself did not survive the early 1960s, its participants and some of its signal innovations influenced many subsequent activities in wargaming and science-fiction fandom.

4.3 PERSONALITIES BY POST

Coventry never quite became a game, but as the phenomenon played out in Los Angeles, the first wave of commercial board wargames from the Avalon Hill Company slowly crept into the consciousness of science-fiction fandom. Ted Johnstone wrote in *Mest* #5 (his fanzine for SAPS, for the January 1961 mailing) that in addition to being a science fiction fan he considered himself a Games Fan, an interest he shared with Bruce Pelz. Johnstone goes on to explain the play of *Tactics* at some length, though

probably he meant *Tactics II*. He singled out that the big bit in this game is that you can move as many pieces as you want, simultaneously ; for players weaned on chess, this must have been the most striking departure from the traditional principles of board games. He was also aware of the existence of Avalon Hill's *Gettysburg*, and remarked of their 1959 title *U-Boat* that the game is fast and furious. Johnstone reserved his most generous praise, however, for a title Avalon Hill did not publish: *Diplomacy*, which he deemed probably the most adult game I know of. He outlined its overall system and enumerated the qualities necessary for victory: juggling power, being a sneak, an underhanded double-dealer, and generally an excellent diplomat. He also attested to the current popularity of the game at Caltech, as *Diplomacy* swept through campuses and communities nationwide.

A few years later in March 1963, John Boardman, a science fiction fan from Brooklyn, New York, and a frequently contributor to a wide range of fanzines including *Amra*, penned an account of *Diplomacy* for the third issue of his wide-ranging fanzine *Knowable*, with the offhand suggestion that this game would lend itself easily to being played by mail. Only one significant obstacle stood in the way: the necessity of each player devising their moves in secret without knowledge of the intended actions of others. In person, of course, all players would commit their orders to paper and reveal them simultaneously, but a postal system would require some alternative: sending identical mails to six rivals, aside from the cost and hassle, created too great an opportunity for delay and mischief. If an impartial referee or Umpire, as Boardman had it, served as a hub for all correspondence, collecting the moves for a turn from private letters and revealing the resulting actions to all players at the same time, then the core mechanic could be preserved.⁵² Since face-to-face *Diplomacy* already required written orders, the notation for recording moves given in the 1959 rulebook needed no enhancement for play-by-mail. Boardman volunteered himself as the first Umpire and asked to hear from anyone who wants to start a game of postal *Diplomacy*. By May 1963, he had received eleven expressions of interest, nine of them from a cluster of fanatics in East Paterson, New Jersey, attested by Calhamer to be the earliest *Diplomacy* club. The two outliers hailed from Ontario, Canada and from Southern California. To broadcast the collated moves each turn to all the players, Boardman founded a new periodical which he called *Graustark* after the 1901 novel of the same name, a story of intrigue among tiny fictional principalities in the Carpathian mountains.⁵³

The Southern Californian volunteer, David McDaniel (1939-1977) confidently asserted in *Graustark* #1, I'm sure I could get a couple of the L.A. fan into it.⁵⁴ Given Ted Johnstone's enthusiasm for *Diplomacy*, it may seem surprising that he did not contact Boardman himself. This oddity is easily explained, however, by the fact that Ted Johnstone and David McDaniel were the same person. Johnstone is merely the alias for the fan whose real name was David McDaniel. McDaniel traded under the Johnstone pseudonym for his prolific dealings with science-fiction fandom, saving his real name primarily for his later writings as a professional author, mostly novelizations of *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*; with a wink, the dedication of McDaniel's novel *The Monster Wheel Affair* reads To Ted Johnstone, for ten years of unremitting labor which put me where I am today. For playing *Diplomacy* by mail, however, McDaniel felt comfortable revealing his real name not an insignificant choice, as we shall see below. In deference to his preferred identity split, we shall continue to refer to him as McDaniel in discussing his relationship with *Diplomacy*, but will use the Johnstone alias for his other dealings with fandom.

Also in *Graustark* #1, a note from Fred Lerner suggested that Boardman publish a newspaper which would contain players' propaganda, and serve as a vehicle for negotiation, intimidation, ultimatums, etc. The second issue of *Graustark*, which assigned McDaniel to Austria-Hungary for the world's first postal *Diplomacy* game, bears only one such piece of propaganda, which set the precedent for endless postal games to come: Peace-loving Austria-Hungary wishes to decry publicly the offers of alliance in aggression we have received, and to state that the motives of our Empire are entirely conservative and peaceful. However, we must also warn the aggressors with which we are surrounded that if we are threatened with attack upon ourselves or our allies, we are prepared to fight defensively to preserve our peace.

McDaniel voices Austria-Hungary here with a certain dramatization, attempting to simulate the sort of propaganda that a nation might actually broadcast to the press under such circumstances. The next issue ratchets up this narrative style, beginning with extremely conspicuous frankness, It is the pleasure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to announce that in the Spring of 1901 our fleet will sail from Trieste into the friendly neighboring ports of Albania on the first leg of a cruise of peace and good will among our allies lining the Mediterranean. Is he telling the truth or not? By way of contrast,

the player controlling Germany propagandizes in a more prosaic style: Germany has concluded nonaggression pacts with England and France, and the various spheres of influence of those countries have been delineated. These two distinct voices, different approaches to verbalizing matters in games, have surfaced in this study before. The examples from the

⁵² The resemblance of this role to the structure of an APA, with the gamesmaster effectively collating the orders contributed by each of the players and then mailing the result to the group, is probably no coincidence, given the origins of postal *Diplomacy* in science-fiction fandom. ⁵³ Virtually all histories of postal *Diplomacy* observe that Conrad von Metzke attempted to initiate an earlier game of postal *Diplomacy* in 1962, but the game fell apart prior to the first move.

⁵⁴

Opponents Wanted column of the *Avalon Hill General* in Section 1.1 similarly vary between bombastic rhetoric very much in the character of the protagonists of the imagined conflict and matter-of-fact requests for a fellow enthusiast to join in a game. Similarly, as we saw in Section 3.1.7, Don Featherstone proved exceptionally sensitive to those battle reports which contained such superfluous embellishments as extravagant phrases and verbose wording in their reports, talk of smoke drifting across the field ... wounded dragging themselves away etc. etc. [WGD:v4n1] He preferred a more spartan reporting style, simply announcing the sequence of events in a wargame without trying to stir any sort of vicarious reaction in readers.

Across the three traditions of hobby wargaming board wargaming, miniature wargaming and *Diplomacy* we see at their inception two distinct voices for describing games: we shall call them the *immersed* voice and the *detached* voice. Of course, these voices should not be understood as binary options but instead the endpoints of a continuum, where most descriptions of game activities lay somewhere between, leaning to one extreme or the other. The immersed voice is the voice that McDaniel uses, a voice that contextualizes itself within the game and emulates the sort of description of events that fictional entities in the game might themselves construct. The detached voice lies at the opposite pole, treating the game as a game rather than as the events that the game is intended to model, and thus speaking from the perspective of a player instead of any character. Featherstone, in this taxonomy, preferred detachment to immersion in his battle reports.

While the subject of immersion into imaginary worlds has arisen frequently in this study, a detailed discussion of the concept belongs with postal *Diplomacy* because descriptions of game events have a different status in *Diplomacy* than they do in the other families of wargaming mentioned above. The Opponents Wanted column of the *General* introduced potential players to one another before games ever took place, and the vivid battle reports that Featherstone criticized are retrospectives on conflicts already played and decided. The propaganda of *Diplomacy*, however, is a vital component of the game itself, rather than a precursor or a postscript. The text written by a postal diplomat, whether tailored to a particular recipient or aired for public consumption, impacts the course of events in the game, just like the original diplomatic phase of the board game. For a precedent elsewhere in the wargaming tradition where the description of game events, the very words themselves, might carry this sort of consequence, one must look to free *kriegsspiel* pioneered by Verdy du Vernois and the dialogic exchanges of actions and consequences between the players and referee.⁵⁵ Real-time improvisation, however, requires a different skill set than conducting diplomacy through postal correspondence. Postal *Diplomacy* gives its diplomats ample time to choose their words, and simply by virtue of forcing them to write those words down, it locates the communications of postal *Diplomacy* in something like a literary context.

⁵⁵ One could analyze the sample dialogic description of play in *Underworld & Wilderness* for its position in the continuum between immersion and detachment. The Caller speaks of characters in a distanced third person (only once using a first person pronoun), and, aside from the very last

A player like McDaniel, innumerable fanzines, probably could not take pen to paper without embellishing a narrative of some kind. During his fictionalization of events in Coventry, despite his love of writing he insisted that he was not very original and that he must lack the imagination and memory needed to keep all the facts of a fictional world in mind, which is why he so delighted in borrowing Stanbery's world.⁵⁶ McDaniel actively sought worlds he could fictionalize, and to him *Diplomacy* must have looked like just such another world. The eagerness he showed to dramatize the world of *Diplomacy* must owe something to his experiences with Coventry. Another potential influence came from his studies at San Diego State University, which were primarily in filmmaking.⁵⁷ One of his projects was a

television show called The War Makers, exploring a research project at the nearby Western Behavioral Sciences Institute said project, as it happened, was an instance of the InterNation Simulation. In *Graustark* #5, Boardman reviewed the script of McDaniel's show and observed that the Inter-Nation Simulation is akin to the war games that 19th-century general staffs used to play among themselves in anticipation of a war. McDaniel's experience with the Inter-Nation Simulation also must have brought him closer to the immersive techniques of role-playing.

McDaniel pioneered the use of the immersed voice in postal *Diplomacy*, and his example would prove the rule rather than the exception. When, in *Graustark* #6, Boardman noted that interest had risen to a level sufficient for the creation of a second postal *Diplomacy* game, McDaniel promptly volunteered to serve as its Umpire. His new periodical *Ruritania*, the second *Diplomacy* zine, appeared September 13, 1964, and like *Graustark*, drew its name from a fictional European state, this time the setting of the novel *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894). Boardman himself signed up as a player, as did none other than Allan Calhamer, the inventor of *Diplomacy*. Bruce Pelz participated as Russia under the pseudonym Adhemar Grauhugel in order to disguise a conflict of interest: his girlfriend (and by issue #10 of *Ruritania*, his wife), Dian Girard, played Austria-Hungary.⁵⁸ Needless to say the iron-clad alliance between their nations placed the other powers at something of a disadvantage.

The very structure of *Ruritania* reveals McDaniel's commitment to the immersed voice. Unlike *Graustark*, *Ruritania* attired itself as a newspaper within the game world. Its first issue begins, after a few headlines, with a feature article on the growing hostility in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century and a promise that it will be the policy of this paper to keep our readers constantly informed of every action of all the European powers in the coming conflict if it happens in Europe, you will read it first in *Ruritania*, unless himself an aspiring author with skills honed on you wrote it yourself. Later issues move to a two-column format in closer imitation of a broadsheet, running leaders for several fictional articles on the first page;; issue #10, for example, has Terror in St. Petersburg and Mystery in the Aegean Sea as top stories, in both cases brief dramatizations explaining the removal of navies from the board. In this respect *Ruritania* much resembles the *Coventranian Gazette*. The first issue of the *Coventranian Gazette* (dated Second Yule 412 by the local calendar), below its elaborate masthead, sports

dual columns containing the leaders Supreme Minister Retires After Battle With Church Authorities and Constitution Granted To New Organization, though the articles within, like those in *Ruritania*, are a mixture of detached and immersed descriptions of the game.

little in the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* one might construe as encouraging the immersed voice, as later sections of this chapter will note. Contrasting this exchange with the vivid words of the Judge in the dialogic example in Korns *Modern War in Miniature* is quite instructive.⁵⁶ #2.

⁵⁷ Like Stanbery, McDaniel eventually hoped to film the *Lord of the Rings*.

⁵⁸ Most of the players met at the World Science Fiction Convention in Washington, D.C., (DisCon I) that summer, about two weeks before the first issue of *Ruritania* came out.

McDaniel further added to the aura of immersion in *Ruritania* by providing each player not just with a country to rule but with a character. The distinction between playing as a Great Power and playing as a particular ruler of a Great Power may seem a slight one, but subtle shifts can have significant implications for a game with the diplomatic openendedness of *Diplomacy*. A nation has a territory, allies and ambition, but a diplomat has foibles and personality. Is a ruler bombastic or cautious, jocular or imperious, wise or rash? *Ruritania* #1 lists the circa-1900 rulers of each nation and suggests that the game may reveal a certain amount of information... regarding changes in administration in actual history. Just by mapping players to rulers rather than Great Powers, McDaniel took an important step away from the assumptions of boardgame *Diplomacy* and toward a concept of character;; perhaps this explains why he had no need for the alias Ted Johnstone in *Diplomacy*, as history offered a fresh selection of pseudonyms for diplomats. All of this served to make the game more vivid and engaging: for McDaniel, a game of *Diplomacy* invented a divergent line of European history, basically an alternative-history fiction, rather than just a series of maneuvers on a game map.

Postal *Diplomacy* spread slowly in its first two years of existence. With the eleventh issue of *Graustark* (October 23, 1963), Boardman gave up the title of Umpire and rechristened his role Gamesmaster, a term then adopted by the small second wave of *Diplomacy* fanzines that began in 1964.⁵⁹ Like many postal wargames, *Diplomacy* matches frequently suffered drop-outs, especially among players with slim prospects of victory, but fortunately the large number of starting players and the foresight of the rules compensated

for occasional attrition. Even by the wargaming standards of the time, however, the postal *Diplomacy* community remained small and insular. *Graustark* #53 and #54, which arrived late in the spring of 1965, enumerate all persons interested in postal *Diplomacy* known to Boardman they number only eighty-seven. The overlap between his list and the roster in *Who's Who in Coventry* #2 is striking: beyond McDaniel and Pelz, it includes Karen Anderson, Dean Dickensheet, Dian Girard, Owen Hannifen, Jack Harness, John Koning, Dick Eney and Rick Sneary. The strong presence of Coventranian characters is one indication that postal *Diplomacy* still appealed largely to science fiction fans. It is therefore unsurprising that the first organization to attempt to wrap a club around postal *Diplomacy* was a science fiction fan organization.

The National Fantasy Fan Federation (NFFF, sometimes given as N3F) aspired to much the same position in science-fiction fandom that the International Federation of

⁵⁹ The Eastern Paterson Diplomacy Club had earlier bestowed on Calhamer term. [GRS:#11]

Wargaming coveted among wargamers. Founded in 1941, and employing the term Fantasy in a way that encompasses science fiction, the NFFF offered (and still offers

today) an umbrella organization enabling both individual fans and local organizations to

discover one another and exchange information about fanzines, conventions and the like.

By 1950, the NFFF had four hundred members, which represented a sizable chunk of the

organized fandom of the day, though the same managerial demons that plagued the most

populous wargaming clubs soon caused a near-reboot of the NFFF, which barely rebuilt to

half its peak membership before 1960. Another respect in which the NFFF prefigured the

IFW was its division into member-created Bureaus to serve narrow interests within the

community: a Collectors Bureau helped fans locate obscure fanzines and books, a

Manuscript Bureau collected important documents in science fiction history,

a Tape Bureau amassed audio recordings of authors reading from their works. The formation of a Games Bureau naturally complemented the NFFF mission, as so many science fiction fans also played games. Don Miller, whose name appeared among the eighty-seven *Diplomacy* fanciers known to Boardman, chaired the Games Bureau and debuted its official organ, *The Gamesletter*, in February 1965. The Bureau encompassed a Division for *Diplomacy* as well as several other games, including chess, go and Jetan, the chess variant designed by Edgar Rice Burroughs for his John Carter novel *Chessmen of Mars* (see Section 2.1.1). Jetan had seen limited postal play among fans and stands among the earliest science fiction themed games.⁶⁰ While the NFFF Games Bureau helped to lure some as yet unaware fans to *Diplomacy*, it was not until Miller began publishing an extended family of postal game fanzines such as *Diplomania* in 1966 that science fiction fans found the perfect marriage of their genre interests and postal *Diplomacy* in the emerging world of variants.⁶¹ Miller's *Diplophobia* zine carried game variants that relied on the traditional *Diplomacy* board but altered the rules slightly: with three versus three team play, or fiveplayer games rather than seven-player games, for example. Miller corralled more radical variants in his smaller zine *Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*, such as the Game of Anarchy, a thirty-four player brawl where each player controls only a single supply center at the start of the game. For fandom, however, the most important games lived in Miller's *Fantasia* (first issue July 10, 1966). Its Tolkien-themed variants included Middle-Earth Diplomacy II

and IV, as well as Mordor vs. the World I and II: Section 1.6 already listed these among the earliest wargames with a fantasy setting. Typically, fantasy variants little altered the system of *Diplomacy* instead, they substituted the map of the fictional territory of some acclaimed fantasy story for that of Europe, and adjusted the number of players and victory conditions to match. Don Miller's Middle-Earth Diplomacy II (originally published in⁶⁰ One of the instigators of the NFFF, Art Widner, invented a science fiction boardgame called *Interplanetary* in 1943 that many in fandom regard as the first true science fiction game, as it actually transpired in space bearing in mind that while *Chessmen of Mars* (1922) came earlier, its setting is hardly futuristic. While not widely recognized outside of fandom circles, *Interplanetary* was certainly known to Johnstone, who wrote in *Mest* #5:

[*Interplanetary*] board ever in existence and put all the pieces together too, in what was, for me, an⁶¹ As a minor historical aside, *Diplomania* originally fell under the auspices of a local club, the Washington Science Fiction Association;; it was not until January 1967 that Miller attached the *Diplomania* family of zines to the NFFF. Throughout the field of postal *Diplomacy*, it was never particularly uncommon for a single zine to associate itself with several parent organizations.

Diplophobia #2), for example, is a five-player variant fought between the forces of Gondor, Rohan, Mordor and others in which a player simply needs to amass fifteen armies in order to win. The most extreme variants, like those in the Mordor vs. the World family, introduced novel objectives such as capturing a ring of power, but not all of them balanced these outcomes judiciously a disproportionate number of games of Mordor vs. the World ended with Sauron gloating over his prize.

Crucially, all these variants derived from fantastic literary sources which focused more on the characters of rulers than on nations themselves. Players in fantasy *Diplomacy* variant games consequently had a ready-made blueprint for authoring propaganda in a strongly immersed voice, often a literary voice. This is not to say that this immersive propaganda necessarily honored the spirit of the source text in much of it, players parodied the staple fictions. A representative scrap of agitprop in *Fantasia* #14 (October 1967)

accompanying an instance of Mordor vs. the World I reads, There is no truth to the rumor that Shelob is really the present ruler of Mordor in drag. frivolous commentary, however;; in that same issue, for a game of Others provided less Mordor vs. the World II, we see Gondor write, The King of Gondor now realizes his grievous error. The spell of Sauron was cast upon him so that he became greedy for the lands of the Rohirrim. He just hopes it's not too late. Most sorry, Dear Queen.

As Section 1.1 already detailed, between 1966 and 1976 the first board wargaming clubs emerged, including the USCAC, which introduced Gary Gygax to the national hobby. When Avalon Hill gamers began to self-organize, they naturally discovered *Diplomacy* fandom, and after a few years of cross-pollination the two communities effectively merged. This resulted in a steady increase in the number of new *Diplomacy* zines hosting postal games. The *Encyclopedia of Postal Diplomacy* (1992) cites only thirty-two of these new Dippy zines founded in the two-year period between 1966 and 1967;; in 1971, however, forty-two such zines entered the market, fifty-five in 1972, and sixty-five new *Diplomacy* zines in 1973,

"Winter 1906"	1969 AE	LD #1
FRANCE (Lakofka): Par, Bre, Mar, Spa, Por, Lon, Bel, Edi, <u>Phl</u> , Tun, Nap, Liv. (11) Build 2.		
GERMANY (Cote): Ber, Kie, Mun, Den, <u>Hfl</u> , Vie, War, Nor, St.P, Swo, Tri, Mos, Hol. (12) Build 2.		
AUSTRIA (CD): <u>Hfl</u> , <u>Sfl</u> , Bud, Ven. (2) No change.		
ITALY (CD): Rom, <u>Nap</u> , <u>Tun</u> . (1) No change.		
RUSSIA (CD): Sev, <u>Mos</u> . (1) No change.		
TURKEY (Gygax): Con, Ank, Smy, Bul, Gre, <u>Ser</u> . (7) Build 1.		

"Winter 1906" builds are due 25 March 1970. "Spring 1907" moves will be due 4 April 1970 ("Winter" builds will be sent to the players).

PRESS RELEASE

Vienna, Austria; 1 May 1906 (UPI):

Sigmund Prude held a press conference today in which he commented on recent remarks regarding his demise: "Reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

Prude went on to say that it was French and German sources that fed such false information to the public, for the degenerates behind this lie wish to carry on their disgusting and perverted activities behind a cloak of confusion and obscurity. "However, I, Sigmund Prude, famed Austrian moralist, point the finger directly at you and cry shame! Stand revealed in the limelight of your own lies, Canard and Willie, the Odd Couple!"

FIGURE 49: POSTAL DIPLOMACY PROPAGANDA BY GYGAX [LD:#12]

directly before the appearance of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The first widely-circulated postal *Diplomacy* coverage addressed to the wargaming community began in *Strategy & Tactics* in September 1967, in the same issue that serialized the third part of *The Siege of Bodenburg*. S&T subsequently printed a regular *Diplomacy* column by Rod Walker, himself a *Diplomacy* zine editor of some note. The IFW began tracking *Diplomacy* in the May 1968 issue of the *Spartan*, which examines a number of ambiguities in the postal rules along with resolutions that reflect the consensus of the play-by-mail community.⁶² Additionally, the IFW piece lists the top ten postal zines in the Dippy fandom community, and urges that the IFW sponsor its own *Diplomacy* publications. Before the end of 1968, Gary Gygax evinced his own interest in *Diplomacy*, and in particular Tolkien-based variants, with his blurb on the back cover of the *Spartan* inquiring about a Hobbit variant of *Diplomacy*. [IW:v1n7]

Gygax decidedly increased his involvement in postal *Diplomacy* in the late 1960s, famously authoring several variants and leaving posterity a voluminous record of his approach to the game. He quickly embraced the tradition of participation that derived from McDaniel's immersive approach to propaganda itself a window to the approaches to character pioneered in Coventry. Even in ordinary Europe-circa-1900 games, Gygax authored *Diplomacy* propaganda with an immersed voice, albeit tongue firmly planted in cheek. Lenard Lakofka *Diplomacy* zine *Liaisons Dangereuses*, for example, began with a postal game in May 1969 where Gygax controlled Turkey. The first piece of propaganda from that country is a mock press release, quoting liberally from his Omnipotence Sultan Omar II Protector of the Faithful, who blames the unstable political situation in Europe on the French. Like frogs in a polluted pond they croak for a cloak of aggression in order to hide the shame of their recent humiliation at the hands of the Russians. The second issue of *Liaisons Dangereuses* introduced J. Ackbah Hookah head of the Faithful Believers of Islam (generally referred to as the FBI) as an important agent in Turkish operations against France. Most other players adopted a similarly playful voice, and it would not be an IFW zine without a certain number of political jabs at rival clubs in the wargaming community much sport is made of a certain Pussell Rowell, for example. Each player adopted the role of such a fictional ruler, rather than playing as the historical ruler of the power in question. Nothing in the house rules for *Liaisons Dangereuses* guided how the players developed their fictional

personae for the game: presumably, they each invented a persona at their own discretion.

As the *Diplomacy* and wargaming communities merged, the notion of adopting a fictional alias within the context of a postal wargame cropped up elsewhere in IFW circles. In a 1968 issue of the *International Wargamer*, a blurb for the *Fight in the Skies* Society notes that it is a society of dogfighters who carry on an active tournament and adopt *noms-deplume* for added realism. [IW:v1n5] Those three last words command special attention: the players of *Fight in the Skies* at the time believed that developing an alias for one's pilot, and thus playing as someone other than oneself, made the game more realistic.⁶³ The earliest uses of these aliases were confined to the postal community, as the Society's long-running

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⁶³ here must mean something much like immersion, the degree to which the game refuses to distinguish itself from real life. This additional dimension of realism went beyond the adherence of a system to the setting, as discussed in the previous chapter, and served a different purpose: to make the game more engrossing, more sustainable, more enjoyable.

zine, *Aerodrome*, did not begin until June 1969. Not long after that, however, the game's creator Mike Carr explained: One of the greatest things about *Fight in the Skies* is the fact that it is such a personal game, unlike almost all other games. In *Fight* you control only one man, and in a sense, the way he performs is an extension of your personality. That is, if you want him to.... I would suggest that for each game in which your pilot is introduced... have him perform according to his personality, not yours. If the opener says he's aggressive, then have him fly aggressively... If we all do this, it should be more fun for all of us.⁶⁴

In a follow-up article in the subsequent issue, Carr stresses that a key component to this idea of personality is writing memoirs, that is to say battle reports, from the immersed perspective of the pilot as he saw it from the cockpit. Throughout the early *Aerodromes*, we find the names of many of these personalities mapped to their players;; for example, Paul Cote (later a member of the Castle & Crusade Society) we first find in the persona of Pierre le Brou. However, each player might have different *noms-de-plume* in different games;; a regular feature called Personality Profile gave an origin story for many of these fictional pilots, and in issue #20 we find a detailed

write-up of one Carlo Lendetto, Paul Cote's personality in another game. That profile covered Carlo's date and place of birth, parentage, education, introduction to piloting, mentor and finally the circumstances of his ascension to a squadron commander. This historical background in no way affects the play of the game, except insofar as players may choose game moves that, as Carr recommends, defer to the personality over the judgment of the player.

Presumably players in *Diplomacy* developed characters for the same reasons: more fun for all of us. Both games shared a multiplayer dimension that seemed to encourage the use of the immersed voice;; they also shared a common player base, as enthusiasts like Paul Cote can be found playing in *Liaisons Dangereuses* against Gygax and Lakofka. The scope of agency of the personalities in *Fight in the Skies* remained fairly limited, however, compared with that of a ruler in *Diplomacy*. To understand how the wargaming community embraced *Diplomacy*, one must remember that *n*-player postal wargames boasted a pedigree in American wargaming circles that predated the first issue of *Graustark*. Postal *Diplomacy* appeared to many IFW members as a new instance of a familiar type, a multiple commander play-by-mail game. Proni's original *War of the Empires* is a comparatively late example, but as Section 3.1.7 noted, the first postal hobby wargame with multiple players and a centralized staff of referees debuted in 1959 in the pages of the *War Game Digest* under the name of the International War Game. [WGD:v3n2] The postal dimension of the game arose from the sheer necessity of providing a means for geographically dispersed wargamers to participate in a wargame when they are unable to find local opponents. In the mold of a two-mode strategy-tactical game, the game divided players into two categories: National Leaders, who submitted by post orders (mostly map movements) at a strategic level to a Coordinator (referee);; and Operations Commanders, who executed the tactical miniature battles in face-to-face combat with a local opponent who acts as an opposing Operations Commander. The original plan that Art Mikel devised for the International War Game called for thirty countries on the upper bounds of what any Coordinator could hope to manage. For the players acting as National Leaders dealing with the strategic mode of the game, it must have closely resembled the structure of postal political wargames;; for the Operations Commanders, the whole strategic context merely set the stage for table-top miniature battles. Tony

Bath would embed this core idea into the later phases of his Hyborian campaign at the end of the 1960s, fielding out strategic decisions to remote players by post while deciding all the tactical battles on his own personal sand table, as we shall see in Section 4.5.1.

⁶⁴ *Aerodrome #11 (May 1970)*.

This form of two-mode postal game, in which the strategic component transpired by mail, heavily influenced both of the creators of *Dungeons & Dragons*. *Diplomacy* fit nicely into that existing niche as the strategic excuse for perpetual tactical table-top battles, especially because it adapted well to postal play. Moreover, the tradition of distributing immersive propaganda by post begun by McDaniel accustomed the wargaming community to the idea of controlling not just a nation but a particular character. The myriad activities surrounding *Diplomacy* in wargaming circles made the game inescapable in the circles where Gygax and Arneson moved. This study has already paid significant attention to postal *Diplomacy* zines under the IFW Diplomacy Society imprint including *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Thangorodrim* and *Atlantis*, though ultimately all three IFW zines formed a secondary affiliation with the NFFF, and were thus subsidized by both clubs. *Thangorodrim* modeled itself very much on Miller's variant zine *Fantasia*, incorporating games of Middle Earth Diplomacy IV and Mordor vs. the World III. Press in *Thangorodrim* mixes immersion and whimsy in equal measure;; for instance, a snarky Mordor (played by Brian Libby) moans, I don't mind if none of you other players write, but the least you could do is give me a Ring! [THG:v1n3] Margaret Gemignani, playing Harad, writes in a more literary vein, My Lord the Steward of Gondor pleases me much with his kingly offer. I, Queen Haradess, do accept it. [THG:v1n6] In addition to IFW regulars like Gygax and Lakofka, one of the players in *Atlantis* happened to be Peter Gaylord, a member of Arneson's gaming circle in the Twin Cities. Late in 1969, Gaylord had begun his own *Diplomacy* zine, the *Ramsey Diplomat*, which carried a number of postal *Diplomacy* games catering to the Twin Cities audience;; in one (designated 1969RDa), for example, we find Dave Arneson England pitted against Dave Wesely France, with Mike Carr playing Italy and Duane Jenkins as Austria.

After Gygax Napoleonic Diplomacy II variant was published in *Thangorodrim* (where Gaylord also participated as a player) in 1969, that variant became the basis for the strategic-level interactions in Arneson's seminal Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, with moves initially published in

the *Ramsey Diplomat*. As the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign's scope and complexity increased, however, the responsibilities of a player went far beyond those of a typical *Diplomacy* ruler, insofar as *Diplomacy* governed only the most macrocosmic events in the campaign. Arneson quickly expanded on Gygax's small initial list of conflicting nations, eventually including distant powers not commonly associated with the Napoleonic Wars, even the United States.

The upkeep of large powers required the efforts of several real-life players who played different roles in the administration, just as Gygax, Don Kaye and Rob Kuntz shared the direction of the United States, a practice that recalls the divisions of labor in the Inter-Nation Simulation. As Section 1.7 already noted, each played a particular role in the administration: Kaye as President, Kuntz as Secretary of State and Gygax as Secretary of the Navy. Implicitly, the rulers of the various powers in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign shared the identity of their players at the very least, they shared a name. The use of real player names for rulers in Arneson's game probably should be understood as a

3 December 1971

Your Most Catholic Majesty:

This note is to apprise you that the U.S. is about to go to war with Tuscany and her ally Russia, precipitated by the recent naval action in the Azores.

In this regard, we are advising you that the Russian fleet has been ordered out into the Atlantic. We thought that you might wish to join forces with us in crushing, once-and-for-all, Russian sea power, particularly in light of the situation with regard to Russian land operations as well as the Russo-Turk alliance.

The United States is also contacting both England and FRANCE in this same regard. If your Majesty is willing to join us in operations against the Russians, please inform us immediately, in order that our fleets may rendezvous. The U.S. plans to claim no Russian prizes if the operation is a joint one.

Sincerely,

Gary

E. Gary Gygax
Secretary of the Navy
United States



CAMPAIGN LETTER FROM GYGAX

casual convention rather than any attempt to populate that alternate history with plausible leadership;; the narrative almost certainly was not that Duane Jenkins, say, went back in time and became Prime Minister of England.⁶⁵ As many nations with various executives entered the game, the sheer number of personae involved soon exceeded that of all but the wackiest *Diplomacy* variants. Moreover, Arneson heaped on the shoulders of personalities many non*Diplomacy* responsibilities the national budget, the management of marriages, injuries and recuperations, successions and so on. Suffice it to say that the overall experience of simulating a world of nations by post successfully established significant levels of immersion in players. As Section 1.10 already noted, the management of the eventual twenty-five or so personalities became an integral but intensive component of the game administration, one which Arneson fielded out to Mike Carr, whose experiences with the *Fight in the Skies* Society rendered him especially qualified for this job of the Personality Coordinator. The primary workings of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign lay in the activities of personalities: after all, from a strict *Diplomacy* perspective, between the game start in late 1969 and January 1974, only six turns of play transpired (from spring of 1800 to fall of 1802), a glacial pace that would discourage even the most patient player, had *Diplomacy* been the sole dimension of the campaign.

What did players do then, for the bulk of their time? They conspired in correspondence, they propagandized and of course they fought miniature battles. The first piece of press published in that campaign came from Duane Jenkins, and began with the character Prime Minister Jenkins addressing the British House of Lords. To account properly for the results of a miniature battle in the tactical component of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, several stipulations in the rules suggest that Arneson encouraged his players to produce a detailed memoir of the battle after the fashion Mike Carr recommended for *Fight in the Skies*. Writing battle reports thus occupied much of the time between the strategic-mode *Diplomacy* moves as well. The example in *Panzerfaust* #53 (excerpted in Section 1.9) of the actions of Commodore John Rogers in the Azores to

game *War of the Empires* in 1969;; on the cover of an issue of *The New War Reports* a paper that shared, incidentally, the faux newspaper template of the *Coventranian Gazette* and *Ruritania* we see that the protagonists in its space battles in other familiar IFW names. [NWR:v2n3]

secure the return of the USS Experiment shows that the detail invested in the battle reports far exceeded even the most verbose *Diplomacy* propaganda.⁶⁶ A surviving letter from Gygax to Dan Nicholson (player of Spain) dated December 3, 1971, illustrates how Gygax himself used the immersed voice of the Secretary of the Navy in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign outside of the public press, in one-on-one correspondence with another player.⁶⁷

In the Twin Cities Napoleonic *Diplomacy* campaign, roles and immersed-voice propaganda popularized by the postal *Diplomacy* community intersected with wargames campaigns to create a powerful new fusion. The original *Diplomacy* rules authored by Calhamer made no provision for any concept of character;; the wording in the rulebook is each player represents one of the Great Powers of Europe the power, not any decision-maker for said power. More or less from its inception, however, postal *Diplomacy* found benefits in attaching interesting or humorous personalities to powers. David McDaniel, a.k.a. Ted Johnstone, must have been the first to forge this association, and his initial approach borrowed from history, assigning as a ruler to each Great Power its historical leader of the era. Some later diplomats-by-mail, as the example of *Liaisons Dangereuses* shows, developed their own fictional personae as rulers for their powers, and to a greater or lesser extent embellished their character and game narrative in the immersed voice. Finally, in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign we find an example in which the players are, in some sense, playing themselves thrust into an alternate history perhaps just as the participants in Coventry imagined themselves thrust into a possible (if extremely unlikely) future. The precedents for players approaching the game as if transported into a fantastic setting cannot be ignored, as this notion would in 1971 form the basis for Blackmoor, in which players literally played as themselves in a fantasy setting: an extension of the visitation theme of fantasy literature discussed in Section 2.4 from works of fiction to fantasy games.

As a participant in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, Gygax saw first-hand how well this two-mode format worked. When he formed the Castle & Crusade Society in 1970, Gygax intended for it to include this sort of multiplayer postal wargame as a Society activity: his initial blurb in the *IFW Messenger* mentions an MCPBM map/miniatures game. [IWM:v2n3] A more detailed description of the proposal in the *IW Supplement* for March 1970 reads: A mapboard-strategic/miniatures-tactical game based on an alternate Earth has been developed. The game is rather like a hybrid of AH and *Diplomacy*. When opposing forces meet play goes to the sand table and the action is fought out in miniature. While a proposal along these lines for the Great Kingdom eventually receives a cursory treatment in *Domesday Book* #9, Gygax clearly invested more effort into his proposal two Dark Ages, Medieval Confl . It explicitly was to be a two-level game (for map and miniatures) in which the strategic (map) and diplomatic play will be postal while battles will be resolved on the table top using LGTSA rules (DB #5) and local players to command the forces. [DB:#7] As Section 3.2.2. pointed out, such designs informed the high-level trimodal structure of *Dungeons & Dragons*, which also transitions between strategic movement and tactical battles.

⁶⁶ It moreover shows that in the scope of a tactical battle, the protagonists are minor fictional characters that do not share the names of their players. It is unclear who actually conducted the miniature battle in question, though surely Arneson wrote it up.

⁶⁷ Another surviving letter from Gygax to Nicholson offers to purchase Spanish territories in North America.

Gygax also understood well the potential for the narrative to take on a life of its own within a postal game. As Section 2.5.2 discussed in some detail, Gygax submitted a series of articles to *Thangorodrim* nominally, press associated with the two Tolkien variants, though he himself did not play in either on the color-coded varieties of dragons. Among the most avid *Diplomacy* devotees, propaganda could decouple from game events entirely and tell whatever sort of story its author desired. In *Atlantis*, the non-variant game 1970AJ (begun in issue #25, June 23, 1970) led with an unusual bit of joint propaganda from England (Lakofka) and Italy (Gygax). England s first press High in the Tyrolian Alps a brave Cartographers and Historians set off to find the lost land of Tolkien. Legend has it that somewhere in the upper reaches of these high mountains once dwelled many races of humanoids The

contribution from Italy details the research of one Patrick Albermarion, numerous manuscripts in ancient contained stories of elves and dwarves, hobbits and wizards, men and orcs, trolls and Balrogs, and wrangs [sic] Further notes from England suggest that this manuscript of Tolkien First Age will be yet another *roman à clef* for the wargaming community, featuring characters including Gygax the Blue: a portly wizard from the cold north lands of Rhovanion, Willey Voyer (William Hoyer), Roddy Wacker (Rod Walker, the *Diplomacy* zine editor) and so on. None of this had any bearing on the diplomatic situation of Europe in 1900, and might seem more relevant to a fantasy variant than a conventional *Diplomacy* game, but lengthy press releases continued this narrative as translations from Patrick Albermarion more than a year later (up to October 1971).⁶⁸ The appearance of these fantasy characters and themes here in a narrative where Gygax figures as a character takes on added significance, as during this stretch of time *Chainmail* with its Fantasy Supplement appeared and the publisher of *Atlantis* (Chris Schleicher) took over the production of the *Domesday Book* of the Castle & Crusade Society.

Not all propaganda served to drive realistic or immersive stories. Some players only wanted to wrap a light and amusing narrative around their game, rather than aspire to any sort of credible depiction of events. Again and again in the zines cited above, we see some players embrace the immersed voice and some the detached voice, with seemingly irreconcilable voices heard even within the same game. Clearly, some players found value in embracing a fictional context and character as they played *Diplomacy*, and others did not. The adoption of these rich personalities only changed the play of *Diplomacy* insofar as it changed the character of diplomatic relations the impact is thus not easily measured. Did release begins with the band of Lexographers,

⁶⁸ Considered solely as a retelling of the familiar petty political squabbling between the IFW honchos

disguise for John Boardman), the Albermarion narrative is unexceptional, following the earlier coherent allegory, perhaps it concerns how the IFW might control the entirety of postal *Diplomacy* fandom. In keeping with the default club zine level of discourse, the satire is not an elevated one, to put it mildly. It is significant, however, for its vivid placement of various IFW personalities in a fantasy cont of England. Lakofka s bears a more than passing resemblance to the Coventry stories, which often involuntarily

deputized local fans to serve as minor characters. Although its link to a game is tenuous at best, it does demonstrate the growing fluency with fantasy literature that IFW members assumed at the dawn of fantastic medieval wargames.

players who assumed a personality and employed the immersed voice win more often? Or did they simply do it to enhance their own enjoyment of the game? Probably players sympathetic to the immersed voice forged alliances more liberally with those who shared their disposition. Perhaps the same applied to those who shunned it;; one can easily imagine Featherstone in a postal *Diplomacy* game completely ignoring a lavishly embellished diplomatic overture. At the end of the day, however, *Diplomacy* is intrinsically limited in its scope of agency, as all diplomatic intentions must be reduced through the system to pushing units on a map;; one cannot write to the referee and ask what happens if England tries to sneak thousands of smallpox-infected blankets into Russia's naval vessels. The true power of these invented personalities only emerged when applied to a game system where *anything can be attempted* and a human referee is the ultimate arbiter of the system. The referee in *Diplomacy* simply does not possess this power, and thus the characters adopted by *Diplomacy* players fall short of enjoying the freedoms of personhood.

4.4 IMPROVISATION AND ANACHRONISM

While the examples in the previous section all concern postal games, some players of face-to-face *Diplomacy* must also have approached the diplomatic phase of the game from an immersed perspective. An intrepid few may have engaged in improvisational dialogs in the characters of particular rulers of Great Powers. One can even imagine especially enthusiastic players dressing up in the costumes of rulers, leading to a scene much like that on the cover of *Liaisons Dangereuses* #3, which depicts all of the fictional personalities in the zine's first game assembled in a parlor for some sort of social occasion, where Gygax Omar II can be seen wearing a turban, and Lakofka stout Duc de Canard, the leader of France, carries a teddy bear. The prevalence of this style of table-top gaming is hard to assess precisely because these sessions lacked the permanent record and distribution channel of postal *Diplomacy* games, and since they thus remained more obscure they in turn must have been less influential. Moreover, the expertise required is nonoverlapping: it is one thing to write in an immersed voice be it in fictional newspapers, letters or narratives but it requires a

very different skill to converse interactively with other people while everyone maintains the pretense of their characters. Correspondingly, the experience of opening a letter from a supposed Secretary of the Navy must differ from seeing a player in person, hearing a voice and responding to spoken entreaties.

The Coventrian Council of Warlords of May 1961, the costumed gathering of Coventry most active participants, did not transpire in the context of a game as such. It did however involve a number of participants acting in the character of

pre-established roles without any



From left to right: His impotence Omar II (alias G. Gygax) J. Bobek resident artist, (foreground) Envoy Pill Frithurd, Czar Ale Kat (alias Chuck Pearson) The Comptess de caquet, Pope Pussell Rowell, Herr Paul Cote, and the Duc de Canard (alias L. Lakofka)

FIGURE 51: ILLUSTRATION BY BOBEK OF

DIPLOMACY PARTICIPANTS [LD:#3]

memorized lines or fixed patterns of behavior the meeting was unchoreographed and improvisational, and its outcome altered the ongoing development of the collaborative fictional setting that was Coventry. Prior writings about Coventry informed the proceedings, and provided the participants enough background to speak their parts and adorn themselves in

plausible attire. Paul Stanbery, in the persona of Paulus Edwardum Rex III, donned Coventranian pseudo-medieval regalia from a crown, necklaces and medals and all the way down to black tights. Fandom had long recognized the practice of assuming the costume of a character from a work of science fiction or fantasy, which inspired the masquerades costumes had photographs taken by Robert E. Howard and his friends dramatizing the savage scenes of his fiction with costumes and weapons, they expressed the avidity of fans by adding an extra-literary component. These masquerade competitions typically involved a sort of pageant set to music, something like a fannish fashion show, after which judges selected entries of special distinction and awarded prizes. This coveted accolade of fandom, a community in which the most stable unit of currency was the egoboo (ego-boost, that is, praise), motivated the participants to construct elaborate, startling and costly displays;; at the 1958 WorldCon in South Los Angeles, one fan just short of seven feet tall... made a stunning entrance at the masquerade ball in flowing black robe, a bald headcap, his face whitened to a frightening degree, carrying a smoking brazier, and shouting things in an unknown tongue.⁶⁹ Certainly, all of the members of Los Angeles fandom involved in Coventry knew the masquerade tradition well.

The Council of Warlords went beyond a simple fashion show however, insofar as costuming merely augmented the immersiveness of the situation. The Council had no scripted agenda, and eventualities arose which threw some participants off their guard, and forced them to struggle to stay in character. At the very beginning of the meeting, Stanbery rattled off his several titles and then requested each attendee to introduce themselves in similar fashion, which everyone performed capably. After circulating a document for all to sign, Stanbery produced sealing wax and asked each of the Coventranian Warlords to apply their own stamp to their signature;; after some scrounging in pockets, the best that one participant could muster was an American coin, while Stanbery himself pressed a hollow plastic checker onto the wax which became stuck and had to be left embedded in the parchment. Throughout the event, however, the participants maintained the illusion and refused to break character. Maybe, for one fleeting moment, looking around the room at the Council, someone might have found it credible that the assembly really was a meeting in the distant future, on a wandering asteroid, a living simulacrum of the past.

We, the Guardian did not think so highly of Coventrianian gatherings. The first issue of *Dauringa Extra* lambasts the Council of Warlords with the epithet Disneyesque. While intended as pejorative, the term reflected a particular association with the Disney theme park Disneyland, which opened its doors south of Los Angeles in 1955. In Stanbery's 2002 essay on Coventry (It Wasn't All Plagiarism...), he has a great deal to say on the subject of that place and its relationship to his creation. Calling Disneyland one of the most profound cultural structures of my generation, he cites it as nothing less than the inspiration for the multi-temporal culture of Coventry. By this he means that Disneyland encompasses several thematically distinct environments which visitors may pass between held at the World Science Fiction Conventions since their inception; promulgated to many regional fan events as well. Like the striking freely. A park-goer can cross effortlessly from the extraterrestrial future, as realized by Tomorrowland, into the adventuresome American past of Frontierland. Frontierland is perhaps the closest analogy to the replicated starfaring Isles of Coventry, as it too reproduces an idealized time of human conflict and endeavor, the setting for the Western adventure stories beloved by audiences of the day.

⁶⁹ Turner, *A Wealth of Fable*, 399. Turner is a good source for the masquerade tradition overall.

While Disneyland's historically-minded attractions particularly influenced the Coventrianian virtue of conservation (or conservity, as the Coventrianian Seal has it), it is only one of several places that fall into a peculiar American tradition of historical preservation through selective reinvention. Early twentieth-century plutocrats seemed especially fond of reinventing the thoroughly-idealized past in the form of outdoor museum towns, including John D. Rockefeller's reversion of Colonial Williamsburg to a sanitary approximation of its pre-Revolutionary state and Henry Ford's surreal Greenfield Village, to which, as a tribute to American innovation, he physically relocated the home of the Wright brothers, the laboratory of Thomas Edison, his own birthplace, and many other entrepreneurial landmarks to form an implausible but highly symbolic neighborhood. These artificial towns served as museums to educate the public or less charitably, to indoctrinate the public in the revisionist agenda of their creators. All attracted considerable tourism, though none so much as Disneyland. As places of learning they all required more than just architecture: they needed

townspeople to sustain the illusion of habitation and to explain history to visitors.

Living history museums thus engage interpreters, persons wearing the garb of the museum's era who are versed in the setting of the museum and elaborate the period, either by exposition or by example. Some may visibly work a trade in the proper historical manner, such as the craftsman and jailers at Colonial Williamsburg;; others act more as tour guides who recite a largely scripted overview of the museum's featured landmarks. Any interpreter must be capable of acting and speaking extemporaneously in a manner appropriate for the setting. Walt Disney famously deployed animatronics in place of human interpreters in much of his theme park, but costumed employees frequently called cast members still carry much of the burden for interfacing with guests of Disneyland, even if only to pantomime the characters of famous cartoons for the younger audience. Witnessing someone else acting out history in a controlled setting differs qualitatively from participating in the action oneself, however. The visitors to Colonial Williamsburg typically lacked the means or inclination to adopt the attire and speech of their hosts. In this important respect, the comparison of Coventry to Disneyland is an uncharitable one, as Coventry was never intended as a spectator sport. Despite the engagement offered by rides and animatronics, the experience of a theme park or a living museum remains a passive, detached one. Even the voice of interpreters cannot consistently be an immersed one, as they must continually compensate for the detachment of their clientele.

To find a more involved approach to living history, one must look outside the museums. In July 1961, about two months after the Coventrian Council, a group of some two thousand enthusiasts in Civil War attire descended on Manassas National Battlefield Park in Virginia to reenact the First Battle of Bull Run, one of the first major conflicts of the Civil War and a significant Confederate Victory.⁷⁰ While the number of reenacting combatants amounted to an order of magnitude less than that of the original battle, tens of thousands of spectators, including the Governor of Virginia, swarmed the region, to the delight of concession and souvenir vendors. The reenactors themselves wielded period weapons, which they discharged enthusiastically throughout the proceedings;; straw dummies lay strewn on the very fields where, one hundred years before, some eight hundred soldiers perished.⁷¹

⁷⁰ *War Games* (2004).

While this event and subsequent centennial gatherings set the tone for later twentieth-century Civil War reenactments, the practice of Civil War reenactment originated far earlier. The fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1913 drew an enormous number of Civil War veterans (from both sides) and their descendants to its site, where they performed a credible, though fortunately bloodless, rendition of that decisive engagement. One can understand what brought the original protagonists back to commemorate such a momentous event, but what motivated the participants a century after the fact? A reenactor of such a large-scale event with many participants has a rare opportunity to become immersed in the setting more so than an interpreter in a living history museum, as on the battlefield one can interact solely with other interpreters. Much the same effect could be achieved by reenacting in an isolated environment with a small core of dedicated companions. Tony Horwtiz, in his book *Confederates in the Attic*, tracked the members of an elite group of Civil War reenactors that met regularly for weekend drills in which they emulated the lives of Confederate soldiers in winter quarters to the point of eating, sleeping and marching in the precise fashion of the period. Eventually, the experience becomes utterly believable. He quotes one member as saying, Sometimes, after weekends like this, it takes me three or four days to come back to so-called reality... That's the ultimate.⁷²

A broader history of the reenactment of battles would go far beyond our budgeted space, but for the most part these battles aspired to complete historical fidelity: the most dedicated Civil War reenactors even adopt the identity of a particular historical personage, the more obscure the better. This faithfulness meant that the North must prevail in Gettysburg, and the South in Manassas, though to reflect the preservation of the Union, after the reenactment of the Confederate victory at the 1961 centennial, everyone present joined in a patriotic chorus of God Bless America. The anniversaries of major Civil War engagements provided inspiration and free press for another emerging cultural tradition of the day: Avalon Hill board wargames, in particular their *Gettysburg* (1958) and *Chancellorsville* (1961) titles. There was however a significant difference between a board wargame and a reenactment: in the Avalon Hill version, the gamers could arrive at a different outcome for the battles, while reenactment under most circumstances must adhere to the historical play of events. When such a

simulation of past events leaps free of the rails of history, perhaps it is better termed a recreation than a reenactment. As Section 3.1.2 observed, even Hellwig, at the dawn of board wargaming, learned that his configurable board had been applied to recreating an important engagement in the Seven Years War, and Reiswitz sometimes set the general idea

the recent past. Precedents for

for his own games to explore important military events of open ended exploration of history, where the outcome is not foreordained, on a larger scale than a table top also abound the Romans, for instance, favored mass gladiatorial combats that modeled famous battles of the past, and sometimes history failed to repeat itself in a manner that caused some political embarrassment.

⁷¹ Many of the participants came from the ranks of the North-South Skirmish Association, a group that had long studied Civil War weapons and uniforms outside of the context of reenactment.

⁷² Horwitz, *Confederates*, 11.

Preservation of the past through historical reenactment need not merely remind audiences and participants of some particular event, however. It can also serve to reinvigorate traditional values by displaying the positive qualities of the heroes of yesteryear. Many forms of ritual and tradition associated with European royal courts contain elements of reenactment, practices long obsolete but retained because their very anachronism condones the present with all of the authority of the past. Up to the early nineteenth century, for example, the coronation of English monarchs required many trappings of chivalry, including knights in armor and even a King's Champion who ceremonially threw down a gauntlet that any challenger to the succession might take up as a call to single combat, though no prudent dissenter would favor this means of registering their disgruntlement with a new sovereign. The crowning of Queen Victoria (1837) finally eliminated this expensive and gaffe-prone tradition, along with many other chivalric obligations and privileges conferred on peers by centuries of hereditary precedent.

In 1839, however, the feudal establishment experienced a fleeting resurgence when Sir Archibald Montgomerie, the 13th Earl of Eglinton in Scotland, announced a chivalric tournament, one largely intended to compensate for the many honors the aristocracy lost in Victoria's coronation the Earl's stepfather, not coincidentally, would have held the prestigious

position of Knight Marshal in those ceremonies had they transpired. Under the influence of Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814) and *Ivanhoe* (1815), as well as the same Gothic stories that captivated the Brontë children around a decade after, Eglinton hoped to restore chivalric values to their rightful place, and to demonstrate that the noble stock of the British Isles still instantiated the same virtues espoused by the medieval epics. The tournament conformed to medieval tradition as best as its designers understood it: young noblemen of the day equipped themselves with arms and steeds for jousting, while noble ladies donned sumptuous garments and paired themselves with champions who would fight in their name. Training for the event took the better part of a year, as the employment of these arms hardly came naturally to the idle rich of early modern Europe. The young knights adopted personae that might have come straight out of Spenser: The Earl of Craven, for example, styled himself as the Knight of the Griffin, Viscount Alford as the Knight of the Black Lion, the Marquess of Waterford as the Knight of the Dragon. While staying at Eglinton Castle in preparation for the event, the Knights were obligated to call one another by these pseudonyms, which apparently occasioned a few jests: the Knight of the White Rose, the joke went, ran the risk of turning pink after consuming a surfeit of claret.⁷³ The Lady Seymour graced the coveted seat of the Queen of Beauty.

At staggering expense, Eglinton retrofitted his castle and its grounds for the procession and the jousts themselves, engaging and costuming an enormous supporting cast of musicians, pages, archers and jesters, not to mention erecting a veritable medieval stadium alongside massive tents to encompass banqueting and dancing after the festivities. While the knights whose limbs and pocketbooks proved equal to competing in the lists numbered no more than forty, the tournament captured the imagination of the popular press and demand for attendance was enormous. The Eglinton tournament became a sort of early nineteenth-century Tory version of Woodstock, with around a hundred thousand attendees, utterly inadequate room and board to support such a mob in the surrounding communities, and most disastrously of all, stubborn precipitation. On account of heavy rains and consequent logistical problems, little actual jousting took place, even after several postponements. The event was not a social failure for Eglinton, however, as the aristocracy he aspired to please appreciated the fruits of his

laborious preparations. Several copycat events, albeit with more limited means, cropped up around England and even in the United States.

⁷³ Anstruther, *The Knight and the Umbrella*, 186. That same volume relates that the Knight of the White Rose in fact, Sir Charles Lamb, half-brother to Lord Eglinton and a tremendous influence on the 1839 tournament fashioned as a child a fantastic imaginary kingdom centered around his pet guinea pigs, of which he apparently kept hundreds. He at one point authored a work of 16,000 words elaborating their several genealogies and histories, with a special focus on heraldry. Among the most revered orders of knighthood in this childhood kingdom was, appropriately enough, the Order of the White Rose. This provides yet another example of a childhood persisting far into adulthood.

More than a hundred years later, romantic medievalism enjoyed another spike in popularity (as Section 2.2 previously detailed), thanks partially to Sir Walter Scott once again, this time for the film version of his *Ivanhoe*, but due also to the gathering momentum around Tolkien Middle-earth as the 1965 debut of its paperback edition approached. When technological optimism waned in the throes of the Cold War, medieval themes nicely complemented the pastoral fantasies and anti-industrial sentiments of a new generation of young romantics. The composition of science-fiction fandom changed in several ways in this era, as it incorporated a new wave of medieval fantasy fans: most notably, it grew larger, as the threefold increase in attendance between the 1963 and 1967 WorldCons suggests. Tolkien-centered fanzines carrying occasional subjects of general medieval interest began to surface, with one of the earliest being *I Palantir*, begun in 1960 under the editorship of none other than Ted Johnstone and Bruce Pelz. That effort is predated by *Amra*, which, although spiritually oriented toward Conan rather than Frodo, featured historical articles on medieval arms and culture, including a favorable review by L. Sprague de Camp of an account of the Eglinton tournament called *The Knight and the Umbrella* (1963) by Ian Anstruther. [AMR:v2n32] Another Tolkien fanzine of the early 1960s was *NIEKAS*, which was distributed through the APA of the NFFF, appropriately enough called *N APA*.⁷⁴ The contributors to *NIEKAS* circa 1964 included a few names familiar from Coventry, such as Jack Harness and Bjo Trimble, as well as many San Francisco Bay Area locals, and in that roster one reads another fact about the changing face of 1960s fandom: it attracted far greater

female participation. Diana L. Paxson, a student of medieval literature at Mills College in Oakland, California, became involved with a local fan club that included most of the perpetrators of *NIEKAS*, and began submitting artwork to the magazine. Her own interests in the medieval period aligned with those of Dave Thewlis and Ken de Maiffe (both of whom also have art credits in *NIEKAS*), a pair of fencing enthusiasts who had developed an interest in medieval armor and combat. The pair of them often practiced swordsmanship in the backyard behind Paxson house on Oregon Street in Berkeley.

Collectively, these Berkeley fans conceived a way of taking their medieval interest to a new level, one that went beyond fanzines and into the realm of extra-literary experience comparable to that of Civil War reenactors.⁷⁵ On May Day of 1966, about thirty fans gathered in Paxson backyard for a peculiar hybrid event: a combination of a medieval costume contest and a melee combat tournament, the latter conducted with blunted weapons but little restraint. In her contemporaneous write-up of the event, Paxson introduced this gathering by retelling the story of the Eglinton tournament, concluding,⁷⁴ **The apostrophe differentiated N APA from the National Amateur Press Association (NAPA), the institution Lovecraft himself joined early in the twentieth century.**

⁷⁵ Bear in mind that the Renaissance Pleasure Faire, progenitor of the modern renaissance fair, began as a Californian tradition in 1963, and while many SCA members participated in the Faire, the two events were essentially independent. *Tournaments Illuminated* #3 has a history of the Northern and Southern California incarnations of the Renaissance Pleasure Faire, and their relationship to local public radio stations. Naturally, the SCA participated heavily in the Marin County fair in October

But that Tournament, ill-fated as it turned out to be, cannot truthfully be considered the last. Chivalry is not dead my backyard bears proof of the same!⁷⁶

The May Day tournament got off to a slow start. At twelve noon (official starting time) there were about four people standing around admiring each other's costumes, one of my roommates was still finishing her dress, and I was wondering what else you can do with four people in costume. A couple hours later, however, her backyard had filled with guests wearing their best approximation of medieval garb, which judges (including one of professors, Elizabeth Pope) assessed for authenticity.⁷⁷ In short, participants assumed

characters for the duration of the day, and chose appropriate names, attire, armaments and behavior for their personae. After a march and procession, the more industrious, or perhaps reckless, among them then staged single combats with various padded weapons and makeshift armor. The initial battle took place between persons styling themselves as Sir Siegfried X. Hofflichkeit and Sir Kenneth;; other combats followed throughout the afternoon. Paxson gushes in an unmistakably immersed tone: What swords were splintered that day! What cries of exultation and anguish, what sounds of blows and what good knights struck to the earth, and what resplendent ladies looked on!

After several bouts, two finalists emerged: Sir Aeginius (Dick Barnhart) and Sir Deutsche Bursenschaft (Paul Wolfgangel). In the final combat, Paxson reports of Aeginius that the clear plastic facepiece of his motorcycle helmet actually cracked from the force of his opponent's blow. Not all costumes strictly adhered to the period, but given the ferocity of fighting, the choice of a motorcycle helmet and other modern forms of armor might be considered a very prudent one. For his part, Deutsche suffered a disabling hit to his left arm, which under the rules of battle required that he fight with that arm held behind his back. Thus, facing off against one another in the last exchange of blows, there stood: Sir Deutsche in complete white fencing costume, with a mace in one hand and the other held behind his back;; and Sir Aeginius, in black, holding a spear and crouching behind his black, silver-blazoned shield. They circled round, scuffling in the dust, Sir Deutsche wary, and Sir Aeginius feinting with his spear. He thrust, Sir Deutsche avoided the blow. They circled again;; then Sir Deutsche darted in. We heard the clonk of a blow caught on the shield, then the mace swung up, fell, and hit Sir Aeginius between neck and shoulder and brought him to the ground. If the weapon had been sharp...? Sir Deutsche Bursenschaft was the winner.⁷⁸

1967, including running a Living Chess Game there. In fandom circles, several pseudo-medieval organizations centered around costumes and mock ceremonies had existed for some time, most notably the Knights of St. Fantony. As recently as 1965, a notice in *Amra* announced that Karen Anderson (wife of author Poul Anderson) ran the Royal Hyborean College of Arms;; herself styled wore a tabard to one of their Musters. Note also that Karen Anderson made a contribution to Coventry, in her fanzine *Zed* (#798, in the 58th SAPS mailing), which Stanbery acknowledged as canon in the

Coventranian Gazette.

⁷⁶ NIEKAS #16 (June 30, 1966).

⁷⁷ Steve Perrin remembers attending in his persona of Stefan de Lorraine with the following get-up:

ur lining of my raincoat belted fur side out around my waist and Ace bandages on

Aside from these martial proceedings, there were medieval readings in AngloSaxon and Old French, scenes from Cervantes, even a Maypole dance. Its organizers had not intended this to be a recurring event, but when surging interest mandated a sequel, one of the participants a writer named Marion Zimmer Bradley, who attended Paxson yard party in the persona of Dona Ximena, wife of El Cid suggested that the group adopt the name the Society for Creative Anachronism, or SCA.⁷⁹

For the next couple of years, the SCA held regular gatherings in the Bay Area, with increasingly elaborate costumes and armaments. Any costume was welcome, provided that it appeared to hearken from before the year 1650. Participants left behind their modern wardrobe and names, assuming for use within the Society personae antique to the eye and ear;; for example, Paxson became Diana Listmaker, and Dave Thewlis fought under the aforementioned nom-de-guerre Siegfried von Hofflichkeit.⁸⁰ Not all events emphasized the martial character of the Society. A poster for the Twelfth Night Revels in 1967 welcomed Lords, Ladies, Youths, Maidens, Yeomen, Squires, Druids, Merry Clerics, Minstrels, Jesters, Green Knights, Red Barons, Elves, Gnomes, Little Men, and Kings from the East.⁸¹ It promised entertainment including medieval music, and counseled attendees to be ready for dramatics both impromptu and improper, readings, declamations and all manner of minstrelsy. The SCA is mainly known, however, for its Tournament, which establishes the hierarchy within a particular SCA Kingdom.

An SCA Kingdom is, appropriately enough, ruled by a King. The Champion, which is to say the winner of the most recent Tournament, becomes the next King, and selects the Lady that will be his Queen. A current King cannot compete in the Crown Lists tourney, and thus the King changes after each Tournament. If we consider the SCA as a game whose object is to be King, this stipulation ensures that the game never ends, that a healthy dose of conflict constantly upsets the social structure. An early description of how these tournaments transpired in practice reads: A

procession enters, made up of the nobility, the King and Queen, the Tannist (King elect) and his Lady, and anyone else the King wishes in the procession. All proceed to the thrones, where the King passes on his rank by crowning the Tannist as the next King. The order of the day proceeds with fighting, music, etc., until one Champion emerges as the winner of the day's fighting. This person, and his lady, are crowned with laurels, thereby becoming the Tannists.⁸²

The fighting itself reflects a trade-off between realism and safety, where safety is best understood as the better part of playability. Metal weapons of any kind are forbidden,⁷⁸ *NIEKAS* #16.

⁷⁹ The suggestion came from Bradley and her husband at the time, the fan Walter Breen. They may have drawn some inspiration from an [AMR:v2n38]

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Paxson gives the name in *NIEKAS* as Hofflichkeit, though other early sources use n

⁸¹ In retrospect, this practically reads as a list of character classes. The local fan club in Berkeley

⁸² From *A Handbook of the (Current) Middle Ages* (1968).

as are certain authentic medieval implements like the morning star and most projectile weapons, though ultimately the responsibility for deciding the propriety of any weapon for use in a tournament belongs to the combatants and the King, the latter having ultimate authority over the arms on his field. There are some restrictions on fighting technique;; for example, no thrusting is allowed except with the lance or shortsword, and no knight may grasp the bladed portion of a simulated weapon defensively. The key stipulation in the Rules of the Lists, however, is that fighters are expected to behave as though the weapons are real, and injuries will be judged accordingly. If a combatant receives a blow to the arm, for example, he must fight as if that arm were disabled, usually by putting the arm behind his back. Hits, however, must be palpable: You should strike with the force of your entire arm, the rulebook recommends.⁸³ Once one starts losing a combat with these rules, a last minute comeback becomes very unlikely.

The SCA approach to medieval combat contrasts obviously and fundamentally with the man-to-man combat system of *Chainmail*. The implications of relying on one's actual physical prowess as a surrogate for that of characters reward further exploration. In the SCA, one must

physically wield martial implements, which simulated or no are weighty and awkward. The author Poul Anderson, who participated in the SCA from its first May Day gathering under the persona of Bela of Eastmarch, included in his lengthy write-up of the SCA for *Amra* the sentiment that it takes many bruising, tedious hours of practice to develop warlike skills... the sport is a rough one;; bruises are a near certainty, concussions and broken bones are not unknown. [AMR:v2n50] Crucially, in the SCA, your character can only be as capable with a sword as you are;; in the execution of the *Chainmail* system, or indeed any wargame, a figure's capability is specified mathematically in the system and need have no bearing on any person's physiology living or dead. During the course of wargaming, debilitating injuries ordinarily should not arise, as the players are limited to swinging dice rather than physical weapons. The example of the SCA fighter exposes, then, a limit of the simulation: broadly, the weak cannot play the personae of the strong in a game where the strength of players is a surrogate for the strength of characters.⁸⁴ In this respect, while the experience of participating in the SCA may be more immersive, it is perhaps not as versatile a simulation as *Chainmail*, or any table-top wargame. Simulating magic, for example, would pose a challenge in the SCA system.

These limitations suited the participants in the SCA, however, who aspired to create a believable courtly environment. Weather permitting, they preferred venues in natural surroundings, far from chance interlopers, where nothing in sight or sound belied the illusion of the period they emulated. Anderson writes, there is a conscious objective of

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fighting in the Lists for the Crown must literature suggest that women may enter combat;; historically, of course, this is an entirely authentic allotment of gender roles.

⁸⁴ While this physical case is perhaps the most obvious such limitation, less tangible characteristics of game personae may suffer similar curbs. *Dungeons & Dragons* characters have an ability called Intelligence

that decides among courses of action in game, and players routinely make selections below their consensus among the persons sitting around a table top, rather than anything written next the word Charisma subject.

reviving and practicing not only medieval sports and games, but medieval ceremoniousness, respect for rank, most especially courtesy and honor. To this end, participants simulate as realistic (where we understand the term in Mike Carr's sense, as something close to immersive) a setting as possible:

Around a broad field stand gaily hued pavilions, tents, and baldaquins. Before and beneath them appear refreshments for the owners, their entourages, and others;; generosity is the order of the day. Often a considerable effort has been made to obtain such food and drink as could have been had in the Middle Ages and to manufacture ornamented goblets for the latter. Banners fly overhead, bearing the arms of the members. (Anyone may assume any he chooses, provided these are not already taken in the Society or the real world;; however, heraldic correctness is urged, and to insure this a College of Heralds is being created.) A few staffs may also bear green branches, signifying a man who will not be fighting today. But most banners are flown in challenge. [AMR:v2n50]

For a participant, this scene induces an immersive effect, almost as if a modern person has been plucked from our time and transported into a credible medieval world much like, say, the character of Holger Carlson in Anderson's earlier work *Three Hearts and Three Lions*.⁸⁵ As Section 2.4 discussed, much of the fantasy fiction of the era focused on visitations of fantasy worlds, round-trip journeys from the dissatisfaction of modern life to a realm of adventure and back again. Like Holger Carlson, the participants in the SCA take up the trappings of medieval society for a glorious but brief romp before returning reluctantly to the mundane world. Just like the participants in the Lists, Holger must heft his sword against many a foe, and when he does so, his own strength and skill dictate his effectiveness. Holger falls into a character in the world he visits, that of Ogier le Danois, though unlike the personae of the SCA, it is not one of his own devising. Thanks to a fortuitous conceit, Holger acquires his arms and armor without effort, while SCA members dedicate countless hours to their construction. This huge investment of time must reflect a proportionate seriousness in their approach to their roles and their aversion to any blunder that might expose the proceedings as a contrivance. Unlike the die-hard Civil War reenactors discussed above, however, the SCA did not attempt to recreate the actual medieval situation one of disease, deprivation and unpredictable brutality but

instead the Middle Ages as it should have been, a time of courtly romance and blunted weapons visited only for short, enjoyable stints.⁸⁶

Only four such labor-intensive visitations to medieval times populated the early SCA yearly calendar, corresponding to the equinoxes, the summer solstice and May Day, with other winter events such as the Twelfth Night revels remaining largely free of violence. On its first anniversary, the club launched a periodical called *Tournaments Illuminated* (a play on *Sports Illustrated*) which promulgated club news as well as helpful tips for recreating medieval attire, weapons, speech, food and more or less all other aspects of life. The SCA did some amount of early proselytizing outside the Bay Area, most notably at WesterCon 20 in Los Angeles, where they formed the first ties with LASFS. Marion Zimmer Bradley served as the guest of honor at that convention, and delivered a medieval-themed speech at the convention banquet. *Tournaments Illuminated* #3 reported on a fascinating fight between Siegfried von Hofflichkeit and Fritz Leiber, who must be approaching sixty years old, attributing to Leiber an ability with standard sabre that is a sheer joy to watch, as well as unusual proficiency fighting broadsword to broadsword, with no shields

the tournament

against his younger opponent. The writer Harlan Ellison also fared well in ⁸⁵ It is also reminiscent of Bruce Pelz - ventry mentioned above, although without requiring the assistance of drugs yet this being Berkeley in 1966, it probably did not bar the assistance of drugs either.

⁸⁶ In character, as in system, there must be a trade-off between realism and playability: a Civil War reenactor who endures severe diets, cold nights sleeping in the woods, long hours of marching and so on certainly achieves a realistic approximation of his character, but not all could muster the required rigor, whereas the Society for Creative Anachronism appropriates only the intriguing elements of medieval times and bundles them into a package with broad appeal.

that day, though the Bay Area veterans, including Poul Anderson, dominated the finals. Henrik the Dane (Henrik Olsgaard) won the tournament and walked away with a two-quart hand-painted beer stein as his trophy. The SCA rose to a more national prominence the following summer at the World Science Fiction Convention of September 1968, located as chance would have it at the Claremont Hotel on the border of Berkeley and Oakland. There, the SCA staged massive outdoor combats that dazzled the

broader fan community with their sophisticated costumes, weapons and fighting technique. Helpfully, they also sold there for 75¢ a mimeographed booklet entitled *A Handbook of the (Current) Middle Ages* containing enough detail about the Society for any purchasers to found chapters in their home towns.

From that point forward, the SCA swept through the eager hordes of fandom. Kingdoms which held their own tournaments sprang up throughout America: the Berkeley contingent assumed the name The Kingdom of the Mists ;; Portland, Oregon, stood in for the Barony of the Three Mountains ;; and Brooklyn, New York, began the Kingdom of the East. The first notice of the SCA appeared in *Amra* shortly before the 1968 convention via Clint Bigglestone, a Bay Area fan, plugging *Tournaments Illuminated*. [AMR:v2n48] One long-time *Amra* contributor who became involved in the SCA was John Boardman, the editor of *Graustark*, who styled himself Lord John of Brook Lynne and produced a couple of SCA-related fanzines, including *PRISCVS ORDO SECLORVM*, dedicated to the proposition that the Dark Ages are returning... and that prudent persons will conduct themselves accordingly. Many participants in the NFFF *Diplomacy* games, especially those who favored an immersed voice, found a good home in the SCA;; Margaret Gemignani, who was mentioned above for her play in *Thangorodrim*, can be found in the SCA as Margaret of San Gemignano.

In the SCA, the science-fiction fandom community created an immersive medieval phenomenon with a strong emphasis on Inevitably, the membership of the SCA community. For *Tournaments Illuminated* #13 (late in 1969), a Joseph the Rhymer provided an article entitled The Medieval Wargame which sketched, at a high level, the basic principles long discussed in medieval miniature wargaming circles by Tony Bath and others. Miniatures are designated as light or heavy infantry or cavalry, with archers counting as a separate type of light infantry. The rules employed a simple combat factor (an Avalon Hill-ism) system where, for example, heavy cavalry has a combat factor of five, and thus if you roll a 5 or lower on a die when attacking with heavy cavalry it defeats the targeted unit. The author even mentions Jack Scruby as a source for the miniatures themselves.

When the Castle & Crusade Society began in March 1970, its membership also overlapped with that of the SCA. The early key member in common was William Linden, known in the SCA as Alfgar the Sententious, an authority on medieval heraldry. Linden contributed many fascinating historical tidbits to *Graustark* around 1969, at a time when Gygax

participated actively in that fanzine. Since the Castle & Crusade Society aspired to character and certain game-like elements intersected with the broader wargaming assign a unique and meaningful coat of arms to each member, the assistance of Linden proved quite valuable. In the C&CS, Linden held the rank of Lord Prince of Arms as of the fourth *Domesday Book*; the next issue contains an advertisement for *Tournaments Illuminated* and instructions on joining the Middle Kingdom of the SCA, the regional club based around Chicago. Given these notices, and especially that Arneson as Pursuivant of Arms drew heraldic devices that Linden designed, it seems certain that Gygax and Arneson both had knowledge of the SCA in 1970, and might have experimented with its combat system.⁸⁷ The publication of *Chainmail* even received a notice in the final issue of Boardman SCA fanzine *PRISCVS* (#IX, February 1972).⁸⁸

The feudal membership structure of the C&CS, as first delineated in the *Domesday Book*, raises the question of whether the Great Kingdom, eventually home to Blackmoor and Greyhawk, borrows from the Kingdom structures of the SCA. Part of the difficult in resolving this question is that the C&CS system languished in a state of partial implementation. Early issues of the *Domesday Book* outline the many possible feudal ranks and orders of knighthood, with the proviso that advancement in rank in the society will be based on activity, contribution and playing ability. [DB:#4] This last point is where the C&CS most resembles the SCA, as it conferred rank to Knights who have proven their playing ability in sponsored events. In the C&CS, the jousting rules published in the *Domesday Book* offered one such way for Knights to compete, though more overarching visions of competition appeared in the ninth issue, including Arneson Futile and Gygax sketch of the Great Kingdom as a stage for conflicts. By that ninth issue, the number of possible titles in the C&CS had expanded alarmingly up to fifty, ranging from Serf to Pope. The Great Kingdom encompassed all of the territory of the major peers, though of course nobles owe feudal service to their liege lord, the King, and although it only receives a superficial treatment, Gygax seems to envision the Kingdom as the playing field of a game that would incorporate AH-type play as well as aspects of *Diplomacy*. Voting on decisions of the Society perhaps stood as the most substantial of the intended privileges of rank, with the more exalted titles granting more ballots in votes. There is however no evidence that either the jousts or any activities of participants in the Great Kingdom actually caused any changes

in rank within the C&CS, nor that the voting system saw much exercise. Moreover, the members of the C&CS adopted no particular character, except in the casual sense that the players of *War of the Empires* and some postal *Diplomacy* players loosely recruited their own selves as rulers;⁸⁷ Robert Kuntz in that sense played King Robert I, and Gygax was crowned King Gary I. The transfer of power between these monarchs, however, surely owed more to the mounting delays in the publication of the *Domesday Book* than to any machinations in the fictional realm.

When it comes to role assumption, who would want to play a king, anyway? Holding court, attending state dinners, issuing decrees while plucky adventurers enjoy all the risks and spoils? The most historically significant events in the Great Kingdom, those taking place in Blackmoor, played out at a more personal level, concerning the heroic residents of a town rather than rival Dukes squinting at one another across vast expanses of terrain. Fantasy narratives, as Chapter Two amply substantiated, focus on the activities of heroes. Those heroes may participate in larger battles, but more often they are armies unto themselves, and their conflicts transpire on a human scale. These precedents of fantasy genre literature informed the fantasy wargame setting, and narrowed the scope of immersion down to the individual. A rich idea of character naturally migrated from fantasy literature to fantasy games as players immersed themselves into these individual roles. Which is more likely to induce a satisfying level of immersion, a face-to-face contest between two fighters or the epistolary correspondence of nobility? Tellingly, the Coventry stories of Tedron place him in disguise, free of ducal responsibilities and commands, for a healthy dose of rollicking adventure. The lesson is one familiar from the dawn of the fantasy genre. Aragorn prefers to get his hands dirty in the wilds rather than luxuriating within the walls of Minas Tirith. Similarly, even when Conan is a king, he is an uneasy one, and his rulership hinges on his personal strength rather than what he might command of others.

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members here in Lake Geneva, two of whom played in my *D&D* campaign. I did indeed wield a rattan sword with helmet and shield, but only in practice. I never did join the SCA or make armor and costume. As is still the case, gaming kept me too busy for that. Lacking proper leg protection, I still sport the broken blood vessels where enemy swords impacted leg. Never felt the pain of impact at the time though--too wor

⁸⁸ As one salvo in the endless feud between Gygax and Boardman, Boardman turned to the Middle Ages than Gary Gygax, wargamer, Swiss

4.5 HYBORIA AND THE CAMPAIGN AS STORY

Up to this point, we have seen how science-fiction fandom embraced an improvisational method of playing characters in fictional environments, both on paper and in person. Before the popularization of hobby wargaming, a phenomenon like Coventry never quite rose to the level of a game, but once science-fiction fandom applied these principles to a political wargame like *Diplomacy*, especially in its postal incarnation, the result was a novel fusion of wargaming systems with immersive expressions of dramatization and character. When characters entered the medieval setting, as the example of the Society for Creative Anachronism shows, the immersion into a fantastic alternate world took on a particularly strong form. All of these practices fed back into the wargaming community through various intermediaries who participated in both fandoms;; these ideas of character directly influenced both Gygax and Arneson, most notably in the structure of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign and the Castle & Crusade Society. By the late 1960s, the elements were all in place for the creation of a new sort of game, one with a wargame system but an emphasis on character, potentially set in a world with medieval and fantastic qualities. Immediately prior to the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*, there were a few experiments that combined these elements of character and system with the fantasy setting. While these efforts were obviously overshadowed by the success of *Dungeons & Dragons*, the communities that drove them were instrumental to the acceptance of fantastic roleplaying in the mid-1970s as were the communities behind Coventry, postal *Diplomacy* and the SCA. The remainder of this chapter examines these cousins of *Dungeons & Dragons*: their inventors, players, structures and ultimately the limitations that prevented their widespread adoption.

Tony Bath began combining fantasy fiction and wargaming as early as the 1950s, though it took a decade for his campaign to arrive at a concept of character. Many early wargamers, as Section 4.2.1 already observed, staged their games in childhood fictional settings building on Let's Pretend. Tony Bath, one of the seminal figures in British wargaming, instead founded his

campaign world by adapting a pre-existing imaginary realm: Robert E. Howard's Hyborian Age. Bath identified and developed this setting at the



FIGURE 52: TONY BATH

astonishingly early date of 1957 astonishing for the state both of hobby wargaming and of Howard's escape from obscurity. Generously, Bath postulates of his readers that there may be many of you who will be familiar with the writings of the late Robert Howard, not a certainty at a time when

Conan owed his survival to the Gnome Press editions of *Conan the Conqueror* (1950), *King Conan* (1953) and *Tales of Conan* (1955), none printed in runs larger than five thousand.⁸⁹ As almost certainly the first to combine wargaming and fantasy fiction, Bath was ahead of his time;; however, he took a long and circuitous path to develop the idea of Hyboria into the sort of campaign described in his classic *Setting up a Wargames Campaign* (1973), a work that shares many significant features with *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Initially, Bath s ambitions for Hyboria as a campaign setting sounded quite modest.

As he wrote in 1957 to the *War Game Digest*: For someone like myself, whose chief interest is in ancient times, the Hyborian Age, with its wildly diversified types, is proving the ideal setting. I now have a large scale map of the continent of Hyboria, and each country therein now possesses its own colors and flags, its own weapons and strategies. As rapidly as possible I am building up an army for each country, and in addition there are mercenary troops which can be hired by any kingdom which requires their services. [WGD:v1n4]

Section 1.6 already related that Bath appropriated the Hyborian Age not to dwell on its fantasy aspects, but instead to indulge his general interest in the ancient setting, and to provide a campaign framework that would permit many diverse types of armies to confront one another. By building up an army here he surely means the acquisition and painting of the miniature figures themselves, but this arduous task proved far simpler for Bath than finding someone to oppose him on the battlefield this was years before Opponents Wanted, and even had it existed, it hardly served the British Isles. He complains in this same article, I have tried every means I can think of to obtain an opponent, even advertising in the local paper.... Apart therefore from occasionally dragooning my wife into taking a hand I have to operate both armies, with the subsequent disadvantages. [WGD:v1n4] Given that he frequently had to play both sides of the battle, it is unsurprising that he assigned countries their own particular strategies, to which he strictly adhered in order to diminish awkward second-guessing in this form of solitaire. His interest in basing his campaign on an existing fictional world whose denizens have previously-specified characteristics owes no small debt to his isolation as a wargamer. An

⁸⁹ In *Slingshot*

these Gnome editions, with a casual men editions contains in its endpapers a map of the Hyborian Age drawn by David Kyle.

existing fictional narrative inspired Bath's wargame;; it is therefore unsurprising that his wargame in turn inspired a dramatization.

4.5.1 DRAMATIZING GAMES

Bath had already conceived of a literary dimension of the Hyborian campaign in 1957: For the future I have planned a whole series of campaigns among those various countries, which are to be fully covered by war correspondents so that a complete history of Hyboria can be compiled. [WGD:v1n4] He intended to produce a document that would aggregate accounts of the various fictional conflicts in his Hyboria, detailing their outcome and broader consequences. For Bath, odd, unconnected battles never proved satisfactory: he needed to contextualize the battles in a broader narrative that added a historical perspective and set the stage for future battles.

Perhaps the established fictional narrative behind his setting inspired Bath to document the campaign as a story, one that emphasized the roles of the protagonists of warfare. Bath could however just as easily have emulated the precedent of Stevenson written accounts of wargaming at Davos, especially for the idea of a war correspondent as the author of the chronicle. In the very first issue of the *War Game Digest*, Ted Haskell gave guidance on how to: write up the battles in the manner of a war correspondent. Those who do this are in good company. No less an author than Robert Louis Stevenson, onetime correspondent of the Yallobally Record, wrote stirring accounts of battles between lead soldier armies. [WGD:v1n1] Examples of highly immersed narratives of this form appear throughout the early issues of the *Digest*. In addition to Ted Haskell Wells-like Battle of Cooper's Farm equally-fictional Piobair

in that first *Digest*, we find another fictional manuscript by the Dhu, the ferry-keeper at the Cheffsford Crossing, who explains the roots of the conflict between Trencherland and Tankardland in Haskell imaginary world. In a later piece called There's None That Can Compare, Haskell indulges himself in an immersive finale: When the sun rose, all eyes turned to the flagstaff atop the highest turret of the Castillo. A flag was rising. It was white. [WGD:v1n2] In that same issue, A. W. Saunders gives a vivid report

on The Battle of Hill 40 which includes a first-person narrative from a survivor on the losing side, a certain Serge Rokoloff, Pvt. 23rd Inf't. Regt., Military Hospital, Novograd. In dramatizing Hyboria, Bath thus drew on a long tradition, and one most recently exemplified in the pages of the *War Game Digest*.

Where most dramatized war correspondence, following Stevenson precedent, reads like the jottings of a journalist, Bath's narrative reads like the ruminations of a historian. Subsequent issues of the *Digest* give some indication of Bath's historical tone, including a March 1958 piece dramatizing The Naxos Campaign. It unfolds more in the fashion of Oman or Creasy than Robert E. Howard, with its fluid description of *casus belli*, tactical decisions and the vicissitudes of advantage. The first sentence reads: In pursuance of his claims to the supreme power among the Hyborian kingdoms, King Namedides of Hyperborea decided upon the invasion of his neighbor, Brythunia;; his object being to force through the mountain ranges and capture the strong fortress of Naxos which lay beyond them.⁹⁰ Occasionally, Bath's tale breaks into vivid flourishes: At the Pass of Warriors the mass of Hyborian knights, with their dancing banners and gay pennants, forced a way through their infantry and charged down upon the Brythunians. In the end, Namedides must withdraw after suffering crippling losses at the hands of the Brythunian king, Valannus.

⁹⁰ -person narrative follows the exploits of this Namedides, a king of Hour edition *Conan the Conqueror*.

Bath reveals in a letter to that same issue of the *Digest* that he had made the fortuitous acquaintance of Don Featherstone, who would regularly oppose him in Hyborian conflicts.⁹¹ Now in a two-player campaign, Bath continued the affairs of Naxos later in the year;; he explicitly noted that he had adopted a particular character for the duration of this campaign with the assertion that I commanded the Hyborians as King Namedides throughout the fighting. [WGD:v2n4] As Bath transitioned away from solitaire dramatizations and made more wargaming acquaintances, the Hyborian campaign began to exemplify the two-mode structure of a strategy-tactical wargame. While Bath and Featherstone faced off against one another at the strategic level of kings, Bath fought the tactical siege of Naxos on a miniature table top against a different opponent, Tony Holman. For that battle, both played in the persons of lesser commanders. Bath seems to have adopted the persona of Count Miltiades of the Hyperboreans, who has no

obvious precedent in the Conan canon.⁹² Holman for his part played Balthus, the commander of the garrison at Naxos probably the Balthus from Howard's *Beyond the Black River* (available in *King Conan*). Again, Bath's battle report goes beyond the military actions and dramatizes the individuals caught up in this struggle. Near the end, for example: Balthus had first been encouraged by the sight of Valannus's standards in the distance, growing ever nearer; but soon it was all too clear that the relieving army had been beaten off. At about that time an assaulting force gained a lodgment on the ramparts of the citadel;; and Balthus, seeing that the position was hopeless, thereupon capitulated.

By the end of the first of several major campaigns late in 1960, Bath had accumulated enough material to anthologize into a History of Hyboria, which A. W. Saunders records receiving at that time in a wonderful reading, Saunders judges, before

bulky envelope. [WGD:v4n4] It makes encouraging Bath and Featherstone to serialize it in its entirety in the pages of the *Digest*. Of course, given Featherstone attitude toward these sorts of vivid battle reports, that could not have been a likely outcome.⁹³ Bath did, however, take some space in the September 1961 issue, in an article called Fact or Fancy? to elaborate on the relationship between his own Hyborian campaign and the fictional world it appropriated. The piece takes its title from Bath's division of wargamers into two camps: those who base their games on historical recreations like Napoleonic wargaming, and those who dream up their own kingdoms. He notes with some resentment that historical wargamers tended to be a little patronising towards those of us who produce our own countries largely because historical research purportedly required exactitude and realism that exceeded the level of detail yielded by mere imagination. Bath refutes that hypothesis vigorously: fleshing out a world like Hyboria from the geopolitical snippets contained in the Conan tales requires research and imagination equaling the labors of the recreationists, he asserts. Although he dedicates much of his description of Hyboria to the economic and military circumstances of the world, he hints: ⁹¹ Featherstone had not yet lodged his famous objections to precisely this sort of narrative battle report, one describing the game events as the fictional persons in the game might see them (that is, in the immersed voice), rather than as the players of a mere game, as Section 3.1.7 told. ⁹², whose *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World* pays generous homage to the command of Miltiades at the Battle of

Marathon.

⁹³ Years later, Bath produced lithograph copies of two volumes of his *History of Hyboria*. Volume I appeared in mid-1973 (reviewed in *Slingshot* #48), Volume II in mid-1974 (noted in *Slingshot* #54).

I've gone much further than this, purely for my own pleasure, by working out systems whereby my nobles can inter-marry, revolt against their rulers, assassinate one another, die from natural causes, and many other items. [WGD:v5n3]

His stable of nobles, the characters of the Hyborian campaign, benefited from an increasingly sophisticated system that simulated the events of their lives. Even the economics of Hyboria enriched these individuals as much as countries. Bath divvied up the wealth of nations in proportion to rank: the lord of a demesne kept so much, the count of the province had his share, the duke took so much from his duchy, and all contributed to the royal coffers. The king in turn paid certain sums to people... [WGD:v5n3] Within the campaign, monetary wealth provided upkeep for armies, and thus determined just how many troops each kingdom, duchy or province could support. This practice should sound familiar: Bath's campaign pioneered the economic models that would later drive the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign and Blackmoor, which had a similar emphasis on rulers as characters.

For the origins of fantasy wargaming, it is even more significant that Bath did not restrict his consideration of fancy to Robert E. Howard alone: Fact or Fancy? also notes the fantasy worlds created by Edgar Rice Burroughs, L. Sprague de Camp and J.R.R. Tolkien. For his tiny Southampton wargaming circle, Bath had recreated the world of Hyboria derived from Howard as well as the world of Tolkia derived from Tolkien in particular the *Lord of the Rings* is named rather than *The Hobbit*. Roy Blackman, another gamer of Bath's acquaintance, founded his own game world derived from a story by de Camp. Burroughs is mentioned in particular for his Mars (Barsoom) and Venus settings, which Bath finds more fertile ground for wargaming than the Africa of Tarzan. It is remarkable that of the four authors mentioned in the foreword to *Dungeons & Dragons* as sources of inspiration, Bath here, in September 1961, names three as creators of worlds suitable for wargaming as well as discussing the elephant in Gygax room, Tolkien Middle-earth. We further learn that Tolkia incorporated a College of Wizards who can affect the situation by their use of the Black

Arts ;; one of the spells in question apparently turned arrows back on their archers.⁹⁴ Various large reptiles more dinosaurs than dragons served among the footsoldiers of the armies of Tolkia, although they had a major drawback: a vulnerable priest controlled each such lizard, and if the priest died, the monster would turn on its former masters. In light of these fantasy elements, present so early in a wargame, and by a game designer whose medieval system was well known to Gygax, we must ask very seriously to what degree the fantasy components of *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons* depend upon Bath s original work.

That influence must be limited by the short time that the world of Tolkia persisted one hears nothing of any activity there after the early 1960s. At least one reason for its abandonment must be that Bath s most frequent opponent held these fantasy elements in low regard;; as Section 1.6 already related, Don Featherstone wrote, No one resisted more strongly than I when an opponent introduced into his Ancient wargames the use of wizards whose spells would turn cavalry squadrons into toads or formulated rules governing the introduction of pre-historic animals. [WGN:#92] This resistance must have encouraged Bath to downplay, if not outright remove, fantasy elements from his wargames. Since contemporary mention of Tolkia is only to be found in *War Game Digest* among the rarest of all wargame periodicals few could even learn of the existence of Tolkia.

⁹⁴ The best write-up of Tolkia, though one that does not reference the campaign by name, appears in *Slingshot*

Even as Tolkia fell by the wayside, Bath continued to refine the world of Hyboria throughout the 1960s. At that time, the campaign featured no such offending fantastic elements. The resignation of his editorship of the *War Game Digest* in March 1962 perhaps reflected a broader schism between Bath and Featherstone, however, as at this juncture Featherstone ceased to be Bath s strategic opponent in Hyboria. Featherstone s place was taken by another denizen of Southampton, Neville Dickinson, who would later achieve notoriety in wargaming circles as the founder of a company called Miniature Figurines, Ltd., (or MiniFigs) which manufactured, appropriately enough, miniature figurines. After Scruby discontinued the *War Game Digest* entirely, Bath sporadically wrote for the more widely-circulating *Table Top Talk* and *Wargamer s Newsletter*, but submitted little regarding his ongoing Hyborian campaign. Bath felt that the ancient wargaming setting had enough support to merit its own venue, so in 1965 he founded the

Society of the Ancients, a wargaming club devoted entirely to the ancient and medieval settings.⁹⁵ Hyborian matters Bath reserved for the Society's quarterly journal *Slingshot* initially capped at one hundred copies per issue, comparable in obscurity to *War Game Digest*.

In issue #9 (January 1967) of *Slingshot*, Bath's article Campaigning with the Aid of Fantasy Fiction demonstrates that his fluency with the genre had increased over the past decade understandably, given that sword-and-sorcery was now well on the way to the zenith of its popularity. In addition to recommending wargame worlds based on Howard, Tolkien, Burroughs and de Camp, Bath now knew of Fritz Leiber as well, and even possessed a map of Nehwon. His appropriation of these worlds differs from the later formula of *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, insofar as he discarded any overtly supernatural element. For Bath, the advantage of a fantasy setting over a historical setting lies in its versatility. You can indulge in any mixture of types and races, mix mediaevals and whereas the historical set-up, if it is to be of any worth, is strictly limited in choice of troops, uniforms, etc. [SL:#9] In other words, fantasy fiction attracted Bath primarily for the leeway it afforded, in contrast to the adherence to a historical setting implied by something like Napoleonics. Rather than putting players in a position to refight the epic struggles related by J.R.R. Tolkien, Robert E. Howard, and other fantasy writers, as *Chainmail* later would, Bath endorses fantasy settings as a way to fight with mundane ancient and medieval troops in a manner free from any quibbling about the likelihood of armored knights charging at javelin-wielding charioteers. All of the nations of Hyboria map onto the types of ruling powers which existed in the ancient and medieval periods of our world, he writes. Aquilonia is a typical medieval Western Christian feudal system, for example, while Hyrkania stands for a fairly typical Saracen/Persian ménage and Hyperborea has a Greek/Carthaginian culture.

Hyborian campaign politics remained

[Ibid.]

pleasantly mired in perpetual warfare throughout the 1960s, any brief promise of harmony inevitably dashed by a betrayal, a miscommunication, a mysterious assassination or a medical misfortune that silenced any peacemakers. Bath and Dickinson shared responsibility for determining the direction of the campaign at the strategic level of national foreign policies and also, of course, jumped into the roles of kings or tactical commanders as

the circumstances dictated when armies met for a miniature battle. Bath found, however, that controlling the flow of history at the level of nations as well as the tactical situation during military actions gave rise to unavoidable conflicts of interest. This had always been true: for example, during one of his last campaigns with Featherstone, they had assumed the conflicting sides of Shem and Zembabwei (described in A Potted History of Hyboria in *Slingshot* #24), the latter of which appealed to the King of an adjacent country for aid. Unable to formulate an impartial response, Bath reached out through the mail to a neutral third-party the author Joe Morschauser, as it happens to determine how the King would reply. Morschauser proposed a devious reaction: the King arranged a few judicious poisonings, sparking a civil war and inspiring several new miniature battles for Featherstone and Bath to stage. While a fresh perspective proved valuable enough that Bath periodically involved other local Southampton gamers in tactical battles alongside Dickinson, he harbored a nagging doubt about the overall duopolistic governance structure of the Hyborian campaign.

⁹⁵ In *Slingshot*

Featherstone that I thought there might be a following for a magazine devoted entirely to that

Early in 1968, Bath decided on a revised campaign model that diversified authority over the governments of Hyboria. Essentially, he took his referral to Morschauser to its logical extreme. Bath reached out to several trusted fellow wargamers in the Society of the Ancients to assume the characters of the rulers of the major world powers of Hyboria on a permanent basis. He and Dickinson relinquished their direction over national foreign policy in the campaign, as Bath writes: From now on he and I were to act as general controllers, umpires, and tactical commanders. We would try and get other people to run the individual empires, and make all the political, financial and strategy decisions on the basis of the knowledge we passed to them. [SL:#24] To start with, he enlisted Joe Morschauser, who accepted the position of Emperor of Cimmeria. Charles Grant, who like Bath contributed heavily to the British Model Soldier Society's *Bulletin* in the days before the *War Game Digest* debuted (see Section 3.1.7), writes explicitly of how he was allocated the role... of that great and good man, Prince Vakar, Satrap of Hyrkania note especially his choice of the word role. [SL:#32] Phil Barker filled the shoes of King Conan of Aquilonia;; a founding member of the Society of the Ancients, Barker formed one-third of

the celebrated War Games Research Group triumvirate whose seminal ancient setting rules would appear shortly thereafter, in February 1969. The campaign grew quickly;; in 1970, some seventeen players are listed in Bath s roster. By then the other two-thirds of the War Games Research Group had joined the game: Bob O Brien playing Jarl Ramaos of Asgard and Ed Smith standing in for the King of Shem. [SL:#30] Given that Morschauser lived overseas in the United States, and the initial five principal players had little prospect of congregating in the same city as the two referees, the strategic mode of the campaign was conducted entirely in writing and by post.

Hyboria, at a strategic level, then became a game about characters. Bath had transposed the Hyborian campaign into a game in the tradition of the Inter-Nation Simulation and its predecessors at RAND;; his use of the term controller for the referee echoes operations research literature of the late 1950s, and can be found in several resources on that era, including Young and McHugh. In the Inter-Nation Simulation, any tactical military conflict between nations transpired at the discretion of the umpires in a private room the players or decision-makers merely declared their high-level intentions and trusted the umpires to resolve any battles in a plausible manner. By transposing this model into a play-by-mail environment, Bath follows the precedent of Art Mikel s International War Game and the multiple commander play-by-mail (MCPBM) games known to the American hobby wargaming community. Bath and Dickinson assumed precisely this umpire Reiswitzian general idea the political and military ambitions of their kingdoms. When battles arose, Bath and Dickinson fought them out on their own sand table without any concerns about partiality toward the contending forces. The rulers thus became parties who might attempt anything by writing their intentions to the umpire and learning the results via mail. The ingenuity of the initial five rulers proved nothing short of astonishing to Bath: All five of them received massive dossiers of information and were told that peace was to reign for five continental years to enable them to get their affairs in order. It was my original expectation that this would take up possibly a couple months of real time and campaigning would then begin. I under-estimated the potentialities of a cold war! For two essentially honest and kindly people, Phil and Charles showed themselves master of every underhanded political trick in the game. Spies, plots and counter-plots, attempted coups, assassinations followed thick and fast. For instance, Phil ordered the construction of the nucleus of a fleet in the Turanian harbour of Agrapur. Charles, learning of this from his spies, first of all tried to have the

ships burnt on the stocks, and failing in this, blocked the harbour mouth by a coup de main of which he afterwards denied all responsibility. Phil, on his part, created the Hyperborean Freedom Party, which became annoyingly active. Charles attempted to tamper with the loyalty of the Khaurani nobility, whereupon Phil concocted a pseudo plot in which Charles's special envoy and all the disloyal nobles perished miserably... Just over a year has gone by since the scheme was put into operation and we still haven't gotten a large-scale military campaign going. [SL:#24]

The players in the Hyborian campaign took to their roles with surprising ambition and ingenuity. No doubt Bath and Dickinson found themselves, like the umpires of any free *kriegsspiel*, constantly inventing new means of deciding the consequences of the exploits invented by their players. Bath's description certainly anticipates the surprise of Dave Wesely upon running his first Braunstein game under the similar principle of *Strategos* that *anything can be attempted*; in that game as well, intrigue proved far more attractive to the players than actually maneuvering miniature soldiers into a battle.⁹⁶ At the time, however, the Society of the Ancients presumably remained obscure to the miniature and board wargaming communities of the United States. In his mid-1969 article on Wargaming and the Hyborian Age, Gygax demonstrated his complete ignorance of Bath's efforts, which had then been underway for some dozen years, when he asserted that no one (at least to my knowledge) has yet come up with a Hyborian game.⁹⁷ It is even difficult to identify any responsibility for Hyboria, providing little more than the or scenario and giving the players tremendous leeway to dictate

⁹⁶ The events Bath describes here unfolded early in 1968. While dates before 1969 are sometimes claimed for Braunstein, see the notes in Section 1.9 on Braunste On the unexpected 2006;; similar assertions can be found in many other later works following Wesely, including that of Fannon, *Fantasy Role-Playing Game Basement* (to date unreleased).

⁹⁷

enlarged map of Conan

121, or the interviews for the film project *Dragons in the* -tactical wargame concept to Bill McDuffie, who had recently published a series articulating this very notion of strategic command being distinct from tactical battles fought with miniatures in the *International Wargamer*. [IW:v2n2] The notion that channel by which Bath's Hyboria might have influenced gamers in Lake Geneva or the Twin Cities;; the traditional chroniclers of wargaming

magazines passed over *Slingshot* in silence.⁹⁸ The idea of adapting wargames from fantasy fiction, and by extension fantastic characters, was, however, in the air.

4.5.2 CHARACTERS RUN AMOK

While the Hyborian campaign demonstrated a Braunstein-like open-endedness as early as 1968, these features manifested in the postal incarnation of the campaign, rather than face-to-face over a table top. There is a vast gulf of difference between committing to paper over the course of a few days the decisions of a fictitious ruler and, with the real-time pressure of improvisation, speaking in the character of a ruler around a sand table. The former is dramatization, but the latter requires a different sort of immersion. It is perhaps no coincidence that knowledge of postal *Diplomacy*, which affords rulers great latitude in decision making, began to reach the wargamers of the British Isles around the time that Bath adopted this model for Hyboria, although the first native *Diplomacy* magazine, *Albion*, would not appear until the summer of 1969. Bath resorted to postal gaming out of necessity, because of the diffuse concentration of wargamers in his vicinity: his only opportunity to experiment with the sort of multiplayer dynamics that gave rise to Braunstein was at conventions. On a Sunday in August 1971, Bath took advantage of a gathering of the Society of the Ancients in Southampton to stage a fourteen-person Hyborian miniatures game, the object of which, as he put it, was to cause the maximum confusion to the maximum number of people. [SL:#38]

In person, Bath brought to the table top what he had previously done only by mail. Each player received a character with a personalized set of victory conditions, a Reiswitzian specific idea, varying in particulars but interconnected with the goals of others;; for example, Valannus was directed to go on a camel-slaying safari while Calliope, who had the camels, was instructed to kill anyone she could. No player received a complete map, but instead just a vague fragment;; the actual lay of the land remained secret information. Each received a certain amount of money which could be spent in various ways, including on hirelings two mercenary generals received instructions to amass money. The Umpires doubled as local peasants with unhelpful information, and while all players were advised that there was a treasury somewhere on the field, they heard nothing about the hidden traps. The result was a pleasant bout of chaos. The mercenaries defaulted on all of their obligations, and entire regiments fell victim to the allure of a local

brewery, only to be rescued by an imaginative general hoisting a banner with the legend Free beer, follow us. Other highlights included the episode of the hundred naked women, the saga of Ben

Gunn's skeleton, the incredible Gunpowder Plot, the mystic Oracles and many more. [SL:#38]

Gygax arrived at this specific idea for a Hyborian game independently of Bath may seem incredible, but also consider that he published these words in May 1969, yet *Slingshot* #24, which articulated

sociable Gygax knew of *Slingshot* in this era and opted to lurk rather than contribute;; we would surely see letters and articles from him in its pages if he received it. Regardless, this idea and the proposed

⁹⁸ While ordinarily one might expect *etter* to cover it, for example, *Slingshot* received little mention in its pages;; though upon seeing the *Domesday Book* in 1971, Featherstone could not *Slingshot*

That Sunday afternoon game served as Tony Bath's true Braunstein: it showed him the possibilities that arise when you assign to a group of players characters with all the freedom of agency of real people, and then let interpersonal dynamics and the inventiveness of players steer the game. We should not be surprised to find that it soon inspired several imitators, just as the Napoleonic Braunstein triggered the Western-themed Brownstone and the fantasy Blackmoor. 1972 brought a slew of fantasy-themed games to the Society of the Ancients and the pages of *Slingshot*, though not without encountering a certain amount of opposition from more historically-minded gamers. The Society's Annual General Meeting in March 1972 advertised, among several contests, a Science-Fantasy confrontation: Duke Vaughan of Trasimere versus Nogbad the Wicked, with assorted giants, dragons, trolls, heroes, goblins and magicians, under modified Research Group rules. By this time, Tony Bath's long-favored ancient and medieval rules had ceded their dominance to the work of the War Games Research Group, whose system had informally incorporated some hurriedly put together fantasy elements, although they would not see print until the fourth edition in August 1973, and even then only with the indignant gloss, They are here reprinted by popular request i.e., to stop people writing to us about them!⁹⁹ Curiously, although *Chainmail* passed its first birthday around the time of this Annual General Meeting, it seemingly remained unknown in the Society's circles further evidence that the Lake Geneva/Twin Cities axis of wargaming had little commerce with Bath's circle overseas.¹⁰⁰ Members of the Society must

have read *Wargamer's Newsletter*, however, and in its July 1971 issue one can find Gygax outlining the particulars of Tolkien fantasy games underway in Lake Geneva, followed four issues later by his much-maligned Battle of Brown Hills battle report, and then in the January 1972 edition one finds yet another note about Gygax running fantasy battles involving wizards, dragons, heroes and the like! While unpopular with some of Featherstone readership, these pieces may have found a warmer, if tacit, welcome in the *Slingshot* crowd.

Much like in Lake Geneva, younger wargamers in the Society of the Ancients took more readily to the fantasy setting than their elders, and favored improvisation in person. Stephen Reed, among the more active and respected young wargamers in the Society, ran another table-top game early in 1972 which he entitled The Quest for the Sword. Loosely Arthurian in nature, the game contrived to place a number of unemployed knights at a lonely inn in Shropshire one medieval evening, where a thinly-disguised Merlin imparted to them a map to the location of Excalibur, apparently long forgotten in a nearby castle. Naturally, each of the twenty players in the game coveted that sword, and immediately in something of the manner of a RAND n -person game, some formed coalitions (with names like The Knights of St. David) while others struck out on their own to secure the weapon. The culture of open-endedness permitted players to attempt actions that Reed might never have anticipated: one group of knights, for example, rushed to the stable at the start of the game, mounted their own horses and then set fire to the building, to the great annoyance of those who planned to stay the night and start out fresh in the morning. The group of knights that succeeded in acquiring the sword tried to smuggle it out from the

⁹⁹

sive text to the effect that the

¹⁰⁰ When *Slingshot* finally deigns to mention *Chainmail*, in issue #59 (May 1975), it notes dismissively

under the noses of their competitors by disguising one of their number as Merlin. Unfortunately, the action then strayed too close the nearby Lonely Mountain, from which the Arthurian era borrowed its famous dungeon-dwelling denizen, the dragon Smaug, who promptly burnt the wielder of Excalibur to a crisp.¹⁰¹ The company of Robin of Loxley, who also resided in this multi-temporal environment, declined to join the fracas owing to the after-effects of a large consignment of wine. Other knights lost interest and

dallied with farm-girls. Reed wrote of administering such a game, one where apparently *anything can be attempted*, that: Rules are prepared in advance for any actions you expect to happen, e.g., setting fire to buildings, attempts to drug or poison food, ambushes, treachery, drawing the Sword. When somebody attempts to do something not covered by your rules, such as hamstringing horses, you have to invent a rule on the spot, involving arbitrary dice throws. [SL:#43]

Tony Bath promised to explore a similarly multiversal fantasy setting for the anniversary of his previous Southampton bash. The game, which took place late in August 1972, now involved twenty-four players. It could hardly be described as a war game, Bath explains apologetically in *Slingshot* #44, and indeed, given the level of anarchy now overthrowing the Society's sessions, the term wargame fit ever more poorly. 16 Heroes, 4 Magicians, 2 Brigand bands, a Pirate Queen and a fearsome Dragon were the principal characters again, the word character here being notable who were let loose on a beautiful set of maps prepared by Peter Millen, there to seek hidden and usually well guarded treasures and to fight among themselves. Reading only that high-level description, one could understandably presume that Bath had lighted independently upon exactly the dungeon-exploration adventure invented by Arneson for Blackmoor the previous year.¹⁰² The truth, however, is a bit more complicated.

Bath assigned to each player a character taken directly from fantasy genre literature: John Carter, Conan, Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, Harold Shea and Elric all made appearances, as did Mazirian from Jack Vance tales, as well as Gandalf, Brak, Thongor and even Beowulf, Robin Hood and Merlin. Devotees of this form of literature were at a decided advantage, Bath notes wryly. Each player maintained a Diary Sheet, a set of running notes on the state of their character, with entries such as fought cannibal ghosts laid up 2 days or, as a sample final entry, turned to stone by Head of Medusa.

The play of the game itself exhibited all of the open-endedness of Bath's session the previous year, with the added dimension of magic. One of the common objectives for all characters was to reach the city of Ascalon, and thus having made it fairly difficult and dangerous to travel by sea, we found that all the Magicians had gone into the transportation business. Moreover, two crafty magicians arrived early and set up a magical glass wall around the town to prevent others getting in! Not all heroes fared so well when

¹⁰¹ Much as Don Kaye had cobbled together a dragon out of a plastic dinosaur for the Lake Geneva ch it was, was made by Phil Barker from a plastic prehistoric ¹⁰² Remember that it is difficult to date precisely when Blackmoor

Section 1.10 suggests, the most probable timeframe is around the end of 1971 to the beginning of

1972. It is however virtually impossible that any contemporary copy of the profoundly obscure *Corner of the Table*, the only periodical then describing Blackmoor, made it into Bat time. Much later, after the formation of TSR, Bath did however receive courtesy copies of *Corner of the Table* from Arneson.

transposed into this environment, however: John Carter, lacking the advantages he got in Martian gravity, fared rather poorly;; he spent most of his time in jail, and finally turned pirate. The events of the day proved so numerous and diverse that A chronological account of the events is not possible. One could mention the Olympic Games, where Fafhrd won three events and the chariot race failed to take place because all the contestants had doped each other s horses;; the Boar Feast at which Obelix got acute indigestion;; or the time Gandalf fell under the Curse of Forgetfulness and couldn t remember his spells. At all events, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. [SL:#44]

Through some unimaginable and probably arbitrary mechanism, Bath scored each player based on their diaries, and thus eventually declared an overall winner the Gray Mouser who received 500 points. Whether or not what transpired that day meets a strict definition of a wargame, it undoubtedly did prove entertaining to its players and umpires alike. It requires no great powers of imagination to see how this sort of event might have been realized with the *Chainmail* or *Dungeons & Dragons* rules. Bear in mind that Gygax report on the *Chainmail* match for which he built a chest of jewels as the object to be obtained to win and then trapped the chest with a pair of basilisk eyes that turned various units to stone would appear shortly after Bath s game in the October 1972 issue of the *Wargamer s Newsletter*, though of course because of the enormous trans-Atlantic lag in correspondence, Gygax piece substantially predicated the Southampton fantasy bash. The striking similarity in the game elements of treasure-hunting and petrification amply demonstrates that Gygax and Bath structured their games around similar obstacles and objectives. Bath

however goes beyond the scope of *Chainmail* and well into the territory of Blackmoor with his character assignments: when Gygax mentions, for example, that his trapped chest turned the first ogre who opened it to stone, this misfortune befalling an anonymous monster has quite a different implication than marbleizing a John Carter, or even a Baron Fant. The shift from expendable minions to characters with whom a player identifies reflects the first stages of a transition from wargames to role-playing games.

Tony Bath's chaotic Southampton games received detailed coverage in *Slingshot*, yet they remained infrequent special events, whereas his day-to-day wargaming continued to transpire in the Hyborian campaign. His annual face-to-face games never graduated from the status of odd, unconnected battles into a campaign with continuity of character. Nor did the vogue for the fantasy setting impart to Hyboria any great influx of magical elements. One innovation in that campaign which arose in the beginning of 1972, however, did require a bit of sorcery: the birth of a Hyborian newspaper, the *Shadizar Herald*. Like *Ruritania* or the *Coventranian Gazette*, the *Shadizar Herald* adopted a broadsheet, multi-column format. Unlike those publications, however, the *Herald* presents itself entirely in the immersed voice, without any detached editorializing on the game itself even the price on its cover is an in-game cost presumably borne by any recipients. The *Herald* you hold in your hands aspires to be identical to the one your character might purchase for one silver crown. As Bath notes in *Slingshot* #40, This was originally intended to give players a little more general information and to poke fun as well;; it immediately caught on and now, after 3 issues, is well established, getting numerous contributions from the players. Like Lloyd Osbourne in Stevenson game, rulers immediately sought to censor or silence the *Herald*, though obviously the umpires contrived to maintain the freedom of the press. The many shadowy correspondents for the *Shadizar Herald* apparently communicated their articles back to the home office instantly through magical means.¹⁰³

To contemporaries, the Hyborian campaign was known more or less entirely through these immersive dramatizations, be they Bath's history books or his newspapers. Despite spending fifteen years refining Hyboria and sharing his experiences with the

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The COVENTRANIAN GAZETTE #1

CONSTITUTION GRANTED TO NEW ORGANIZATION
Paulus Rex consents to democratic reforms

Liesburg, Coopersburg,
RAEP. (1/11/41) (Cont'd.)
— The General President of Country announced to congregations in Bethlehem his intention to create a new and more democratic government for CIAMUT. His intention has been to create new interest in the infant body which has been faltering under the chronic ailment, lack of members.

The new government will include a General Assembly comprised of every active member of the Society, and will throw open a great many previously appointive offices to election.

For further participation, the CIAMUT Upper 12 has been (Cont'd. on p. 6)

SUPREME MINISTER RETIRES AFTER BATTLE WITH CHURCH AUTHORITIES

Condor, Luftstreif Rins, Reichs Deel, GRP (VII/14/41) (Cont'd.) It is expected that Hickey the Liberator, of the Wilhelmsburg Free State, now vice-President of the GRP, will be named his successor. Hickey gained his present position as a result of the shake-up which removed Edward W. Bush of New Greenland from the office to take that of Hickey, then Minister of Defense.

Jernes announced to the congregation in Condor that his resignation had been granted by the Church referee to allow the use of submarine in the war with him. Public information will be circulated (though Jernes strenuously object) that he resigned as a result of the failure of the Congress of the GRP to make that a Hamburg Tribune called "necessary totalitarian reform" for the conduct of national business during the war,² which meant constitutional revision, and which was strongly disapproved of by the Church. It may be noted that the Leader's advice will still be employed by Supreme Minister Hickey (Cont'd. on p. 6)

ENCLAVE AND ARCHON ASSAULTED

The daring attacks have been made on prominent officials attending the Five Town Council. The first, on 15th April, involved the Archon of Dampat, Meister Koen Birnold. There were, it is estimated by eye-witnesses, twenty assailants, apparently barbarians having yellow skins and slant eyes. The Archon was severely beaten and then the magistrates, destroyed together, and then the survivor to the Archon's Office for investigation. It is not known what, if any, information was given, but the archon was personally executed by the Archon afterwards — it is reported that his body was upon a pyreous state until it disintegrated.

(Our English correspondent, the Dagster, here informs us that this is spell as "Phantom's Spyglass")

Following this attack the Inquirer applied to the Court of Civil Orders for protection on behalf of other delegates to the Council. This was granted in the form of an official guard of troops provided by the Chamber-Captain. However, on the following evening Vaneo von Bern, one Red-Bearded Alaric, was shooting the "Hawks" in the Street of Dreams when attacked by a group of men finally identified to those of the previous day, as the "Glevenen" is next door to the Tengi offices one of my printers, Goren Hyuland, witnessed the whole affair. The Glevenen's bodyguard, a Western black cat, was aided by several Gentlemen of Fortune who were inside the building. In the resulting struggle both were slain by Goren, though we learn that twenty persons lost their lives. The Merchant himself suffered a broken arm. The assassin fought with ferocity and only two were captured.

On 20th April an Emergency assembly was called, at the instigation of the Inquirer who was unable to assure further security precautions to be deemed necessary after the fighting a substantial majority voted against retaining the present restrictions on retainers.

DRAGON RAID IN NORTH VIKING ATTACK KIRKHAM
(from Valius Krabbe, Filanore, Prada)
On May 2nd the lions of Beornland, silent for many years, were heard to roar, and shortly afterwards a large red-gold dragon was seen over the City-Town forces rose to intercept but after circling the city once the dragon flew off southwards over Merven. It was later discovered that the dragon, also known as the "sea beast", had attacked various localities on the Dumbi, isolating the capital, carrying off the commander of a garrison.

In an official statement issued on 6th May Valius Simeon Sermis, Lieutenant to Prince Cassentum, stated that the abducted officer had returned, reporting the dragon to be named Rufius and suggesting that it had been encouraged by Jarl Helmanus of Discaline.

Another event of note has been the arrival of Gauday Ahasec Pechakha, Captain of the Palythian Kosmaka, in the City on 26th May. No official statement has been issued.

Dagster and Biriki comment that dragons rarely reveal their "true" name and that Rufius must therefore be a nom-de-guerre assumed by this dragon.

DRAGONS IN THE DANUBIA, HYBORIA
(from Dib the Danuar, Hyboria)
Several VIKING raids in the north of the Kingdom in the last month. The largest raid on aquiles captured the town and still holds it. The Government of the state is still in confusion following the death of King Phillip in mysterious circumstances, as clear successor has emerged from the various royal contenders. The army is reported to favour none of them, but to be unable to propose an acceptable alternative. Some have called for the return of the Gnanchen, a proposal that will meet opposition from the marchals.

RURITANIA
#10 Winter 1905 16 Feb '66

NOTHING HEARD FROM BRITISH GOVERNMENT
ENGLISH FORCES IN RUSSIA DEFEATED BY "GENERAL WINTER"

Italian Eastern Fleet Vanishes — Mutiny Fears

MYSTERY IN ARIAN SEA
The Italian Fleet in the Arian Sea has disappeared, according to sketchy reports from the Italian ministry. No information is available on this concurrence but rumors abound to the effect that the men of the fleet, angry at being sent on a suicidal mission due to heavy losses, have mutinied and frightened by the losses their home country is suffering on the field of battle in the north, mutinied and took over the entire fleet. It is suspected, but unproven, that they have defected to Austria-Hungary, which nation has just commissioned a new fleet in Trieste.

CENTRAL COMMISSION REPORT
From the Central Commissariat Ward of St. Petri's Harbour, Istanbul, dated 15th February, the following news reaches information:

Regret extremely the losses in my ports during the last nine months. A rather remarkable event occurred as I was awaiting the Istanbul Express at Naupoli last January. A gentleman (As such I thought he was) approached me with the request that I lent a large Gladstone bag, which he explained held a rather valuable antique clock. It was only when he departed at a dead run that I questioned him about the bag. He had apparently planned to be running, but, of course it was rather late. I am now doing quite well, though I tend to find each day that some hitherto unnoticed lag, aye, finger or toe is in reality a clever fabrication of our or guita-percha. Since my assailant were burmous, sabots and a monocle; had a waist-length black beard, spoke with an impeccable Oxford accent, and was whistling Gile Bag, I am driven to suspect that he was not with agents.

I however, have been carefully watching reports of military actions in Europe, and have made certain derivations.

The Italian and British despatches are (cont'd. on page 23)

FIGURE 53: FOUR GAME NEWSLETTERS, FROM COVENTRY, MIDGARD, HYBORIA AND RURITANIA

¹⁰³ Bath, *Setting up a Wargames Campaign*, 42.

readership of the wargaming community, in 1972 Bath remained reluctant to publish his campaign system. He wrote with more than a hint of exasperation: Please, if you are considering setting up a mythical continent of your own, don't write asking me for copies of our campaign rules. I haven't any spare sets, and in any case doubt if they would be suitable, being highly specialized. [SL:#40] He even discouraged others from undertaking a campaign on the scale of Hyboria: I honestly wouldn't advise anyone to get involved in running an operation like this unless they had players of the experience and caliber of our group it's not a thing for beginners, believe me. The very fact that Bath felt it necessary to promulgate this disclaimer reveals that some demand existed for his rules, however. This must also reflect the steady increase in membership of the Society of the Ancients in the early 1970s. From a mere one hundred in 1966, the society reached four times that number by 1971, 650 by November 1972, and then 890 in November 1973 nearly twice the size of the IFW at its apex. An emerging market for campaign rules in this space could scarcely be denied. Despite Bath's misgivings, the War Games Research Group prevailed upon him to write up some guidance for wargame campaigns which would include much of the system of Hyboria. This appeared under the War Games Research Group imprint in mid-1973 under the title *Setting up a Wargames Campaign*.

Wargames Campaign condenses Bath's extensive experience of campaigns into seventy-five pages of system, a small amount of which had previously appeared in the pages of *Slingshot*, albeit in a slightly less mature form. Most of its recommendations concern the invention and administration of a wargaming campaign scenario, for those who wanted to try their hand at this great endeavor, though presumably Bath generalized away the highly specialized components that precluded the distribution of the Hyborian rules. The core system describes the choice of terrain, both at the strategic, overview-scale level (which is, like *Dungeons & Dragons*, represented on a hex map) and at greater detail for the purpose of determining tactical battlefield layout or the economic resources available to any principality in the world. Much of the book concerns the logistical management of resources, such as the cost to equip fresh soldiers with leather, mail or plate armor, as well as twelve different sorts of weapons ranging from the javelin at 5 gold crowns to the crossbow at 25, though these prices arm an entire

regiment, not a single adventurer. Bath also addresses the disposition of forces after a battle, including the manner to preserve troops and their equipment after a victory or defeat. The actual deciding of armed conflict is not covered by *Wargames Campaigns*: its combat system basically defers to the War Games Research Group's other publications. Instead, Bath focuses on all the glue that ties battles together, that transforms the odd, unconnected battles into a greater game with an objective other than just trying to destroy the other fellow's army the essence of a campaign.¹⁰⁴

For the purposes of this chapter, the most important part of *Wargames Campaign* must be the section on Characterization. While we might suppose that this system details the generation of player characters, instead it provides the means for referees to juggle a group of non-player characters, as Bath would say cardboard characters, whose individual quirks and relationships partially generate the narrative flow of the campaign. To that end, *Wargames Campaign* details the governance structures of nations in the ancient and medieval settings, and provides rules for creating whole dynasties which may intrigue and intertwine. Without this constant flow of assassinations, betrayals, births, misfortunes and contested inheritances, peace might threaten to extinguish the necessary impetus behind campaign politics. Through his various systems, Bath determined the personality of each prince and military commander relevant to Hyboria's destiny, which he retained on index cards filed alphabetically under family names. The cards recorded ancestral chronicles, personal histories and a sort of psychological profile: a character might be sullen or cheerful, saintly or depraved, thrifty or generous. One mechanism Bath records for determining personality is something like a tarot reading: for a given character, he draws seven playing cards, each of which implies a particular foible of the subject given in a table in *Wargames Campaign*. For example, drawing the Ten and Seven of Spades, Eight of Clubs, Nine and Four of Diamonds, Four of Hearts, Two of Spades gives you someone very ambitious, handsome, cruel, arrogant, a strong personality but an extreme physical coward. The system provided a simple way for the referee to simulate a large cast of autonomous people within a campaign.

This form of characterization is helpful to the umpire fleshing out the world, but has little bearing on how a player might adopt such a role. The players in the Hyborian campaign did however inherit roles with known character traits, most especially flaws;; for example, Charles Grant, who

received the longstanding character Prince Vakar of Hyrkania when Bath restructured Hyboria in 1968, held Vakar to be a greedy, treacherous and disloyal character, as I was informed, and presumably continued to direct Vakar's actions in keeping with those stipulations. These broad constraints on the free agency of Grant as a player, however, seem no more limiting than the choice of alignment (Law versus Chaos) in *Dungeons & Dragons*. For all intents and purposes, the players in Hyboria had unlimited agency: they might attempt anything, and the umpire shouldered the burden of determining, in some fair fashion, the results of these undertakings. It is in this respect that *Wargames Campaigns* most resembles *Dungeons & Dragons*: even in its postal incarnation, Hyboria effectively maintained a dialogic relationship between the players and the umpire. As Bath states from his perspective as referee: Each campaign week every player is provided with a situation report giving him all the information to which he is entitled;; he then issues instructions, based on that information, and I put them into practice. They are not concerned with the mechanics of the affairs;; I formulated the rules without consulting them and the ultimate decisions are mine to make.¹⁰⁵

This plays out much like the constant dialogic feedback in a session of *Dungeons & Dragons* except of course that it plays out by post, and consequently, it deals with a far longer timescale than a turn in the dungeon. Only the face-to-face immediacy of table-top play feels appropriate to the minute increments of time in *Dungeons & Dragons*; play by post usually involves turns describing weeks or months of action, a precedent that *Diplomacy* undoubtedly helped to establish with its six-month turns. Imagine the difference, had *Wargames Campaign* described Bath's chaotic Southampton games in 1971 and 1972, with their many participants striving towards contradictory goals all bashing up against one another in frantic bouts of improvisation. Because of his lack of a local gaming community, however, Bath rarely experimented with these approaches to character. In this respect, the presence of vibrant groups in the Twin Cities and Lake Geneva no doubt contributed significantly to the birth of *Dungeons & Dragons*, not only in that they provided a constant demand for games with large numbers of players, but moreover they steered multiparticipant games away from the post office and onto the sand table. Of course, the Twin Cities also administered the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, the strategic element of which largely transpired by post, and its structural resemblance to

Bath's *Wargames Campaign* is very striking.¹⁰⁶ Posterity often deemphasizes the campaign aspects of Arneson Blackmoor, which are so lengthily reproduced in the beginning of his *First Fantasy Campaign*, but they illustrate very similar logistical principles in the administration of regions, maintaining economies and armies and the like. The aspects of that game which truly captured the imagination of players, however, lay below ground, in the personal adventures of heroes defeating monsters to accumulate experience and treasure. Though a character in Hyboria might become a slightly better politician or general with experience, those rewards accrued at a glacial pace from game-years of duty, rather than in real-time from foes slain and plunder stowed. Hyborian characters were simply less personal.

The impersonal nature of the characters in Hyboria amply comes through in the published histories, especially those Bath distributed in 1973 and 1974 as the two-volume *A History of Hyboria*. Again, the narrative recalls Creasy or Oman, an expansive overview of the circumstances surrounding military and political conflict, replete with ironic detachment and a peppering of quips and judgments of the sort which flowed naturally from the pens of nineteenth-century English historians. The situation of individuals barely influences the inexorable advance of the forces of history. Contrast these narratives with the earliest dramatizations Gygax would produce for *Dungeons & Dragons* notably the tale of The Giant's Bag, the untitled exploits of Mordenkainen and the Expedition to the Black Reservoir (all of which receive further attention in Section 5.2). These three accounts probably provide us with the most direct insight into how Gygax originally played *Dungeons & Dragons*, more so even than anything we might learn from examining the rulebooks themselves;; since he held these up as early exemplars intended to stimulate sales, surely they must represent what he considered the most attractive and compelling manner of utilizing the system. The differences between Bath's narrative and Gygax are fundamental. Gygax writes in the manner of Leiber or Vance: direct, action-oriented genre fiction telling the moment-by-moment thoughts and actions of adventurers, without even a nod to any circumstances outside the moment. These narrative styles must correspond to his style of play. The adventure of The Giant's Bag, for example, contains dozens of lines of dialog, exchanges that would simply have no place in Bath's considered reflection on the passage of fictional history. The story itself follows the

attempts of a greedy wizard (presumably played by Gygax son Ernie) to con a churlish but canny giant out of its rucksack without violence, merely with trickery. In fact, the magician first allies with the giant to acquire a sunken treasure, and only after trying to take advantage of his oversized companion's feeble-mindedness does he get his comeuppance. Gygax examples show more problem solving than carnage, less warfare in a political context than simple plundering of any wealth in plain sight. The accounts of *Dungeons & Dragons* ignore the fate of nations and focus instead on the episodic unfolding of a fictional life, that of a person, and thereby created something new: a wargame without wars, a miniature game without miniatures, and a game without a winner or even an ending.

¹⁰⁶ One significant difference, however, is that Bath insisted that the umpires conduct all tactical battles themselves one could view the entire Hyborian campaign as one enormous pretext for establishing the scenarios of his sand table miniature battles. Arneson, on the other hand, happily permitted any participants in his Napoleonic Simulation Campaign to conduct their own battles, provided that they furnished a detailed battle report for the umpires to review. This was also owed far more to *Diplomacy* and exhibited a greater emphasis on naval activities.

While Hyboria, in its long years of existence prior to *Wargames Campaign*, invented many practices later adopted by wargamers throughout the world, it remained in its post-1968 revision fundamentally a game of logistics, where players may attempt anything that might be undertaken by rulers, rather than by heroes. Conan may have been played as a character in Hyboria, but only as an aged Conan who no longer relied on his own brawn to topple kingdoms, instead shouting orders to subordinate legions. Moreover, despite any temptation to proclaim it the true first fantasy campaign, Bath himself would insist that it really had no fantasy elements as such.¹⁰⁷ Wizards do not walk the land inflicting epic sorceries on their enemies, and religions, as *Wargames Campaign* has it, serve only as cloaks for other activities, as either bolsters for or checks upon governments, and of course as excuses for holy wars etc.¹⁰⁸ Nowhere in Hyboria is anything like the dungeon exploration adventure of Blackmoor to be found. Ultimately, Tony Bath experimented with many of the same ingredients as Gygax and Arneson, but produced a very different dish.

4.6 THE MIDGARD PHENOMENON

Tony Bath's Hyboria illustrates how a game might share some of the seminal features of *Dungeons & Dragons* without discovering the precise formula that would captivate the world in the years following 1974. The family resemblance of *Wargames Campaign* to the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* seems positively tenuous, however, when compared with the proximity of another relative that emerged early in the 1970s: the Midgard series of fantasy games. The insular and obscure Midgard phenomenon encompasses at least five distinct games which evolved roughly simultaneously with *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons*, as well as several lesser branch games which descend from the primary Midgard stalk.¹⁰⁹ While Midgard shares even more elements in common with *Dungeons & Dragons* than Hyboria, it couples their implementation with several debilitating handicaps that precluded its widespread adoption. Even more so than Hyboria, Midgard thus serves as a testimony to the precarious conditions under which *Dungeons & Dragons* succeeded, and to the theory that deviations from its serendipitous recipe would fail to trigger the sort of cultural movement that Gygax and Arneson initiated. Merely incorporating characters, or the fantasy setting, or some role-playing elements simply was not enough. All of the efforts discussed in this chapter, successful or no, reflect a growing community that yearned for a more impactful and immersive fantasy experience, and familiarity with this established community will be essential to understanding the early reception of *Dungeons & Dragons* in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁷ Looking back on his game from a post-1974 perspective in *White Dwarf* #4 (Jan 1978), Bath would later in that magic plays very little part in its affairs. In fact, its use is very often a cover for more *Shadizar Herald*.

¹⁰⁸ Bath, *Wargames Campaign*, 47.

¹⁰⁹ The Midgard family of games is so diverse, ill-documented and complex that this study cannot hope to address them satisfactorily. The scarcity of its materials is far more dire than even the most celebrated rarities of *Dungeons & Dragons* virtually all the products of the games were ephemera distributed to a small number of persons (forty being the upper bound, with most probably seeing in the neighborhood of thirty copies). While the study in this section certainly improves on any previous consideration of Midgard, it rests on scant and fragmentary evidence, and would almost certainly be superseded were more documents to come to light.

The story of Midgard begins, as do many of the earlier endeavors discussed in this chapter, within the community of science-fiction fandom, and particularly among the fans oriented toward the fantasy subgenre of sword-and-sorcery. Atypically, however, the prime movers of Midgard dwelt outside the English-speaking world. As the sword-and-sorcery craze spread in the late 1960s, it remained an overwhelmingly English-language phenomenon, which necessarily limited foreign interest. Yet fandom discovers adherents in the most unlikely places and speakers of German, the native tongue of much Teutonic mythology, are not the least plausible demographic for sword-and-sorcery fancying. Organized science-fiction fandom had only arisen in Germany after the Second World War (Harry Warner states in no uncertain terms that Germany had only one fan of any prominence before the start of the War), and although interest in the more scientific strands of speculative fiction flourished in West Germany and Austria, the seminal sword-and-sorcery fictions outside of Tolkien enjoyed less popular awareness in Europe.¹¹⁰ Even a Brit like Tony Bath found himself as of January 1967 appealing to American [Society of the Ancients] members for assistance in locating the books of Robert E. Howard, L. Sprague de Camp, Poul Anderson and others as he states they are unobtainable in this country. [SL:#9] These books must then have been scarce indeed on the Continent.

When an Austrian named Hubert Strassl began publishing the German-language sword-and-sorcery fanzine *Lands of Wonder*, it was only natural that its title be in the English-language and moreover appropriated from Lord Dunsany. There existed no native German tradition of sword-and-sorcery fiction, nor much by way of translations of the major American works, and thus *Lands of Wonder* is littered with English and Anglicisms, as any reader familiar with the genre surely commanded a reasonable grasp of the language in which it was written. This zine supported an organization founded in 1966 called the Fellowship of the Lords of the Lands of Wonder (FOLLOW), and while the choice of the word Fellowship must nod in Tolkien direction, this club focused more on the works of the *Weird Tales* and *Unknown* authors. The fourth issue tabulates the inexpensive late-1960s paperback sword-and-sorcery releases of Ace, Lancer, Pyramid and Ballantine discussed in Section 2.1.3. Some non-fiction works of seminal authors appear in translation in *Lands of Wonder* as well: the first issue

contained an essay by de Camp on heroic fantasy, and the fourth issue a piece by Leiber on sword-and-sorcery.¹¹¹

FOLLOW adopted a stratified feudal structure similar to the Hyborian Legion, the Society for Creative Anachronism and the Castle & Crusade Society, a progression that began with stable boys (*Stallburschen*), who might be elevated to squires (*Knappen*), who in turn may become Lords. Membership to FOLLOW required only a humorous, humble written petition (if possible in old-fashioned German) favorably received by one of the existing Lords, to whom the new member would then attach as a vassal.¹¹² The keyword old-fashioned here must suggest an immersed voice. As in the SCA, each Lord adopted a character in the Fellowship: Strassl went by the name Lord Hughbold, for example, and even a Lady Eleanor can be found among their number. FOLLOW held its own small assemblies, modeled on the broader science-fiction fandom conventions that had periodically transpired in Germany and Austria earlier in the 1960s. These gatherings served as an opportunity for lectures on the Sacred Genre of sword-and-sorcery as well as various ceremonies related to the feudal appointments. FOLLOW and its meetings are noteworthy to this study, however, for another activity it conducted in person. The description in *Lands of Wonder* of the December 1967 gathering in Strassl home town of Linz briefly mentions that a game (*Armageddon*) took place, which despite its planned briefness extended over a whole afternoon.

¹¹⁰ Warner, *All Our Yesterdays*, 163.

¹¹¹ Among the contributors to early issues of *Lands of Wonder* was Gerhard Richter, whose essay on the sword-and-sorcery genre appears in issue #2.

¹¹² *Lands of Wonder* #4.

Armageddon is a board wargame, one immediately recognizable as a Hellwig-style *kriegsspiel*, though one which incorporated concepts popularized by Avalon Hill, including a map divided into hexagons rather than squares. Strassl and his collaborators favored a board shaped as a circle rather than a rectangle;; for a game of four to seven players, they preferred a massive board, roughly two meters in diameter, with hexagons of 1.8 centimeters to a side, for a total of around 3,500 hexes on the board. In keeping with the precedent of Hellwig, each hexagon contains a particular terrain type, be it mountain, desert, tundra, hills, water or plains, and units moving through these terrains may suffer various advantages or penalties as

appropriate. Fortresses and other man-made structures adorned the natural world, but the denizens of these lands were anything but natural.

Each player supervised many units per the conventions of board wargames. As the game transpired in the ancient and medieval world settings, the game pieces represented knights and barbarians equipped with melee or ranged weapons such as swords, lances, bows, slings and axes, as well as various siege implements and forms of transportation including horses, boats, chariots and even war elephants. From the sword-and-sorcery genre, *Armageddon* also imported heroes and wizards. While the armies controlled by players admitted of some slight differences (depending on the national character, for example, one player might have elephants and no horses and another vice versa), each player controlled one and only one wizard, whose repertoire included spells that increased the movement speed of units, conjured new units into play, weakened enemy troops, instantly transported a unit around the board and so on, although the efficacy of spells depended upon a die roll. Aside from the minions of players, mythical creatures also roamed the land, including giants, sea serpents and unicorns, whose movements depended on dice as well, although a fortunate wizard could displace creatures for strategic purposes. Combat between units followed something like the Avalon Hill CRT model, though differently-slanted tables resolved combat between the various unit types, so some units dominated a specific other unit and might themselves be dominated by yet another unit. Adjacent units could also support one another in order to better their combat odds in the manner of *Diplomacy*. Again, as in Hellwig's game, a player might move any number of units during a turn, and all combat is resolved after the end of the movement phase.¹¹³ For representing units on the board, FOLLOW favored miniature figures, especially Airfix models.

As an n -player game, *Armageddon* necessarily encouraged the familiar interpersonal dynamics of *Diplomacy*: players alternately allied and intrigued with one another, and weaker nations reluctantly accepted oppressive treaties with stronger powers. The game ended with the consensus of a victor among all players, or barring that, in a brutal contest of total elimination. Obviously, the existence in 1967 of a fantasy board wargame with such elements, so long before *Chainmail*, is intrinsically of historical interest.¹¹⁴ A development imparting much greater significance to *Armageddon*, however, occurred early in 1968, with a particular five-person game that failed to reach a conclusion. No longer content with what Tony

Bath would term odd, unconnected battles, the participants resumed this game at a subsequent session, and then at another, and so on, admitting new players as occasion arose, though the group could only convene once or twice a year.¹¹⁵ Whether by accident or design, this game of *Armageddon* developed into a campaign, in fact a fantastic medieval wargames campaign, which Strassl and his cohorts dubbed the Eternal Game (*Ewige Spiel*). The particular scenario of the Eternal Game became known as the World of Wonder;; within two years of its commencement, its terrain had spread across three of those massive two meter boards, which jointly represented the Northern Hemisphere of the World (the Southern Hemisphere was reserved for future expansion). Like Tony Bath, Strassl maintained an elaborate narrative history of the campaign, though he took things a bit further by collecting these game events specifically to serve as the foundation for swordand-sorcery fiction. Adventures in this vein would fill later issues of *Lands of Wonder* and eventually inspire a series of novels based on its world of Magira.¹¹⁶

¹¹³

may mount or dismount horses, board transports and so on.

For several years, *Armageddon* remained virtually unknown outside of the diminutive circles of FOLLOW, largely because of the language barrier and the lack of communication channels between Central European fandom and the established communities of fantasy interest in England and the United States. In 1970, however, the World Science Fiction Society for the first time selected a venue for its annual convention outside the English-speaking world: Heidelberg, West Germany.¹¹⁷ The convention in Heidelberg, or as it came to be known HeiCon, drew a far smaller crowd than its American predecessors, but it did attract many English-speaking fans from Great Britain. FOLLOW made a showing at HeiCon, with one of their enormous playing boards, and distributed a flyer in English describing *Armageddon*, though at the end it notes apologetically that the printed rules is unfortunately out of print. An overall revision is necessary in any case as the basic edition caused confusion in many cases and did not include any of the new rules and concepts.... A new edition will be out as soon as possible.

Among the attendees at HeiCon was an Englishman named Hartley Patterson. Had the members of FOLLOW imagined any ideal conventioneer whom they hoped to impress with *Armageddon*, Patterson could not have fallen much short of that mark. In the first place, he figured among the

earliest participants in the fledgling British postal *Diplomacy* community, which had begun only the year before with the founding of Don Turnbull's seminal zine *Albion*, a vehicle for *Diplomacy* games as well as reviews of the American wargaming scene. Patterson played Austria-Hungary in the debut game of only the second *Diplomacy* zine native to the United Kingdom, *War Bulletin* the first issue of *War Bulletin* having mailed on August 14, 1970, about a week before HeiCon. In the second place, Patterson thoroughly knew Tolkien and other fantasy authors in the sword-and-sorcery subculture that *Lands of Wonder* targeted;; he was already a member of a fan organization called the Tolkien Society. *Diplomacy*, let alone Avalon Hill board wargaming, remained obscure enough in England, however, that fans indoctrinated in both fantasy and wargaming remained rare.¹¹⁸ When Patterson beheld the massive demonstration board that FOLLOW had set up and skimmed their flyer, he conjectured that it ought to be possible to set up a game along similar lines. [MD:#1]

¹¹⁴ Do note, however, that as Section 1.6 observed, the War Game Inventors Guild, as of no later than February 1968, had its own fantasy wargaming project based on the Battle of the Five Armies. [IW:v1n2] The efforts of FOLLOW, if they predate this precedent, do so only very narrowly. Remember as well that fantasy *Diplomacy* variants were already common in 1967 (see Section 4.3). ¹¹⁵ From the introduction to Walker, (1978).

¹¹⁶ Hubert Strassl published the results of the *Ewige Spiel* in a sword-and-sorcery series published under the name Hugh Walker. These books appeared in English the late 1970s, beginning with *War* (1978), though its German incarnation first saw print in 1975 (under the title *Reiter der Finsternis*)

described in Section 2.4: they begin with a wargamer who, while embellishing the world in which his battles transpire, begins to dream about its language, culture and protagonists, and eventually finds himself transported into the wargaming world entirely.

¹¹⁷

times in London (1957 and 1965).

4.6.1 MIDGARD IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

After a few months of preparation, in early January 1971, Hartley Patterson assembled a short zine called *Midgard* that described his planned game.¹¹⁹ He circulated it through several venues, including *Albion*, the *War*

Bulletin and the *Bulletin* of the Tolkien Society. Nothing in the literature distributed by FOLLOW employed the name Midgard, nor does Patterson initially suggest that he intended to impart this title to his creation. The name, of course, means Middle-earth in Old Norse, and directly inspired Tolkien (who knew well the word's analog in Old English poems) to impart that name to his own fantastic epoch. Even at this conceptual stage, Patterson viewed his proposed game as something rather more complex than *Armageddon*, the German Game however, given that FOLLOW could not supply copies of the rules, and that Patterson had some difficulty contacting the game's creators, it is probably most accurate to consider Midgard as Patterson's attempt to invent a game loosely derived from his experiences with the game at HeiCon and the description he read on their flyer.¹²⁰

Even where he knew the precedent of *Armageddon*, Patterson diverged from it in several important respects. For instance, Patterson began from the plausible proposition that:

The three basic factors in a typical sword-and-sorcery world are Magic, Money and Warfare. A player entering the game therefore chooses to be a Wizard, Merchant or Hero,¹¹⁸ Patterson was not entirely alone in sharing these two interests: the English *Diplomacy* and fantasy fandom communities did not want for common members. Tolkien references suffused the pages of *Albion*, and its fourth issue even contains an entire letter in Elvish.

¹¹⁹ The most accessible nearis by Patterson himself, in *White Dwarf Alarums & Excursions* #8 is perhaps the only attempt by a player to catalog the succession of Midgard-related games;; although its sequencing is correct, it is riddled with errors that confuse the narrative, especially in relating the proper names of games and characters (Gemignani was infamous in the fan community for the opacity of her writing). Gemi Midgard Fantasia post-1974 Midgard activities are for now postponed until Section 5.3. It is clear that Gemignani has each of these roles having certain advantages. He is provided with a set of rules, basic map, and suitable equipment. [MD:#1]

Hyboria inspired Drake.

¹²⁰ One may be reminded of Gygax developing *Dungeons & Dragons* based on his play of Blackmoor. Eventually, Patterson did establish limited communication with FOLLOW. In *News from Bree* #8, Patterson notes that he received the German-language *Magira*, the successor to *Lands of Wonder*, which continued to elaborate *Armageddon* and the Eternal Game.

The simple introduction here of direct role-assumption that a player chooses to be one of three roles, renders the scope of Midgard far more personal than that of its predecessor. Patterson's Midgard is a character-driven game, in which the characters are not troop commanders but individual protagonists like heroes and wizards. With this change in focus, Patterson brought his project closer to the winning formula of *Dungeons & Dragons* than either Hyboria or *Armageddon*. Hyboria ultimately lacked any real fantasy elements, but Midgard embraced wizards and monsters from its inception. Both Tony Bath's campaign and the Eternal Game of FOLLOW assume that players act as rulers, and occupy themselves with the activities of politicians, generals and the idle nobility. In those games, the strategic aspirations of rulers are entrusted to expendable subordinates who wage tactical battles on the table top. Not so in Midgard, however. Patterson establishes a one-to-one relationship between the player and a particular character in the game and explicitly designates the potential character classes as roles later, he would even refer to these types as classes. More striking still is the freedom of agency Patterson offers to players: What players do in game is up to them. They may wander around the world for a while, collecting wealth, spells and magic rings as appropriate.... How active players are is up to them. They will not be penalized for not sending moves in unless this is a hindrance to others... a player could for example build an impregnable castle, write up a list of standing orders and retire from the game until he can find time to be more active again. [MD:#1]

Clearly, the latitude afforded to characters in Midgard goes far beyond the rigid structures of a traditional wargame. While in this early rough draft of the game, Patterson does not specify the source of wealth, spells or magic items, ultimately they need not derive from conflict with other players. Much of Midgard actually plays out in a mode of exploration, where characters face challenges invented by the GM Patterson favors that abbreviation for the umpire or gamesmaster, to whom the players send their moves and from whom by return they learn the results of their actions, the classic dialogic feedback loop. [MD:#1] Without the presence of an umpire interpreting the attempted actions of characters, the freedom of agency required to control a believable character simply cannot be provided. The gamesmasters keeps the world map a secret from players at the start;; the basic map only gives them essential features of their specific local landscape. Invoking principles that would certainly strike a chord with Totten, Patterson stipulates: The gamesmaster will only give players such

information as they might reasonably be expected to know. This will include restricting not only details of the activities of other players but also matters of geography. [MD:#1]

Following the open-endedness of the Eternal Game, Patterson asserted that Midgard will have no ending as such, the rules will ensure that it would be difficult, though not impossible, for any player to win. Players may of course graduate from adventuring to a higher station in life: After some time they may choose to settle down and become rulers, either of previously occupied land or by raising rebellion against an established player. Rulers in turn behave much as they did in Hyboria: amassing funds through taxation to support armies, to try to conquer the lands of either other players or barbarians, where that disjunction suggests that the barbarians would, like Bath's cardboard characters, fall under the gamesmaster's own governance. A less ambitious ruler can instead merely pile up his wealth in treasure. [MD:#1]

If it sounds as if this game as conceived by Patterson in January 1971 anticipates *Dungeons & Dragons* entirely, do note the absence of critical concepts like parties, experience, a mode of combat and of course dungeons themselves.¹²¹ But moreover, Patterson made two design choices that ended up significantly limiting the prospects of his Midgard. First, he cast it as a postal game, in the general mold of *Diplomacy*, and per standard postal *Diplomacy* practice of the era he hoped to resolve moves every two weeks or so via correspondence. Perhaps, like Tony Bath before him, he resorted to mail to guarantee a sufficiently broad player base: his aspirations for Midgard required n -player dynamics, and Patterson ultimately decided that the game should support around thirty players. The delays of the post, however, dictate a certain pace of the game, turn lengths more on the order of weeks than moments, and thus the immediacy and immersion created by the dialogic interface in person are sacrificed. Patterson's second limiting decision, one that would plague all of the descendants of Midgard, is the democratic principle that the rules will not be permanent and will be changed by the gamesmaster and the players as the game progresses. [MD:#1] This fluidity of system became a hallmark of future Midgard games, many of which piggybacked ballots polling the players on system changes to every issue of their zines. This creates for historians a profound difficulty in analyzing the system of Midgard, as it existed in a constant state of flux.¹²² Moreover, it effectively precluded the publication of an

authoritative and enduring rulebook, and thus Midgard, like the Hyborian campaign and much like Blackmoor as well, relied for its operation on the ever-changing records of its referee commercially marketing such a game, or even handing it off to a different gamesmaster, presented serious challenges.

The fate of Patterson's Midgard thus depended on the fickle enthusiasm of the postal gaming community. After laying out his general idea for the game in the first issue of his zine *Midgard*, he did not produce a second until April (right after the publication of *Chainmail*), and that issue largely reprinted the *Armageddon* flyer from HeiCon. By that point, however, Patterson had only just begun to receive comments on the first issue, and the level of interest in the game world remained deeply uncertain. Would the ingredients of fantasy and wargaming mix successfully? Basically, I'm trying to balance Midgard on the fence between two at present totally separate fan groupings, and whether it will succeed I just don't know. [MD:#2] Uptake from the wargaming side of the fence did not impress Patterson;; he assumed control over the editorship of the *War Bulletin* with issue #11, and in #12 he notes my other publication, *Midgard*, is not generally circulated, most *WB* recipients have not reacted to it. By June, however, Patterson had completed a master map for the game, which at 6 x 4 somewhat clogged his loft. The world consisted of a single continent with frozen northern regions and a balmy southern clime, complete with a¹²¹ Sticklers for historical priority may also note that well before January 1971, Gary Gygax had already sent to Don Featherstone his sketch of the Fantasy Supplement of *Chainmail*, so while it is remotely possible that Gygax learned of *Armageddon* through some second-hand account of HeiCon

the fantasy elements in the first edition of *Chainmail*. These and similar notes to well preceded the blurb Patterson sent there about Midgard cited below.

¹²² The democratic design of the system also anticipates many of the difficulties that *Dungeons & Dragons* faced in the first years of its existence with self-appointed collaborators in the fan community.

good helping of islands and peninsulas. At the center of the world lay the Five Towns, the cornerstone of civilization, where most players situated their characters. Elsewhere on his secret map, Patterson squirreled away Tolkienesque rings of power, ornery sea serpents, flighty winged horses and whatnot. The brief issues of *Midgard* that circulated in the first half of 1971 mostly vetted rules proposals and began the balloting process by which players agreed on changes. By August, one year after HeiCon, Patterson

began to advertise the existence of the game in some of the higher-circulation outlets of British fandom, such as *Checkpoint* #7, which gave an overview of the system and forecast that the game starts later this year and the end of August is the deadline for would-be rulers... some thirty players have joined so far.

In fact, although Patterson produced eleven issues of *Midgard* before the end of the year, he did not quite manage to start a game. Commencing play required a consensus among the players on the rules. Around the publication of *Midgard* #IX (September 1971), Patterson faced a concerted opposition to his own system proposals;; although the broader readership did not favor the counterproposals, as of early 1972 Patterson ceded editorship of *Midgard* to a ringleader of the dissidents, Will Haven, soon to be the publisher of a *Diplomacy* zine called *Bellicus*. By relinquishing editorial control of his zine, however, Patterson did not yield his authority over the game: Haven produced a master copy of each new issue of *Midgard* but sent it back to Patterson for duplication, and Patterson retained the sole right to act as the gamesmaster, in the event of a game actually materializing. This change in administration accompanied a stricter distribution policy;; instead of dispatching *Midgard* free of cost to any who expressed casual interest, the new administration of the zine halved the subscriber base (and hence the player base) by reserving copies for paying subscribers and other zine publishers.

Even with the joint efforts of Haven and Patterson, the draft Laws of *Midgard* did not mature into a stable wargame system until the early fall of 1972. This delay may owe something to Patterson's lack of the German rules, which necessitated some amount of research and innovation on his part. He drew from the American board wargaming precedent not directly from Avalon Hill, however, but instead from their rival Simulation Publications, Inc., whose curious title *Strategy I* (1971), a setting-independent board wargame that purported to serve as a foundation for games set from the time of Alexander the Great to World War III, enjoyed a vogue among British *Diplomacy* players fortunate enough to acquire a copy. Shortly, however, Patterson learned from his players of the existence of the miniature wargaming community, and in particular the War Games Research Group based in his native country. By adopting its work as a baseline, Patterson opened a line of communication between British science-fiction fandom and the British miniature wargaming community. As he wrote to Don Featherstone *Wargamer's Newsletter* in June 1972 (around the same

time that *Midgard* #XIV appeared): I am also involved in Gamesmastering an extremely complex postal game set in a medieval fantasy world very similar to Tolkien Middle Earth. The game is called MIDGARD, and has about 20 players at present. The battle rules are adapted from the London Wargames Research Rules, though as the game is postal (with players in UK, USA, Israel, Belgium, etc.,) the unfortunate GM has to resolve all conflicts! The game also involves economics, magic and the other ingredients of epic fantasy. Rulers must raise taxes to support their armies too high a tax rate and the citizens will revolt.¹²³

Of course, we must understand involved in Gamesmastering here as a bit forward-looking: Midgard had not yet gotten off the ground. Patterson predicted in the June issue of *War Bulletin* (#32), game start due soon (!) which at best concedes nothing had transpired yet. The notice in *Wargamer's Newsletter* did Midgard little good, apparently;; Patterson would later say it produced no reaction at all, though given the attitude towards fantasy espoused by the editor of that magazine, this can hardly be surprising. [NFB:#13] Delays to the game start mounted from several sources. In November 1971, for example, Patterson embarked on a separate publishing venture: a scandal-sheet called *News from Bree* which criticized the lax administration of the Tolkien Society.¹²⁴ Furthermore, Will Haven relocated to the United States for the second half of 1972, which put a dent in his own contributions. Both Patterson and Haven spent much energy maintaining their own *Diplomacy* zines and contributing to efforts to organize the growing British postal *Diplomacy* community. Midgard, in England anyway, resided on a back burner.

4.6.2 MIDGARD II AND BEYOND

In his letter to *Wargamer's Newsletter* above, Patterson noted that Midgard had prospective players overseas in America. In fact, news of Midgard had made its way Stateside by the summer of 1971, through Patterson's connections to the American postal *Diplomacy* community. Patterson cultivated for himself a sort of liaison position between the fledgling UK scene and the established mainstays in the USA bear in mind that when *Albion* published only its tenth issue, that old warhorse *Graustark* celebrated its twohundredth. These ties secured an advertisement for Midgard in the NFFF *Gamesletter* in the middle of 1971, a prominent placement that brought the game to the attention of many American *Diplomacy* aficionados. For example, that notice captured the attention of

Lewis Pulsipher, an IFW member in the process of founding an official IFW Fantasy & Science Fiction Society, complete with its own zine called *Supernova*. The third issue of *Supernova* (August 1971), which hoped to enumerate the existing games of the science fiction and fantasy genres, pleaded for more information on Midgard expanding on the blurb in *Gamesletter*. By October, Patterson imparted further detail to the readership of *Supernova*, and subsequently received a number of inquiries from Americans hoping to run their own Midgard-style games. This level of interest demonstrates the readiness of American gamers for a new style of fantastic adventure, one predicated on a strong concept of character.

An early respondent, Charles Cotten, had learned of Midgard from his college roommate, who happened to distribute Patterson's zines in America. What Cotten admired most about Midgard was, as he wrote in *Supernova* #9, the simulation aspect: players are

¹²³ [WGN:#127] #127 is the October 1972 issue although since Patterson Group with the London Wargames Section, a separate organization which promulgated quite different rules. *White Dwarf* #2, however, attests that the rules used were the War Games Research Group, and that the inspiration derived from one of the Midgard players, Rowan Edwards, whose name can be found in some later issues of *Slingshot* a plausible enough connection.

¹²⁴ Section 5.5 will show that *News from Bree* became one of the earliest zines focused on *Dungeons & Dragons*, a few years later.

free to do as they like in the framework of the rules, the rational laws, which are as loosely formulated as possible. Cotten acknowledges that this puts a lot of responsibility on the GM to interpret the rules and determine situations not covered by the rules explicitly. Although Cotten's plans to run a variant of his own apparently came to naught, his words illustrate how novel and inspiring this open-endedness appeared to gamers in the early 1970s. Another American hopeful, Hal Broome, had already begun developing a *Lord of the Rings* wargame when he learned of Midgard (probably through the Tolkien Society, to which both he and Patterson belonged). From Midgard, Broome appropriated the mechanics of a postal game probably wisely, as his initial board design proved a bit impractical with dimensions of 81 square feet. Broome also admired Midgard's handling of secret information (he calls his game closed and secret), especially ignorance of geography beyond local starting regions. Overall, these influences placed the main emphasis on questing, with not too much

warring. Broome also firmly insisted that players interact with one another as their characters, in an immersed voice: Oh yes, playing will cover extra-board activities, like when Gandalf (played by J. Doe, e.g.) runs across Frodo (J. Smith), they communicate AS THE CHARACTERS;; ex: J. Doe writes J. Smith and converses via letter, again, I repeat, as the characters G. and Frodo. Of course then, I would prefer that players act in character and not have alliances between people that would contradict (ex: Gandalf being an ally of Sauron s!). [SN:#9]

One perhaps unexpected limitation of Broome's approach lay in his fidelity to Tolkien;; rather than permitting players to invent their own characters in the Middle-earth setting, he actually intended players to select and assume the roles of established characters from the *Lord of the Rings*, although as of the time of his writing, Gandalf, Sauron and the Balrog apparently were already spoken for. His vehemence on this point is unmistakable: Broome insisted on a strong form of immersive role assumption, at least as strong as one can hope for in a postal game. Ultimately, it does not appear Broome succeeded in getting his game off the ground, even with an endorsement from Patterson in *War Bulletin* #22. Only one of the American spin-offs from Patterson's Midgard gained any immediate traction. Earlier in the summer of 1972, before the completion of the English rules, Thomas E. Drake of Utah secured permission from Patterson to implement his own variant, and thus Midgard II was born. For those keeping score, from this point forward three distinct games in this family *Armageddon*, Patterson's original Midgard, and Midgard II continued to develop independently under effectively separate administration.

At roughly the same time that Points of Interest in Black Moor made the rounds in *Domesday Book* #13, Drake liberally circulated an outline similar to Patterson's original flyer on Midgard. Notice appeared in the touchstone of the American postal *Diplomacy* community, *Gamesletter* #38, where it reached many fans who delighted in fantasy variants of *Diplomacy*. Crucially, among the other *Diplomacy* fanzines carrying blurbs about Midgard II was *Liaisons Dangereuses*, one of the IFW-affiliated zines in which Gygax participated and played. Its July 31, 1972, issue provides this brief but enticing blurb (presumably authored by Lakofka): FANTASY NUTS UNITE! Mr. Tom Drake... is producing a multi-player Fantasy game for playing by mail. It will include giants, wizards, Heroes, and Rulers as some of the cast of Characters. The rules of the game are but a guide to the

use of your own imagination in play. Many unique concepts are outlined. We suggest you get a copy of the outline, only 50¢... We intend to!¹²⁵

One can easily imagine a contemporary reviewer condensing a description of *Dungeons & Dragons* into that same paragraph, aside from the playing-by-mail aspect. Drake also advertised Midgard II in science-fiction fandom circles. His outline appears in a fanzine called the *CULT*, an APA which admitted only thirteen members at a time. The August 20, 1972, distribution of the *CULT* carried his two-page proposal under the frank of a member named Sid Cochran, Jr. Cochran, it turns out, was also among the earliest members of the IFW;; his name appears in the membership rolls in 1968, and issues from that year record his work on a sophisticated *Battle of the Bulge* variant which incorporated many logistical details and such nuances as weather effects. [IW:v1n7] Among the other twelve members of the *CULT* at the time were George Scithers of *Amra* fame now also associated with the Society for Creative Anachronism and, remarkably enough, Ted Johnstone, of Coventry and *Ruritania* fame.¹²⁶ In this single small and obscure venue, word of Midgard seemingly reached representatives of all the communities that might find such a game attractive.

In its high-level particulars, Drake's circular strongly resembled Patterson's original proposal, but its innovations brought Midgard closer to the eventual system of *Dungeons & Dragons*. He retained the notion of secret geography: The large majority of the board is unknown to any one player at gamestart. More information can be obtained by traveling, or buying (or otherwise acquiring) maps. Much as in the original Midgard, the players of Midgard II are divided into 3 main types: Rulers, Heroes and Wizards. The substitution here of Rulers for Merchants reflects the persistent difficulties Patterson encountered differentiating his Merchant role from the traditional ruler type of postal *Diplomacy* or Hyboria.¹²⁷ Drake, however, makes a further allowance that other types of characters might be invented by the players. In addition, a player may choose to be some other type, such as Wandering Minstrel, as long as it doesn't result in a super-character who can do everything [Heroic Wizard-King, etc.]. Heroes, Drake asserts explicitly, are basically of the Conan or Gray Mouser/Fafhrd type. Both Heroes and Wizards, he suggests, start out as footloose, which is to say without the great worldly possessions, influence or obligations of Rulers. Heroes, however, are much concerned with tracking down hoards of treasure, magical weapons, etc., and killing any guardian dragons, etc., or

simply¹²⁵ [LD:#34] and perhaps some other personages of note, though this t

sibling rivalry between GenCon and Lakofka , so relations with Gygax may at that time have been strained albeit, not so strained that Gygax failed to submit his moves to *Liaisons Dangereuses*, which implies he read the zine as well.

¹²⁶ Furthermore, on the waiting list of the *CULT* then was Lee Gold, the future editor of *Alarums & Excursions*. While the policies of the *CULT* on these points are virtually inscrutable, fans on the waiting list typically received copies of the *CULT*. Another stand-out among the thirteen members is Frank Denton, whom Ken St. Andre (designer of *Tunnels & Trolls*) would later indicate first notified him of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

¹²⁷ As Patterson says of his Midgard in *White Dwarf* countries, a fact which caused endless confusion amongst players who became convinced as I recall

envisaged a complicated trade system whereby goods could be transported around on a kind of supply and demand principle. It never had a chance to be pu adventuring. Heroes may also enter the employ of Rulers, leading armies, and in the manner of Bath s generals, they increase the combat value of any army they lead by a sizeable fraction, and this fraction increases with experience (no. of past victories). Wizards, on the other hand, may try to acquire a kingdom, or wander in search of adventure, Old Lore, artifacts, or magical animals. For those of a magical nature, power can be increased through finding certain artifacts;; spells come from the Old Lore (both can also be obtained from other wizards if you can get them at a disadvantage). Both Heroes and Wizards thus have paths of personal progression, ways to increase in both intrinsic power and in possessions which augment that power a remarkable prefiguration of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Rulers control kingdoms and reign largely through taxation and military force, though of course Rulers may hire either Heroes or Wizards to conduct their affairs more effectively.

Drake also preserved Patterson s commitment to open-endedness, under the control of the gamesmaster. As he puts it: One of the basic rules of this game is to innovate. Use your imagination: the rules are simply the norm, a set of guidelines expressing the underlying physical, economic and natural laws. If you want something, or want to do something, not covered in the rules,

suggest it to me and, if it doesn't violate the basic tenets of the game, we'll work out a set of rules between us to cover cost, effectiveness, etc.¹²⁸

These words certainly suggest that an open-ended approach to fantasy wargaming system emerged independently of the *Strategos* vogue in the Twin Cities and perhaps more strongly, that the principle that *anything can be attempted* arises naturally when the system encompasses realistic characters. The prevalence of open-endedness must owe something to the potentially collaborative dynamics of the *n*-player structure: where players need not compete directly with everyone or indeed anyone, then orders need not be simplified and systematized to meet the demands of fairness, as they are in the rigidity of two-player wargames. Moreover, the need for subterfuge and double-dealing also relies on tight-lipped administrators not divulging the imminent treason of allies. Any game that gives a referee latitude to interpret player orders, and in particular any such *n*-player game, innately seemed to require a certain flexibility in the design of system, a willingness to allow referees to act as interpreters for the potentially complex or surprising endeavors which interpersonal dynamics naturally inspire. Braunstein or Blackmoor, improvisational role assumption in a postal game versus a real-time, face-to-face game. In a postal context like that of Midgard, the gamesmaster has all the time needed to work out the consequences of a surprising interjection from a clever player, and even to negotiate with its instigator the proper way to adjudicate novel actions in the system. To Broome's vehemence as well, we must reply that it is far less radical an innovation to pen a compelling approximation of Gandalf voice in an armchair over a weekend than it is to conduct satisfactorily a wizardly conversation across a table top with a would-be Frodo.

Although the end of Drake's flyer cautions readers that the rules will come out in several installments, and promises that I've got the rough draft finished, and I'll get each section typed, printed and mailed as fast as I can, this could not have been a trivial proposition, given that Drake hoped to simplify Patterson's rules considerably. Drake's When comparing the however, remember open-endedness in Midgard to a the enormous difference between new zine *Midgard Forum* would, like Patterson's *Midgard*, contain many tiresome ballots for players to vote on new rules, and consequently the rules would never be truly stable. Moreover, Drake had to design a new world-map for his separate Midgard scenario, though one patterned on the same principles as the original. Those contingencies

notwithstanding, Drake had no difficulty finding an eager player base;; by August 11, 1972, Drake reports he has all the players I can handle at the moment. In fact, a September notice in *Supernova* #12 suggests that Midgard II now has an overflow, which sent Drake in search of someone to gamesmaster a second game.¹²⁹ As such, the start of Midgard II incurred a slight delay.

¹²⁸ Drake s Midgard II circular, *CULT*, August 20, 1972.

Midgard II s parent back in England fared no better. After the publication of the immediately-outdated Laws of Midgard in September 1972, the game-start only receded farther into the future. In mid-November, Patterson received from Haven the stencils for a new issue of *Midgard* which set a definitive January 1973 deadline for commencing play, but as of a month later (as told in *War Bulletin* #40), Patterson confesses, Players in Midgard, the long delayed postal Fantasy game, will be frustrated to hear the next issue is awaiting duplication. It announces a game start, though as I don t have time to GM it this seems unlikely! Before the end of the year, both Patterson and Haven resigned their respective posts in the administration of Midgard, and handed over control to a pair of the prospective players: Rowan Edwards and Graham England. A note in the British journal *Checkpoint* from mid-February 1973 (#31) still can only claim game-start is anticipated soon under the new administration. Whether or not the game ever began in earnest that year is debatable. Although the new GMs managed to execute a couple of moves, the foundations of the game were shaky at best these issues of *Midgard* bore no dates, nor schedule, and some (like #19, probably mid-1973) were nothing more than single-page apologies for the ongoing delays.

Stateside, Drake s Midgard II got off the ground more promptly, just before the publication of *Supernova* #15 (late February 1973). When play began, Drake supplemented the out-of-character *Midgard Forum* with a completely immersed game newspaper called the *Midgard Journal*, which carried press and rumors in much the spirit of the *Shadizar Herald*, *Ruritania* and the *Coventranian Gazette*.¹³⁰ In the year after the game start up until March 1974, Drake managed to produce five issues of the *Forum* exceeding other Midgard incarnations. Through the experience the exploits of the many characters exploring Drake s world. Sid Cochran, the IFW and *CULT* member, played a Ruler named Ragnar Bluetooth. Other noted Rulers included several postal *Diplomacy* veterans: Edi Birsan, playing Nasrib of

Kustenmark;; Stan Wrobel (editor of *Jastzrab*) as Wixon the Wise of Bolonia and Brian Libby (a prominent *Diplomacy* variant designer and early IFW member) as Siegfried II of the Traumreich. Margaret Peggy Gemignani, whose vivid *Diplomacy* press releases and activities in the Society for Creative Anachronism are mentioned above, opted to play a non-type character, Nika the Minstrel Maid. Gary Gehrke, a wargamer from Madison, Wisconsin, played one of the Heroes, Surlyn de Draagekriek. Among the Wizards one can find a respectable number, certainly *Forum*, one could vicariously Starkad, played by a certain Walter J. Williams, whose contributions to the final issues of the *Domesday Book* and the subsequent journal *Cymry* provide a rare direct link between the Midgard community and the Castle & Crusade Society.

¹²⁹ *Supernova*

responsibility for an additional Midgard game, with its organ the *Midgard III Recorder*, but it founded by 1974.

¹³⁰ Patterson would himself produce a similar immersed zine for the original Midgard called *Times of Caran*, an example of which is bundled in *News from Bree* #12.

Although the Castle & Crusade Society was long defunct before Midgard II got underway, Midgard is strikingly reminiscent of several proposed activities of the IFW. In 1970, an IFW member named Mark Goldberg submitted an article to *Wargamer's Newsletter* detailing some upcoming American endeavors in wargaming, including that plans are underway to take a popular series of Sword and Sorcery fantasy (such as Howard's colourful Conan series) and construct an Avalon Hill strategic, miniature tactical game out of it;; with economic, political, and, especially, diplomatic rules. [WGN:#105] Ironically, though this blurb may sound like reporting on Hyboria or even a prophecy of Midgard to come, Goldberg is surely describing here Gygax proposal for Wargaming and the Hyborian Age from May 1969 already mentioned above, the one which conjectured that an enlarged map of Conan's world could be drawn up. [IW:v2n5] No doubt Goldberg also recalled the Great Kingdom of the Castle & Crusade Society as it was originally envisioned, a mapboard-strategic/miniatures-tactical game based on a medieval period of an alternate Earth. [IWS:Mar70] Remember, however, that few of these efforts came to fruition the Great Kingdom and the Hyborian Wargames Society both effectively founded. Enthusiasts like Goldberg saw their hopes for fantasy games disappointed.

How could one then be surprised to find Mark Goldberg a few years later wandering around Midgard II in the character of Shodan Steelhand, one of the Knights of the All Father?¹³¹

After the success of *Dungeons & Dragons*, with the benefit of a few years hindsight, Hartley Patterson wrote of his September 1972 rules that they described a game which bears some interesting resemblances to the Gygax bestseller, at that time presumably still not even dreamt of not that there is any possibility of TSR having seen any Midgard material before *D&D* was printed, as we moved in quite different circles. [WDF:#2] Despite the generosity of this concession, one must insist that the circles are not so readily separated: Gygax had almost certainly heard of Midgard by the middle of 1972, if only through *Liaisons Dangereuses*, and several persons in the IFW circles where Gygax moved played in Midgard II. However, one must furthermore realize that by September 1972, Arneson's Blackmoor existed in a relatively advanced form, and that Gygax might already have dreamt hazily of its codification as *Dungeons & Dragons*. While Midgard independently developed some of the novelties present in Blackmoor (novelties, one might add, that are amply detailed in the Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger earlier in the year), it is unclear that Midgard could have imparted any trait to *Dungeons & Dragons* that Blackmoor could not. The core concept of adopting the character of a Hero or Wizard obviously had prefigurations in *Chainmail* and neither Merchants nor Rulers appear as classes in the original edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The mode of exploration and emphasis on umpiremanaged adversaries is far more thoroughly instantiated in Blackmoor than in Midgard.

In the Midgard phenomenon, we see how the prospect of playing a fantastic character in a game brought together diverse communities of interest: postal *Diplomacy* fans, science fiction fans and wargaming fans, even members of the IFW and Castle & Crusade Society. While this sounds very promising, the impact of Midgard was weakened by its implementation as campaigns rather than as a universal system of rules. Very few persons played in Midgard on the order of a hundred worldwide, perhaps and due to the aforementioned difficulties with its postal structure, even fewer experienced more than brief and halting stints of play. Moreover, the influence of Midgard's system was limited because it never aspired to publication as a set of rules that any gaming group might pick up and implement;; instead, its system remained *ad hoc*, bound strongly to the

campaign and circulated only among its players. Incessant fluctuations in the rules sent in every mailing provoked debates and occasionally high-profile resignations among the participants. Hyboria similarly was a campaign which only its referees and players truly experienced we might be saying the same of Blackmoor, had Gygax not codified and adapted it into the published system of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The stark differences between the Blackmoor campaign and the three volumes of the 1974 edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* speak to the immense difficulty of transforming the informality and situational rulings of a campaign into a commercial game. Even had such a reincarnation of Midgard been attempted, however, its postal structure did not lend itself to the immediacy of scenarios like dungeon exploration which proved so captivating to the gaming audience of the mid-1970s.

¹³¹ Before Gygax snatched it up for himself, Goldberg *War of the Empires* in 1969. As Section 1.1 already noted, Goldberg won the first *Fight in the Skies* tournament at the very first GenCon.

4.7 CHARACTERS AND ROLE--PLAYING

When Tony Bath ran his anarchic Southampton games, filled with characters drawn from fantasy genre literature competing to satisfy unwarlike victory conditions, he deferentially confessed that such an activity could hardly be described as a war game. Granted, but if they were not wargames, what were they, exactly? Without the benefit of hindsight, one could not at the time perceive the thread that linked these unconnected activities the costumed gatherings of Coventry, the lists of the Society for Creative Anachronism, the table-top antics of Braunstein and then the immersed written narratives of postal *Diplomacy* or *Fight in the Skies* or the Midgard games. All embraced a concept of character, where each player has a surrogate in the game world. In the most immersive games, those characters aspire to true personhood, to the same freedom of agency we enjoy as people to *attempt anything*. After the release of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and the general popularization of the idea of playing a character in a game, it is easy to see these activities as harbingers of things to come. Regardless of the degree to which Gygax or Arneson participated directly in these character-playing games and thus incorporated their influence, the community that received *Dungeons & Dragons*, as the next chapter illustrates, consisted in large part of the veterans of precisely these phenomena.

When it appeared, *Dungeons & Dragons* passed over the consequences of role assumption in silence. Nothing in *Dungeons & Dragons* encourages the immersed voice, let alone mandating it after the fashion of Hal Broome. The sole example of play in *Underworld & Wilderness*, a dialogic exchange between the referee and caller, epitomizes detachment. We do however have ample evidence that Gygax and Arneson as players and referees favored the immersed voice, from their activities in postal *Diplomacy* described above and from documents like the Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger. Furthermore, the earliest descriptions of *Dungeons & Dragons* authored by Gygax for periodicals in 1974 seamlessly transplant the game events into a fictional narrative, creating battle reports that really constitute nothing less than works of short fantasy fiction. That circumstantial evidence aside, the absence of any commentary on immersion in the original *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks therefore leaves posterity with a curious puzzle. How did the authors expect characters to be played in *Dungeons & Dragons*? Did they hope players would speak in the first-person voice of their characters, and like a player of *Fight in the Skies* allow a character to perform according to his personality, not yours? Or did they expect, following the example caller in *Underworld & Wilderness*, players would dispassionately evaluate the situation and relay orders to the referee? Did the authors believe that immersion was necessary or even salient to the game?

It is unlikely that our curiosity about this point of authorial intention will ever be completely satisfied, but nor does it need to be in order to understand how *Dungeons & Dragons*, and more significantly role-playing, became a cultural phenomenon.¹³² As with any work bestowed to the populace at large, authorial intention must inevitably yield to the reception and interpretation of the audience. Midgard, Hyboria and Coventry are not household names, and it is doubtful that they shaped *Dungeons & Dragons* directly it is certain, however, that they conditioned the reaction to *Dungeons & Dragons*, in various measurable ways. All three seeded interest in character-driven fantasy wargaming among highly connected networks of fans. The postal communities that developed around Midgard, for example, provided natural distribution channels for new fantasy games entering the market, which *Dungeons & Dragons* thoroughly exploited. More importantly, the formulae of Midgard and Hyboria whetted the appetite of fans for a strongly immersive experience, but because of their intrinsic limitations, they ultimately failed to satisfy the cravings they inspired.

Dungeons & Dragons hit upon precisely the recipe to sate that hunger, and, with a fortunate timeliness, to dominate this untapped market for the role-playing of fantastic adventures.

Role-playing became a form of popular entertainment in outlets other than games during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1973, directly before the release of *Dungeons & Dragons*, J. L. Moreno revisited his *Theatre of Spontaneity* for a revised English edition. In a new preface, he awards some guarded praise to recent theatrical innovations, especially insofar as in the last twenty years the American tendency to overcome the old, dogmatic theater has become visible. Especially in the 1960s, improvisational performances enjoyed special currency among radical young actors and directors;; Moreno singles out the Living Theatre and Open Theatre as indications of improvement, though he complains that the ensemble of players improvises step-by-step the parts of a play which they then melt together into an organized play, and that therefore the aim of the ensemble is still to create a theatre piece rather than something more revolutionary. His remarks on the spontaneous theatre of the era do demonstrate the widespread acceptance of real-time improvisation as a mode of dramatic exploration. Moreno died the following May, only a few months after the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and must never have learned of its existence. Role-playing, it would seem, never lived up to his expectations, at least not during his lifetime.

Moreno coinage, role-playing, did not perish with him, however. Although rarely employed in gaming circles since the early 1960s, in 1973 the term began to experience a resurgence. For example, the ambitious zine *Xenogogic* originally a postal *Diplomacy* journal, but by 1973 a thick, scholarly Gaming and Simulations Quarterly published an article co-authored by Lincoln P. Bloomfield of MIT on Games Foreign Policy Experts Play. As an early adopter of political wargaming (his work received a nod in Goldhamer's Some Observations on Political Gaming), Bloomfield had referred to his exercises as role-playing as early as 1959. In *Xenogogic* in 1973, Bloomfield casually wrote that his type of all-man, role-playing game using realistic hypothetical crisis problems has been staged by other groups, both in the United States and elsewhere. Bloomfield dropped the term enough times that Don Miller, in *Gamesletter* #69, picked it up for his description of that issue of *Xenogogic*; he references the *Xenogogic*-sponsored game *Nexus* as a ¹³² In late interviews, Gygax frequently

disparaged the sort of amateur acting that accompanies the most immersive approaches to role-playing though most likely his distaste was a matter of degree rather than a blanket condemnation.

Presidential role-playing simulation. *Gamesletter* #69 shipped in December 1973, in the final weeks before the advent of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Once released into the milieu of the fan community, this term did not connect immediately with *Dungeons & Dragons* initially, *Dungeons & Dragons* had no need for any sort of label or descriptor, it masqueraded as just another wargame. Once other games attempted to recapture the innovative, characterdriven play of *Dungeons & Dragons*, only then did the community require a common descriptor to refer to this new genre.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE DAWN OF ROLE--PLAYING (1974 1977)

We now resume the thread suspended at the end of the first chapter, which concluded just as *Dungeons & Dragons* was released. In the intervening chapters, we have explored how *Dungeons & Dragons* comprised the fantasy genre as a setting, the medieval wargame as a combat system and, tacitly, a dimension of personal role-playing that the authors borrowed from their experiences with earlier games. *Dungeons & Dragons* was not the first title to blend fantasy and wargames, nor to put players in control of characters rather than armies, nor to implement a dialog between player and referee as the primary manner of representing the game world. Prior games that experimented with these mechanisms did not achieve the same stature as *Dungeons & Dragons*, and thus there was no reason to think, back in January 1974, that *Dungeons & Dragons* would transcend the boundaries of the wargaming community and reach an audience any larger than other wargame titles released the same year. If anything, the prospects of *Dungeons & Dragons* seemed worse. Where the games discussed in the last chapter achieved their reach by enlisting postal participants, *Dungeons & Dragons* steadfastly fixed itself to the table top, and thus depended on adoption by local groups and not just pairs of players, but a referee and a suitable party. The game lacked the marketing budget or print run that an established corporation might provide, and the rules were lengthy, expensive and not especially clear.

Yet as the 1970s drew to a close, *Dungeons & Dragons* became an international sensation, and then a commercial juggernaut. While its later fortunes are well documented, the answers to the important questions about *Dungeons & Dragons* reside in those first few murky years, when it fought for attention, for disposable income and eventually for supremacy over rivals. What did the audience of *Dungeons & Dragons* find in the game that previous efforts had lacked? How did the game spread through fan communities to reach an unparalleled level of popularity, and in the throes of success, how did the game maintain its integrity against the unrelenting inventiveness of fandom? How did *Dungeons & Dragons* avoid falling into obscurity, and instead pioneer a whole new industry of games? And finally, what set this new category of games apart from its predecessors?

5.1 FINDING AN AUDIENCE

Evangelizing *Dungeons & Dragons* became a way of life for Gary Gygax as soon as the finished product returned from the printers. Although Tactical Studies Rules scheduled a handful of other releases for 1974, none rivaled the scope of *Dungeons & Dragons*, nor its immediate profit potential as a ten dollar purchase.¹ In a letter he sent to Dave Arneson on March 5, 1974, only weeks after the release of the game, Gygax stresses that every flyer you pass out could mean more royalty dollars. Remember, every retail sale we make is \$1.00 to you. Put a flyer in all letters, right? Gygax surely would not recommend this tactic had he not already adopted it for his own voluminous correspondence. Mere word of mouth, while undoubtedly stimulating some sales, could not however announce *Dungeons & Dragons* to the world. Scarcely a week later, a subsequent letter to Arneson voices Gygax

¹ The back of the first printing of *Dungeons & Dragons* lists the forthcoming *Tricolor*, as well as teasers

As we shall see in this chapter, most but not all of these titles eventually saw print.

frustration with their existing sales ploys: Seeing as how you and I each make a buck on a retail sale by TSR we have to be dreaming up ways to promote same! Get to work!²

By this time, unbeknownst to Gygax, Twin Cities outreach on *Dungeons & Dragons* had already begun, and it would have far-reaching consequences. Early in February 1974, mere days after the release of *Dungeons & Dragons*, a Minneapolis local named Louis Fallert attended one of the University of

Minnesota Military History Club meetings and there joined a Blackmoor dungeon expedition.³ Fallert had some experience with board wargaming, but far more with science-fiction fandom under the *nom-de-fan* Blue Petal, Fallert had in the summer of 1972 founded *Minneapa*, the APA of Minneapolis sciencefiction fandom, or Minn-stf, as they identified themselves. After playing in Blackmoor, Fallert felt an irresistible urge to adapt and reinvent it for his own use, a sentiment that Gygax probably would have found familiar. Fallert notes for February 8, 1974, in *Minneapa* #38 record that he had been doing some work on a game of dungeon, or Castle Keep. I made up some rules and a map and hopefully will get to play it tomorrow night.

Before delving further into this Castle Keep, one might well ask why Fallert made up his own rules rather than purchasing a copy of *Dungeons & Dragons*, as Gygax would ardently have hoped. While one can only infer so much from the documentary record, it seems unlikely that Fallert even knew that the dungeon adventure game he played at the University had shipped in a commercial release. Perhaps, as a newcomer to Blackmoor, he simply wandered into a game in progress, received a character and some rudimentary instructions, after which he sat through an entire session without ever glimpsing a rulebook if one was even consulted during play.⁴ While Fallert appropriation of the dungeon game may strike readers as a blatant act of piracy and plenty of those will be discussed later in the chapter in the open and collaborative culture of science-fiction fandom, it is probably best understood as simply sharing an enjoyable pastime with others. The last thing on Fallert mind was turning a profit.

Fallert notes for February 9 reflect that Richard Tatge and a couple of others expressed interest in DUNGEON so we played a game that ended with all getting killed. Later a bunch of us... played it a bit more seriously. In this more successful session, the party went down on three expeditions and came back with enough treasure to outfit another expedition. With some satisfaction, Fallert concludes, Have to do this some more. More detailed commentary on this dungeoneering came from a spectator: Mike Wood, another *Minneapa* member who attended the Minn-stf meetings where Fallert unveiled the Castle Keep game. He writes of this first foray, Blue Petal was directing Tatge and a couple other people in a game he'd just put together, sort of a simulation of intrepid heroes wandering around in a dungeon seeking to find treasure and avoiding death at the

bution to the future of their shared creation.

³ Fallert gives a January 1974 date for his trip to Blackmoor in an article written less than two years. It seems more plausible, however, that this is the visit to the Military History Club he refers to in *Minneapa* #37 as February 6, 1974. Note that Fallert association with the Club goes back some years: in a 1971 *Corner of the Table*

[COTT:71:v3n6] ⁴ From *Minneapa* #39, however, we do learn that Fallert at least overheard the name of the game:

hands of trolls, orcs and other perils.⁵ In the next few issues of *Minneapa*, Wood further chronicles the spread of the game through Minneapolis fandom, and offers what is probably the first independent reaction to its overall structure. On March 2, 1974, he writes: Back at the Minn-stf meeting again, late in the afternoon over half a dozen people once again got involved in Blue Petal's explore-the-castle, seek treasure, and fight off the monsters game. In spite of my interest at the previous meeting, I found I really wasn't interested enough to actually get involved in the game, tho I did enjoy watching it with about half my attention. I was intrigued by the way the results of one game could be carried over to future games: a warrior could advance in rank by virtue of number of orcs killed, etc.; a wizard could acquire more spells;; treasure accumulated in one venture could be used to purchase weapons and armaments for the next. And of course, you could be killed in a battle and presumably have to start again from scratch next time you played.⁶

Wood lights immediately upon the progression system, the capacity to increase in wealth and power spanning over the course of the campaign, as the most intriguing feature of the game. As we shall see, this is fairly typical of early reactions. In his March 23 entry, Wood explores another feature that would frequently be cited: the unusually immersive experience of players. That game has really caught on fast in Minn-stf in the month or so since Blue Petal first introduced it;; actually I don't think more than a dozen people have actually played... but their number is steadily growing, and a lot of the people who do play have really gotten involved in the game there's a definite secondary-universe feeling about it. The creative license granted to the referee also merits attention: There seems to be a real artistry involved in being the gamesmaster, at least as I've seen Blue do it, and even where dice and tables decide the nature of encounters, Wood attests that these are

generally created by the gamesmaster too. He provides a charming illustration of how the events in dungeon expeditions may verge on the downright bizarre, an instance when a horde of rats took one character hostage, which eventually precipitated a trade agreement where the party exchanged large quantities of cheese for the gold scavenged by the rats in the lower reaches of the dungeon. Unfortunately, as the rats dwelled on the far side of a vast underground lake, this posed significant logistical challenges and at least one cry of, We carried that goddamn boat full of cheese down 12 flights of stairs! Just as in Arneson circle a number of players stepped up to administer components of the Blackmoor world, so did Fallert offload the duties of the referee to others: Several people have now designed their own dungeon-mazes so they can act as gamesmaster when an expedition goes down.

Wood furthermore ponders a prescient question: will this game catch on with fan groups outside of Minneapolis? He notes the upcoming semiannual Twin Cities science fiction convention known as Minicon (held April 12 14, 1974) as one possible vector for fans outside the Twin Cities to learn of this curious new hobby. *Minneapa* itself constituted another. Even regional APAs often had a couple of satellite members living elsewhere, perhaps former residents or persons connected to the community of the APA through conventions or just friendships. These linkages allowed significant crosspollination among regional American science-fiction fandom ⁵

Minneapa

that Fallert mentioned Blackmoor or any published precedent for his game, though many of Fallert converts would soon enough find their way back to *Dungeons & Dragons*, including the aforementioned Richard Tatge, who became a prominent early referee. Tatge, incidentally, also served as Seneschal for the local SCA Barony.

⁶ *Minneapa* #39.

1974 and
communities.

1975, both Throughout

conventions awareness throughout cover of *Minneapa* doubled as a dungeon adventurer recruitment poster, frequently depicting scenes from the game or, as with issue #42 from late April, printing a facsimile of a dungeon map, albeit a humorously exaggerated one.

Although the enthusiasm for dungeon adventures in the tiny confines of Minn-stf hints at the great commercial promise of *Dungeons & Dragons*, it could hardly translate into the sales that Gygax demanded, given that no one in Fallert's group had any idea that *Dungeons & Dragons* existed. This unfortunate misapprehension would be rectified eventually (though not before taking another amusing turn detailed below), but in the interim, if we want to hunt for the first copies of *Dungeons & Dragons* to reach the hands of consumers we must look elsewhere: back to the wargaming community. In his second letter to Arneson in March, Gygax stresses his interest in selling D&D with ads and stories (with plenty of graphic work to put it across with POW!) The difficulty was that TSR limited means precluded casting a wide net of advertisements. The landscape of marketing venues for a new wargame had changed a great deal over the preceding year.

After the decline and fall of the International Federation of Wargaming in the summer of 1972, the impetus behind national wargaming clubs shifted to smaller, regional organizations.⁷ Several groups aspired to resume the ambitious activities of the IFW, including some well-intentioned executives of that defunct organization, as detailed in and periodicals spread

of *Dungeons & Dragons* broader fandom. Even the



⁷ This downturn befell not only the IFW, but also its chief rival for national prominence, the Spartans, which underwent tumultuous upheavals around the same time, including the resignation of , as well as one of their most ardent contributors, Earl Ryan dical appeared in October 1971;; only

well into the new year would a thicker quarterly, the *Spartan Simulation Gaming Journal*, replace it. Moreover, the Spartans suffered from conflicting ambitions while they aspired to establish a professional gaming league, they simultaneously wanted to cater to amateurs, and thus they diluted their brand with a nominally separate Amateur Gamers Association. Another longstanding member of the club, Harley Anton, disapproved and split off his own Professional Gamers Association as a competitor. While the Spartan tournaments offered substantial cash prizes and continued to attract a good deal of interest with refugees from the IFW, the official roster of the Spartans had topped seven hundred members by the end of 1973 the whole idea of a national club had fallen on hard times.

Section 1.11. The most credible venture, however, came from the American Wargaming Association (AWA), publishers of the new journal the *American Wargamer*. Spearheaded by George Phillies, a longstanding IFW member but a vocal critic of the group's weak leadership, the AWA assumed a similar democratic structure and focused on facilitating communication among gamers rather than hosting national tournaments or conventions. However, the AWA faced an uphill battle convincing local clubs to integrate into any national structure. For example, Phillies corresponded with Gygax late in 1973, inquiring if the LGTSA at that time a group of roughly twelve members would consider affiliating with the AWA. You will have to build slowly and hope for the best, Gygax counseled him by way of reply. When the LGTSA put the matter to a vote, it elected not to align itself with the AWA because, as Gygax reported in his capacity as Secretary of the LGTSA, the organization does not wish to become involved in any matters which are beyond their control.⁸

What benefit did a wargaming club derive from a national presence, anyway? If the organization existed solely to help wargamers find nearby opponents, then surely a local club could do the job just as well, if not better. Insightful game reviews or strategy guides also required no ambitious geographical scope. The only differentiating feature a club of national reach could offer was scale more numerous and diverse membership but the troubles of the IFW demonstrated that larger scale could bring as many challenges as advantages. Regional clubs therefore flourished, though not all remained as small as the LGTSA, which effectively represented one seasonal Wisconsin resort town with a single traffic light. One of the larger regional clubs, the Midwest Gaming Association, developed late in 1973 out

of the Michigan Organized Wargamers club centered around Detroit. For the benefit of their membership, in January 1974 they published a Great Lakes Gamers Census cataloging wargamers not only from Michigan but also Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and other surrounding states. The tally surpassed one thousand names with contact information, and included many that have previously figured in this history: Gary Gygax, Dave Arneson, Brian Blume, Rob Kuntz, Pete Gaylord, Mike Carr, Duane Jenkins and even Alan Calhamer. For a regional club to produce such a list amply substantiates the high concentration of wargamers within striking distance of Lake Geneva. When Tactical Studies Rules produced one thousand copies of *Dungeons & Dragons* in January 1974, there existed in that handy list one thousand local wargamers who might purchase it. The challenge, for a fledgling, impoverished business, was figuring out how to turn those highly dispersed wargamers into customers.

As Section 1.11 briefly mentioned in its triage following the demise of the IFW, Lakofka arranged for *International Wargamer* subscriptions to be resumed by a new, *Diplomacy*-themed magazine called *El Conquistador*, a periodical connected to his beloved Chicago summer games convention. While presumably Gygax and Arneson both received copies of *El Conquistador*, neither immediately contributed to it, perhaps out of lasting bitterness over the ignominious demise of the IFW. Brian Blume, however, had arrived too late to remember any of that drama. In the second issue of *El Conquistador* (October 1973), Brian Blume joined one of its postal *Diplomacy* games Blume's press, incidentally, adopts a suitably immersed and lighthearted voice, personifying the Pope's public relations agents as Blume played Italy. Only with the fifth issue (January 1974) did *El Conquistador* begin to fulfill the outstanding subscriptions from the IFW, and in that issue one sees a number of familiar IFW bylines: Lakofka, of course, as well as that of LGTSA tank-master Mike Reese, Great War flying ace and Bishop of Blackmoor Mike Carr, and even Tom Webster, still going on about ancient-era miniature battles.⁹ Their articles collectively steered *El Conquistador* into the realm of a general-purpose wargaming zine rather than one strictly confined to *Diplomacy*. With a suitable audience now in place, the February 1974 issue broadcasted the following pronouncement, probably the first advertisement for *Dungeons & Dragons*:⁸ **From a letter to Phillies dated December 3, 1973. The previous citation comes from a letter to Phillies dated November 12, 1973. Individual members of the LGTSA,**

including Brian Blume, had independently joined the AWA well beforehand, around the August timeframe.

The Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association has now released its set of fantasy campaign rules (*Dungeons and Dragons*). One may find a game in progress on a Sunday afternoon at about 1:30. Visitors are welcome. For more information contact E. Gary Gygax , c/o Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association, 330 Center Street, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, 53147.¹⁰

Even in so few words there lurk noteworthy implications. This blurb seems to conflate TSR with the LGTSA as the publisher of the game, though this is not an entirely unreasonable supposition, as the LGTSA of the time constituted only a slight superset of TSR, and assuredly the other members of the LGTSA felt deep and abiding solidarity with TSR ambitions. Moreover, it curiously states no price or means for acquiring *Dungeons & Dragons*, and emphasizes visiting Lake Geneva and joining the game over and above sales of the product. The rationale for blunting the pitch becomes clear, however, when one observes the location of this blurb, under the heading for Clubs, the column for matters like local wargaming club news rather than commercial advertisements for companies. Since advertisements cost money and club news circulated as a service to the wargaming community, we must suspect that the principals of TSR cannily disguised their first announcement to the advertisement.

marketplace as club news to avoid the expense of a paid

5.2 SELLING THE STORY

When Gygax in his letter to Arneson touted selling D&D with ads and stories, his emphasis on stories reveals the initial marketing strategy conceived by TSR. TSR possessed an extraordinary asset that it would have been remiss not to exploit Gygax tireless prolificacy. While advertisements could create brand awareness, an article by Gygax could deliver far more impact by illustrating the play of the game or describing its relationship to broader traditions in fantasy literature and wargaming. More materially, authors of articles do not pay for the privilege of seeing them in print, unlike advertising ideally, money flows in precisely the opposite direction. In the first half-year of its life, *Dungeons & Dragons* advertised itself to the world in three brief works of fiction that exemplified the play of the game.

This is not to suggest that TSR shunned paid advertisements entirely, nor would it be praiseworthy if they had, given the dependence of many valuable but impoverished fanzines on those revenues. Some carefully exploited good

fortune stretched TSR's meager budget quite far without withholding any funds. In his letter dated February 27, 1974, which appears in the *Great Plains Game Players Newsletter* #7, Gygax inquires about the ad rates for an issue, in the interests of supplying preprinted *Dungeons & Dragons* flyers for inclusion in that periodical, which then had a modest circulation of around one hundred copies. Luckily, the editor of *GPGPN*, James Lurvey, relied on free access to the printing press of his university on the absolute condition that he received no compensation for his zine, so he declined to charge any fees to distribute the flyer for fear it might threaten that sponsorship and simply incorporated the flyer into the April issue. Extending across two pages as a gatefold, the flyer was probably identical to the ones Gygax enclosed in his regular correspondence and urged Arneson to disseminate. Along with the ad, Gygax also included a hint that certain wild west miniature games occupied some of the LGTSA *GPGPN* however was a dramatic account of one our dungeon adventures, perhaps a misstatement as the accompanying story, *The Giant's Bag*, adventures of the wizard Nestre above ground, rather than below.

⁹ Mike Carr -up of the Twin Cities Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, one of the only accounts of the campaign outside of *Corner of the Table*.

¹⁰ [EC:v1n6] This same blurb recurs in the June 1974 issue of *El Conquistador*.

While the printed TSR advertisement in *GPGPN* #7 contains the mundane particulars of *Dungeons & Dragons*, such as price and how to order, it is the story, *The Giant's Bag*, that does the selling. This adventure and its two companion pieces the untitled golem-related difficulties of Gygax wizard Mordenkainen which would appear in the following month's issue of *Wargamer's Digest* and the expedition of the wizard Erac to the Black Reservoir beneath Castle Greyhawk in the August issue of *El Conquistador* already warranted a mention in Section 4.5.2 as examples of battle reports written in an immersed voice.¹² The exploits of Nestre, Mordenkainen and Erac are all presented as short fictions that might stand alone without a game behind them, narratives that illustrate the sorts of stories that *Dungeons & Dragons* might imitate and produce without relying on stories, one could very well be at a loss to characterize the game at all. Gygax stipulates in the *Wargamer's Digest* piece that adventures are of two kinds: underworld expeditions to labyrinthine dungeons, or perilous treks in the wilderness ; while Nestre wanders the wildernesses, Mordenkainen and

Erac descend into dungeons. Just as we saw in Section 4.6, where the designer of the German game *Armageddon* hoped to cull fantasy fiction from the *Ewige Spiel*, so did Gygax milk his own local games for illustrative or amusing incidents,

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FIGURE

55:

EARLY

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attention. 11

The bulk of this missive to though that is involves the

¹¹ Surely a forecast of the still-distant TSR product *Boot Hill* (1975). *Panzerfaust* #63 (Jul 1974) gives some further hints of an upcoming western setting game, a battle report

that in #134 (May 1973), Gygax had already professed an interest in this setting, perhaps one sparked by the *Western Gunfight* rules often discussed in that periodical. Also remember ed as a forthcoming product in the back of *Men & Magic*. ¹² Note again that this is not to be confused with Jack Scruby *War Game Digest*.

though he translated them into advertising copy. Considered as contributions to the genre, these stories are unabashedly derivative, greatly resembling the most admired authors of the sword-and-sorcery genre term sword-and-sorcery prominence and far larger typeface than the actual title of the game. All of this served to identify *Dungeons & Dragons* with those beloved fictions in the mind of consumers. To consider Gygax dramatizations of *Dungeons & Dragons* pieces only as advertisements, however, would neglect a critical subtlety. Gygax had previously tried his hand at writing short fantasy fiction for the professional market: in a letter written around the middle of 1975, Gygax notes that I have been a SF & fantasy fan since age 12... but I have yet to sell a SF or fantasy story, and that will be my next real project in a year or so when I have time to rewrite my favorite fantasy novel in hopes of something more than the usual rejection slips.¹³ Given that Gygax had attempted, but failed, to sell his yarns to established fantasy outlets, perhaps he relished the opportunity to publish even brief sorties of his prose in the wargaming trades.

In his three illustrative fictions, we moreover find the examples of play that the original *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks so sorely lacked. The prosaic sample dialog between the referee and caller in *Underworld & Wilderness* showed the minutiae of dungeon exploration but hardly recommended the game to readers. These three short stories, on the other hand, since they draw from Gygax own experiences as referee and player, showcase the aspects of the game that he originally found most compelling, and thus form a very plausible testimonial to his authorial intention. Did he favor light-hearted romps or tense, deadly excursions? In these fictions, much more so than in the rulebooks, we discover how Gygax meant for the game to be played, and perhaps more significantly how to elevate play above

the details of dice, turns and cartography into the more expansive context of an overarching story.

The Giant's Bag subtitles itself as An Account of a Wilderness Adventure in Fantasy Wargaming, and indeed it depicts nothing relating to dungeons or dragons whatsoever. It details a relatively friendly encounter between the wizard Nestre (presumably Gygax's son Ernie) and a giant. It begins in a sober tone: Four great war horses forced their way through the brush bordering the stream. The party was making its way through the trackless wilderness southeast of the walled city of Greyhawk, seeking monsters to slay and treasure to loot. Upon meeting a churlish giant, however, Nestre decides to enlist him in his endeavor rather than fight him. Nestre regales the giant with the claim that we have with us a map leading to a fabulous store of wealth! Things in this forsaken land, however, seldom turn out as planned, so we are willing to share the treasure with you in return for your aid in gaining it! The map leads the group to the bank of a turgid river overrun with large crustaceans. These prove no match for the giant, who pummels them all with his club and duly retrieves the treasure. The giant was gulled into accepting a few hundred pieces of gold, while the humans shared the cream of the treasure among themselves. Here, however, we detect the hand of the referee, Rob Kuntz, who recognizes that Nestre has done nothing to secure a share of the treasure. When Nestre expresses an avaricious intent it can be no accident that the TSR promotional flyer awards the (or Swords & Sorcery as the headline reads) greater interest in the contents of the giant's satchel, in his eagerness to cheat the giant further he ends up trading his crystal ball, as well as two of the largest gems in the score, for nothing more than the giant's soiled laundry. As a story of adventure, it never breaks into swashbuckling nor once does Nestre cast a spell, and the only violence results in the ingredients for exceptionally large crab cakes. The story arc is driven by irony and greed, and the overall effect is akin to the wry failures of a character in a Jack Vance story. In fact, at one point Nestre earns the epithet Nestre the Clever, undoubtedly a reference to Cugel the Clever, the too-clever-for-his-own-good protagonist of Vance *Eyes of the Overworld*. Aside from this slight resonance with canonical fantasy fiction, one could be forgiven for wondering why Gygax would have thought customers would flock to a game where one gets cheated out of wealth by dimwitted giants.

¹³ From *Alarums & Excursions* #2. By 1976, in the pages of the *Dragon* one could read Gygax fantasy fiction (written under the thinly-disguised pseudonym Garrison Ernst) alongside that of his heroes, authors like Gardner Fox and Fritz Leiber. Eventually, Gygax would fulfill his ambition to become a novelist, enjoying some success with his Gord the Rogue tales in the 1980s.

This episode contrasts nicely with the untitled short story in the May 1974 *Wargamer's Digest*, which exemplifies a high-level dungeon adventure and portrays characters of great power contending with deadly foes. It commences by establishing more game system context than The Giant's Bag : The pair of darkly cloaked wizards had already descended to the fourth level of the dungeons. They were Mordenkainen, a 12th level Magic-user, and his one-time apprentice, Bigby, now himself a wizard of the 11th level. While Nestre is alternately described as a mage, a sorcerer or a wizard, he is never branded as a Magic-user, and nor is his level mentioned. Mordenkainen, moreover, behaves in a more wizardly manner, frequently casting spells, consulting archives of lore, and facing down horrible subterranean perils. Mordenkainen's encounter with a golem a monster, incidentally, once mentioned by name but not specified in the original *Dungeons & Dragons* manuals ends poorly: despite unleashing an arsenal of spells and an ineffectual efreet on his iron adversary, Mordenkainen is turned to stone. Fortunately, Gygax as a player can return to the dungeon with a posse of alternate characters to rescue his petrified sorcerer however, this time both Yrag, reportedly Gygax first Fighting-man, and the hapless Bigby fall to the golem. Finally, the golem was vanquished by another of Gygax Fighting-man characters, the elf Felnorith. Through sorcery and the goodwill of the Patriarch of Greyhawk, the statues can return to flesh and the dead return to life in the post-combat bout of logistics. This story showcases the epic deeds accessible to higher-level characters, for whom even death proves a temporary inconvenience. Gygax apologetically explains, Fantastic? Most assuredly, and perhaps a bit on the corny side also. Nonetheless, it is one whale of a lot of fun.

The story of Mordenkainen appeared as the lion's share of an article called Swords and Sorcery in Wargaming which additionally relates some of the history of fantastic medieval wargaming including the precedent of Blackmoor. This piece also avoids direct advertising: it mentions that *Dungeons & Dragons* exists, that it is sold by Tactical Studies Rules and that

it is to Gygax knowledge the only fantasy campaign rules currently available, yet without providing any commercial details. Although the *Wargamer's Digest* has a section for club news, like *El Conquistador*, the blurb on the activities of the LGTSA mentions several types of miniature wargaming activity, including fantasy, but extends no open invitation to drop by Gygax house on Sunday afternoons for a bout of underworld plundering. Not until the June issue of *Wargamer's Digest* does a TSR product flyer appear, greatly reduced in scale to serve as a quarter-page advertisement. It may be the only advertisement for *Dungeons & Dragons* that TSR purchased in the entire first six months of the game's existence. Then again, since *Wargamer's Digest* paid a generous \$25 for articles at the time (as reported in a contemporary issue [WD:v1n4]), more likely TSR simply traded Gygax previous article for advertising.¹⁴ The compensation Gygax received for his sword-and-sorcery piece would surely have covered the cost of the eye-straining TSR advertisement in the June issue, so probably this publicity as well cost TSR effectively nothing.

Finally, in *El Conquistador*, one finds the third fictionalized perspective on Greyhawk, this time following the exploits of a Magic-user named Erac (again, Gygax son Ernie). [EC:v1n12] The Expedition into the Black Reservoir is the most artfully written of Gygax three early stories, and perhaps the most indicative of a typical *Dungeons & Dragons* game. The characters, aside from the protagonist Erac the Enchanter, Erac the ambitious, a paladin of Law and here the term paladin connotes nothing of the later character class, though its use in mid-1974 must be noteworthy for that association include the Lama Londlar, one Nulfyke, a dwarf swordman where each of those titles, enchanter, lama, swordsman specific *Dungeons & Dragons* class and level. From this story we learn that Castle Greyhawk lies some distance outside the walled city of Greyhawk, and that the entrance to its dungeon is now controlled by a gang of elves who levy a tax on any dungeon adventurers they admit to the underworld: surely Gygax appropriated this from Arneson, who similarly granted a small army of elves supervision over the Blackmoor dungeon after the fall of the town to the Baddies. Beneath Greyhawk Castle, the adventurers discover the eponymous reservoir, and after being corralled onto a raft by the menace of an immense crab, with pincers of sword-like proportion (cousin, no doubt, to those smashed by Nestre's gigantic acquaintance), they discover some sort of mechanism attached to a pillar in the middle of the lake which unleashes an

enormous sea serpent. Eventually, after a few reversals, Erac gets the better of this aquatic peril thanks to a powerful wand. We also see how the Lama Londlar treats wounds the party endured in this trial: He made passes over the rent flesh, and uttered prayers in a tongue strange to the ears. Before the eyes of the wounded, their flesh knit itself. Surely such a dire fiend must guard a magnificent treasure, so the party set out to recover it, once the the truncate corpse of the sea monster thrashed on the stone blocks, spattering ichor everywhere. Eventually, they stumble upon a chamber containing a chest filled with gold coins and glittering gems, also home to a figure in black robes and tall pointed hat whom they promptly take into custody. As they make their exit with loot and prisoner in tow, their captive escapes, vowing, I am the Sorcerer of the Black Reservoir, and I shall be avenged for the theft of my treasure! Though disconcerted by this oath, the party found comfort in their considerable financial windfall and returned to the surface to reprovision and plot a new expedition. Nowhere in the article does the title *Dungeons & Dragons* ever arise, or indeed anything that might suggest Gygax hopes to sell you a product, yet on page 28 of that issue of *El Conquistador*, one finds another washed-out reproduction of the June flyer mentioned above.

With sufficiently keen eyesight, one can perceive in that June version of the flyer a departure from its April predecessor the addition of a new TSR product, a booklet of and the acolyte Ugubb, and acolyte, signals a¹⁴ The pages of abounded with advertisements for local hobby shops scattered throughout the country, as well as mail order miniature figure vendors, and it squarely targeted the more traditionally grudgi

Napoleonic miniature rules called *Tricolor* (1974) authored by Rick Crane. Crane, a Chicagoarea wargamer, had ranked as a High Constable in the now-defunct Castle & Crusade Society.¹⁵ As Gygax s foreword for *Tricolor* (dated April 1, 1974) indicates, Crane also played Napoleonics against Perren, which positioned him nicely to approach Gygax for publication;; *Tricolor* had originally appeared on the future product list for Guidon Games in 1973.¹⁶ While we need not detail the relatively dense system of *Tricolor*, its very existence confirms that TSR did not intended to retire on *Dungeons & Dragons*, but would continue to produce unrelated products in other wargame settings. The back page of *Tricolor* offers further hints at their direction: after enumerating the three existing TSR games, it

mentions that *Star Probe* The Game of Adventure, Exploration and Conflict in Space would be Coming Soon! The origin of this latter game is related by Dave Arneson in an article in *GPGPN* #8 detailing the activities of the MMSA, telegraphing that an intergalactic space wargame, which will also result in a new set of rules soon, began [here in Minneapolis] as well. The layout of the June flyer, however, indicates where TSR priorities lay at the time: *Dungeons & Dragons* arrogates two-thirds of the advertisement to itself, leaving the final crowded third to be shared by the less promising *Cavaliers & Roundheads* and *Tricolor*.

Gygax letter dated May 10, 1974, in *GPGPN* #9 also mentions the imminent publication of *Tricolor*, and hints of a fine space game (mostly paper and pencil) slated next. That missive furthermore announces that TSR planned to acquire the rights to several Guidon Games titles, including *Tractics*, *Don t Give Up the Ship* and *Chainmail*. Given the reliance of *Dungeons & Dragons* on *Chainmail* for its combat system, naturally TSR would move to guarantee it remained in print, as the long-term viability of Lowry s game division had fallen into serious doubt. In that same letter, Gygax apologizes for his inability to distribute free review copies of *Dungeons & Dragons*, as TSR remained pretty low-budget, though rich enough in spare time that he volunteers to furnish a fairly regular column on D&D for *GPGPN*. As a sample of that column, he enclosed in that issue the most important development of *Dungeons & Dragons* in the first half year of its existence: a new class of player-characters for D&D called Thieves.

The addition of the Thief class is of the utmost historical significance for two reasons: first, because the class became a signature feature of *Dungeons & Dragons* and later derivative games, and second, because it showed how the fan community would exercise the extensibility mechanisms of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Gygax story about the origins of Thieves merits lengthy citation: Recently I received a telephone call from Gary Switzer who hails from sunny California. It isn t all that sunny out there, however, for there are many dungeon expeditions regularly being led through the grim piles of the castles which are scattered throughout the land.

¹⁵

advocate for fantasy wargaming in the entire run of the *Domesday Book*. [DB:#11] *Domesday Book* pieces even made their way into the *International Wargamer*, for example his passionate

¹⁶ An advertisement in *Lowrys Guidon* #6 attests to this. *Tricolor* was to

have appeared before Christmas 1973, though by this time pressures had forced Lowry to deemphasize miniature rules \$3.00 (two dollars less than the cost of the TSR edition). It is however very unlikely that *Tricolor* ever appeared under a Guidon imprint, though it was not the only title to be advertised prematurely: one *Short Rules* for Napoleonic games, which seems never to have seen print at all.

Anyway, during the course of our conversation he mentioned that his group was developing a new class of character thieves. Gary gave me a few details of how they were considering this character type, and from these I have constructed tentative rules for the class. These rules have not been tested and should be treated accordingly.¹⁷

From this account we may gather and surmise several things. Most readily, we see that by May 1974 there already existed dedicated *Dungeons & Dragons* fans in far-away places like California. The June issue of GPGPN contains another indication of its spread: a brief missive from Pete Bosworth from Iowa, perhaps the first (of many) thank-yous for the game: My hat s off to Gygax and Arneson for *Dungeons & Dragons* they re great. More significantly, the Thief class shows that players had already taken to heart the call-to-action that concludes *Underworld & Wilderness*, the one encouraging readers that the trimmings will oftentimes have to be added by the referee and his players. We have attempted to furnish an ample framework, and building should be both easy and fun... why have us do any more of your imagining for you? Write to us and tell about your additions, ideas and what have you. [OD&D3:36] As the end of Chapter Two suggested, the setting of *Dungeons & Dragons* admitted of limitless extensibility. In light of the fantasy canon, the addition of Thieves was probably inevitable how could one overlook the archetype of Bilbo Baggins or Cugel the Clever or the Gray Mouser? Most striking of all, however, is how Gygax admits so readily that he did not invent the class out of whole cloth. A group of fans at Aero Hobbies in Santa Monica, California, conceived it and, through Switzer, shared the idea with TSR, whereupon Gygax set about putting together formal rules: the first additional rules of any kind published for *Dungeons & Dragons*, before even the system for any new monster, spell or magic item, all far simpler ways of extending the game. It demonstrates Gygax genuine openness at this early date to accepting the ideas of players for incorporation into the system of the game.¹⁸ It moreover provides a first data point of [GPGPN:#9]

editorial change is not a trivial one, since it effectively awards credit for the inspiration of the Thief class. Gary R. Switzer, of Aero Hobbies in Santa Monica, California, does not seem to have claimed credit for this innovation directly, although his byline can be seen, for example, in *APA-L* #522, and from that article (dated May 15, 1975) one learns he already had a long history of playing *Dungeons & Dragons* behind him. Note that Gygax specifically stipulates that he communicated with this other Gary over the telephone, and thus probably did not see his name in writing, which might explain how a Switzer became Schweitzer. In the first handful of months after the release of *Dungeons & Dragons*, how many people named Gary living in California, with a name that could be mistaken for Schweitzer over a long-distance line, might have been involved in designing variants? The coincidence seems too great. Moreover, this would explain the cryptic remark in the introduction to the *Manual of Aurania* (1976), a work produced by the group from Aero Hobbies (it credits Switzer),

Dungeons & Dragons

Manual of Aurania, which the

Manual, which does contain several other character class ideas. Note as well that the idea of Thieves in *Dungeons & Dragons* no doubt evolved independently in several places: Nick Smith at Caltech credits Kenneth M.

le it is conceivable these efforts in Pasadena were linked with the Aero crowd in Santa Monica, it is more likely a case of parallel evolution.

¹⁸ It is however worth observing that a nod to Gary Switzer and his group at Aero Hobbies for the Thief class, while given in this prototype, does not appear in *Greyhawk* (1975), even though three

the correlation between the deep investment of players in the game and the creation of extensions to it the incompleteness of *Dungeons & Dragons*, its invitation to collaborate, turned out to be one of its most seductive features. Later, when the community producing extensions to the game swelled to an unmanageable size, and new rules appeared without TSR consideration or endorsement, we shall see that Gygax could no longer exhibit this largess.

The rules for Thieves occupy only two pages, wrapped in a cover and back illustration matching the *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks. In fact, this four-page insert is designed for easy removal from the newsletter and sized for storage in the woodgrain TSR box surely few instances of *GPGPN* #9 are to be found today with those rules intact, especially given that Lurvey

initially circulated only twenty-five copies of the issue. He does, however, suggest for those lacking Thief rules that additional copies can be obtained from us at 20¢ each, and may include the rest of the issue ;; these abysmally-reproduced copies have a reprint stamp on every page.

The Thief class is different from any of the others, as Thieves are generally not meant to fight, although they are able to employ magic swords and daggers (but none of the other magic weaponry) and the only armor they can wear is leather. Rather than possessing the spells of Magic-users or Clerics, Thieves have certain unique abilities, eight of them to be exact. This very early definition of the class shows how its mature features figured into its original form, as the abilities are: opening locks, removing traps, climbing walls, stealing items by stealth and/or sleight-of-hand, silently from behind), listening for noise behind a closed door, moving with stealth. The chance for Thieves to exercise any of these abilities successfully are mostly expressed as percentile probabilities;; for example, a first-level Apprentice Thief has only a 15% chance to open locks, whereas a seventh-level Pilferer has a 50% chance. The hear noise ability is rolled with a simple six-sided die, with a first-level Thief already having a respectable one in three chance of success. The example of the Thief in action explains that if the thief strikes silently from behind he will do two dice of damage for every four levels he has attained, minimum damage of two dice, and hit probabilities from behind should be increased by 20% (-4 on numbers shown to hit) the first formulation of backstabbing rules. All Thieves are of Neutral alignment, and the prime requisite for Thieves (see Section 3.2.4 for more on requisites) naturally is Dexterity. Listed under other possible considerations are two other seminal rules for Thieves: third-level Thieves are able to read unknown languages, so treasure maps can be understood by them without recourse to a spell, and ninth-level Thieves can read magical writings, and thus if they discover a scroll they are able to employ any spell thereon, excluding Clerical spells. Surely the exploits of Cugel the Clever at the end of Vance *Eyes of the Overworld* inspired this as a plausible talent for Thieves: Cugel exhibited a lack of innate competence for magic, but once he came into possession of the wizard Iuocounu's library, one or two of the spell-books he found susceptible to his understanding.¹⁹

backstabbing (striking

hide in shadows, and It is a shame that an addition so meaningful to *Dungeons & Dragons* would materialize in a fanzine of such limited

distribution. The upheaval in the wargaming community precipitated by the fall of the IFW forced TSR initial outreach into periodicals that had not even debuted until well after the IFW

demise: *El Conquistador*, the *Great Plains Game Players Newsletter* and *Wargamer's Digest* all began in 1973. Loftier venues such as the *Avalon Hill General* and *Strategy & Tactics* took no initial notice of *Dungeons & Dragons*; by this point, *Strategy & Tactics* had largely forsaken its independent perspective on the industry and become a boardgame-focused house organ of Avalon Hill's rival SPI. Although Don Lowry obligingly advertised the availability of TSR's *Cavaliers & Roundheads* in *Lowry's Guidon* #7 (which shipped around February 1974), he subsequently deemphasized rulebooks in favor of more lucrative miniature figure sales. *Panzerfaust*, under Lowry's management, did however print a strictly factual notice of the availability of *Dungeons & Dragons* in issue #62 (March/April 1974); the closest it comes to expressing an opinion of the product is to say that the three booklets... are nicely printed and assembled... and come in an attractive 6 x 9 x 1.5 box. *El Conquistador*'s May issue had a slightly more substantive take from Jim Dapkus, calling *Dungeons & Dragons* a rather unique set of rules and observing that the rules offer a new twist to gaming, since a game can be played out using only pencil and paper and a map. [EC:v1n9] The notion of a wargame without either a board or miniatures obviously struck Dapkus as intrinsically novel. However, because of the length of the rules, Dapkus apparently could not assimilate the entirety of the work in time for this review;; he apologetically explains, I am not aware what revisions and/or deletions have been made with respect to *Chainmail*; but since the set runs to three volumes, something must have been done.

perhaps its most significant innovation. Whether an acknowledgement would have sufficed as a token of appreciation is another, weightier question.

¹⁹ In the mature version of the Thief rules in *Greyhawk*, there is also a chance of spell failure, a possibility with which Cugel the Clever had direct familiarity.

Two issues later, however, Dapkus returned with a review aptly titled *Dungeons & Dragons*, or: What's Next? It leads with a familiar citation from the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*, which Dapkus glosses, I cannot picture Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson out on some windswept knoll with the burning fire and bubbling cauldron... but how else could *Dungeons & Dragons* have

come into being? Now speaking from a greater fluency with the game and a newfound admiration, Dapkus singles out the key points that differentiate it from its predecessors. Like most other reviewers, he observes how as you fight monsters and other players for treasure you move up the ladder of wealth and experience. The personal nature of characters and progression also captures his imagination: You no longer command an army, you yourself become the army, and whatever influence you are able to project, your followers will gather around. This sort of leadership through inspiration depends on the personal freedom of agency in the game, a point Dapkus stresses: The fundamental law of the game is that you are a person, with so much ability, trying to stay alive in a hostile environment. Dapkus seems to struggle with a definition or even description of play so open-ended. You start out as a person or some figure... you are then placed in a situation set up by the gamesmaster, which could be just about anything. Like Gygax before him, he resorts to a short illustrative narrative of play to give a sense of how the game might operate. Clearly awestruck by the endless possibilities of the system, Dapkus offers only one material criticism: the lack of roles for female characters in the rules. His interaction with TSR on the subject is priceless in its short-sightedness: I asked Gary what women s libbers think of the situation, and he told me that he will bend to their demands when a member of the opposite sex buys a copy of *Dungeons & Dragons*! While ample precedent suggested that day would never come, as we shall see *Dungeons & Dragons* shortly crossed the gender divide which had for so long relegated wargaming to a young man s club.

Perhaps the most insightful early impression comes from someone who learned the game through apostolic continuity if we imagine Gygax and Arneson as the fonts of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and deem those who played in their Blackmoor and Greyhawk campaigns as apostles, then those apostles in turn, when they invented campaigns of their own for the entertainment of the uninitiated, delivered to fresh converts an experience continuous with the original. The convert in this case was a certain M.A.R. Barker, a professor at the University of Minnesota and soon-to-be game designer of some note, who writes to *Wargamer s Newsletter* #149 of the well-organized ongoing Fantasy campaign here, using the *Dungeons & Dragons* rules run by our kindly referee, Mike Mornard.²⁰ As far as apostles go, Mornard s pedigree includes the uncommon distinction of attending early sessions of both Greyhawk and Blackmoor.²¹ Barker attests that Mornard runs groups of

adventuresome warriors, elves, dwarves and other sundry folk around in his personal labyrinth as he sees fit, usually with fatal results to everybody as they encounter Orcs, Balrogs and other Tolkienesque denizens of the underground. This is certainly as the founders intended; where Barker displays unusual insight is in his realization that: [*Dungeons & Dragons*] is not strictly a war game at least not in its early stages, where parties of players band together and explore for treasure and experience points but it can develop into a full-fledged battle campaign a-la-Tolkien at a later stage when players begin to carve out baronies and empires for themselves.... I personally find it great fun, although it is not at this stage really a war game for me. [WGN:#149]

Barker, in this note to *Wargamer's Newsletter* and in others from earlier issues, demonstrates ample familiarity with traditional miniature wargames, including ancient-era, Napoleonic and English Civil War battles. We must be careful not to read into his words more than he intended, but when he asserts *Dungeons & Dragons* is to him not a war game, he may mean something deeper than the mere fact that large-scale battles had not yet figured in Mornard's campaign. The goal of accumulating treasure and experience points differs fundamentally from the victory-driven player-versus-player competition of wargames, and Barker rightly calls out that this change in the orientation of the game grants a singular and distinct experience to its player and one that he found great fun. His

²⁰

has just arrived. Goodness, had I known that you would publish my scattered, ill Barker clearly published as a letter appears in #146, though surely the reaction reprinted above from the beginning of #149 could not refer to the publication of a letter. Consequently we must conclude that Barker wrote the note published in #149 shortly after receiving the March issue, so probably in the April 1974 timeframe.

²¹ Mornard lived in Lake Geneva until the fall of 1973, when he began studies at the University of Minnesota. In the *Dragon* #7, Gygax named Mornard as one of the key early players in Greyhawk, and in fact, the published *Greyhawk*

-user Lessnard a slight transposition of Mornard. Readers of Section 3.2.1.1 will recall the example dungeon maze drawing observation must be among the first to see in *Dungeons & Dragons* a new and separate category of game.

Few other zines in the wargaming community even acknowledged the flyers that Gygax so assiduously circulated. One such notice, in a semiweekly wargaming news aggregator called *Signal* in May 1974, even manages to miss the name of the product though given the confusing design of the flyer, the blame for that error must rest largely with TSR.²² Selling the wargaming community on a game so strikingly novel as *Dungeons & Dragons* posed no small challenge, but fortunately, Gygax had an ace in the hole: GenCon VII. A notice in the Minneapolis-based periodical *La Vivandière* early in the summer reports that Gary Gygax of Gygax-Arneson *Dungeons & Dragons* is busy working on new rules for more monsters, spells, etc. He is also being kept busy with preparations for the next Lake Geneva Convention. [LV:v1n3] This notice is all the more remarkable as the founder of *La Vivandière*, a certain Greg Scott, should be familiar to Blackmoor fans as the opponent of fantasy wargaming immortalized as the Egg of Coot.²³

Generously, *La Vivandière* promised to cover GenCon VII in its pages, and dropped a further hint about a new *Tractics* revision. Around this time, Guidon's languishing back-catalog also attracted the interest of Avalon Hill, who prepared a mailorder edition of Gygax board wargame *Alexander the Great*, retitled simply *Alexander* (1974), as part of a drive to increase the diversity of their catalog in order to compete with the constant deluge of games released by SPI. With great delicacy, Avalon Hill avoided naming Guidon Games in its overview of the game, instead suggesting that Gygax published the title on his own and that the original edition constituted a prototype. [AHG:v11n1] Avalon Hill proudly represented *Alexander* as a new type of game... a board game out of what are primarily miniatures rules. While these rules had substantial grooming by Donald Greenwood before they were deemed suitable for the Avalon Hill imprint, this would be the last time that Gygax would bend to Avalon Hill's judgment. After GenCon VII, Avalon Hill would sense the turning of the tide, and understand that even a small company like TSR might produce something of greater stature than a mere prototype.

5.3 CONVERTING THE WARGAMERS

While each of the previous six GenCons marked pivotal points in this history, since each one afforded geographically dispersed gamers a rare opportunity to confer in person, **GenCon VII** (August 23–25, 1974) can

boast to have ushered in a new era. This claim does not depend on a vast increase in attendance, though with a headcount over 350 it certainly crowded more gamers into the cramped Horticultural Hall than its predecessors.²⁴ Nor does it rest on GenCon VII first spilling over the bounds of the

²²

Men & Magic, Volume #2 is *Monsters & Treasures* and #3 is *Underworld & Wilderness Adventures*. They are [for] miniatures players and cost \$3.50 each or \$10.00 a *Signal* #57.

²³ The first issue of *La Vivandière* -Fi articles should be submitted to Fanzines (Yuck!), *La Vivandière* [LV:v1n4]

²⁴ The Spartans aggressively scheduled a tournament with significant cash prizes on the same weekend as GenCon in nearby Iowa, though apparently they canceled it when it became clear that

weekend to add a third day, Friday, to its schedule, given that zealous gamers had prematurely congregated on that day for some years. To GenCon VII belongs this: it first introduced *Dungeons & Dragons* to the wargaming community. Gamers from around the country brought back rules, or at least news, of this novel game, and numerous wargaming clubs thereafter became increasingly, if not unhealthily, preoccupied with dungeon adventures. Fortunately, we have several detailed accounts of the goings-on at GenCon VII, including those of James Lurvey in *GPGPN* #12 and former IFW President Bill Hoyer in the *American Wargamer* and in *Signal*, all published in September 1974.

Hoyer does not beat around the bush: This year s convention was centered mainly around the new set of Gygax and Arneson rules *Dungeons & Dragons*. On Saturday at least a dozen games were in progress and as soon as one ended another was started. [AW:v2n2] *Signal* #65 (the edition for September 15, 1974) contains two notices, including one from Bill Hoyer that similarly begins with Gary s new rules *Dungeons & Dragons* was the hit of the convention with gamemasters having games going in all parts of the Hall. Another review in *Signal* #65 (attributed to the initials J. H.) corroborates that a number of fantasy scenarios were well attended.

What were they playing, exactly? Gygax reported in his May 10 letter to *GPGPN* that Dave Arneson even promises to run a few expeditions into his infamous heap, Blackmoor Castle at GenCon. Surely Greyhawk withstood a few forays from novice dungeon explorers as well. Hoyer tells us in *Signal*

#65 that thief additions to *D&D* were previewed with this providing more fun to an already excitement-packed set of rules. Indeed, Gary specifically invited Lurvey (in a July 15 letter) to bring to GenCon copies of *GPGPN* which TSR would sell at its own booth. In his report on the convention, Lurvey observes that issue #9 with the Thief additions went fast, issues 8 and 10 did not fare as well. The lack of sales of the August issue (#10) is perhaps surprising, as Gygax snuck another addition to *Dungeons & Dragons* into its pages: new rules for Fighting-men of exceptional Strength, granting them bonuses both in their chance to hit and in the damage they dealt, as well as boosting the amount of weight they might carry. It stipulates that those Fighting-men with a maximum Strength of 18 take an additional roll on the following table using percentage dice in order to determine how extraordinary their Strength is. While a Fighting-man with only 16 Strength gains +1 to hit and +1 on damage, a Fighting-man with 18 Strength who scores a 00 on the percentage roll gains a full +4 to hit and +6 on damage. Those of extraordinary Strength will bend iron bars, or perform similar feats, and the simulation of fantastic people deepened accordingly. No doubt these rules also received some attention at GenCon VII. More significantly, Gygax and Arneson both created legions of apostles in their dungeon crucibles in those three days, all of whom returned to their places of origin flush with missionary passion.

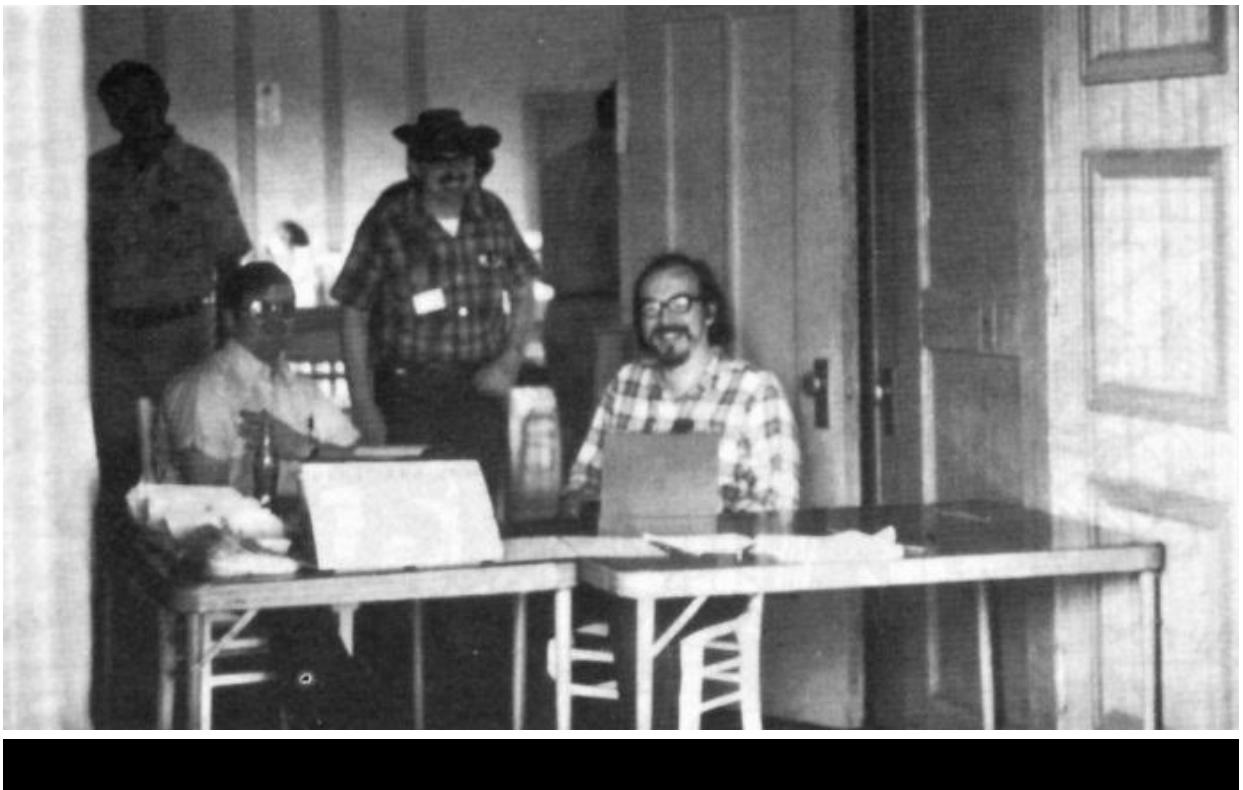


FIGURE 56: GYGAX AT GENCON VII (1974)
they would lure few regulars from GenCon.

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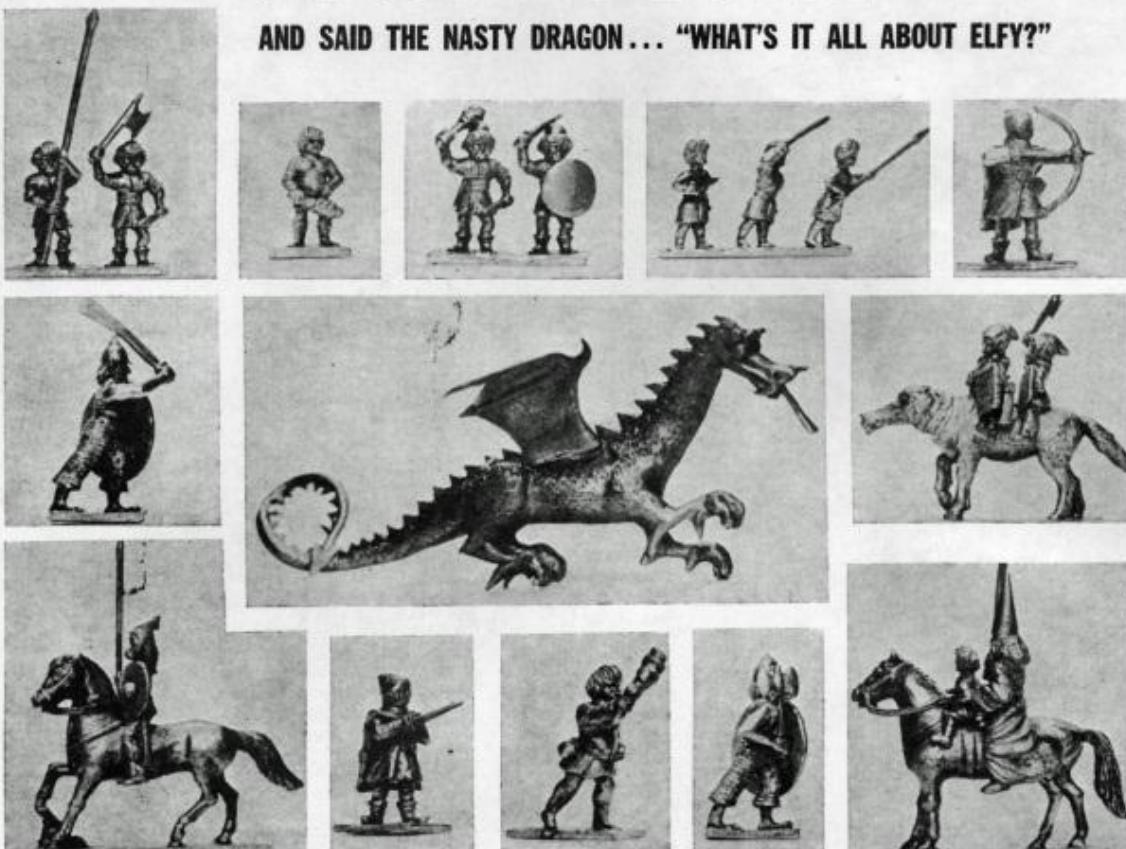
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FIGURE 57: MINIFIGS "MYTHICAL EARTH" SERIES

The other breakthrough at GenCon was the ascendancy of fantasy miniatures. The fantasy miniatures on sale at GenCon came from several sources, the largest and most established of which being the English giant Miniature Figurines, Ltd., or MiniFigs for short. Section 4.5.1 mentioned that Tony Bath collaborated with a Neville Dickinson in the administration of the Hyborian campaign, and that this Dickinson went on to found a company that manufactured toy soldiers: MiniFigs was that very company, based in Bath s hometown of Southampton. Their products sold well in the United Kingdom;; since 1968, a fullpage advertisement for MiniFigs traditionally occupied the first inside page of each issue of *Wargamer s Newsletter*. The August 1973 advertisement in that magazine first noted that Figures for Middle Earth Fanatics were coming soon. In that same issue, Don Featherstone promises that by the time you read this, Neville Dickinson will have been and returned from America where he is opening up a new manufacturing plant for his vast range of figures American wargamers, you do not know what is going to hit you!²⁵ MiniFigs created an outpost in New York to cast for an American audience the inexpensive pewter figures designed overseas at the home office, and then shortly thereafter opened another foundry in Texas. By 1974, Don Lowry s hobby business stocked a full assortment of MiniFigs, including the new 25mm Middle Earth line of fantasy miniatures which he marketed, naturally, for use with the *Chainmail Fantasy Supplement*. [LG:#8] They included orcs, elves, dwarves, wizards, hobbits, trolls, ents, Nazgûl, eagles and of course dragons. A detailed review of the entire Middle Earth line, and one contemporaneous with GenCon VII, can be found in Midgard-creator Hartley Patterson s *News from Bree* #12 (August 1974) he quibbles with the Rohan figures and the ents, but praises the excellent Dragon, standing with outstretched wings. In the following issue of *News from Bree*, Patterson prints rebuttals and clarifications from the newest member of the MiniFigs staff: Tony Bath himself, who had overseen the work on their fantasy miniatures line.²⁶

²⁵ [WGN:#

set of amazing figures to be used in Tolkien wargaming, with dragons, dwarfs, elves wizards, etc., etc. If this is your line of country then buy some and go mad with th

ad to feature these figures would not run until the December 1973 issue. [WGN:#141] Stateside, advertisements for MiniFigs could also be found at the time in the pages of and other periodicals of the day.

At GenCon VII, James Lurvey spent some time at the two MiniFigs booths, and comments on their new Fantasy figures including a spider, an unusual giant, goblin foot[man] and elvish horse[man]. [GPGPN:#12] Lurvey is fortunate to have checked with them early Afternoon.

as Bill Hoyer reports, Both MiniFigs sold out on fantasy figures by Sat²⁷ While the positive reception of *Dungeons & Dragons* undoubtedly boosted fantasy miniature sales, we must remember the slight contradiction in this, as miniatures played no ostensible role in the play of the game as specified in the rulebooks perhaps Gygax and Arneson deployed them in their GenCon demonstrations, posing them to visualize small skirmish battles under *Chainmail* rules, and this example drove urgent purchases. Given the rush on fantasy miniatures, it is fortunate that MiniFigs was not the sole purveyor of them at GenCon. The TSR booth stocked fantasy miniatures from a different source entirely: the father of American miniature wargaming, Jack Scruby.²⁸ TSR reseller relationship with Scruby had already been secured when *Tricolor* went to press earlier in the year, as it lists a complete line of Scruby miniatures, including fantasy figures in the mail-order catalog in the back. A record remains of Scruby's 1974 fantasy offerings in *Lowrys Guidon* #9 incidentally the final issue of that periodical which shipped around mid-July 1974. It lists only ten figures, with human-sized figures coming in at 30mm, including a Super-hero, in chainmail with shield swinging sword, a wizard on rearing horse, as well as various ogres, ents, orcs, dwarves and goblins but no dragon. Other vendors of traditional wargaming miniatures also unveiled fantasy prototypes, not yet for sale, at GenCon that year: Hoyer noted that Der Kriegspieler is definitely going to release fantasy figures and had a dwarf, tree ent and some orcs on display and they are great.²⁹

Finally, TSR could not let GenCon VII pass without premiering a new game. During his visit to the TSR booth, Lurvey learned that their space rules [i.e., *Star Probe*] are not out yet ;; however, they did have rules for Martian-Burroughs wargaming. These rules, *Warriors of Mars* (1974), subtitled The Warfare of Barsoom in Miniature sub-subtitled Rules for Individual and Large-Scale Land and Aerial Combats and further carried the first design credit that Gygax would share with Brian Blume. Worlds of

heroic fantasy are many, Gygax foreword begins, but perhaps the best known of them all is the Barsoom of Edgar Rice Burroughs... These rules are an attempt to expand your vicarious enjoyment of this Martian world. *Warriors of Mars* claimed a very different inspiration than other TSR games: This project was done at the request of the firm which originated the miniature²⁶ Featherstone notes that Bath had joined MiniFigs as Administration Manager. [WGN:#145]

²⁷ *Signal* #67.

²⁸ There is some small irony in TSR developing a relationship with Scruby, as Gygax and Scruby had feuded publicly in the pages of *Panzerfaust* only a year before. It began in *Panzerfaust* #58, when Gygax complained that the price of miniature figures had increased to a point where copying existing models was justified. Scruby's response defended the economics of the miniature industry

themselves. Of course, rules are more easily duplicated than miniature figures, but Scruby

Dungeons & Dragons.²⁹ *Signal* #67.

figures for this singular aspect of wargaming.³⁰ Who might that have been? The Hinchliffe firm of England, also frequent advertisers in *Wargamer's Newsletter*, designed a line of Barsoom miniatures, which were represented at GenCon by the Texas office of MiniFigs (who cast Hinchliffe miniature designs for American markets at that time). Bill Hoyer reports, Hinchliffe, courtesy of MiniFigs Dallas, had their new Martian series on display. The Green Martian is a figure that is a little over 2 inches tall and is very deadly looking with his four arms and each one has a weapon in it. Lurvey, for his part, judges of MiniFigs Texas that theirs was the best exhibit at the entire convention. By the end of 1974, incidentally, the Dallas outpost of MiniFigs would adopt the new name Heritage Models, a brand well-known to collectors of early fantasy figurines.³¹

Warriors of Mars attempts to be all things to all people: it can be played as an isolated battle, or as a campaign;; it can be played at a 50:1 figure scale commanding armies, or a 1:1 figure scale directing personal, named figures;; it can be played with a referee, or as a contest adjudicated by two players. Accordingly, the system suffers from overambition and underspecification. The rules for individual adventures referee, and like *Dungeons & Dragons* involve a mode of complemented by a vestigial mode of logistics. Referees generate secret maps populated with various adversaries and treasures (with

further provisions for random encounters) which players explore and map. To what end? It is to gain fighting ability that individuals risk their lives in the Barsoomian wilderness, for with each successful combat with men or animals, with the acquisition of lost treasure, the individual moves up the levels towards the unreachable plane where John Carter reigns alone!³² The stratified progression system allows for thirteen levels, but John Carter alone can claim the thirteenth players may only aspire to the twelfth or below. Experience is measured in points, with specific point values given for dispatching different sorts of undesirables, along with point sums required to advance through each of the twelve accessible levels. The combat system features a matrix similar to the Fantasy Combat Table in the back of *Chainmail* a simple map of creature type against creature type, though in this case, a roll admits of two possible successful outcomes: a wound or a kill, with the latter requiring a higher roll than the former. In the man-to-man combat, for example, a man five levels higher than his adversary will wound his opponent with a to-hit roll of 5 or higher on 3d6, and has a very good chance to kill outright at a 10 or higher on 3d6. Greater disparities in level translate to even less balanced combat odds. Wounds factor into a simple endurance system, in which a figure is killed in the 1:1 scale require a exploration and combat,³⁰ But not, however, at the behest of the Burroughs estate, who according to later accounts soon persuaded TSR to discontinue these rules, plunging them into eternal scarcity. While no known documents corroborate this directly, *Warriors of Mars* vanishes from the product list in the back of the *Strategic Review* after the second issue, which suggests the request would have come late in the summer of 1975. Also note that same issue promises that the next SR will contain an article on

Warriors of Mars or *D&D*, *Warriors of Mars*. This conspicuous silence must betoken an outside influence. As late as May 1975, in his interview later published in *Panzerfaust* #69, Gygax refers to strong sales of *Warriors*, which suggests this intervention probably occurred around June 1975.

³¹ The transition from MiniFigs Dallas to Heritage Models can be observed, for example, on the advertisement appearing inside the cover of , November 1974.

³² Notably, the rules cover only wilderness adventures;; for underground adventures, such as in the black pits of Mars, the authors suggest that referees pick up a copy of *Dungeons & Dragons*. See *Warriors*, 22.

after suffering a number of wounds one greater than its level (though John Carter, ever the exception, requires fifteen wounds). Otherwise, the turn sequence, missile combat and morale system are fairly typical of ancients rules. The aerial combat touted by the cover resembles *Fight in the Skies*, with hit location tables and chances of scoring a critical hit.

Noteworthy innovations in *Warriors of Mars* include an initiative system.³³ Once an attacker has the initiative, after each attack survived by the defender, the defender may roll initiative dice, and provided they score a total above a required number (scaled, again, with the difference in level between combatants), they gain the right to attack though if the same assailant attacks three times in a row, initiative automatically swaps to the defender. *Warriors of Mars* also articulates its setting in far greater detail than *Dungeons & Dragons*, to the point of constructing a high-level scenario. This manifests in several ways. The action depicted by *Warriors of Mars* takes place on Burroughs's planet Barsoom, and as such, planetary maps of Barsoom grace the center of the booklet. The Barsoomian Code of Battle figures heavily in the system, enforcing chivalric behavior on the part of combatants;; violations of the code result in obscene bonuses for the offended party. Most striking, however, are the personality figures, a system for miniature figures representing major characters in Burroughs's novels, including John Carter, Tars Tarkis, Ulysses Paxton and so on, each of whom has a specified level, a heroic illustration and a short blurb of flavor text relating their back-story. Presumably, in a given game instance, one could play against Tars Tarkis, or never meet him, or fight alongside him, or play as him such are the what-youwill guidelines of the game. The tale can be as simple as a minor skirmish between two swordsmen, or it can be as complex as the interactions which arise between several of the Barsoomian city-empires, the foreword pitches. Although Lurvey picked up a copy of *Warriors of Mars*, he quickly loaned it to a friend and thus had not read it at the time of his GenCon travel report. How many starry-eyed *Dungeons & Dragons* converts could divert their attention to *Warriors of Mars*, one wonders?

Reports on GenCon trickled into the wargaming press through October, though with one unexpected omission. Every previous GenCon had received at least a curt review in one of the next couple issues of the *Avalon Hill General*; the first such report practically provided a blow-by-blow description of the games in progress. [AHG:v5n4] Directly prior to GenCon

VII, Avalon Hill had trumpeted that the convention would include its featured Avalon Hill *Stalingrad* tournament ;; although the *General* records the winner of that tournament in its November 1974 issue, the tournament itself is described as the

Lake Geneva, WI, 7th Annual Avalon Hill Competition without mentioning GenCon at all. On that same page, however, we find an explanation for why Avalon Hill might suddenly choose to downplay GenCon: an advertisement for Origins I, wargaming convention to be held in Baltimore, but more saliently, Avalon Hill sponsors a convention. Origins would not be held until July 1975, but the timing of the Origins announcement alone warrants further comment. Had Avalon Hill observed the tremendous enthusiasm for *Dungeons & Dragons* and decided that GenCon no longer reflected the primacy of board wargaming? In light of Thomas Shaw remarks on the first national the first time ever

³³ Initiative has roots in the very beginnings of modern hobby wargaming in the so-called early as 1957 in the third *War Game Digest* three years later. [WGD:v4n1] Innumerable intervening wargame systems adopted similar mechanics.

the stagnation of the board wargaming industry which concluded Chapter One, it is telling that this same issue of the *General* contains a reader questionnaire on potential Avalon Hill products, which includes an option for *Fantasia* Do battle with dragons, dwarves, wizards and magic swords.

would be the startlingly new Is the fantasy setting really what wargamers wanted? If this breakthrough in wargaming, naturally Avalon Hill wanted to get in front of it. The Origins advertisement lists its planned schedule, which prominently features fantasy trips through *Dungeons & Dragons* the latest miniatures craze. This first mention of *Dungeons & Dragons* in the *General* is notable both for deeming *Dungeons & Dragons* to be a craze already, and moreover for associating it so strongly with miniatures. Origins will offer us a unique glimpse into early *Dungeons & Dragons* tournament play, which we shall reserve for a later section.

By the autumn of 1974, some local gaming clubs finally began to digest *Dungeons & Dragons*. Kevin Slimak of Boston, a longtime IFW member, reports in the *American Wargamer* that *Dungeons & Dragons*... made its appearance at the MITGS just recently and seems to be making a hit.³⁴ At MIT, characters just starting the game seem to have very little chance of

survival, though Slimak avowed himself the oldest and richest surviving player in the current game. The core players at MIT also included Mark Swanson, whose relationship with early fans of the game in Los Angeles will receive some attention in the next section. A review of *Dungeons & Dragons* by Bill Hoyer in that same issue of the *American Wargamer* leads with a paragraph vignette dramatizing a dungeon adventure, and after a perfunctory listing of each booklet's contents, he gives up on a deep look with the apology, Much too long to go into detail here. He makes special note of the extensibility of *Dungeons & Dragons*, reminding us that these rules, being open ended, are capable of being changed by the players to develop new monsters and even better treasure. The review does end on a ringing endorsement: by all means, buy a set. Apparently, many took this advice to heart: around this time, rumor had it that noting the frequency and length of *Dungeons & Dragons* games at MITGS, George Phillies recently commented, My God, it's worse than heroin. [AW:v2n4] Even the staid Phillies could only resist its allure for so long by the time these words saw print, Phillies had acquired his own collection of medieval miniatures and joined the fray.

Closer to the ground zero of Lake Geneva, Detroit-area gamers took the plunge very shortly after GenCon VII. Marc Miller of Game Designers Workshop recalled that Mike Bartnikowski visited from Detroit and saw *D&D* in progress, and (it being a new game to him) was spurred to get a copy and introduce it in Michigan.³⁵ In Bartnikowski's zine *IGHiP* (Interest Group Highland Park, named for the Detroit suburb) #25 (September 3, 1974), a quick blurb notes that *Dungeons & Dragons* looks to be a multiplayer thing that despite the cost, seems well worth it. While many early reviews complain about the price, Detroit gamers shrewdly noted that one set could serve more than two players at

³⁴ [AW:v2n3] In November 1976, Slimak further explains the introduction to MITGS of *Dungeons & Dragons* got into *D&D* in September of 1974 when I visited the MFCA convention in Philly

name Gygax, had some club funds to spend, and did so. As a result of this purchase, the MITSGS (for whom Mark Swanson has been the most regular spokesman in A&E) was hooked. By Thanksgiving, I was deep in designing my own dungeon (still active); I started running HELLSGATE (of which there has been some mention in A&E) just after the Christmas break at

[A&E:#16] ³⁵ [DW:#1] Bartnikowski would later serve as a popular auctioneer at GenCon.

a time, unlike a typical board wargame. Two issues later in November, *IGHiP* continues on our area's first glimpse of the fabled *Dungeons & Dragons*. Five *IGHiP* stalwarts found their way out of a sub-basement of WSU's Old Main with a magic sword and only a few scars.

In that same issue, Bartnikowski wrote up a lengthy and considered *Dungeons and*

Dragons Progress Report that dispenses advice to early adopters experimenting with the

game: It takes a great deal of preparation to make the Underworld portion of *Dungeons & Dragons* (D&D) work well for game participants... A recent practice game required four to six hours in map making and careful specification of all particulars.... The game is only as rich as the imagination of the creator of the underworld scene (GM).

Bartnikowski also observes that the play itself can be time-consuming. One experience showed a party of 5 took 2 1/2 hours (real time) to explore 3 rooms and conduct 2 melees. Despite his cautionary words, his piece evinces the strong interest shown by his local community in the game. Several dungeons are under construction in our area. Among the builder-artists are John Van De Graaf, Matt Shaut, Matt Gandel, and Gurth Oakenskull [apparently Bartnikowski persona]... Len Scensny is the first to be planning outdoor wilderness adventures. The next week, in the neighboring journal *Midwest Gaming Review* #11, that same Len Scensny authored a full-page review entitled What To Do During National Take-A-Dragon-To-Lunch Week. Perhaps following the lead of Gygax narrative advertisements for *Dungeons & Dragons*, Scensny begins with six paragraphs of short fiction describing the exploits of three novice adventurers in the gloomy catacombs beneath the centuries-old castle. The story tells of the fourth trip this particular band had made into the dungeons, now unwisely delving for a treasure on the perilous fifth level. When the Fighting-man in their group dies in the jaws of a werewolf, the other two decide that perhaps the experience they'd gained from defeating the werewolf and other monsters was profit enough and beat a hasty retreat. In any event, they'd not return until advanced quite a bit in their respective vocations.

The main feature of the game that Scensny highlights, unsurprisingly, is the personal progression system. Each character is controlled by one player, who seeks to advance his status and power by participating in a series of adventures. As a players advances, his skills and capabilities grow, allowing him to attempt greater adventures. [MGR:#11] The downsides, in his opinion, are the requirement for a referee, or to use the term the Detroit crowd favored a GM or gamesmaster, the amount of labor required to design a dungeon and the overall expense of the rules with various accessories including dice. All that said, Scensny unambiguously confirms that the rewards are well worth the trouble and calls *Dungeons & Dragons* the ultimate in fantasy gaming.

Less salutatory but still insightful is the contemporary review by Arnold Hendrick in the *Courier*. [CO:v6n6] Hendrick immediately recognizes that *Dungeons & Dragons* falls outside the parameters of traditional wargames, insofar as it represents an attempt to outline a system for playing the kind of fantasy adventures one previously read about in paperbacks. Hendrick even exhibits some discomfiture calling it a game : The game is played by various adventurers and a referee. Hendrick must be the first to compare *Dungeons & Dragons* to the work of Korns (see Section 3.2.1.1 for a refresher on Korns), noting the common dialogic structure: how the referee is informed of each action, and after consulting the maps he has made, the basic tables and information in the booklets, and his own imagination, gives the player a response.³⁶ Hendrick fails to grasp that these dialogic elements supplant miniatures and boards, however, and as the players should explore the world in near total ignorance, he thus dubiously concludes that play in person is usually impossible, since the referee can only show the adventurer the terrain he is crossing at that instant, plus whatever is in his sight. He suggests that playing by mail or even by telephone would remove this difficulty, though of course anyone familiar with the game understands the absurdity of these proposals. Despite this confusion, Hendrick airs a number of grievances that cannot be so easily dismissed: beyond griping about price, he furthermore observes that vastly too much has been attempted in these booklets, with very little detail, explanations or procedures. He concludes that the scope is just too grand, while the referee is expected to do too much in relation to the players. At face value, this is a very sensible assessment: why would a referee bother to do all of the work to construct dungeons, and how could any referee be equal to the task of administering a game built on such a

skeletal framework of rules and ideas? Theoretically, Hendrick concerns are justifiable but in practice, referees could administer the system, and did so gladly and capably, if inexplicably. While he must concede that the concept and imagination involved is stunning, Hendrick finishes with, I do not suggest these to the average wargamer.

Inevitably, *Dungeons & Dragons* cropped up in another familiar venue the *Midgard Forum* of Thomas Drake's postal fantasy game, Midgard II. Drake writes in the November Got ahold of Gary Gygax new thing, *Dungeons & Dragons*, and it is fantastic (no pun intended)... If you are interested in such, it is a must-buy. Drake's typist and co-gamesmaster Scott Rich, who would soon found the Midgard Ltd. offshoot of the Midgard game family, further elaborates that he has adapted a lot of it to Midgard, and that players should expect to see combat odds geared for polyhedral dice. Rich explains: *D&D* has a technique of setting up underground mazes, on several levels, and stocking them with treasures and creatures. I'm going to set these up all over Midgard.³⁷ And indeed, in *Midgard Forum* #11 there follow some pages of rules on labyrinths drawn on graph paper and as if in deference to Arnold Hendrick a play-by-mail adaptation of the dungeon exploration process. Scott Rich vows that if you write to me with your move, I'll write back immediately, but one can hardly imagine the tedium of cautiously exploring a dungeon via post. Dice rolls govern creatures encountered in the underworld, as well as the treasure they guard, in a few pages of tables clearly drawn from *Dungeons & Dragons*: the magic items listed (e.g., Displacer Cloak, Drums of Panic, Helm of Chaos) unmistakably belong in *Monsters & Treasure*. These appropriations initiated a lengthy process by which Midgard II slowly adapted its rules to the system of *Dungeons & Dragons*, a shift that would be mirrored by the two Midgard variants spawned at the end of 1974: Scott Rich's Midgard Ltd. and Jim Lawson's Fantasia.

³⁶ Hendrick

that he possibly knew Korns only by reputation, as it takes some generosity to deem that a book of -level ideas of how they might be employed.

³⁷ While one might have expected *Dungeons & Dragons Midgard* as well, it had since lapsed into abeyance. In *News from Bree* #13 (Nov 1974), Patterson *Midgard*. The latest volunteer to run the game backed out
befo

Gamesletter Midgard

games mentioned in *GL* #67: *Midgard III* has collapsed, and *Midgard I*, having lost all three GMs, will apparently do the same. But *Midgard II*

Midgard Ltd. splintered off from Midgard II by adopting a set of campaign rules designed by Brian Libby, playfully entitled Kam-Pain.³⁸ In its original incarnation at the Purdue Wargamers Group, Kam-Pain began as a multiplayer game loosely incorporating some principles from Tony Bath's *Setting up a Wargames Campaign* mingled with bits of *Diplomacy*. The players refused to conform to Libby's modest ambitions, however, and Kam-Pain developed into an ideological contest between various fictional state religions that deified their rulers, making for an intriguing interpersonal dynamic. Libby, a longtime IFW member and *Diplomacy* variant designer, played in Midgard II along with Scott Rich, but his Kam-Pain deemphasized fantasy elements. The notice in *Supernova* #21 for Midgard Ltd. suggested it would follow the same course: Midgard Limited by Scott Rich et al. Another Midgard type game, but one with the emphasis on the medieval rather than the sword & sorcery aspects. *Supernova* suggests the game might start in September 1974. However, once *Dungeons & Dragons* began to sweep through the ranks of Midgard aficionados, the plan rapidly changed the characters in Midgard Ltd. became fantastic persons of tremendous power, some practically demigods like the rulers of Kam-Pain.

Once again, these borrowings reflect the collaborative ethos of gamers and fans of the era. No one in that culture would suggest that Scott Rich had plagiarized *Dungeons & Dragons* by incorporating the dungeon exploration concept, especially given that the Midgard postal games had no commercial ambitions: their sole cost to players supported the duplication and mailing of the game's periodical organ. As Section 4.6.2 advised, it is probably most fitting to consider the Midgard family of games as campaigns rather than formal systems, as the system constantly fluctuated with rules ballots and occasionally gamesmaster fiat, as with the addition of labyrinths the game setting remained Midgard even as the campaign rules shifted closer to TSR's. By adapting and republishing these elements of *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, the Midgard crowd did obviate the need for its members to spend \$10 on the published TSR rules. Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but it is not the most remunerative. Surprisingly, Gygax overlooked these transgressions, since he happily endorsed the Midgard II and Midgard Ltd. games in 1975, as we shall see.³⁹ By imitating *Dungeons & Dragons*, in

the long term they spread *Dungeons & Dragons*, and perhaps Gygax had the foresight to recognize that. For example, Glenn Blacow, later a prominent *Dungeons & Dragons* fan in the Boston area, began his fantasy gaming career in Midgard Ltd.⁴⁰ The closer games like Midgard came to *Dungeons & Dragons*, the more likely it was that fans would eventually shift to the latter, and perhaps even buy a copy.

³⁸ The most accessible source for information on Kam-Pain -Papism in Campaign Games, or Boniface VIII Wargaming #1 (1977).

³⁹ In the *Strategic Review* Fantasia, which went so far as to provide a detailed mapping of the rules of Midgard onto *Dungeons & Dragons* so that characters, monsters, and items could be ported between the systems. See *Fantasia Times*, Vol. 1 No. 2.

⁴⁰ In March 1976, Blacow , Ltd. with Scott Rich as GM, using *Kam-pain* rules. I found it highly interesting and spent a good deal of time in writing about the history, religions, genealogies, etc of the continent. Developed some that Mark Swanson *Different Worlds* #1 that Blacow Midgard Limited long before Gygax published *D&D* erroneous, as Midgard Ltd. did not begin until the last months of 1974. As late as *Minneapa* #52 (December 7, 1974), Blacow

As the first year of *Dungeons & Dragons* wound to a close, however, copies of its initial printing became scarce enough that even players who wanted to buy them could not find copies for sale. Before GenCon VII, Gygax had already reported in a letter to *GPGPN* #12 that sales are going quite well particularly *D&D* sales. The heavy emphasis on the game at GenCon must have moved many copies, and the positive reviews that followed undoubtedly depleted the last stocks of the first printing at TSR and in retail stores. The scarcity of distributors willing to take a chance on such a radical new product surely compounded the woes of aspiring purchasers, as the responsibility for fulfilling mail orders devolved entirely to the overworked principals at TSR. The experience of new converts at this time more often than not must have resembled that of Niall Shapero, who went looking for *Dungeons & Dragons* around November 1974: As no one in Berkeley had a copy of the rules, this meant a short trip to acquire same. Six of U.C. Berkeley s finest crammed into my BMW, and we proceeded to cover most, if not all, the game shops in the San Francisco Bay Area in search of rules. Some six hours, eighty miles, and several frayed tempers

later, we discovered 1 (one) rule set in some out-of-the-way game shop. [DW:#1]

A quick exercise in arithmetic, however, will reveal that this made one copy for six persons. As a consequence, within a week, we had xeroxed relevant portions of the three original rulebooks. Marc Miller of Game Designers Workshop, himself a designer and publisher of rules, was reduced to a similar expedient that same year: Initially, we played from xeroxes of the rules booklets;; we couldn't wait for an order to be filled before we started. [DW:#1] Photocopying the *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks represented for TSR a double-edged sword: it greatly contributed to the spread of the game, but denied their coffers much-needed cash. The extremely high price of \$10 (in 1974 dollars) for three slim pamphlets in a box must have sorely tempted consumers to take matters into their own hands;; in the *American Wargamer*, George Phillips judged that the rules are rather expensive sufficiently over the cost of copying them, I think, that there are probably more pirate Xerox copies than licit copies in the world. [AW:v2n8] Gygax would later conjecture, I have no way of knowing how many pirated copies of D&D were in existence, but some estimates place the figure at about 20% of total sales, some as high as 50%. [DR:#22] For the moment, it little mattered: TSR probably remained unaware of such piratical acts and would have been powerless to stop them if they objected.⁴¹ This issue would trigger vicious disputes in the following year, however.

Another source of unauthorized reproduction, this one undoubtedly the most dangerous to TSR, came in the form of a misunderstanding. Craig van Grasstek surely did not intend to compete with TSR system for adventuring in fantastic dungeons when he association with Midgard Ltd. did not commence until a year after *Dungeons & Dragons* appeared. ⁴¹ In *Alarums & Excursions* #5 (Oct 1975), Dick Eney similarly estimates that the retail price of *Dungeons & Dragons* so vastly exceeds its likely production costs that he questions any condemnation

Gygax somewhat testily refutes this charge two issues of A&E later, while played a much larger role in the spread of *Dungeons & Dragons* than it ever could have with board or miniature wargaming, both of which require materials that photocopiers do not adequately reproduce.

wrote up his *Rules to the Game of Dungeon* (1974). In fact, by all appearances, Grasstek had no idea *Dungeons & Dragons* existed. That was because he was one of the three original players that Louis Fallert led into

his Castle Keep on February 9, 1974, in Minneapolis. Months later, since the popularity of these local dungeon adventures had grown to feverish levels eight dungeons now welcomed intrepid adventurers in Minn-stf Grasstek decided to write down a set of rules, apparently a step Fallert never took. The problem seems to have been one of standardization: Since there are so many different mazes, run by so many different people, there are bound to be many discrepancies and idiosyncrasies among them, Grasstek writes in his foreword. Moreover, Grasstek hoped these rules would spread the dungeoneering tradition beyond the Twin Cities: in addition to enclosing his rules in *Minneapa* #49 (though originally slated for #47, in September 1974), he also produced fifty copies to distribute at the 1974 DisCon II World Science Fiction Convention held in Washington, D.C., at the end of August.

Grasstek *Dungeon* reflects the accumulated wisdom of several months of seat-of-the-pants play without any codified rules, and laudably captures the game in only eighteen pages of guidance. His overview of play is in many respects more coherent than the corresponding sections in *Dungeons & Dragons*, since his game puts on far less ambitious airs: The basic idea of the game, for those totally unfamiliar with it, is this: the players form a party composed of warriors, priests and wizards. The party starts out on the surface, enters one of the castles and descends into the dungeon. Once in the dungeon, the party moves from chamber to chamber, accumulating treasure and making a map as they progress.

To procure treasure from the chambers, the party must battle its guardians. For killing these guardians, and for performing other valiant deeds, they obtain karma. As treasure and karma accumulate, a party member may exchange them to move up in rank. This may be done only between descents, though.

Grasstek also helpfully explains that there is no object to the game, per se, other than to see who can move up the highest, collect the most treasure, etc. Nothing in his rules suggests the possibility of wilderness adventures, but most of the core concepts of dungeon adventures recur in Grasstek. His karma equates to experience, his rank to level (though rank goes backward, starting at 10 and counting down to 1 as characters advance), and his three classes correspond to the three basic classes in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Eschewing polyhedrons, the entire system uses 2d6 for virtually all rolls, where doubles usually confer some bonus such as rolling twice. His endurance system more or less follows the *Chainmail* cumulative hit

mechanic: a troll takes four hits, a giant takes thirty hits. Armor provides mitigation of damage, such that leather armor will absorb seven hits before it is destroyed, plate mail fifteen hits. Moreover, as players advance in rank, depending on their class they gain the ability to take more hits: upon advancing to the sixth rank, after acquiring 400,000 karma, warriors can take five more hits, at fourth rank, ten more hits, and at first rank, fifteen more hits. Wizards act largely through the hurling of balls which are purchased in the General Store;; other than the basic employment of illuminating light balls granted to all starting wizards, a wizard must learn a spell in the dungeon before purchasing the associated balls in the shop.⁴² Other types of balls include axe, mace, sword and pike balls, all of which deal damage comparable to the weapon type for a handful of rounds. Slave balls allow the wizard to charm any non-player creature indefinitely, though the wizard may only keep five slaves at any given time. Priests may cast a heal once after each battle, which removes 1d6 worth of hits on a target character, and even wizards can find you guessed it

⁴² Given that Fallert first

from the prepared spells created and sold by magicians in the Blackmoor scenario. In fact, it is not

In general, the Grasstek's *Dungeon* diverge significantly from their analogs in *Dungeons & Dragons*, adopting a more lighthearted and modern tone. Among mundane equipment available at the General Store one finds Lysol spray, bubble gum, Dr. Scholl's foot powder and so on, all of which presumably counteract certain baddies found in the dungeon. In lieu of alignment, priests and warriors past a certain rank are obliged to become chivalrous, which precludes the wielding of certain weapons;; priests, of course, may not strike with blades at any rank. Wizards have no similar moral awakening, however, as by nature they are somewhat shifty and occasionally untrustworthy. Grasstek recommends a party largely made up of warriors, with one priest for every four warriors and only one or two wizards total. Karma is awarded only to the single party member who delivers a killing blow on an enemy, which places wizards and priests at something of a disadvantage. As a self-contained system, the game suffers from grave underspecification only with a great deal of initiative and imagination could a novice pick up these eighteen pages of rules and run an enjoyable game. More likely, these written rules served to resolve disputes

between referees and players already familiar with the basic underlying concepts.

Grasstek did not claim credit for something he did not devise. His foreword magnanimously states that Blue Petal invented the game. In a reply to Grasstek in *Minneapa* #52 from November 1974, Flieg Hollander gently suggests that according to a games-playing friend of mine, Yale Edeiken, the Dungeon game in one form or another has existed for some time in games-playing circles, so I doubt if Blue Petal should be credited with its invention, but rather its introduction to the Minn-stf circles. Nonetheless, many players learned of dungeoneering from the descendants of Fallert's work rather than directly from Gygax and Arneson. Glenn Blacow, for example, encountered the Minneapolis version of the game first courtesy of Richard Tatge, and only later experienced full-blown *Dungeons & Dragons*.⁴³

healing balls, which heal everyone in the party of 1d6 hits. spells, magic items, attributes and mundane equipment in

implausible that Grasstek preserves many features of the original Blackmoor that *Dungeons & Dragons Blackmoor*, the clearly a mitigation rather than avoidance function, just like the armor in Grasstek. Perhaps armor more frequently provided mitigation in the original Blackmoor. The use of 2d6 must also be a hold-over.

⁴³ In February 1976, Blacow *Dungeon* (NOT the board game;; this is a Minneapolis/St. Paul offshoot of *D&D* with many of the same general rules, but somewhat simplified). I made a few descents into dungeons Ltd. (see above) and then his introduction to *Dungeons & Dragons*

made three descents into Dungeons run by Dick Tatge and John Kusske (both operated under *Dungeon*, not *D&D*, rules) and was captivated. After a few descents into Martin Sch Crotoncon, I undertook my first descent into a Dungeon operating under full *D&D* rules at
Gorree.

By the end of 1975, the *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks finally began to exert a substantial influence over play in Minn-stf. Nonetheless, the ersatz, unstandardized rules for dungeoneering that dominated Minneapolis science-fiction fandom in 1974 serve as something of a tribute to Arneson own rejection of formal rules, his emphasis, surely one rooted in *Strategos*, on the referee's discretion to decide a situation. By distilling these vague rules into a lean, concrete system, Grasstek produced the first game that directly competed with *Dungeons & Dragons*, albeit accidentally and by all

appearances noncommercially. Grasstek might have been the first to publish rules for dungeon adventuring redesigned from scratch, but he certainly would not be the last. By 1975, upstart designers would release games that reacted to the length and complexity of *Dungeons & Dragons*, games which very much hoped to usurp its nascent market.

5.4 DUNGEONS & DRAGONS IN LOS ANGELES FANDOM

While Gygax supervised and encouraged the spread of *Dungeons & Dragons* through the wargaming community, its wild propagation through science-fiction fandom rode a wave of sheer grassroots advocacy. Once Arneson had offhandedly sparked the interest of Minn-stf, the highly interconnected communities of science-fiction fans created many opportunities for cross-pollination: in APAs, at the large-scale science-fiction conventions and with the multitude of college-aged fans who commuted between their hometowns and distant universities. Just as Grasstek brought his *Dungeon* to the World Science Fiction Convention, so did other members of Minneapolis fandom bring the game to the attention of distant venues.

Chronicling the entrance of *Dungeons & Dragons* to each such cell of fandom is beyond the reach of posterity, but the case of the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society (LASFS) can serve as an instructive example for several reasons: because of its exceptionally strong culture of documentation, because of its prior significance in the evolution of phenomena like Coventry and the Society for Creative Anachronism, and because Los Angeles fans would construct one of the most vibrant and lasting venues for discussing *Dungeons & Dragons* and its ilk. The LASFS APA, *APA-L*, appeared once a week, twice as frequently as the biweekly *Minneapa*, although both reached quite a small audience: the copy count for *APA-L* at the time stood at around seventy, yet even this greatly exceeded the *Minneapa* circulation of forty-five. A notice for *Dungeons & Dragons* in one of these periodicals, consequently, could not be said to announce the game to the American populace at large, yet the small set of science fiction fans who might read it were probably the optimal audience: the most diehard, enthusiastic devotees of fantastic worlds, the ones most likely to share with receptive friends or to found a new interest group at their university. Finally, Los Angeles fandom shared several members in common with Minneapolis, Boston and San Francisco fandom;; we will see that while the Minneapolis and Boston crossover fans conveyed second-hand reports of the game, indoctrination into *Dungeons & Dragons* thrives on face-to-face play, and it

was visiting San Francisco fans who brought the first rules and experiences to Los Angeles.

In early November 1974, the existence of *Dungeons & Dragons* remained a rumor to Los Angeles fans. The first detailed word of the game came from Mark Swanson, a former IFW member (he appears on the New Member list in a 1970 *Supplement* [IWS:Mar70]) who also served as acting Vice President of the American Wargaming Association in January 1974. [AW:v1n7] Swanson furthermore actively participated in science-fiction fandom, both in Boston, where he went to school, and in his native Los Angeles. Swanson was exactly the sort of person most likely to serve as a transmission vector for *Dungeons & Dragons* an American crossover wargaming and science-fiction fan who frequently hopped between coasts. Not long after GenCon, in his Kyth Interstellar Bulletin for *APA-L* #493 (dated October 10, 1974), Swanson gives a four-paragraph overview of his latest obsession: I been hooked again, this time by a new game. The game is played basically with paper, pencils and a reeling mind (together with buckets of dice.) It is *Dungeons & Dragons*. He explains that the gamesmaster creates a secret map of the dungeon, in which the treasures are guarded by appropriate monsters (gnomes, green slime, orcs, dragons, evil wizards, zombies, giants, etc.) and that the deeper you go, the nastier the monsters and the bigger the treasure. Once again, we see a reviewer single out the progression system: As you win encounters, you gain experience, which makes you a better fighter, able to go lower. constitute a basic (early) game hopes to gain levels quickly but faces game in Boston, death results in resulted in worse characters: you received forty henchmen with your first incarnation, for example, but only thirty-five with your second, thirty with your third and so on. He relates some high points of his recent adventures, but recognizes the futility of a summary, as there are three booklets of rules, and I will not try to repeat them here. He does judge it is a very good game, at least as much for the gamesmaster as for the players. Helpfully, he supplies TSR address and the price of the game.

For those familiar with the current practices in the Twin Cities, this description proved confusing. Tom Digby and Matthew Tepper, who participated in both *Minneapa* and *APA-L*, acted as a conduit of news between Minneapolis and Los Angeles. In Digby's zine *Probably Something*, collated in *APA-L* #495 (November 7, 1974), he writes: Somebody may've mentioned it, but Minneapolis Fandom has been playing (to the degree that L.A. Fandom was playing Bourree or Hearts a few years back) a game called

Dungeon that may be a version of that Dungeons & Dragons game mentioned earlier. Rules were put through *Minneapa* some while back.

In the next collation of *APA-L*, Tepper corroborates, Hmm... now that I think about it, I recall Dick Tatge consulting a copy of the *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebook at the Hobbitat *Dungeon* games. Although Tepper at that time took classes in San Francisco, he had spent some of the previous summer in Minneapolis;; his testimony suggests that Tatge and others may have been well aware of *Dungeons & Dragons* prior to the publication of Grasstek *Dungeon* rules. From just these few hints and tidbits, however, readers of *APA-L* surely could not have imagined how one plays *Dungeons & Dragons*, a game that notoriously resisted description.

There came a different, more intriguing sort of rumor of dungeon adventures in Swanson Kyth Interstellar Bulletin for *APA-L* #497, where he presented a dramatization of the misfortunes of his character Helmuth in the dungeons of the MIT Games Society. Much like The Giant's Bag, the saga of Helmuth is not a story of adventure, but instead a story of the consequences of greed;; it reads like an amateur emulation of the dreamy tragedies of Dunsany.⁴⁴ Helmuth is betrayed by his companions, Interestingly, Swanson believes that wilderness adventures conducted prior to entering a dungeon, where a character

a shocking high mortality rate. As they played the reincarnation, though progressive reincarnations

⁴⁴

who apparently had served Chaos from the start and had merely awaited the most lucrative moment to dispose of Helmuth;; after some sort of charming or domination the soul of Helmuth was sundered from his body, and his still-animate corpse sent to a final doom. Swanson tells of named magic swords, including Plasma and Firebane, of the capture of some unspecified monster (probably a dragon) called Many-Snores, and although he does not specify the level of characters in those terms, he does refer to such rascals as the Lama Slimke, surely a sixth-level Cleric belonging to Kevin Slimak, or the Conjuror Nony, someone's second-level Magic-user. Nowhere does the tale break from the immersed voice or discuss the game mechanics, though Swanson cannot resist a parenthetical aside after the conclusion of the tale: (Score: *D&D* 1, me: 0) If one could not decipher the acronym *D&D* , nothing else about the piece would even hint that it described a game. As an advertisement for *Dungeons & Dragons*, Swanson

yarn is a bit too oblique to win converts, but it teased the imagination enough to stimulate curiosity. One perceptive reader expressed a particular interest: none other than Ted Johnstone. After the last gasps of Coventry in the mid-1960s, Johnstone enjoyed some success under his real name, David McDaniel, as an author of novelizations relating to the television shows *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* and *The Prisoner*. This work left him little time for things like postal *Diplomacy*; although he created the first piece of postal *Diplomacy* press, he had not been active as a player in many years. Upon reading Swanson fictionalization of *Dungeons & Dragons*, he offers a few pedantic criticisms of the prose, but must concede that the game sounds fascinating.

Dramatizations alone, however, could not substitute for the experience of play. The lasting outbreak of *Dungeons & Dragons* in Los Angeles came only after the new year, early in February 1975. The plague carriers who infected Los Angeles with this pandemic were Owen and Hilda Hannifin. Although they then hailed from San Francisco, Owen Hannifin had participated in LASFS since the early 1960s appears in *Who's Who in Coventry #2* (where he figures Commander, Special Detail Co. (Commandoes)), and in fact, when Johnstone lived in San Diego in 1963, Owen Hannifin briefly was his roommate.⁴⁵ Although they had long since relocated north to the San Francisco Bay Area, the Hannifens ties to Los Angeles remained strong. Owen and Hilda had previously transmitted their enthusiasm for the Society for Creative Anachronism to LASFS: Owen, known in the SCA as Karl vom Acht, claimed some of the earliest early honors in the West Kingdom of the Bay Area.

The Hannifens shared their northern ways with ideal partners for communicating *Dungeons & Dragons* to the remainder of Los Angeles: Lee and Barry Gold. Both contributed avidly to *APA-L* and both had precisely the whimsical streak that drew gamers to *Dungeons & Dragons*. While touring the Bay Area in December, the Golds attended a party with the Hannifens, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Matthew Tepper, and a group of people playing *Dungeons & Dragons*, according to Lee's zine *Haplography* in *APA-L #501*. She notes that Barry may be getting hooked by that game, though apparently neither of them actually played that night. Several weeks later, in *APA-L #508* (February 6, 1975), Lee reports:

long enough that his name

as Colonel Win Anhaven,

⁴⁵ In *Mest #12*

Vermont, a small state in upstate New York. He emigrated to South California just before New

We got a lightning visit this week from the Hannifens... Hilda and Owen stayed 28 hours and then headed back to San Francisco. After showing them the [LASFS] Clubhouse... they dug out their *Dungeons & Dragons* rules and introduced us to the game. Before they left, they let us have two xeroxes of the rules, one for us and one for LASFS.... Since most *APA-L* contributors do not seem to have ever played *Dungeons & Dragons*, I will run an account of our game through *APA-L*.⁴⁶

The account that Lee Gold provides covers a solid three pages of text, from character creation through a successful dungeon expedition. She reports that character generation took about a half hour as she and Barry each invented two characters Owen would play two previously existing characters, and Hilda would administer an established dungeon. Apparently, Owen Hannifen's characters also brought along the intrepid Tofu, a mule shod with silver shoes.

The expedition into Hilda's dungeon leaned more toward the uncanny and suspenseful than the violent and bludgeoning. After riding a freight elevator downstairs, the party encountered a pair of skeletons who promptly turned to dust at the sight of Owen's Bishop, St. Hugh. Thereafter, the party made the acquaintance of a strange bean-shaped being of a Lawful disposition whom they elected to accompany;; as a bout of Japanophilia had made the rounds in California, they identified this being as a nomaru, the ghost of a child slain by vampires. On cue, when a group of vampires fell on the party, this nomaru nullified them. Sensing a further evil presence in the dungeon, the party soon stumbled onto a dark religious ceremony. After subjecting the acolytes to a magical slumber and slaughtering them, the party traded blows with a Black Lama (a sixth-level Chaotic Cleric) who eventually elected to flee. In the aftermath, the party recovered a magic sword named Lovelorn, a pair of Elven boots and a grateful virgin who had narrowly escaped the sacrificial knife. Returning to town, the party converted all of these commodities (including said virgin) into cash, netting around 22,000 gold pieces, which they dispersed among the group, though giving an extra share to St. Hugh. The experience gathered from the adventure they also split six ways, which elevated Lee and Barry's

characters well beyond the starting level. We enjoyed the game, Lee concluded.

The Golds expressed great appreciation for the game, and the denizens of Los Angeles were positively intrigued by Lee's account. The following issue of *APA-L* contains half a dozen reactions of interest ranging from mild to obsessive. Toward the latter end of that spectrum, Neeters Mitchell replies, *Dungeons & Dragons* ohmigod! And (drool slobber) when do we get to try it? Fred Patton illustrates precisely how foreign and novel this sort of experience appeared to someone hearing it for the first time: The *Dungeons & Dragons* description is fascinating, but I can't visualize the rules of the game that could result in such moves. June Moffatt emphasizes the connection between the game and fantasy fiction when she asserts that I would love to see the rules of *Dungeons & Dragons* sounds like any one of the games makes a good adventure story. Tepper, realizing that *Dungeons & Dragons* had now become more than a rumor in Los Angeles, puts in, fascinated to see that *Dungeons & Dragons* have (has?) caught on in L.A. at last. Although Tepper lived in the Bay Area, in striking distance of the Hannifens, he regretfully noted, it has caught on locally, but I haven't gotten out to Berkeley to any of the sessions yet. Bjo Trimble, a battle-scarred veteran of Coventry, commented that she would like to try *Dungeons & Dragons* some day. Bjo drew the cover for *APA-L* #509 it depicts an astronaut, in a suit with a bubble helmet, staring dubiously at an enormous dragon who has entwined his feet with her tail as she gazes upon him lovingly, her head surrounded by cartoonish hearts, and her claws clutching a plush heart-shaped emblem.

⁴⁶ During his visit to the LASFS clubhouse, Owen left a related, though to many cryptic, message: he drew the symbol of the Guardian from Coventry on the blackboard. Needless to say this ruffled a few feathers.

The piqued interest of Lee Gold, Hilda Hannifen, June Moffatt and Bjo Trimble contrasts starkly with the solely masculine appeal of prior wargames. The very presence of women in *APA-L* reflects the basic demographic difference in the fandoms of wargaming and science fiction: the former lacking any but the smallest traces of female involvement, whereas the latter, in the 1960s, had transitioned from a virtual boys club into a community with many notable female fans. The rising popularity of fantasy fiction at the time, as opposed to the Gernsback-approved experimental fictions intended to inspire scientific progress, correlated with

an increase in female fans. For many women in Los Angeles science-fiction fandom, the Society for Creative Anachronism had already weakened this gender divide around violent games, if only by stylizing the violence considerably and moreover providing an explicit feminine role in the proceedings, as Section 4.4 already discussed. For the wargaming industry, a product that appealed to the other half of the human race had become a sort of holy grail, a long-sought invention that would move wargames out of the basement and into the living room, which would not only win new converts among females but legitimize the interest of marginalized male fans as well. In Los Angeles, early indications suggested that *Dungeons & Dragons* might have hit upon this formula, an accomplishment which industry giants had long dismissed as unattainable.

This is not to say that *Dungeons & Dragons* failed to command an equally fervent reaction from male gamers. In *APA-L* #510, in his response to Lee's trip report, Ted Johnstone exhibits through his eagerness a keen understanding of the design decisions underlying the game: I am launching in all directions for a copy of the three 40-page booklets which comprise the only formal body of text so far on *Dungeons & Dragons*. What drove me to frustration in your narrative of the brief practice game with the Hannifens was the lack of indication at decision points whether something was pre-established, decided by dice, calculated from impinging factors or made up on the spot. I understand that the parameters of this game make it possibly a new order of Game, as the playing board exists in the minds of the players and paper sketches which are probably rarely if ever exhibited. The game is an abstract concept, and could be played around a table in a restaurant, across the back seat of a Greyhound Bus on a cross-country trip to a WorldCon, in a hydromedusa, by WATS conference line (with modifications for the dice), or off and on in spare moments for weeks at a time, as almost the entire complex setup of action and interaction is kept in the minds of the players. If you pick up a stranger in the Dungeon and let him join your party, does the Dungeonmaster handle it? I have hundreds of questions, most of which I expect the rulebooks to answer.⁴⁷

Johnstone postulated that *Dungeons & Dragons* had inaugurated a new order of Game precisely because it relied on no sort of board or other physical representation, instead existing only in the minds of the players. It is especially striking to hear this coming from one of the administrators of

Coventry. Equally noteworthy is his offhand use of dungeon master, a term that Lee Gold also uses in *APA-L* #510, in reference to her first

⁴⁷ *APA-L* B-Roll Negative

time serving as referee: It was a fun game, for the Dungeon-master as well as the players. This new term certainly derived from the position of gamesmaster in postal *Diplomacy*, a title that goes back as far as 1963 (see Section 4.3). As we saw in the previous section, fans in Detroit called the *Dungeons & Dragons* referee a gamesmaster not long after GenCon in 1974. The late 1974 issues of *Minneapa* consistently employ the term gamesmaster for the referee of dungeon adventures. In *APA-L* #514, Swanson in Kyth Interstellar Bulletin says that if you dislike/are tired of a gamesmaster suicide is the only answer, that gamesmaster also prevailed in his Boston gaming circles. This coinage of master seems to have migrated south from the Bay Area with the Hannifens. From Los Angeles, the role of the dungeon master would quickly spread to a large segment of *Dungeons & Dragons* fandom.

The Golds took it upon themselves to indoctrinate the remainder of Los Angeles fandom, and happily shepherded groups of seven or so players at a time into Lee Gold's first attempt at a dungeon, an abandoned underground labyrinth now being used as a condominium by the local fiendom. By February 20, 1975, she had already run two groups through, on the previous Saturday and Sunday.⁴⁸ Her detailed account of the Sunday sessions shows a certain debt to Hilda Hannifen's game: immediately upon descent, for example, the party encounters a group of zombies who flee from the party's Cleric. This group lacks a convenient nomaru to cope with vampires, however, and upon being confronted with a pack of bloodsuckers they leave behind one of their number to join the undead ranks in order to make their escape. After bribing a massive banquet of berserkers, the party stumbles upon another sort of black mass, this time a group of Black Enchanters in the process of torturing a Lawful sword, presumably with the intent of effecting a conversion. After overcoming these adversaries, the party grabs the sword and returns to cast a sleep spell on the berserkers, from whom they steal diamond pendants, jeweled cufflinks and a dumb sword named Melvin. Apparently, berserkers stock saffron and aquavit in their pantry.

June Moffatt, who played in that expedition, judged that her first game of *Dungeons & Dragons* was interesting, but dreadfully slow, and suggested that rather than compelling players to act as cartographers, some sort of map

could be pre-drawn and gradually revealed to the players through the process of exploration.⁴⁹ Lee Gold voiced the opposite concern she worried that a dungeon would become obvious too quickly. In order to reuse her scenario without making it stale for players, after her first session the walls in the dungeon have been shifted slightly... and many of the tenants have moved or acquired new treasure. Gold had also by this point realized a fundamental empirical measure of dungeon worth: If one's Dungeon is interesting, one gets expeditions venturing down again. If not, it is deserted. These words reflect an early recognition of the responsibility of the referee to provide an interesting, fair and challenging experience to players, and the Darwinist realization that failure to do so would force players to seek alternatives. Ted Johnstone echoed this sentiment shortly thereafter in *APA-L* #511, by which time he had actually studied the rules (photocopied for him by Gold). Setting aside his justifiable complaints about the disorganized and obscure rulebooks, he found the underlying concept very strong, especially in that it's not a zero-sum game;; the Referee, or Dungeonmaster, wins if suggesting dungeon the players enjoy his setting enough to want to come back and explore further. The notion that the dungeon master wins by designing a popular dungeon must have a special resonance for someone who writes fiction for a living the dungeon master here succeeds in much the same way that he as an author succeeded when his novel sustained the interest of readers and impressed them enough that they might look forward to a later work. The process of running a game shapes a story collaboratively with the players, and a dungeon master who tailors events to meet player expectations will be rewarded with repeat customers.

⁴⁸ *APA-L* #510.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* The idea of a map that reveals itself will be discussed again in the Epilogue.

Unsuccessful dungeon masters would see their players relocate to competing dungeons. In Los Angeles, alternative underworlds sprang up at a pace in keeping with the availability of the system and implements of play. Some bothersome constraints limited the rate of its spread for example while rulebooks can be photocopied, polyhedral dice cannot. In *APA-L* #510, Lee Gold complains, We still haven't managed to get a set of D&D dice, tho we do have two sets on order. That much said, provided you treat the rules flexibly, you can surmount this obstacle. We have however figured out how to mock up an 8-sided die, a 12-sided die and a 20-sided die (with

probability being kept the same for any given face turning up) with two dice of different colors. (How will be left as an exercise to the reader.) Had the Golds rediscovered the approximation of a d20 given by Korns in the back of *Modern War in Miniature*? Perhaps, though his work did not extend to octahedrons or dodecahedrons;; whatever their method, the convention they adopted must have sufficed for casual play, and probably proliferated to others in the Los Angeles area.

Nor did the Golds tinkering stop with dice. In *APA-L* #514, Lee went beyond mere evangelism for the game and began publishing guidance on dungeon design and interpretation of the often-lax rules. As Section 3.2.3.1 mentioned, the system in *Dungeons & Dragons* of awarding experience for killing monsters suffers from extreme underspecification;; although Gygax had authored a clarification for *GPGPN* #12 (September 1974), surely that obscure periodical remained unknown to most *Dungeons & Dragons* players, including those in Los Angeles. Lee argued that experience awards must correspond to the ratio between the hit dice of slain monsters and the level of the slayer while the example text in *Men & Magic* may support this view, it certainly differs from the guidance given by Gygax in *GPGPN*. The first wave of gamers in Los Angeles confronted the same ambiguities in the game that any pocket of enthusiasts must have addressed: how many times a memorized spell may be cast, just how pliant the Charm spell rendered an adversary, how well modern contrivances like rigged-up gunpowder or Molotov cocktails fared in a fantasy setting. The need for agreement on these points arose because characters, and dungeons themselves, had grown increasingly portable a character who started in Lee Gold's dungeon, for example, might later visit Mark Swanson's. Without standardized approaches to awarding experience, or distributing treasure, or designing monsters, traveling characters could find themselves unexpectedly slaughtered or absurdly overpowered.

Concerns about standardization were not merely theoretical: characters had an increasing diversity of dungeons to choose from. Early in March 1975, Lee and Barry Gold attended the regional Boskone science fiction convention in Boston, where they played in Swanson's dungeon, a 345-and-a-half room funhouse called Gorree.⁵⁰ By the March 20 collation of *APA-L*, Ted Johnstone had constructed his own island of Calendim, honeycombed like Mount Suribachi with underworld perils. A full half of the twenty-two

⁵⁰ Swanson eventually shared his house rules for Gorree in the *Wild Hunt #10* at the end of 1976.

submissions to that *APA-L* collation mention *Dungeons & Dragons*. The Golds broke ground on a somewhat more ambitious dungeon, in which Barry designed the even levels and Lee the odd ones, eventually to be known as NeoCarn. It will be totally nonanachronistic. For instance there will be no elevators, escalators or sidewalks;; just stairs, ramps and trapdoors. Jack Harness, another survivor of Coventry, had tasted enough of the Golds subterranean hospitality that he too began architecting a lair of his own.

Similar real estate booms erupted in other cities, though few as vibrant or thoroughly-documented as Los Angeles. In Michigan, John van de Graaf began in March 1975 his *Ryth Chronicle*, a zine relating the progress of the twenty-three players in their local campaign centering on the eponymous river Ryth which had begun the previous November among those players is Len Scensny, author of the favorable early analysis of *Dungeons & Dragons* in *Midwest Gaming Review #11*. Enumerating the Ryth participants, many of them *Diplomacy* and wargaming veterans, we again see an unusual number of female names: the wives of both van de Graaf and Scensny, for example, figure as regular players. In the first issue of Stephen Tihor's East Coast campaign newsletter *The Haven Herald* (May 1975), we can witness the beginnings of his Tolkien-laden world of Endore, a diversion for students at Princeton University which gradually spread into New York City as well. The rapid adoption of *Dungeons & Dragons*, to say nothing of its appeal to a demographic that differed materially from that of a traditional wargame, hinted that the game might go on to a far greater destiny than anyone could have anticipated.

5.5 THE SEEDS OF SUCCESS

In 1975, Tactical Studies Rules began to see how much money they could mine from the underworld Gary and Dave had discovered. This is not to say that earnings the prior year had disappointed the publishers of *Dungeons & Dragons* quite the contrary, for a newborn wargame company to survive its first year at all was a remarkable achievement, and to turn even a small profit would be a shocking eventuality. A somewhat later recollection suggests that TSR may have managed gross sales of \$50,000 over those twelve months.⁵¹ In mid-January 1975, Gygax contributed to the fanzine *Europa* a description of the bustling everyday operation of the TSR partnership one year into its life: TSR is run from the home of Mr. Kaye at

present, although we expect this to change within a year or two. (Remember that our firm is only two years old NEXT November). Orders come to that address at an average of perhaps ten per day although that total includes orders from stores and distributors, so it gives no real picture of what volume we move. Mr. Kaye handles from 50-75 orders per week. Between one and two letters per day are sent to TSR inquiring about one thing or another. I handle about 60% of these inquiries, with the balance being handled by either Mr. Kaye or Mr. Blume. [EU:#4 5]

⁵¹ [DR:#35] Gygax reported that figure quite late, however, and it may be inflated. Consider that four releases in 1974 would amount to a total sum of only half that figure and surely not all of those titles sold out, nor did all copies sell for the full cover price. We can plausibly add some additional revenue from accessories like dice, perhaps miniature sales, as well as reselling the back catalog of Guidon Games. The figure must also include early sales of the second printing of *Dungeons & Dragons*. A more conservative estimate for first-year revenue would be closer to the \$20,000 30,000 mark.

Kaye acted as Treasurer in addition to President, Blume as Sales Manager and Vice President, and Gygax served as Advertising Manager as well as Editor. While they remained only a partnership, Gygax hints that they were currently considering the possible advantages of incorporation. The greatest barrier to the growth of the business, he attests, is managing to get enough cash to keep up with the TREMENDOUS amount of rules and games we have waiting for publication! Raising cash required a substantial sales volume, and TSR typically runs only 1,000 copies of a set of rules in the first printing. Fortunately, of the four titles published in 1974, all enjoyed a favorable reception and credible sales, including a latecomer that snuck in toward the end of autumn: *Star Probe*.

Whereas previous TSR titles reflected the innovations of the LGTSA and the leftovers of Guidon Games, *Star Probe* hailed from the Twin Cities. Its designer, John M. Snider, began a science fiction campaign within the MMSA in 1972;; it is mentioned in the July issue of *Corner of the Table*.⁵² The idea quickly gained traction;; Arneson reports a few months later in *Corner of the Table* that since John set up his two campaigns a few months

ago the majority of club members have become participants.⁵³ *Star Probe* falls well outside the gaming paradigm established by *Dungeons & Dragons*. It is a game of space exploration, where ships investigate distant planets and contact any denizens thereof, something after the fashion of the television series *Star Trek* (1966). Lacking any prime directive, the competing tyrannical space empires in *Star Probe* vie only to decide who can extract the most wealth from their colonial possessions. If two spacefaring powers arrive at the same system, some rudimentary ship-to-ship tactical combat rules determine the victor. Turns, however, take a month of game-time, and freedom of agency is sharply curtailed a die roll determines the outcome of discovering an alien species, rather than any process where a player invents some clever stratagem for sparking friendship or enmity as desired. The folded 22-by-28 inch Star Map enclosed with the game shows over two thousand star systems, and through an elaborate system of coordinate notation it depicts these bodies in a three-dimensional space. Although *Star Probe* laid TSR first stake in the space wargaming market, it falls into a clear tradition of space exploration games, one lengthily detailed in the pages of the fanzine *Supernova. War of the Empires* by Tullio Proni (later revised by Gygax), which arrived hot on the heels of *Star Trek*, pioneered the genre of space exploration games with multiple commanders where control of the largest number of planets resulted in victory. *Diplomacy* variants with an interstellar theme filled the relevant fanzines. Lou Zocchi even created a game called *Star Trek* in the spring of 1972, one replete with Klingons, Romulans, even Spocks and McCoys, though before the end of the year he changed its⁵² is working on another operation and this is an area where our groups have never done anything before. Exact details of play are still not available, but the gist of the scenario uses the far distant future when good old humans are mucking around the universe getting into trouble. It seems that there is someone else out there too and after finding out they could clobber us as bad as they could clobber us things sort of fell apart. This left a number of local pockets of colonization populated by several different types of society in addition to a few bug eyed monsters and the fact [COTT:v4n4] This effort was already mentioned briefly in Section 1.10. See also #40. ⁵³ [COTT:v4n6] Apparently, these space Blackmoor adventure campaigns overlapped sometimes with

vessel from an avian race having had the misfortune *Dungeons & Dragons* and more modern or futu *Sturmgeschütz* name to *Alien Space* to avoid familiar legal entanglements.⁵⁴ In his foreword to *Star Probe* (penned September 1, 1974), Gygax notes that this booklet represented the first installment of a trilogy of space campaign rules planned by TSR.

Whatever pride Kaye, Gygax and Blume felt in the promising inaugural year of their business, TSR returns of 1975 would vastly exceed those of 1974, and with this success came the requisite challenges. Consider that the first printing of one thousand copies of *Dungeons & Dragons* took some eleventh months to sell. The second printing issued in January 1975, also one thousand copies, sold out in only five or six months, at such a rate that already in April, TSR clamored to assemble a third printing of two thousand copies, and even this combined stockpile would not last them until the end of the year, necessitating a fourth printing in November.⁵⁵ In the intervening months, TSR transformed from a venture operated by hobbyists out of sheer enthusiasm for wargaming into a real company with paid employees and the corporate machinery required to handle orders at significant volumes.

One fateful, fundamental and unwelcome change intruded upon the success of these young entrepreneurs in the first weeks of 1975, changing forever the destiny of *Dungeons & Dragons*. On January 31, 1975, at the age of 36, Don Kaye died suddenly of a heart attack, having witnessed only the first small step toward TSR success. As one of the three partners in TSR, its President and most business-minded director, Kaye's absence left a void that could not readily be filled, to say nothing of the impact that the death of a trusted childhood friend must have had on Gygax. The passing of Kaye posed numerous difficulties in deciding the future governance of TSR. As a stopgap measure, Blume and Gygax issued a new equal partnership agreement effective February 1, 1975, with Kaye's widow, Donna Kaye.⁵⁶ The amended partnership also required new royalty agreements with authors of TSR publications. A copy survives of the April 1, 1975, amended agreement that Gygax and Arneson executed with TSR, granting them collectively as⁵⁴ Zocchi provides a good write-up of his difficulties in #1 (Feb 1975): ago I published and sold a Star Trek Battle Manual. I later learned that I had no right

to do so, and promised not to sell any more... Paramount Studios must issue a license to anyone who⁵⁵ editorial in the *Dragon* #11 (Dec 1977), where he

relates of the initial run of *Dungeons & Dragons*:
months to sell those first sets of *D&D*

he *Dragon*

hand assembled and labeled, took eleventh months to sell, another 1,000 of the same took only five or six months to sell (and Tactical Studies Rules was thrilled). Finally a third printing of 2,000 sold in five months. So, from January 1974 to December 1975, only 4,000 sets of the original game were in in the 1999 25th anniversary boxed set of *Dungeons & Dragons*, Gygax claimed higher figures for later printings 2,000 for the second printing and 3,300 for the third the earlier account here must be preferred: there is no reason to think Gygax would know any better in 1999, many years after severing his connection with TSR, than he did in 1977 or 1979. Before 1977, Gygax rarely offered any assessment of the number of copies in print. In a letter to George Phillips dated December 17, 1975 only a handful of weeks after the fourth printing **5,000 copies for the fourth printing suggests that more conservative numbers should be favored, and that the figures in the 1999 history are inflated.**

⁵⁶ Even the renewed partnership would not survive this tumultuous year, as will subsequently be shown.

authors a 10% royalty for each copy of *Dungeons & Dragons* sold half the prior royalty agreement, we can infer from the letters Gygax sent to Arneson in January 1974 which began this chapter. All of these steps betoken a new professionalism in TSR, a gradual maturation positioning the company to address a wider market.

Even before TSR lost its President, these larger ambitions had coalesced into a new venture for the partnership: a quarterly periodical entitled, appropriately enough, the *Strategic Review*, available at a cost of \$1.50 per annum. With its commencement, the burden on posterity to unearth obscure sources where Gygax makes this or that pronouncement is somewhat lessened, as within its pages numerous articles would explain the situation of TSR for the next eighteen months with greater timeliness and accuracy than we encounter in most external sources. The first six-page issue of *SR* ties together many of the threads discussed in this chapter to date. It genially recommends, for example, the *Great Plains Game Players Newsletter* and *Wargamer's Digest* as sister publications;; the absence of *El Conquistador* from this list is no oversight, as that publication had already lapsed into abeyance (though it would not be pronounced formally dead until the

following issue of the *Strategic Review*). Despite founding his own house organ, Gygax did not deprive these faithful outlets like *GPGPN* of new material. In fact, the January 1975 issue of that periodical contains yet another important addition to the rules, a table of Attacks and Damage by Monster Type which finally does away with the single d6 of damage dealt by virtually all monsters, be they enormous or minuscule, in favor of multiple attacks with variable damage within an appropriate range;; thus the lowly kobold deals a single d4 of damage in a round, whereas a hulking roc has two claw attacks and a bite attack which deal damage scaled to its size up to a devastating d12 per claw and 2d12 per bite, enough to rend a novice adventurer to pieces. Although the first issue of the *Strategic Review* mentions that *Dungeons & Dragons* supplement books are still high on our priority list for new releases, the January *GPGPN* divulges still more detail about:

AGREEMENT

To take effect as of 1 April 1975, item 4. below notwithstanding.

This AGREEMENT is made between the the Author(s) specified
hereunder and Tactical Studies Rules, 542 Sage Street, Lake
Geneva, WI 53147, hereafter called TSR.

Author(s): Gary Gygax, 330 Center St., Lk., Geneva, WI

Dave Arneson, 1496 Hartford Ave. St. Paul, MN

1. The Author(s) hereby agree to assign to TSR the copy-right, the right to publish, sell, and distribute, the set of game rules or game entitled DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, in any form TSR deems suitable for commercial sales, as well as any other similar rights.

2. TSR hereby agrees to pay the Author(s) a royalty of TEN PERCENT (10 %) of the cover price of the game rules or game on each and every copy sold; this royalty to be payable on a quarterly basis reported within 30 days after the end of each quarter, with quarters ending 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December of each year.

3. TSR also hereby agrees that the ownership of the copy-right mentioned above shall revert to the Author(s) not more than 90 days after the set of game rules or game is no longer maintained in-print.

4. This Agreement shall not be considered a valid contract until all parties concerned have signed and dated the contract, but upon so signing the contract shall take effect on a retroactive basis from the date of publication of the set of game rules or game.

TACTICAL STUDIES RULES

Gary Gygax
E. Gary Gygax, Editor

7 April 1975

Gary Gygax
Gary Gygax

7 April 1975

Dave Arneson
Dave Arneson

17-4-75

FIGURE 58: TSR ROYALTY AGREEMENT (1975) WITH

GYGAX AND ARNESON

supplementary booklets planned for the not too distant future: Supplement #1 *Greyhawk*, Gary Gygax and Rob Kuntz;; Supplement #2 *Blackmoor*, Dave Arneson.⁵⁷

In the *Strategic Review*, one also finds many familiar references to the precursors of *Dungeons & Dragons* discussed in Chapter One. The plan to republish Guidon Games titles such as *Tractics*, *Don t Give Up the Ship* and *Chainmail* was reiterated. Gygax penned a regular feature called Castle & Crusade, which he introduces with the anecdote: Some readers will harken back to the time when there was a Castle & Crusade Society, originated by the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association and jointly sponsored by it and the now-defunct IFW. As the LGTSA was instrumental in preparing the final version of *Chainmail*, it is quite natural that your editor should discuss those rules in this column. The *Dungeons & Dragons* enthusiast also would find plenty of interest within, including a description of a new monster and rules for solo dungeon adventures. The new fiend appears under the heading Creature Features, and in this installment depicts The Mind Flayer, one of the quintessential *Dungeons & Dragons* monsters, a Lovecraftian humanoid menace with a mouthful of tentacles, psionic powers and an insatiable appetite for gray matter. The mind blast emitted by a mind flayer, the first of several psionic powers admitted to the *Dungeons & Dragons* canon, causes death in the dim-witted and insanity in geniuses. The system for solo dungeon adventures filled an urgent and obvious need for many solitary fans.⁵⁸ Using d12s, d20s and percentile dice, the random dungeon generation scheme determines the length of passages, presence of doors, appearance of monsters and so on dynamically, creating the dungeon as the solo player explores it. While this experience is at best a poor approximation of running with a referee, isolated owners of the *Dungeons & Dragons* rules no doubt tried it. The issue rounds out with a few *Tractics* additions, and although *Dungeons & Dragons* was slightly emphasized in terms of space awarded to each game, the overall composition balances fantasy wargaming with TSR other aspirations in more traditional wargame genres. At the end of the issue, the publishers inserted a survey asking the readership s opinion on the *Strategic Review* future coverage, and from the wide range of settings and

game types it proposes, clearly TSR had not decided to concentrate on *Dungeons & Dragons* to the exclusion of other products.

This first print run of the *Strategic Review* numbered only a few hundred copies, many no doubt promotional and free of cost, which arrived in mailboxes for the most part in the February 1975 timeframe. The *American Wargamer* March issue deemed it a clean, readable six page magazine... reminiscent of the old *S&T* issues of 1967 with two columns and the front page being very similar. [AW:v2n3] On the following page of that issue of the *American Wargamer*, an article by George Phillips entitled Phillips on *Dungeons & Dragons* offers the most detailed and insightful analysis yet of the game. This article, written a year after *Dungeons & Dragons* entered the marketplace, marks the beginning of a new era in which the application of the term wargame to *Dungeons & Dragons* grew

⁵⁷ [GPGPN:#12] The same issue also mysteriously hints that a third supplement is in the works,

y to any specific individual, could he mean Professor Barker?

⁵⁸ The solo dungeon rules credit George A. Lord, who perhaps provided Gygax with some naval game to the board wargaming community. [S&T:v2n2] More about the influence of solo dungeons on computer play appears in the Epilogue.

increasingly problematic. It moreover contains the strongest early account of the innovations of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and thus merits detailed scrutiny.

It begins with: To judge from published accounts in wargaming magazines (and I see a lot of local magazines), *Dungeons & Dragons* (by Gary Gygax) seems to be the most popular gaming title in some time. When Phillips gently reminds the reader of his voracious fanzine consumption, he means for us to recall that as editor of the *Guide to Wargaming Periodical Literature*, he published essentially the only comprehensive catalog of articles by subject across all wargaming zines, and thus he could probably claim an unrivaled perspective on the overall picture of the wargaming fan community. ⁵⁹ To Phillips's eyes, *Dungeons & Dragons* represented something fundamentally new: *Dungeons & Dragons* is entirely unlike any previous sort of wargame (if it is one, a thing of which I am not convinced.) Previously, he observes, setting the stage with the canonical varieties of wargaming,

Diplomacy.

there have been three sorts of wargaming efforts: boardgames, miniatures and

Though he recognizes that the boundaries between these categories admit of some fuzziness, he submits: it would appear that Gary Gygax has added a fourth dimension to the wargaming scene. *D&D* does not use miniatures (indeed, it is hard to see how one could, without gross amounts of work)... it is certainly not a boardgame in the usual sense... there are very few games where one determines the map only by moving.... Furthermore, *Dungeons & Dragons* is not a competitive game in the usual sense, at least as played here. It is more, in the old sense, the game of life you vs. the world, as represented by the gamesmaster and the dice. [AW:v2n8]

We have read before that *Dungeons & Dragons* masquerades as a wargame but relies on neither board nor miniatures, and that the mode of exploration underpinning the dungeon adventure has few obvious precedents. The more crucial insight here is the contention that *Dungeons & Dragons* did not represent merely dungeons or dragons, but something much more expansive, a game of life, a game that pitted you vs. the world. Phillips struggles to articulate what this quality might be: In a sense, the popularity of *D&D* arises from its ability to appeal to the Rommel syndrome the feeling that one actually is the character represented in the game. This idea of the Rommel syndrome was originated with respect to AH games, where it was argued that the French player in Waterloo really saw himself as the Emperor Napoleon... In *D&D*, you are one character (perhaps a few characters, but usually individual ones) with a set of strengths determined by the game. This is a very seductive approach;; it is much easier to envision oneself as a real person in some other world than it is to believe that one is all of the German eastern front commanders. [Ibid.]

Here Phillips comes right to the brink of creating a new classification for these sorts of games though he retreats into a more modest conclusion, that the 1:1 figure scale and high degree of individuation in characters creates a far more seductive, immersive experience than managing many wargaming chits in an Avalon Hill battle. The Rommel syndrome triggered by those traditional wargames may be milder, but surely that results from something more than just the figure scale: it owes to the omission of that expansive game of life quality from Avalon Hill games. How can you really believe one actually is ⁵⁹ Note that the *Guide to Wargaming Periodical Literature* transitioned to become the *History of Wargaming Quarterly* at around this

time: the final issue of the *GWPL* covered the last quarter of 1975, while the *HWQ* begins in the spring of 1976.

the character represented in the game if you cannot attempt any of the gamut of possible actions that a person in the game situation could reasonably attempt? The freedom of agency, more so than the figure scale, underlies the immersive power of *Dungeons & Dragons*. A game of you vs. the world allows a categorically different sort of role assumption than that of the roles assumed by the faux-Nazi posters to the Opponents Wanted column of the *General* described in Section 1.1. This expansiveness is not limited to the players, either. A gamesmaster of *Dungeons & Dragons*, as Phillips notes, is nothing less a world-builder: One creates one's own dungeons and towns, and populates them in as much detail as one desires. Consider how long it takes to catalog all of the items in your bedroom to do a dungeon in similar detail is a much greater effort. [Ibid.]

The article carries over to the next issue of the *American Wargamer*, and there reiterates the assertion that *D&D* is not a wargame in the usual sense. *Dungeons & Dragons* had, however, captured the imagination of a large share of the American wargaming community. In the February issue of the *American Wargamer*, Kevin Slimak found during his visit to the Midwest something remarkable enough to report, namely that St. Louis appears to be one of the few areas that isn't hooked on *Dungeons & Dragons* at present the exception proving the rule. The recently-reinvigorated fanzine *Supernova* carried a review in its 25th issue (March 1975) by Jim Hayes which proclaimed that *D&D* is a milestone in the development of wargaming, but editor Lewis Pulsipher felt compelled to gloss that sentiment with the caveat that it is not a game for someone who cannot get away from the competition idea... It is a fun game rather than something to play for blood. It has become very popular in some parts of the country, and I understand that non-wargamers are often attracted to it as well as veteran gamers. This broader appeal of *Dungeons & Dragons*, its ability to reach outside of the traditional wargaming community, proved instrumental to its success in its second year of existence.

In 1975, *Dungeons & Dragons* even broke out of the confines of America and began to spread to Europe. *Signal* magazine, run by the Canadian John Mansfield while he was stationed overseas in Europe, had previously served regular notices of *Dungeons & Dragons*, but it hardly spoke to the European audience. Native European press came in January, with an introductory article by Gygax entitled What *Dungeons & Dragons* is

All About and How to Go About it in the new journal *Europa*, edited by Walter Luc Haas. Run out of Switzerland, Haas *Europa* began in the summer of 1974 as a general wargaming zine targeting the continent, though increasingly it gravitated toward discussion of *Dungeons & Dragons*. In Britain, word of the latest craze across the Atlantic cropped up sporadically at first. Despite M.A.R. Barker's enthusiastic letter in the middle of 1974, and perhaps more surprisingly despite the full-page advertisement TSR purchased for the July 1975 issue of *Wargamer's Newsletter*, Don Featherstone did not deign to acknowledge *Dungeons & Dragons* in its pages until 1977, and then only with words constituting little more than a dismissal. [WGN:#186] One of the earliest places the game received detailed consideration was in Midgard-creator Hartley Patterson's *News from Bree*, via a letter appearing in issue #14 (March 1975) which begins, I thought you might be interested in the system in *Dungeons & Dragons*. After reading through the epistle's brief description of the magic system, Patterson replies in a way that suggests this is all news to him: This sounds very like the Midgard system devised by Will Haven. There wizards are graded and also have a limit to the number of spells they can cast at a time. They also have to acquire the spells in the first place. Aside from this brief exchange, it would not be until 1976 that Patterson began to give *Dungeons & Dragons* serious coverage in *News from Bree*. Another British newsletter, however, quickly seized the initiative in the middle of 1975: *Owl & Weasel*.

Owl & Weasel represented a new London-based venture called Games Workshop, the partnership of Ian Livingstone, Steve Jackson and John Peake.⁶⁰ In something like the manner of Don Lowry's business, Games Workshop designed games, sold games (their own and others) by mail, and published *Owl & Weasel* to draw attention to these activities. The inaugural *Owl & Weasel* of February 1975 stated their ambition to cover the gap between large commercial game publishers and the amateurish efforts of hobbyists. We'd especially like to hear from anyone who is concerned with what could loosely be described as progressive games in which category I would include Hyboria and Midgard, computer gaming, psychological games, new ideas about abstract games, and so forth. By the fifth issue, Steve Jackson had stumbled over *Dungeons & Dragons*. Although I've not actually played the game, I watched one in progress the other week at the City University Games Club, and was fascinated. How much can change in a month the July 1975 sixth issue of *Owl & Weasel* bears a huge banner

proclaiming *Dungeons & Dragons* Special Issue across its cover, and contains a detailed review, an example of play and the beginning of a voluminous examination of its structure.

The Workshop has now had a chance to play the game, the cover begins nonchalantly, and, quite honestly, we are obsessed with the thing. Is it really the most original new development in progressive gaming since *Diplomacy*? Judge for yourself. Like virtually all previous reviewers, Jackson struggles to even describe *Dungeons & Dragons*. It can be as tense as a bomb defusion, as scary as potholing and as much fun as a Python gem. As points of novelty, he singles out the cooperative aspects of play: It is noncompetitive in that each player is simply trying to further the development of his own character. Naturally, this leads into the progression system: A character does not cease to be when the night's adventure is over, but carries over from one game to another, accumulating experience points. Jackson also observes the lack of a large box with a thousand plastic bits typical of board wargames, and instead how your character and his equipment are simply written down on a piece of paper. Nor does he neglect the place of the referee, who acts as God for the adventure and has his own little universe of dungeons drawn out to scale on graph paper, and these are secret. His main criticism, again in keeping with American reviewers, is the price. \$10.00 is too much to pay for three little books, but then it is such a good game and it must have taken some time to develop.

All of these considerations are subordinate to the truly revolutionary aspect of *Dungeons & Dragons*: The beauty of the game is that any decisions made by any of the players can be incorporated. As an example of the awesome freedom of agency in the game, he relates a precious anecdote, wherein a party lathered poison on the corpse of an unwise colleague, quartered the body, and fed the parts to a roomful of huge serpents whom they could not otherwise defeat. Only in a game like *Dungeons & Dragons*, where literally *anything can be attempted*, could such an endeavor even be contemplated. It worked, mostly the Fighting-man delivering the poisoned limbs to the serpents unfortunately also contributed to their feeding, but the party prevailed. *Dungeons & Dragons* is a modern classic, Jackson concludes.

⁶⁰ Peake, however, would leave the partnership at the end of 1975. Also note that the English Steve Jackson of Games Workshop is an entirely

different person than the American Steve Jackson, designer of *Melee* and *Wizard, The Fantasy Trip* and later *GURPS*.

Games Workshop became a reseller for TSR in Britain, just as Walter Luc Haas of *Europa* resold TSR on the continent.⁶¹ With the sudden increase in the sales volume of *Dungeons & Dragons*, more than double that of the previous year, distributors became a necessity, not merely a promotional gimmick. Fortunately, many of TSR publicity venues of choice happily rose to the occasion and began selling TSR games on commission. *Wargamer's Digest* began a Reader's Service Department, offering a handful of games for sale via mail order, including a generous helping of TSR products. Local stores that advertised in the pages of *Wargamer's Digest* even began to mention *Dungeons & Dragons* by name, as does the ad for Brookhurst Hobby in the April 1975 issue. Jim Dapkus, who had reviewed *Dungeons & Dragons* so favorably in *El Conquistador*, began selling it through his own mail-order fantasy books business, which operated out of his fanzine *Bleak December*.⁶² A play-by-mail game venture called Flying Buffalo (owned by Rick Loomis, famous for its *Nuclear Destruction* and other computer-administered postal wargame titles), sold *Dungeons & Dragons* and other TSR titles through its *Wargamer's Information* as of June 1975. Lou Zocchi also began distributing TSR through his own mail-order business around the middle of the year, as he had long been reselling copies of the original Guidon Games *Tractics*, but once Lowry's stores emptied, TSR began to fulfill his back-orders with their reprint.⁶³ TSR even recruited an Australian distributor.

The increase in the sales volume of *Dungeons & Dragons* formed only part of the challenge of moving TSR products, as the Lake Genevaans aggressively introduced new games throughout the year that all required marketing and care. Some, like Brian Blume's tank rules *Panzer Warfare* (1975), enjoyed favorable reviews and respectable sales but obviously could not command the same attention from the fantasy fans who made *Dungeons & Dragons* such an unprecedented success. However, the early March release of *Greyhawk* (1975), the first supplement to *Dungeons & Dragons*, established the beginning of an entire game franchise. It moreover proved that TSR could price these releases aggressively: three slender booklets for \$10 shocked the gaming world, but the fifty-six page *Greyhawk* pamphlet, representing basically a third as much material, sold for \$5. Needless to say, people paid it those without access to a photocopier, in any event.

Greyhawk is credited as a collaboration between Gygax and Rob Kuntz, reuniting the Kings of the Castle & Crusade Society and further cementing the ties between TSR and the LGTSA.⁶⁴ This is not to say that Kuntz had only suddenly become involved with⁶¹ Both of their addresses can be found on the back cover of the Winter 1975 *Strategic Review*, for example.

⁶² Sometimes, however, even fulfilling orders for resellers proved too difficult. In the June 1975 issue of *Bleak December*, Dapkus must apologize for h

of these games and myself are friends, and as my ads went out, he assured me he would ship the he *Strategic Review* gives a nod to *Bleak December*; *Bleak December* supported poetry.

⁶³ See #1 for more on Zocchi

ad including *Dungeons & Dragons* can be found in the August 1975 issue of .

⁶⁴ The front piece also gives thanks to three gamers: Mike Mornard, Jeff Key and Alan Lucien Gygax). Mornard has already introduced himself above, as an early player in both Greyhawk and *Diplomacy* enthusiast of some repute and editor of the zine *Baraduin*, played in Midgard II, along with many other members

of the Youngstown crowd. Alan Lucien not only belonged to the IFW (he is listed as a new member

in the August 1969 *International Wargamer*) but served a term as a Senator in 1970. Lucien made an TSR as co-referee of the Greyhawk campaign from more or less its inception, no doubt Kuntz contributed a great deal to the design of *Dungeons & Dragons* as well as the city and Castle of Greyhawk. Here, however, one must remark that the *Greyhawk* pamphlet has surprisingly little to say on the subject of Greyhawk the campaign or scenario. It is divided into three sections, each of which updates particular portions of the original *Dungeons & Dragons* booklets. The changes are both extensive and pervasive, but would not assist anyone in creating a campaign based on Greyhawk. What the *Greyhawk* pamphlet does deliver is a considered revision inspired by the experience of play and the feedback of players it as much clarifies the system as it extends it, and many of its additions rectify deficiencies in the initial design of the game.

For subscribers to the *Great Plains Game Players Newsletter*, some of these updates came as no surprise. The addition of the Thief class is perhaps the most fundamental transformation of the baseline rules presented in

Greyhawk, albeit one that was old hat for GenCon attendees and Jim Lurvey's subscribers.⁶⁵ The table of Strength bonuses for Fighting-Men in the *Great Plains Game Players Newsletter*, including the percentile adjunct to a Strength of 18, also reappears, as do the guidelines for awarding experience and the Attacks and Damage by Monster Type table that liberated fiends from dealing d6s. However, Gygax did hold back a few of the *Greyhawk* revisions from the readership of *GPGPN*. A table of Intelligence bonuses, for example, now accompanies the table of Strength bonuses, granting the cleverest among Magic-users a greater chance to learn spells and a larger repertoire to draw on.⁶⁶ Just as monsters now deal damage more indicative of their stature and armaments, rather than a d6 for great and small alike, so too do weapons now reflect something of their heft and keenness: a diminutive dagger inflicts only a d4 of damage, whereas a towering two-handed sword deals a full d10 worth.⁶⁷ Even the hit points of player characters now rely on polyhedral dice, from the meager d4 of the Magic-User to the robust d8 of the Fighting-Man. Collectively, the Greyhawk rules make vastly greater use of polyhedral dice than the original *Dungeons & Dragons* system, which must have assuaged the doubts of those who belatedly discovered the outlay for dice sets as a hidden cost in the *Dungeons & Dragons* product suite.

The introduction of subclasses, and in particular the Paladin subclass of Fightingman, marked another major milestone for *Dungeons & Dragons*. Any starting Fighting-man of Lawful alignment with a Charisma of 17 or higher may elect to become a Paladin, which confers tremendous advantages coupled with a few mild drawbacks. In addition to retaining the innate abilities of a Fighting-man to wear the heaviest armor and wield the deadliest weapons, Paladins can heal others, detect and dispel evil, and if they possess any sort of Holy Sword they become virtually immune to all magic. All of this, and Paladins receive a complimentary horse as well. These last two perks especially hint that the Paladin system owes a particular debt to the character of Holger Carlson in Poul Anderson's *Three Hearts and Three Lions*. As in that novel, a Paladin must remain Lawful, and thus any chaotic act will *immediately* revoke the status of paladin, and it can *never* be regained. Also, Paladins must live frugally, charitably parting with surplus wealth and magic items. Once the idea of subclasses took root in the community, innumerable imitators created their own, and as we shall see, the early and lucky few found Gygax willing to canonize their creations.

unsuccessful bid to restart *War of the Empires* in 1971, after Gygax had abandoned it. More recently, Lucien ran *Dungeons & Dragons* in Redwood City, California, in 1974 in a letter to *GPGPN* #9, for example, Gygax recommends that Lurvey seek out Lucien as a potential subscriber interested in *Dungeons & Dragons*. His long association with the IFW included his early interest in the game of Jetan, a write-up of which he sent to *Interplanetary Communicator*

recur in Section 5.7 in connection with *Dungeons & Dragons* tournaments.

⁶⁵ The Thief system in *Greyhawk* does differ in numerous small particulars from the version in *GPGPN*: damage is converted from two additional dice of damage per four levels to double damage added at each four levels (double damage at level 1, triple damage at level 5, quadruple damage at level 9, et cetera). ⁶⁶ Eventually, this extrapolated to other classes as well; for example, Dexterity bonuses for Thief skills appear in the April 1976 issue of the *Strategic Review*. Expanding the applicability of abilities to more in-game circumstances rendered the simulation of people more vital to the system. ⁶⁷ These values are for man-sized opponents: a dagger does less (a d3) against larger opponents, whereas a two-handed sword does vastly more (3d6).

The bulk of the *Greyhawk* pamphlet exercises the less intrusive aspects of the extensibility system: the introduction of new spells, magic items and monsters. Many of these additions reflect the specification of higher levels attainable by player characters. This is not to say that the original *Dungeons & Dragons* fixed a maximum level that characters could reach, but in the original system, beyond a certain point, abilities petered out and further levels merely added more baseline capabilities rather than any new tricks. Accumulation of additional spells for Magic-users and Clerics now continues into the twentieth level. Magic-users above the fifteenth level, and Clerics above the eleventh level, gain access to extremely powerful new spells. In keeping with the original ratios in *Dungeons & Dragons*, Magic-users receive a much greater variety of these epic spells than Clerics: twenty-seven versus sixteen. Among the new Magic-User spells are a number of classics: the various Power Word spells, Wish and its little brother Limited Wish, a Time Stop enabling a wizard to act while time pauses, the Astral Spell that transports Magicusers to the astral plane and a Gate which opens a cosmic portal and allows an ultrapowerful being (such as Odin, Crom, Set, Cthulhu, the Shining One, a demi-god, whatever) to come to this plane. As

usual, Clerics get a smattering of novelties but also many hand-me-down clones of Magic-user spells, including Astral Spell.

Even for lower-level characters, *Greyhawk* offers greater spell variety and flexibility, though again disproportionately for Magic-users over Clerics (twenty-three new lower-level spells for the former, against only four for the latter). These new pages in the spell book

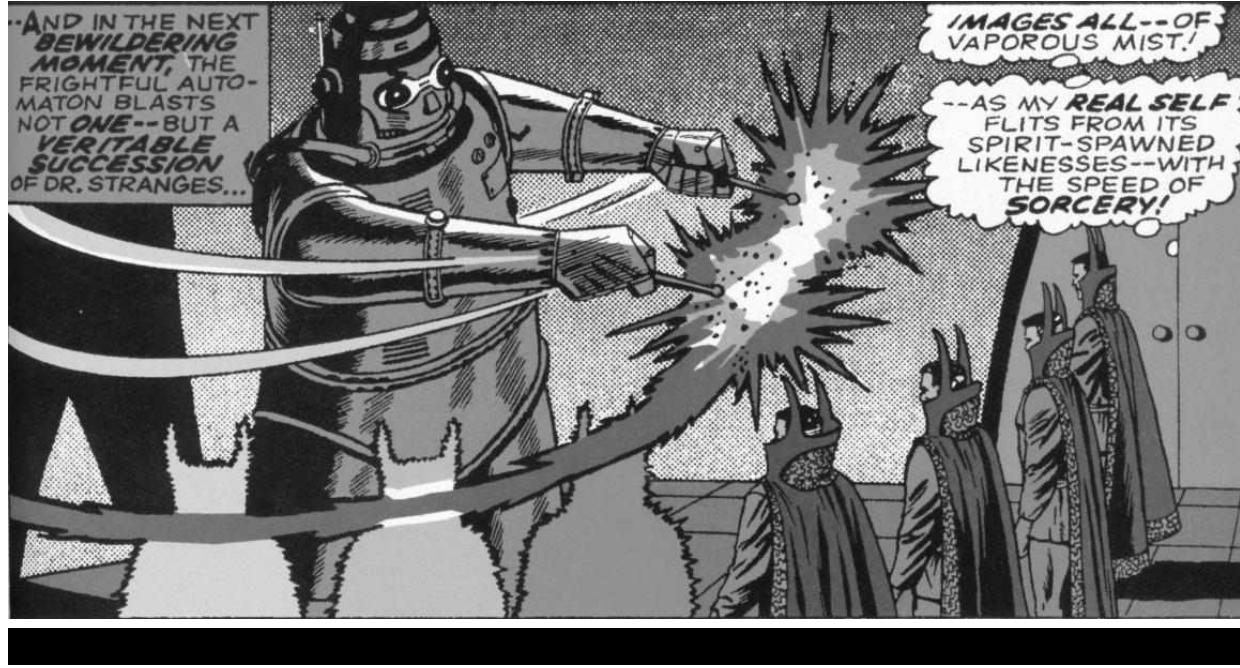


FIGURE 59: DOCTOR STRANGE CASTS "MIRROR IMAGE"

repurpose the low-level Magic-user from a support role to something more combat-ready. The addition of Magic Missile to the first tier of spells provides at least a small opportunity for a starting Magic-User to deal direct damage to adversaries; similarly the first tier Shield spell compensates for the Magic-User's inability to wear armor. Other famous spells added in *Greyhawk* include the series of Monster Summoning conjurations and the Mirror Image effect beloved of Doctor Strange.⁶⁸ Entry-level Clerics can now count among their repertoire the anti-caster spell Silence, 15 radius.

The additions to creatures and magic items are similarly extensive. Thirty-one new types of monsters emerge from the pages of *Greyhawk*, a solid boost to the fifty-one in the original booklets. Some of these newcomers were entities mentioned, but not detailed, in *Monsters & Treasure*, including titans, salamanders, gelatinous cubes, golems, doppelgangers and shadows. The additions blend mythology with sources in fantasy fiction the shadows, for example, hunger after the life energy of living things in a manner highly reminiscent of the subject of Merritt's

Creep, Shadow but also exhibit a good deal of new behaviors that clearly arose during the play of the game. The lich, a terrifying undead sorcerer, closely follows the depiction of a creature by that name in the novel *Kothar*. *Greyhawk* was the first *Dungeons & Dragons* publication to discuss druids as a monster, not yet as a character class the priesthood of a neutral-type religion who has access to both the spells of Magic-users and Clerics, as well as the ability to change shape three times per day into various sorts of animals. Druids abound in the Harold Shea tale *The Green Magician*, where seemingly everyone lives under one sort of geas or another, though as *Greyhawk* describes them, druids perhaps draw more liberally on the character of Beorn from *The Hobbit*, or perhaps his friend Radagast the Brown, whom Gandalf calls a master of shapes well versed in much lore of herbs and beasts.

Moreover, *Greyhawk* expands the bestiary by embellishing existing categories of fiends, or extrapolating them from other aspects of the game. If the rainbow of dragon variety in the original *Dungeons & Dragons* does not suffice, *Greyhawk* coins for them a number of metallic brethren: the brass, copper, bronze, silver, gold and platinum dragons, as well as the chromatic dragon which is discussed below. Many new creatures simply follow the bigger-is-better principle: a titan is a bigger, better giant;; tritons lord over mermaids;; bugbears are the giants of goblins. An example of design-by-extrapolation is the displacer beast, which obviously derives from the Cloak of Displacement magic item described in *Monsters & Treasure*. The existence of the beast explains the origins of that cloak, which makes its wearer appear to stand some distance away from their position the cloak is simply the hide of the beast, which naturally exudes the same property. As an equal and opposite reaction to the displacer beast, *Greyhawk* furthermore introduces blink dogs, which are basically lawful and will always attack Displacer Beasts. Blink dogs possess the unusual ability to teleport a short distance frequently, frustrating opponents in much the same fashion as displacer beasts. This short-range teleport, which is known as blinking,

⁶⁸ Doctor Strange casts mirror images to confuse Loki in *Strange Tales* minions in both *Strange Tales* #130 and #131, to delay the robot Voltorg in *Strange Tales* #166 *The Amazing Spider-Man Annual* #2 and to confound his inhuman enemies in *Doctor Strange* #183 (1969). In that last case, the victims

Thomas comic some years later, *Conan the Barbarian* #20 (Nov 1972),

Conan growls at a skeleton foe,

- would in a later design-by-extrapolation inspire another spell for Magic-users which conferred the same ability. One of the most obvious ways to flesh out *Dungeons & Dragons* is simply to extend to every class of character and type of item an analog for an ability formerly exclusive to some other element of the setting. Thus the displacement ability moves from cloaks to beasts, which in turn inspire an antagonistic creature with the blinking ability, whereupon blinking migrates from dogs to wizards. Other newcomers to the growing membership of fienddom in *Greyhawk* seemed tailored to the peculiarities of dungeon adventuring. For example, why are dungeon corridors not littered with the belongings of fallen adventurers? Perhaps because of the dreaded rust monster, which causes all metal, even magic armor or weapons, to wither to dust on contact. The gelatinous cube make short work of any organic remnants of former expeditions, complementing the molds and slimes in the original line-up of monsters. In the absence of these scavengers, surely dungeons would be clogged with the detritus of a thousand failed adventuring parties.

While the ranks of monster membership surges in *Greyhawk*, the variety of magical implements positively explodes. All of the major categories of items get a healthy boost: swords, armor, miscellaneous weapons, potions, rings and staves all increased in number. Swords notably gain the decapitating Vorpal Blade of Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky poem, the Dancing Sword which requires no wielder, and the Holy Sword +5 accessory for paladins. A new category of rods accompanying staves and wands adds more powers, including priestly Resurrection, to the gamut of weapons wielded by those who would rarely if ever swing them. The real proliferation, however, comes to the category of miscellaneous magic items: in *Monsters & Treasure* it numbered only twenty-nine, to which *Greyhawk* adds some 102 items. However, in fairness, for most useful items *Greyhawk* supplies a corresponding cursed item that no adventurer would want, so if we count only desirable loot the number drops substantially. For instance, the original Flying Carpet is now accompanied by a Rug of Smothering: A carpet which exactly resembles a Flying Carpet, but when an attempt to use it is made the item rolls itself around all seated upon it, smothering them unless emergency measures succeed. Or similarly, Drums which seem to every test to be Drums of Panic may actually be Drums of Deafness, cursing their user and nearby allies with poor hearing. A necklace may shoot magic

missiles, or may strangle its wearer;; bracers may grant defense (equivalent to wearing armor of a particular class) or utter defenselessness;; a girdle may confer the Strength of giants or an involuntary sex reassignment. On the revised tables for randomly-generated treasure provided in *Greyhawk*, one is indeed more likely to get a gender-reversing girdle than a strengthening one, and the probabilities frequently favor cursed miscellaneous items over their uncursed counterparts. Aside from these annoyances, the miscellaneous items debuting in *Greyhawk* include the seminal Sphere of Annihilation, the Portable Hole and the Wizard's Robe which confers to Magic-Users near-certain success in casting critical spells. The list rounds out with a number of single-use magical books which impart increases in ability or level to certain categories of reader, while causing disastrous consequences for any others who dare to peruse them.

Finally, *Greyhawk* introduces many items and monsters which collect multiple familiar abilities into one game element. Among dragons, for example, a unique entity known as the chromatic dragon, or Queen of the Chaotic Dragons, embodies all the qualities of the white, black, red, blue and green dragons by virtue of having five heads corresponding to those colors. Another, more extreme example is the signature creature the Beholder, whose portrait graces the cover of *Greyhawk*: a levitating sphere with one huge eye in its body, and ten smaller eyes on stalks atop it.⁶⁹ Each eye casts a different sort of Magic-user spell, everything from charming to disintegration. A Rod of Lordly Might can transform into a Flaming Sword, an Axe +2, a Spear +3, even a fifty-foot-long ladder. Perhaps the single component of the setting most indicative of the *Greyhawk* expansion is the Deck of Many Things, a set of fourteen cards which confer all sorts of random benefits or penalties: you may gain 50,000 experience points or suffer immediate death, depending on the card drawn.

More or less simultaneously with the publication of *Greyhawk*, TSR distributed a second issue of their quarterly *Strategic Review*, which they probably assembled around the first of April. It leads with a brief obituary for Don Kaye, and the TSR News section hurriedly explains, A lot can happen in a month, and it has been turning out that way. [SR:v1n2] Aside from *Greyhawk*, TSR had also put out Brian Blume's tank warfare game *Panzer Warfare* and had two other titles slated for imminent release: *Boot Hill*, the Gygax/Blume Wild West rules which they had tested and reworked for more than a year, and *Classic Warfare*, the definitive incarnation of

Gygax ancients rules, as had recently been featured in the pages of *Wargamer's Digest*.⁷⁰ The last page of the issue advertises yet another product soon to appear under the TSR imprint: *War of Wizards* (1975), offered as a special pre-publication edition, made up of a very limited number of author-produced copies. This board game depicts a duel between a pair of wizards who launch spells and creatures at one another, and it would thus be fair to say that it is not exactly a war game an especially apt assessment given that the designer of the game was M.A.R. Barker, who had written to *Wargamer's Newsletter* the previous summer about his unwarlike experiences playing *Dungeons & Dragons* in Mike Mornard's campaign. Barker had designed this sorcerous showdown to integrate nicely with *Dungeons & Dragons* as well as the upcoming fantasy game *Petal Throne*, an oblique hint about a future release. This spate of new releases has a logical explanation: success. We had an unexpected surge of income which allowed us to rush ahead with production of these booklets, and we hate to keep you waiting!

The *Strategic Review* also provides some overflow content for *Panzer Warfare*, another blurb on *Cavaliers & Roundheads* as well as some good historical data on pole-arms, just in time for the reprint of *Chainmail* under the TSR logo. The *Dungeons & Dragons* content of the second *Strategic Review* further extended the game with a new monster, a tentacular menace called a roper, and another subclass of the Fighting-man known as the Ranger. Much as with the Thief, the Ranger owes its existence to someone outside the TSR fold: one Joe Fischer, who detailed the class under his own byline, a first for community input into the design of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Like the Paladin, Rangers must remain Lawful, and they also require extraordinary ability scores (including healthy amounts of Intelligence and Wisdom) to qualify for the subclass. No one familiar with Tolkien could mistake that Aragorn is the original of the Ranger class: In the wild lands beyond Bree there were mysterious wanderers. The Bree-folk called them Rangers, and knew nothing of their origin. They were taller and darker than the Men of Bree and were believed to have strange powers of sight and hearing, and to understand the languages of beasts and birds.

⁶⁹ The preface to the *Monster Manual*

prototypical beholder, a revised version of which was included in *Greyhawk*

⁷⁰ From the May 1974 issue of the , though the rules existed in an earlier

form, as Section 1.4 already discussed, beginning in the *IFW Monthly*. [IW:v2n5]

Following Aragorn's prototype, Rangers have the exceptional ability to track the path of most creatures when outdoors, and even in dungeons, much as Aragorn tracked the hobbits in the first few lines of *The Two Towers*. They also attract extraordinary followers, includes elves and dwarves, who may or may not be named Legolas or Gimli. Every Ranger fights particularly well against a certain category of monsters, here called the Giant Class (Kobolds Giants), though the division of monsters into such families has little precedent in the rules.⁷¹ Finally, Rangers above eighth level begin to gain spell-casting abilities of both Clerics and Magic-users;; in order to reach that critical point faster, Rangers gain four experience points for every three they earn. Like the paladin, they must live in austerity, charitably disposing of any excess material wealth, and owing to their solitary nature, they must work apart from their brethren: no more than two Rangers may collaborate in a single party.

More significant even than the addition of a new subclass, however, is the article *Questions Most Frequent Asked about Dungeons & Dragons Rules*, which clarifies many aspects of the combat system and furnishes a sorely-needed example of combat as well as glosses on experience and spell-memorization. As Section 3.2.3.1 previously remarked, the notes on experience in the *Strategic Review* clarify little: just that referees should award experience sparingly, especially when the experience derives from material wealth rather than combat victories, and that battles should yield the stated rewards only when the circumstances actually jeopardize the lives of the player characters. The commentary on spells, on the other hand, provides a crisp ruling on authorial intent: A magic-user can use a given spell but once during any given day... a magic user could, for example, equip himself with three sleep spells, each of which would be usable but once. Similarly, when casting from a scroll as the words are uttered they vanish, establishing scrolls to be single-use only.⁷² The combat clarifications, almost in passing, define an initiative system with no precedent in the prior rules: while surprise allows a first attack, thereafter initiative is simply a matter of rolling two dice (assuming that is the number of combatants) with the higher score gaining first attack that round, with scores adjusted for Dexterity.

As TSR production ramped into high gear, the growing fandom of *Dungeons & Dragons* digested the new concepts in *Greyhawk* and the

Strategic Review with cautious optimism. The release of *Greyhawk* was the first event in the evolution of *Dungeons & Dragons* that the fan community reacted to *en masse* and publicly. In *APA-L* #520, Mark Swanson reports from Boston on the reception of: the first *D&D* supplement, *Greyhawk*. Local opinion is a little doubtful about it. In Wisconsin, they have been playing for two years or so and everyone is so high [level] that minor dangers are ignored. These rules make results far more dependent on your characteristics. They also make treasure hunting far more important which may be realistic but doesn't improve the game as far as I can tell. You kill 15 orcs and what do

⁷¹ Some monsters are obviously grouped as instances of a type: notably dragons, giants and elementals, each of which admits of several subtypes. The ability of Clerics to turn undead also rendered the undead a recognized category. For dragons and elementals, these groupings already existed in *Chainmail*.

⁷²

After reading a spell from a scroll the writing disappears, so the spell is usable on

you get? 160 experience points.

Nonetheless, Swanson must concede that most dungeonmasters are using parts of the rules in *Greyhawk* note how the lingo dungeon master has now spread to Swanson. In the April 1975 issue of the *American Wargamer*, Kevin Slimak gives another perspective on the reception in Boston: The appearance of the first supplement to *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Greyhawk*, has served to maintain, and perhaps reinforce, the *D&D* craze at MITSGS. [AW:v2n9] While the new rules/monsters/magic items met with mixed reactions, he also observes that GMs are using the new rules as they see fit, along with the rules interpretations that the folks at TSR have just put out, presumably referring to the FAQ in the *Strategic Review*. For some, however, these essential corrections came too late. These fans had already filled the gaps in the system of *Dungeons & Dragons* with their own inventions, and settled ambiguous rules to the collective satisfaction of their local gaming circles. From their corner, as we shall see in the next section, came a new rallying cry: *D&D* is too important to be left to Gary Gygax.

5.6 ALARMING EXCURSIONS

By the late spring of 1975, *Dungeons & Dragons* had completely transformed the Los Angeles fan community contributing to *APA-L*. The Santa Monica hobby shop Aero Hobbies, whose highly-inventive gaming group suggested the Thief class to Gygax, even began circulating a handwritten price list of TSR games as a contribution to the APA, though surely this blatant advertising in a supposedly fan-driven enterprise troubled the elder statesmen of local fandom. The tenor of discussion about *Dungeons & Dragons* had also converted from the delight and passion of fresh discovery to a more sober, and if anything more deeply engrossing, consideration of its system and potential improvements thereof. While enthusiasts still digested the additions in *Greyhawk* and the *Strategic Review*, alternative ideas had ample time to entrench themselves.

Lee Gold had previously ruminated over the ambiguities in the system for spell memorization and casting, no doubt after seeing the system exploited by players who claimed that they could cast any memorized spell an infinite number of times, and eventually she decided to enforce hard limits on the amount of casting that could be done at a time with a system of her own invention, one intended to model the energy required to cast spells. Ted Johnstone, although initially uncomfortable with this direction, wrote in *APA-L* #521 that after talking it over with Lee I'll accept the concept if some allowance is made for recovery of goetic energy after a certain period of not casting anything. Just because most parties don't stay in long enough to use up their supply doesn't mean it shouldn't be possible to stay down for a full week it'd be silly to run out of curative spells, for instance, when they're done with a simple laying-on-of hands. Suppose a Magic-User with 14 points of goetic energy used 5 in a major encounter say he could restore one point in each full turn of rest or two turns of movement (no spell-casting).

This idea of some sort of quantified goetic energy expended by spellcasting, which commonly became known as spell points, quickly began to gain traction. In the following issue of *APA-L*, John Hertz replied to Tedron, I rather like the idea of using up spell-points. I do think they should be restorable by rest. One issue later, Hilda Hannifen expressed more qualified enthusiasm: I agree that spell casting should be rejuvenated at a faster pace than Lee allows but also at a slower pace than you [Johnstone] would allow: say, one point per hour game time. I like to see limits on magic use as that tends to make a more wary, challenged game group. These deliberations are remarkable for their complete dismissal of the published clarifications of spell memorization in the *Strategic Review* #2, of which all

parties surely were well aware by this point. Mark Swanson, speaking as a former IFW member familiar with Gygax prior contributions to wargaming, reacted to that ruling (in which memorized spells are forgotten once cast) with the blanket statement: I am supporter of the slogan *D&D* is too important to leave to Gary Gygax. Gary has produced other games in the past. The problem has been that they are not interesting in their full form. They tend to be flawed by simple, bad solutions to complex problems. Thus, in Gary Gygax game, A MAGIC USER GETS TO USE EACH SPELL ONCE A DAY! [APA-L:#503]

Johnstone must concur with this sloganeering;; in the same issue he writes portentously, It seems obvious that the Game has now outgrown its creators. Neither of them felt constrained to accept any of the judgments of TSR: Like those other Dungeonmasters you mention, I ll probably end up using parts of *Greyhawk* and adapting some of their less-well-thought-out ideas. Thus, systems like Johnstone nascent spellpoint mechanic, one clearly reminiscent of many future game systems, continued to develop independently of the pronouncements coming out of Lake Geneva. Some of these guerilla corrections overruled inconvenient restrictions in the original system, for example, the level cap on the progression of elves and dwarves. Gamers at Caltech constructed a revised table of level progression which required different amounts of experience points for humanoids to advance about 25% greater, though elves incurred a higher penalty at high levels and dwarves actually required less experience than humans. The Aero Hobbies players, employing as a messenger the same Gary Switzer who shared their Thief class idea with Gygax, published in *APA-L* #522 (May 15, 1975) a system for critical hits and trips, wherein melee combatants have a slight chance to either score a very successful critical hit attack double damage or better in some circumstances or scoring a trip, which may result in dropping a weapon or even allowing enemies a free hit.⁷³

While previously, the participants in *APA-L* obliquely referred to the house rules of their particular dungeons in general terms, articles increasingly ascended into the levels of specificity required for published rules. Surely they followed the example of articles in the *Strategic Review*, which amended *Dungeons & Dragons* with somewhat cavalier sweeps of the pen. Ironically, however, the *APA-L* crowd found that their pluralistic approach to the system led to an undesirable consequence: a lack of

character portability between dungeons which operated under different rules. Back in *APA-L* #511, Swanson

⁷³ The Aero Hobbies critical hit system is overly complex, but worked roughly as follows. On each in mind that early critical hit or a trip if the attack roll succeeds, then a hit has occurred, otherwise it is a trip. For critical hits, 2d6 are then rolled, which determine the hit location, much in the fashion of *Fight in the Skies*: hits may land on the neck, leg, groin, head or even on a 12 the spinal cord. Typically, more dice particular to the location must then be rolled: for a spinal hit, for example, percentile dice are rolled, at 80 or higher resulting in an automatic fatality. For a trip, 1d6 is rolled to determine the egregiousness of the error: on the worst case roll of 6, for example, the attacker loses their weapon, and the defender gets three (!) free hits on the attacker, as well as automatically seizing the initiative for the next round, if any.

insisted that if *D&D* gets going, every effort should be made to make sure the games are compatible and that everyone accepts each other's ranks, since otherwise everyone is always a first level fighter or whatever and the games get boring.⁷⁴ The mounting preponderance of variant rules, however, forecasted widespread incompatibility, as characters seasoned in one dungeon might be unwelcome in others governed by differing laws. A purist playing by the TSR rules, for example, could justifiably reject a twelfth-level elf emerging gleefully from one of the Caltech dungeons as a blatant violation of game-balance. As more fans broke ground on their own underworld funhouses, the problem only worsened. I fear with the proliferation of would-be Dungeonmasters we are in for a wave of tasteless sillinesses and conflicts of opinion, Johnstone lamented in *APA-L* #522.

The number of voices contributing to this discussion imposed a significant strain on *APA-L*. Ever wary of the growing copy-count requirement, Bruce Pelz undoubtedly looked askance at several new members without any strong ties to the Los Angeles area or broader fandom who joined solely to discuss *Dungeons & Dragons*. In #521, Lee Gold hinted that she planned to found a *D&D* APA (as yet untitled), and two issues later announced that we have named the *D&D*-zine *Alarums & Excursions*. It will come out monthly, being mailed the first Monday after the first weekend of every month. Copies are free to contributors (plus postage), 25¢ to lastish contributors (plus postage) or 75¢ to noncontributors (plus postage). Some freebie copies of the firstish will be made available to

interested persons. I have lifted some material from APA-L so that Swanson, Digby, Harness and Tedron will be contributors to the firstish, which will be appearing June 2nd.

Alarums & Excursions has an arguably superior claim even to that of the *Strategic Review* to the title of first *Dungeons & Dragons* magazine after all, the *Strategic Review* covered many TSR titles, but *A&E* initially focused exclusively on *D&D*.⁷⁵ The mission statement on its first pages proclaims its aspiration to give all of us, especially DungeonMasters and Wilderness-Lords, a chance to discuss interpretations of the rules and to share our own special monsters and treasures with others who will appreciate them properly. The prominence of term Dungeon-Masters

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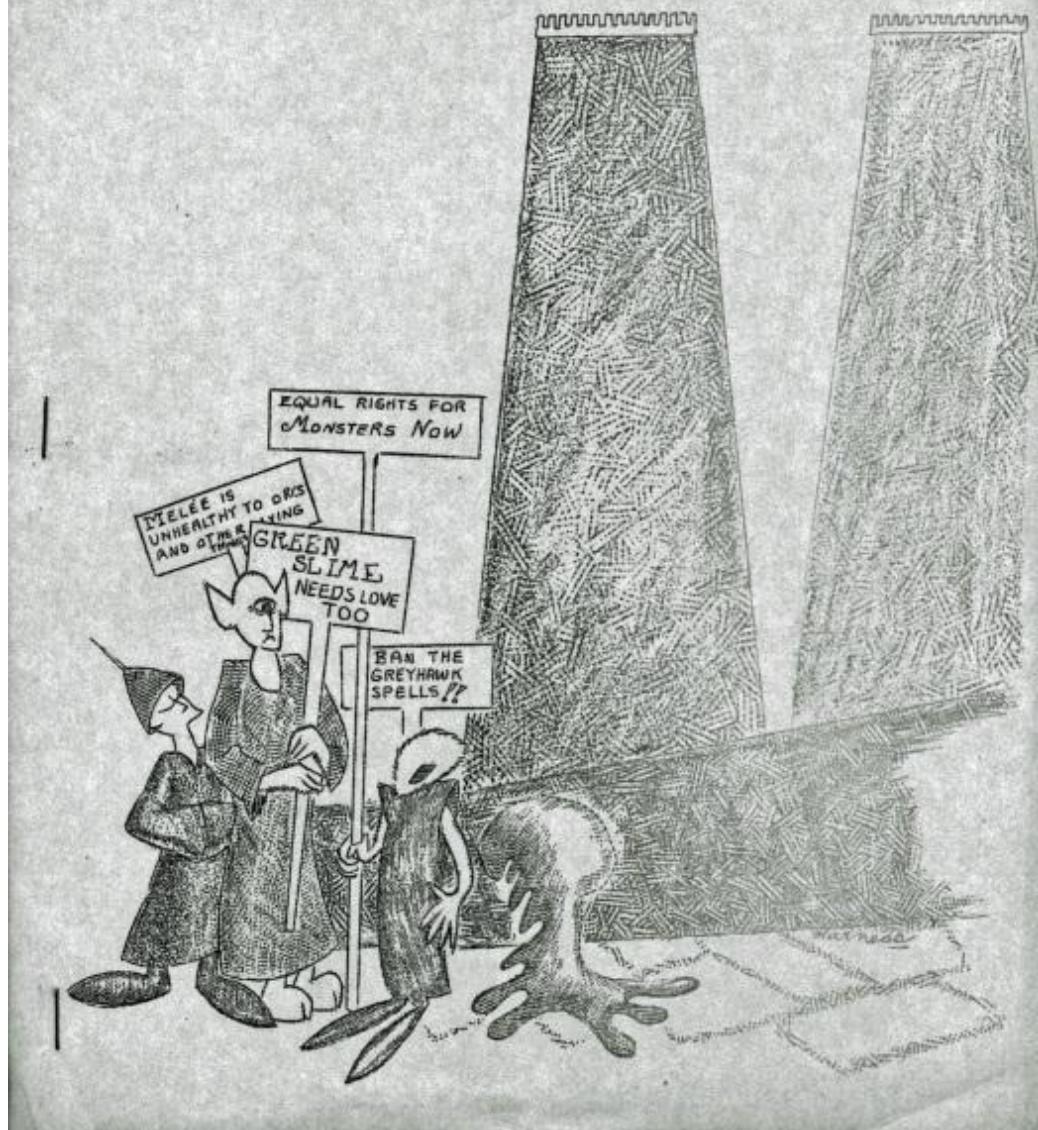
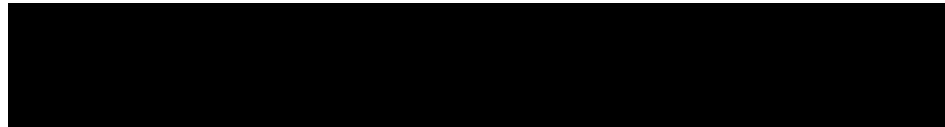


FIGURE 60:

EARLY ALARUMS & EXCURSIONS



here is noteworthy, as surely *Alarums* played

man these terms would percolate through the fan community for years before affecting the official *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks.

⁷⁵ While both the *Ryth Chronicle* and the *Haven Herald* preceded *Alarums*, both began as campaign newsletters rather than magazines with general articles discussing the game of *Dungeons & Dragons*. When other games arose to compete with *Dungeons & Dragons*, of course, *A&E* discussed them as well.

a huge part in elevating that term to its present popularity, though sadly the same cannot be said for the forgotten Wilderness-Lords. *Alarums* has proven a periodical of astonishing longevity, appearing monthly for some thirty-five years as of the time of this writing (issue #400 arrived in January 2009). As Gold promised, the inaugural issue included many articles culled from the back catalog of *APA-L*, including the more disgruntled commentary of Swanson and Johnstone. Lee Gold's own contribution, entitled Tantivity, further evinced the divisiveness of Los Angeles area dungeon masters: she accuses the Caltech players of refusing to accept experience points awarded in other dungeons, quoting their justification that other dungeons don't play the rules right and leading her to dub their game Dungeons & Beavers, the latter being the Caltech mascot.

When he first heard inklings of *Alarums*, Johnstone expressed his wish that it might serve as a venue for perfecting *Dungeons & Dragons*; through it, he hoped, we may be able to arrive at a truly intelligent version of the game. [APA-L:#522] This truly intelligent version would presumably incorporate the many fixes favored by Los Angeles area fans. In line with this ambition, the first *A&E* includes a number of chunks of system: Johnstone, for example, presents a proposed set of rules for modern firearms, useful for modeling the possible emplacement of a troop of Vietcong in a swampy jungle along with an ordinary black dragon. Lee Gold fleshes out rules for animals, including everything from ordinary snakes to exotic koalas and a few imaginary critters such as the tribbles from *Star Trek*. She furthermore presents the current local custom for limitations on spell casting: each Magic-User receives spell points equal to half the sum of Intelligence and Constitution, and spells are priced by their effect: a locking spell costs half a spell point, a Fireball or Lightning Bolt two spell points, Sleep one spell point, and so forth. Mark Swanson includes a set of Special Abilities for starting characters intended to impart greater individuation, as otherwise most first-level Fighting-men, for

example, are more or less alike in specification and performance. By rolling 2d6, one determines the Special Abilities for a character, all of which are minor merits such as a +1 bonus to sword use, +2 saving throw against charm or sleep and being a good liar who gains +1 Charisma. The most ambitious of the rules in the first *A&E* came from Michael Siemon, in his article

Proposal for a Character Type of Singer or Bard. Siemon proposes the addition of a seventh ability to *Dungeons & Dragons* called Inspiration, which would be rolled with 3d6 at character creation time along with Strength, Intelligence and so on. The motivation behind the proposal is twofold: first, to create a class in which all types may advance indefinitely, where by types here he means races such as dwarves and elves who suffer level caps in the original rules which prevent their advancement, and second, to allow Neutrals to have access to some of the Cleric spells, as *Dungeons & Dragons* forces Clerics to choose either Law or Chaos. We will return to the particulars of bards as character classes in Section 5.8.

Gold collated these submissions into the first issue of *Alarums* and sent it, as she promised, to interested parties, reserving two copies for a party she very much hoped would be interested: TSR. Unsurprisingly, the ever-prolific Gygax replied personally with a three-page letter printed in the second issue of *Alarums* (July 1975). He pays particularly close attention to the criticisms of *Greyhawk* and the *Strategic Review* aired in the first issue and responds, with considerable probity: I too subscribe to the slogan *D&D* is too important to leave to Gary Gygax. Gosh and golly! Whoever said anything else. However, pal, best remember that it is far too good to leave to you or any other individual or little group either! It now belongs to the thousands of players enjoying it worldwide, most of whom will probably never hear of you or your opinions unless you get them into the *Strategic Review*. [A&E:#2]

The copy count of the second issue of *Alarums* stood at sixty, while the second issue of the *Strategic Review* initially circulated to around three hundred subscribers not so enormous a difference in reach as Gygax might imagine. Still, the thrust behind Gygax argument here is obvious enough: he wanted the discussion of the rules of *Dungeons & Dragons* to transpire in a venue controlled by TSR. It may appear contradictory that Gygax strenuously argues in the same letter that if you don't like the way I do it, change the bloody rule to suit yourself and your players. Here, however, Gygax is feeling around the edges of an important distinction: the one

between the printed, fixed rules of the game and the situational rulings or setting elements introduced by referees for a particular session or campaign. In the context of a campaign, Gygax argues for the overriding authority of the referee over the rulebook. Indeed, he asserts freely of himself and Arneson that both of our campaigns differ from the rules found in *D&D*. That's because each campaign should be a variant ... for every fine referee runs his own variant of *D&D* anyway. This liberty is available to every dungeon master

publish rules, however, Gygax then begins

when you put down the dice and instead to have concerns. For example, Gygax compares the alternative Magic-User system discussed in *Alarums* with the official rules. He concedes, surprisingly, that to utilize a point system based on the magic-user basic abilities and his or her level is a better solution and moreover one that I have been aware of since the first. He opted for the solution in *Greyhawk* over spell points for reasons of playability: [Spell points] would have required a great deal of space and been far more complex to handle, so I opted for the simple solution. Gygax did not hope to prevent anyone from employing this variant rule, but he does want to make clear why he did not canonize it in the published rules. The distinction between control over the implementation of the rules in a particular campaign versus control of the printed game rules itself, while not the easiest one to draw, undoubtedly motivated Gygax to steer future discussions of the printed rules toward the in-house magazine of TSR.

Of course, Gygax could not neglect *Alarums* as an outlet for promotion: it would have been entirely uncharacteristic for him not to dedicate a full page of his missive to advertising future TSR releases. He gleefully trumpets the forthcoming *Empire of the Petal Throne* by Professor M.A.R. Barker, with the endorsement that I must liken the whole of the Professor's work to J.R.R.T.'s, more or less the highest praise one could bandy about in those days. Gygax has a great deal to say about the high-quality illustrations and materials provided for the game, though surprisingly little about its nature except that its form was influenced by *D&D* (and I am greatly flattered about that). The only negative consideration he can foresee is the cost though his worst-case estimate at that time still fell short of the eventual price tag. He furthermore mentions that we also have a wonderful parlor version of *D&D* dungeon adventures coming up fairly soon, a reference to the forthcoming release of the boardgame *DUNGEON!*

Alarums #2 mailed early in July 1975, presumably directly after WesterCon 28 in Oakland on the Fourth of July weekend. Lee Gold, Jack Harness and many other Los Angeles area fans made the trek northward for that event with copies of the new *Alarums* in hand. Niall Shapero remembers Lee distributing *Alarums* to the crowd:

It was at the 1975 WesterCon that I first met Lee... I was talking with some LA fan about *D&D* (said fan

You like *D&D*? Well, then you'll just *love* this! bundle of energy came bouncing by. she said, thrusting a copy of *Alarums & Excursions* under my nose. The price was reasonable, and what the devil, I was at a convention anyway. [DW:#1]

The gamers whom Lee Gold ambushed at WesterCon found within *Alarums* #2 not just a letter from Gygax, but a Monster Determination Table created by Gold for randomly populating the adversaries in a dungeon, a battle report from Dick Eney, an intriguing worksheet created by Jack Harness to assist new players in generating characters and news on the play of *Dungeons & Dragons* well beyond Los Angeles: in Boston, in Boulder, Colorado, and even in Guadalajara, Mexico.⁷⁶ The community of *Dungeons & Dragons* players had initiated a process of self-organization outside of TSR umbrella. The LASFS crowd, however, were not the only fans to come to WesterCon with new ideas for dungeon adventures, and despite Gygax misgivings about the publication of variant rules in a fanzine, the true threat to TSR came from elsewhere. From Phoenix, Arizona, there came to WesterCon a young man named Ken St. Andre, who brought with him about fifty copies of a pamphlet he produced at the Arizona State University print shop entitled *Tunnels & Trolls*.

In Phoenix, much like in Los Angeles, rumors of *Dungeons & Dragons* circulated long before the rules themselves. The mail-order business of Flying Buffalo, based in nearby Scottsdale, announced the availability *Dungeons & Dragons* in the May 1975 issue of its newsletter;; the next issue carried a review praising the game as an entirely new concept in the wargaming world.⁷⁷ St. Andre first laid eyes on the rules around the same time. He amply qualified as a member of TSR target audience: a science-fiction fan, fluent in wargaming, and an early member of the Society for Creative Anachronism's southwestern branch, the Kingdom of Atenveldt. Nevertheless, his initial enthusiasm for *Dungeons & Dragons* soon gave way to disappointment. When I had finished reading I was convinced of several

things: (1) that the basic ideas were tremendous, even revolutionary, but that (2) as then written, the mechanics of play were nearly incomprehensible, and (3) that the game rules cost far more than they should, and
(4) that 4, 8, 10, 12 and 20-sided dice were too much to bother with.⁷⁸

As I stood up I vowed that I would create my own version of the game that I could play immediately and that would correct all the other things I thought wrong with *D&D*. [DW:#1] He tested his variant rules on the local science fiction fans of the Phoenix Cosmic Circle, who, as one of their members (Patrick J. Hayden) reported to *APA-L*, were mainly composed of wargamers *Risk* (Hyborian or Middle-earth),

⁷⁶ Joel Davis, in a later *Alarums*, recounts the introduction of *Dungeons & Dragons* to the University of Colorado VII convention, Chris Weiser showed up at CU with

meetings were Wednesdays... *D&D* was relegated to Monday nights in a dormitory lobby. Soon, ⁷⁷ #25.

⁷⁸ [DW:#1] Surely in this account (written perhaps three and a half years later), St. Andre misremembers the existence of 10-sided dice in mid-1975.

Diplomacy & other Avalon Hill games, and recently, *D&D*. [APA-L:#522] As his improvements accumulated and his variant rules recast more fundamental components of *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, St. Andre crossed a point that Los Angeles area gamers had not yet reached, where the modifications to the system that he proposed became sufficiently pervasive that, in his opinion, he had invented a distinct game. As the first edition of *Tunnels & Trolls* claims, So it is no longer *Dungeons & Dragons* it is now *Tunnels and Trolls*. Our thanks go out to Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson who created the original *D&D*, but it is basically a completely different game, bearing about the same relationship to *D&D* as *Careers* does to *Monopoly* or Chevrolet does to Ford.

St. Andre thus set out to better what Grasstek, albeit unwittingly, had attempted in the fall of 1974: to produce a shorter, simpler, clearer system for dungeon adventuring. Superficially, however, the play of *Tunnels & Trolls* corresponds exactly to that of its predecessor. It is a game which breaks down into basic modes of exploration, combat and logistics, where adventurers accrue treasure and experience, progress in levels and grow correspondingly more powerful in order to tackle greater adversaries and earn greater rewards. Upon creating and naming a character, one rolls 3d6 for the value of six abilities: Strength, Intelligence, Dexterity, Constitution,

Charisma and Luck, the last one obviously substituting for Wisdom in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Mindful of these values, the player decides whether the character will select a career as a warrior, magic-user or rogue St. Andre collapses the Cleric class of *Dungeons & Dragons* into the magic-user, who learns some healing spells.⁷⁹ Character descend into a multilevel underworld designed by the Dungeon Master (D.M.) who hides his maps from the prying eyes of players. Personal progression is stratified into levels measured in experience points, which accumulates both from combat victories and from looting gold or valuable items, though like in *Dungeons & Dragons*, characters must overcome the logistical challenges of encumbrance as they cart around unwieldy collections of plundered merchandise. Within the dungeon, they encounter monsters
dungeon randomly
some of whom reside in particular rooms, others wander the
as well as traps, the avoidance of which may require a saving roll.

So far, anyway, any differences between this new game and post*Greyhawk* *Dungeons & Dragons* seem cosmetic at best far less significant than the contrast between the designs of *Monopoly* and *Careers*, say. The simplifications St. Andre introduced lie in the particulars of the combat system. Characters have no hit points, for example: their Constitution serves as hit points. As characters advance in level, they have the opportunity to add to their base abilities, and thus Constitution can increase with experience. Combat transpires more or less without avoidance checks: the two sides in the combat (be it one-on-one or a clash of small armies) simply roll their damage dice instead, and the difference between the damage totals rolled by the two sides must be distributed evenly among the combatants on the side that rolled the lesser figure. Damage derives almost entirely from the type of weapon used: a dagger is a 1d6 weapon, a halberd a 5d6 weapon, though bonuses result from exceptional Strength, Dexterity and Luck. Armor serves only as mitigation in this system, like in Grasstek game;; a suit of armor absorbs a certain number of hits (here, ten for plate and five for chain) before it is destroyed. By dispensing with an avoidance check, this optimization hugely speeds and simplifies the resolution of combat, though the resulting system is grossly unfair to the lesser side in a conflict (as high rollers take no damage), far too deadly to magic-users and in practice can produce imbalanced outcomes.

⁷⁹,

Gandalf and Cugel the Clever

The other major difference in the *Tunnels & Trolls* system is the rejection of a spell memorization mechanism in favor of spell points derived from, of all things, the Strength of the magic-user.⁸⁰ Each spell is assigned a point value in Strength required to cast it;; thus the Strength of the magic-user gradually depletes as the adventure goes on, though points are restored to their natural level upon exiting the dungeon. The level of the caster reduces the necessary point expenditure, as do certain magic staves, which halve the cost of spells. The spells themselves bear far more whimsical and obscure names than those of *Dungeons & Dragons* (for example, Hidey Hole makes the party briefly invisible, Yassa-Massa ensures the subservience of subdued monsters, Zingum transports inanimate objects short distances), and to learn any spells requires first a payment in hard cash (500 gold pieces each for second-level spells) and second an adequate Intelligence score. Rogues, in the stamp of Cugel the Clever, may also learn simple spells if a Magic-user condescends to instruct them through the exercise of the first-level Teacher spell.

St. Andre mainly slimmed the rules by omitting the vast taxonomic sections which fatten the original *Dungeons & Dragons* pamphlets. He supplies no statistics for monsters, for example, but instead just a page of instructions on Monster Making which contains, in a single paragraph, an enumeration of seventy-some potential dungeon fiends, ranging from fire-breathing dragons to misogynists. Magic items he neglects entirely aside from an occasional mention in passing of staples like magic swords, he says nothing about them whatsoever. A few pages of charts list the properties of various prosaic and exotic weapons, but rather than provide a glossary on the nature of these implements, the author decided to let you do that work for yourself in order to save space. Spells occupy perhaps the single longest section of the rulebook, covering around seventy spells, but each spell receives only the tersest blurb describing its usage, descriptions which have little practical value in determining the outcome of game events;; consider, for example, the complete description of the spell Take That, you Fiend : Uses I.Q. as a weapon against foes.⁸¹ This overall lack of formal system places the burden squarely on the shoulders of the dungeon master to explicate the monsters and treasure of the world, and to settle the broad latitude in the specification of combat and spells into concrete outcomes

during game play, though one can imagine that referees frequently deferred to the precedents of a certain other game.⁸²

⁸⁰

APA-L describing the spell-point system probably circulated in Phoenix in May, given Patrick J. *APA-L* at that time.

⁸¹ Presumably, St. Andre means that the Magic-user rolls dice equivalent to Intelligence as damage

dice in combat, for that round. From this and numerous similar examples, however, it is unclear if

he succeeded in improving on the incomprehensible system he rejected in *Dungeons & Dragons*.

⁸² This is perhaps best illustrated by a letter to *ormation* #15 (Apr 1976) which asks a

barrage of questions about *Tunnels & Trolls*

factor responds by conceding that the rule

some important things out of the rules. My alibi is this: by the time I had finished typing up the rules, my friends and I had been playing the game for 2 months and these things were taken for granted. I reread both the first and third editions over again carefully, but nowhere are your Did St. Andre truly invent a completely different game, as he suggested? The primary changes, to the combat system and the magic system, might at first glance appear no more profound than the *Dungeons & Dragons* variant proposals routinely circulated in *APA-L* and *Alarums & Excursions*. Consider that the month after WesterCon, the *Spartan Simulation Gaming Journal* dedicated its ninth issue to a thirty-page article called Warlock, or How to Play D and D Without Playing D and D produced by the gamers at Caltech.⁸³ Like *Tunnels & Trolls*, Warlock tweaks the primary abilities slightly (adding Size and Agility to the canonical six from *Dungeons & Dragons*), converts the magic system to spell points with the further addition of a great many spells, and finally reinvents the combat system where St. Andre removes the avoidance system entirely, the Caltech gamers redo avoidance as a percentile roll, and compound the results with their critical hit mechanics as already described in *Alarums & Excursions*. In terms of its size and scope, Warlock seems at least as different from baseline *Dungeons & Dragons* as St. Andre's variant, and yet for all that, the Caltech gamers recommend that you at least have access to a *Dungeons & Dragons* game to use it, and clearly insist that Warlock is

not intended to replace *D&D*. Instead, it presents a way of handling *D&D* without the contradictions and loopholes inherent in the original rules.

St. Andre, however, had the larger ambition to transform his variant into an independent commercial product which he aspired to sell at a price point far lower than *Dungeons & Dragons*. It is this pioneering audacity that earns *Tunnels & Trolls* its place in history. On the probity of this endeavor, he wrote in 1979, One controversy that has come up is whether *T&T* has the right to imitate *D&D*. Ideas and systems are not copyrightable. Nor is *T&T* in any respect a plagiarism of *D&D*. [DW:#1] From a legal perspective, both of these arguments hold water, no matter how derivative we might deem his creation. By setting this precedent, St. Andre paved a way for many future commercial competitors who based their efforts on far more fundamental reconsiderations of the game.⁸⁴ However, at WesterCon in 1975, the future of *Tunnels & Trolls* seemed far less certain. St. Andre sold only ten of the fifty copies he brought with him. Upon his return to Arizona, he found a local distributor willing to try to sell the remaining stock in nearby Scottsdale: Rick Loomis, head of the Flying Buffalo play-by-mail game company and publisher of *Wargamer's Information*. The August 1975 issue of that periodical tacks on to the end of an article about *Dungeons & Dragons* the advertisement that Flying Buffalo now publishes a variant of *D&D*. It is called *Tunnels & Trolls* (don't blame me, I didn't name it), and sells for \$3. If \$10 is too much for you, *T&T* is very similar and is a complete game itself. Or, if you already have *D&D*, *T&T* has some great ideas for new spells, etc. [WI:#7]

Dungeons & Dragons to cover these loopholes in his own play. This casts further doubt on whether his early incarnations of *Tunnels & Trolls* should truly be understood independently of *Dungeons & Dragons*, though over the years future editions provided a more comprehensive system.

⁸³

Dahl and Bill Peterson.

⁸⁴ The dedication of *Runequest* (1978),

, who found it could be opened This budget alternative sold briskly enough to justify further printings, which Loomis happily sponsored, eventually moving the game under his own Flying Buffalo imprint. One could fairly argue that for the sorts of games favored at the time, either system sufficed. Mid-1975 marks the heyday of Swanson Year of the Gilded Hole, where referees of *Dungeons & Dragons* emphasized a funhouse-like underworld of

wealthy monsters a hole in the ground that exists for no discernible reason other than for adventurers to extract gold from it, filled with improbable creatures and situations awaiting the approach of heroes. Swanson ran his Gorree in Boston, Lee Gold her NeoCarn in Los Angeles, Niall Shapero his Stormgate in San Francisco (some Los Angeles fans ventured within during WesterCon), just as Gygax had his Greyhawk and Arneson his Blackmoor. In the throes of this fascination with the Gilded Hole, however, there stirred yearnings for a deeper game.

The article on *Dungeons & Dragons* to which Loomis appended the advertisement for *Tunnels & Trolls* above, a piece by Tim Waddell, criticizes the dungeon-centric culture of *Dungeons & Dragons*. When I first read the rules to *Dungeons & Dragons*, I realized that its potential knew no bounds... How many of us, while reading *The Lord of the Rings*, have wondered what it would be like to be in Frodo's shoes, or be Gandalf, Strider, or even Sam...? To a certain degree, D&D allows us to do this. [WI:#7] The problem, from Waddell's perspective, is that no one puts in the work necessary to make *Dungeons & Dragons* rise to the level of a work like Tolkien saga. He postulates different levels of interest and complexity in campaigns, ranging from the simplest, which consists merely of a dungeon, through games that include surrounding wilderness, a town or two, up to his apex: What I think *D&D* was meant to be. For Waddell, the true potential of *Dungeons & Dragons* is a scenario where everything is defined. Almost down to a sneeze. There are several completely mapped towns, plenty of interesting townspeople, rumors, legends, history, etc. A total fantasy world. Waddell perceived that *Dungeons & Dragons* could go beyond simulating merely conflicts, and even people, but instead become a game of playing at entire worlds.

Waddell doubts that this ultimate form of *Dungeons & Dragons* could be achieved, given the sheer amount of work and imagination it might require, but TSR had already risen to this challenge with M.A.R. Barker's *Empire of the Petal Throne*, a work which appeared nearly simultaneously with *Tunnels & Trolls*.⁸⁵ Within its one-hundred-odd pages of rules, readers found not only a system one heavily indebted to *Dungeons & Dragons*, though not just a reiteration of its booklets but also a complete setting specified to the level of a scenario. Barker's introduction begins, The book you hold in your hand contains a description of a new fantasy world, together with rules for conducting adventures therein. Previously, TSR *Warriors of Mars* had

coupled system with a particular world setting, that of Burroughs's Barsoom, but *Petal Throne* transpires in a setting that relied on no famous works of fiction, nor on any staples of mythology. Its author, therefore, could not simply defer to previously published works to explicate his world of Tékumel: all necessary background needed to be provided by the rulebook.



⁸⁵ As historians of games routinely designate *Tunnels & Trolls* the second role-playing game, the question of whether it actually preceded *Petal Throne* is a material one, though not an easy one to answer (and one that neglects Grasstek's earlier work). St. Andre only first encountered *Dungeons*

& Dragons in April, when he began work on his variant, and there is absolutely no doubt that Barker adapted his world of Tékumel to the system of *Dungeons & Dragons* considerably prior to that, having

Barker did not invent Tékumel to serve as a game setting. Like Coventry and Angria, Tékumel emerged as a dream of childhood, an instance of Let's Pretend that took on its own enduring inner life. Tékumel, together with its people, beasts, mythologies, elaborate social systems, flora and fauna and especially its sense of wonder have been with me since I was about ten years old, Barker wrote.⁸⁶ As he matured, studied and traveled, his vast learning and exotic experiences augmented and crystallized this world into a creation far beyond child's play. In the early 1950s, as a participant in the science-fiction fandom communities in Seattle while attending the university there, he began writing fantasy fiction, some of which incorporated elements later familiar in Tékumel. Although Barker had unsuccessfully experimented with the application of wargaming principles to his fantasy world, the release of *Dungeons & Dragons* suggested a radically different, and much more satisfying, way of bringing his world to life. As Chapter Two concluded, any fantasy setting becomes better when it can be experienced rather than merely read. After reaching out to TSR, Barker honed his rules by running the game for some members of the Blackmoor Bunch (Barker taught at the local University of Minnesota in Minneapolis), including William J. Hoyt, who receives a credit on the title page of *Petal Throne*. Unsurprisingly, Barker harbored ambitions to author an epic novel about Tékumel, and indeed Gygax in his foreword of Tékumel in comparison with J.R.R. Tolkien Barker found in his campaigns inspiration for planned adventure fictions.

The articulated setting of Tékumel may rival the breadth of Middle-earth, but it shares little with Tolkien familiar revivals of Nordic mythology and Germanic nomenclature. Advanced spacefaring humans discovered the planet Tékumel, in Barker's back-story, and settled terraforming colonies there, subjugating native species and inviting some allied alien races to settle alongside them. An unexplained phenomenon, however, must ask the reader to view the world Middle Earth. Like Gygax, perhaps played actively for more than a year longer than St. Andre. St. Andre had one hundred copies of *Tunnels & Trolls* printed, at his university print shop, in June 1975 teur spirit duplicated edition (of which Bill Hoyt retains a copy today) appeared before that, though probably not in so great a number. St. Andre sold ten copies at WesterCon (July 3 5), and while the first readily recorded sales of the boxed

TSR version of *Petal Throne* came at Origins (July 25-27) in much greater numbers, incidentally

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Petal Throne dates to July 1 and the *Petal Throne* preceded Origins by some narrow window of time. [SR:v1n3] Rather than debating the semantics of y, though surely the spirit duplicated version of *Petal Throne* circulated in more than ten copies months before ⁸⁶ [SR:v1n4] Probably the best article about the early evolution of Tékumel appears in the *Strategic Review* childhood intimations of fantasy worlds.

transported Tékumel entire solar system into an uncharted space with no visible stars and no contact with intergalactic civilization. Cut off from vital trade goods and companionship, humanity collapsed into medieval barbarism, and native species crept back to harass the fringes of society. Remnants of ancient technology, now reinterpreted as magical, remain to be discovered in forgotten ruins. Moreover, contact with a set of extradimensional beings of godlike power inspired a clergy which performs miracles, and these same psychic abilities underlie less pious forms of sorcery.

Superficially, the setting thus accommodates the same fantastic medieval building blocks as *Dungeons & Dragons*. One can play a warrior, priest or magic-user, and warriors wear plate armor and wield swords. The concrete elements of the world of Tékumel, however, are much less familiar. Alignment, for example, divides simply into the categories of Good and Evil, depending on the god worshipped by the character in question;; however, the Good gods are known in Tékumel as the Tlomímtlanyal, the Evil gods as the Tlokiriqáluyal. Despite the efforts of Barker (a professor of linguistics, much like Tolkien) to provide a handy primer on pronunciation at the back of the rulebook, surely no one could reasonably expect the uninitiated to pronounce, or even differentiate, those words. These same conventions apply to the names of monsters and treasure. In the underworld, one might be ambushed by a Hli ír, the Beast with the Unendurable Face or the Chnélh, the Ape-Mutant ;; above ground one may confront the crab-like Ngrútha or the sixlimbed, furry and whooping Hyahyú u. As treasure in a dungeon, you might find a sought-after copy of a book like the Timándàlikh hitùplanMitlándàlisayal, The Great Understanding of the Beloved, Great and Powerful Gods. Throughout the rulebook, Barker provides samples of the Tsolyáni written language, a flowing, arabesque script which is convincingly

alien but, unlike the Germanic runes appropriated by Tolkien, jarring to Western eyes.⁸⁷ Fear not if the language seems overwhelming: at the end of his section on the linguistics, Barker counsels that for further information on Tsolyáni, the reader should consult Messíliu Badárian's work *Krysháldàlidhalikh hiTsolyánisa*, a joke that rings a bit hollow. The seven condensed pages of Tékumel tumultuous and intricate world history abound with such place and person names, and with admirable candor, in the spiritduplicated pre-publication edition of the game, Barker must acknowledge, I doubt whether any other referee could guide a party through the world of Tékumel, as almost any imaginative science fiction-cum-fantasy expert can do through the worlds of *Dungeons & Dragons*.⁸⁸

Interestingly, *Petal Throne* goes beyond merely fleshing out a world as its setting, and proposes the play of a specific scenario: one where all player characters arrive in a small boat at the great Tsolyáni port city of Jakálla, each one originating from their (presumed) barbarian homelands. Upon disembarkation, the characters must remain within a foreigners quarter, as players who do attempt to enter Jakálla alone at this stage run the risk of making errors in speaking Tsolyáni or in the intricate rules of Imperial etiquette, the punishment for which is typically instantaneous execution. Thus, it is advisable for beginning players to remain within the foreigners quarter until contacted for a mission by some non-player Tsolyáni character, and Barker provides charts for randomly determining the nature of this visitor and the sort of employment they propose a priest may wish for players to retrieve an artifact from an underground ruin (i.e., dungeon), a wealthy merchant might seek gladiators for the great arena and so on. After many such missions, the wealth and status of the players may grant admittance to the city proper, and even a coveted certificate of citizenship, lovingly furnished in the Tsolyáni script by Barker as a full page of the rulebook. Presumably, Barker casts the player characters as foreigners precisely because he expects players to know nothing of his elaborate specification of Tsolyáni culture, and thus a different nationality handily excuses their ignorance. The play of the game accordingly gains another component exploring the world and assimilating its culture, a subtext Barker presumably enjoyed imparting to his gaming circle. To assist in this endeavor, the TSR version of *Petal Throne* furnishes a pair of large 34-by-61 hexagonal maps showing the known world, in which each hex is some 82.8533 miles across that unusual number owing, of course, to the use of the

Tsán, an Imperial unit of measurement with no easy English equivalent. *Petal Throne* also ships with a detailed map of the city of Jakálla, one almost reminiscent of the map of Blackmoor in *Domesday Book* #13.

⁸⁷ Barker even offers a set of tables for randomly generating Tsolyáni names, lest players and [SR:v1n4]

⁸⁸ This confession is replaced in the 1975 TSR edition of *Petal Throne* with a more optimistic *Dungeons & Dragons* (and other games of the genre) to enter such an intensely personal creation. More to the point, can anyone besides myself referee adventures in Tékumel? I believe that it is indeed possible, and once one gets past the original alienness, it is easy for others to become immersed in the elaborate societies, politics, and adventures of Tékumel

From a system perspective, *Petal Throne* does not venture far from the precedents of preGreyhawk *Dungeons & Dragons*. It retains six canonical abilities (which it terms Basic Talents) of characters, though for Wisdom it substitutes Psychic Ability and for Charisma it prefers Comeliness, and all are rolled with percentile dice rather than the traditional 3d6. One selects a class or and while adventuring, one accrues recovering treasure. *Petal Throne* does include a notably detailed skill system, ranging from Plebian vocations like that of a barber, mason or tailor, through Skilled jobs like that of a fletcher, jeweler or scribe-accountant, up to Noble forays as an alchemist, dancer or poet. Virtually all such skills have some applicability to game situations. The magic system, in contrast to *Dungeons & Dragons*, allows casters to select from a flat list of spells spells do not have tiers like in *Dungeons & Dragons*, and thus a first-level priest can just as easily select Cure Light Wounds as they could Revivify, the *Petal Throne* version of the Raise Dead spell of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Level does factor into the chance of successfully casting a spell, however first-level characters have a base 60% chance of failing to cast a spell, dropping to 20% at level five and 0% at level nine, though a high Psychic Ability improves odds at all levels. The overuse of more powerful spells is curtailed by an intrinsic limit on the number of times they may be cast per day a sort of cooldown period between casting.⁸⁹ A priest may cast Remove Curse, for example, only once per day. Barker specifies very narrowly the circumstances in which depleted spells replenish: All such spells are automatically regenerated each day at approximately 6:00 AM. Thus, if one has used one's Control Person spell and spent the night outdoors, it would be usable again at dawn of the

following day. The combat system mostly rehashes *Dungeons & Dragons*, though it does have an interesting addition: a system for Double Damage and Instant Death which stipulates, If a player throws a 20 on the 20-sided die to hit, he does

Profession experience on the basis of these natural aptitudes, points from slaying adversaries or DOUBLE damage. This must be a natural 20 : i.e., not including any hit bonuses. If the player opts to reroll the d20 upon scoring a natural 20, and gets a 19 or 20 on this second pass, the opponent is instantly dead, whatever its hit dice may be.

⁸⁹ Gygax sparingly implemented this mechanism in the original *Dungeons & Dragons*: for example, the a cooldown of one week.

The release of *Empire of the Petal Throne* confirmed TSR willingness to promote games other than *Dungeons & Dragons* which operated on its same fundamental principles, apparently fearless of cannibalizing the audience for *Dungeons & Dragons* itself. Gygax himself lavishly praised the game in terms that frankly belittled *Dungeons & Dragons*: for example, this is not to say that it is a copy of *D&D*, for its concepts are different and it is a superior game and TSR is convinced that we will never have another title which will surpass *Empire of the Petal Throne* in concept and design. [PZF:#69] One could hardly fault Ken St. Andre for imitating *Dungeons & Dragons* when TSR so willingly did so themselves, and this precedent must have inspired others to produce games which, like *Petal Throne*, relied heavily on the system and basic concept of *Dungeons & Dragons* while adopting a radically different setting. When considered in light of non-TSR releases like *Tunnels & Trolls* and the Warlock rules of the Caltech gamers, *Petal Throne* plotted another data point in a growing line of games with a certain family resemblance, a category, a budding genre, but one which at that time remained nameless.

5.7 THE SUMMER CONVENTIONS OF 1975

For the wargaming community, the summer of 1975 ushered in the seminal Origins convention, held in Baltimore, Maryland, on July 25 27. Origins drew an unprecedented crowd from around the nation, and Gary Gygax organized the first largescale *Dungeons & Dragons* tournament under its auspices. For TSR, however, Origins was only the first stop among several summer conventions, including CITEX, as usual colocated with DipCon, August 15 17 in Chicago, and then GenCon VIII, August 22 24. As dearly as Gygax may have wished for his GenCon to hold the preeminent

place among summer game flings that year, Avalon Hill threw its considerable weight behind the advertising and promotion of Origins, to great effect. *Signal* #83 records that preregistrations alone for Origins exceeded four hundred, a number comparable to the maximum previous attendance of a GenCon, and the eventual total with walk-ins would far exceed even that number. TSR remained a small company, one whose well-received flagship product had not yet sold four thousand copies, and it simply could not rival the means or influence of Avalon Hill.⁹⁰

That summer, however, TSR expanded beyond its informal partnership of hobbyists and took on more of the structure of a company. As of May, when Don Lowry had interviewed Gygax for *Panzerfaust* (which saw print in #69), Gygax outlined roughly the same structure and situation of TSR that he had relayed to Jim Lurvey early in 1974: As it now stands the principals of TSR take nothing from the company. Every cent that is taken in goes back into the company in one form or another. Gygax describes the division of labor within TSR at that time as follows: Dave Arneson is our research and design specialist, incidentally working with the highly creative wargamers in the Twin Cities area. Ernie [Gygax Jr.] is our jack-of-all trades, doing assembly, play-testing and various other chores. Gary edits the various publications and prepares advertising. Brian [Blume] does component research, sales work, and distribution of the newsletter... Donna [Kaye] is in charge of accounting, shipping, and records. [PZF:#69]

⁹⁰ By the conservative estimate of its chief competitor, Avalon Hill sold some 237,000 units in 1975 alone, a fourfold increase over its sales a decade before. See Dunnigan, *Wargame Design*, 119.

It thus appears that Donna Kaye assumed her late husband's responsibilities for managing the money side of the business, following the revised partnership agreement signed in February. With games like *Star Probe*, *War of Wizards* and *Empire of the Petal Throne* migrating south from the Twin Cities, the Lake Geneva contingent naturally relied on Dave Arneson to oversee ongoing design work up north.⁹¹ Of course, none of these persons worked for TSR full time by any means: as Gygax reports, we all have to squeeze in TSR work in our spare time, and they collaborated only insofar as we have a weekly meeting in order to co-ordinate all our efforts for the next week's work. The official offices of TSR remained the Kaye residence at 542 Sage Street in Lake Geneva.

Accelerating sales as mid-year approached strained the capacity of this structure, however, and the bump to the balance sheets let TSR harbor grander ambitions. They therefore began a process of reorganizing their corporate governance TSR formally incorporated on July 19, 1975. The *Strategic Review* #3, which shipped early in July (despite its designation as the Autumn issue of the quarterly) announces that TSR has formed a Hobbies Division, TSR Hobbies and that Brian is in charge of this division. Originally, the plan for this division, which adopted as its logo the lizard man depicted on the inside cover of *Greyhawk*, was to sell by mail fantasy miniatures and game products, be they TSR own or no the back of the third *Strategic Review*, for example, shows the TSR Hobbies division peddling titles like the *Siege of Minas Tirith*, the *Battle of Helm's Deep* and Larry Smith's *Battle of the Five Armies*, three low-budget Tolkien-based fantasy board wargames from ostensibly competing firms.⁹² Gygax revealed to Don Lowry that this mail-order business had begun in preparation for opening a retail hobby shop in Lake Geneva, which would serve both as another channel for sales and a means to diversify the revenue of the company. Early on, the stock of TSR Hobbies emphasized miniatures, especially MiniFigs, Der Kriegspieler and Scruby, with Heritage and McEwan figurines planned for the future. The business of selling TSR own games, however, had reached a point where the principals of TSR could take a critical step: in the summer of 1975 they employed Gary Gygax full-time, and he is now responsible for all orders, billing and accounting, a job which had undoubtedly grown beyond something Donna Kaye could perform in her spare time. [SR:v1n3] So, at long last, Gygax found full-time gainful employ in the gaming business.

The remainder of the *Strategic Review* for July contains more content along the lines of the prior two issues, including a promotion for *Boot Hill* and an article by Jim Ward

⁹¹ From that neck of the woods, the *Panzerfaust* supplemental booklets for the *Star Probe* the latter surely Dave Wesely his *Strategos N* olutionary War Valley Forge (1976), the closest *Gods, Demigods and Heroes* (1976).

⁹² der the same gray legality that had motivated the publication of pirate editions of *Lord of the Rings* a decade before;; as Hartley Patterson suggests in his review of *Minas Tirith* in *News from Bree* -literary rights to United

retroactively. TSR later bought the rights to all these games and sold them under their own imprint, and thereby exposed themselves to the scrutiny of Tol about Barsoom as a game setting, although *Warriors of Mars* has now quietly dropped off the product list. It also features an extra helping of new *Dungeons & Dragons* creatures, including the first appearance of a few classics: the shambling mound, the naga and the lurker above.⁹³ A new feature, Mapping the Dungeons, provides a listing of gamesmasters (TSR had not yet adopted the term dungeon master) around the country who sought new players. The Michigan gamers involved in the Ryth campaign make a good showing of the eight gamesmasters listed, three played in Ryth and Gygax moreover mentions that *Ryth Chronicle* publisher John van de Graaf has developed an efficient system which allows referees and players to keep track of their character data, though not without adding that TSR is at work along somewhat similar lines with an aim towards making such forms available for purchase.⁹⁴ Aside from a brief mention of TSR upcoming social engagements, it has little to say on the subject of Origins or GenCon, not even repeating the advertisement for GenCon which ran in the prior issue. Even if it had, with a reach still undoubtedly less than five hundred subscribers, a plug for GenCon in the *Strategic Review* would hardly dispel the thrall that Avalon Hill cast around Origins with its regular messianic proclamations in the *General*.

Origins drew a truly nationwide audience, and perhaps no attendee better attested to the allure of the convention than Jack Greene, Jr. of the Simulations Design Corporation, publishers of *Conflict* magazine. Greene embarked on an epic coast-to-coast road trip between July 10 and August 3, 1975, to visit Origins and, along the way, to take the temperature of the national wargaming community.⁹⁵ His write-up of this journey, entitled My Pilgrimage to the Cathedrals of Wargaming, appears in *Panzerfaust* #71, and yields a great many insights into the reaction of the wargaming establishment to *Dungeons & Dragons*. On his way to Origins, Greene visited the three companies that he felt dominated the wargaming industry of the day: Games Designers Workshop (GDW), Avalon Hill and Simulation Publications Incorporated (SPI).

Given that it was only two years beforehand, in the summer of 1973, that GDW showcased its first wares at GenCon, it is remarkable that Greene would single them out for a visit though admittedly, their Illinois headquarters was on the way to the East Coast. Moreover, the community s

respect for their innovative mega-game titles such as *Drang Noch Osten* should not be underestimated. Although Greene discussed a great many past and future releases with Marc Miller, Frank Chadwick and the other GDW principals, they all found the time to get in a game of *Dungeons & Dragons* during his visit.⁹⁶ Loren Wiseman, another GDW insider, identified *Dungeons & Dragons* as one of his favorite games. An⁹³ *Strategic Review* in *Marvel Premiere* #6.

⁹⁴ *Ryth Chronicle* review

sheet of character activity across the campaign indexed by game week, no doubt a handy tool for referees. See Section 5.9.1 for more on the controversies of character sheets and intellectual property.

⁹⁵ s as a work released shortly beforehand: Hunter S.

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. Larry Hoffman, his travel companion, must therefore stand in for Dr. Gonzo. Greene pays special attention to his encounters with suspicious law enforcement officers.

⁹⁶

Chadwick has a rule in which a woman character, after rolling for characteristics subtracts one from her Strength and adds one point to her Dexterity

even better indication of the enthusiasm for *Dungeons & Dragons* at GDW may be inferred from a title it released that July, just in time for Origins: the Renaissance combat game *En Garde* (1975), or as its subtitle goes: Being in the Main a Game of the Life and Times of a Gentleman Adventurer and his Several Companions. The introduction explains its origins as follows: The game was originally devised as a fencing system, with background added to provide scenarios for the duels. After a time, it became apparent that the background was more fun than the duels, and *En Garde*, in its present form, was born.

The background in question amounts to elements of character and setting, unmistakably owing certain qualities to the precedent of *Dungeons & Dragons*. During its development, the intended fencing simulation game blended with the habits that the GDW crowd had acquired from playing *Dungeons & Dragons*; rather than playing just any fencer, one must invent a specific fencer character. That character must have a name, a father, a means of income, a mistress, a military career, a level of favor in court, titles and so on. *En Garde* draws some of its system from *Dungeons & Dragons*: it requires neither boards nor miniatures, characters have Strength and

Constitution scores generated with 3d6 rolls and in place of hit points an Endurance score (derived from Strength times Constitution). Structurally, however, the game borrows even more liberally from *Diplomacy*. For each fourweek turn of *En Garde*, players write down secretly which activities their character will pursue during that period soldiering, wenching, dueling or what have you and all players reveal these orders simultaneously. A period of negotiation precedes committing these activities to paper, so that two players who wish to duel, for example, could agree on when they will meet however, as in *Diplomacy*, neither player is bound by these negotiations, and both or either could renege on a planned rendez-vous. Insofar as there is any player versus player strategy, it must reside in these diplomatic maneuverings. Otherwise, the activities involve only rolling dice to determine the outcome of, say, a week in a casino. The goal of the game remains unstated, but like *Dungeons & Dragons*, presumably *En Garde* simulates personal self-improvement, where characters acquire more money, social standing and martial expertise until poor die rolls impoverish, disgrace or slay them. In this lies the central limitation of *En Garde*: the results of complex social interactions like courting a mistress devolve to the roll of a d6.⁹⁷ During his visit, Greene suggested adding a V.D. factor when visiting a bawdy house, and one can easily imagine the corresponding table fitting in nicely in the back of the rulebook. *En Garde* lacks a referee, and without a referee, the vital ability for players to innovate, to *attempt anything* per *Strategos*, is lost.⁹⁸ Consequently, *En Garde* is best understood as a transitional game, like *Warriors of Mars*, between wargames and the emerging new genre defined by *Dungeons & Dragons* and its closer imitators. As a further indication of GDW's interest in this style of⁹⁷ The difference in social levels determines the difficulty: a roll of 2 suffices when the character is three or four social levels above the mistress, though a 6 is required if the mistress is six social levels above the character.

⁹⁸ In *Alarums* #9, Mark Swanson, while appreciative of many of *En Garde* amounts of dice the game, Marc Miller expressed to Jack Greene his aspiration to a design a potential game in the future dealing with Space Empires.⁹⁹

After visiting GDW, Greene trekked to Avalon Hill in Baltimore, the highest of all high temples of board wargaming. He reports almost wistfully that for those who have not been to Avalon Hill, it is a very old building, in a very old section of town, across from the Welfare office. A vast storage area

with very few employees. In that gloomy venue, when granted an audience with Tom Shaw, Greene mostly discussed Avalon Hill's stature and release schedule, but also gleaned that Shaw believed, *Dungeons & Dragons* as a concept will be built on within the hobby, which at least expresses a recognition that *Dungeons & Dragons* had brought new tools to the wargaming industry. Discussing the perennial problem of attracting women to wargaming with Don Greenwood, Greene heard Greenwood predict that it would be some time before women really came to be included in wargaming, other than through such games as *Dungeons & Dragons*. While significant as a recognition that TSR had captured the interest of the female demographic, it hardly acknowledges the dawning importance of *Dungeons & Dragons*-secure market.

During his brief sojourn to SPI in New York City, Greene heard even less about *Dungeons & Dragons*. SPI had commissioned Linda Mosca to design *Battle of the Wilderness*, which would make her the first published woman wargame designer, and she named *Dungeons & Dragons* among her current favorites. Although SPI ostensibly avoided treating *Strategy & Tactics* and its kid-sister publication *Moves* as house organs Richard Berg's columns reviewed many games not published by SPI, an impartiality the *General* could not equal *Dungeons & Dragons* had not yet received any attention in SPI periodicals.¹⁰⁰

The wargaming industry did not stand still in the year and half since the release of *Dungeons & Dragons*; Avalon Hill and SPI continued to sell board wargames that connected with a substantial audience. Most Origins attendees had not come there expressly for *Dungeons & Dragons*. Greene himself, though clearly not opposed to fantasy games, signed up instead for tournament play of the new Avalon Hill naval wargaming hit *Wooden Ships & Iron Men* he took second place, incidentally. Traditional wargamers found much to delight them those in three hot days in Baltimore. Greene gushes, Let me say that Origins was fantastic, incredible, constant and total. This is not to say that the event was free of logistical problems, as the *General* reported that a postcard feedback system had prepared us for a gradual registration spread fairly evenly over the three days. When the majority showed up Friday at precisely 4 o'clock (don't any of you people work for a living?) pandemonium broke loose. [AHG:v12n3] Midsummer in Maryland can boast oppressive temperatures;; Greene remembers in particular the 7th circle of Hell in the dorms where the temperature at night was approximately

95 degrees. Overall, Johns Hopkins proved a very successful venue for a wargaming convention. Lou Zocchi, who is not the most uncritical of commentators, proclaimed, I've never attended a better run convention than Origins I, praising the meals at the university cafeteria, the proximity of the dorms to the

⁹⁹ Almost certainly a very early inkling of *Traveller* (1977).

¹⁰⁰ Moves began in issue #15 (Jun 1974). Sid t games than wargames, continued in *Strategy & Tactics* until reviews of wargames (from Berg), non-war games (from Sackson) and related books (by David Isby).

gaming halls, and easy access to a Rathskeller adequately stocked with beer and wine. Kevin Slimak called it a blast for yours truly, being one of the better cons I have ever attended. [AW:v3n1] Charles Starks, who reviewed Origins for *Panzerfaust* #70, similarly deemed it a great success, even though he stood among the unfortunates trapped in the registration line for more than an hour on Friday.

The virtual absence of grievances illustrates how carefully Avalon Hill had prepared for the event, and given the large turnout, the seamless operation of the convention is practically miraculous. On Sunday, Greene heard from Don Greenwood that at least 1,100 people had showed up for the convention ;; the *General* later raised that estimate to 1,500. [AHG:v12n3] Of that number, who made up by far the largest convention of hobby wargamers to date, only 120 could participate in the *Dungeons & Dragons* tournament. The official schedule printed with the pre-registration forms lists four trips of *Dungeons & Dragons*: Friday at 6PM, Saturday at 10AM, then Saturday at 6PM and finally Sunday at 10AM. [AW:v2n10] Each trip admitted only thirty players, who were divided into two parties of fifteen, one refereed by Gary Gygax, the other by his son Ernie Gygax some photographs of Gary running the game appear in the *Avalon Hill General*. [AHG:v12n3] Origins attendees could sign up for one to three dungeon trips in the preregistration, at a cost of one dollar each. *Signal* #83 reports that all the trips were sold out in pre-registration. Ultimately, across the events at Origins, *Dungeons & Dragons* boasted the third-highest attendance and perhaps it was only the cap of 120 players that prevented it from topping the list.

Dungeons & Dragons trips at Origins were judged as a competitive tournament: Gygax tallied the results of all of the trips to declare a winner.

At first hearing, the very notion of running a game without victory conditions as a tournament may sound preposterous. One potential way to overcome this obstacle, however, appeared in the longawaited TSR release of Dave Megarry's boardgame *DUNGEON!* (1975), newly unveiled at Origins.¹⁰¹ *DUNGEON!* combined the dungeon exploration mechanic with the familiarity of a parlor board game and the simplicity of an eight-page rulebook. No longer does a referee carefully guard the secret plans to the dungeon the dungeon is clearly printed on the board for everyone to see, and no referee governs play. Two ordinary six-sided dice resolve all combat. It is furthermore a competitive game, with concrete victory conditions. Players take turns moving their pieces (Elves, Heroes, Super-heroes or Wizards) through the dungeon attempting to accumulate treasure. The first to acquire a set total of gold pieces wins, but this total varies with the power of the piece, so Elves and Heroes require less than Super-heroes to win, and Wizards need the most of all. As players explore the dungeon and enter rooms, they encounter random monsters who guard random prizes, both drawn like the Community Chest in *Monopoly* from card decks. The dungeon has six levels, and the farther one descends, the greater the dangers and rewards: the monster and prize cards are coded by level.

Revenue targets as victory conditions could apply equally well to a *Dungeons & Dragons* session, and that is how Gygax adjudicated the tournament at Origins. From the party of fifteen that extracted the largest sum of gold from the hole, Gygax would select the most instrumental player to declare the overall victor. Fortunately, one of the attendees who successfully pre-registered for a trip at Origins wrote a detailed account of his

¹⁰¹ Kevin Slimak saw *DUNGEON!* there for the first time, as he reports in the *American Wargamer*. [AW:v3n4]

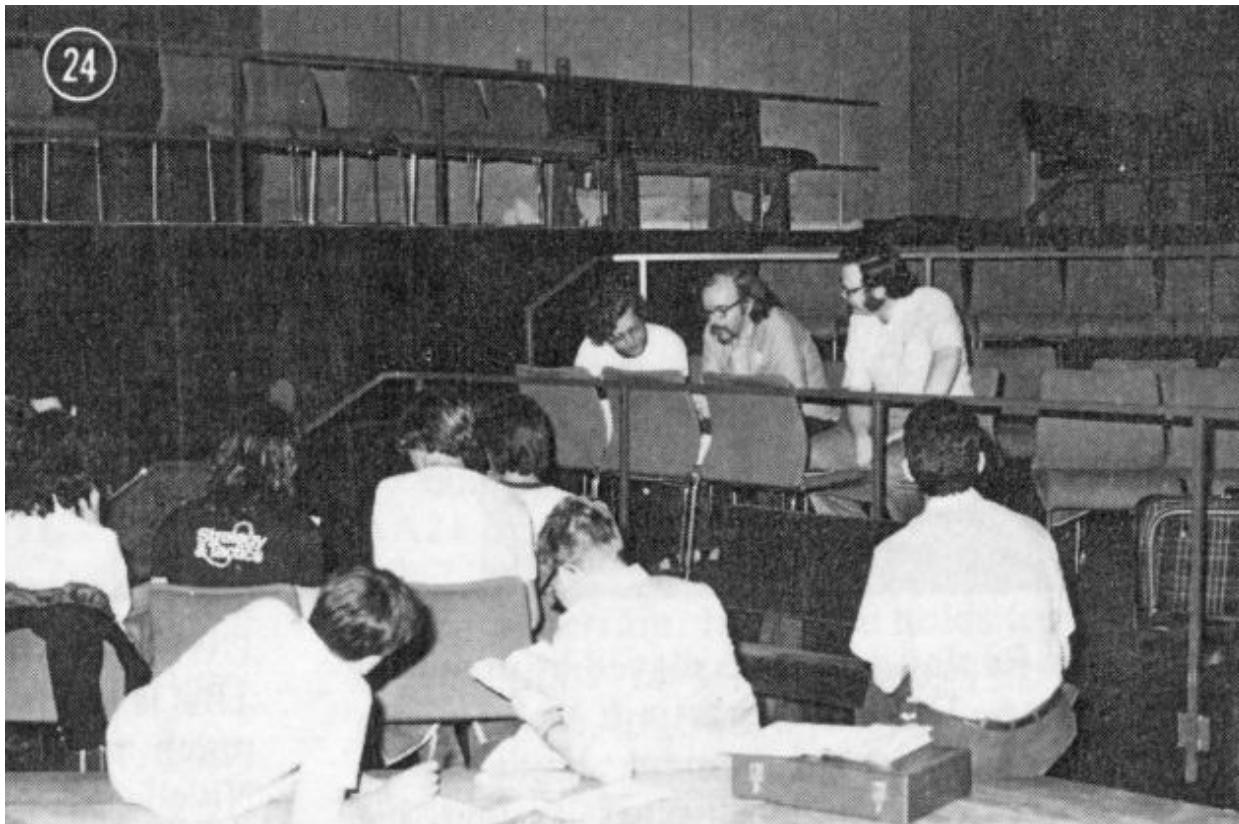


FIGURE 61: GYGAX (TOP CENTER) RUNNING D&D AT ORIGINS I (1975)

experience: none other than Mark Swanson, whose impressions of Gygax dungeon appear in *Alarums & Excursions* #4. He played in the first trip, newly arrived from Boston on Friday night, and Ernie Gygax refereed his group of fifteen. All fifteen of the characters were nameless, pregenerated, and assigned to players in alphabetical order: to ensure that the trips to begin on equal footing, Gygax needed to mandate an identical party composition across them all.¹⁰² The luck of the draw landed Swanson a feeble Magic-user. In Swanson group, only four of fifteen had any prior experience with the game, which means that those other eleven Origins attendees had pre-registered for a baptism by fire and furthermore suggests the Gygax family's personal tutelage introduced many wargamers to *Dungeons & Dragons* that weekend.

Any ardent fan of early *Dungeons & Dragons* would find the scenario of the tournament immediately recognizable. From the moment Swanson reports, We were to loot a tomb, hidden under a hill, one suspects that

Swanson faced an early incarnation of the classic deathtrap module the *Tomb of Horrors* (1978). Gygax would later reveal that its structure drew the position of

from a similar tomb designed by Alan Lucien.¹⁰³ As Swanson had seized caller for his party, he directed their movements through the maze of puzzles and spiked pits that followed. At the very threshold of the tomb, for example, Swanson chose a right-hand entrance, only to find the group trapped in a small space as a wall slid to close the corridor behind them. Fortunately, the use of the Passwall spell allowed the party to try an alternative means of ingress. After passing a pair of dogheaded beings holding a coffer in a wide antechamber, the two Fighting-men marching in the front of the party fell into a trap filled with poisoned spikes and abruptly perished. After that, the group proceeded very cautiously. Nonetheless, in a later puzzle room, a Fightingman and Cleric adjusted the wrong lever and plummeted 130 feet to their deaths. Upon discovering a magic ring with white dust inside, the hobbit Thief unwisely donned it (the injudicious wearing of magic rings having a longstanding resonance for hobbit Thieves) without first removing the suspicious powder and immediately dropped dead. Only after revealing a secret door in the original antechamber did the party find any monsters to combat in this case, a pair of gargoyles who were dispatched only with great difficulty, yielding two collars worth 500 gold pieces each our only treasure, it turned out, Swanson admits mournfully.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Swanson gives an exact description of the party, sorted by class with the levels of each character

-users (12, 6), 2 clerics (10, 6), 7 Fighters (8 Paladin, 3 x 7, 6, 5, 4), 2 triple-class Cleric, obviously, which the first-edition rules forbade. Although Gygax preordained the characters, players selected their spells and to some degree equipment.

¹⁰³ [A&E:#15] As we saw in Section 5.5, this same Alan Lucien received a credit in *Greyhawk*.¹⁰⁴ In the published version of the *Tomb of Horrors*, that corridor contains only one gargoyle rather than two.

The party had only begun to experiment with an orange mist door that converted characters into evil twins when they received a five-minute warning. After some frantic attempts to explore farther and unearth any additional treasure, the elder Gary approached and declared, Game s over. Ever a critic of Gygax, Swanson airs several grievances with the adventure in the pages of *Alarums*. First, he complains about the lack of wandering

monsters not because their presence would have enhanced the dungeon, but because Swanson took exceptional precautions under the assumption that wandering monsters might appear, which needlessly slowed the party. Second, Gygax elves have to see secret doors, a principle that for Swanson is reasonable, but not what I am accustomed to. Accordingly, the thin layer of plaster that coats the walls of many rooms in the tomb thwarted the elvish detection of secret doors, unbeknownst to Swanson. This too lost the party much precious time. In the end, Swanson concludes: From the whole experience, I deduce a couple of lessons. 1) Don't run *D&D* as a tournament. 2) Always shatter plaster unless you are in the dungeon of nasty-minded people such as I who might put poison gas behind it. 3) Play a Gygax game if you like pits, secret doors and Dungeon Roulette. Play a game such as in *A&E* if you prefer monsters, talking/arguing/fighting with chance met characters and a more exciting game. Of course, the game may not have been typical, but Gygax can defend himself. I felt no real desire for a second, similar game. [A&E:#4]

As to whether or not this adventure truly exemplified Gygax preferred style for his personal games, we can refer back (see Section 5.2) to the story of The Giant's Bag, the expedition to the Black Reservoir, or the exploits of Mordenkainen, all of which seem to feature the very qualities Swanson identifies in the games favored by the readership of *Alarums*. In fact, Gygax had recently published another dramatization of an early dungeon adventure in the *Wargamer's Digest* of June 1975: the saga of The Magician's Ring, featuring the adventurers of Lessnard the Magician, a character of Mike Mornard's. In this narrative, Gygax does a great deal of talking and arguing with Lessnard in the person of the non-player character Floppspel, who coveted a certain Ring of Invisibility, with amusing consequences. We might therefore surmise that Gygax adapted Alan Lucien's horrible tomb for Origins precisely to meet the constraints of a tournament environment. For the eleven newbies who accompanied Swanson party into that funhouse, however, this session calibrated them to the play of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and it carried the authority of the game's inventor: many later dungeon masters followed this deathtrap precedent.

Swanson bitterly reports that another, later party, possibly aided by rumors or led by someone who understood pits, elf-proof plaster and the unpopulated nature of Gygax dungeon, got the whole treasure. [A&E:#4] The official winner of the tournament was Barry Eynon of Ann Arbor: one of the players in the Michigan Ryth campaign, many of whom made the long

journey to Origins.¹⁰⁵ Jack Greene, ever on the lookout for more data about women in wargaming, encountered Laurie van de Graaf, wife of Ryth referee John, and she too expressed that she especially enjoyed *Dungeons & Dragons*. Even from the perspective of a wargamer who had not contracted the fantasy bug, Charles Starks opined, I would say that *D&D* was the most popular game overall at the convention, mostly on the basis of my continually finding little groups of people scattered all over Levering [Hall at Johns Hopkins] who had formed up into teams and were playing random scenarios in their spare time. [PZF:#70] Needless to say, the *General* voiced no similar opinion.

¹⁰⁵ Per *Ryth Chronicle #2* (Aug 1975), Eynon played Athelfrār, a Ranger, then fourth level. Further *Fight in the Skies* Society newsletter *Aerodrome #19* (Sep 1971), playing in those postal wargames.

As another measurement of the success of the upstart TSR on Avalon Hill home turf, one can simply look to their sales booth. Would the boxed set of *Empire of the Petal Throne* sell at the shocking price of \$25, even with Gygax almost hyperbolic endorsement behind it? Swanson reports it sold out at Origins I by Saturday afternoon I'm surprised it took that long. Even TSR resellers profited handsomely from the game's acceptance: Richard Berg from SPI reports in his Baltimore Kaleidoscope in *Moves #21* that Lou Zocchi was cleaning up with the awesome *Petal Throne* game, a blazing bestseller at \$25 a shot. The enthusiastic reception of the game must to some degree rebut Ken St. Andre's rejection of a \$10 price tag for *Dungeons & Dragon* after all, people happily paid two and a half times as much for a very similar product, albeit one with enormous, full-color maps that were not photocopier-friendly. This is not to say that wargamers failed to snatch up copies of *Tunnels & Trolls* and at \$3, perhaps as more of an impulse buy but just that the deciding factor in a purchase was not price.

After the wild popularity of Origins, how could **GenCon VIII**, at month later and in the comparative obscurity of Wisconsin, not feel like a letdown? Just one year beforehand, the LGTSA, a local wargaming club with a handful of members, ran GenCon;; now, at least, the program cover indicates corporate sponsorship by Tactical Studies Rules & Friends. Even with nominal commercial backing, the quaint charm of the Horticultural Hall could not compare to the vast and efficient facilities of Johns Hopkins. For the many Midwestern gamers unable to travel to Origins, however, GenCon remained the largest party of the year. Tom Wham ran constant auctions

throughout the weekend. Rob Kuntz (who would turn twenty years old the following month) oversaw a *DUNGEON!* tournament on Friday afternoon, and then took responsibility for three *Dungeons & Dragons* tournament sessions (Saturday at 10:00AM and 5:00PM, then Sunday at 10:30AM).¹⁰⁶ Dave Arneson ran a separate fantasy miniatures tournament on Friday as well.

A post-game report in the *Strategic Review* claims paid attendance of about 900 gamers spread across the three days of the convention, though anyone familiar with the dimensions of the Horticultural Hall might, after coughing politely, wonder how exactly they arrived at that figure.¹⁰⁷ Eyewitnesses did report exceptional crowding at the eighth¹⁰⁶ Mark Swanson asked that the publication of his Origins dungeon report be postponed until the September issue of *Alarums GenCon* in mid-Dungeon that Gygax will be running at tournament, not GenCon.

¹⁰⁷ [SR:v2n2] The figure of nine hundred attendees follows from the resolution of a significant controversy about GenCon attendance that reflects the early character of TSR. Immediately after GenCon VIII, the *Strategic Review*

laughable number perhaps invented to exceed slightly the 1,500 tallied by Avalon Hill for Origins. [SR:v1n4] The 1,500 persons according to Avalon Hill. This is a VERY respectable figure, especially for a first-time convention and even considering the tremendous publicity campaign which was run to boost attendance. Only one other wargame convention drew Wargamers certainly supported GenCon, for attendance as many wargamers, GenCon VIII. was a whopping 1,800, and in the [SR:v1n5] Even without the addition of two hundred previously unreported attendees, the tone smacks more of propaganda than factual assessment. This figure of 1,800 was blithely repeated by other sources, including *Panzerfaust* #72. Later, Gygax would fend off the angry skepticism of incarnation of GenCon, however, so perhaps it exaggerates only slightly. Dave Glewwe, a newcomer to wargaming conventions, wrote to the *Great Plains Game Players Newsletter* #19 that in the main hall, it was too cramped for miniatures. Part of the problem was the large number of wargamers present. There simply wasn't enough room for everyone. He also complained that the miniatures games filled up too quickly, in part owing to those who came at 8:00AM on Friday and signed up for all the tournaments. Unsurprisingly, Glewwe found most of the attention focused on a single type of game: The latest craze is

Dungeons, and it seemed like everyone played it at least once. I made it to the finals of the *Dungeons* tournament but lost out. Presumably Glewwe here means the *DUNGEON!* board game, which Lenard Lakofka, dropping in for his first GenCon since 1971, called the single biggest hit of the convention. [LD:#61]

Another attendee, James Lurvey whom posterity must thank once again for his perspicacious notes on the proceedings similarly felt that the convention had outgrown its nursery, the Horticultural Hall. The sheer decibel level of crowds in the hardwood heart of the Hall proved a serious impediment to play: The problem was, in short, breaking in a new set of rules with unfamiliar players, in an uncooperative environment. The din in Horticulture Hall would have caused problems in any game. I found during Bunker Hill with the simple WRG rules that we had to step outside in order to communicate, and there was even more going on Saturday afternoon! [GPGPN:#19]

Lurvey managed to have a good time notwithstanding. Upon his arrival, he purchased a set of Napoleonic miniatures at a very compelling price from a young man named Timothy Kask (b. 1949).¹⁰⁸ Lurvey saw Kask again on Saturday evening, when along

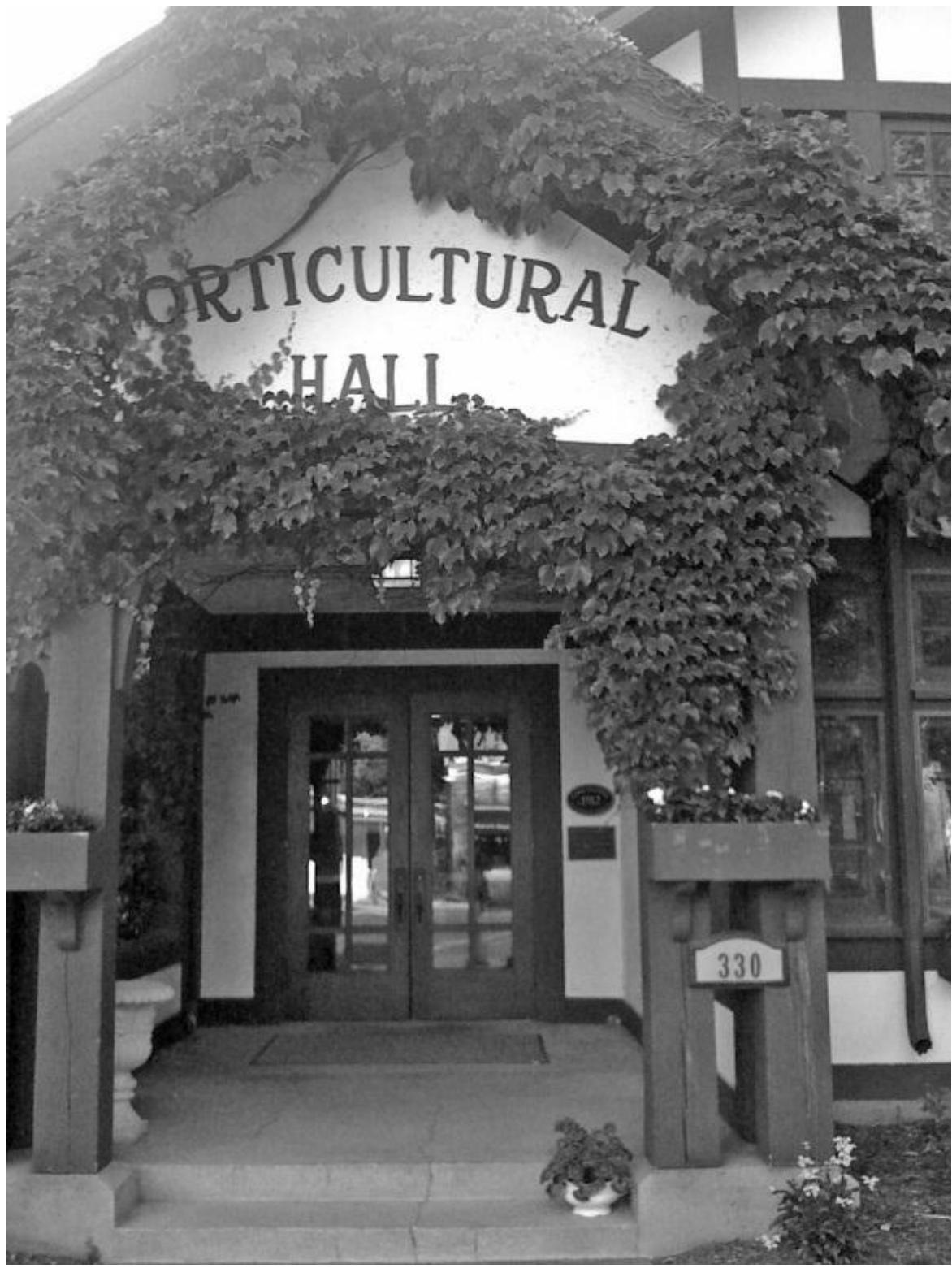


FIGURE 62: THE HORTICULTURAL HALL, LAKE GENEVA

[REDACTED] 900 of tho

larger attendance than GenCon several hundred at least. Sheer numbers do not make a good local facilities, especially when rain rules out using the courtyard and alley, as Lurvey reports it did on occasion. However, Lakofka wrote

[LD:#61]. This reminds us that total attendance need not be limited by the maximum concurrent occupancy of the Horticultural Hall, and that Saturday was only one of three days. Therefore, with a

¹⁰⁸ *GPGPN*, tho

with Jeff Perren, they sat together during the public showing of *Zulu* (1964), one of the war-related films in Perren's comprehensive library that he brought for the edification of GenCon attendees. While Lurvey came largely for the auctions and miniature gaming, he recorded a survey of the exhibitors booths at the show. Among all of the miniature foundries hawking their wares, Lurvey lights especially on one company whose figures were fabulous! The wizard was the most wizardly looking one I have ever seen, his voluminous sleeves flowing in the wind of his incarnation with his staff and magic books at his feet. The manufacturer of this wizard was a new concern called Ral Partha out of Cincinnati. Lakofka as well corroborates that especially fine figures of Gondor, orcs, Sea Elves and a superlative wizard are available from Ral Partha Enterprises. [LD:#61] An interesting rumor also wended its way between the stands of miniature vendors at GenCon VIII. Lurvey reports that he heard (second-hand) rumors of a suit by the publishers of *The Lord of the Rings* for copyright infringement, since they have not released the use of the names. While apparently these suspicions targeted producers of miniatures at the time MiniFigs, for instance, cautiously vacillated between calling their seminal fantasy figure line

Middle Earth or Mythical Earth with the abbreviation ME soon enough TSR would find itself under the same scrutiny.

Collectively, the tournaments tremendously boosted the visibility of *Dungeons & Dragons* in the wargaming community. Origins undoubtedly more so than GenCon, both on account of its size and furthermore because it catered to East Coasters who lived outside shouting range of Lake Geneva

and the Twin Cities. Although the World Science Fiction Convention did not transpire in North America that year, a stopgap event called the North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFiC) held on Labor Day weekend in Los Angeles drew an audience of around eleven hundred and involved a great deal of socializing of *Dungeons & Dragons* as well as *Empire of the Petal Throne*.¹⁰⁹ After the conventions of the summer of 1975, the energy dedicated to *Dungeons & Dragons* in fandom both wargaming and science fiction fandom radically increased.

The fannish enthusiasm of the era is most enduringly evinced by the growing importance of fanzines, which served as a font if not a geyser of new ideas for *Dungeons & Dragons*. George Phillips, whose *Guide to Wargaming Periodical Literature* measured the number of articles which focused on a particular game as their subject, records some eyeopening figures in 1975 and 1976. For the first quarter of 1975, he records only ten articles about *Dungeons & Dragons* in wargaming fanzines, including those in the *Strategic Review*, *GPGPN*, the *American Wargamer* and so on. [GWPL:v3n5] By the last quarter of 1975, he tabulates a total of thirty, now including *Alarums & Excursions* in his reckoning as well as *Wargamer's Information*. In 1976, as the surge in fan energy bore fruit, those numbers shot up dramatically 137 articles in the second quarter, for example. Moreover, those figures count only articles about *Dungeons & Dragons* itself;; the numbers jump further if we combine the commentary on *Empire of the Petal Throne*, the *DUNGEON!* board game and so and promotions at Origins and GenCon not appear in the subscriber lists regularly published in *GPGPN*.¹⁰⁹ Wayne Shaw

one into Nick Shapero

Jack Harness

Petal Throne while there.

on. This plenitude reflects not only the entrance of new fanzines into the marketplace, but also the fattening of *Alarums & Excursions* as it attracted more contributors.

Many of the venues for this sudden uptick in chatter about *Dungeons & Dragons* never aspired to cover fantasy gaming. Howard Thompson, for example, had no intention to support TSR when he founded *Space Gamer* in the spring of 1975 as an in-house publication for his new company Metagaming Concepts;; instead, he hoped that a magazine would help socialize his own flagship game, *Stellar Conquest* (1975). However, after

conducting a survey to rate existing science fiction wargames, the results of which appear in the first issue of *Space Gamer*, Thompson found that *Dungeons & Dragons* took second place even though it lacks any science fiction elements. Thompson won't profess to fully understand it since fantasy isn't our bag, but nonetheless he obligingly began to resell the game and solicited a review from his readership. The second issue of the *Space Gamer*, which came out after GenCon, contains two reviews of *Dungeons & Dragons*: one enthusiastic summary from Tim Waddell, already mentioned above as author of the piece championing richer campaigns in *Wargamer's Information* #7, and another from Andy Pudewa, which reverentially begins, If you took everything possible or impossible you ever dreamed about, read about, or imagined;; put it in a medieval setting, and heaped it all into one set of rules for a game, you would have *Dungeons & Dragons*. The same issue contains capsule reviews of *Empire of the Petal Throne*, *Greyhawk*, *War of Wizards* and even a plug for the ongoing Midgard II campaign which reports that the current game was full at about 30 and there was a waiting list as of June. While subsequent issues of the *Space Gamer* do indeed discuss games depicting space, by mid-1976 Metagaming had begun publishing fantasy games, and *Dungeons & Dragons* occupied more real estate in the *Space Gamer* than any other title.

A similar transmogrification overcame *News from Bree*, the putatively Tolkien-focused fanzine published in the United Kingdom by Hartley Patterson, who earlier instigated the Midgard family of games in the English-speaking world. After the first rumor of *Dungeons & Dragons* whispered by a correspondent in *Bree* #14 (March 1975) broke the ice, Patterson observes in the following issue (the same month as *Origins I*) that he had acquired a copy of *Dungeons & Dragons* from John Mansfield, the publisher of *Signal*. Patterson breathlessly relates his eye-opening experiences in a convention dungeon, and concludes simply, This is going to be THE game for some while, and I suggest you get the rules now, providing the address of Games Workshop as the best place to acquire the game in Britain. By the next issue, Patterson confesses, quite a lot, so it's going to take up more space this issue out. With issue #17, Patterson refers to *Dungeons & Dragons* as the pencil-and-paper fantasy game that is currently the major preoccupation of a fair number of London SF fans and goes on to print several letters from fellow enthusiasts as well as his own variant rules. An issue later in May 1976, *News from Bree* had converted entirely into a *Dungeons & Dragons* fanzine.

Other new entrants to the periodical market after the summer conventions of 1975 targeted *Dungeons & Dragons* from their inception: for example, *Kranor-Ril* popped up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in September;; *Dankendismal* in Moorestown, New Jersey, followed in December. Both went beyond the campaign newsletter model of the earlier *Ryth Chronicle* and *Haven Herald* zines by printing variant rules more so than reports on the state of local dungeons;; the first *Kranor-Ril*, for example, contained new character classes, ideas for dungeon traps, and an account of giant animals in *Dungeons & Dragons*. By the fall of I've been playing and refereeing about five pages worth, it turns 1975, the *Haven Herald* itself began to emphasize rules over campaign stories;; issue #3 (September 1975) leads with a proposed Empath class for *Dungeons & Dragons*. The several players and referees associated with the growing Endore campaign immortalized in the *Haven Herald*, of which Stephen Tihor now served as the Worldmaster for a handful of subordinate areas, had furthermore branched out into several new zines of their own. The New York outpost of Endore had many members who entered the hobby through *Diplomacy* and already ran Dippy fanzines which suddenly burgeoned with *Dungeons & Dragons* content;; two fifth forum students at the Horace Mann School, Scott Rosenberg and Greg Costikyan, played in Endore and ran the *Diplomacy* zines the *Pocket Armenian* and *Urf Durfal*, respectively. Rosenberg, for example, controlled a segment of the world of Endore called Jaracosta, for which he targeted the *Jaracosta Journal* as a campaign zine, yet he could not resist populating his *Pocket Armenian* with still more fantasy gaming articles. Costikyan, facing a similar problem, snuck out the first issue of his *Dungeons & Dragons* fanzine *Fire the Arquebusiers!* before the beginning of the new year (it is dated November 22, 1975), plump with humorous if sophomoric variant rules;; Rosenberg's comparable effort the *Cosmic Balance* made its way to the public later, in April 1976.

Although still in high school, Costikyan worked part time for the research and development department of SPI, surely the most fashionable employment available for a young, devoted game fan in New York City.¹¹⁰ The days when SPI, publishers of the widely-read (circulation at the time stood around thirty thousand) and influential *Strategy & Tactics*, could ignore *Dungeons & Dragons* had ended. Richard Berg, who authored most of SPI's reviews of third-party wargaming titles, had observed in his Baltimore Kaleidoscope coverage of Origins that *Dungeons & Dragons*

abound at the convention;; in the October issue of SPI *Moves* Berg elaborates in his column Forward Observer : The world of fantasy seems to be getting a great deal of attention lately;; both the standard hex-map format and the new boardless, role-playing systems (a la *Dungeons & Dragons*) are in evidence. [MV:#23]

Berg follows with some guarded praise for *Empire of the Petal Throne*, but his seminal application of the term role-playing to *Dungeons & Dragons* is of far greater interest.¹¹¹ Notably, he separates fantasy games into two buckets: on the one hand those familiar games which follow standard boardgame conventions like the aforementioned *Siege of Minas Tirith* and *Battle of Helm's Deep*, or SPI own first fantasy offering *Sorcerer* (1975), or *White Bear and Red Moon* (1975), the first boardgame release from a new company called the Chaosium;; and on the other hand, those which eschewed the board and embraced something else, which he here calls role-playing. In fact, Berg had already dropped this term in the Briefings column of *Strategy & Tactics* the month before to apply to another

¹¹⁰ Another Endore veteran, Ben Grossman - ;; see *Urf Durlaf* #6,

¹¹¹ At around the same time, Phil Barker of the War Games Research Group published his *Ancient Wargaming* (Sep 1975), which concludes with a brief chapter on fantasy wargame campaigns in
-tactical table top
-

contributed to the adoption of the term.

game which he clearly places in the same bucket: *En Garde* boardless, role-playing, free-form system for becoming The Greatest Swordsman in France.¹¹² Berg would apply the term in a review in the following month s *Strategy & Tactics* as well, this time to the *Empire of the Petal Throne*, which he summarizes as a massive role-playing, freeform system for the fantasy world of Tékumel. [S&T:#53] Perhaps we can discern something of what he intends by the term from his further explanation of this game: Recreating a complete society, up to its language and history, you pick your hero and lead him through a series of adventures, at the whim of a referee who directs events to which you must adjust according to your characteristics.

Only with the perspective of a reviewer, looking at all three games in parallel, could one isolate and extract the elements they share. Considering solely the TSR products, *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Empire of the Petal*

Throne, the superficial sameness of the setting swords, sorcery and so on obfuscates the more fundamental commonality in the underlying structures of the games. Adding to the mix *En Garde*, which lacks any dungeons or dragons, one can perceive a potential genre of boardless, free-form, victory-agnostic games with radically different settings.¹¹³ While it took some months for TSR to adopt the term role-playing, it spread through the enormous subscriber base of *Strategy & Tactics* into the popular vernacular of many fanzines, and as the competition to control the future of fantasy dungeon adventures became more heated in 1976, the key concept of roleplaying played a pivotal part in establishing an industry independent of TSR.

5.8 THE BULLY PULPIT OF LAKE GENEVA

Early in the fall of 1975, TSR consolidated its newly-founded retail and mail-order product business with its games development arm. Blume and Gygax used TSR Hobbies, Inc. as an umbrella company to purchase the assets of the original TSR partnership on September 26, 1975, effectively buying out Donna Kaye.¹¹⁴ From that point on, no longer were new TSR games emblazoned with the Gygax-Kaye GK logo, but instead with the lizard man of TSR Hobbies. The original logo would remain for some years, however, on the new printings of *Dungeons & Dragons*, even though with the fourth printing the box's cover art changed to a scene of a wizard battling a band of monsters. In November 1975, consumer demand for *Dungeons & Dragons* justified that fourth printing of five thousand more copies: between January and November 1975, *Dungeons & Dragons* shipped nearly three times as many copies as it had during the same span the previous year. This latest printing abandoned the woodgrain box of prior editions in favor of a shrink-wrapped white box, and though it appeared in greater numbers, *Dungeons & Dragons* sales still represented only a tiny fraction of the wargaming market. Sales do not necessarily reflect popularity, however. The fan community discovered, *Dragons* purchase let several enthusiasts play rules can support many players without them, and in part because of the ease of photocopying the rules, as opposed to reproducing boards or miniatures.

¹¹² [S&T:#52] In the very back of *S&T* #52, where traditionally the editors of the magazine request subscriber feedback on the issue and ratings of games, *Dungeons & Dragons* finally appears among the 180-odd games for which SPI cared to test public opinion. *Empire of the Petal Throne* and *En Garde* also grace the list. However, the 1973 1975

extension to SPI

appears in *S&T* #53 makes no mention of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and its exclusive focus on board wargaming so outraged Gygax that he penned his own history of wargaming, which appears in the first issue of *Little Wars*, as a rebuttal.

¹¹³ At around this time, in

Dungeons & Dragons

nothing to do with fantasy

games set in World War I, or even space games, with the same underlying system elements.

¹¹⁴ Many related pieces of evidence surrounding the dissolution of the original TSR partnership appear in the court filings for Minnesota Civ. 4-79-109.

At the home office in Lake Geneva, volumes of orders, of letters requesting rules clarifications, of variant rule suggestions and submissions, of correspondence with fanzines, all combined with the labor-intensive creation of new gaming products, necessitated that TSR expand its full-time paid staff. The fourth issue of the *Strategic Review*, which shipped a bit late in the autumn because of these pressures, names two recent hires: Terry Kuntz, Rob Kuntz's older brother;; and Tim Kask, who already had a cameo in Jim Lurvey's GenCon report in the previous section. Effective the first of October, Terry Kuntz filled the position of Service Manager, which included some game design responsibilities, but mostly dealt with questions of rules interpretation. Kask came on board as Periodicals Editor, and assumed immediate editorial responsibility for the *Strategic Review*. This issue carried the first paid advertisements in the *Strategic Review*, including a well-placed notice from GDW for *En Garde*. As of the next issue, the *Strategic Review* moved from a quarterly publication schedule to semimonthly editions, which accounts for the peculiarity that there are five issues in the first year of the quarterly.¹¹⁵ The teaser promising that The Dragon is Coming! in *Strategic Review* #4 alludes to a coming slick magazine that Gygax mentions in a letter to *Owl & Weasel* #9 in October. With these greater ambitions for the periodicals space, TSR relied heavily on Kask to shape an important and growing segment of their business.

The fourth issue of the *Strategic Review* mentions another momentous imminent hire: Dave Arneson will be coming down from St. Paul soon to join our regular design staff. This had been in the works for some time: in

the August 5, 1975, issue of his resumed but sporadic *Corner of the Table*, Arneson predicts, Within the next three months I will, in all probability, be moving my place of residence to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, where I will be employed by Tactical Studies Rules as a figure caster and writer on a full time basis. In fact, his actual start date fell after the New Year;; in January, Gygax wrote shortly beforehand that Dave Arneson will be coming down to go to work full time about the 19th.¹¹⁶ As to Arneson new responsibilities, Gygax lays them out in the *Strategic Review* as follows: His function will be to help us co-ordinate our efforts with free-lance designers, handle various research projects, and produce material like a grist mill (Crack! Snap! Work faster there, Dave!). [SR:v1n4]

Though one should not read too much into Gygax teasing, the editorial in that same issue also laments of the planned second *Dungeons & Dragons* supplement, *Blackmoor* is late. As long ago as March 7, 1975, in a letter to *GPGPN*, Gygax related that Dave Arneson tells me his *Blackmoor* (D&D Supplement II) is being put into final draft now, so there will be yet more to add to the game. If the final draft was in play that early, the failure of the game to appear by the end of the year must raise eyebrows. In the August *COTT* mentioned above, Arneson excuses a long delay in his Napoleonic Simulation Campaign with the claim, As many of you are aware, and others will shortly know, I have , that a single *Dungeons &* in part because one dungeon master with the been occupied writing a supplement to the *Dungeons & Dragons* fantasy rules which will be called *Blackmoor*. This has occupied the bulk of my free time for the last three months and caused a suspension of the Napoleonic Campaign during that period. To all appearances, however, these efforts did not speed *Blackmoor* to the presses. In the fall, Gygax boasted that Arneson already held HEAPS of manuscripts and games waiting in the wings, so to speak, for TSR to get into print. [O&W:#9] These did not quickly translate into titles, however. We have little insight into what else he had on his plate at the time other than *Blackmoor*, apart from Gygax earlier statement that Arneson responsibilities in the TSR partnership included working with the highly creative wargamers in the Twin Cities area.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Gygax had anticipated this move at least since his May interview with *Panzerfaust*. ¹¹⁶ Letter to George Phillips, January 13, 1976.

Prematurely, the fourth issue of the *Strategic Review* advertised for sale at a price of \$5 the long-promised *Blackmoor*. In the next issue, the last of

the year, Kask first consoles the many readers who prepaid for *Blackmoor*, and have been forced to endure an interminable delay. To clear any remaining obstacles to publication, Gygax had assigned Kask to assume editorial responsibility for the supplement and get it out the door. As a consequence, Kask could also announce, *Blackmoor* is finally done and in the hands of the printers, and further adds We know it's late, but you wouldn't believe me if I listed all the problems we had with it. Suffice it to say that I have been blooded, as an editor, by *Blackmoor*. It was my first project for TSR, and all that neat stuff you learn in college is seldom applicable in a situation like ours. [SR:v1n5]

These loaded words spark more curiosity than they satisfy, and although the precise nature of the problems remains hotly disputed by eyewitnesses, about six months later Kask disclosed two specific obstacles that befell *Blackmoor*: he related how you just have to wing it when the press breaks down, or your manuscript gets mysteriously misplaced.¹¹⁸ It is clear enough that TSR expended a great deal of effort to improve the text in the final weeks before publication. The front piece of *Blackmoor* thus credits Gygax, Kask and Rob Kuntz as well as a certain Steve Marsh for suggestions and ideas.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ *Dungeons & Dragons* design credits on *Warriors of Mars*, *Greyhawk*, *Boot Hill*, and soon *Classic Warfare*, four promotional short stories, literally countless other articles and letters appearing in other periodicals one might well ask how Arneson Arneson did write two letters to the *GPGPN*, and between 1974 and 1975 he did produce three issues of *Corner of the Table*. Even *Empire of the Petal Throne* credits the assistance of MMSA member Bill Hoyt, but not Dave Arneson, which suggests that Arneson provided little direct input to the design of the game. We shall return to this question in Section 5.9.3.

¹¹⁸ From the foreword to *Gods, Demigods and Heroes*, written July 4, 1976. In recent years, Tim Kask has written a great deal on the Internet about the nature of these difficulties, but little documentary evidence of these events survives. While certainly Arneson must have devised the Loch Gloom scenario and many of the related items and creatures, it is unclear which of the other elements in *Blackmoor*

¹¹⁹ contribution, according to his contemporaneous underwater encounter charts after the editor was finished with them 70% of the monsters gone in his Preface to the *Monster Manual*

undersea encounters which originally appeared in *Blackmoor* lack thereof) for his input, see the end of Section 5.9.2.

When it finally appeared, shortly before the New Year, the second *Dungeons & Dragons* supplement marked another major step in the game's evolution. It introduces two new subclasses: Monk, a subclass of Cleric, and Assassin, a subclass of Thief. Monks draw from the mythology of Eastern martial arts, and perhaps in particular from contemporary films like the Bruce Lee vehicle *Enter the Dragon* (1973): they fight without armor and do exceptional damage with their bare hands, including the dreaded Quivering Palm attack, fatal to any adversary merely brushed by the Monk. Monks demonstrate exceptional fortitude of mind and body, and thus command a number of exotic abilities, including feigning death, resisting mental invasions or controls and even healing themselves of damage. Assassins, for their part, gain the ability to wear disguises and use poisoned weapons over and above the diverse repertoire of the Thief class, and can accumulate extra-credit gold and experience by carrying out contract killings. Although the Monk receives more specification than the Assassin (poisons, for example, defer entirely to future work), neither modifies the base system of *Dungeons & Dragons* very extensively. The subclasses in *Blackmoor* provide at least one subclass option for each class, when combined with the pre-existing Paladin and Ranger, as well as the new Illusionist subclass of Magicuser proposed by Peter Aronson (a Boston-based player in Edwyr and Gorree) in the *Strategic Review*. [SR:v1n4]

Blackmoor furthermore contains five pages of rules for hit location, a system which distributes the total hit points of creatures or characters into several distinct areas of their bodies: a human with one hundred hit points, for example, can withstand only fifteen points of damage to the head, and thus an adversary who can deal that amount of damage to the head will slay their target without needing to bother with the remaining eight-five hit points. The precise location where any given blow lands, however, is determined randomly, though influenced by the orientation of the attacker to the target (from behind, an attacker has a 25% chance of hitting the head of a human, but only 15% from the front) and the difference in size between the attacker and defender (a human attacking an enormous dragon is more likely to hit the legs rather than the throat, say). The complexity of these rules certainly exceeds even that of the critical hit tables of the Caltech gamers. *Blackmoor* also presents rules for Underwater Adventures, clearly intended as a complement to the existing Wilderness Adventures defined in the

baseline *Dungeons & Dragons* rules. Underwater encounter tables determine the soggy foes parties might encounter, and among the thirty-four new monsters specified in *Blackmoor*, the bulk lead aquatic lives, from whales to giant beavers to water spiders and the dreaded humanoid sahuagin. Even the handful of hastily outlined new magic items seem designed for divers, from the Necklace of Water Breathing to the Helm of Underwater Vision. A few other miscellaneous topics are within, including a system for various diseases and a new type of hired specialist called a sage whom monied characters engage to research topics of interest, often at an astronomical expense.

The real innovation in *Blackmoor*, however, is the twenty-page specification of a scenario entitled the Temple of the Frog. This Temple lies in the Loch Gloomen area of the Blackmoor setting, the place to which Arneson banished the Blackmoor Bunch for their failure to defend the city of Blackmoor against the Baddies in the fall of 1972. A *Corner of the Table* from that era mentions that [Dave] Wesely, Scott Belfry, and Pete Gaylord went off to the town held by the Monks of the Swamp and haven't been heard from since. [COTT:72:v4n6] It seems plausible that they then visited a precursor of this very Temple, though three years later in *Blackmoor*, the mysterious religious order of the area is called the Brothers of the Swamp, perhaps to distinguish them from the Monk class already defined in that booklet.¹²⁰ In a fit of misanthropy, said Brothers bred a strain of amphibian that would combine the worst ferocity and killer instincts of larger mammals with the ability to move through swamps with great swiftness to strike and avoid retaliation, obviously the eponymous frogs, which are two feet in length and come equipped with razor-sharp teeth and talons. To retain control over these powerful creations, the Brothers isolated them in the depths of their stronghold. Arneson provides five pages of maps which illustrate the town, temple and of course the obligatory subterranean environment for players to plunder. Each map's numbered legend describes the contents of its particular buildings and rooms.

The heavily fortified Temple of the Frog could resist the invasion of any force less than a disciplined and well-provisioned army. The very approach to the Temple bristles with fortifications and heavy siege weaponry, and at the gate one confronts more than a hundred ready troops at any given moment, though in case of a more serious peril, under the Temple are some 1,000 guards who are always available to relieve the city guards. These

troops merely serve as cannon-fodder for the Brothers themselves, whose leader, Stephen the Rock, Arneson informs us is not from the world of Blackmoor at all, but rather he is an intelligent humanoid from another world/dimension, who brought with him technologies that render him essentially omnipotent in the Blackmoor setting. His battle armor, disguised as an ordinary suit of mail, provides complete protection against all energy type weapons including fireballs, lightning bolts, etc. as well as conferring maximum Strength and Dexterity scores to its wearer. Incidentally, it also confers the powers of flight and underwater breathing to any who don it. Stephen's shield, in addition to rendering its wielder invisible, furthermore nullifies all mental attacks, energy attacks, and magical and/or clerical spells in a ten foot radius around it. In the unlikely event that Stephen suffered any harm, he could retire to his Medical Kit, a cube approximately 10 per side which can restore any injuries, even fatal ones. Finally, should Stephen for any reason wish to flee a battle, his communications module allows him to teleport (by voice command) to anywhere on the planet, or even to the scout craft he keeps in orbit above Loch Gloomen. Like Sauron, Stephen controls his subordinates through the distribution of hierarchical rings which keep underlings under constant telepathic control, said rings also controlling access to the restricted areas of the Temple.

Despite these formidable impediments, a party of adventurers who chooses to assail the Temple will find the first level of the dungeon populated primarily with human soldiers, and the second level with monsters, including medusae, trolls, snakes and of course frogs. Mostly, these adversaries guard coinage and gems, with the occasional magic item at their disposal. Woe betide any who tread on the slippery slope in the first level of the dungeon and plunge into the breeding pond below, where an estimated 1100 1200 killer frogs await the unwary. Fortunately, they attack in modest waves of 3-18 at a time, which a large and competent force might hope to repel. Only by braving the breeding pool

¹²⁰ From various constructions in the text about the Temple of the Frog, it seems obvious that it drew on a *Chainmail*-grounded original: for example, the frequent use of constructions of the form a more *Chainmail*-like way of describing endurance;; or the use of the term Temple, presumably describing a first-level Cleric);; or the use of the *Chainmail* can one reach the island where Stephen the Rock engineers his army of frogmen, who hold the most potent treasure in the underworld.

Those who remain above ground may explore the libraries and upper reaches of the temple and recover there a modicum of loot.

While the scenario of the Temple of the Frog may not appeal to all readers, the very publication of a scenario, detailed down to the room occupancy and treasure, marks a turning point in the literature of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The third rulebook, *Underworld & Wilderness*, provided a sample dungeon level with a similar legend, but surely no referee (outside of a test run) would actually present that as a scenario to players and expect them to navigate it. The Temple of the Frog, however, aspires to provide referees with all the information they might need to run the area for players, including sufficient back-story to describe the circumstances of Loch Gloomen and the motivations of the non-player characters. Effectively, this opened a new axis of extensibility for *Dungeons & Dragons*: the authorship of scenarios intended for wholesale appropriation by referees. As *Dungeons & Dragons* transpires largely in the mode of exploration, which requires secret maps, players able to inspect a published scenario like the Temple of the Frog would gain an unfair advantage, and perhaps tire of the scenario quickly or trivially complete it. A dungeon master who could present the scenario to players unfamiliar with it, however, would save a lot of work. Even a dungeon master who never intended to referee the Temple of the Frog scenario could still borrow components, or derive more general inspiration from its structure. By the end of 1976, the published scenario evolved from this initial foray into another potential stream of revenue for TSR and its small stable of partners.

Whatever their misgivings with the production process, Kask and Gygax put on a brave face for the release of *Blackmoor*. After divulging his troubles as its editor in the *Strategic Review*, Kask promises, Trust us, it will have been worth the wait. [SR:v1n5] Gygax, in his foreword, dispenses his usual unrestrained praise of the whole enterprise. He lauds Arneson as the innovator of the dungeon adventure concept, creator of ghastly monsters, and inscrutable dungeonmaster *par excellence* a noteworthy construction, if only to illustrate Gygax newfound adoption of the term dungeon master. He continues, I cannot recommend him more highly than simply saying that I would rather play in his campaign than any other. With a hint of disappointment, Gygax asserts that he is eagerly anticipating yet more material from the dread Blackmoor Castle, which reminds the reader that *Blackmoor* says very little on the subject Blackmoor, just as *Greyhawk* imparted no specific intelligence of the city or castle of Greyhawk.

Most diehard enthusiasts had formed their opinion of Blackmoor by the end of January, as the first block of reviews appeared in *Alarums & Excursions* #8 (collated February 5, 1976). Mark Swanson review, unsurprisingly, dismissed the product as *Blackbore*, though more kindly than Glenn Blacow who deemed it *Blechbore* though either of these epithets would be preferred to that of Scott Rosenberg, who labeled it *Blackmanure*. On behalf of the gamers at MIT, Swanson reported: Local reaction to the new TSR supplement, *Blackmoor*, is generally negative, frequently ribald. Not that it isn't useful, with a good example of how to set up a dungeon/wilderness area, useful sage and assassin rules and... Well, what is there? The Mystic United Order of Bruce Lee Faaaans has few local admirers. *A&E* has better monsters as well as more words. There is still no how to play it manual, though *A&E* is a reasonable substitute. Not only has the mountain brought forth a mouse, it is a gold plated mouse. For completists and those who just don't care about the costs. [A&E:#8]

Once again, the cost enters into Swanson's considerations as a reviewer, though perhaps not so strongly as his disdain for a martial arts class. Wayne Shaw argues of the Temple of the Frog that while it is very interesting, I'd just as soon not have spent a dollar-sixty on it, as those twenty pages constitute about a third of the size of the pamphlet. *Blackmoor* weighs in thirteen pages shorter than *Greyhawk* at the same price, and even the pages it does have feel lighter. None of the reviewers in *Alarums* #8 felt that *Blackmoor* lived up to the precedent of *Greyhawk*. Steve Rose complains: Compare that with *Greyhawk*! *Blackmoor* is fine and dandy, but... it's like expecting Pepsi and getting R.C. Like wanting Asimov and getting Ellison.... Or to cease with these never-ending analogies, like expecting *Greyhawk* and getting *Blackmoor*. Wayne Shaw echoes those words: I guess what it boils down to is that I was expecting *Greyhawk*, and got *Blackmoor*. [A&E:#8]

Reviewers outside of *Alarums* showed little more enthusiasm for *Blackmoor*. *Owl & Weasel* #10 concurred that it is perhaps not quite as useful as *Greyhawk* (which had all the Combat and Magic tables).

called *Blackmoor* a bomb,

The first issue of Scott Rosenberg's the *Cosmic Balance* bluntly a waste of \$5 and a great disappointment after *Greyhawk*.

Bill Maxwell of Cincinnati, in a review appearing in *Fire the Arquebusiers!* #2/3, ranted that *Blackmoor* is an empty few pages of paper. Reading the backs of cereal boxes would enlighten you more. Greg Costikyan responded to the publication of *Blackmoor* by counterproposing

against both the Monk and Assassin classes in that same issue of *Fire The Arquebusiers!*, with his Martial Artist class and his Assassin, of which he claimed, This is the real thing. Not *Blackmoor*'s dipshit watered down version. The Endore campaign followed some of Costikyan's work here;; as the fifth issue of *The Haven Herald* reported, the campaign accepted Assassin, Sage and Disease rules from *Blackmoor* but reprinted Costikyan's Martial Artist class in lieu of the Monk rules. Perhaps the most damning analysis appears in *Space Gamer* #6 a few months later, which published the results of a survey asking subscribers to rate publications in the genre on a scale of one to ten: while *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Empire of the Petal Throne* tied at a rating of 7.7, and *Greyhawk* enjoyed a comparable score of 7.4, *Blackmoor* rated only as a 5.2, below even the zany *Tunnels & Trolls* at 5.5.

Although TSR no doubt hoped *Blackmoor* would receive a more favorable reception, surely these titles were critic-proof: negative reviews in periodicals with such tiny circulations could not have impacted sales significantly. Even if *Blackmoor* underperformed slightly, TSR released a diverse portfolio of games near the New Year, and their continuing success depended on no single title. For the bulk of these releases, TSR did seem to raid the community's back catalog, however, rather than inventing new titles. In addition to the recent revival of the Guidon Games naval miniatures title *Don't Give Up the Ship*, TSR planned a new boxed set edition of Mike Carr *Fight in the Skies*. Gygax 1969 ancients rules, which he had revised in 1974 for *Wargamer's Digest*, found their mature form in *Classic Warfare*, one of the early 1976 releases. Even Gygax very first board game design, *Little Big Horn*, would appear under TSR imprint in the first half of the year, after Mike Carr applied a bit of polish.¹²¹ Through its mail-order business, TSR also resold the remaindered stock of Guidon Games, particularly the late titles *Hardtack*, *Ironclad* and *Grosstaktik*, and cultivated a stronger relationship with distributors like Lou Zocchi, whose own wares figure prominently on the back of the December 1975 *Strategic Review*.

¹²¹ Other wargame titles released by TSR in 1976 included the miniatures titles *Valley Forge* (by Dave Wesely) and *Air Power* as well as the board wargames *Lankhmar* and *William the Conqueror*.

The larger mail-order catalog in 1976 reflected items TSR Hobbies would have on hand for the imminent opening of its retail shop in Lake Geneva, aptly named the Dungeon. In *Owl & Weasel* #9 back in October,

Gygax had written that we have just arranged to purchase an old residence (zoned for business) on a main street here in Lake Geneva, although not near the lake where all the tourist traffic is. The house stood at 723 Williams Street, said Williams Street being the continuation of Broad Street as it winds north away from the lake. In his letter of January 13, 1976, to George Phillips, Gygax reports that the shop is scheduled to open 1 February, and shipping and the offices of the corporation will be in the building we bought in a week or so (and my home can return to its normal chaotic state). In the February *Strategic Review*, Kask promises that we will be partially into our new shop by the time subscribers could read his words, though the official grand opening sale at the Dungeon did not transpire until the week of April 24. [SR:v2n2] The Williams Street office afforded TSR two important luxuries: first, sufficient storage space to house the growing print runs they ordered for their products, and second, an excuse to fill more staff positions. Terry Kuntz, for example, worked the retail till at the Dungeon, after having really slaved in getting it into shape, according to Kask. Around this same time, Mike Carr and Dave Megarry both migrated south from the Twin Cities to join TSR staff.¹²² The pictures from the Dungeon in the *Strategic Review* show Gygax and Blume situated in comfortable offices upstairs, while the downstairs counters burgeoned with TSR titles. One can clearly see their new boxed set of *Fight in the Skies*, as well as *DUNGEON!*, *Boot Hill*, *Tractics* and *Empire of the Petal Throne* prominently displayed alongside board wargames by Avalon Hill (including *D-Day*) as well as smaller ventures (like Jedko's *War At Sea* (1975)). The walls are literally covered with miniatures: the distinctive packaging of Der Kriegspieler covers one free-standing rack. [SR:v2n2]

The growing diversity of TSR product lines could not, however, pace the deluge of variant rules it received as submissions from the fans of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Gygax explains that heaps of material have been received, and we do plan to publish most of it. [SR:v1n4] Some ideas made their way into the *Strategic Review*, but Gygax elaborates that we are also seriously considering the production of a D&D supplement authored by DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENTHUSIASTS EVERYWHERE, with the assurance that each contribution would be credited to the appropriate author, and contributors would receive several free copies of the booklet. Barely a month later, Gygax then asked fans what they would like from a future supplement, as clearly the volume of submissions far exceeded TSR publishing capacity:

We get stacks of stuff every week from players, and a good deal of it is quite good. Well, it is impossible to print every bit of it in *SR*. We just don't have the space. And we certainly don't want to discourage future submissions. So we thought we would select the best material received and print it along with the items printed in *SR* as a supplement. Everyone that has a piece printed will have it credited to them, and receive two copies of the supplement as payment.... How about a supplement of nothing but magic? (Spells-only, or items only, or somewhere between?) Or how about a book of Artifacts and Relics? [SR:v1n5]

By early 1976, the imagination of the fan community had already conjured innumerable variations and extensions of baseline *Dungeons & Dragons*, and even the presumably top-shelf submissions which made it into the *Strategic Review* often rehashed proposals long-familiar in fanzines. In the February *Strategic Review*, for example, there appears a new character class, the Bard the first new base character class promulgated by TSR since the Thief, as opposed to the subclasses of Ranger, Assassin, Monk and so on. The Bard is both an amateur thief and magic user as well as a good fighter, according to Doug Schwegman, who submitted the description to the *Strategic Review*. Attentive readers may recall that the very first issue of *Alarums & Excursions* the previous summer contained a proposal by Mike Siemon for a Character Type of Singer or Bard who also sings spells and would be permitted to operate during a given adventure as a Fighter, Cleric or MagicUser (the Thief class being too recent an innovation at the time to figure in Siemon's proposal). This is not to suggest that Schwegman in any way plagiarized earlier work;; Schwegman's Bards, for example, have the distinctive ability to charm listeners with their performances, as well as to recover ancient lore about places and items from their repertoire of stories.¹²³ The Charisma-based Poet class proposal in *Alarums & Excursions* #9 (March 1976), however, illustrates how many close variations on these themes circulated in the fan community: Bill Stoddard of San Diego equipped the Poet (for whom the 10th level title is Bard) with an Entrancement ability that can hold an intelligent creature immobile while the song lasts, and moreover a clone of the Legend Lore spell of Magic-users. A couple of the Poet's level titles correspond almost exactly with those of the Bard in the *Strategic Review*: both at sixth level are Minstrels, and while the latter at first level is a Rhymer, the former is a Rhymster.

¹²² *Corner of the Table* and Mike Carr

The more difficult question to answer is whether Schwegman's Bards display any greater suitability for admittance to the canon of *Dungeons & Dragons* than the Singer or Poet classes, and moreover whether or not publication in the *Strategic Review* or any other TSR imprint entailed entrance to the official rules of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Remember that Ted Johnstone aspired to arrive at a truly intelligent version of *Dungeons & Dragons* through pooling the collective intelligence of the *Alarums* community. The pages of *Alarums* teemed with variant rules, but if anything, they reflected rapidly diverging opinions about the ideal form of the game, rather than any convergence toward standardization. Of the many other classes proposed in *Alarums* the Courtesan, the Damsel, the Mad Scientist, the Ninja or the Fenrist Priest, to name only a handful none achieved widespread recognition, at least not in the forms presented there. In part, the growing disparity between the circulation of *Alarums* and the *Strategic Review* explains this difference in the weight of their opinions: whereas the second issue of the *Strategic Review* back in April 1975 had mailed to only three hundred or so subscribers, the fifth issue in December went to more than 850, to say nothing of the fifty complimentary copies sent and the hundred or so copies allotted for over-the-counter sales. A letter from Tim Kask to potential advertisers around that time explains, Our survey data shows that each copy is seen by at least five people. This translates into 5000+ potential customers of your products. Comparatively speaking, *Alarums* fixed its copy count at one hundred until the end of 1975, and while each issue may have been seen by more than one enthusiast, surely its total reach fell far short of the *Strategic Review*.

Given that TSR simply could not manage the volume of ideas the fan community generated, *Alarums* served a crucial purpose. The February 1976 *Strategic Review* says as much, calling *Alarums* far and away the best *D&D* zine, and giving it the highest rating among the fanzines it reviewed.¹²⁴ Aside from merely circulating rules, *Alarums* analyzed and criticized them, in keeping with the culture of mail comments on prior issues that it inherited from the APAs of science-fiction fandom. Nowhere else at that time did proposed emendations to *Dungeons & Dragons* confront such a responsive and outspoken audience. Lacking the space constraints that winnowed submissions to the *Strategic Review* down to the Darwinian finest, *Alarums* gamely printed ideas no matter how thoughtful or unconsidered only in the next issue, in the mailing comments, did the community's approval process

begin. So when Siemon's Singer class proposal appeared in the first *Alarums*, the disclaimer all helpful suggestions gratefully accepted accompanied it, and Lee Gold immediately replied, I strongly object to introducing any new characteristics, by which she meant the Inspiration stat which Siemon suggested as the prime requisite for his class. This same peer review process played out for most of the variant rules carried in *Alarums*. Comparing the relative value of this volunteer, community-driven effort to the selection process TSR applied to its own periodicals and supplements is fraught with difficulties. Ultimately, the counterproposals of Greg Costikyan against the *Blackmoor* Monk and Assassin classes demonstrated that whether Gygax liked it or not, the canonical TSR rules were subject to the same scrutiny and consensual approval as the juvenile trash proposed in the grungiest zine.

¹²³ Schwegman, however, opted not to specify a prime requisite for his invention.

Perhaps the lukewarm reception of *Blackmoor* inspired Gygax to follow up quickly with an additional supplement which dug deeply into the submission pile, as he long had promised. *Eldritch Wizardry* (1976), by Gygax and Blume, hastily made its way onto the production schedule unlike *Greyhawk* and *Blackmoor*, no prophetic utterances preceded *Eldritch Wizardry*, Supplement III of *Dungeons & Dragons*, aside from a simple statement in the *Strategic Review* that it would ship on the first of May, and that it would present psionic abilities & combat, ultra-powerful magic items known as Artifacts & Relics, various new monsters including demons and finally Druids a new subclass of Clerics.¹²⁵ Since they first featured in *Greyhawk* as a type of monster, Druids had captured the imagination of the fan community. In *Alarums* #6 (December 1975), Jack Harness wrote up rules for the Neutral Cleric class based on the Druid, in *Greyhawk* who retained the ability of the non-player class to polymorph themselves. Lee Gold, in *Alarums* #9, agrees with Harness that now that *Greyhawk* has legitimized Druids, it seems unfair to rule our player characters from being neutral Clerics. Just one month before the publication of *Eldritch Wizardry*, *Alarums* #10 published another Druid system, this one from Hendrick Pfeiffer, which considered Neutral Druids as a subclass of Magic-users.¹²⁶ No doubt TSR read both these Druid proposals, though the one published in *Eldritch Wizardry* derived from Dennis Sustarre, who is credited as the Great Druid on the title page, next to Elder¹²⁴ It orders the relevant zines as

follows: *Alarums & Excursions* Space Gamer, Owl & Weasel and Ryth Chronicle

hybrid game Fantasia) and *Fire the Arquebusiers!*

Fantasia Today (serving the MidgardD&D

Dankendismal TSR

¹²⁵ *Alarums #12* that he received his copy of *Eldritch Wizardry* in Pasadena

week or so of the planned release date.

¹²⁶ Steve McIntosh in *Alarums #13*, reacting to *Eldritch Wizardry*, suggests these are only the tip of



FIGURE 63: THE FOUR DUNGEONS & DRAGONS SUPPLEMENTS Steve Marsh, as well as Tim Kask and Jim Ward.¹²⁷ Sustarre's Druid system grants access to a whole new tree of nature-related spells, many derived from earlier Cleric spells (the various ranks of cure, for instance), but others inspired by the Druid's connection to weather, flora and fauna. Signature Druid spells include Call Lightning, Transport via Plants (a sort of teleportation through the earth) or various ranks of Animal Summoning instead of the Magic-user Monster Summoning spells.

The gap that *Eldritch Wizardry* fills, according to Kask's introduction, is to restore the mystery, uncertainty and danger that was lost with the proliferation of rule sets. By this proliferation he apparently means strong sales of *Dungeons & Dragons*, which inevitably meant that players learned information best kept restricted to the Dungeonmaster a term widely used throughout *Eldritch Wizardry*. As with the release of the Temple of the Frog

scenario in *Blackmoor*, secret information intended for referees has a very short shelf life when promulgated as a commercial product. TSR solution, of course, is to sell yet another supplement, containing surprising new monsters that dungeon masters can race to employ before wily players study up on them. The implied business model is a very attractive one for TSR, but one that depends on the inability or unwillingness of dungeon masters to devise their own threats and rewards, an assumption surely long discredited by the labors of the fan community.¹²⁸ Hartley Patterson's review in *News from Bree* #19 neatly explodes TSR pretensions in this regard: The introduction is somewhat puzzling;; it looks as though TSR thinks everyone is adopting all their rules and not devising any of their own.... Odd.

Eldritch Wizardry does offer a way for the referee to keep at least a few secrets from the prying eyes of players. The system for unique artifacts and relics, the rarest and most powerful of magic items, relies on lengthy tables for dungeon masters to generate their powers. *Monsters & Treasure* previously alluded to artifacts, then imagined as superpowerful artifact character who touches one.¹²⁹ By *Eldritch Wizardry*, however, only certain artifacts insisted on a particular moral disposition in their bearers, and many simply served as a warehouse for a random set of extreme powers and punishments. Thus, any player who discovers ¹²⁷ Ward was already mentioned above for his earlier work in the *Strategic Review* on Barsoom, but is better known for his later game *Metamorphosis Alpha*.

his connection to the Latter Day Saints movement.

¹²⁸ It also implies that if the limited information necessary for players could somehow be cordoned off in a separate volume from the private information specific to dungeon masters, say by segregating them in a separate handbook and guide, the problem would be solved though as it turns out, this problem is more fundamental.

The Ring of Gax with its eight configurable stones will have no idea which magic effects result from any particular setting one configuration might allow the wearer to charm monsters, another might slay the wearer outright. Other artifacts and relics, like Baba Yaga's Hut, a sort of traveling apartment on stilts for adventurers, have innate utility for storage, transportation and even combat (the Hut's legs kick savagely) and only a slight reliance on the tables of random powers. The most novel property of these artifacts and relics, however, is their very uniqueness: *Eldritch Wizardry* calls them one-of-a-kind objects that have been around for

thousands of years. This implies that only one adventurer in a given game world might possess each one of these items, and moreover begins to unveil a sort of communal world setting for *Dungeons & Dragons*. The Hand of Vecna and Eye of Vecna, for example, are the sole remains of an ancient lich, and we learn from the description of the Sword of Kas that Vecna's bodyguard once wielded that weapon. The Mace of Cuthbert introduces a certain St. Cuthbert, a name drawn from an actual religious figure of antiquity, and virtually all these top-tier items owe their existence to some named figure of the past be it The Invulnerable Coat of Arms or the Machine of Lum the Mad.

Greyhawk set a precedent for the existence of unique entities with its proviso that there is only *one* King of Lawful Dragons just as there is only *one* Queen of Chaotic Dragons, though the implications of these pronouncements for the games of any particular referee remain unclear: is this in reference to the world of the Great Kingdom, where Greyhawk and Blackmoor lie, or meant to constrain every campaign world invented by independent referees? The latter interpretation is probably more accurate, though Gygax consistently maintained that the rules exist only to inspire dungeon masters, and that everyone should adapt these ideas to fit their own campaigns. *Eldritch Wizardry*, however, reinforces this precedent, and not just with unique magic items, but also in its new demonic hierarchy. *Monsters & Treasure* does not use the word demon, not even to refer to balrogs, which it calls highly intelligent monsters with a magical nature or casts as a strong chaotic character. [OD&D2:14] *Eldritch Wizardry* describes six types of chaotic and evil demons, from the meager Type I, somewhat a cross between a human and a vulture, to the terrifying Type VI demons which are sometimes known as balrogs, as well as succubae who prey on the concupiscence of adventurers.¹³⁰ Above these rank-and-file fiends rule the Demon Princes, Orcus and Demogorgon, unique monsters who previously shared a couplet in Milton *Paradise Lost* (Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name/Of items with a strong connection to a particular alignment, such that for a Lawful

very harmful effects should be incurred by any Neutral or Oppositely aligned¹²⁹ [OD&D2:38] In *Alarums* #2 (Jul 1975), Robert Sacks discussed his own implementation of relics, which he had already raised in correspondence with Gygax Sacks at the time believed relics might eventually be detailed in the *Strategic Review*. However, Swanson had

previously mentioned in *APA-L* #523 (reprinted in *Alarums implements of less iconic figures (though the arms of St. Cuthbert, arguably, tie this back to Christianity)*). In *Eldritch Wizardry*, little distinguished relics from artifacts.

¹³⁰ The reference to balrogs was excised from later editions of *Eldritch Wizardry* after the cease-anddesist order relating to Tolkien intellectual property.

Demogorgon).¹³¹ Orcus, the Roman god of the underworld from whom the orcs take their name, acts as a prince of the undead and wields an artifact, the Wand of Orcus, the touch of which is fatal to any creature except other Princes, High Devils, Saints, Godlings, etc. The two-headed Demogorgon, with reptilian body and tentacles, possesses virtually every magical power a demon might desire, is 95% resistant to magic and can hypnotize up to one hundred creatures at once with the gaze of one head while the other induces insanity. No doubt Orcus and Demogorgon both serve as potential foes for jaded adventurers who had attained practically god-like power and wealth in the care of unduly generous dungeon masters.

Finally, *Eldritch Wizardry* introduces the concept of psionic ability, the existence of spell-like mental powers in human characters (and some monsters), even in those without any other magical or divine inclination. Legendary pulp editor John W. Campbell brought the term psionics to the attention of science-fiction fandom in his February 1956 issue of *Astounding Science Fiction* with an article entitled, The Science of Psionics.¹³² The term psi had already for some years figured in various pseudo-scientific experiments in extrasensory perception, and indeed *Dungeons & Dragons* incorporates it less with fantastic than scientific language, including some Freudian terminology, as well as much talk of precognition, suspended animation, molecules and so on. Any player character with a score of 15 or higher in Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma has a ten percent chance of harboring psionic aptitude;; the magnitude of psionic ability is determined by another percentile roll. Characters with the gift have a further ten percent chance per level of gaining certain psionic abilities, be they forms of psionic attack or defense, or spell-like abilities including telekinesis, clairvoyance and the like. Even in comparison with other systems of that pioneering era, the psionic combat mechanic admits of needless complication.¹³³ At its core, however, the psionics system answers the complaints of critics who rejected the Vancian spell-memorization system of *Dungeons & Dragons* in favor of

spell points. Characters who mastered psionic teleportation, for example, paid twenty

psionic strength points to cast it;; maintaining invisibility cost two points per turn. Psionic combat between foes similarly expended points for attacks (like the Mind Thrust at ten¹³¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. II, v. 964. Virgil teaches us that Orcus wields a rod, or *virgam*, which grants him control over death and sleep;; *Aeneid*, Bk. IV, v. 242. Demogorgon however has a somewhat less grand historical pedigree than Orcus. C. S. Lewis, in his *Discarded Image*, makes a compelling case that Demogorgon was born of a sloppy copyist, who mistakenly transcribed the authors interpreted as the name of a distinct fiend.

¹³² editorial in *Astounding* (Vol. 56, No. 6) optimistically assesses the state of scientific inquiry into psionics as follows:

prodding at the edges of a new field that will open a totally new concept of the Universe. And that,

Eldritch Wizardry missed the twenty-year anniversary of this issue of *Astounding*

ems to reflect an inability to distinguish fact from fiction, bear in mind that only six years earlier, he published in the pages of the May 1950 *Astounding* Scientology.

¹³³

adding the psychic potential to the number of psionic abilities times two plus the number of psionic points) and defenses (the Intellect Fortress, for a mere seven points). Psionic strength points regenerate quickly if one abstains from psionic antics: at a rate of six per hour for everyday activities, and twenty-four per hour when sleeping. As an alternative to the existing magic system, psionics fulfills Gygax prophecy about a spell-point system in *Alarums #2*, that it would have required a great deal of space and been far more complex to handle. It furthermore illustrates his willingness to skin the same cat multiple ways, as these rules do not rescind the prior memorization-based system for spellcasters, but instead provide a largely overlapping alternative, and one that moreover grants mundane classes like the Fighting-man and Thief access to supernatural powers. *Eldritch Wizardry* awards psionic powers to a handful of new monsters (like the intellect devourer) as well as old favorites, for example completely retrofitting the mind flayer defined in the first *Strategic Review*.

Psionic powers additionally grant a new means of access to the astral and ethereal planes, and those places receive some additional attention, linking to the concept of planes a more nuanced system of alignment that assigns homes to extraplanar creatures based on their moral code. In the pages of the February 1976 *Strategic Review*, Gygax reinvented alignment, in the process bringing it into further accord with the model of the fantastic multiverse of planes and dimensions he had begun to develop. His article, entitled The Meaning of Law and Chaos in *Dungeons & Dragons* and their Relationship to Good and Evil, postulates that widespread confusion over the definitions of lawful and chaotic versus good and evil necessitated a richer classification system for alignment. He volunteers had I the opportunity to do *D&D* over I would have made the whole business very much clearer by differentiating the four categories, and many chaotic creatures would be good, while many lawful creatures would be evil. With a helpful chart, he thereby places many of the beings in the *Dungeons & Dragons* setting on a continuum between, as he puts it lawful/good and chaotic/evil, where Paladins exemplify the former and red dragons the latter. Sitting on the fence in the middle in a state of true neutrality are Druids, as well as elementals, giants and the like. Gygax illustrates that Law need not be synonymous with Good, however, by pointing to a dictatorship, whereas societies which allow more individual freedom tend to be more chaotic. [SR:v2n1]

Alongside this redefinition of alignment, Gygax defines a cosmology of sorts. He associates the lawful/good whereas the chaotic/good Elysium. We have already discussed planes in Section 2.7.2, though their specification in the earliest *Dungeons & Dragons* rules left much to referee discretion. Now we learn from *Eldritch Wizardry* that Demons fall under the chaotic/evil designation, and in the *Strategic Review* Gygax associates these entities with the lawful/evil, dwell in Hell. For the lawful/neutral for the chaotic/neutral Limbo;; the neutral/good

Abyss, whereas Devils, who are Gygax sees Nirvana in their future, find their reward in Paradise, and the neutral/evil pass their sentence in Hades. None of these places receive any further explication at this stage, but we know from Magic-user spells like Contact Higher Plane and Gate that powerful sorcery can breach the barrier between planes and sometimes allow beings to cross over into our world. *Eldritch Wizardry* does corroborate that a demon, when killed in our world, is merely forced back to the plane from whence it originally came, though without giving any indication of where exactly that might be. Through specifying the planes associated with the

various alignments, giving additional definition to demons and saintly figures, as well as defining certain relics, *Dungeons & Dragons* began to quadrant of his illustration with Saints and with Heaven, quadrant he assigns to Godlings and somewhere called embed within its setting a baseline account of religion, though admittedly one that borrows in syncretic fashion from a smorgasbord of real-world faiths.

By crystallizing the previously-abstract cosmology of *Dungeons & Dragons*, Gygax rendered the entire setting and scenario of the game less a matter for the discretion of the individual dungeon master, and more an element of the base rules. The final issue of the *Strategic Review* (April 1976) continues this direction with two major articles by Gygax, one on The *Dungeons & Dragons* Magic System and the other advising readers that *D&D* is Only as Good as the DM. [SR:v2n2] The first article obviously targeted the vocal participants in *Alarums* and other fanzines who rejected the Vancian spell-memorization model. Gygax freely admits that the game itself does not carefully explain the reasoning behind the magic system, a failing he endeavors to correct by explaining somewhat pedantically that there are four basic parts to magic: the verbal or uttered spell, the somatic or physical movement required for the conjuration, the psychic or mental attitude necessary to cast the spell, and the material adjuncts by which the spell can be completed.¹³⁴ No amount of explanation, however, will satisfy those who enjoy comic book characters, incredible spells, and stratospheric levels, devotees of which balked at Gygax clarifications of the spell system. While he pays some lip service to allowing great variations between campaigns in their interpretation of the rules, he insists that there are some variations which are so far removed from the original framework as to be totally irreconcilable with *D&D*. He lays down this firm rule to prevent the game from devolving into a weird wizard show where players get bored quickly, arguing that the most desirable game is one in which the various character types are able to compete with each other as relative equals, for that will maintain freshness in the campaign. The importance of this fundamental principle of balancing the relative power of classes outweighs the need for the referee's latitude.

His second article bluntly attacks the prodigality of those dungeon masters who fail to balance dangers and rewards in their games. It is often a temptation to the referee to turn his dungeons into a veritable gift shoppe of magical goodies, ripe for plucking by players. This leads to characters of the

twentieth, thirtieth or even fortieth level, who either become bored or filled with an entirely false sense of accomplishment he adds that no player in either Blackmoor or Greyhawk has risen above 14th level. The heretical practices of the Caltech gamers receive especial admonition: The boys out there are playing something entirely different than the game as intended according to TSR.¹³⁵ Gygax urges more parsimonious distribution of treasure, and moreover encourages dungeon masters to exercise greater disinterest: If a favorite player stupidly puts himself into a situation where he is about to be killed, let the dice tell the story and KILL him. He prefers non-player characters to charge appropriate rates for goods and services, to foster the appearance of a realistic economy. All of these recommendations serve a certain amount of corporate self-interest, as the accumulation of excessive power places pressure on TSR to design suitably inflated rules;; this piece telegraphs that Gygax would not cater to the demands of these comic book superheroes. Instead, he asks dungeon masters to exercise restraint by designing campaigns where a dragon, a balrog, or whatever will be a

¹³⁴ The un

derives from Harold Shea, in particular *The Castle of Iron*

¹³⁵

fearsome challenge rather than a pushover, as there are no monsters to challenge the capabilities of 30th level Lords, 40th level Patriarchs, and so on. While he does not forbid referees to ignore his advice and if he did, surely he could not police all tomorrow's parties he does draw a normative line in the sand delineating which campaigns have the right to call themselves *Dungeons & Dragons*. To power-trippers, he must declare, Different strokes for different folks, but that is not *D&D*.

While the final issue of the *Strategic Review* delivers no new system for *Dungeons & Dragons*, it does formally announce the upcoming birth of the *Dragon* magazine (due in June) and its sister *Little Wars*, which TSR would publish on alternating months. These twin zines mirror a growing schism in TSR target audience between fantasy fans and traditional wargamers. Tim Kask bills *Little Wars* as a magazine for miniatures enthusiasts though it will not neglect boardgames either as it covers battle reports, game analyses, book and game reviews, figure reviews and so on;; it targeted the market served by *Strategy & Tactics*, but with a greater emphasis on miniatures. The *Dragon*, he says, will be devoted to gaming in Fantasy, Swords & Sorcery, Science Fiction and role-playing games. This April 1976 usage of role-

playing games, which recurs several times throughout the issue, shows an increasing awareness on TSR part of the emerging genre of games which are not *D&D*, as Gygax might say, but share an essential component of character in common with it. The survey in that *Strategic Review* explores the readership's preference among 1) miniatures;; 2) boardgame;; 3) paper Role Playing game (*D&D*, *EPT*, *En Garde*, etc). Instantly, the term echoed in the zines that closely tracked TSR

month, there is a reference to role playing

releases;; in *Owl & Weasel* #16 the following games such as *Dungeons & Dragons* and *En Garde*, and simultaneously in Flying Buffalo's *Wargamer's Information* #16, the review by Tony Watson of *En Garde* begins Like *Dungeons & Dragons*, *En Garde* is a role playing game, using paper and pencil. In the next year, as TSR increasingly restricted the access of enthusiasts and competitors alike to the *Dungeons & Dragons* brand, the term role-playing game served a critical function as the catch-all term for the nascent underground titles which Gygax deemed not *D&D*.

5.9 CANONICITY AND CONTROL

When Gygax leveraged the *Strategic Review* as a platform to criticize alleged distortions of *Dungeons & Dragons*, he provoked increasing scrutiny not just of his own style of gaming, but of the very basis of TSR fundamental authority over the game. As Swanson's review of the Origins I tournament suggested, many believed Gygax tastes as a dungeon master tended toward impersonal deathtraps, and this perception, right or wrong, discredited Gygax in the eyes of many readers of *Alarums* and other fanzines. Among the young audience for *Dungeons & Dragons*, a natural antiauthoritarian streak triggered a knee jerk reaction to any pronouncements from on high. For example, in the March *Wargamer's Information* (#14, also reprinted in *Fire the Arquebusiers!* #2/#3) there appears an article by Bill Maxwell, Jr. called A Creative Look at *D&D/EPT* (or) Gary Gygax is not a god! which advises readers: Remember that YOU ARE THE MODERATOR, not E. Gary Gygax. Don't feel urged on or inhibited by his many creatures and rules. If you don't like his combat system (I hate it and I don't use it) don't use it! If you think *EPT* is too much like *D&D* in its mechanics, CHANGE THEM.... If you think the rules for Assassins and Monks are worthless (which they are) by all means change em or skip em. Gary Gygax may be a good moderator as far as moderators go, but he isn't a good fantasy game designer. [WI:#14]

In *Alarums* #11, Nicolai Shapero rejects Gygax normative prescriptions with a defiant sneer: As for me, I'll never play Gygax *D&D*. So Gary, if you're reading my column in *A&E* and *TWH*, you can fume and fuss to your heart's content, and call me all sorts of bad names for playing a game that is NOT *D&D* but instead some horrible twisted variant, but that's the real world, buddy. [A&E:#11]

Worse still, many perceived a hypocrisy in Gygax insistence, per his note in *Alarums*, that I desire variance in interpretation and... I will do my utmost to see that there is as little trend towards standardization as possible, when considered in light of his more recent attacks on outlier interpretations. [A&E:#2] That much said, one can argue that the rules published as Warlock had led to extreme conditions in some California games. Steve McIntosh, who played in Long Beach, reported in *Alarums* #8 (February 1976) of dungeon masters implementing non-player characters over level 250, and in some cases over level 1,000. The existence of these sorts of characters posed a significant difficulty for TSR;; while *Greyhawk* exemplified a certain willingness on Gygax part to cater to higherlevel characters than the original rules considered, how far did this willingness extend? To level 100 and beyond? Ultimately, how would TSR address a market of players that operated under such radically varying parameters? Did TSR need to invent spells of suitable power for characters that level? Should published scenarios like the Temple of the Frog cater to characters that are level 10 or level 100 or level 500? Regardless of these practical concerns, Gygax reservations about these outlier campaigns clearly contradicted his frequent avowals of different strokes for different folks, and the community did not hesitate to rake him over the coals for it. In *Alarums* #13, Scott Rosenberg observed: Gygax letter to *A&E* #2 provides a biting counterpoint to Gygax articles in *SR*. If everyone can play his own way, why is Gygax telling people that that's the way to play in *SR*'s pages? Others resorted to more humorous barbs, like the following creation of Chuck Ulrich: Gygacks: 1-8 appear, AC 6, move 12', 6 HD, in lair 10%, type C treasure, butt @ 2-8, bite @ 1-3, weapon by type. These bull-headed men exactly resemble Minotaurs, but are extremely and annoyingly Lawful in nature. When encountered, they will insist upon everything being done their way, although they will insist that they favor individuality and diversity. Gygacks are natural enemies of Minotaurs and will attack them on sight. Nor do they take kindly to being called Minotaurs by unenlightened parties. [A&E:#15]

5.9.1 THE COPYRIGHT ON DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Gygax tentative steps toward standardization furthermore coincided with a separate trend that infuriated the fannish community: TSR began to defend through legal channels its claimed intellectual property, including the trademark *Dungeons & Dragons*. The first important challenge hinged on the production of character sheets. Character sheets of varying degrees of sophistication had long appeared in fanzines: the fan community quickly recognized the need to provide players with an easily completed paper form for the various abilities and attributes which preserve the state of characters in the game. The first issue of the *Haven Herald*, among the earliest periodicals dedicated to *Dungeons & Dragons* (May 1975), concludes with a simple character sheet by Stephen Tihor, not greatly expanded from the few lines recommended for recording characters in *Men & Magic*. [OD&D1:10] *Alarums* #2 contains a character sheet designed by Jack Harness, and by #5, Dick Eney generated one on the basis of Harness's, Gold/Johnstone, and Tihor character sheets. Yet another sheet by Jeff May surfaced in *Alarums* #12;; Hartley Patterson printed his own in *News from Bree* #16 at the beginning of 1976.

In Boston, for the players in the Edwyr and Gorree dungeons of Blacow and Swanson respectively, Robert E. Ruppert designed a set of sheets that appeared in the January 1976 *American Wargamer*. [AW:v3n6] It included provisions for the Swanson Special Abilities and similar variants preferred locally. Its offset print quality greatly exceeded that of earlier amateur sheets all products of a typewriter rather than a print shop. Across their top, Ruppert's sheets read in large letters, Dungeons & Dragons Character Sheet. Below, each sheet was customized for a particular character class;; the *American Wargamer* contains a Magic-user and Thief sheet as samples, and where the Magicuser has blanks for spells of various levels, the Thief's has special fields for abilities like opening locks as well as Thief's Guild Status. Ruppert made these sheets available, via the American Wargaming Association, for a pittance: two cents for a sheet, or eight for fifteen cents.

After the sheets appeared in the *American Wargamer*, Ruppert contacted TSR late in January to ascertain if there was any interest in his project. The response, however, was not what he hoped for. TSR retained the law firm of Allen & Lenon, based in Lake Geneva, as their legal counsel at the time. After some initial expressions of displeasure, a March 5, 1976, letter from David A. Lenon to Bob Ruppert insists that Ruppert cease any publication of any such work based on the game *Dungeons & Dragons*, on the grounds that The game *Dungeons & Dragons* and the title of that game are copyrights of

TSR, Inc., a Wisconsin corporation, and were filed in January of 1974. Therefore any continued use by you would be a breach of this copyright and would subject you to further legal proceedings or associated items for use in the game of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Above and beyond a mere copyright on *Dungeons & Dragons*, TSR's legal counsel here asserts that no one could publish any games or associated items for use in the game other than TSR. TSR, as Lenon reports, would appreciate it if you would cease producing this character sheet and any other similar products at once. Needless to say, this step caught the Bostonians by surprise, and sales of the sheets instantly halted. Kevin Slimak, the Secretary of the AWA, sent a feeler to Gygax in February to ascertain whether he intended to pursue the matter any further, to which Gygax shortly thereafter replied: We are not planning to take any legal action regarding the *D&D* stuff you were producing under the auspices of the AWA. What we really are concerned about, however, is preventing any sort of rip-offs of our material, so there is a hard-line policy prevailing here. We bear absolutely no ill will, and let us forget the whole matter!¹³⁶

At around this same time, Bob Ruppert inquired with Tim Kask about the possible grounds of legal action, and Kask (in a March 13, 1976, letter) clarified that you were right when you assumed that it was the use of *Dungeons & Dragons* that upset us! Indeed, the prior sheets appearing in the *Haven Herald* and *Alarums & Excursions*, although they enumerated many fundamental elements of *Dungeons & Dragons* such as hit points and level, did not festoon the name of the game across their masthead.¹³⁷ In an attempt to salvage the situation, Ruppert tendered the possibility of TSR reselling his sheets, but Kask informed him curtly that this is too late as we now distribute the *Character Archaic*.

¹³⁶ Letter dated March 2, 1976.

¹³⁷ Ruppert took the hint: in August 1976 he pr

The *Character Archaic* (1975) first appeared in the TSR product list on the back of the *Strategic Review* in February 1976, though it had been conceived the previous September. The write-up in the next *Strategic Review* announced that there is a new playing aid available that has to be one of the finest accessories on the market and we are now the exclusive dealers for it. Indeed, the *Character Archaic* was the first accessory designed for its products by third parties that TSR resold. It was the brainchild of two Californian enthusiasts, Pete and Judy Kerestan, and illustrated by Brad

Schenck, a.k.a. Morno, an artist and dungeon master who advertised his character portrait service in *Alarums* #6 and #8.¹³⁸ Primarily, the *Character Archaic* contained character sheets: eight for Mages, three for Clerics, and sixteen for Fighting-men of various races.¹³⁹ It furthermore includes a single page map of a twentyfour room dungeon, The Wizard's Tomb, along with a blank Creature Encounters chart on which a referee might record the perils and plunders to be found in those chambers, all bundled with various other forms that might assist a dungeon master at work. At three dollars for the whole package, the *Character Archaic* promised a new revenue source for TSR, and thus outside parties selling sheets through the *American Wargamer* for a mere two cents a piece posed a competitive threat. While a higher-quality product might command a higher price, fan reaction did not perceive the *Character Archaic* in this light;; in *Cosmic Balance* #2, for example, Scott Rosenberg suggests: its level of development is back at our first-generation sheet (we're now on our fifth or sixth). What a waste of money.¹⁴⁰ The sheet design of the *Character Archaic* does suffer for its generality. Since it aspires to apply equally to *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Empire of the Petal Throne*, its sheets provide fields for a superset of the character data both games require;; for example, the list of abilities includes the four attributes that the two games have in common (Strength, Intelligence, Constitution, Dexterity) but also the four that they do not, so depending on the system, players will leave blank either the Wisdom and Charisma fields or the Comeliness and Psychic Ability fields. While for TSR, this killed two birds with one stone, no doubt some players searched in vain for a Hit Points field on the character sheet, or wondered how to populate the field for God.

The discomfiture of TSR with the invocation of its treasured trademark manifested in other, subtler ways. The case of DunDraCon, obviously a contraction of *Dungeons & Dragons* Convention, serves as another instructive example of how TSR wielded its influence against brand dilution. DunDraCon was the brainchild of the dedicated core of Bay Area fans, notably the players in the Monday Night Game, who included Hilda and Owen Hannifen, Clint Bigglestone, Steve Henderson and Steve Perrin, all SCA members, and most of whom contributed to *Alarums* with some regularity. Perrin also authored a set of variant rules entitled the Perrin Conventions which circulated widely through fannish circles at the time.¹⁴¹ They scheduled DunDraCon for the weekend of March 6, 1976, at the

Claremont Hotel in Oakland;; Lee Gold arranged to collate *Alarums* #9 at the event. Although at first TSR happily advertised DunDraCon as the First Annual Convention for *Dungeons & Dragons* Enthusiasts in the winter 1975 *Strategic Review*, the following issue contained an abrupt retraction: *Dungeons & Dragons , Petal Throne, Boot Hill, En Garde, Tunnels and Trolls*

the Wild Hunt #8.

¹³⁸ Schenck

early issues of the *Dragon*

example. Schenck furthermore drew a number of early covers for *Alarums*, including #11, #21 and #22.

¹³⁹ The *Strategic Review* lists only six sheets for mages, but the version distributed by TSR shipped with eight (bearing four unique mage portraits, each appearing on two sheets).

¹⁴⁰ *Cosmic Balance* #1, incidentally.

We've heard about a *D&D* Con on the West Coast, but we're a little upset at the advertising the sponsors used. They claimed that Fritz Leiber was going to be there with his dungeon, but when we asked him, he said it was untrue. Hope none of our loyal *D&D* fans are duped, so verify before you go, and spare yourself some disappointment. [SR:v1n5]

TSR at the time maintained an open channel of communication with Leiber due to his ongoing involvement in a board wargaming project based on his world of Lankhmar a reconstruction of the very same wargame Leiber alluded to in *Amra* back in 1960 (see Section 2.1.2). This disavowal of DunDraCon in the *Strategic Review* prompted a frantic letter to Kask from Clint Bigglestone explaining the situation;; basically, Leiber had approved the dungeon, though another Bay Area fan distilled it from Leiber's works. Consequently, a re-retraction from TSR appeared just in time for the convention, which falls short of an apology but hopes that DunDraCon will be able to do well in spite of these hassles. [SR:v2n1] Hilda Hannifin, in her write-up in *Alarums* #10, suggests that around one hundred people attended DunDraCon, including Leiber himself. While TSR surely had the right to criticize misleading advertisements, it appears that they printed these accusations without even consulting the conference organizers (who included a number of influential fans), and in a hasty, dismissive manner that may have owed as much to a jealous and protectionist reaction to a

Dungeons & Dragons convention outside their control as to any concern for duped fans.¹⁴²

Finally, TSR began to explore the complicated questions surrounding the game's emerging direct competitors and the unsanctioned publication of material related to *Dungeons & Dragons*. In 1976, it became increasing difficult for TSR to distinguish between pirates, variant authors, unauthorized anthologizers and designers of new games. Insofar as the firm of Allen & Lenon insisted that the game *Dungeons & Dragons* and the title of that game are copyrights of TSR, what really constituted the game *Dungeons & Dragons*? The contents of the original three rulebooks, no doubt, but what about the contents of the *Strategic Review*? Did all of the variants printed therein immediately become part of the game of *Dungeons & Dragons*, or only those pieces authored by TSR staff? And what of the fan community's tireless reconsideration of the Monk, Bard and Druid classes did a variant of an official class infringe on this copyright, and did it matter if the variant in¹⁴¹ The Perrin conventions refined the magic system (granting far more spells to low level casters) and combat system (clarifying initiative and the order of operations in combat), and also incorporated a set of critical hit rules devised by David Hargrave, later known for his *Arduin Grimoire*. The Perrin Conventions as they stood circa 1977 appear near the beginning of the second volume of .

¹⁴² Two smaller conventions around this same time and OrcCon PrinceCon (March 19-21) at Princeton, NJ seem to have , was only around a dozen. [A&E:#11]

fact appeared earlier? The status of reorganizations or clarifications of existing rules raised similar questions: did the reproduction of TSR widely dispersed charts on a single handy page constitute an act of piracy, and did it change matters if that page appeared in a fanzine like *Alarums* or as a product sold by mail order?

As the precedent of character sheets suggested, TSR intended to vigorously defend the trademark *Dungeons & Dragons*. Imitators of the game up until this time blithely marketed their games as alternatives to *Dungeons & Dragons*: the Warlock rules, for example, bore the subtitle, How to Play D and D Without Playing D and D. The advertising for *Tunnels & Trolls* also defined its product largely in terms of *Dungeons & Dragons*. A Flying Buffalo catalog from 1975 contains a lengthy description of *Dungeons & Dragons*, followed by the following blurb: *Tunnels & Trolls* is

a Flying Buffalo game along the same lines as *D&D*. *T&T* is not as extensive (or as expensive) as *D&D*, and it uses regular dice. Can be used instead of *D&D*, or as a supplement to *D&D*. By way of announcing the August release of Ken St. Andre's new game *Monsters! Monsters!* (1976) in *Space Gamer* #6, Metagaming inquires, Have the unrelieved heroics and derring-do of *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Empire of the Petal Throne* been leaving you a bit jaded? *Monsters! Monsters!* will provide instant relief.¹⁴³ That game, a role-reversal romp allowing players to control the monsters who lie in wait for unsuspecting bands of adventurers, could most readily define itself in terms of the titles it hoped to supplant;; when St. Andre explained that *T&T* started as a revolt against needless complexity in *Dungeons & Dragons*, one questions whether he intended to find a market for his creation other than those gamers already familiar, and disaffected, with *Dungeons & Dragons*.

The liberal use of the words *Dungeons & Dragons* in *Tunnels & Trolls*, both in its advertisements and its game manual, elicited a response from TSR legal counsel. The June 1976 *Space Gamer* (#6) reported that: TSR Hobbies Inc. recently moved to defend what it considered to be an infringement of the copyright of their game *Dungeons & Dragons*. In a letter from TSR lawyers to Rick Loomis of Flying Buffalo Inc. advertisements for FBI's game *Tunnels & Trolls* were cited as infringing copyright by mentioning that *T&T* was like *D&D*. A copy of the letter was also forwarded to Metagaming Concepts, also considered to have violated the *D&D* copyright in ads for *Tunnels & Trolls*.

When Howard Thompson of Metagaming explained this development in *Space Gamer*, he insisted that the *D&D* copyright was not violated in the case of the advertisements, but nonetheless he must concede that *D&D* would not be mentioned in future ads out of respect for our good working relationship with TSR. Clearly, he found the heavy-handed approach of dispatching cease-and-desist letters disappointing, given that Metagaming had long distributed TSR products: It was regretful that expensive legal advice was thought necessary for a matter easily able to be handled by an informal letter. Thompson also could not resist airing this piece of dirty laundry to the community either, as the actions of the firms that produce the games are important to gamers. No doubt to many disgruntled customers, this latest legal posturing only served to confirm that TSR intended to bully

its way into a monopoly rather than letting the highest-quality product prove itself in the marketplace.

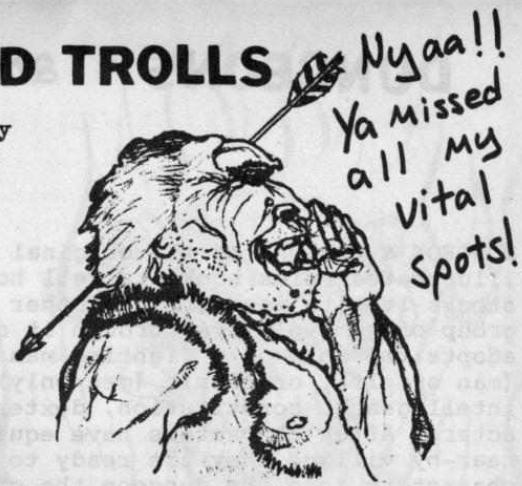
¹⁴³ *Monsters! Monsters!*, authored by St. Andre for Metagaming, also featured the talents of Steve Jackson (the American one) who edited the rulebook.

Flying Buffalo also elected to remove the words *Dungeons & Dragons* from all advertising for *Tunnels & Trolls*. Their advertisement in the Metagaming catalog published on August 1, 1976, shows us how they circumvented the need to mention any TSR products: Similar in concept to other fantasy role-playing games, *Tunnels and Trolls* has the advantage of a more simple design and less detail. The construction other fantasy roleplaying games, building on the reference to role-playing game Flying Buffalo s boss Rick Loomis had already dropped in the May *Wargamer s Information*, served as a very convenient euphemism for a certain game with a majority of the market share. *Monsters! Monsters!* is an all new fantasy role-playing game from Metagaming Concepts, we learn elsewhere in the same catalog, and major omissions and contradictions that plague other fantasy game systems are not part of *Monsters! Monsters!* In case there was any confusion about what those other fantasy game systems might be, another advertisement on the same page helpfully begins, *Dungeons & Dragons* is the original fantasy role-playing game. Thanks to TSR prohibitions, Flying Buffalo and Metagaming became the first companies to market their products as role-playing games in the sense that the future game industry would recognize. This advertising copy echoed into product reviews as well;; for example, in the *American Wargamer* (November 1976), by way of reviewing *Monsters! Monsters!*, George Phillips calls it a role-playing game. [AW:v4n4] Even more rapidly, Avalon Hill picked up the term: in the July 1976 issue of the *General*, a list of new titles under consideration includes

cowtown Gunfighter an individual role-playing game of life and adventure in an old west and Comanche Another role-playing game from the old west. [AHG:v13n2] While the efforts of Flying Buffalo and Metagaming unambiguously competed with *Dungeons & Dragons*, other activities proved harder to classify. Scott Rosenberg, the editor of the *Cosmic Balance*, sent a note to TSR in June requesting permission to, as he puts it, Xerox some of your tables and then cut them out, laid out differently to provide a compact set of all important tables for DMs. He intended to sell these photocopies to

a few friends at cost (no profit). The response he purportedly received follows: Dear Sir: In response to your question, no, you may not reprint anything. The curtness of this dismissal provoked Rosenberg to send a letter dated July 1, 1976, for publication in the *Dragon* (eventually, it appeared in the October issue, though it also turns up in *Cosmic*

TUNNELS AND TROLLS



A black and white illustration of a troll's head. Two arrows are stuck in his forehead; one has an arrowhead pointing upwards and the other is lower. The troll has a large nose, a mustache, and is wearing a simple beard. He appears to be shouting or speaking, with a speech bubble containing text.

TUNNELS AND TROLLS is a set of rules for a fantasy adventure game. The rules may be used for single adventures or for a cumulative campaign. Similar in concept to other fantasy role-playing games, TUNNELS AND TROLLS has the advantage of a more simple design and less detail. You still need to create a dungeon; and a dungeon master is an added plus, but the rules give you all the basic structure to play. This is a good bet for those new to fantasy gaming. You find out what it's all about for a modest price.

The 41 page 8½X11 rules booklet contains the following sections: digging the dungeon, creating the characters, monster making, how to have combat, saving rolls, experience points, supplies and provisions, elaborations, the Peters-McAllister chart, logic of magic, advanced weapons and armour chart, berserker fighting rule, advice for dungeon masters. Included also is lots of humor and a variety of illustrations by Liz Danforth.

TUNNELS AND TROLLS is \$3.00. (\$2.75 to TSG subscribers.)

FIGURE 64: ADVERTISEMENT FOR TUNNELS & TROLLS AS AN RPG

Balance #3), in which he offers a history lesson: Those with a background in many different fandoms have some knowledge of the results of a company oppressing an infant hobby with this type of policy comic fandom, for instance, was stunted, and nearly ruined, by comics companies refusal to allow amateurs to use pro characters in their fanzines.... I might also point out that an active and prosperous D&D fandom is as much, if not more, to your benefit than to anyone else s.

Rosenberg expresses a common concern among fans, one which the recent purchase of *Diplomacy* by Avalon Hill from Games Research in February 1976 had underscored that established publishing companies frequently mistake fannish enthusiasm for competition to squelch, rather than seeing it as a crucial resource to nurture. The small shop Games Research had for years supported postal *Diplomacy* fandom as an essential marketing channel, and *Diplomacy* fans warily monitored Avalon Hill for any shifts in this policy. Gygax, as Chapter One vividly and consistently illustrates, knew these lessons all too well from his early activities in the

wargaming community. He expertly leveraged wargaming fandom to build consensus around his own rule designs, and with that consensus, secured publication through Guidon Games, which ultimately served as his springboard to TSR. However, despite Rosenberg's passionate argument, one must acknowledge a material distinction between redrawing comic book characters within essentially free fanzines and anthologizing photocopies of TSR published tables into a concise format offered for sale, at whatever price. Rosenberg continues: If I and those like me were setting ourselves up in competition with already-available TSR products I might more readily understand your qualms. Unfortunately, real *D&D* fans are well aware that the supply of playing aids from TSR is, sadly, pitiful... Everyone is grateful to TSR for providing us with such a useful, flexible, and fascinating fantasy game. But, for god's sake, you're not providing effective products for enthusiasts of your game;; it seems you are doing a disservice to your loyal customers by preventing others from providing these products as long as they're not trying to make a profit.

Here, Rosenberg argues less persuasively that the poor quality of TSR rulebooks forced fans to take matters into their own hands that effectively, his proposed effort would reorganize previously published TSR material into a superior product that, simply by virtue of being actually useful, could not be construed to compete with the hopelessly jumbled and useless work of TSR. Much like Bob Ruppert before him, however, Rosenberg mistakenly believed that TSR had no aspirations to address his intended space, when in fact they heard pitches for these sorts of third-party playing aids incessantly.

5.9.2 LICENSE TO COMPETE

In July 1976, two enthusiasts from Illinois named Robert Bledsoe and William Owen arranged a meeting at TSR in Lake Geneva. Owen had developed a set of American Civil War rules, and TSR remained sincerely interested in publishing traditional board and miniature wargame systems. Upon their arrival, they met with some of the core design team, including Dave Arneson. Secretly, in addition to the Civil War rules, Bledsoe and Owen had smuggled in a wealth of material from Bledsoe sprawling *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign. Since the local General Electric plant where he worked had closed its doors in December 1975, Bledsoe had thrown himself wholly into the campaign, all the while harboring an ambition to bring his work to a broader audience: I felt that the reams of material developed by countless hours of generation and playtesting was extremely valuable to new judges. I was also interested in the exchange of

rule sets developed by the thousands of competent judges throughout the US. [JGJ:N] Thus, once he and Owen had penetrated TSR perimeter defenses, they hatched their secret plot, and, as Bledsoe put it, overwhelmed them with the bulk of our rule sets and campaign maps of Middle Earth and the City State, the latter forming the basis of his famous *City State of the Invincible Emperor* (1976). Surprisingly, the good folks at TSR gave us much encouragement, and with that encouragement Bledsoe and Owen began preparing maps and playing aids for sale to the broader community, targeting that summer s GenCon as their debut. Some of these accessories would compete directly with the plan to organize and reproduce crucial charts that Scott Rosenberg had conceived, though Bledsoe and Owen s partnership, which would be called the Judges Guild, offered a very different model than the fannish one Rosenberg proposed: in due time, the Judges Guild received official license and approval for its products from TSR, and paid them the concomitant royalties.

The Judges Guild ushered in a new and lucrative era of third-party developers supporting TSR products. Some *Dungeons & Dragons* accessory designers, however, chose not to secure a relationship with TSR, but instead quietly inserted their work into the margins of the market. On TSR endorsement, as Bledsoe and Owen would discover, one could build a lasting business, but back in 1976, few harbored serious ambitions along these lines. For example, the dedicated crew of ten or so attached to the Aurania campaign at Aero Hobbies in Santa Monica had, in their long course of play, assembled enough variant material to fill a slender supplemental volume, virtually all of which invoked the traditional extensibility mechanisms of *Dungeons & Dragons*: new monsters, new treasure, new races and new classes. They compiled these innovations into a booklet called *The Manual of Aurania* (1976), but they were understandably wary of seeking TSR approval before going to print the last time their group naïvely shared an idea with Gygax, namely the Thief class in 1974, they did not exactly profit from it. The introduction to the *Manual* does not mention the Thief class in particular, but what else could they mean when they complain that in the past their ideas were outright stolen and soon appeared in print, and insist that the whole purpose of printing the *Manual* themselves was to prevent that from happening again ? Publication through TSR promised widespread promotion, but Aero Hobbies had previously been content to advertise its wares in the pages of *APA-L*; now, they inserted an advertisement for the *Manual* in *Alarums* #11 (May 1976), selling it as a

self-published product for three dollars. Did the *Manual* creep below TSR radar? In all likelihood, it did, but only because it scrupulously avoided the use of TSR trademarks or the replication of any copyrighted system. The cover (which also served as the ad copy) describes the *Manual* in generic terms as being a compendium of varied and misc. monsters, dragons and characters, and within little mention is made of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The text does constantly reference hit points, armor class, level, experience points, classes and so on, but to construe that the copyright on the game of *Dungeons & Dragons* encompassed these very concepts oversteps the conventional bounds of intellectual property. Although the *Manual* enjoyed modest success, its innovations, including a Beorning class of werebears, Sidhe and Leprechauns as variant elf races, a Samurai subclass of Fighting-man and many new types of monsters had little visibility outside of Los Angeles.¹⁴⁴

144 One notable monster in the *Manual*

As an example of a way to turn a small profit on variant designs, however, *The Manual of Aurania* did not escape the attention of the *Alarums* community. In *Alarums* #14, Lee Gold reflects on the sheer amount of new system she had planned for her forthcoming dungeon, Nyosa, and comments: I am torn between printing these things up as they come in A&E or putting them all together with all Nyosan monsters, special spells (the Magic-user s guilds and the various churches I have been busy researching), special artifacts, etc. and publishing it as a supplement for, say, \$3, A&E contributors \$2.50. Since the latest Gygax supplement [*Eldritch Wizardry*] is supposedly the last they will publish, I presume Gary wouldn t be too displeased as long as copy count was kept on the amateur level say about 300-500 copies. Your reactions appreciated.

At the very start of that same issue, however, Gold inserted the following notice: Warning: In future issues A&E will not publish/include any material rehashing characters/spells/monsters written up (and copyrighted) by TSR or anyone else. She singled out a contribution in that issue from Lee Burwasser which reiterated, more or less verbatim, the rules for Rangers previously printed in the *Strategic Review* as an example of the sort of contribution *Alarums* could no longer allow. In the following issue, Gygax expressed his approval of Gold s new policy, as the thing TSR did not want to see reprinted was: some rehash of our copyrighted material. With regard to commercial sale of material pertaining to *D&D*, I can state that TSR is

absolutely opposed to the practice in those cases where there is infringement upon our copyright. In the case of your supplemental material, I cannot say but will certainly tend to look more favorably on an enterprise of yours, for you have been most careful and conscientious regarding the rights of TSR. Please let us take a look at the material if you wish to go ahead. [A&E:#15]

Did Gygax words here imply that he saw the Ranger class rules in the *Strategic Review* as canon, as part of what TSR copyrighted under the game of *Dungeons & Dragons*? Or did TSR pleasantly bask in the ambiguity of the phrase where there is infringement, allowing every reader to project their own fears onto its interpretation? The degree to which this instilled a chilling effect in the fan community is difficult to measure;; certainly, Lee Gold's plans to publish that supplement never came to fruition, and no doubt other aspiring variant authors balked at the hint of legal action. Others, however, rebelled against this show of force, and found ways to promulgate their designs which did not fall under TSR authority.

Following the example of the *Manual of Aurania*, the safest approach for fans was to develop areas outside the core system. Publishing ideas in periodical fanzines rather than commercial titles marketed as game systems also helped minimize any overt competition with TSR, although practically speaking, the distinctions were elusive. A new *Dungeons & Dragons* periodical commencing in June 1976, Paul Jacquays's *The Dungeoneer*, carried all of the expected fannish articles in its first issue
snippets of back-story from local campaigns
eleven-room dungeon designed by Jacquays
new monsters and treasure, variant rules, and then something unexpected, a simple entitled F Chelrak's Tomb. Jacquays provided a map and then a simple key for each of the rooms, in much the same fashion as one that obscures sight of it. Fans of the later computer game *Zork* pay heed. The grue figured previously in Jack Vance *Eyes of the Overworld*.

The Wizard's Tomb in the *Character Archaic* except Jacquays furthermore populated the key with adversaries and plunder as in the Temple of the Frog in *Blackmoor*, rather than leaving this as a blank worksheet to be filled in by the reader as in the *Archaic*. Each subsequent bimonthly issue of *The Dungeoneer* contained a new labyrinth the twelve-room Fabled Garden of Merlin in #2, the thirty-room Borshak's Lair in #3. The cost of these scenarios was built into a three-dollar annual subscription fee, a significantly greater return in dungeons-per-dollar than *Blackmoor* offered.

Producing such ready-made dungeon scenarios, later to be called modules, opened a new way that third-party designers could contribute to the game, one which steered clear of the intellectual property TSR guarded so closely. This is not to say that TSR shunned the opportunity to commercialize scenarios. Pete and Judy Kerestan, who previously developed the *Character Archaic*, premiered a new game product called the *Palace of the Vampire Queen* the same month as the first issue of *The Dungeoneer*. An extension of the core concept of The Wizard's Tomb, the *Palace* contains five levels of maps;; for each level, the kit includes one map for players and then an annotated map for referees. A key tersely explains the contents of each room, though in a level of detail far less than the Temple of the Frog or any of the dungeons in *The Dungeoneer*; to flesh out the scenario, the Kerestans do however provide a good piece of background text for the players. Given the prior success of the *Character Archaic*, TSR became the exclusive distributor of the *Palace of the Vampire Queen*, although they put little effort into marketing the game before the end of the year. Following its precedent, the tournament dungeons authored for conventions would soon enjoy a second life as commercial products sold in the same fashion.

With his considerable expertise in managing hobby communities, Gygax knew better than to squander fan energy, and did his best to harness it rather than extinguish it. When the first issue of TSR's new glossy magazine the *Dragon* appeared in June 1976, it carried an article by Lee Gold on languages and another by Wesley D. Ives (an *Alarums* regular) extending the applicability of the character abilities (Strength, and so on) to new game circumstances. At the end of Gold's article, an italicized plug from TSR reads, *Alarums & Excursions* is highly recommended for *D&D* ers everywhere. TSR recognized the role that a fanzine like *Alarums* could play as a marketing channel and as a source of new material, provided that it did not challenge TSR control over its own products. The *Dragon*, which premiered with a full-color cover and thirty pages of offset layout including copious graphics, clearly aspired to a professionalism previously unknown among fantasy gaming zines so why should it feel threatened by an overgrown APA? While TSR disclosed no formal circulation numbers for the first issue, private correspondence from Gygax a few months beforehand suggests that circulation will be not less 2,000, in large part because with a more professional appearance we will considerably up counter copy sales a reach far exceeding that of any fanzine.¹⁴⁵ From its first issue, the *Dragon*

adopted an inclusive approach to fantasy gaming, featuring articles on *Dungeons & Dragons* and *DUNGEON!* as well as wargames like *Battle of the Five Armies* and *Royal Armies of the Hyborian Age* it even published a wholly original set of fantasy miniatures rules by Len Lakofka. Reviews cover one TSR miniatures title (*Classic Warfare*), but also board wargames like Fantasy Games Unlimited's *Citadel* and the Chaosium *White Bear and Red Moon*.

¹⁴⁵ , March 2, 1976. In fact, the figures in the *Dragon* #12 suggest that over the first year of publication, counter sales were about four times mail subscriptions, and that mail subscriptions never ventured far above the one-thousand mark.

The *Dragon* also leads with a big name: the periodical's first byline went to Fritz Leiber, who gamely trots out Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser to scrutinize the practice of wargaming. This fictionalization, while charming enough in its own right, advertises TSR upcoming board game *Lankhmar*, in which Leiber obviously enjoyed some financial interest. In Leiber's prose, however, one detects a certain understanding that *Dungeons & Dragons* might exert an even larger long-term influence on the reception of his work. Despite all the fuss about Leiber involvement in DunDraCon a few months earlier, Lee Gold reported at the time that Leiber seemed quite interested in the activities there as he prowled the convention floor. [A&E#10] Why should he not be? Referring to his recently published story Leiber calls it remind Leiber of his own subterranean creations: Fafhrd remarked, Don't forget Stardock when you write for these wargamers a whole vast Dungeon inside Nehwon mightiest mountain, with routes both on the mountain and inside it.

Better yet Quarmall, and not half as chilly, the Mouser put in eagerly. A vast underground world of many levels, a nation in the mines! There's a Dungeon would send wargamers ape! [DR:#1]

In case any *Dungeons & Dragons* fan did not recognize these references, Leiber plugs in an aside, They were referring to sub-worlds of Nehwon described in *Swords Against Wizardry*. Leiber's presence betokens a further ambition of the *Dragon*: to publish and popularize sword-and-sorcery fiction of the very sort that inspired *Dungeons & Dragons*. This included not only introducing new fantasy fiction, such as the Gardner F. Fox stories in issues #2 and #5, but also reviving works long out of print. In the *Dragon* #11, for example, Tim Kask reveals: We have reached an agreement in principle,

verbally, with L. Sprague de Camp to reprint the missing Harold Shea story from the Incompleat Enchanter series. Titled *The Green Magician*, it was last printed in a now defunct s-f magazine in the early fifties, and excluded from the collection published under the title *The Compleat Enchanter*. The serialization of that lost gem began in the *Dragon* #15. Perhaps the most striking fiction published by the *Dragon*, however, came from Andre Norton, author of the Witch World series of novels, who debuted a fragment of her new novel *Quag Keep* (1978) in the *Dragon* #12. The story of *Quag Keep* is in many respects a visitation fantasy of the type discussed in Section 2.4 except in this case, visitors from the real world are playing a game of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and the realm they visit is Greyhawk itself. The visitation is triggered, in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Merritt's *The Ship of Ishtar*, when the protagonist sees a miniature figurine so realistic, with which he identifies so strongly, that he finds himself transported into a fantastic realm where memories of his mundane existence fade, and only a tell-tale bracelet emblazoned with a set of dice marks him as a gamer.¹⁴⁶ *Quag Keep* shows the influence that *Dungeons & Dragons* would begin to exert over the authors who created the very genre it borrowed: the setting of the game both inspired and constrained future authors who wrote fantasy fiction, and it would perhaps not be unfair to say that TSR's extensive taxonomies of the fantastic served as a better primer on the sword-and-sorcery genre than any of the original sources it copied.

Under the Thumbs of the Gods (from the April 1975 issue of *Fantastic*), a treasurehouse of *D&D* material. Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser even¹⁴⁶ *In the published novel, those dice are depicted -sided, four-sided, eight-sided, sixall of which figure in Dungeons & Dragons except for the first, a comical error in retrospect.*

The *Dragon* did not restrict its fiction selections to established authors. A heretofore obscure author called Garrison Ernst began to serialize a great new fantasy novel entitled *The Gnome Cache* in the very first issue of the *Dragon*. From the name of the fantasy world the story introduces, Oerth, and by squinting at the name Garrison Ernst, one can readily surmise that a certain Ernest Gary Gygax authored the piece in question.¹⁴⁷ Oerth, we learn, parallels our own Earth, though scientific laws differ and a strange blend of Medieval cultures exist in the known lands of Oerth. A few textual clues, especially the reference to the Western Ocean, point back to *Domesday Book* #9, to the map of the Great Kingdom in which Gygax and

Arneson situated their Greyhawk and Blackmoor. In future installments of The Gnome Cache, which follow the exploits of an adventurer called Dunstan, readers would learn more of Oerth Dunstan even visits Blackmoor in the sixth chapter and thus of the world-scenario Gygax envisioned for *Dungeons & Dragons*. In the second installment, for example, Dunstan stumbles across a shrine of Saint Cuthbert, presumably the same fellow whose mace figures among the artifacts introduced by *Eldritch Wizardry*. By all appearances, Gygax intended to flesh out that Great Kingdom of yore into a setting and scenario as concrete and detailed as Barker's *Empire of the Petal Throne*. Beyond that, the struggling novelist in Gygax probably relished the sight of his fiction not merely battle reports from table-top games, but wholly original stories published alongside the writings of Fritz Leiber and the many other sword-and-sorcery authors whose works graced those issues.

To promote *Lankhmar* as well as his own fiction, Leiber furthermore agreed to appear as Guest of Honor at GenCon that summer, starting a tradition that would see many stars of fantasy fiction visit Lake Geneva in the summertime. The conventions that year brought with them unprecedented challenges for TSR principals: while the team at Lake Geneva attempted simultaneously to seduce and suppress fandom, they also contended against Avalon Hill, SPI and less established rivals for market share. As with the year before, the action began in Baltimore with the second incarnation of Origins, July 23-25.

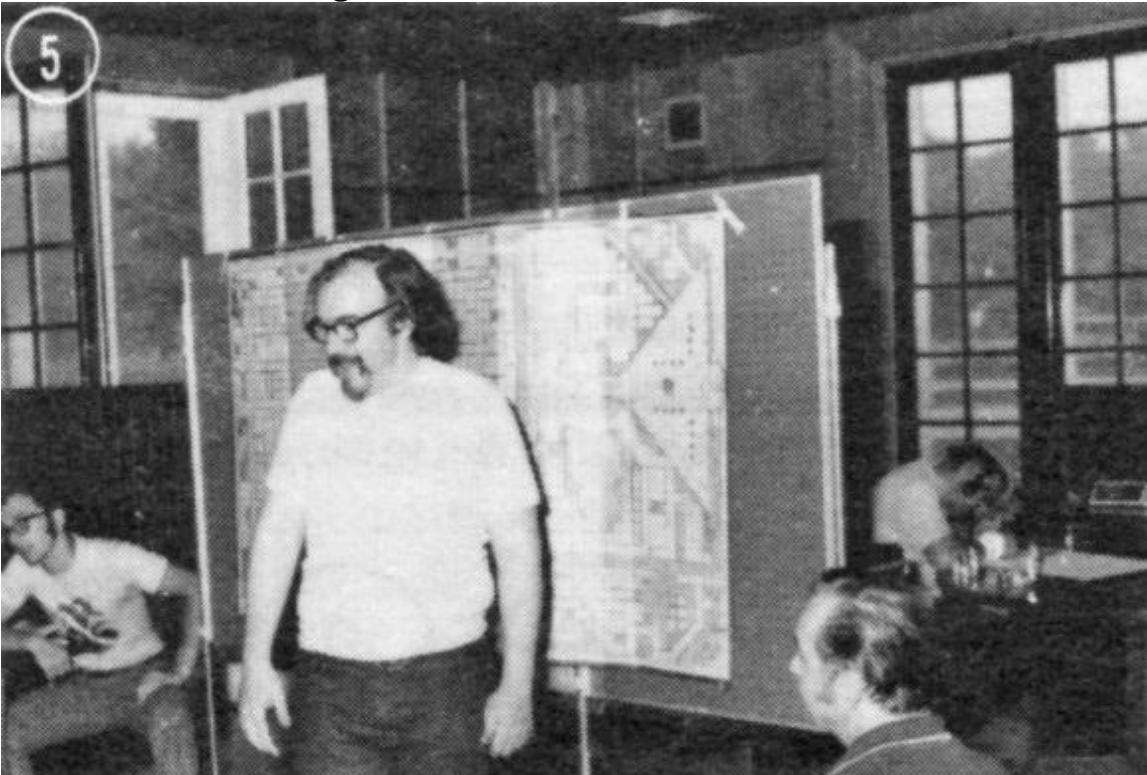
Origins returned to the campus of Johns Hopkins, once again under the watchful eyes of Avalon Hill. Official attendance shot up dramatically, to some 2,500 persons. [AHG:v13n2] Eyewitness reports suggest that despite the throngs, lines moved smoothly, although some complained that the Rathskeller failed to stockpile adequate quantities of beer for this larger and thirstier crowd. [MGR:#19] Naturally, *Dungeons & Dragons* came back to Origins in force: TSR returns with D&D creator Gary Gygax and seven others to host eight tours through the famous Lake Geneva dungeons. Each trip through the dungeons will accommodate a group of 12 adventurers in four hour rounds. The top survivors in each round will receive credit slips for TSR products. A demonstration game of D&D will be held Friday evening and hosted by Gary Gygax himself to introduce new people into the fantasy scene. Players may enter only one dungeon trip. \$1.00 entry fee. [AHG:v12n6]

¹⁴⁷ Tim Kask let the cat out of the bag in the final *Strategic Review*, where he blurted out the news that the premiere issue of the *Dragon* he *Dragon* [AW:v1n12]

The provision that players might only enter one of the four trips (reiterated on the pre-registration form three times) presumably prevented opportunists from leveraging the knowledge garnered from an exploratory trip to secure first place in a later one. As with the year before, the Origins schedule accommodated one *Dungeons & Dragons* trip on Friday evening at 5PM, two on Saturday at 10AM and 5PM, and finally one on Sunday at 10AM, to be held in the basement theater at Levering Hall. Moves #29 calls it the closest thing to a dungeon on campus. The blurb in the *Avalon Hill General* mistakenly suggests that, following the precedent of Origin I, only two trips would transpire at a time for a total of eight tours. [AHG:v12n6] Given the enormous surge in registration for *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, TSR ran five trips simultaneously in each of those time slots, for twenty trips of twelve players each, or a total of 240 players almost one in ten of the attendees. No doubt to Avalon Hill dismay, the participation in *Dungeons & Dragons* far exceeded that of any other tournament at Origins II. The next closest, at 182 participants, was the *Diplomacy* tournament bear in mind that Avalon Hill, having purchased *Diplomacy* from Games Research in February, arranged for Origins to stage the yearly DipCon which formerly graced Chicago's CITEX conference (now defunct).¹⁴⁸ Even up against the ninth incarnation of that gathering of *Diplomacy* enthusiasts, the *Dungeons & Dragons* tournament still attracted far more gamers. The *General* reports that Gygax conducted his demonstration game, for which he tacked a large dungeon map on a poster board and explicated the administration and play of *Dungeons & Dragons* for beginners, before a standing room only crowd. [AHG:v13n2]

Glenn Blacow, who barely scraped together the means to attend Origins II, relates in *Alarums* #15 his encounter with Gygax, and the impact their conversation had on his own understanding of experience, of enchanting items and several other aspects of the system. Without a pre-registration, Blacow could not enter the tournament, but he claims he was just as glad. A buried spaceship type of thing, all very technological. Gblech. In fact, entrants to the tournament found their characters thrust into exactly that

environment, dealing with the subterranean remains of a long-defunct colony ship, now overrun with mutants but replete with tantalizing gadgets outside the *Dungeons & Dragons* norm. Fans will recognize this as a synopsis of the module *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks* (1980). This cross-over with science fiction at Origins II fueled rumors



that TSR would release a new far-future game before the end of the year, perhaps

FIGURE 65: GYGAX D&D TUTORIAL AT ORIGINS II (1976)

[REDACTED]

something involving just such a colony ship.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ CITEX, which may be remembered from Section 1.8 as the conference that Lakofka heralded over GenCon in 1972, had run afoul of significant political difficulties the year before as sponsor of DipCon. The *Dragon* ment in CITEX after a flyer *The General* soon announced the rather abrupt ch Gordon Anderson, organizer of the tournament, were unsuccessful.

Fortunately, *The General*

¹⁴⁹ From the Preface to the *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*

GenCon IX opened its doors about four weeks later, on August 20. Though still nominally based in the Horticultural Hall, TSR once again arranged to rent the Lake Geneva Guild Hall for additional playing space, with some spillover to the local American Legion Hall as well. Having resigned themselves to the reality that Origins drew a larger crowd, TSR reported through the *Dragon* #3 plausible admissions figures: Paid attendance was in the vicinity of 1,300, with crowds of over 1,000 on both Friday and Saturday. Pilgrims made the journey to GenCon from all over, but two especially devoted fans crossed the Atlantic to attend: Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson from Games Workshop, who took a copious amount of pictures (*40 Years of Gen Con* reproduces many of them) and wrote up a detailed trip report in *Owl & Weasel* #18. *Alarums* #15 contains a couple more valuable eyewitness reports of the *Dungeons & Dragons* games played there.

The tournament at GenCon IX adopted an entirely new format designed by Bob Blake, a dungeon master from Valparaiso, Indiana. Blake first announced his plans for a three-day tourney in the April 1976 *Strategic Review*, where he solicited volunteers to referee the match. Unlike the previous Origins tournaments, Blake aspired to handle parties of a more typical size, only five players each, and since he aimed for one hundred entrants, that would require at least twenty independent trips. As the schedule broke the first round of play into two sections on Saturday, a morning and afternoon, that means ten groups would need to enter simultaneously, which explains why he so stridently recruited dungeon masters. Per his plan in the *Dragon* #2, a party consisted of one each Fighter, Mage, Cleric, Elf-Mage, and Dwarf-Fighter. These characters will have pre-rolled abilities and come equipped with certain magical goodies. The Magi and Cleric will be able to select their own spells, however, and all players will be able to select their own equipment. [DR:#2]

After a preliminary round of plundering the ruins of Baldemar Castle in search of a peevish wizard's misplaced staff, by a process of elimination only one quarter of the players would advance to a final round to assault a more formidable peril, the Lich Grsk Grimvader, and to wrest from him the Helm of Valasdum. The outcome of that final round would decide five winners, one in each of the classes, each of whom would receive a \$10 gift

certificate from TSR. Interestingly, Blake developed a point system for measuring performance, awarding points for monster kills, treasure accumulated, solving traps, and penetration from a starting point to a goal. The focus on a particular goal, on a quest that would be completed only by defeating a powerful adversary and returning with a particular item, made evaluating performance very straightforward. The tournament seems to have proceeded more or less as planned, although given excessive crowding, at Gygax direction they relocated the event from the Horticultural Hall to the lawn behind the Legion Hall. One of the dungeon masters running the tournament, Jon Pickens, submitted a detailed account of his experience to *Alarums* #19;; he notes for example that the most common error here was an MU casting a Lightning Bolt in an enclosed space;; at least four killed when TSR was contemplating publication of a science fantasy role-playing game. Jim Ward had already shown us some rough notes on *Metamorphosis Alpha*; I thought it would be a splendid idea to introduce Ji tournament scenario. I laid out the tournament rial

Metamorphosis Alpha simultaneously with Origins, delays must have foiled that plan. Robert Mandell from New York City won the tourney.

themselves this way and that one of the groups he ran, apparently smarting from their experience at Origins the year before, spent three hours picking plaster off the walls of an empty room.¹⁵⁰ Blake duly crowned his five winners on Sunday, though not all of the participants approved of his methods;; some complained that the dungeon design included too much hack-and-slash and left players virtually no latitude.¹⁵¹ Intriguingly, Blake indicates in the *Dragon* #3 his willingness to sell reproductions of the maps, room key and background for the tournament dungeon: Anyone wishing a copy of the tournament run at Gen Con IX may write me. The preliminary round and the final round are \$2.50 each, a copy of both is \$5.00. You ll get everything you need to spring this on your own D&D group!¹⁵² Thus tournament games also entered the nascent market for dungeon scenarios;; ter this market as well.

With attendance over one thousand and only a tenth as many seats in the tourney, many unrelated *Dungeons & Dragons* games sprang up that GenCon weekend.¹⁵³ One latecomer, Bill Paley, did not arrive until Sunday, but he discovered that Dave Arneson would host a visit to the Blackmoor dungeon that afternoon at 3:30 for twelve brave souls. [A&E:#16] Even though sign-ups would not open until 2:45, at a quarter of one o clock ten

prospectives had already lined up, and Paley became the eleventh. The wait was made bearable by the friendly atmosphere and the sudden appearance of the card game *Nuclear War*, he reports.¹⁵⁴ The best player in Arneson's game stood to win a year's subscription to the *Dragon*, though as Paley discovered, Blackmoor can be unforgiving. The party of twelve fortunately included a ringer Greg Svenson, one of the Blackmoor Bunch, playing his character the Great Svenny (Paley heard the name as the Great Sweeney) to provide some adult supervision. When the party encountered a group of goblins, for example, a fight broke out until those unfortunate dungeon dwellers caught a glimpse of Svenny, at which point they instantly recognized him and immediately dropped weapons, etc., and ran like... er, heaven was after them. When facing a horde of orcs, insulted by hearing their national anthem played backward (readers of the *First Fantasy Campaign* may recognize this circumstance), apparently Svenny killed seventeen orcs in a single melee round. After the party pilfered treasure which belonged to non-player Heroes who had staked out an area of the dungeon, Svenny's presence once again prevented an outright slaughter. When¹⁵⁰ This same Jon Pickens provided the Alchemist class in the *Dragon* #2 and the Berserker subclass in #3, among other early rules proposals. Pickens was an early participant in postal *Fight in the Skies* games, his name can be found on the player list of *Aerodrome* #12, for example.

¹⁵¹ The winners were Eric Ortega (Fighting-man), Allen Hammack (Magic-user), Stan Wood (Cleric), Tony Svarenka (Elf Magic-User), and Jeff Boyce (Dwarf Fighting-man).

¹⁵² *GenCon IX Dungeons* (1978) for the lesser price of \$3.50. To all appearances, the text closely follows the original tournament version, and details the scoring system as well.

¹⁵³ Not all of the fantasy gaming centered on *Dungeons & Dragons*: another *Alarums* contributor, Stewart Levin, reported playing a Magic-user in a session *Empire of the Petal Throne* run by M.A.R. Barker;; for the occasion, Barker had the setting much more vivid for attendees. [O&W:#18] The *Dragon* #4 has a brief description of the creation of the Temple and several eye-straining photographs of the result. It apparently required over one thousand man-hours of work on the part of Barker and several assistants. ¹⁵⁴ An older game (from 1965) recently reprinted by Flying Buffalo (see #15, April 1976), *Nuclear War* captivated the summer convention audiences in 1976 Charles McGrew, in his report on Origins II in *Alarums*

the party found a magic stairway, however, Svenny opted to teleport away and leave the group to their fate. Paley's Cleric, who was named Tindell, climbed to the top of the staircase and fell through a trap door there, only to find himself high in the air above Blackmoor Castle and plummeting into the lake, wherein he drowned. Paley's description abounds with expressions of bafflement, and is perhaps best summed up by his aside: don't blame me;; it's Arneson dungeon.

The summer convention season necessarily meant new TSR releases as well. The star-power of Fritz Leiber spotlighted TSR new boardgame *Lankhmar*; on Friday afternoon at GenCon, Leiber gave a seminar on sword-and-sorcery followed by a pitch for the new game. [O&W:#18] Reception for *Lankhmar* seemed positive: Stewart Levin called it a good game in his GenCon report in *Alarums* #16, and the Games Workshop crowd published a favorable review in the next *Owl & Weasel*, with the caveat that it is more a war game than a fantasy game. Gygax also published a new set of fantasy miniatures rules called *Swords & Spells* (1976) as a replacement for the aging Fantasy Supplement in *Chainmail*. As Tim Kask notes in a foreword, *Swords & Spells* breaks some longstanding conventions of miniature wargaming: most notably by permitting a mixed figure scale (in which one miniature figurine might represent ten men while another represents only one). Gygax supports this unusual system by scaling the damage dealt by an individual to its level;; for example, a figure representing a single fifth-level Fighting-man deals half as much damage as one representing ten first-level Fighting-men. *Swords & Spells* primarily improves on *Chainmail* by retrofitting it with the principles of *Dungeons & Dragons*: not only level and armor class, but also the full gamut of Magic-user and Cleric spells. It also incorporates a more flexible system for fantastic creatures, which opens the battlefield to virtually any monster designed for *Dungeons & Dragons*, rather than the meager handful presented by *Chainmail*. Feedback on *Swords & Spells* also proved largely positive: in *Alarums* #16, Charlie Luce called it the best thing to come out of TSR since *Greyhawk*, attesting that as a third-generation *Chainmail*... it leaves the former book in the dust.

The big release for *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, was *Gods, Demigods & Heroes* (1976) by Rob Kuntz and Jim Ward. The full-page advertisement in the August issue of the *Dragon* proclaims It's Here!... The Last D&D Supplement!?! So it proved to be: with the publication of *Gods*, the original incarnation of *Dungeons & Dragons* became complete. Its

emergence had long been telegraphed by TSR;; back in December 1975, Kask forecasted, Sometime before GenCon, we are also going to publish *Gods, Demi-gods & Heroes*. [SR:v1n5] It draws on the mythology of Egypt, India, Greece, the Celts, the Norse, the Finns, Central America, China and even fictional settings like Howard's Hyborea and Moorcock's Melniboné.¹⁵⁵ As the original *Dungeons & Dragons* passed over questions of religion entirely, the prospect of identifying a few gods that Clerics might worship fills a significant gap. Unlike the previous three supplements to *Dungeons & Dragons*, the fourth and final booklet introduces no new system: it is merely a list of the eponymous unique entities, some lesser beings that play a role in the corresponding mythology and finally items of note in the possession of these godly figures. Who could systematize Thor, after all, without describing *Mjöllnir*, his hammer? For each divine being, *Gods* provides a rough approximation of their powers in the taxonomy of *Dungeons & Dragons*: Thor, for example, acts as a 20th-level Fighting-man, has 275 hit points and an armor class of 2. His ostensible superior Odin has 25 more hit points, and although he acts as only an 18th-level Fightingman, he sports a variety of special magic abilities, including the rather impressive latitude to¹⁵⁵ While no one would mistake the work for a scholarly survey of world mythologies, it explores these traditions at the proper level for its target audience. Only in the *Dragon* #12 did Kuntz (with the assistance of Eric Holmes) adapt the Lovecraftian mythos for *Dungeons & Dragons*.

use any or all spells of magical or clerical nature. range, if for some reason he elected not to Wish arrows per turn from his bow which never miss their mark!

Tim Kask foreword (dated July 4, 1976) discloses an ulterior motive in the publication of *Gods*: This volume is something else, also: our last attempt to reach the Monty Hall DM's. Perhaps now some of the giveaway campaigns will look as foolish as they truly are. This is our last attempt to delineate the absurdity of 40+ level characters. When Odin, the AllFather has only(?) 300 hit points, who can take a 44th level Lord seriously?

Kask thus aligns the work with Gygax normative rejection of overpowered characters and campaigns. The *Alarums* community did not miss this message, though unsurprisingly it met with a mixed reaction. Nick Smith of the Caltech group heard it loud and clear: Gygax group has said, Ha ha, we've said the gods are low level, and you can't be better than a god, now can you? Smith argues, however, that it was Gygax who pushed them

down the path to inflation: The original *D&D* rules provide a system whereby characters can advance indefinitely (as it says in Book I itself), and *Greyhawk* does its best to make it easy (gaining experience by books and decks and what-all). What did TSR think would happen in a game that offered boundless progression that characters would progress only to some predetermined limit? Stewart Levin perused a copy of *Gods* at GenCon and deemed it was terrible, CONAN HAD ONLY A 17 CONSTITUTION and was a 15th level Fighting-man-Thief while his god Crom was only 20th level. Yech!¹⁵⁶ Those most sympathetic to Gygax attempts at standardization, however, voiced approval. Glenn Blacow advised critics that the problem with *Gods*, *Demi-gods & Suchlike Trash* is not that the gods portrayed are just 20th-level fighters (most aren't), but that a lot of games are so magic-rich that your ultra-level characters are so well-equipped that they outclass the gods in special abilities. [A&E:#16] While *Gods* drew the lines of the battle over *Dungeons & Dragons* more starkly, it probably won over few converts.

Not all of the *Alarums* crowd found it convenient to convene at Origins or GenCon, but other conferences later in the summer strengthened the ties of that community. Right on the heels of GenCon on September 2, the World Science Fiction Convention opened in Kansas City, Missouri, adopting the nickname MidAmeriCon for this iteration, and contributors to *Alarums* such as Margaret Gemignani, Jason Ray, Lew Wolkoff and Charles McGrew joined up for a bit of *Dungeons & Dragons* there.¹⁵⁷ No doubt jealous of the burgeoning Bay Area community attached to DunDraCon, TSR summoned about one thousand attendees to its GenCon West in San Jose starting on September 4, where a bewildered Hilda Hannifen entered Blackmoor under its creator's direct supervision and emerged with her own impression of Arneson style as a dungeon. Should you attempt to fight Odin at you dead, he can for example fire ten master.¹⁵⁸ *Alarums* itself had advanced to a point where contributions had grown prohibitively large and numerous. New entrants came from around the globe: Hartley Patterson, creator of Midgard, became a regular contributor as of November 1976 (#16), around the time that Gold capped the total page count for issues of *Alarums* at 160, with no individual contribution spanning more than twenty-two pages acceptance on a firstcome-first-serve basis. The sheer hassle of assembling and shipping *Alarums* required limiting the copy count to three hundred as of #17, and

charging a one dollar fee per issue to contributors who had not sent an article in the past three months.

¹⁵⁶ In *Alarums* #15, Levin - of-the

¹⁵⁷ Anyone wandering around WorldCon that year might have stumbled over the hospitality room for a forthcoming Twentieth displayed at MidAmeriCon mock-ups of C3PO and R2D2 as well as a Darth Vader costume, and

Criticism of TSR more heavy-handed tactics only grew more pointed as *Alarums* expanded. After Gygax letter to *Alarums* #15 in which he defended TSR attempts to control the *Dungeons & Dragons* phenomenon (both as intellectual property and as a matter of standardization), the next issue yielded a gamut of responses. Not all brimmed with vitriol;; Stewart Levin gently admonished Gygax, You have given the world a great game that has no end in sight of dying out, you have done well, so why try to reform everybody to your kind of playing. Steve McIntosh, after describing his own difficulties with the published rules, acknowledged that TSR has a tremendous amount of power, whether you wish it or not, over a large percentage of the D&D playing populace in that anything you say or publish becomes gospel. This has and will happen with a large number of players, no matter how often you tell people to wing it.

Indeed, while the community of enthusiasts and activists who contributed to or created these fanzines left the most evidence behind for posterity, surely the bulk of *Dungeons & Dragons* players never published any record of their play and received the verdict of TSR without public complaint. An issue of *Alarums* in late 1976 had thirty or forty contributors, but with a copy count of three hundred, clearly far more people consumed *Alarums* than constructed it. As McIntosh suggests, the silent majority probably accepted TSR guidance unquestioningly. Surely the *Dragon* also played the cathedral to the bazaar of *Alarums*, with an order of magnitude more subscribers and yet half as many contributors per issue, to say nothing of the editorial approval decision that preceded publication. For all that, TSR struggled to downplay the canonicity of the *Dragon* while preserving the authority of Gygax as a designer. In response to an especially vicious cartoon in *Alarums* #19 (which depicted Gygax and Kask hung in effigy by a party of female adventurers who apparently took exception to a blatantly sexist article on female characters in the previous issue of the *Dragon*), Kask wrote a letter to *Alarums* stressing that The *Dragon* is NOT a monthly

supplement, and rhetorically wondering, Where in the magazine does it say that you are bound to the items presented? Do you adopt every innovation that debuts in *A&E*? At the end of his letter, however, and apparently without any intended irony, Kask insists that this conversation properly belongs in the *Dragon* rather than the pages of *Alarums*. There is no larger forum available than the *Dragon* from which to propagate your ideas! If you have so many, why haven't I seen any? I pay good money for items used.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ From *Alarums* . (First to fourth-level characters were used. My character was selected as leader. On the first level we wandered around without ever getting any doors. Down a level the first room we entered contained 6 11-die spiders with a 7th coming up a hall. My character stayed and died because being lawful and leader I had to play him that way. However, apparently, alignment has no value nor did game balance, so really the only way to survive would have been to abandon those already dead and dying and run like hell which is what the reported rolling a d4 for level in his account of Blackmoor at GenCon IX (he rolled a 1, incidentally).

This last point speaks to the core problem. Tim Kask may claim that he paid good money, but the case of Steve Marsh, a heavyweight freelance contributor who received a credit in both *Blackmoor* and *Eldritch Wizardry*, proves instructive: I started D&D in 1974, was paid with 1 copy of *Blackmoor* for my material therein.... I got nothing for my work in *EW* and finally bought a second copy (having returned the first copy I bought due to my being in transit & having no place to keep it). I was promised a lifetime sub to TSR periodicals for the monsters & stuff of mine they printed in same and I got (tho the post office may have swallowed some) 4 issues of the *SR* and one of *The Dragon*. I was also promised recognition when they used my material...¹⁶⁰

TSR profited from the sale of new *Dungeons & Dragons* rules, be they in supplements or indirectly through purchases of the *Dragon*. The exhortation from TSR to its readership at the end of *Underworld & Wilderness* to write to us and tell about your additions, ideas, and what have you came with no licensing agreement. Converts to *Dungeons & Dragons* from the collaborative and open environment of science-fiction fandom may have sought only to perfect the game, as Ted Johnstone intended when *Alarums* first appeared;; this crowd believed the very notion of profiting

from a hobby was absurd, and certainly no one would accuse Blue Petal of trying to turn a profit with his Castle Keep or any of its child Dungeon games in Minneapolis fandom. Did this give fans the right to oppose any commercialization of a product like *Dungeons & Dragons*? Perhaps not, but the high price tag on the base rules, especially compounded with the incremental expense of seemingly endless supplements, accessories and magazines, provided many fans with all the justification they needed to condemn the greed of TSR.

There is no pat right or wrong in this matter, as Dick Eney observed: There are serious questions to be asked about the ethics of commercializing one's hobby and how far the opponents of commercialism should carry their resistance to the trend. [A&E:#10] Different enthusiasts reacted in different ways. Some continued to publish ideas in *Alarums*, others peddled them to the *Dragon* and still others followed the path of Ken St. Andre, who hoped to compete with TSR both on price and quality, though certainly the former proved easier than the latter, despite the poor organization of first-edition *Dungeons & Dragons*. Small shops like the Judges Guild (whose advertisements began appearing in the *Dragon* #3) managed to earn TSR approval to refine and extend the game, but only on a short leash and with royalties moving in the appropriate direction. TSR reluctance to permit

¹⁵⁹ [A&E:#20] In the *Dragon* #7, Kask issued a more formal, but also more ambiguous, clarification *The Dragon*

NOT BESTOW ANY SANCTION OR APPROVAL TO ANY VARIANTS,
VARIATIONS OR
of des

will tell you that if a piece is written by an author of the game, the game being discussed in the

¹⁶⁰ [LOC:#5] Marsh

from Gygax when I wrote him at his home indicates that he is not to blame...
(you guessed whom I

even trusted associates like Lee Gold to publish their own unsupervised variants and supplements outside of TSR umbrella certainly encouraged many of the more creative enthusiasts to consider framing their ideas within an entirely novel game, with the eventual goal of publishing new systems as a for-profit venture. Late in 1976, Bay Area player Steve Perrin notes ominously: We've discovered lately that even people such as Steve Henderson, Clint Bigglestone and I, who play together a whole lot, are not

interpreting rules the same way. We are now working on a major interpretation Manual for our way of playing. Who knows, if it proves quite different from what can be told of the basic Gygax determinations, maybe we'll publish our own game...¹⁶¹

These were the starting conditions of the role-playing game industry. In November, TSR took one more step toward the creation of that industry by releasing James M. Ward's *Metamorphosis Alpha* (1976), the first game TSR marketed directly as a role-playing game. Its front cover calls it a Fantastic Role-Playing Game of Science Fiction Adventures ; the back cover (replicated in the advertisement in the *Dragon* #4) brands it a science fiction role-playing game and a role-playing game in the grand tradition of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The foreword, by Gygax and Blume jointly, begins by asserting *Metamorphosis Alpha* is one of the new breed of role-playing games.

For a setting, it chose the Starship Warden, a vast colony ship that accidentally steered through a cloud of radiation, thereby mutating many of the species and natural habitats that populated its fifty-mile long decks. The system presents a radically simplified subset of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Many of the core concepts remain, including armor class, hit

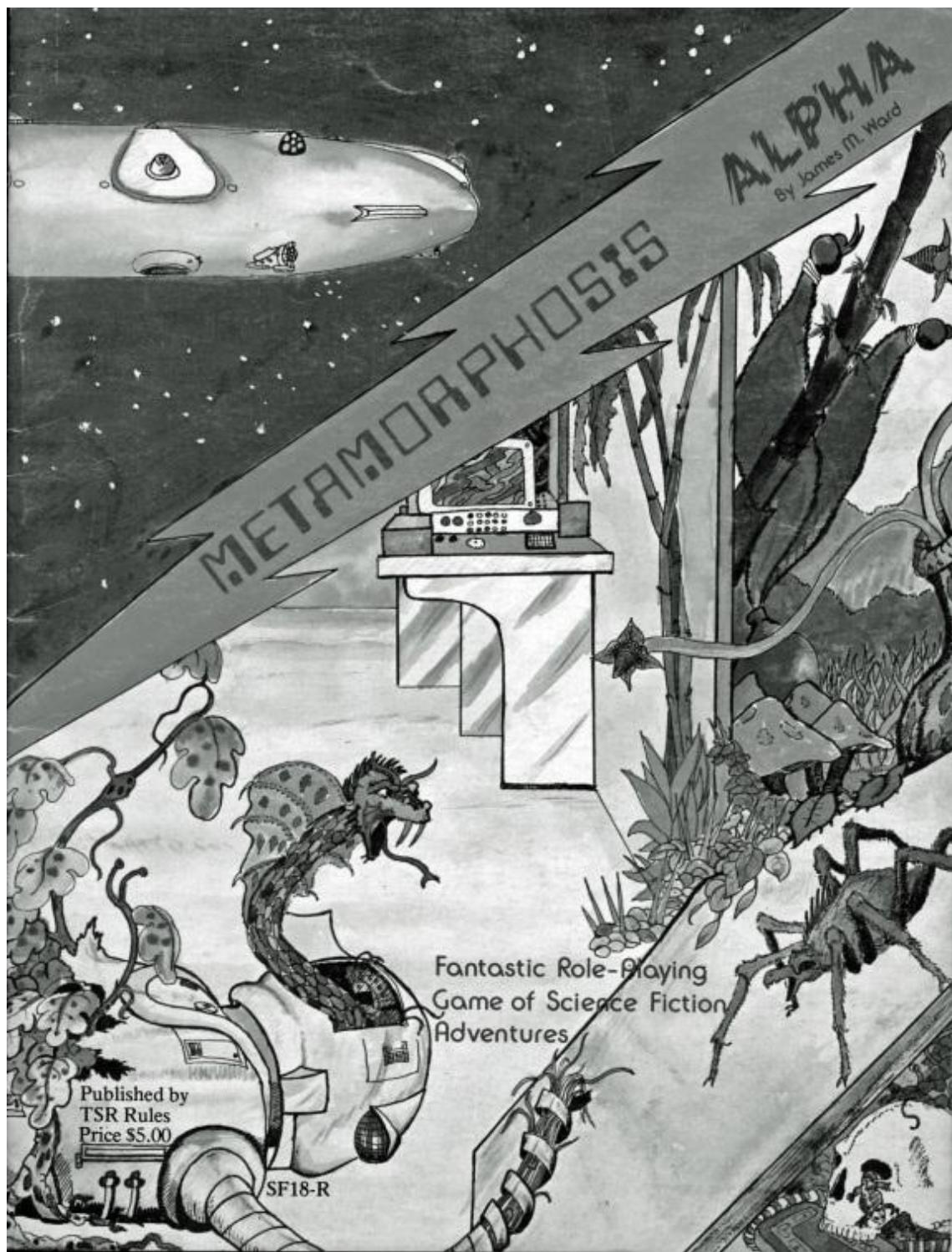


FIGURE 66: *METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA* MARKETED AS AN RPG

points and the physical abilities (Strength, Dexterity and Constitution) generated as before with 3d6, though the game largely lacks a progression system: there are no experience points or levels, and thus for example hit points

character creation.

typically are fixed at Instead, characters become more powerful by equipment, though given

accumulating the advanced technology of the spaceship, some of the abilities conferred by equipment border on the magical the Laser Pistol or Paralysis Rod are only the beginning. For those irrevocably committed to personal empowerment, radiation-triggered mutations also stimulate familiar *Dungeons & Dragons* powers such as telekinesis. In the first issue of the *Dragon*, Ward wrote about the commensurability of magic and science, and while *Metamorphosis Alpha* is ostensibly a science-fiction game, it still delivers mysterious powers and ghoulish monsters. In its play as well, it resembles its forebear: players wander the decks in an adventure designed by the referee, sometimes entering combats, sometimes carting back plunder to a base to recuperate or follow through on other logistical tasks. *Metamorphosis Alpha* vividly illustrated how the underlying principles of *Dungeons & Dragons* might be translated into a game without dungeons or dragons or any of the fantasy trappings retained by *Empire of the Petal Throne*, *Tunnels & Trolls* or their ilk. TSR thus assisted the nascent role-playing game industry in understanding the way to introduce a role-playing game sufficiently divorced from *Dungeons & Dragons* that an argument from intellectual property would be moot.

¹⁶¹ [A&E:#19] The next section will discuss the *All* project, which must have influenced Perrin to sever his connection to *Dungeons & Dragons* entirely before he and Henderson began work on *Runequest*.

5.9.3 PARTING OF THE WAYS

One last event contributed to the 1976 battles over *Dungeons & Dragons*, and though it appears here last, it eclipses the rest in the popular mythology. In the middle of November, Dave Arneson ceased to be an employee of TSR Hobbies, Inc. after roughly eleven months on staff. Many stories are told about the circumstances of his departure Gygax summarily dismissed him, some say, others that Arneson resigned after a humiliating demotion, while still others insist that he voluntarily left in disgust with the stultifying, profit-driven atmosphere in Lake Geneva. This is not the sort of

dispute that a mere perusal of historical documents can settle. One can, however, fairly ask what Arneson made of his eleven months on staff. Where did Arneson byline appear in the pages of the *Dragon* or the *Strategic Review*? Right before he came on staff, Arneson revamped an old battle report describing an action fought at GenCon V under the *Don t Give Up the Ship* rules (presumably to promote the reissuance of that pamphlet by TSR), but after that, nothing. [SR:v1n5] He submitted a single article to *Little Wars* describing World War II naval miniatures as usual, a naval topic but nothing whatsoever on *Dungeons & Dragons*. The same is true of game rules: *Blackmoor* came out right before Arneson joined TSR staff, but afterwards, one is hard-pressed to find anything new he authored.

This forcibly reminds us of Gygax friendly jibe in the previous year's *Strategic Review* that he brought Dave Arneson onto TSR payroll to produce material like a grist mill (Crack! Snap! Work faster there, Dave!) [SR:v1n4] Moreover, remember Gygax boast to *Owl & Weasel* that Arneson had HEAPS of manuscripts and games waiting in the wings, so to speak, for TSR to get into print. So where were they? Did those manuscripts get mysteriously misplaced at the last minute, like the long-delayed *Blackmoor* manuscript?¹⁶² Ultimately, did Arneson fail to produce them or did Gygax fail to publish them? Whatever the cause, suffice it to say that in his capacity as Creative Director, Arneson could not get new material into TSR product line. Even Arneson role in overseeing development of other authors games is difficult to trace: only *Valley Forge* (1976), a title by Dave Wesely that adapted his *Strategos N* rules to the Revolutionary War, bears an introduction from Arneson, dated July 1, 1976.¹⁶³

¹⁶² The manuscripts for some of his prospective titles survive, most notably the game *Ships of the Line*, which in its typewritten form has a foreword from Gygax written in 1972 (while still intending its publication for Guidon Games), but also a foreword from Arneson which refers to TSR. It is probably best described as an aggregation of the rules for the naval aspects of the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign (see Section 1.10 for more on *Ships of the Line*). Although it contains many disjointed chunks of system, it gives little sense of how the overall campaign might actually work what objectives players might achieve or what form their orders or moves might take, aside from a great deal of tactical information that is at best redundant with . It alludes to the Napoleonic *Diplomacy* that might establish the parameters of play for *Ships of the Line*

this far, are you beginning to wonder how the devil you are going to put all of the information given into some sort of playable, and workable, campaign? Small wonder if you are, for that is the hardest *Ships of the Line* shows that not

Most significantly, why do we see nothing from Arneson on *Dungeons & Dragons*? Did his prior difficulties collaborating with Gygax on the original rules convince him that any contributions he proposed would be ignored? Surely, however, in the two years between the publication of the game and his start date at TSR, Arneson could have socialized his thoughts in *Alarums* or any of a number of other fanzines, had he so desired. Aside from allowing Scott Rich to republish a 1974 letter critical of the system of *Dungeons & Dragons* in an issue of the *Great Plains Game Players Newsletter*, Arneson exhibited little interest in getting his side of the story on record, and perhaps even less in promoting the game. At that same time, however, he did labor to reboot his long-comatose Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, publishing substantial issues of *Corner of the Table* dedicated solely to that game in January and August 1975, and then March and July 1976, all full of *Diplomacy*- style press releases from the Great Powers of the Napoleonic era. The issue of March 1976 even mentions that he now printed *COTT* on TSR issues, produced while elsewhere *Dungeons & thousands*, one remembers that in the fall of 1972, the Blackmoor games relocated to St. Thomas College so that the main table at Arneson games. [COTT:72:v4n6] Perhaps Arneson simply campaigns to fantasy, at the end of the day. Although he ran the Blackmoor dungeon at conventions in 1976, in the *First Fantasy Campaign* (1977) he attests that the Blackmoor campaign has basically been stagnant for years: The game has rarely seen the old bunch back together for long enough to do anything... So the game stands pretty much where it was two years ago. [FFC:15] Even when Arneson ran the Blackmoor dungeon for new guys, the experience of Bill Paley and Hilda Hannifen suggests that he did not present the game in a manner very accessible to newcomers.¹⁶⁴ Neither did the *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks themselves, for that matter: introducing them to the marketplace required a nearconstant process of tutelage and revision, and the face of that process was Gary Gygax, not Dave Arneson. For that reason, the community heaped all of the blame for the many failings of *Dungeons & Dragons* on Gygax shoulders and, when applauding its innovations, rarely acknowledged Arneson.

Whether his heart simply was not in it, or for whatever other reason, Arneson did not come to TSR and produce material like a grist mill. Once it became apparent that he would not, his departure was probably a foregone conclusion, however awkwardly it happened to play out that November. As an author of *Dungeons & Dragons* and a shareholder in TSR, Arneson retained some association with the company, and per the mimeograph. Browsing through these

Dragons captured the imagination of can be reserved for the Napoleonic preferred his nineteenth-century author agreement (which in no way was linked to his employment) received royalties for the sale of the work. Now, however, TSR would have to deal with Arneson as a critic and a potential competitor. Only a few years later, as TSR produced new *Dungeons & Dragons* products without crediting or compensating Arneson, a famous battle over attribution would then begin in the courts.¹⁶⁵

misplaced it also shows, however, a work with no obvious evidence of development since 1972, and many deficiencies as a potential release. Even more curiously, Arneson sold a self-published edition of the rules by mail order for six dollars as of January 1975

[COTT:75:Jan]

¹⁶³ *Lankhmar* (1976), though this is clearly set apart from a design or editing credit.

¹⁶⁴ Margaret Gemignani in *Alarums*
pals got treasure in the tournament

5.10 D&D AMONG THE RPGS

Dave Arneson departure from TSR late in 1976 marks as good an end as any to the infancy of *Dungeons & Dragons* and that of the role-playing games industry. Henceforth, the task of chronicling the history of role-playing games changes from juggling a manageable number of parallel threads to containing an explosion of diverse activities better suited to an encyclopedia than a narrative. As evidence of the increasingly conspicuous subculture surrounding the game, consider that it had become notable enough to attract academic attention: the sociologist Gary Alan Fine began his two years of field work in 1977 studying a group of role-players in Minneapolis, which eventually culminated in his study *Shared Fantasy* (1983).¹⁶⁶ In 1977, as TSR strained to monopolize the roleplaying market, the activities of several other companies notably Games Workshop, the Chaosium, Metagaming, Flying Buffalo, Fantasy Games Unlimited, Judges

Guild and Game Designers Workshop clamored for the attention of enthusiasts and introduced significant fragmentation to the market. The vibrant fan community maintained numerous conduits for news of these alternative games to spread, notably in zines and conventions, and moreover produced not a few of the authors who drove this work forward.

Once the sheer girth of *Alarums* forced Lee Gold to restrict its total page count, as well as the page count of individual contributions, the fan community needed new outlets for its growing productivity. The *Wild Hunt*, Mark Swanson and Glenn Blacow's APA, had provided an alternative to *Alarums* since February 1976, though largely it served as a¹⁶⁵ Dave Arneson filed a civil suit (No. 4-74-109) in the Minneapolis Second Circuit court naming TSR and Gygax as defendants on February 22, 1979. At the time, royalties from the original *Dungeons & Dragons* set began to taper off, due to the release of the *Monster Manual* and \$6,635.50, respectively. TSR had not however awarded any design credit or royalty share to Arneson for the new hardbound *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*

entitled to the same royalties prescribed by the 1975 agreement for these new works. A settlement was finally reached between the parties on March 2, 1981, that granted Arneson a 2.5% royalty on the cover price of the existing *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* books (including the *Dungeon Masters Guide*), up to a maximum payment of \$1.2M. As the popularity of *Dungeons & Dragons* peaked around this time, the deal became a very lucrative one;; for example, for the third quarter of 1982 alone, Arneson received a royalty of \$60,236.68. When, in 1984, TSR refused to pay Arneson royalties on the new *Monster Manual II*, he sued TSR again (Civil No. 4-84-1180), and once again won his case;; for just the first \$108,703.50. Adjusting these figures for thirty years of inflation would make them worth more than twice as much;; furthermore, bear in mind that due to his early role in the partnership, Arneson also held stock in the company, which was quite profitable at the time. Given that Arneson essentially did not participate in the design process of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, and had only an inspirational influence over the production of the original three booklets, his eventual compensation was substantial, if hard-won.

¹⁶⁶

Room in Minneapolis [AHG:v13n5]
every Sunday afternoon, judging from a 1976 blurb in the *General*.

mouthpiece for Boston area enthusiasts in 1977, however, it developed increasing relevance as competition intensified for real estate in *Alarums*. The February 1977 issue of *Alarums* (#19) noted the lack of a comparable publication in the United Kingdom, which Bryan Ansall proposed to rectify with: a British fanzine, dealing mostly with *D&D*, and also with fantasy and role-playing games in general. This will be on a not-profit-making basis, along the lines of the American amateur press association zines... Unless anyone thinks of a better name, I intend calling the zine *Trollcrusher*.¹⁶⁷ Nicolai Shapero, another long-term *Alarums* contributor, founded his *Lords of Chaos APA* in May to enforce his own editorial idiosyncrasies;; about a month later, Robert Sacks, formerly of the Boston crowd but now a New Yorker, began his *APA-DUD*, which derived its name from the local abbreviation for *Dungeons & Dragons* (and also the regional slang to dudge as a verb for dungeon exploration).

Some more ambitious scriveners abandoned the barter economy of APAs in favor of potentially remunerative publishing ventures. Howard Mahler, a Princeton-based player in the Endore campaign whose byline first appears in *Alarums* #17, began his *Quick Quincey Gazette* in October 1976, offering a subscription at twenty-five cents for each variantpacked issue, arriving on a near-monthly schedule. Long Islanders Scott Johnson and Andrew Muller perpetrated three issues of their ambitious new zine *Spellbound* in 1977, pricing issues first at fifty cents and later at the princely sum of one dollar. Lewis Pulsipher s old zine *Supernova*, which Flying Buffalo had purchased in 1975 but left dormant in favor of *Wargamer s Information*, came under Ken St. Andre s editorship, and resumed regular publication as of May 1977 at four dollars for eight issues, with an understandable focus on efforts outside of TSR bailiwick. An even more striking transformation overtook Games Workshop fannish *Owl & Weasel* in June, it blossomed into a glossy full-color magazine patterned on the *Dragon* and entitled *White Dwarf* (at fifty English pence per issue, or \$1.50 American). While Ian Livingstone s editorial in the first issue of *White Dwarf* acknowledges that *D&D* was the first (and still is the best) commercially produced game based on a Fantasy/Sword & Sorcery theme, and moreover a game which owed much of its success to the ingenious concept of role-playing, it pointedly observes that there are over 50 games available based on Science Fiction and Fantasy and sets out to cover the entire space with particular reference to *D&D*. One thus finds advertisements in that *White Dwarf* that the *Dragon* would

hesitate to accept for *Monsters! Monsters!*, for example. As a British publication, it moreover covered regional games of interest: the second issue has a Hartley Patterson feature on his original Midgard, the fourth a lengthy consideration by Tony Bath of the Hyborian campaign.¹⁶⁸ Even from across the Atlantic Ocean, *White Dwarf* posed a significant challenge to the *de facto* dominance of the *Dragon* over the roleplaying periodical market.

TSR also intensified the competition for convention audiences, while still canvassing the smallest regional shindigs as potential sales channels. Even in the first couple months of 1977, however, the crowded calendar of events targeting role-playing fandom now precluded scheduling an itinerary covering them all. *Dungeons & Dragons* had long featured in the WinterCon events held in December by the Metro Detroit Gamers group, the core constituency of the Midwest Gaming Association and home of the venerable Ryth campaign;; this season, the event fell on December 3 5, 1976. That convention must not be confused with the Boston area WinterCon beloved of the MITSGS and the contributors to the *Wild Hunt* which attracted visitors from as far away as New Jersey;; see Howard Mahler s trip report in *Alarums* #19. To these two hibernal gatherings, TSR now added its Winter Fantasy event in early January 1977, another special occasion added to the growing family of TSR-sponsored events alongside GenCon, GenCon West and GenCon South. West Coasters who wished to stay in warmer January climes could attend OrcCon (the Orange County Convention) I in Fullerton, California, at around the same time.¹⁶⁹ Even crossing the Atlantic offered no escape Games Workshop held its Gamesday on February 12 in London, for example. While Californians converged again for DunDraCon II in early March, East Coasters could visit PrinceCon in New Jersey, March 18 20. Even this list neglects many other conventions where *Dungeons & Dragons* figured less heavily in the schedule, like WarCon 3 in Texas late in January, or the New England science-fiction convention Boskone 14 in February, or the MFCA convention in March.

¹⁶⁷ Ansell introduced himself in the *Wild Hunt Setting up a Wargames Campaign* a British *D&D* fanzine along the lines of *A&E* and *TWH*

¹⁶⁸ Bath and Patterson alike reflect on the rise of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and contextualize their earlier work in terms of its principles, though neither lays claim to inventing the fantasy role-playing game.

Conventions remained the venue of choice for unveiling new role-playing products, and sometimes conventions inspired future releases as

well. In 1977, we again see how tournament dungeons evolved into commercial *Dungeons & Dragons* modules that TSR would later sell. At Detroit WinterCon V, Gygax personally oversaw a one-hundred person *Dungeons & Dragons* tournament featuring a dungeon of his own design. The adventure is a two-level underworld for six pre-generated characters averaging around seventh level.¹⁷⁰ The six adventurers ransack a maze of caverns in the hopes of retrieving an artifact known as Daoud's Wonderous Lanthorn, though as with the GenCon IX tournament, one level of the dungeon serves as an elimination round, and only those who triumph in that first round advance to the second level of the dungeon where said artifact might be discovered.¹⁷¹ Ultimately, the defender of the Lanthorn turns out to be a Vampiress Lord (not to be confused with a Vampire Queen), whom the winning party in the tournament presumably must subdue.

Owing to the need for several tournament referees to administer dungeon explorations simultaneously and impartially, each referee worked from a common set of written instructions crafted by Gygax, copied and distributed to all dungeon masters. Following the precedent of Bob Blake's post-game sales of his GenCon IX tournament dungeon, TSR later allowed the Metro Detroit Gamers group to package Gygax maps, encounter charts, character sheets and related instructions to tournament referees as a sixteen-page loose leaf product in a zip-lock bag to offer for sale. They called it the *Lost Caverns of Tsojconth*, and advised buyers to use this dungeon for your own tournament or for a new exciting dungeon for one Dungeonmaster and six players.¹⁷² MDG sold copies of the dungeon for three dollars. Flying Buffalo also offered them via mail order in the summer of 1977, according to a review by Ken St. Andre in *Supernova* #28. George Phillies evaluated the product in the *American Wargamer*, calling it a beautiful example of a wellprepared, thoroughly-described dungeon. [AW:v5n6] More importantly, the Detroit gamers viewed this not as a one-off, but instead they announced on the back of the dungeon: Additional printings of MDG tournament dungeons are planned. The dungeon set from MDG MichiCon VI Gamefest will be out shortly following the convention. The level of interest in these pre-packaged adventures ramped up significantly in the next year or so, by 1978 becoming a major source of revenue for TSR. Around the beginning of 1977, one also begins to see evidence that TSR finally trickled out a few copies of Pete and Judy Kerestan's *Palace of the Vampire Queen* to the market.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ An ad for OrcCon appears in a contemporary *American Wargamer*. [AW:v4n3]

¹⁷⁰ The party make-up is: a human Cleric, a human Fighter, a dwarf Fighter, a hobbit Thief, an elven Fighter/Magic user (with an emphasis on the latter) and a half-elven generalist (Fighter, Magic-user of Oerth, noting locations like the Duchy of Geoff and the Marches of Perrenland).

¹⁷¹

group adventures through the upper caverns, one of their number will gain a certain aura, and he or

Not every convention served up products sanctioned by TSR, however. At the second DunDraCon, once again in the Bay Area this time in Burlingame, adjacent to San Francisco's primary airport many attendees got their first glimpse of the *Arduin Grimoire* (1977). This thick pamphlet (nearly one hundred pages) by Dave Hargrave, a longtime Bay Area dungeon master, splayed out his numerous variant rules, famously including his critical hit tables that had long circulated with the Perrin Conventions variant. Hargrave sprawling tome, a fatter sort of *Manual of Aurania*, covers variant character classes as well as new spells, monsters and magic items all of the traditional areas of extensibility but furthermore reworks the core system of *Dungeons & Dragons* so thoroughly that one might argue it constitutes an independent game. To the six canonical character abilities, for example, Hargrave adds Ego, Mechanical Ability, Magic Resistance, Agility and Stamina, though differentiating these last two from Dexterity and Constitution would require explication, something that the *Arduin Grimoire* deemphasized. It burgeons with charts but wants for any connecting exposition. Everything admits of finer and finer distinctions in Hargrave vision of the game. While many fans resisted Gygax ontology of nine alignments rather than three, Hargrave offers fifteen, and there are eleven different varieties ¹⁷² Eventually, this module would reach the mass market as the *Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth* (S4) (1983). Three WinterCons later in 1979, the tournament featured a module by Allen Hammack called *The Ghost Tower of Inverness*, which TSR printed in a limited convention edition before mass marketing it a year later as module (C2).

¹⁷³ In *Alarums* #19 (Feb 1977), Lew Wolkoff princess as prisoner. (Quest, anyone?) It comes in a folder: two sets of maps, one of just the regular passages

numbered and secret doors and passages indicated;; a background and

scenario for DMs;; and a set of d a dungeon to start out in. maps, charts, hit points for monsters, and treasure so the neoDM can get a good idea before they set up their own dungeons. Minuses. The maps are laid out on graph paper, about the dungeon architecture

previously had no knowledge of the product. Only shortly thereafter (in June), George Phillies has seen the sequel *Dwarven Glory*, which he recognizes as a Wee Warriors product, though he deems it might concur with Dr. Phillies on this point. Curiously, Phillies notes this release before he records seeing the earlier *Vampire Queen* itself. [AW:v4n12]

of saving throws in *Arduin*. Charts allow dice to determine the most minute details of the world: for example, a Random Fog and Mist Generation Chart for Dungeon Rooms has some twenty different outcomes for colors, smells, visibility, sounds and special effects of suspicious vapors, and those who breath them in may experience effects such as producing drunkenness, adding 1d6 to all attributes (!) or randomly changing gender. For good measure, Hargrave throws in a world map and a dungeon map, presumably drawn from his campaign world of Arduin.

The release of the *Arduin Grimoire* figures into virtually all of the DunDraCon II trip reports. In *Alarums* #20, Wayne Shaw urges his readers, If any of you find it possible to get hold of a copy of Dave Hargrave *Arduin Grimoire* do so. Jim Bolton gushes, I did find one thing that really made the trip to SF all worth it. That was a 100 page book called the *Arduin Grimoire* Volume 1.¹⁷⁴ An advertisement for the book made its way into issue #6 of the *Dragon* in April. No doubt many ordered it, thanks to the convention buzz, but upon closer scrutiny the reaction became less adulatory. The volume suffered from serious editorial problems, most notably a lack of page numbers, or even a table of contents, which probably resulted from its hasty constructions and a last-minute change of publisher.¹⁷⁵ Lee Gold rather pointedly summarizes: My own reaction to the *Arduin Grimoire* was that I have little patience with publications that had to come out in a hurry and so do not have an index, enough cross references, or any elementary aids to completeness or understandability. [WH:#21] Most shocking of all, however, must have been the price tag \$9.50, very nearly the price of the base *Dungeons & Dragons* boxed set the advertisement in the *Dragon* somewhat doubtfully purports that you would have to pay over \$20 anywhere else for the information in these 100 jam-packed pages. Where Ken St. Andre

competed with TSR on the price as well as the simplicity of rules, Hargrave seemed to offer neither. Blake Kirk, another contemporary reviewer, moans, I was sorely disappointed with what I got for my \$9.50. [WH:#20] In the June 1977 issue of the *American Wargamer*, George Phillips affirms that the *Arduin Grimoire* rules cannot be used without *D&D*, I don't think;; there are too many things that won't make sense otherwise. [AW:v4n11]

Moreover, since the *Arduin Grimoire* made liberal use of the key phrase *Dungeons & Dragons*, it elicited the inevitable cease-and-desist letter from TSR, after which Hargrave perfunctorily excised the offending text in favor of other similar role-playing games and comparable constructions.¹⁷⁶ In 1977, few entrants to the fantasy gaming market would walk into that trap, however, which had to date proved a convenient stumbling-block that TSR could toss in the path of an upcoming competitor. The new breed of role-playing games and accessories that entered the market in 1977 were neither knee-jerk imitations like *Tunnels & Trolls*, nor simple variant compendia like *The Manual of Aurania* or the *Arduin Grimoire*. They reflected years of consideration that their designers had invested in the play and study of the game, and perhaps most importantly, a keen analysis of the gaps in *Dungeons & Dragons*, the areas where TSR apparently neglected the wants of the fan community.

¹⁷⁴ e artwork by a young man named Erol Otus

¹⁷⁵ In #24 (Mar 1977), Rick Loomis published a notice from the Chaosium -playing games compiled by a local worldmaster named Dave Hargrave reported that he received his copies of *Arduin* via Russell Powell and that the Chaosium had nothing to do with their production. The advertisement in the *Dragon* #6 ascribed the production to Archive Miniatures of Burlingame;; later editions would list house.

¹⁷⁶ In *Alarums* #27, Hargrave reported on meeting Brian Blume at GenCon West and finding his outlook very much at odds with the reported posture of TSR: Blume hinted then that once again *Arduin Grimoire The Dragon*

The community of *Dungeons & Dragons* players had long signaled their desire for reform, or at the least clarity, in the basic rules. After the publication of *Eldritch Wizardry* and *Gods, Demi-gods & Heroes*, TSR left the core system of *Dungeons & Dragons* in a state of completion but also some ambiguity. What really constituted *Dungeons & Dragons* in early 1977? The many emendations to the original three volumes of rulebooks in the supplements, the *Strategic Review* and elsewhere had sometimes

extended and sometimes overridden the base rules still other times, they proposed alternatives without any real normative force. This left the community with lingering uncertainty about the rules that TSR intended them to follow, though of course their acquiescence to those official rules remained a further question. The cries for some sort of definitive rendering of *Dungeons & Dragons* permeated the fanzines of the era. In *Alarums* #16, Steve McIntosh provides one of the most detailed critiques of the original rules, arguing to Gygax that the rules you published in *Chainmail* and *D&D* may be painfully obvious to miniature battle freaks, but to people who have no wargaming experience, or grew up on Avalon Hill and SPI, it's as confusing as hell! He ends with a plea, begging that TSR rewrite *D&D* and republish it so that we don't have to tell each new player what it all means. Mark Swanson in *Alarums* #17 wonders aloud about the value of devising variants for *Dungeons & Dragons*, given how little interest TSR evinced in reforming their rules: The fact that *D&D* has never been reissued bodes ill for any work spent on improving them. Dan Pierson in *Alarums* #18, though skeptical of TSR more heavy-handed normative pronouncements, still insists, I would, however, greatly like to see a revised and combined *D&D* with all the monsters,

NEW RELEASES

TUNNELS & TROLLS

Half the rules of
D&D, four times
the ambiguity!

GARDENS
& GOBLINS
JEWELS
surely no
re in Prague.
sack in silence.

BUNNIES & BURROWS

Other games got you
Watership Down?
Only costs a Fiver!

GARDENS & GOBLINS

Furious Topiary Action!
Prune the Erlking and
stop the Orchid Hoarde

LABYRINTHS & LUCRE

I dunno, there's like some
treasure in this, uh, giant
maze or something JUST
GIVE US YOUR MONEY

ITEMS & AMPERSANDS

Can't make a new fantasy
game without ampersands!
And this game has TONS!

A PATTERN
DEVELOPS

spells, character types, etc. etc. collected and organized together. These represent only the public pronouncements no doubt TSR received plenty of mail to this effect as well, to say nothing of what they might deduce from incessantly responding to queries grounded in the confusions they had sown.

Several unresolved issues dominated discussions of *Dungeons & Dragons* in the fanzines, and by 1977 it had become apparent that a simple ruling from TSR would not put these matters to rest. Spell memorization remained under siege from a variety of spell-point systems and the increasingly-popular klutz system of random spell failure favored by Mark Swanson and others.¹⁷⁷ The nature of hit points consistently preoccupied players, some of whom advocated for variants with static hit points (where hit points do not increase with level) as more realistic, while others argued that hit points reflected something more than just a body's innate tolerance for punishment;; one very popular facet of this argument was the question of whether characters immediately died upon reaching zero hit points, or if they merely fell unconscious, and could in fact endure a negative hit point total in a comatose state without actually perishing. The proper approach to critical hits, often considered through the sort of hit location system proposed in *Blackmoor*, sparked endless variants and debates about the onerous complexity of supplementary die rolls and managing the hit points ascribed to various parts of the body. The systems for Bards and Druids simply could not achieve any consensus in the community, and proposals abounded for various sorts of neutral Clerics and rhyme-based magicians with a roguish bent. Every new issue of the *Dragon* seemed to create new points of contention and new questions about canonicity and community acceptance.

TSR seeming inability, or at least disinclination, to resolve these questions no doubt inspired others to intercede. Thus, as the summer conventions of 1977 approached, a growing number of competitors aspired to displace TSR *de facto* monopoly on roleplaying. Fantasy Games Unlimited, who had before the end of 1976 released its first minor role-playing game (*Bunnies & Burrows* by Dennis Sustarre, based on the recent warringrabbit saga *Watership Down*), planned a major release squarely targeting the fantastic medieval gaming space. The pet project of Game Designers Workshop was a science fiction role-playing game. Dave Arneson, as we shall see, had a few tricks up his sleeve as well. In the convention season, all of these parties brought their wares to the table at the same venues TSR had dominated with its role-playing offerings for the past three years, creating the first real environment of competition.

Next to this flurry of activity, TSR creative staff might have looked like they rested on their laurels, but they brought to the summer 1977 conventions a new product that they had assembled quietly, as Gygax would

later explain: Before the third supplement (*Eldritch Wizardry*) was in print, it had been decided that some major steps would have to be taken to unify and clarify the *D&D* game system. This project began then, but such a long and complex task cannot be accomplished quickly if it is to be done right, and if nothing else we were determined to do it right! Organizational work was in progress when correspondence with J. Eric Holmes, professor, author and incidentally a respected neurologist, disclosed that the Good Doctor was interested in undertaking the first stage of the project the rewriting and editing necessary to extract a beginner's set of *D&D* from the basic set and its supplements. The result of his labors is the *Basic Set of D&D*. [DR:#14] In time for the third incarnation of the Origins convention this time beginning July 22 in Staten Island, New York, under the stewardship of SPI TSR produced the *Basic*

¹⁷⁷ For an account of klutz magic, see Swanson *Alarums* #11 (May 1976). A few months afterward, Swanson breaks down klutz factors per requisite and explores several alternate proposals. [WH:#9] A more mature description appears two years later. [AW:v5n8] Note that *Empire of the Petal Throne* effectively operates on a percentage failure system as well, and that percentage failure had long been a factor in the Thief system of scroll usage.

Set of Dungeons & Dragons. The *Basic Set* finally replaced the legend Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns with Rules for Fantastic Medieval Role Playing Adventure Game Campaigns. The project credits Holmes merely as an editor, though the process of condensing the disparate materials of *Dungeons & Dragons* into a single fortyeight page booklet (admittedly, in an 8.5-by-11 inch form factor nearly twice the size of one of the original books) required more than just judicious appropriation. This miraculous reduction in the length of the rules resulted from the radical decision to repurpose the system for beginners: the rules cover only characters between first and third level. With that comes a commensurate reduction in the long lists of elements like spells and monsters: only four pages of real estate, for example, detail all of the magic items in the game. This naturally raises the question of what happens beyond level three surely Gygax disdain for fortith level characters had not inspired this as a permanent restriction. In fact, the Preface to the *Basic Set* explains that, Players who desire to go beyond the basic game are directed to the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* books though for the time being, none of those existed. In June, when TSR shared their product roadmap with Judges Guild,

the schedule for production of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* was very aggressive, as the *Judges Guild Journal* reported: We've just gotten word from TSR that they're revising the *D&D* system for both a beginner's edition and an advanced version. We've only seen the draft of the beginner's edition and will let you know about the other as soon as it is available (by GenCon in August is the projection). [JGJ:M]

TSR remained wary of rushing the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* project, however. Later in 1977, Gygax explained: Some players have impatiently demanded immediate release of such material, but we are not about to step into that mess again. *D&D* originally came out as it did because of *demands* from those who had tested it and fallen in love with the concept. [DR:#11] While *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* would take years to crystallize, the *Basic Set* served as a stopgap, and moreover as a means of introduction to the game that strove to be far more consistent and comprehensible than the previous, scattered rule set. Most importantly, the *Basic Set* cost just \$9.50. While this may sound like only fifty cents off the price of the original boxed set, the *Basic Set* came in a larger box filled with goodies. In addition to the core rulebook, it contains: a set of *Dungeon Geomorphs*, dungeon map fragments that could be arranged like a jigsaw puzzle into the desired configuration;; a book called the *Monster & Treasure Assortment*, which allows for the random generation of the adversaries and plunder in a dungeon room on a particular level between the first and third;; and, perhaps most notably of all, a bag of five polyhedral dice, albeit notoriously poor ones. Remember as well that the *Basic Set* did not require players to purchase any supplement in order to play a Thief, even if it did allude to more exotic classes (like the Paladin and Ranger) as elements of the forthcoming advanced game.

Simplifying the game in this fashion could never satisfy the diehard fans who so vehemently defended their own variants and interpretations of the original rules, but this product targeted the uninitiated, not the expert. It would not set the record straight on spell memorization nor the nature of hit points nor the proper approach to critical hits. Nor did it even eliminate new print runs of the seminal three-volume boxed set, though as of 1977, they began featuring the starburst to differentiate them from TSR's the *Basic Set* for review (though not from TSR, she notes pointedly) and wrote up her thoughts in *Lords of Chaos* #3. Overall, she argues that its organization is spotty and that

there are also quite a few things to nitpick despite the efforts to produce an intuitive and Original Collector's Edition logo on their white cover recent work. Nonetheless, Lee Gold received a copy of consistent product. She furthermore singles out a number of gaffes, like the guidance for prospective Thieves that other members of an expedition should never completely trust them and they are quite as likely to steal from their own party as from the Dungeon Master's monsters. She reserves the most scorn for the accessories: The dice supplied with the set were sufficiently rotten that I threw them out. They had bubbles on the vertices, bumps and depressions on the faces and not much ink on the numbers. In the end analysis, her verdict on the *Basic Set* reads, I'd judge it very difficult for a total beginner to use without guidance from an experienced player.

TSR promoted the *Basic Set* heavily at all of the 1977 summer conventions, beginning with Origins III. At Origins, however, they found themselves facing a growing resistance movement. Tim Kask and Ernie Gygax held a panel on the future of *Dungeons & Dragons*, one that inevitably descended into a discussion of the intellectual property situation surrounding the game and its growing number of competitors. Sean Cleary, who wrote detailed notes on the panel for the *Wild Hunt* #19, recorded the following: There was a lecture on the one true way to play D&D. All others are called variants. Should one of the variants decide that it has become variant enough to split off and publish itself, then this is OK, PROVIDED SAID VARIANT DOES NOT USE EVEN ONE LITTLE BIT OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL. If the variant does use TSR material, TSR will try to sue for everything. Also the variant will find itself being called a bloodsucker and worse at cons by TSR. Despite this TSR is not a money crazed organization out to suppress everyone (quote from memory, may be inaccurate.) The One True Way will be published in three segments. The first, a beginners manual, is out now, and can be ordered direct. This manual is contained in the beginner's kit, the kit contains everything that a beginner needs to start DMing.¹⁷⁸

Interestingly, Cleary also notes that Gary Gygax had grown wary enough of claims that he appropriated the material of others that he now simply isolated himself from material created by the fan community. Thus, while Tim reads *TWH* and *A&E*, none of the stuff gets passed on to Gygax... nor will they reprint material from those zines. More than a decade after Gygax first submitted to the *Avalon Hill General Opponents Wanted* column the

promise that he will cooperate on game design, he had reached a point where collaborating openly with fans no longer made sense. Kask repeatedly stressed that publishing variant material in fanzines, or indeed any venue other than the *Dragon*, rendered it untouchable in TSR eyes. As Cleary advises authors of material, the *Dragon* will buy ALL rights to it. Don't try spreading the idea in any form that can be taken into a court room or else. However, TSR willingly conceded that it lacked the capability to evaluate the current volume of submissions that it received. Cleary cautions, give them about a year to reply, and that while they occasionally solicit contributions, don't hold your breath. John T. Sapienza, based on a private conversation, also reports that that Kask is rather overwhelmed by the amount of material he is already receiving for *TD*, and really doesn't feel he needs more. [WH:#19] Sapienza doubts, however, that TSR really intended to lighten submission volumes rather than maintaining total artistic control: But from his comments disparaging *A&E* and its contributors, I concluded that he really wishes we would all go away and let him do his own thing.

¹⁷⁸ [WH:#19] See also the corroborating report from Alex Murocmew in *Alarums #27. Another American Wargamer* (Sep 1977) by Richard Schwall, who asked a lawyer to investigate the plausibility of Kask property concerns over products like *Tunnels & Trolls* and the *Arduin Grimoire*. Unsurprisingly, the

TSR must have been unnerved to see a panel at Origins staffed by Rick Loomis of Flying Buffalo, the writer Lin Carter in his capacity as co-author of Fantasy Games Unlimited's *Royal Armies of the Hyborian Age*, Dennis Sustarre representing his work on *Bunnies & Burrows* for that same company, a representative of Little Soldier games (whose name Sean Cleary did not catch) and none other than Dave Arneson, all providing the counterprogramming that TSR feared most. Arneson, as a co-author of *Dungeons & Dragons* severed from TSR, found himself in demand with competitors, but in a legally-uncertain position toward his creation. After departing TSR, Arneson contracted a relationship with both Heritage Models in Dallas (formerly the southern outpost of Minifigs) and with Judges Guild, both of whom would publish Arneson-helmed projects related to *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1977.¹⁷⁹

Paul Keyser wrote up his conversation with Arneson at Origins for the *Wild Hunt*, in which Arneson pitches both of his new ventures: Dave Arneson said that the *Dungeonmaster's Index* which he published (through Heritage, I

believe) was a trial balloon. It is an index to all the *D&D* books and uses all the words they invented so if they don't successfully sue him for that, they won't get him for anything reasonable (i.e., except a direct pirate). He said he was bringing out his original rules (which TSR edited to death) through Judges Guild sometime soon. He is officially disassociated from TSR, but continues to receive royalty checks on the original books and some of the supplements which may be another reason TSR brought out the revised edition of *D&D* when they did.¹⁸⁰

The *Dungeonmaster's Index* (1977) credits Dave Arneson on its cover as co-author of *Dungeons & Dragons*, yet throughout it scrupulously avers, when invoking those keywords, that the name of the game is a registered trademark of TSR Hobbies. The *Index* catalogs all of the monsters, spells and magic items provided in the canonical TSR sources: the original *Dungeons & Dragons* booklets, *Chainmail* and *Swords & Spells*, all four supplements, and the seven issues of the *Strategic Review* cover the *Dragon*. Within the three broad categories although it does not purport to that it encompassed, Arneson enumerates the entries alphabetically;; for example, one can look up a Denebian slime devil in the *Index*, and discover that the last *Strategic Review* described that fiend on page 15. By definition, the work contains no additions to *Dungeons & Dragons*, nor does it repeat any of its content it merely provides pointers to the work that TSR had already published. One can readily understand the market for the *Index*, given the growing body of work surrounding *Dungeons & Dragons* and the difficulty of locating any particular piece of information in the dozen or more possible hiding places, though of course the *Basic Set* approached the same problem from a different perspective. While Heritage Models receives a credit for Graphics and Layout, the book declares no publisher, saying only that it was Printed in the USA and granting copyright to Arneson. In his Origins report, Paul Keyser casually relays, however, that Tim Kask also mentioned a case in Texas due in court soon with an unspecified opponent, which almost certainly refers to Heritage and to this product it seems impossible, given TSR posture on these matters, that the publication of the *Index* would not have merited a cease-and-desist at the least. Whether any lawsuit truly made it to court or not (it seems unlikely that it did), future revisions of the *Dungeonmaster's Index* never appeared, despite the hint in Arneson foreword that the work would pave the way for greatly expanded subsequent efforts.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Note that Heritage Models, in the beginning of 1977, merged with Custom Cast, makers of the Der Kriegspieler line of miniatures.

¹⁸⁰ [WH:#20] Already, these words imply that Arneson viewed the revised edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* with suspicion about his due royalty payments.

The second Arneson project, delivering his original rules (which TSR edited to death) to the community, became the *First Fantasy Campaign* (1977). The first *Judges Guild Journal* to announce its availability arrived in August (Installment N), at around the same time that the Judges Guild signed its long-term agreement to provide products sanctioned by TSR direct oversight. Bob Bledsoe foreword to Arneson's booklet elaborates that Dave has attempted to show the development and growth of his campaign as it was originally conceived. I'm sure that he was tempted to update the work to match pace with new trends, but he presented the unpolished gem, while preserving the feel and wonder of its unveiling, much to our benefit as Fantasy Game Judges. [FFC:1]

In this choice of words, especially unpolished gem and the bit about the author resisting the temptation to update the work, one detects a certain implication that Arneson recycled his original and unchanged campaign notes, perhaps even the original twenty or so pages of rules presence effectively verbatim from *Domesday Book* #13 on page 25 of the *First Fantasy Campaign* (the accompanying map, professionally redrawn and slightly modified, appears on page 29), reinforces the suspicion that Arneson, in resisting the temptation to update his original vision, simply anthologized that he shared with Gary Gygax, for this booklet.¹⁸² The

of Arneson Points of Interest in Black Moor article¹⁸¹ Gossip in the fan community held that Arneson retained some rights to the work *Dungeons & Dragons* after leaving TSR, though it is unclear where these baseless claims originated. In the *Wild Hunt*, George Phillips in Texas, and is rumored not to have left his fraction of the rights to *D&D* [WH:#19] In the same *D&D* However, the *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks make it clear that neither Arneson nor Gygax owned the copyright it is assigned to Tactical Studies Rules. Indeed, the April 1975 royalty agreement

the right to publish, sell, and distribute, the set of game rules or game entitled *Dungeons & Dragons*

ownership of the copyright mentioned above shall revert to the Author(s) not more than 90 days after the set of game rules or game is no longer

maintained in employment status. One does, however, wonder how expansive *Dungeons & Dragons*, the *Basic Set*, the forthcoming *Advanced* manuals, or all of the above? The question became the lynchpin of the subsequent litigation pursued by Arneson against TSR.¹⁸² Perhaps the material from roughly page three through fourteen was a part of that missive to Gygax, though this is admittedly conjecture see Section 2.9.1 for some notes, however, on the resemblance of the price lists given to those appearing in *Men & Magic*. The castle construction process also seems strikingly similar to the comparable section in *Underworld & Wilderness*. If why Gygax insisted that those notes had little impact on the core development of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

notes from the heyday of the Blackmoor campaign. That notwithstanding, the work treads carefully, and manages to discuss both dungeons and dragons extensively without really mentioning *Dungeons & Dragons*, though it freely references *Chainmail* and the Castle & Crusade Society, *Outdoor Survival* and of course the dungeon adventures of the Blackmoor Bunch. The *First Fantasy Campaign* provides the best window into the state of the Blackmoor dungeon as Hilda Hannifen and Bill Paley experienced it the summer before. It does not, however, reprint even one little bit of copyrighted material, and thus presumably TSR allowed it to appear under the Judges Guild imprint, if only grudgingly.

Whatever competition these two Arneson releases might have given TSR, it paled in comparison to other products unveiled at the same time. The same issue of the *Judges Guild Journal* that announced the *First Fantasy Campaign* also states that *Traveller*, a new role-playing game from Game Designers Workshop.

we now have *Traveller* (1977) clothed itself in all of the trappings of *Dungeons & Dragons* a twelve-dollar boxed set with three forty-eight page pamphlets inside but it chose as its setting a far future of interstellar travel that recalled a pastiche of Asimov's *Foundation*, Herbert's *Dune* and many other classics of the genre. On the back of the first edition box, the game self-identifies as a role-playing game: *Traveller* is a role-playing game simulation;; the individual players assume an alter ego, with unique abilities and skills. When Marc Miller of GDW gossiped with Jack Greene in 1975 about a potential game in the future dealing with Space Empires, he did not speak idly.

GDW presented *Traveller* in a fashion that certainly recalls some aspects of its earlier effort *En Garde* the most salient difference is that with *Traveller* the main thrust of the game is the refereed or umpired situation, as opposed to the player-driven activities of *En Garde*. Like the characters in *En Garde*, *Traveller* characters have careers, typically in the military, and the randomized achievement of rank and social status drives much of the character generation process. Dice decide the fate of characters who enlist in the armed forces in a rather cruel and capricious manner a moderate pension or an early grave occur with about equal frequency (in the Marines, an average fellow survives a term of service by rolling a 6 or higher on 2d6, but achieves promotion only with a separate roll of 9 or higher). *Traveller* eschews polyhedrons in favor of 2d6 for most rolls including the six characteristics, which in *Traveller* are Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, Intelligence, Education and Social Standing. Whereas in *En Garde*, the Strength multiplied by Constitution made up Endurance (effectively, the hit points a character could withstand), in *Traveller* points of damage subtract temporarily characteristics, and if even one of them reaches incapacitated. Combat is resolved by an accuracy roll (a base to-hit score of 8 on 2d6) whether an aggressor wields a bludgeon or a laser carbine, though innumerable bonuses and penalties, including a matrix of weapon-to-armor modifiers, result in a combat system that behaves similarly to *Tractics*. For the most part, the progression system in *Traveller* is limited to the acquisition of material wealth and possessions: no levels or other stratified progression mechanisms trigger from gains in experience. Characters may undergo various sorts of training regimens to improve education or weapon expertise, but in the course of typical game adventures, characters do not accumulate the steady and routine augmentations that await dungeon explorers. Hartley Patterson, in his review in *News from Bree* #23, intuited that something was missing from a role-playing game without progression: The absence of levels can lead to players treating all characters as throwaway , and casual one-off games are not really possible as a character's experience is from any of the three physical zero, the character is effectively *Traveller* comes from gaining information about the universe as designed by the referee, not from quantified numbers which can be transferred to another game.

What constitutes a typical game adventure for *Traveller*? The third pamphlet in the box, *Worlds and Adventures*, stipulates that the referee has the responsibility for mapping the universe before actual game play begins,

but as the Final Word at the end of the booklet puts it, *Traveller* is necessarily a framework describing the barest of essentials for an infinite universe. While the referee must create entire worlds and societies through which the players will roam, we get little inkling of why they might roam those worlds. The rules provide, however, a great deal of information on the construction, pricing, staffing and operation of starships, especially combat vessels, and detailed rules for the indigenous species that might be encountered on strange worlds. One could use *Traveller* to tell the sort of stories that the *Star Trek* television series recounted, or to explore the setting of popular science fiction novels. As it happens, GDW had the great fortune to schedule their release on the heels of the monumental success of the film *Star Wars*, which provided a fresh and engaging template for heroic fantasy in a science fiction environment. *Traveller* appropriated, with especial fortuitousness, the psionics rules from *Dungeons & Dragons*, which provided a means to read or send thoughts, enjoy clairvoyant visions, move objects telekinetically virtually all of the Force powers that Obi-Wan Kenobi invokes await the reader of *Traveller*. Just as the sword-and-sorcery tradition taught prospective dungeon masters how to plot their perils, so did *Star Wars*, in the earliest days of *Traveller*, provide a familiar blueprint for futuristic fantasies.¹⁸³

Traveller enjoyed a very positive reception. Ken St. Andre, who as the author of the early game *Starfaring* (1976) perhaps enjoyed the best claim to inventing the science fiction role-playing game, writes in *Supernova* #29 that *Traveller* was top notch in concept and execution, though in a bit of a back-handed compliment, he opines that character creation is practically a game in itself. In the *Wild Hunt* #22, as part of a survey of existing role-playing games, Glenn Blacow observes that among science fiction games *Traveller* was more popular by far. One Boston-area fan in *TWH* #21 reveals, I haven't been playing all that much *D&D* lately, as I managed to get one of the dozen copies of *Traveller* that [Harvard Square games store] Games People Play had in stock. Mark Swanson even began working on some variants. Fortunately for *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, few fans viewed dungeoneering and *Traveller* as mutually exclusive they served very different needs and could occupy independent niches in the marketplace. Even Gary Gygax praises it and its maker: *Traveller* is an imaginative game, and if it was inspired by *D&D*, it can be considered an imitation by no possible stretch of the imagination. TSR respects GDW as an ethical concern

which simply saw the possibilities inherent in role-playing and went on to devise unique and interesting games from this concept. [DR:#11] Nonetheless, TSR surely intended to compete in the futuristic role-playing game space, both with its existing *Metamorphosis Alpha* and with new titles then in the planning stage.

A direct challenge to the fantasy role-playing niche of *Dungeons & Dragons* would be a different matter entirely and that is exactly what many brought home with them from the summer conventions in 1977. Wes Ives, a long time *Alarums* contributor (not to mention a contributor to the *Dragon*), wrote the following to the *Wild Hunt*:¹⁸³ Mania for *Star Wars* swept through science-fiction fandom and role-playing fandom alike;; *Dungeons & Dragons* variant rules for the Jedi Knight class, systems for light sabers and the powers of the Force inundated fanzines and shifted interest in heroism toward more technological props.

We all owe Gary Gygax, and we owe him heavy. It was TSR that made role-playing games what they are. So it is with a real sense of regret that I have to admit that TSR has been surpassed, overwhelmingly so. *Dungeons & Dragons* is no longer the standard of comparison, at least with this gamer. [WH:#20]

The game that elicited this rather dramatic announcement from Ives was *Chivalry & Sorcery* (1977) by Edward E. Simbialist and Wilf K. Backhaus, published under the imprint of Fantasy Games Unlimited. *Chivalry & Sorcery* aspired to displace *Dungeons & Dragons* as the premier fantasy role-playing game, and it aimed to do so by providing a richer and thus deeper level of simulation. Rather than merely refining individual segments of the rules piecemeal, *Chivalry & Sorcery* reimagined the game from first principles. Its largest single departure from *Dungeons & Dragons* was the adoption of a more concrete setting not quite a scenario, as the world of Tékumel is to *Empire of the Petal Throne*, but a specific feudal medieval period (based on twelfth-century France) with a well-defined economy as well as rigid societal and governmental structures. For its fantastic component, it appropriates even more liberally from Tolkien than Gygax did the description of hobbits, for example, discusses how they came to live in the peace of the Shire until the events of the War of the Ring. Within that setting, the authors strove to depict a plausible world, one where the actions of characters had a coherent and believable context. In terms familiar from the *Fight in the Skies* recommendations discussed in 4.3, the rules suggest

that players should adjust the play of their characters in accordance with their rolled characteristics: It is strongly recommended that players do not play every character as if they themselves were in the adventure. If a character is stupid, role-play and have him act stupidly. If he is a fumble-fingered boob who has the dexterity of a hobbled camel, have all the fun you can with him (these make good comic Thieves). The whole idea is to have fun, to live out fantasies that could never happen in real life. As much as possible, let the characters play themselves.

The full realization of a character begins at birth, within a stratified society that may confer to a child privilege or squalor, depending on their circumstances. Randomly assigned social status plays a huge role in interactions, and determines the degree of material wealth that a starting character enjoys. *Chivalry & Sorcery* provides immensely detailed economic data about the setting recording the day's wage for a laborer, the cost of an inn room, the amount a tradesman will exact for work (depending on their guild rank, if any), the cost of food down to the level of parsley and watercress, as well as the price of every conceivable garment of the era which makes the costs of weapons and armor, as well as the value of plunder, more meaningful. In this more concrete and plausible fantastic environment, there are few actual dungeons other than those connected with inhabited or ruined castles and towers. Inhabited castles and towns rarely have any items of value in their dungeons. The pretext of adventuring in a dungeon must have grown thinner and thinner as the years after 1974 went by. Instead, *Chivalry & Sorcery* defines Places of Mystery as a general category, given the more plausible conjecture that ruins inhabited by nameless horrors might contain treasures, though of course, Clerics have monasteries and churches;; Fighting-men and nobles have castles, keeps and manor houses;; Thieves have hideouts and Guild Halls, all of which adventurers might find a pretext to raid. That much said, the rulebook stipulates that the existence of unclaimed wealth or dangerous villainy in the world would likely attract the attention of impecunious kings or righteous orders of crusaders well before any plucky bands of adventurers could mobilize as much as sword-and-sorcery literature might tell us otherwise. *Chivalry & Sorcery* designed for contests on a grand scale, between realms governed by the civil and ecclesiastical structures of feudal Europe, and thus the rules optimize equally for courtly manners, battlefield clashes and laying siege to great fortresses.

Chivalry & Sorcery promise of a richer game experience attracted many converts. Wes Ives instructs his readers to go right now and buy a copy of these rules, for ten dollars. [WH:#20] Those ten dollars purchased a single rulebook, but a full-size, 128-page rulebook in eye-straining five-point text, simply crammed with charts and exposition. Ives especially drools over the magic system, or as the authors prefer Magick system, which occupies nearly a third of the rulebook, including the sixteen separate and distinct types of Magicians, who further subdivide into some thirty-nine orders. His satisfaction with these new rules, Ives says, put me out of the table-writing business in other words, superseded his own variant designs for *Dungeons & Dragons*. In the *Wild Hunt* #21, Swanson agrees: Personally, I am planning to start a *Chivalry & Sorcery* campaign with a greatly complicated society.

After a month or two went by, however, the applause for *Chivalry & Sorcery* began to peter out. The cause of this dwindling enthusiasm must seem obvious in retrospect the system shouldered a heavy burden of complexity to achieve its ambitions. Characters, for example, have all six of the original abilities from *Dungeons & Dragons*, though in this game one rolls a d20 for each of those, as well as for Personal Appearance and Bardic Voice, to say nothing of Size, and if one wants to play a humanoid like an elf or dwarf, one must roll for Race as well. One even rolls for Alignment in *Chivalry & Sorcery*, though rather than binding its adherents to any code of conduct, Alignment is merely a guide to players so that they can build their characters personality in an orderly manner. In the combat system, one may not blanche at the inflation to eleven distinct armor classes, but when compounded with shield class and, yes, helmet class, as well as independent dodge and parry systems the dodge system involves the attacker and defender writing Left, Back or Right on a secret sheet of paper, whereby the defender hopes to fake out the attacker which of course only serves as a prelude to designating a tactic for the combat round by writing down one of seven types of maneuvers in secret to say nothing of all of the exceptional moves one might attempt, including the Great Blow out a desperate defense and once morale is resolved, of course have blanched by the time one rolls percentile dice to hit, keying off a chart depending on the weapon type wielded, though also taking into account the class of the attacker and the aggregate armor of the defender, all subject to a bewildering number of incremental modifiers.¹⁸⁴ Once the initial enthusiasm for the virtues of *Chivalry & Sorcery* wore off, its advocates began to apprehend the

unwieldiness of combat resolution. As the realism rose to vertiginous heights, the playability of *Chivalry & Sorcery* precipitously plummeted. Lewis Pulsipher's review in *White Dwarf* #5 insightfully proposes that *C&S* is the fantasy roleplaying expression of the wargamers who favor realism and simulation, while *D&D* is the or bashing or calling one may very well

¹⁸⁴ Lee Gold constructed a one *Chivalry & Sorcery* in the *Wild Hunt* extensive flowchart lacked the selection of tactics. It seems unlikely, despite numerous attempts by the authors of the game to clarify the combat system, that any two readers understood it the same way. She consequently revisited the system two issues later, and there her combat algorithm sprawled across some six pages.

expression of playability fans who want a good *game*, not simulation. Kevin Slimak summarizes: *C&S*, of which much has been said (especially by Wes Ives), has a system involving more skill, but (at least at first glance) it appears that it will take longer than *D&D*. The challenge: come up with a system modifying *D&D* or replacing the combat system without grossly increasing the time required to play. [WH:#21]

Two *Chivalry & Sorcery* reviews appear in the *American Wargamer* in November, one from Lee Gold, who calls it a tantalizing rulebook, but too complex, too disorganized and too unclear to be played without massive rule reinterpretation. [AW:v5n4] Swanson, in the *Wild Hunt* #22, concedes, I probably will not be running a *C&S* game after all. The basic problem is the complexity of the rules. A major job of indexing and interpreting would be needed. He also complains about the need for an errata sheet any work so lengthy and complicated must in its first edition contain its share of typos and ambiguities. He furthermore bemoans how it takes so long to set up a *C&S* character. Perhaps most telling of all, however, is his admission that there is a conspicuous lack of interest in a *C&S* campaign locally. This obstacle lay in wait for any direct competitor to *Dungeons & Dragons*: the dependable inertia of players and the difficulty of persuading a critical mass to migrate to a new system. After all, these are not solitaire games, and in the community where Swanson played, games figured into large and stable group dynamics. While one or two players might brim with enthusiasm for a new and possibly superior system, players loved their existing characters, to say nothing of their carefully-honed variant systems and well-trodden dungeons.

One could not dispute that players demanded improvement on *Dungeons & Dragons* the ardent if brief vogues for games like *Chivalry & Sorcery*, and the ceaseless criticism and challenges to the rules of *Dungeons & Dragons*, amply substantiated the truth of that. Even the venerable Ryth campaign, which spawned arguably the earliest fanzine dedicated to *Dungeons & Dragons*, drew to a close in September 1977, which its referee explained in the tenth issue of that fanzine thus: The main reason is that I feel the *Dungeons & Dragons* system has been explored rather fully in our campaign, and the disadvantages now outweigh the novelty. Did fans want a new game that improved on *Dungeons & Dragons*, or did they simply want *Dungeons & Dragons* to improve? In 1977, TSR retained enough control over the market that the appetite of fans tended toward the latter. Consider that Tim Kask announced, in the first anniversary issue of the *Dragon* in June, that readership had increased three-hundred percent in the intervening twelve months;; the first issue of 1978 (after which the *Dragon* finally went monthly) would report that circulation had reached 7,500. Consider as well that the third incarnation of Origins drew a disappointing crowd of 2,200. [AHG:v14n2] The four-day 1977 **GenCon X**, on the other hand, claimed 2,300 paid conventioneers, and over 2,600 different people. This prompted Tim Kask to assert, and not entirely without justification, that GenCon X was the biggest wargame convention that has EVER been held, by anyone, anywhere.¹⁸⁵ These numbers far exceeded the capacity of the old Horticultural Hall, but by this time a new home for GenCon had been found: the Playboy Club of Lake Geneva, more or less the most incongruous possible stage for a wargaming convention. Whether GenCon attendance was helped or harmed by this change of venue is difficult to say, as it must have prevented many younger gamers from securing parental approval. TSR thus controlled both the most popular convention and a magazine that dominated any of its direct competitors in the role-playing space, even if it still remained smaller for the moment than the house organs of the two largest wargame producers. Neither Avalon Hill nor SPI yet aspired to compete in the production of role-playing games, though the writing on the wall must have gotten clearer by the day.

¹⁸⁵ [TD:#10] This proved a short-lived glory next year, GenCon XI would be crushed by Origins IV, at 3,500, though with some extenuating circumstances. Metro Detroit Gamers sponsored Origins IV, and held the

conference in Ann Arbor rather than the East Coast, thereby poaching much of the Great Lakes area GenCon audience only a few short weeks

TSR could not however rest on its laurels. To meet challenges like *Chivalry & Sorcery*, TSR accelerated its long-term plan to better the dungeon-plundering experience: the storied but perpetually delayed Advanced game that Gygax frequently mentioned. His article in the *Dragon* #11 lays out the roadmap: *Basic D&D* was the first step, and the release of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, Monster Manual* is the next. As Arneson *Dungeonmaster's Index* suggested, monsters lay scattered throughout rulebooks, supplements and magazines and Arneson considered only the fiends in the official products of TSR. Since 1976, the fan community had taken this matter into their own hands, of course, as Sean Cleary's note to *Alarums* #9 indicates: I have found one instance in which photocopies are more valuable than originals: I am almost through creating a quick reference monster table with a standard-sized binder, a set of index tabs and a third-generation photocopy of Greyhawk and Book Two, alphabetizing the monsters. [A&E:#9]

It is one thing to create such a photocopied anthology for personal use, and another to cast it as a commercial product. During the summer of 1976, Steve Perrin started an ambitious venture to tabulate All the World's Monsters, which he envisioned as an annually-revised bestiary covering all the monsters currently extant in the *D&D* world.¹⁸⁶ Preemptively, Perrin proposed to take stuff from *Alarums & Excursions* (full credit given) extensively, so anyone with objections please contact us now the implication being that unless someone wrote to Perrin in order to opt-out of the process, they effectively granted consent for their work to be reprinted. To facilitate direct submissions, he circulated a code sheet in *Alarums*, a handy form for recording all of the relevant characteristics of a monster. Because of a less-than-overwhelming initial response, Perrin worked out a plan to issue credits toward the purchase price of the final product based on the amount contributors submitted. After an update on the project he sent to *Alarums* #14, he tacked on the hopeful appendix: NOTE TO GARY GYGAX et al. If TSR would like to publish this catalog or act as distributors, etc., we'll be glad to hear from you and I'm sure something can be worked out. No reader of this chapter should be surprised to learn that Perrin did hear back from TSR, and not with the expression of support he solicited. Their lawyers have written us their standard letter, and we don't feel like making an issue of it,

he reports bitterly in *Alarums* #19. Rather than abandon the project, however, Perrin converted it into *All the Worlds Monsters* where Worlds is plural, and implies that one world we will not have in the book, by the way, will be TSR s.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ He collaborated on this project with Jeff Pimper, who produced , an annual detailing of all of the known releases in the wargaming space, which patterned itself on the *ting Ships* annual produced in the late nineteenth century by Fred T. Jane (see Section 3.1.5).

The sheer level of fan enthusiasm for a thorough and organized catalog of monsters, combined with the imminent threat of a competing product entering the market, must have pushed the planned *Monster Manual* (1977) to the front of the queue for deliverables in TSR s revision of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Despite his best efforts, Gygax did not quite beat *All the Worlds Monsters* into print the Chaosium advertised it (alongside their new fantasy wargaming title *Elric*) in the *Dragon* #10. It offered 265 unique monsters and all specifics necessary to adapt them to almost any role-playing game. The first plug for the *Monster Manual* appears in the following issue of the *Dragon*, and its tally of over 350 monsters are specifically for use with *D&D*. Sheer size aside, the differences in production values are staggering. At \$7.95, *All the Worlds Monsters* consists of computer print-outs, in a landscape format and in a stout, late-1970s printer font, in all block capital letters. First printings came unbound, in loose, shifting colored paper within, using cardstock only for the detached front and back leaves. Occasional illustrations of varying quality flesh out some of the entries, but most are heavy on system yet light on description (the entire description of the monster Zanth, for example, reads: Six-legged wolfkomodo-lizard). By way of contrast, the *Monster Manual*, at \$9.95, came in a plush, sturdy hardbound volume, whose entries are eminently legible and amply illustrated over two hundred pieces of artwork appear in the text. The statistics for monsters are kept to a minimum. For the marketplace, there simply could be no comparison. The *Monster Manual* represented a huge jump in physical quality over previous TSR publications, and the system data describing its monsters conformed with the forthcoming Advanced rules. Sean Cleary, who had longed for just such a product, reviewed it very favorably: This one rates an A for its technical quality. It is easily above other efforts like *All the Worlds Monsters*. It contains more monsters than most of the other efforts, and goes into far more detailed description [WH:#26]

There is one respect, however, in which *All the Worlds Monsters* proved richer than its rival for each monster, there is a credit assigned to its designer. Among those attributions are the names of many seasoned fans who helped to shape the phenomenon of *Dungeons & Dragons*. To name just a few, one sees Hilda Hannifen's Stone Golem, Steve Marsh's Gibbering Ghoul and Mark Swanson Daughter of Kali. In the *Monster Manual*, however, one instead finds a preemptive defense written by Gygax that, Those monsters drawn from my original work have been revised and expanded upon accordingly. Except as noted, all new monsters are strictly of this author's creation just as all those which appeared in the *Strategic Review* were and I take the burden of full responsibility for them. Gygax does dole out a few morsels of credit to Steve Marsh for his undersea creations, to Terry Kuntz for his prototypical Beholder, as well as to Erol Otus and to his own son Ernie.

History sometimes reserves its ironies for the most opportune moment. At the height of Gygax insistence on the originality of TSR inventions, late in 1977, TSR received a cease-and-desist notice from Elan Merchandising, a sublicensee of Saul Zaentz's production company, who in turn owned the non-literary rights to Tolkien works as the producers of Ralph Bakshi's forthcoming animated Tolkien adaptations.¹⁸⁸ While the higher profile of the *Basic Set* and the increasing circulation of the *Dragon* might have attracted this unwanted notice, it is more likely that the lesser-known *Battle of the Five Armies*, which in April 1977 had been reissued by TSR in a grand release with new box art, was the proximate cause of the legal action. The Rankin/Bass animated version of *The Hobbit* aired for the first time in November on NBC to much publicity but little acclaim which required enough advertising expenditure that merchandising departments took notice of any unlicensed products riding their coattails. Once the gaze of intellectual property attorneys turned to TSR, however, they found plenty of grounds for complaint. Of course, TSR had learned well precisely how to react to this sort of challenge exactly the way that *Tunnels & Trolls* or the *Arduin Grimoire* had circumvented TSR intellectual property. They crudely excised copyrighted keywords, replacing them with synonyms, but leaving the fundamental concepts unchanged. Hobbits thus would yield to halflings, ents to treants and Nazgûl to simple wraiths.¹⁸⁹ The unfortunate balrogs disappeared from the main rulebooks entirely, though their place would be filled by the balor Type VI demon in later editions of *Eldritch Wizardry*.

(1976).¹⁹⁰ TSR needed to perform these alterations not only on the *Basic Set*, but also on the Original Collector's Edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks, the supplements and even the venerable *Chainmail*. The changes went into effect hastily and sloppily printings to come

a stray reference to hobbits lingered in the *Basic Set* for some few

¹⁸⁷ One may hear an echo of this sentiment in the title of *Different Worlds*, a Bay Area fantasy gaming magazine.

but also silently. Only Games Workshop's Ian Livingstone, in his opening editorial in *White Dwarf* #5, comments on this issue, and even then obliquely. After noting that manufacturers have to try to get round the copyright laws at expense and annoyance to both themselves and their customers, Livingstone laments that the game *Siege of Minas Tirith* has disappeared from the shelves and is soon to be followed by TSR *Battle of the Five Armies...* It is sad to learn also that Miniature Figurines are soon to withdraw their Mythical Earth range of figures.

While costly and inconvenient, this interruption could not break TSR stride. The grand plan to produce *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* continued, though at a gradual pace. In the *Dragon* #11, at the end of 1977, Rob Kuntz insists that Gary continues to work upon this *humongous* project daily and volunteers a guesstimate that the work will complete next summer. Months ago in his Origins report, Sean Cleary overheard the prediction that the revised game would consist of a book of advanced rules so that you can set up an Nth level dungeon, and a DM's guide, almost the size of a book, which will contain and justify every single rule of the game. Cleary also reports, however, that this book is being slowed down by the TSR staff's often almost physical confrontations/meetings over what the optimum rules are. [WH:#19]

¹⁸⁸ Zaentz acquired the rights in advance of Bakshi's animated *Lord of the Rings* (1978) in early 1976 from United Artists, who had in turn purchased them directly from the Tolkien estate in the unfulfilled hope of producing the picture themselves. It is thus interesting to note that Zaentz did not control that intellectual property when *Dungeons & Dragons* was initially published. Stanley Kubrick was among the directors who considered, but eventually rejected, the prospect of directing a live-action version of the *Lord of the Rings* for United Artists. There is a detailed account of the making of the Bakshi film in the *Dragon* #20.

¹⁸⁹ *Chivalry & Sorcery* required a similar, if not even more extensive, clean-up of Tolkien intellectual property.

¹⁹⁰ The first printing of *Eldritch Wizardry*

Of the two books that Cleary foretold, only one would be ready for GenCon in 1978: the *Player's Handbook*. The follow-up *Dungeon Masters Guide* would wait until the following year. Both books would emerge into a vastly more diverse competitive landscape than the preceding years had known. Already in 1977, we see hints in *Alarums* of a roleplaying version of *White Bear and Red Moon* that Steve Perrin and Greg Stafford had undertaken, soon to be *Runequest* (1978). We see Steve Jackson's seminal work on *Melee*, the first of the family of games soon to be known as *The Fantasy Trip*. TSR touted its own forthcoming *Gamma World*, a successor to *Metamorphosis Alpha*, as well as other role-playing projects.

All of these products billed themselves as role-playing games, but moreover they shared certain genre-defining features in common. All embraced a distinction between a referee and players, between the authority who establishes the situation and manages the hidden forces of the world, and the players who probe and experience that imagined reality. Players interact with the world through a dialog with the referee, rather than depending on any omniscient visual representation of the world like a wargaming board, as the state of the world remains a secret guarded by the referee. *Anything can be attempted* by the characters that the players control, though it is up to the referee to decide on the wisdom and consequences of these attempts. The games all admitted of the same core modes of play as *Dungeons & Dragons*: a mode of exploration, traveling through potentially dangerous places;; a mode of combat, when danger manifests;; and a mode of logistics, when dealing with the consequences of an expedition or preparing a new one. By rationing out these modes judiciously, a referee creates a dramatic blend of tension, catharsis and banality that keeps the adventures fresh, impactful and plausible for the players. All the games contain some notion of personal progression, of characters who potentially improve indefinitely, which secures the investment of players in a particular character and game, and moreover invites a strong identification of the player with the character. These qualities set the new genre of role-playing games apart from its parent, wargaming.

With these tools, players could have the unprecedeted experience of simulating a person in a fantastic situation, of visiting a magical world for a

time and then returning to normal life. As in wargames, the simulation quantifies the effectiveness of adventurers in combat, with swords or sorcery, but these new systems also furnish details beyond the scope of battle, and even beyond physical qualities like the weight characters could carry or the distance they could move. The system encompasses more abstract qualities of persons like Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma which it defines and implements as elements that affect the performance of characters in the game world. But the statistics on the page tell only half the story. Role-playing games let players choose what their characters had for breakfast, what color shirt they put on and a myriad other incidental facts about their lives and the world that had no impact on deciding combat. In order to manage this world, the dungeon master keeps maps and notes, but the credibility of the world depends on the dungeon master's imagination and wits, the manner in which the unexpected is resolved. A player can always peek underneath a cabinet, insult a local fisherman or set fire to the forest. Through this collaboration, the players and referee can become so immersed in the world that events flow naturally, details leap to mind spontaneously, rather than from the prepared page. Where does this world come from? It seems to be fundamentally the same as the literary worlds created by authors, simply an impulse of human imagination. While the improvisational nature of characters and scenarios is rarely as honed or polished as literature, players manage to fill in the details for themselves, or settle contradictions naturally, as if acting in a fictional world were something innate in human nature.

EPILOGUE: ROLE--PLAYING AND REALITY

Late in September 1973, while Gygax and Kaye hurried to incorporate Tactical Studies Rules, a reporter for *Playboy* magazine named Mordecai Richler traveled to Minneapolis to attend the Third Annual Gnostic Aquarian Festival. The event attracted persons from around the nation who shared an interest in things occult, congregating for seminars and banquets in crowds of fifty or a hundred. Most attendees that Richler interviewed spoke about their past lives and their adherence to ancient traditions of wisdom;; a surprising number touted their ability to tamper with the weather. A young author named P.E.I. Bonewits, who enjoyed some notoriety for finagling a baccalaureate from the University of California at Berkeley in 1970 with a

Major in Magic, confided that he had a nice flair for weather control. Richler encouraged these practitioners to demonstrate their art, but with disappointing results: Outside it was overcast. I invited Zell and Carolyn to have a shot at rain making, and sportingly, they agreed, sinking to the pavement to meditate for ten minutes. On rising, Zell said, We'll have rain in an hour. Alas, the rains didn't come in one hour, or even four...

The wiser wizards refused to trifle with their powers. I don't do parlor tricks, one countered when asked for a performance. They viewed a *Playboy* reporter with bemusement and occasional bursts of scorn, both of which Richler reciprocates in print. These occultists did not come from extraordinary backgrounds, but they enjoyed taking temporary visits to the world of the supernatural: The wizards, many of them insurance claim adjusters, pharmacists or Government surveyors by day, favored medieval robes or black-velvet capes. Richler carefully documented their supposed regressions into past lives through hypnotic trances, lavishing especial attention on their struggles with distant periods and languages. One cannot help but cringe when reading of the astral projector who begins mumbling about a past life in Germany as a certain Heinrich who knew the composer Bach, but struggles to conjure up any German words whatsoever, eventually mustering just a feeble *Guten Tag* before hastily moving on to an earlier life in the safe obscurity of Egypt, where no one could easily assess his linguistic competence.

Could anyone present that day really have believed that they witnessed a man reliving a past life based on such a shabby performance? And if not, why did they all go along with it, and pretend that all of this talk of reincarnation and weather control was credible? Although Richler treats much of what he observed as sheer foolishness, he largely abstains from speculating about the motivations of the participants. Perhaps these would-be wizards felt their engagement with the occult set them apart from the ordinary world, and rendered them important and interesting the presence of a reporter could only corroborate that sentiment, and some of the conference attendees obviously cultivated media personae. For example, Bonewits had already published a book on the occult, *Real Magic* (1970), and presumably his presence at events like these bolstered his professional reputation and drove sales. Does that mean that the conventioneers approached the occult cynically, as a sham they exploited, or did they actually believe that these claims to power and knowledge had some basis in reality, or perhaps they had just decided to live in the world as they wanted it to be, if only for a

day? Did they, like the fantasy fans discussed in Chapter Two, simply find that magic was too compelling to relegate to literary experience alone?

These are new versions of old questions: we could ask the same about the authors and readers of medieval grimoires. Did they practice the spells anthologized within, and if so, were they satisfied with the results, or was it all some massive charade of fraud and self-delusion? We add a new wrinkle to these questions by reexamining them in the light of role-playing, however. What might a reporter like Richler have written after infiltrating a tourney of the Society for Creative Anachronism or a gathering of the protagonists of Coventry? Would the courtly knights have insisted that they lived in the Middle Ages, and would the Coventranians have identified themselves by their fictional titles? In both of those cases, it seems clear that the participants do not really believe they are the characters they claim to be but then again, the Guardian arose to check the excessive commitment of some players to the world of Coventry.¹ Did the attendees of the Third Annual Gnostic Aquarian Festival harbor a conviction in the existence of past lives that differed in some fundamental way from the pretense maintained by the participants in the SCA or Coventry? Be advised that some of the attendees of the Minneapolis magic convention were in fact associated with the SCA: Bonewits, who spent the late 1960s in Berkeley pursuing his degree, had formed an Order of Wizard Lore within the local SCA already. Was his wizardry there real, or only as real as the blows struck by knights in SCA battles? Fundamentally, when the insurance claim adjusters, pharmacists or Government surveyors at the Third Annual Gnostic Aquarian Festival donned a costume and started speaking haltingly in personae like that of the deceased Heinrich, friend to the composer Bach, were they doing something different from what Paul Stanbery did when he assumed the persona of the Emperor Paulus Edwardum III at the Coventry meetings? If so, where exactly does that difference lie?

We cannot hope to resolve such philosophical quandaries in these pages. We must however appreciate that the confusion about these questions played a pivotal role in the popularization of *Dungeons & Dragons*. To the media and to concerned parents, the obsessive interest that *Dungeons & Dragons* stimulated in its fans resembled a belief in an alternate reality, what early spectator Mike Wood identified as a secondary-universe feeling about it. Players naturally labored to make their experience of the game world more real, to make it something more than just a conversation of words could a

world created by a game of *Dungeons & Dragons* have an existence of its own, independent of any game session, as a place that players visited periodically? This Epilogue explores the ways that, when the game left the table top, it became an object of greater mass-market attention.

The more that players strove to make these worlds real, however, the more susceptible they became to the claim that they had lost touch with reality. Of course, the deductions of outside observers did not necessarily correspond to the experiences of the players themselves, almost all of whom assuredly felt comfortable distinguishing games from reality. That much said, few could deny that intense gaming triggered the powerful sense of immersion frequently discussed in the preceding chapters. To what degree, if any, does the property of immersion trigger in players a confusion between reality and the simulated world of games?

¹ A trend best exemplified by Bruce Pelz in order to induce a belief in the reality of Coventry, the so-

POPULAR MAGIC

The conjecture that certain impressionable minds, when presented with a compelling fantasy, will lose the ability to distinguish the real from the imaginary has existed in perpetuity. It found perhaps its most enduring expression in Cervantes, whose Don Quixote succumbed to a surfeit of chivalric novels and began roaming the countryside fancying windmills to be giants. The sixteenth-century works that the deluded Don so admired, such as *Amadis of Gaul* and *Orlando Furioso*, might qualify as the sword-and-sorcery yarns of their day, replete with heroes, blades, monsters and magic. Stories, as Chapter Two argued, must have been among humanity's earliest way of simulating the impossible, involving creatures, places and events that no sane person could accept as real. Could exposure to these books really trick the mind of a Don Quixote into superimposing a fantastic world onto the real one? Critics have imputed to various works of art throughout the centuries the power to inspire acts of violence or depravity;; in the mid-twentieth century, these charges were most often levied at popular music, though comic books and films shared in the blame for some societal ills. As the cultural divide between the Baby Boomers and their parents grew, the elder generation sought any and all potential explanations for the puzzling behavior of wayward youths, and in the cultural products favored by the young they found plenty to demonize. Ironically, the very condemnation of

these works guaranteed their popularity with the rebellious children of the 1960s.

In retrospect, it was inevitable that this pattern would play out for *Dungeons & Dragons*. When a precocious sixteen-year-old college student and computer science prodigy named James Dallas Egbert III went missing from Michigan State University on August 15, 1979, the quest to discover his whereabouts became inextricably bound up with the question of what influence precipitated his disappearance. His distraught parents engaged a Texan private detective agency helmed by William Dear to recover their son, and as the search stretched from days into weeks, Dear's team hunted down any possible lead that might shed light on Egbert's circumstances. In the course of their investigation, they uncovered that Egbert had played *Dungeons & Dragons* at the university, a pastime exotic enough in Dear's eyes that it became a major factor in their analysis. He later chronicled the course of this investigation in his tell-all *The Dungeon Master* (1984).

The city of East Lansing, home to MSU, was also in the late 1970s home to a thriving *Dungeons & Dragons* community. Dear reckons that, incredibly, there were more than one hundred dungeons in the East Lansing area alone when Dallas disappeared.² Dear and his associates thus had no trouble acquiring the rulebooks, including the recently-released *Dungeon Masters Guide* (1979), which Dear scoured for any insights into Egbert behavior. He even engaged a local dungeon master at the princely wage of sixty dollars to run a session for him, in order to better understand the game. As he honed in on Egbert gaming group, however, he began to hear rumors that students played an unusual version of *Dungeons & Dragons* within the steam tunnels beneath the college. One tipster confided, If you're familiar with the game, you'll know that the tunnels are as close to the real thing as you can get. From that point forward, Dear hinged much of his investigation on the possibility that Egbert remained in those tunnels, perhaps hiding there as a runaway, or gravely injured during a game, or deluded into believing that he really was a Magic-user exploring the dungeons. As Dear portentously puts it, Dallas might actually have begun to live the game, not just to play it, shattering the fragile barrier between fantasy and reality.³

² Dear, *Dungeon Master*, 38.

The tall tales circulating about these steam tunnel games, ostensibly an early form of live-action role-playing, sound pretty implausible today. A college senior who confessed to participating in the same underworld

adventures as Egbert related that prior to a game session: The DM would hide treasures, which all of us had chipped in to buy, and the person who found them could keep them. And there'd be niches you could reach into. You might come up with a handful of decaying calf's liver, or soggy spaghetti representing an orc's brain, or something equally unappetizing.⁴ The players wore costumes of the characters they were portraying and explored these tunnels as they would any dungeon. Presumably, the dungeon master intervened when monsters might be encountered to resolve the combat in some fashion, though none of Dear's confidants offered details of the system. Dear heard rumors that similar tunnel-based games took place at Caltech, at Southern Methodist University and at the University of Iowa. He furthermore entertained outlandish stories of dungeon masters exerting authority far outside the bounds of the game;; for example, that: If the dungeon master believes that a particular character is weak, he can send that character off on his own. Not just in the game, not just in his head. He can send him on a *real* mission. You have to prove you're worthy to play with us, the DM might say. You have to show your mettle. I have a mission that you must complete. Usually the mission is something like spending a night in a haunted house, but it's not hard to imagine that it could be much more demanding.⁵

With his head full of these notions, Dear became increasingly fixated on the steam tunnels. Officials at Michigan State University, however, withheld their permission for Dear to conduct a search. In order to exert pressure on them, Dear regularly spoke to the press about the potential connection between Egbert disappearance, the game of *Dungeons & Dragons* and the steam tunnels. By the first of September, with the boy missing for more than two weeks, media interest had grown into a frenzy. Dear expertly kept the story in the public eye day after day, as each new person that recognized Egbert face and learned his story made it that much more difficult for his fate to remain unknown. The intransigence of the college, and uncertainty about the possible outcome of any search of the tunnels, only fueled media furor. Within a week, reports on Egbert had appeared in virtually every major American media outlet, as well as many international sources. For most reporters, and no doubt readers alike, the story of James Dallas Egbert served as their first impression of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

The piece in the *New York Times* of September 7, 1979, for example, speculates that Egbert may have been lost in the tunnels while playing an

elaborate version of a bizarre intellectual game called *Dungeons & Dragons*. The *Times* judged this bizarre intellectual game to be an apparent takeoff on the popular J.R.R. Tolkien trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* in which each player portrays a character and the object is for the players to find a way out of an imaginary labyrinth to collect great treasures. As for the underworld component, the *Times* repeated the rumor that students at Michigan State University and elsewhere reportedly have greatly elaborated on the game, donning medieval costumes and using outdoor settings to stage the content.⁶ The *San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner* for Sunday, September 9, featured an article sensationalized titled, Fantasy cult angle probed in search for computer whiz. By this point, Dear and his associates had finally scoured the tunnels without turning up Egbert, which this article termed a futile search of tunnels beneath the Michigan State University campus where fantasy lovers acted out roles in a bizarre game. The words bizarre and cult recur quite often in these pieces: the *Examiner* furthermore mentions that Kenosha, Wis.,

the youth may have attended a convention of the game-playing cult in ³ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 236.

a reference to **GenCon XII**, which commenced at the University of Wisconsin at Parkside on the day after Egbert went missing.

Naturally, the police contacted TSR Hobbies in connection with Egbert disappearance, in part to see if Egbert had registered to attend GenCon. Tim Kask wrote an editorial about Egbert disappearance on September 11 (which did not appear until the *Dragon* #30) in which he relates of Egbert, I have met him at past conventions, and he used to subscribe to *TD*, though for the summer of 1979 convention registration doesn't show him registered anywhere. Authorities also forwarded to TSR a few potential clues, including a bulletin board in which a number of thumbtacks had been stuck in a pattern suggesting a map or some other visual representation though here again, TSR brightest drew a blank. Kask cannot comment on the Egbert situation without noting that some of the reporting has been every bit as bizarre as the circumstances surrounding the whole affair. The lurid headlines touting the case peremptorily convicted *Dungeons & Dragons* of an as-yet speculative crime: A few choice samples that we have seen here, and only the gods know how many we haven't seen, include Victim of

Game? , Missing youth could be on adventure game , Is Missing Student Intellectual fantasy results in bizarre disappearance , Student May Have Lost His Life to Intellectual Fantasy Game , Student feared dead in dungeon , and more of the like. [DR:#30]

Kask stresses that the most important consideration here is that all of the *supposed* link to this unfortunate incident was somehow *assumed* to exist, when in truth no such link has been proven.

game, including He also singles out some of Dear s more outlandish assertions about the in some instances when a person plays the game you actually leave your body and go out of your mind. Nonetheless, as the editor of a rapidly-growing periodical, Kask begins with the grudging concession that *Dungeons & Dragons* is getting the publicity that we used to just dream about, back when we were freezing in Gary s basement in the beginning. systems for fantastic medieval adventures acted out in person, like Wendell L. Hill *Live Ring Game* (1973). Hill declares that the *Live Ring Game*⁶ It seems likely that many of these reports simply conflate the play of *Dungeons & Dragons* with the activities of the Society for Creative Anachronism. There were by this time however already other *Rules for the rushing excitement a*

-bearer must evade a large team of the forces of Mordor in order to reach the Crack of Doom. Combat is resolved as a cross between a game of tag and *Little Wars*: when someone is tagged, the total numbers of opposing forces are computed and the numerically-superior side wins, with some circumstantial modifiers. Bafflingly, the Ring cannot make its bearer invisible or otherwise assist in evading enemy forces. This is probably not an appropriate game for steam tunnels, however.

Three days after Kask wrote that editorial, William Dear retrieved James Dallas Egbert from a hiding place in Morgan City, Louisiana. In all likelihood, the media blitz surrounding the boy s disappearance contributed to Egbert decision to call Dear and ask to return home. Egbert had run away, due to pressures in his life unrelated to role-playing;; although Dear had the delicacy to keep rumors about Egbert drug use and sexuality out of the papers, his account *The Dungeon Master* clearly indicates that those areas of his investigation came closest to exposing the accomplices who helped Egbert disappear. An Associated Press blurb on September 14 confirmed that the teen-ager s disappearance was not related to the game *Dungeons & Dragons*. Unsurprisingly, however, these errata news bulletins enjoyed far

less limelight than talk of bizarre cults seducing the minds of impressionable college students. In the following issue of the *Dragon*, Kask wonders that a story that generated such publicity while he was missing should die so suddenly and quietly when he was found. [DR:#31]

The story of Egbert vanished from the newspapers but the culpability of *Dungeons & Dragons* was not simultaneously effaced from the popular imagination. The myth of the game that drove college kids insane was simply more powerful than the dull reality that so much hype and furor derived from a private investigator's misguided hunch. That story decoupled itself from James Dallas Egbert and floated in the cultural imagination, ready to attach to other protagonists. Most famously, the author Rona Jaffe commandeered it for her novel *Mazes and Monsters* (1981), which situated the myth in 1980, at a fictional Grant University in Pennsylvania, where a student disappears in a series of nearby caverns while playing the eponymous game.⁷ The controversy generated by the myth turned *Dungeons & Dragons* into a household name overnight. Gygax himself weighed in on the media blitz in the *Dragon* #35: All hell broke loose at our offices a veritable barrage of phone calls and personal calls from reporters from newspapers, radio stations, TV and magazines. When the chap turned up relatively safe and sound, the stories on *D&D* didn't stop;; they just no longer mentioned him. Hectic, but great. It did things for sales you wouldn't believe. What did it do for sales, exactly? Gygax proves unusually explicit about that: The course of TSR Hobbies development has been rather like a *D&D* campaign. When we finished our first fiscal year back in 1975, we were pretty much a low-level-character sort of company, with gross sales of only about \$50,000. We had excellent experience the next year, with a \$300,000 figure, and in 1977 we doubled that to \$600,000. TSR didn't quite double again in fiscal 1978, ending the year at a gross of near \$1,000,000, but in 79 we did a bit better, finishing at a gross of well over \$2,000,000.⁸

From the way 1980 is shaping up, there is no reason to doubt that we'll at least double in size once again. It is possible that we'll be the largest hobby game company and ready to start toward the really high-level game producers such as Milton Bradley and Parker Brothers by 1982. (To those who doubt, think about the relative size of TSR and Avalon Hill, for example, in 1975 . . .) [DR:#35]

⁷ Today, this story is best remembered for its made-for-television film adaptation starring a young and hapless Tom Hanks as the James Dallas

Egbert stand-in.

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Gygax intuition served him well in this matter. TSR sales would continue to grow in a symbiotic relationship with the controversy surrounding *Dungeons & Dragons*. The myth of the steam tunnels conferred to *Dungeons & Dragons* a very unlikely property, one that such a cerebral pastime could never have acquired through any other means: rebellious cachet. When the quiet religious community of Heber City, Utah, banned the game as a children's activity in April 1980, it marked the first salvo in a protracted war, one waged throughout the 1980s, between religious fundamentalists and *Dungeons & Dragons*. Despite the best intentions of these critics, however, nothing excited interest in the game among youths quite so much as the censure of their elders. In that feedback loop, sales quickly rose to stratospheric heights in the middle of the decade. By 1981, TSR posted sales of \$16.5 million dollars, with a profit of \$4.25 million;; the majority shareholders, Gygax and the Blume family, found themselves not merely comfortable, but wealthy.

This success came at a cost, however, as serious real-world tragedies became linked to the myth that *Dungeons & Dragons* blurred the distinction between fantasy and reality. When sixteen-year-old Irving L. Pulling II committed suicide on June 9, 1982, his distraught mother Patricia turned the remnants of her son's life upside down in search of an explanation. She found among his possessions copies of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* and *Monster Manual*, and became convinced that the game was responsible for her son's death. In 1983, she founded an organization called Bothered About *Dungeons & Dragons* (BADD), through which she campaigned tirelessly against the game, upholding the belief that it literally inspired Satanism in children. Tragically, her efforts often seemed to exonerate very serious crimes on the grounds that their perpetrators acted under the influence of *Dungeons & Dragons*; her book *The Devil's Web: Who is Stalking Your Children for Satan* contains a long list of murders, rapes and suicides which she argues to be the fault of cultural influences (including games) rather than their perpetrators. It could not have been difficult to find convicted felons eager to explain away their crimes with such a convenient excuse. Nor was she alone in this conviction she quotes a Dr. Thomas Radecki, at the time

chairman of a National Coalition on Television Violence, as advancing the rather extraordinary claim that

there is no doubt in my mind that the game *Dungeons & Dragons* is causing young men to kill themselves and others.

The glaring misapprehension in these confident words is that a player of any roleplaying game can give up their identity to a character. As the ordeal of the past-life regressor who struggled to be Bach's friend Heinrich indicates, however, there are limits to what we can role-play. A player can no more spontaneously speak M.A.R. Barker's imaginary Tsolyáni language for the sake of the game than Heinrich can spout German for the sake of regressing to more convincing past lives;; while a sprinkling of evocative words can provide just enough conceptual furniture to trigger an immersive response, no player could possess the language skills of a character in Tékumel. *Dungeons & Dragons*, as originally written, encourages careful cartography on the part of players yes, players, not characters. If the player simply asked the dungeon master to provide a dungeon map of the quality that such a brilliant and dexterous character might produce, the dungeon master would surely scoff. Is this such an unreasonable request, though? Or facing a room of adversaries, what prevents a player from responding to a dungeon master's question, What do you do? with the rejoinder, Well, I'm a tenth-level Fighting-man, what would I do in this situation? In a perfect simulation of a character's capability, either of those requests to the dungeon master would be reasonable. In *Dungeons & Dragons*, however, these decisions are relegated to the skill of players, and insofar as the game requires skills of players it necessarily departs from being an ideal simulation of fictional characters. Your character does nothing that you cannot conceive your character should do (magical influences aside). The very principle that *anything can be attempted* in *Dungeons & Dragons* entails that players must exercise their own free will through their characters players direct the actions of characters, not the other way around. *Dungeons & Dragons* no more caused the millions of people who played it to kill one another than reading *Amadis of Gaul* caused people to don armor and tilt at windmills. Don Quixote was just a story that someone made up exactly like the story of the young man playing *Dungeons & Dragons* who lost the ability to tell fantasy from reality in the steam tunnels of a college.

When senseless tragedies and mental illnesses disrupt our lives, it is only human to search for a satisfactory explanation. Often, it is only when someone has already begun tilting at windmills that the retrospective search

for the cause of this behavior begins. Patricia Pulling did not paint *Dungeons & Dragons* as the root of all evil;; her book *The Devil's Web* heaps equal scorn on heavy metal music, violent films and other supposed manifestations of her core concern: Satanism. *Dungeons & Dragons* may well have exposed itself to especial scrutiny from religious fundamentalists, however, precisely because it deals explicitly with magic, monsters and demons. Those who believe that demons are literally real could only find it alarming that children would play at a game where characters summon or collaborate with demons. If it cared at all for its reputation in those fundamentalist circles, TSR did itself no favors by releasing *Deities & Demigods* (1980), the long-anticipated revision to *Gods, Demi-gods & Heroes*. In addition to the pantheons invented by Moorcock, Lovecraft and Leiber, the book incorporates a smorgasbord of historical pagan traditions of the real world, all of which could only infuriate the devout. Worse still, role-playing games attracted many adherents who studied magical traditions and sought to make the magic of games more closely resemble that of genuine magical texts. P.E.I. Bonewits, whose *Real Magic* presumably attested to a genuine belief in the occult, appeared on the DunDraCon II schedule early How D&D Magic . Ultimately, his attentions resulted in a book published by the Chaosium entitled *Authentic Thaumaturgy* (1978) which explains for the benefit of roleplayers the Laws of Magic, the types of magicians and magical entities and so on in terms suitable for a role-playing game.⁹ One almost wonders if the role-playing community deliberately provoked the ire of religious fundamentalists by simulating practices so close to real-world occultism. Sales did not suffer, however, as the blurred boundaries of fantasy and reality persisted.

If TSR did court this controversy intentionally, they were not alone in tapping the commercial potential of occultism. Early in *Real Magic*, Bonewits casually asserted almost everyone these days is interested in the occult. The accuracy of this assessment, especially in the late 1960s and early 1970s, can hardly be overstated. While Avalon Hill may not have jumped at the opportunity to publish *Dungeons & Dragons*, their reluctance could not have rested on any concern about occult content. In 1974, Avalon Hill published two titles that were not board games as such, but instead kits for performing ritual magic: *Black Magic* and *Witchcraft*. The text on the back of the *Black Magic* box reads, You have in your possession a kit that allows you to simulate a magic circle accurately with all the specifics

⁹ A review from Steve Marsh (Jul 1978) lauds *Authentic Thaumaturgy* is [AW:v5n12]

needed and you have further a ritual made of authentic traditional passages from the textbooks of magic. Inside, a board covered with magic circles serves as a vehicle for these experiments. Of course, the consequences of performing the ritual are dependent upon the psychic awareness level and skill of the performer, so Avalon Hill does not guarantee that anyone purchasing their product would perform magic as such but just in case, the ritual has been modified to assure beneficent spirits. Surely they did not hope to market this to the sober wargamers at GenCon or Origins more likely, they intended it for the crowd at the Third Annual Gnostic Aquarian Festival, and the millions of others who dabbled in American popular occultism.

Parker Brothers had proven the addressability of this mass market in 1966, when they acquired at a cost of nearly a million dollars a seventy-year-old occult kit known as the *Ouija* board, a divinatory apparatus that supposedly allowed spiritual influences to guide its users to spell out words and phrases. With the strength of Parker Brothers advertising behind it, *Ouija* outsold even *Monopoly* in 1967 with a total of 2.3 million units purchased. Philip Orbans, in his corporate history *The Game Makers*, attributes the monumental success of *Ouija* to the mood of the country, the Vietnam Staid, traditional Parker Brothers began at a moment of great national uncertainty, reminding especially the poor situation of

to mystical could provide answers.¹⁰ Apparently, this vogue for *Ouija* repeated previous booms that accompanied the Great Depression and the First World War.¹¹ Nor was *Ouija* the only toy that acted as an oracle;; the famous Magic 8-Ball also fielded inquiries, and intriguingly, it also introduced the icosahedron to a generation of children, albeit through a murky blue fluid.¹² Occult-themed products such as these contributed significantly to the bottom lines of major toy and game manufacturers of the time.

Does anyone who shakes a Magic 8-Ball, muses at a fortune cookie or consults their daily horoscope in any American newspaper confuse fantasy with reality? Surely a credulous consumer might use these popular forms of divination to make decisions, as when faced with a choice, one might flip a coin to decide on a course of action. Orbans relates that William Fuld, the

nineteenth-century businessman who popularized the Ouija board, had no personal attraction to the mystical nature of the board, save the one time he had asked if he should build the factory to make the [Ouija] board, an idea which the spirits guiding his hands apparently favored.¹³ Such a convenient story must be apocryphal, but weightier decisions in history have rested on auguries avidly believed by their interpreters. Human nature imagines the hand of providence, or at least some hidden order, in those phenomena it can neither predict nor control. Perhaps, as Orbans suggests, the appetite for these superstitions increases in times of great uncertainty. In the ordinary course of events, however, these casual traces of occultism in society constitute little more than a form of entertainment given enough scrutiny, one is just as likely to find some reflection of the day's events in the comics pages of a newspaper as in the horoscopes.

¹⁰ Orbans, *Game Makers*, 145.

¹¹ This trend towards occultism in American popular games goes back well into the nineteenth century;; see Hofer, *The Games We Played*, for numerous examples of commercial board games with fortune *Chiromagica* from the 1870s.

¹² The Magic 8-Ball contains a twenty-sided polyhedron which effectively rolls upon shaking the ball. Each of the twenty possible answers appears on one face of the polyhedron. The odds heavily favor a positive answer, which with repeated use undoubtedly trained children to phrase their questions in a way that produced the desired response.

¹³ Orbans, *Game Makers*, 146.

It seems unlikely that someone heeding the vague predictions issued by fortune cookies or the Magic 8-ball really confuses fantasy with reality but what of grandiose boasts about controlling the weather? After all, a cleverly-worded prophecy can resist any attempt at falsification, but not so much a bold claim that rain will commence in an hour's time. Even weather control, however, seems mundane when compared to shooting lightning from the tip of your finger and slaying rows of enemies, as a Magic-user might in the game of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Here we enter into the realm of powers that no one could plausibly believe a person might possess. To all appearances, the sword-and-sorcery setting of *Dungeons & Dragons* would thus be less susceptible to confusion with reality than divinatory toys like Ouija boards. So what did we mean, exactly, in Chapter Two, when we discussed the way that *Dungeons & Dragons* took the visitation theme further than the passive

experience of the fantasy readership and into a more immersive and interactive experience?

Tim Kask explores the question in the *Dragon* #30 as he reflects on the rumors about Egbert and the steam tunnels: TSR has never ever suggested that *D&D* was meant to be acted out. How could it be, when half of what makes it so much fun magic cannot be simulated?¹⁴ Exploring tunnels could only make *Dungeons & Dragons* feel more real up to a point. The presence of monsters and spectacular magical powers problematizes the instantiation of any fantasy games in human experience;; if anything, these elements segregate the real from the fantastic, confining the supernatural to descriptions in words rather than something that we might remember as actual. Traditionally, the specific fantastic environment in which a game of *Dungeons & Dragons* transpires is shared between only a handful of participants the referee and the players and it lives only in the ephemeral words that they exchange, in the dialog that conveys the state of the world. Immersion arises from the constant need to choose on behalf of a character, from reacting spontaneously to the situation of the world as it evolves, rather than from any visual cues. Wargames always had a similar reactive component, and as George Phillips pointed out, it can induce a Rommel syndrome in players. What set *Dungeons & Dragons* apart from these precedents is the vastly greater freedom of agency, the shift from simulating wars to simulating people;; having to direct the actions of a fictional person necessarily creates a feeling of identification between the player and the character.

The difficulty of marshaling a referee and a group of players for game sessions, however, inspired a number of new role-playing systems that traded off some of that freedom of agency for much greater playability and convenience. These systems approximated freedom of agency with technology of varying degrees of sophistication, replacing the ephemeral interpersonal dialog of *Dungeons & Dragons* with mass media

¹⁴ When Dear interviewed Egbert at the end of his ordeal, Egbert asserted of *Dungeons & Dragons*, was

a term frequently chosen by role-players carries a connotation that the experience of *Dungeons & Dragons* somehow transpires at a remove f misleading term for the process of role-playing: we are all inescapably real, and the experience of playing *Dungeons & Dragons* is as real as any experience, as real as the experience of watching a film or driving a car.

Sadly, James Dallas Egbert committed suicide within a year of that interview;; he could not escape the reality of his problems in *Dungeons & Dragons* or any other fantasy.

eventually, these become worlds one could see and hear, not just worlds evoked by words. In the process, these games created role-playing experiences that were repeatable, could involve thousands or millions of participants, and that ultimately offered access to persistent worlds, worlds where magic could be simulated, worlds whose ties to reality have steadily increased ever since.

PROGRAMMABLE DUNGEONS

The responsibility for maintaining a *Dungeons & Dragons* world a convincing, consistent and intriguing fantasy world falls squarely on the shoulders of the dungeon master. Leaving aside preparatory efforts like the invention of the scenario, what Reiswitz would have called establishing the general idea for a session or campaign, the need for a dungeon master during play rests on three core functions: first, through dialog with the players, the dungeon master interprets the actions of characters and reports the known state of the world;; second, the dungeon master maintains secret information about the world that characters must explore;; and third, the dungeon master executes the system, performing or overseeing all dice checks necessary to decide events in the game. These responsibilities, when properly discharged, allow players to participate in a game with minimal understanding of the system or scenario they merely describe to the dungeon master what their characters attempt to do in the world, and the dungeon master filters these requests through the system and scenario to arrive at a result and a response. This Reiswitzian reliance on the authority on the referee must have contributed to the rapid spread of *Dungeons & Dragons*, as new players had little barrier to entry aside from a small number of decisions during character creation.

The complexity of the system, however, often created a perceptible sluggishness in the tempo of play. Delays manifested primarily in the mode of combat, where dungeon masters juggled enormous numbers of variables in deciding rolls so many that in practice, the execution of combats frequently deviated from the rules through carelessness or a conscious effort to simplify the process. The cover of *Alarums & Excursions* #3 (drawn by Jack Harness) shows a harried woman reciting a baffling litany that well illustrates the difficulty of overseeing a single die roll: Zonkwitz charges in there swinging, and he rolls **gulp!** an eight. These guys are in leather

only, so he needs a twelve excuse me, since Zonkwitz is a 4th Level Fighter he'll connect with a ten. Oh, you say the wizards he is facing have enchanted the leather with a Protection from Good spell, so it is +1? Then he needs eleven to hit. Well, he is Plus One with Sword or Flail and has a +1 sword, and a Bless is on the party but he didn't make his saving throw against the Curse DARN that Anti-Vicar! so he's back to normal wait has the effect of those Non-Standard Potions worn off, and are we using the *Greyhawk* tables? If so [A&E:#3]

With so many modifiers to juggle, mistakes in combat resolution are inevitable or resolving those modifiers with the care necessary to eliminate errors would reduce combats to excruciatingly dull ordeals. Doldrums afflicted not only the mode of combat in *Dungeons & Dragons*, but also the mode of exploration. The absence of a board, and the need for players to act as amateur cartographers mapping as they went along, gave rise to its own tediousness and frustration. June Moffatt, an early adopter, lamented in *APA-L* #510 (February 20, 1975) that, My first game of *Dungeons & Dragons* was interesting but dreadfully slow. Couldn't the Dungeon plan be pre-drawn for the players perhaps covered by other pieces of board/tile/paper/whatever which could be removed as the party progresses? Moffat proposes to modify the management of secret information: rather than requiring players to infer the map while they went along, instead the dungeon master could construct the player's map prior to the game and reveal it selectively as the party explored. Of course, aside from the terrain, there are also the inhabitants of the dungeon to consider: The creatively gifted among us might construct small markers so that the contents of a room once invaded could be shown such as the first room we entered, which proved to contain three vampires, and four after we left. Though constructing 30 berserkers might be a bit much just a small card saying 30 Berserkers would suffice.

In the following week's issue of *APA-L*, Lee Gold replied to the effect that the map would also have to be very carefully unveiled to reveal only things within viewing range. My own dream is getting a terminal with optical display and programming a Dungeon and rules for visibility into the computer. Here, as early as February 1975, Lee Gold proposed deferring some of the functions of the dungeon master to a computer, starting with the management of secrecy.¹⁵ At that time, the commercial video game industry had not yet established its firm grip on American culture;; however, Gold's husband Barry programmed computers for a living, and as we will see in the

next section, he knew the non-commercial hobby game culture that was emerging on corporate, governmental and academic mainframes around the country.

Lee's proposal captured the imaginations of many respondents in *APA-L* #512. Tom Digby, for example, suggested the use of magnetic storage on cards, much like the prepaid cards circulated by the Bay Area Rapid Transit system at the time, to hold character data between game sessions: A Persona machine where you put your money in, push a few buttons to indicate preferences in the things that are player's choice, and get something like a BART ticket containing a computer-generated character. You then insert this into the actual Dungeon machine for descents.... There would be a computerized viewscreen for maps and visuals, and any treasure etc. would be recorded on your ticket magnetically (like on a BART ticket). A few years off yet, but give it time. [APA-L:#512]

Another Bay Area resident, Matthew Tepper, concurs that a CRT-Dungeon game sounds fascinating;; I suppose if one had funds enough to play with, the dragons could be shown meandering about (viz. various CRT games evident in pinball parlors). At the time, the video game arcade culture that would flourish in the 1980s still piggybacked onto the pinball phenomenon of the 1950s and 1960s;; the primitive cathode ray tube games in question were forerunners to later mainstream arcade games. Perhaps Tepper had firsthand knowledge of an early game like the famous table-tennis simulation *Pong* (1972); perhaps he had played *Computer Space* (1971), which adapted the first computer video game, *Spacewar!* (1962), from its hobbyist origins on the DEC PDP-1 mainframe system. A valuable account of that early two-player space dogfight game appears in Don Miller's NFFF zine *Gamesman* #4, in a letter dated December 6, 1966, from John W. Andrews.¹⁶ Andrews had seen the game at Holloman Air Force Base, where the computer operators studied the game with intense curiosity: they had no idea who had written it, and possessed no source code, but: people at the installation... play the game with one another when the machine is not processing important data for Uncle Sam. Some of them have become quite proficient. Andrews inquired about the origins of *Spacewar!* in *Gamesman* because he suspected S-F fans are particularly likely to know from whom, and where to acquire the source code in question. Since so many early hobby video games focused on the science fiction setting, Andrews undoubtedly surmised correctly that science-fiction fandom would contain an unusual

concentration of experts on video games, even back in 1966, when a game like *Spacewar!* was something neither I nor very many others are ever going to play, as it is played on a computer while it is actually running. To him, the very notion of having interactive access to a mainframe as it is actually running for such a frivolous purpose was preposterous;; the real-time resources of a PDP-1 in 1966 were not easy to come by. Most users queued their programs on mainframe computers hours or days in advance, only to have them executed in the dead of night, printing out results that programmers would collect afterward.

¹⁵ *Dungeons & Dragons* in the *Courier* Play in person is usually impossible, since the referee can only show the adventurer the terrain he is crossing at that instant, plus whatev

Apparently, use of a computer in this fashion did not occur to Hendrick.

¹⁶ -time display game for the PDP-1;; 2

Andrews's plea for information about *Spacewar!* elicited a response in the March 1968 issue of *Gamesletter* from one Dave Lebling, an MIT student who co-chaired the *Diplomacy* Division of the National Fantasy Fan Federation's Games Bureau and published the *Diplomacy* zine *Glockorla*. Lebling corroborated the difficulty of gaming with mainframes: *Spacewar!* was, as far as I can tell, invented here at MIT. It is now on the restricted list of routines because about two years ago some people tied up a PDP-1 with it for three days running, by signing out time sharing and just living in the computer center. You have to be a super-big-wig to be able to use it now, much less get a copy of the program itself. After all, computer time costs \$300 per computer/hour. [GL:#12]

Science-fiction fans had no monopoly on computer gaming, however. Wargamers can boast an earlier claim, given the prevalence of electronic battle simulators in the 1950s, as Section 3.1.7 mentioned, though these expensive toys served as military training rather than as a form of entertainment. Computer wargaming systems paced the growing sophistication of mainframes and later minicomputers. Andrew Wilson book *The Bomb and the Computer* (1969) primarily explores computer simulations of nuclear exchanges in the 1960s, but also covers games such as the Air Force Weapons Effectiveness Testing system which simulates combat involving anything from two to twenty-six units aircraft, antiaircraft weapons or ground units in which pilots flew actual planes but all discharges of weapons were left to computers to calculate perhaps a military analog to

the live players. Game is fed into core by usual means, on paper tape. Program sets up display of standard ger optional;; may be omitted for inexperienced players);; and 2 conventionalized blips symmetrically placed with respect to the Sun, on a 45-degree radius vector,

-ship ship, though the enemy may also meet their doom by colliding with the Sun. Each of the two p

hyperspace jumps around the board. The steering of the ship and the raster graphics may remind *Asteroids* (1979), and the resemblance is not coincidental the engineers who adapted *Spacewar!* to *Computer Space*, Nolan Bushnell and Ted Dabney, soon thereafter founded Atari.

action antics of the SCA. A wall of classified secrets and excessive budgets, however, kept these efforts out of the view of most hobby wargamers in the 1960s, at least for a time. In early 1970, George Phillips prophesized in *Panzerfaust* that computers and communications networks would revolutionize wargames especially multiplayer ones within the next 10 15 years. [PZF:v4n2]

While individual hobbyists could not afford their own computers in the early 1970s, one hobbyist built a business on multi-commander play-by-mail games administered by a minicomputer: Rick Loomis of Flying Buffalo. His *Nuclear Destruction* (1970), a simulation of international nuclear stockpiling, diplomacy and conflict, inspired many other for-profit postal wargames (typically costing a fee of around twenty-five cents per turn);; a critical selling point, as an advertisement in the January 1974 *American Wargamer* touted, was that these games are moderated by a fair and impartial Raytheon 704 computer. Aside from primitive games like *Pong*, this was as close as a gamer could come to playing on a computer in the early 1970s. By 1975, however, students at almost all technical universities could access mainframes via terminals with graphical capabilities;; these systems ostensibly served an educational purpose, though inevitably students found ways to repurpose them for extracurricular activities. A remarkable account of a game very much like Lee Gold's idea for computerizing *Dungeons & Dragons* appears in John Boardman occasional zine *Empire* #21, in a letter written August 23, 1975, by Philip M. Cohen. Cohen had witnessed on the local PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations) system at Cornell University a novel diversion, which he introduces with the following teaser: You might be interested in knowing that *D&D* can now be played by computer.

Cohen first describes the ordinary operation of the PLATO system. You sit before a plasma panel (which plots printing and pictures with a 500x500 array of LED s) and a keyboard, type in the lesson you want, and the central computer in Urbana, Illinois, loads the lesson and teaches you. name for a program, which are: weekends). There are standard games like chess, checkers, backgammon, football as well as airfight (simulates flying a plane) and spasim (3D interplanetary war game), and, as of last week, *D&D*.¹⁷

The basic idea is that you go into a dungeon, fight monsters and find treasures, and come out again. Each time you come out, you gain experience points based on the strength of opponents you killed and the value of treasure you found;; there is a straight conversion of

There are however certain lessons, here just a generic playable only at low-usage times (after 2300EST, and on ¹⁷ Anyone could author PLATO routines on the PLATO system through a language called TUTOR, though at the time few were willing to take credit for this misuse of educational facilities, which has led to heated disputes about authorship and priority of these games today. Folklore in the PLATO community holds that several early *Dungeons & Dragons* games were created on the PLATO system but promptly deleted by system administrators, so it is unclear, when Cohen says that this lesson PLATO system, or merely one of the subsequent instances that had not yet been deleted. Given that Cohen seems thoroughly conversant with the diversionary activities available on PLATO, however, surely a new game could not have escaped his attention for long. He does note that the program is not called *Dungeons & Dragons*, but perhaps in the interests of concealing it from any system administrators who happened to read *Empire*

author is not indicated in the lesson, though calls for him to show himself have been appearing in a *Dungeons & Desktops* , for more speculation about the authorship and sequencing of dungeon adventures on PLATO.

1 gold piece = 1 experience point. The object is to accumulate 20,000 experience points and retire.

The playing area is a 30x30 dungeon. However, I only found this out after about 10 hours of exploring;; all you ever get to see on the screen is that part of the room/corridor that is 1 orthogonal step away from you.

This description, perhaps the earliest of a computer-based role-playing game, contains the germ of decades of subsequent elaboration. Cohen relates that the game employs a graphical interface, though one that simulates the

limited visibility of a dungeoneer if anything, one erring on the side of obscuring the world, given the number of hours it took him to learn the contours of that small underworld. We can infer from 1 orthogonal step that the graphics rendered a top-down overhead visualization of the dungeon, like a map viewed from above, on which icons representing the character and various adversaries moved. This simulation began to restore the visual cues of immersion that *Dungeons & Dragons* lost when it abandoned the miniature battlefield of *Chainmail*: they show a world, primitively rendered in 1975 no doubt, but the imagination of the player can imbue even the crudest environment with wonder. One need not crawl through dank and dangerous steam tunnels to experience immersion in a dungeon environment when one can do so from the comfort of one's university computer center.

Like the Persona machine envisioned by Digby above, the PLATO game randomly generated character abilities though Cohen does not mention Wisdom or Charisma, so they may not have figured here. A player could reject a weak character and roll again. Surprisingly, the game dispensed with the concept of class: You start out with 0 experience points and 1 magical spell per trip. As you gain experience, you get more hits and spells, and more effectiveness in fighting. Each character thus had access to both swords and sorcery, though the game supported only sixteen total spells half clerical including familiar favorites like Sleep, Magic Missile (very recently published in *Greyhawk*), Protection From Evil and Light. Cohen complains that six of the spells are not yet operational as the lesson is incomplete. Cohen also grumbles that the thirty-six varieties of monster are not very differentiated, though they fall into various categories, such as undead, mythical monster and giant animal which determine their susceptibility to certain magic spells. As an example of experience awards, Cohen relates that the most a beginning warrior can expect to get for combat is 200 experience points (by killing a level 4 man who has been put to sleep), but also submits that treasures exist of up to 6,000 gold pieces, which would amount to roughly a third of the total experience required to win the game.

Despite the flawed and incomplete implementation of the game, Cohen clearly adores it, and he was not alone: An indication of its popularity can be found from the fact that you can only accumulate experience points by getting on a 15-name roster (otherwise it all evaporates when you come out and you have to build another hero). This roster never has an empty space on it for more than a minute.¹⁸

This roster apparently served to save one's progress in the game, the function Digby imagined that magnetic BART cards might fulfill. Remember how novel the idea of a *Dungeons & Dragons* character persisting between game sessions seemed to Mike Wood of half magical and (at that time only Minn-stf how many computer games before this one incorporated a notion of preserving the game state for resumption at a later time? The very idea would be anathema to games in the tradition of pinball, which depends on kinetic energy and precarious play. While the very existence of a computer game implementing the core mechanics of *Dungeons & Dragons* at this early date is astonishing, note that Cohen had at that time never played *Dungeons & Dragons* he knew the game only by reputation, confessing, I've never seen *D&D* rules.¹⁹ As the dungeon master, rather than the player, in the paper-and-pencil *Dungeons & Dragons* takes responsibility for understanding and implementing the system, so here did the nameless implementer of this game and the PLATO system itself provide Philip Cohen with a user experience that did not require him to crack any books to learn how to play. The game generated characters automatically, accepted simple keyboard inputs to determine movement, selectively revealed the dungeon as characters explored it, adjudicated combats and disbursed rewards. In effect, the computer program assumed the mantle of the dungeon master.

¹⁸ *Empire #21*.

Cohen reports that the game is solitaire, meaning for a single player only, and this also diverges radically from the interpersonal dynamics that underlie *Dungeons & Dragons*. The absence of class must relate to the single-player structure of the game class and party composition fall out of the multiplayer design of *Dungeons & Dragons*, which many early computer variants eschewed in favor of a single protagonist. As assembling a group of willing players and a suitable dungeon master had always proven a bar to playing *Dungeons & Dragons*, the idea of designing a single-player variant held no small attraction. The notion of conducting solo adventures did not originate with computer games, however. In the first issue of the *Strategic Review* (January 1975), Gygax published a system for Solo Dungeon Adventures (with a nod to George A. Lord as a collaborator). The system, as already noted in Section 5.5, consists of seven sets of tables against which the player rolls to determine the layout and contents of a dungeon randomly. Gygax recommends that you begin a level in the middle of the sheet of graph paper

with a single room, and from there, roll dice to decide where corridors lead, how they bend, the contents of any rooms discovered, where doors lie and so on. Through a totally random walk one could easily exit the page of graph paper, or result in a layout that conflicted with earlier rolls, in which case Gygax suggests players amend the result by rolling until you obtain something which will fit with your predetermined limits. By allowing chance to dictate the dungeon, one does keep the player in roughly the same state of ignorance as when a dungeon master works from a secret map. While the desperate probably embraced this early solo system gratefully, clearly the computer-aided version offered a far more compelling replacement for the dungeon master's secret knowledge.

John Boardman, reading Cohen's account, observes that the core system of *Dungeons & Dragons* had been modified in part to fit it onto the computer and in part for simplification of play by the anonymous author of the PLATO game. Most significantly, the elimination of a human dungeon master removes the interpretative dialogic element and with it the freedom of agency, the signature prospect that *anything can be attempted*. Players exchange this self-determination for a tireless dungeon master, one who never gets bored, even if a player chooses to simply cross back and forth between two rooms for hours at a time. The computer is not, however, a spontaneous dungeon master, and the world it presents reflects only the inspiration of its programming. Nevertheless, this tradeoff satisfied Cohen and apparently many others who experimented with the PLATO system.

¹⁹ Cohen quickly became a convert, however: in *Alarums #7*

Throughout 1975 and 1976, several hobbyists who straddled the fandom of computers and role-playing games produced similar efforts, with varying degrees of sophistication. In the pages of *Alarums & Excursions*, we find a considerable amount of material about the activities of groups like the UCLA Computer Club, though apparently the forbidden PLATO lessons did not worm their way to the coasts quickly. In *Alarums #6*, members of the UCLA club asked, Who knows what exists in the lines of computerized DM-aids, etc? but received little by way of reply. Mark Swanson, surely someone well aware of activities at MIT, wrote as late as September 1976 an article on Games Computers Play that expressed skepticism that gamers would see anything more sophisticated than *Pong* in the next four years, despite his fervent wish for computerized

hidden movement pseudo-miniatures armored battles in living color.²⁰ In

Swanson's Boston-area APA the *Wild Hunt*, however, Bill Seligman in October 1976 offhandedly mentions the presence of a substantial computerized D&D following, on a PLATO III system at Cornell, but he stresses that I do not have much in common with their playing styles. [WH:#9] Many enthusiasts employed computers to assist in cataloguing monsters or in dungeon keying, that is, the process of populating dungeons with appropriate monsters.

In January 1976, *Alarums* #7 printed a curious article by Mark Leymaster of Boston, who had devised an automatic character-generating program that worked for both *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Tunnels & Trolls*. Leymaster had already written to *Wargamer's Information* #9 in October 1975 advertising for sale these randomly-generated characters at a rate of one dollar for ten: he explains so far it's cost me over \$75 to develop the program, primarily because running the machine is so expensive. After rolling core abilities for characters, and deciding on a race, the program recommends a proper character class. By the time Leymaster submitted his piece to *Alarums*, he had further developed a randomdungeon program, which he intended to task both for running automatic dungeons and also potentially for play-by-mail systems. He appended to his article a printout of a sample output of his *D&D* Random Dungeon Scenario. It begins with a striking description of the scenario: YOU ARE ABOUT TO ENTER INTO A TERRIBLE LABYRINTH IN SEARCH OF TREASURE IN A HIDDEN GORGE IN THE HIGH HILLS. YOU ENTER A SET OF RUINS. WITH YOUR BLOOD--STAINED MAP, YOU LOCATE THE

WIZARD'S TOWER ... AND THERE, ON THE NORTH SIDE, IS THE DOOR YOU SEEK... ENTERING THE DOOR YOU EASE YOUR WAY DOWN AN ANCIENT STAIR... THE AIR CHILLS AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIR, FACING SOUTH, YOU ENTER A SMALL SPACE... ALL AROUND YOU ARE DOORS, TO THE EAST, SOUTH AND WEST.

²⁰ [AW:v4n2] Swanson is, however, aware of *Spacewar!*

Rather than visualize a dungeon with graphics, Leymaster dungeon simulator relates the circumstances verbally. This passage employs the second-person to cement the identification of the player with the character. When Leymaster calls his dungeon program automatic, he means that it requires minimal interactivity with the player. The simulator blunders its way through the dungeon by brute force, trying each of the exits from the initial room in turn and reporting the results of the attempt. For example:

YOU APPROACH THE NORTH DOOR... CAREFULLY. AS YOU PUSH, THE DOOR OPENS. YOU ARE WATCHING FOR TRAPS.

TRAPPED SUDDENLY A DART ENGINE SPRING ***SAVING THROW MUST EXCEED 19 TO PROCEED... IF THROW = 19 OR 18 THEN YOU TAKE 3 WOUNDS.

YOU CHECK AROUND FOR POSSIBLE TREASURE. AHA... TREASURE: YOU HAVE FOUND 1600 PIECES OF SILVER IN AN ADJACENT ALCOVE.

We might surmise that Leymaster intended for the player to roll a die at this point, and only if the saving throw succeeds to pass unharmed and recover the coinage in the alcove otherwise, presumably the character takes the stated damage. Similarly, the computer may decide on a random encounter. When the printout reports SURE ENOUGH. THERE ARE GUARDIANS ON THIS LEVEL....(ROLLED: 4 @ LEVEL 1) it then insists YOU MUST RESOLVE ENCOUNTER... AND PROCEED IF POSSIBLE. The program seems to propose some sort of opposing die rolls at this point, as it lists a running sum rolled by the computer which the player presumably must equal;; or perhaps the rolls are the to-hit scores for the monster. No doubt Leymaster structured the program in this fashion because he never intended for a player to run it interactively at the mainframe, given the prohibitive costs and scarcity of computer resources instead he expected players to use the print-out as a script for a solo dungeon. The tantalizing possibility that a computer might be more interactive was not lost on the audience of Leymaster article, however. At this point in the piece in *Alarums*, Barry Gold, perhaps reading over Lee's shoulder, interjects a puzzled editorial note: If a machine is going to do anything useful in expeditions, it should help resolve melee. That's the most time consuming and boring part of dungeon mastering. It can take hours.

Eventually, when Leymaster simulation has tried all the doors, it reaches its limit of prediction and concludes that a choice is now required of the user. By why make a choice only at this point? In effect, Leymaster implementation had the computer assume not only the role of dungeon master, but also arrogate to itself the decisions to be made by players. Lee Gold recommends in her marginalia that choice should be made more often. For example, when the DOOR DOESN T OPEN, players should have the option to direct their character to attempt to pick the lock, or cast a Knock spell, or what have you. She argues for a more interactive experience, where Leymaster program puts everything into fully automatic, even the mode of

exploration. At this early date, precedents already existed (beyond PLATO) for simple interactive text games that explored underground labyrinths, of which the most famous must be *Hunt the Wumpus* (1973).²¹ *Wumpus*, however, explained the layout of the eponymous creature's lair, the bat-infested, pit-strewn complex of twenty caves, in a very terse verbal format:

²¹ In *Creative Computing* (Sep 1975), Gregory Yob, creator of *Hunt the Wumpus*, suggests that he invented the game two years prior to that article. Other, simpler games on this same theme include the *Caves* family of computer games simulating a lost caver finding a way out of the underworld, which are documented alongside *Wumpus* in *What To Do After You Hit Return* (1977), an early book of

BATS NEARBY!
YOU ARE IN ROOM 2
TUNNELS LEAD TO 1 3 10
SHOOT OR MOVE (S--M)?

Players could input only the simplest commands, which the computer easily evaluated against the state of the game, and thus the program could run on the humblest computer systems of the day, ones that did not charge hundreds of dollars for an hour of use. The freedom of agency in *Wumpus*, however, left something to be desired, to say nothing of its want of vividness, yet for all that it placed the interactive experience of movement and combat firmly in the control of the player. The more evocative secondperson narrative of Leymaster game, full of apostrophic asides, hints at the potential for a more immersed voice in computer gaming. In the absence of portraying the map graphically to players, a textual game could add vivid literary flavor to dungeon exploration.

If one deprives the player of virtually all liberty and narrows the game into a manageable tree of decisions, one does not even need to resort to a computer to run a solitaire game. While fantasy fans experimented with programmable dungeon masters, far outside the realm of wargaming and *Dungeons & Dragons*, experiments in juvenile literature prefigured the exploration of a decision tree by a lone reader. The first important mass-market works of this variety, the Tracker Books series in the United Kingdom, lured



FIGURE 67: EARLY INTERACTIVE FICTION, IN BOOK FORM

computer games in BASIC.

readers with the extraordinary claim that YOU have to decide what to do in each situation, and the adventure twists and turns depending on YOUR decision. That text, from the back of *Mission to Planet L* (1973) by Kenneth James and John Allen, introduced readers to a first-person adventure story where the reader is faced with decisions like: I had only two choices! I could make a run for it (3) not knowing if my craft was powerful enough to outdistance them;; or I could head for the rings of Saturn (4) and take the chance that my reflections would be effective. By following either of those alternatives, and turning to page 3 or 4, the reader soon faces subsequent choices, though the narrative gives little reason to prefer one path over the other. The mission to the eponymous planet is a short but safe one: there are only four possible ending pages to reach, sixteen pages with choices, and twenty pages that contain neither a decision nor an ending, but instead a single pointer to another page. None of the possible outcomes are messy for

the protagonist. Tracker Books produced a number of these sort of stories, what would later be called interactive fictions, in various genres between 1972 and 1973.

The idea landed Stateside a few years later, when an author named Edward Packard conceived of a children's book entitled *Sugarcane Island* (1976). Crucially, Packard transposed these interactive fictions from the first-person to second-person narratives. For example, *Sugarcane Island* begins, You stand on the deck of a large boat looking back at the Golden Gate Bridge, as you set out into the Pacific Ocean. This turtle-surveying voyage, however, falls victim to a tsunami, leaving you, the protagonist, a castaway on an unfamiliar beach. After five paragraphs of setting the stage, Packard offers the reader a choice:

If you decide to walk down the beach, turn to page 5.

If you decide to climb the rocky hill, turn to page 6.

Decisions are not restricted to movement: you may on a given page face a choice to approach a stranger or ignore him, take an object or leave it, share information or withhold it. This is hardly a great scope of agency, however, since the story must always present the reader with a multiple-choice question. Following the precedent of Tracker Books, when Packard offers choices, he gives only two;; though in *Sugarcane Island*, the alternatives fall on facing pages, so one can browse both options before proceeding, if only with a guilty eye. Packard also made the story much larger, with 108 pages of events and decisions. While with every choice the story bifurcated, parallel storylines could also converge: although about a third of the pages in the book are endings, one can reach the same pages through a couple different paths. In a plot that soon takes on overtones of *Treasure Island*, the protagonist gets between pirates and treasure. Some choices can be deadly: on page 37, You sink deeper and deeper. You wiggle and squirm, but it's too late. Glug, glug, glug. Others proved quite lucrative, as on page 97, when you finally return home, your pockets are still full of precious jewels. Although originally he intended this book would be the first in a series called The Adventures of You, Packard would later enjoy considerable success with some dozens of books written using this method under the Choose Your Own Adventure brand, beginning with his *The Cave of Time* (1979). Both the Tracker Books and Choose Your Own Adventure methods convey changes to the state of the fictional world verbally, much like the way that a referee reports the results of player decisions in the dialog of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The applicability of this book format to role-

playing games quickly became apparent;; we should not be surprised that the first publication in this area came from someone acquainted with computers. In May 1976, Rick Loomis published a solitaire dungeon adventure for *Tunnels & Trolls* called *Buffalo Castle* (1976) which adheres quite closely to the model of *Sugarcane Island*, insofar as it reproduces the second-person narrative format with decision trees.²² Players must accept certain restrictions to participate;; for example, only first level Fighters are allowed (no Magic users, no higher level characters) and only one at a time. *Buffalo Castle* also requires access to the *Tunnels & Trolls* rules, as well as periodic rolls performed by the player for random encounters with wandering monsters. Loomis begins the adventure with a threeway decision: You are facing a large, gloomy castle, with three large wooden doors. If you choose to go in the left door, turn to 4A. If you wish to go in the center door, go to 8A. If you wish to go into the right door, turn to 12A.

The letters beside the numbers allow Loomis to store multiple nodes in the decision tree on a single page;; *Buffalo Castle* has only twenty-eight pages of alternatives, each with up to six story segments letter-coded A through F. If, upon entering the Castle, you opted for the first choice, 4A, you entered a small room where a bored troll sat on a chest;; you could either ignore, battle or engage in conversation with the monster. Opting for combat requires consulting the *Tunnels & Trolls* rules;; Loomis supplied the monster statistics required, and the player conducted the combat under their own recognition. To the victor goes the spoils, to the luckless an amusing demise. *Buffalo Castle* overflows with both the former and the latter: like 18D, You have been turned to stone. Sorry about that! or perhaps best of all, 19E, It is impossible to get to 19E. You have cheated. You are instantly vaporized by the Dungeon Master! Survival proved an unlikely, though not impossible, outcome of a venture into *Buffalo Castle*. Those who passed the test emerged with moderate riches and a decent solitaire experience of dungeoneering without the need for access to a university mainframe.²³

Moreover, these transitional works of interactive fiction rendered scenarios repeatable for the solo adventurer: effectively, they reimagined the concept of modules discussed in the previous chapter into something that required no dungeon master to administer. The author of the fiction, effectively, is the dungeon master, but instead of serving only a handful of players, the dungeon master potentially can address millions. In the mid-1970s, the printed word remained the best way to reach the mass market,

despite the structural shortcomings of books as an interactive media: the ability of players to explore all of the options in a decision tree, for example, to pick the best one. Although through these works fantastic worlds could be explored by legions, each reader experienced the world alone, in a sort of jarring solipsism. By the end of the decade, however, the growing availability and interconnection of computers created an unprecedented possibility for fantastic worlds with far greater interactivity, worlds which players would not enter alone, worlds which did not go away when any given denizen returned to their normal life.

²² #16 (May 1976) advertises the availability of *Buffalo Castle*. In an article in *Wargaming* #2 (Sep 1977), Ken St. Andre reports that Steve McAllister suggested authoring a solitaire dungeon in this manner in March 1976. In the absence of any further evidence, McAllister probably arrived at this idea independently, though it is possible he had seen a Tracker Books edition, or even perhaps heard tell of *Sugarcane Island* before its July 1976 publication by Vermont Crossroads Press. For information on other possible literary ancestors, including the avant-garde works of Raymond Queneau and Julio Cortázar, see Montfort, *Twisty Little Passages*. It seems unlikely that many gamers in the 1970s knew of those titles, however.

²³

Livingstone of Games Workshop tasy
The Warlock of Firetop Mountain (1982), which continued the tradition of exploring dungeons by navigating through pointers in a book four hundred decision nodes.

THE FIRST VIRTUAL WORLDS

While Leymaster experiment perhaps failed to realize the full potential of a textbased second-person computer game, between 1976 and 1977 the seminal groundwork was laid for a new style of game that closely followed the precedents of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Lee Gold s husband Barry Gold authored a remarkable piece reviewing these efforts on Computers and Fantasy Gaming in *Alarums* #30 (January 1978). Barry begins by advising us that he programs computers for living, and had occasionally dabbled with the hobby games that circulated on these systems. Recently, however, he had: noticed something strange going on. While we play our Fantasy campaigns, other people are combining these fantasy elements (from *D&D* and other games) with the basic computer game idea to produce a new synthesis. As the key enablers for this synthesis, Gold singles out two

seminal dialog-based games as were called *Couch* and *Parry*. pretends to be a paranoid with drinking and gambling problems. The game Gold identifies as *Couch* is surely the one remembered today as *ELIZA* (1966). Crucially, the ability of these games to parse sentences typed by a player and respond appropriately raised the tantalizing prospect of emulating the interactive dialog between the player and dungeon master. Gold then gives what must be the earliest (and briefest) history of this new family of dialogic computer adventure games: As far as I know, Willie Crowther... wrote the first fantasy simulation game. Don Woods added several features and expanded the dungeon to produce the current *Adventure* game. Tim Anderson and Dave Lebling of MIT built on the *Adventure* game by using a more powerful computer language and including some ideas from *D&D* (Dave Lebling plays it). With help from two other users they came up with *Zork*, sometimes called *Dungeon*.²⁴

attempts at machine parsing English sentences which *Couch* simulates a Rogerian Psychotherapist, while *Parry* Gold s piece stands out not just for his foresight in recognizing this new family of games, but also because he actually corresponded with both Don Woods and Tim Anderson as he assembled this report. Both offered him material assistance in playing their games: Don with a bound (!) listing of *Advent[ure]* and notes on adapting it to other computers and extending the dungeon, Tim with a special bootstrap to get *Zork* running in my environment and help getting it running on an operating system that is foreign to me. As a programmer versed in the mainframe culture of the day, Gold was also uniquely positioned to report on his experiences operating these earliest incarnations of the adventure games that proved hugely influential in the next decade.

²⁴ [A&E:#30] was at BBN (Bolt, Beranek and left BBN, and discontinued work on *Adventures*

Stanford.

Before we tackle the first of these games, *Adventure*, Gold tells us that its author was inspired by a Middle-Earth offshoot called *Mirkwood Tales*.²⁵ More than an offshoot of Middle-earth, however, *Mirkwood Tales* is a Tolkien-themed *Dungeons & Dragons* variant created by Eric S. Roberts, then a student at Harvard University, who ran a lengthy campaign based on these rules in which Willie Crowther played as a Thief named Willie. Fortunately, Roberts s 1977 manuscript of the rules survives today, though Roberts did not publish it commercially. The author s foreword begins,

Dungeons & Dragons is not really a game. Its players are not players in the classical sense but are instead participants in the ways of a strange and exciting world. To become a part of *Mirkwood Tales* demands more than a love for games;; it requires a will to be part of an adventure and the imagination to make that adventure real. This is surely a sufficient indication of the debt of *Mirkwood Tales* to *Dungeons & Dragons*; furthermore, in an Acknowledgments section, Roberts gives the first credit to E. Gary Gygax, Dave Arneson, Rob Kuntz, Jim Ward and all the others at Tactical Studies Rules for all the groundwork and design behind *Dungeons & Dragons* and for their understanding of the spirit of adventure. Tolkien is relegated to the second credit, for making Middle Earth so real.

As a variant, *Mirkwood Tales* follows the core principles of *Dungeons & Dragons*, though it simplifies to perhaps an even greater degree than Blue Petal's Castle Keep. It includes four character classes: Fighter, Magic User, Loremaster and Thief. The Loremasters draw their strength from their knowledge of history and legend and their mastery of such arts as healing and the detection of evil. Although they use their own form of magic and spells, their magic is generally only of defensive or curative value unlike that of the more powerful Magic Users. As Section 2.3 noted, Tolkien shied away from religion in his setting, and thus it is unsurprising that Roberts converts the Cleric into a secular Loremaster who retains the predisposition toward curative magic. Roberts could not claim to adapt Tolkien without providing player-character races of elves, dwarves and hobbits. *Mirkwood Tales* is a game of stratified progression, where characters accumulate experience points while adventuring and go up in level as they reach certain experience totals. It moreover relies on underworld exploration, combat and treasure to drive an engaging narrative. In all those respects, it very closely follows the precedent of *Dungeons & Dragons*.²⁶

²⁵

D&D rules in building *Advent Mirkwood Tales*, and assumed it was an independent game rather than a close variant of *Dungeons & Dragons*.²⁶ The main respect in which *Mirkwood Tales* departs from *Dungeons & Dragons* is combat resolution, strength serves as an endurance mechanism: a third-level Fighter, for example, has a starting combat strength of four, and thus may sustain four wounds before dying. Combat resolution is based on the throw of a single ten-sided die (in practice, a twenty-sided die with each number between one and ten listed twice) which serves as both an accuracy

check and as a damage roll. When the attacker has a very high combat strength relative to the defender, the attacker can have a fifty percent chance of slaying the defender outright;; when the defender has a substantial combat value, however, the best the attacker can hope for is to inflict a wound. Wounds can be

(reducing it by two). Combat resolves quickly but mercilessly. Similarly, instead of saving throws, *Mirkwood Tales* derives a percentile chance of spell success from the strength of the caster and target;; Magic-users have very high magical strength, whereas Fighters have low strength, and thus a Magic-user might have a 90% chance of successfully casting a spell on a weaker fighter. Missile combat relies only on range and a die roll, rather than any evaluation of level, armor

Roberts gives a lengthy example of play based on a visit to the Glittering Caves below Helm's Deep, in which one player takes on the role of Farin, grandson of Gimli. It follows the dialogic style of *Dungeons & Dragons*, where the referee fields requests and instructions from the players and then reports on the state of the game world. The party explores the system of caves, cautiously traversing dark cavern passages until they come across the body of a slain dwarf. Soon they find themselves within bowshot of a small group of orcs, whom they manage to slay, and eventually they recover the key their expedition aimed to find. Much of their dialog concerns the navigation of the caves themselves, for example:

Farin: We all head down the corridor.

Referee: The passage slopes very steeply here, probably about thirty degrees from the horizontal. Ahead, you hear occasional sounds of rocks shifting, although you can see no one.

Farin: We keep going.

Referee: You are now about fifty feet from the intersection, and the passage continues to slope downward with no end in sight. At various points along the passage, there is some water seeping through the roof of the passage which runs down the walls and trickles along the edge of the floor.²⁷

Apparently, this sort of speleological exploration typified adventures in *Mirkwood Tales*; in his description of the referee's job, Roberts includes, the referee will draw maps of ancient caverns, litter those caverns with treasure and deadly traps, invent hostile creatures to inhabit those chambers and design problems which will capture the imagination of those that will one day encounter them in the dark subterranean ways. The appeal of *Mirkwood*

Tales to Willie Crowther may have lain partially in its emphasis on caving, as he explored actual caves in real life avidly though not professionally. For a day job, Crowther worked at Bolt, Beranek and Newman in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he played a pivotal role in the early development of the Internet as a lead programmer for the Interface Message Processors (IMPs), effectively the first routers deployed on the ARPAnet.²⁸ In fact, Roberts's player group encompassed several members of the Imp Guys at BBN, including Dave Walden and Bernie Cosnell, and Roberts even gives special thanks to ARPAnet project manager Frank Heart in his manuscript of *Mirkwood Tales*. Crowther and his fellow players thus had the expertise with, and the access to, computers required to plot out cave systems as miniature virtual worlds.

Early in 1976, Crowther and his wife divorced, and in the year that followed he wrote a computer game which entertained his young children. The game relied exclusively on the medium of text, and thus is considered a pioneering work of interactive fiction. While Leymaster had paid dearly for computer time to develop his automatic dungeon generator, and had no expectation that players would experience it interactively, Crowther had reliable access to spare computer cycles and moved in corporate and research circles where others did as well. We know his game primarily through the activities of Don Woods, who revised it in 1977;; from an ancient backup of his account at Stanford University (dating from March 1977), an apparently-original version of Crowther source code was recovered.²⁹ Crowther's virtual environment spans about seventy discrete areas, some above ground but most below in the caves. The game commences next to a well house by a large spring on the edge of a forest, but adventure is not far away: or combat strength. *Mirkwood Tales* also passes over most logistical questions in silence: it says little about armor or other equipment, nothing about encumbrance or movement speeds, and although it alludes to prices, it ignores currency.

²⁷ *Mirkwood Tales*, 13.

²⁸ A good early history of the Internet which pays close attention to Crowther is Hafner and Lyon, *Where Wizards Stay Up Late* (1998). The background information on Crowther here follows the account in that volume.

SOMEWHERE NEARBY IS COLOSSAL CAVE, WHERE OTHERS HAVE FOUND FORTUNES IN TREASURE AND GOLD, THOUGH IT IS

RUMORED

THAT SOME WHO ENTER ARE NEVER SEEN AGAIN. MAGIC IS SAID TO WORK IN THE CAVE. I WILL BE YOUR EYES AND HANDS. DIRECT ME WITH COMMANDS OF 1 OR 2 WORDS.

(ERRORS, SUGGESTIONS, COMPLAINTS TO CROWTHER)

(IF STUCK TYPE HELP FOR SOME HINTS) The program refers to itself in the first person and addresses the player in the second person, like Leymaster's dungeons and Edward Packard's *Sugarcane Island*. It establishes from the start that the objective is the acquisition of treasure and gold, and that various subterranean perils stand between prospective adventurers and these goals. It also invites the player to type instructions in the form of simple commands in order to interact with the game a simplification of the dialogic interaction familiar to role-players. These instructions mostly allow the protagonist to move between areas or manipulate elements of the environment. Where Crowther might have said to Roberts in a session of *Mirkwood Tales*, we all head down the corridor, here the typed word down suffices. When prodded, the program supplies a lengthier description of its conversational skills: I KNOW OF PLACES, ACTIONS, AND THINGS. MOST OF MY VOCABULARY DESCRIBES PLACES AND IS USED TO MOVE YOU THERE. TO MOVE TRY WORDS LIKE FOREST, BUILDING, DOWNSTREAM, ENTER, EAST, WEST, NORTH, SOUTH, UP, OR DOWN. I KNOW ABOUT A FEW SPECIAL OBJECTS, LIKE A BLACK ROD HIDDEN IN THE CAVE. THESE OBJECTS CAN BE MANIPULATED USING ONE OF THE ACTION WORDS THAT I KNOW. USUALLY YOU WILL NEED TO GIVE BOTH THE OBJECT AND ACTION WORDS (IN EITHER ORDER), BUT SOMETIMES I CAN INFER THE OBJECT FROM THE VERB ALONE. THE OBJECTS HAVE SIDE EFFECTS FOR INSTANCE, THE ROD SCARES THE BIRD.

USUALLY PEOPLE HAVING TROUBLE MOVING JUST NEED TO TRY A FEW MORE WORDS. USUALLY PEOPLE TRYING TO MANIPULATE AN

OBJECT ARE ATTEMPTING SOMETHING BEYOND THEIR (OR MY!) CAPABILITIES AND SHOULD TRY A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT TACK. TO SPEED THE GAME YOU CAN SOMETIMES MOVE LONG DISTANCES WITH A SINGLE WORD. FOR EXAMPLE, BUILDING USUALLY GETS YOU TO THE BUILDING FROM ANYWHERE ABOVE GROUND EXCEPT WHEN LOST IN THE FOREST. ALSO,

NOTE THAT CAVE PASSAGES TURN A LOT, AND THAT LEAVING A ROOM TO THE NORTH DOES NOT GUARANTEE ENTERING THE NEXT FROM THE SOUTH. GOOD LUCK!

²⁹

Crowther source code, as well as of the cave systems Crowther explored.

This simple interface allowed players to explore Crowther creation: a game which a comment line at the start of the FORTRAN source code identifies as ADVENTURES. From Barry Gold's correspondence with Crowther post-facto collaborator Don Woods, we learn that Don dropped the s from the name of his version to create the game *Adventure* (1977), sometimes abbreviated as *Advent*; we might therefore call Crowther original version *Adventures* (1976).³⁰ *Adventures* recapitulates the classic *Dungeons & Dragons* formula in the following key respects: it entirely appropriates the dialogic interaction between referee and player;; it balances between modes of exploration, combat and logistics, albeit with a deemphasized mode of combat;; and, it requires the exploration of a secret dungeon (which most likely would force most players to take up cartography to navigate) where one defeats adversaries and escapes with treasures. Mark Swanson would certainly identify *Adventures* as a Gilded Hole dungeon.

To foil incautious map-makers, Crowther installed a much-remembered labyrinth with ten interconnected rooms which all appear identical, each sharing the description, YOU ARE IN A MAZE OF TWISTY LITTLE PASSAGES, ALL ALIKE. Like any good dungeoneer, you require a light source during your expedition, and without one you run the risk of dying ignominiously in an unseen pit. The treasures include diamonds, coins and bars of silver, and their acquisition more often involves logistical puzzles than outright slaughter. For example, an enormous snake blocks the way to the bars of silver, but the serpent proves impervious to any aggression you can muster. A small bird can drive the snake away, but first you must catch the bird. Early in the caverns, there lies a birdcage that could transport the bird, but apprehending the bird entails its own challenges. If you currently hold in your inventory a magic rod, then the bird shies away from you (as the hint THE ROD SCARES THE BIRD above implies). You must therefore drop the rod in order to install the bird in the cage, and then bring the cage back to the giant snake to unleash this fearsome foe on the serpent. Combats, when they occur, owe much to chance;; a scuffle with a dwarf or seven gives each blow a fifty-fifty chance of dealing death. The interface completely

occludes any such system details, however: when a player sits down to play, they do not roll a character as they did in the early PLATO system Cohen reviews. *Adventures* follows the precedent of the *Mirkwood Tales*, which similarly deemphasized number crunching in favor of problems which will capture the imagination, as Roberts put it. As promised, *Adventures* does contain a bit of magic most famously, the magic incantation XYZZY found scrawled near the beginning of the caves which teleports its speaker in and out of the underworld when uttered.

Don Woods probably acquired the source code to original *Adventures* in March 1977. Unlike Crowther, Woods had never played *Dungeons & Dragons* or its variants;; Barry Gold relates, Don Woods doesn t play any FRP games where FRP stands for fantasy role-playing but Woods labored to make the program more stable, playable and adventuresome. Woods s revision of *Adventure* stormed the (admittedly tiny) computer geek community in the second half of 1977, migrating from system to system through the file transfer capabilities of the fledgling Internet, through conventions and conferences and

³⁰

Adventure

even through tapes sent via post. Barry Gold did not play Crowther original, but he gives us extensive notes on his experience with Woods s *Adventure*, beginning by suggesting Woods did not go far enough when he nearly doubled the size of the game: The current version has only 140 rooms;; most experienced *D&D* players would laugh at such a small dungeon.... Playing after work and during lunch five days a week, it took me several weeks to completely explore the dungeon and I doubt I could have solved the endgame without sneaking a look at a dump to get the vocabulary listing. Its simple command structure does not make *Advent* a trivial game by any means. [A&E:#30]

Gold draws attention to the key features of Woods s revision that did not appear in Crowther *Adventures*. The first is the scoring system: Woods awarded points for advancing in the game, notably for collecting his significantly-expanded portfolio of treasure and installing it in the building at the start of the game. Woods complicated this whole process by bringing more realism to inventory: as Gold observes, You have a limited carrying capacity, which renders many logistical challenges diabolical. Even those treasures you do lug around are subject to pilfering by the wandering pirate character added by Woods. Finally, unlike a game moderated by a human

dungeon master: you get second chances. All the second chances you want. If you get killed, lost, or lose a treasure, you can always start over but if you don't want to just start over and type in all those moves, you can save the game and continue from there. By saving the game, one gained not just the ability to suspend progress and return later as the PLATO system roster allowed but also the possibility, after suffering a catastrophic event, of restoring a previous state and resuming the game from there. No doubt the save capability became essential as the size of the game expanded under Woods's custody.

In Gold's estimation, that of a professional working in the computing and networking communities, *Adventure* has been fairly widely distributed. His own copy ran on an IBM/360, though he knew that the Digital Equipment Corporation supplied a FORTRAN version compatible with their PDP-11 minicomputer. He considers *Adventure* a small program with a relatively simple structure. This contrasts sharply with the newcomer to the family of text games: *Zork* (1977), which began its long series of incremental releases in June 1977. Gold tells us: *Zork* is a huge program which runs only on a DEC PDP-10 and puts a noticeable drain on the resource of that machine. With 2 or 3 people playing *Zork*, it's doubtful that anyone can get useful work done on the computer at the same time. The resources of the PDP-10 mainframe, the workhorse of the university environment, tended to be costly and contested. So why did *Zork* consume a greater share of computing resources?

Zork has the advantage of being written in MUDDLE, which is a computer language especially designed for AI work. The parser can handle fairly complicated sentences and the latest version even handles indirect objects (i.e., you can say give lamp to troll or give troll lamp). The structure of the database is much more flexible, permitting more complex actions by the players and correspondingly harder problems for him to solve. [Ibid.]

Where *Adventure* accepted only the most rudimentary instructions, *Zork* boasted a greater command of vocabulary and grammar thanks to its reliance on MUDDLE (or MDL, the MIT Design Language). All of this sophistication still yielded a game remarkably similar in premise to its predecessor *Adventure*. *Zork* pits an adventurer against the Great Underground Empire, a complex perhaps closer to a funhouse dungeon than the caves which Crowther undoubtedly could draw from memory. The objective remains the same: curatorship of treasures, which one collects in a trophy case above ground. Scoring, saving and inventory management

follow Woods's model entirely. In place of a pirate, a thief roams the GUE pocketing stray treasures, and when the lights go out in *Zork*, you have more than just pits to worry about the dreaded and slavering grue, a transplant from Jack Vance, lurks forever out of eyesight.

The commonalities in *Adventure* and *Zork* emerge not just from the latter's debt to the former, but also to *Mirkwood Tales*: Dave Lebling, one of the developers of *Zork*, played in Eric Roberts's campaign as the character Luke.³¹ Attentive readers will recall from the previous section that Lebling was involved in the NFFF back in 1968, and reported to the *Gamesletter* at that time about the difficulty of getting mainframe computer cycles at MIT for trivial applications like *Spacewar!* an obstacle he could apparently overcome a decade later when he began work on *Zork*. It was a group effort, as Gold reports from his correspondence with Tim Anderson: In addition to Tim Anderson and Dave Lebling, the authors of *Zork* include Marc Blank and Bruce Daniels. Bruce did no program writing, but contributed a lot to the design of the dungeon. At the time Gold encountered the game, *Zork* had only just begun to spread: To the best of my knowledge, *Zork* exists only at MIT's DMS system and at Stanford Research Institute's KL system. If you have access to a PDP-10, I might be able to arrange a copy for you.

Gold implies that the game underwent constant revisions, and indeed, the notion of ascribing a release date or even a title to a project like *Zork* does a disservice to the hobbyist culture that produced and disseminated these works. The authors simply offered the latest version for free (the cost of a magnetic tape and return postage) to anyone who cared to have a copy, and built new versions whenever their schedule permitted. As the game grew more mature, the authors of *Zork*, all associated with MIT, found their achievement noteworthy enough that they wrote it up for the *IEEE Computer* magazine of April 1979. By that time, *Zork* had grown into a simulation of a space containing 191 rooms and 211 objects, with a vocabulary of 908 words, including seventy-one distinct actions.

Boldly, the authors contended that *Zork* simulates the universe, a claim that warrants closer scrutiny and some few preemptive caveats: Obviously, no small computer program can encompass the entire universe. What it can do, however, is simulate enough of the universe to appear to be more intelligent than it really is. Because *Zork* is goaldirected, players tend to limit their scope of agency to those actions necessary to solve the problems presented by the game, and thus the boundaries of the simulation rarely

become apparent in the course of ordinary play. The authors recognize that players delighted in prodding at the edges of the simulation in what they call a sort of informal Turing test ; surely no one who has played the games of this family has not tried to enter outlandish commands simply to see how the parser would respond.³² While we might suppose that computerization introduced these limits on the scope of agency, in fact, a determined player could always stump the dungeon master of *Dungeons & Dragons*. However thoroughly a dungeon master planned and articulated a scenario, willful players could derail the adventure with surprising actions or questions. A role-playing game requires collaboration between the player and referee, a willingness on the player's part to stay within the parameters established by the dungeon master. Some dungeon masters, of course, presented more latitude to players than others, just as *Zork* offered more latitude than *Adventure*. All simulations, however, must have boundaries.

³¹ Perhaps this name implies a character created after May 1977, the initial release date of *Star Wars*. ³² Even Crowther *Adventures* anticipated that a frustrated player will eventually type in the

The universe of *Zork* contains greater diversity than its predecessor in other respects than the command interface. In the Great Underground Empire one finds a boat that carries dungeoneers across a river, a pioneering simulation of a vehicle. *Zork* also implements a richer combat system than its predecessor, as the following excerpt from an encounter with a troll indicates:

```
>KILL TROLL WITH SWORD
A mighty blow, but it misses the troll by a mile.
The axe gets you right in the side. Ouch!
...
The troll hits you with a glancing blow, and you
are momentarily stunned.
>DIAGNOSE
You have a light wound, which will be cured after
29 moves. You can be killed by one more light
wound.
The troll swings his axe, but it misses.
;; The troll, no gentleman, keeps fighting while
you examine your wound.33
```

From this example, we see that *Zork* contained an endurance mechanism, one that probably owes its structure to *Mirkwood Tales*, where a hit in combat could result in a light wound, a serious wound potential to be staggered

or outright death;; *Mirkwood Tales* also acknowledge the by a blow. Two light wounds apparently suffice to slay an adventurer in *Zork*. Fortunately, wounds seem to heal themselves quickly, a development which must owe to a lack of Loremasters or any other magical means of curing;; in baseline *Dungeons & Dragons*, wounds prove far more tenacious. While the combat system of these early computer games was far simpler than that of their table-top forbears, the differences are overshadowed by the overwhelming influence of the original fantasy role-playing game on the structure of play.

In their 1979 article, the *Zork* authors willingly express their debt to two excellent games, *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Adventure*, noting in passing that *Adventure* itself was inspired by *D&D*, or more specifically a *D&D* variation then being played out at Bolt, Beranek and Newman, a Cambridge, Massachusetts, computer firm. They even considered their own program to be like a *Dungeons & Dragons* referee, as by inputting commands the player interacts conversationally with an omniscient Master of the Dungeon, who rules on each proposed action and relates the consequences. This makes sense as the dialogic structure of *Dungeons & Dragons* serves as the fundamental program architecture of *Zork*: In the simplest sense, *Zork* runs in a loop in which three different operations are performed: command input and parsing, command execution, and background processing. The computer rolls virtual dice to decide combat, and maintains secret information that the player must discern. In this case, the computer truly does perform the job of the dungeon master.

³³ *IEEE Computer*, Vol. 12, No. 4.

Barry Gold observes, however, one key drawback in these first text adventure games: The main problem with both *Advent* and *Zork* is that they have solutions. Once you have figured out the problems, the game has no further interest as such since the problems never change.³⁴ The relatively static nature of the game worlds rendered most challenges deterministic. Of course, a rare encounter with a troll or dwarf could end lucklessly in the death of an adventurer, and the thief or pirate can unexpectedly complicated the resolution of a given puzzle, but fundamentally Gold is correct: by deemphasizing the mode of combat in favor of exploration and logistics, the

compelling dramatic structure of *Dungeons & Dragons* is weakened.³⁵ In traditional *Dungeons & Dragons*, the randomness of combat introduces an uncertainty that lends a freshness to each encounter. Experienced dungeoneers also surely noted the lack of personal progression in *Adventure* and *Zork*. Although the games tabulate a score, and assign a ranking with a title to the player corresponding to that score, adventurers do not innately improve during the course of their exploration, except insofar as they accumulate material possessions with particular uses. Even absent these qualities, however, the text adventure games provided, for their era, an unprecedented realism in dungeon exploration a rich simulation of a world of adventure.

In the mid-1970s, these mainframe-based games remained the privilege of those whose corporate or academic positions afforded them access to state of the art systems. Only a handful of years, in the evolution of computers, can however transform a technology from the privilege of a few to a plaything of the masses. In 1977, the first inexpensive (in the \$500 to \$1,000 range), mass-produced consumer microcomputers entered the market, the most successful of which were the Commodore PET, the Tandy TRS-80, and the Apple II. With them came the potential for a whole new market of computer games aimed at the consumer, rather than college students or professionals with access to minicomputers or mainframes. Although Barry Gold called *Adventure* a small game that can run on a minicomputer, he quickly adds forget about your micro for the time being, though.³⁶ In late 1977, the prospect of so sophisticated a game running on a home computer was still remote. Nonetheless, in mid-1977 TSR began eyeing the computer market thoughtfully. From Origins III in the middle of that year, Bill Seligman, who along with Philip Cohen knew the PLATO-based dungeon adventure games from Cornell, reported: Tim Kask and Ernie Gygax said that TSR was going to spread into computerized *D&D*. Hah!! as if they can even try to compete with some of the superb *D&D* computer programs available on some systems. By far the best I've seen is on the PLATO II system at Cornell, although the network is continent-wide. Draws pictures of the corridors, monsters, sets up quests, keeps score, all in less than a second so you don't have to wait for

³⁴

mazes and problem assignments to keep some novelty in the game. (Both

inspired by *Zork*

³⁵

as portability between *D&D* and these games, you would probably multiply their scoring points by 20 to get equivalent *D&D* acquiring treasure;; Roberts in *Mirkwood Tales* r problem solving as well as

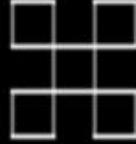
³⁶

Alarums, which consisted of only one respondent interested and capable of running *Zork* or *Adventures* among a host of polite one-line acknowledgments, indicates the rarity of access to the computing power needed for these games. the screen to write out stuff. TSR, how can you do better than that at a reasonable cost? [WH:#19]

This testifies to the continued existence, and increasing sophistications, of those PLATO-based systems.³⁷ TSR could not hope to match the cost to a university student of access to a PLATO system and its hobbyist-written games effectively zero. Nor could any company hope to sell to the university computer market, as the administrators of those computers uprooted frivolous programs like weeds where they sprouted. Nonetheless, as the microcomputer market grew, the demand for games kept pace, and early ventures began to put forth products: some for sale and some *pro bono* for the benefit of the hobby community.

Unsurprisingly, much of the impetus behind these games came from the San Francisco Bay Area, already a computing hotspot. As early as the spring of 1977, at the second incarnation of DunDraCon in Burlingame, one could attend Jeff Pimper's talk on Dungeons and Computers alongside Bonewits' talk on Real Magic. Few produced games that explicitly claimed inspiration from *Dungeons & Dragons*, no doubt in part because of TSR now-legendary litigiousness, but moreover because everyone seemed to have their own favorite fantasy role-playing variant. One of the earliest personal microcomputer advocacy groups, the People's Computer Company in Marin County, developed a close relationship with the Chaosium, whose fantasy role-playing game *Runequest* (1978) enjoyed a great deal of favor in the Bay Area. In the November 1978 edition of *People's Computers*, they profile *Runequest* with the intention to
computer programs
begin building to (1) assist a gamemaster conducting a game of *Runequest* or
(2) implement a simple form of *Runequest* as a computer game. Early issues of the Chaosium house organ *Different Worlds* contain reciprocal

advertisements for the People's Computer Company. In *Different Worlds* #5, circa 1979, one can find an advertisement from the software firm Automated Simulations (later to be known as Epyx) of Mountain View for one of their science fiction wargames, *Invasion Orion* (1979), which they sold on cassette for \$19.99 for the TRS-80, the Apple II or the Pet. Their value proposition to the consumer addressed a pressing need:

X + 

THOU HAST GAINED
0 HIT POINTS
COMMAND? EAST
COMMAND?

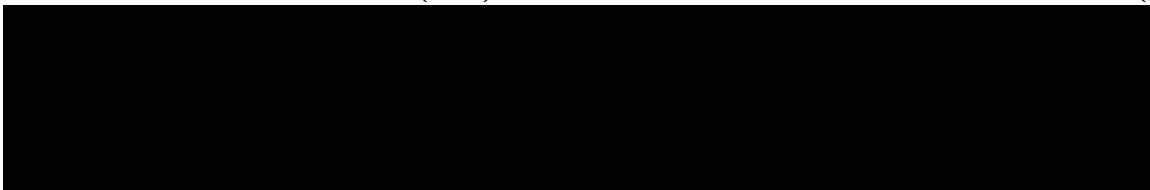
FOOD=62.5
H.P.=16
GOLD=8



COMMAND? FORWARD
~~CHEST~~
CHEST!
COMMAND?

FOOD=66.8
H.P.=16
GOLD=0

FIGURE 68: OVERWORLD (TOP) AND DUNGEON PERSPECTIVE IN AKALABETH (1980)



37

For more on the PLATO fantasy role-playing games of the late 1970s, such as *Oubliette*, *Moria* and *Orthanc*, see Barton, *Dungeons & Desktops*.

Automated Simulations offers you original Strategy games that provide a real solution to the problem of finding an opponent your opponent is included in the game. The computer thus solved the classic Avalon Hill Opponents Wanted dilemma: the computer always wanted an opponent.

When the implementation team behind *Zork*, including Dave Lebling, Tim Anderson and Marc Blank, incorporated in June 1979 as Infocom, they began working on a way to get their behemoth adventure game into the microcomputer market.³⁸ The solution, as they documented in *Creative Computing* of July 1980, was to create a Zork-language virtual machine that could be implemented on any number of microcomputer architectures, and then to rewrite *Zork* in this Zork-language. The first such interpreters they built ran on the Apple II and the TRS-80. Even under these customized conditions, the game proved prohibitively large, so they intended to split it into two smaller, independent games: *The Great Underground Empire, Part I*, and *The Great Underground Empire, Part II*, each of which is a self-contained program. In its most famous commercial incarnation, *Zork* actually needed to be divided into a trilogy.

In the summer of 1979, Gygax D&D/AD&D will very likely be offered in various forms in the years to come family and introductory packages, highly sophisticated expert versions, computerized forms, you name it. The first time that the *Dragon* advertised a computer game, however, TSR was not its publisher. *The Temple of Apshai!* (1979) came from the good people at Automated Simulations, who promised Hours of solitaire excitement you alone against all the perils the computer can summon! In this initial blurb in the *Dragon* #33 only a few months after the furor over James Dallas Egbert had wound down Automated Simulations promised that this title would be only the first game in the DUNJONQUEST series. Their advertisement appears alongside a new column in the *Dragon* called The Electric Eye which acknowledges that a new facet of games and gaming will be the use of electronics and the home computer. game, of which the author asserts

gamers, but then he shocks the readership by revealing that the game was played through a home computer.

The Temple of Apshai! more resembles the PLATO dungeon games than *Adventure* or *Zork*, however. Rather than hiding statistics from the player, *Apshai* eagerly shares them during character generation, when it rolls 3d6 to generate six abilities (the familiar ones, though substituting Intuition and Ego for Wisdom and Charisma).³⁹ Players name their characters (another departure from *Zork*, where the adventurer remains nameless) and go on a shopping spree with a small spending allowance, buying weapons and armor as necessary. The Dunjonmaster then asks which level of the dungeon the player would like to explore, and the character duly appears on a crudely-drawn map. As the character explores, the overhead display renders only the thick outline of the room that the character currently visits, along with any monsters sharing those quarters. Monsters include skeletons and giant rats, who amble toward the character unless halted by bowshots. Rather than typing instructions for movements, the character maneuvers awkwardly;; one uses several told an interviewer from *White Dwarf* that It begins with a dialogic excerpt from a role-playing conversations like the one above are familiar to keys to rotate the character s orientation on the map, and then number keys indicate how far the character will travel in the faced direction, from the tiniest nudge of hitting 1 to a giant leap of 7.

³⁸ Though the design work continued in Cambridge at MIT, their distribution and sales went through Personal Software, Inc. in Sunnyvale.

³⁹ Players may also simply choose to input their scores, equipment and gold, presumably to grant them the grossest possible character to explore the dungeon.

The clumsy and unattractive interface of *The Temple of Apshai!* and its graphical peers goes a long way towards explaining why Infocom emerged as a dominant player in the infancy of microcomputer gaming. In an article in *Byte* in December 1980 on

Computerized Fantasy Simulations or CFSs, Lebling concedes that: There are already CFS games that try to give the player a graphic view of his surroundings. As microcomputer technology advances, this will become more common, and the renditions will achieve higher quality: it will be technically feasible to have a CFS game illustrated by Frank Frazetta or Jeff Jones. On the other hand, the player s imagination probably has a more

detailed picture of the Great Underground Empire than could ever be drawn.⁴⁰

Like *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Zork* and its successors rely on the player's imagination to conjure their visuals. They also did not require players to worry about quantifying abilities like Strength or Dexterity in order to play: they concealed any system behind the intuitiveness of the dialogic interface. While *Zork* closely adheres to the dungeon adventure setting, subsequent Infocom products experimented with all of the mass-market adventure genres: science fiction, mystery, horror, comedy and even adult titles. The games could run on basically any system, and did not require programmers to accommodate the graphical peccadilloes of each distinct computer architecture.

Ultimately, however, the dominance of text over graphics proved short-lived. Throughout the 1980s, the capabilities of personal computers improved relentlessly, and in parity with those advances, the graphical dungeon games became better in every way: they had better graphics, better sound, better systems, better interfaces and better scenarios. They moreover brought non-stop action, a greater emphasis on combat and tactics. Beside them, the textual interface of Infocom games increasingly appeared cumbersome, constraining and vague. Graphical interfaces provided more exact information about the relative positions of combatants, as well as a segmented screen which could render an image of the dungeon in one panel while rendering vital statistics in another. Similarly, typing kill troll with sword may not seem like a lot of bother when one needs to type it once or twice in a game, but in a more combat-driven game where a sword may be swung thousands or tens of thousands of times, players preferred a single button they could mash, like the one they pressed in *Space Invaders* to fire on the shuffling ranks of descending aliens.

The graphical role-playing game franchises for personal microcomputers of the early 1980s, games such as *Ultima* or *Wizardry* (both 1981), exhibited most of the features that would define the computer role-playing game genre. The proto-*Ultima*, Richard Garriott's *Akalabeth* (1980), already went beyond the Gilded Hole by mapping the great outdoors of wilderness adventures, including towns where the character can purchase goods, especially the rapidly-depleted victuals required to explore the world and its dungeons. Underground, *Akalabeth* presented the dungeon through a wireframe firstperson interface, rather than the birds-eye interface of the

outdoors.⁴¹ *Wizardry* also gave a first-person view of the dungeon corridors, and moreover allowed a player to form parties of up to six characters to enter a dungeon together. Barry Gold had lamented of *Adventure* and *Zork* that you get a single person to play, not a party of adventurers. In his opinion, this limitation set those early games apart from the richer experience of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

⁴⁰ *Byte*, December 1980.

⁴¹ Since dungeon environments, when sketched at a wireframe level, contain very little variation (the game assumes dungeons are built from blocky corridors), this is not as computationally expensive as

The introduction of multi-character computer role-playing games, in which the player directs the actions of an entire party, hints at another feature of *Dungeons & Dragons* that got lost in the translation to the electronic environment: the collaborative dynamic of playing with other people. Where early video games like *Pong* and *Spacewar!* had a competitive structure that required two players (which obviated the need for the computer to dedicate its resources to simulating an opponent), dungeon adventure games followed the precedent of *Dungeons & Dragons* by removing any competitive element in favor of a you vs. the world dynamic, as George Phillips had put it. [AW:v2n8] Merely having multiple characters under your control does not change the fundamental solipsistic nature of these single-player games: the only conflict is between one person's interests and the game world. The player always controls the world's true heroes and keeps them in harmonious accord.⁴² Before computer games could recover that uncongenial party atmosphere, however, some questions needed to be addressed. In the 1979 article that the *Zork* authors published in *IEEE Computer*, they speculate on the potential for computer games to embrace multiple players in this fashion, but the problems seem insurmountable: The simplest possible such game introduces major problems, even ignoring the mechanism used to accomplish communication or sharing. For example, there are impressive problems related to the various aspects of simultaneity and synchronization. How do players communicate with each other? How do they co-ordinate actions, such as attacking some enemy in concert?

Putting aside implementation problems, a multiple-player game would need to have (we believe) fundamentally different types of problems to be interesting. If the game were cooperative (as are most *D&D* scenarios) then problems requiring several players aid in solving them would need to be

devised. If the game were competitive and like the current *Zork*, the first player to acquire the (only) correct tool for a job would have an enormous advantage, to give just one example. Other issues are raised by the statistic that the average player takes weeks and many distinct sessions to finish the game;; what happens to him during the time he is not playing and others are?

While the multiplayer computer role-playing game would later enjoy spectacular success in the marketplace, most of these concerns remain major design hurdles of games today. At the time, before widespread consumer Internet access, a problem like identifying the mechanism used to accomplish communication looked like an instant show-stopper. However, bear in mind that virtually all mainframe and minicomputer systems supported multiple terminals, operated by different users who connected at the same time. These computers had long allowed real-time chat between users logged in simultaneously, and thus in that limited scope, coordinated multiplayer gaming fell within the realm of possibility. In his article in *Byte* from the end of 1980, Lebling speculated that in this sort of system, each player (possibly not even aware how many others are playing) would see only his own view of the territory. He would be notified when other players enter or leave the room, and could talk to them.⁴³

than with fluid movement.

⁴² Multi-character games like *Wizardry* allow players to trade goods between characters in a party in ways that would incite a riot in any real *Dungeons & Dragons* party.

Lebling furthermore recalled that there was briefly a multiplayer version of the PDP-10 *Zork* several years ago, and then offhandedly mentioned that today there is a Multiple User Dungeon at Essex University in England. This Multiple User Dungeon (MUD) took its name from *Zork*, insofar as *Zork* briefly circulated under the name *Dungeon* (a fact Barry Gold mentioned in *Alarums* #30) before the authors learned of TSR enthusiasm for intellectual property claims;; nevertheless, a FORTRAN port of *Zork* bearing the name *Dungeon* traveled the world blissfully unaware of legal matters. Roy Trubshaw, a student at Essex, shepherded this MUD project until his graduation, at which time he handed it off to Richard Bartle. Like *Zork*, MUD adopted a dialogic textual interface, and applied verbal descriptions to areas and objects rather than graphical representations. Due to the rudimentary networking infrastructure of the time, text remained the preferred medium for multiplayer games for more than a decade to come.

In the networked multiplayer environment of a MUD, several mainstays of earlier text adventure games had to be sacrificed to solve the problems Lebling enumerates above. Effectively, *Zork* is a turn-based game, which operates similarly to a traditional two-person wargame. The player and the computer alternate actions, and if one does not supply new actions, the other must wait;; while in combat with the troll, a player can wander away from the computer for an hour or two and return to find the troll patiently waiting for the next command input. When multiple players await the results of their actions in real-time, however, the game cannot stall to collect moves from all potential actors, it must evaluate and institute moves in real-time, and players who wander away from their keyboards must face the consequences of inaction just as in a game of postal *Diplomacy*, the gamesmaster would set a deadline for orders, and players who submit nothing in time effectively lose their turn. Conversely, a multiplayer computer game must furthermore guard against players moving too quickly in the single-player *Zork*, a player could feed instructions to the machine literally as fast as the interpreter could consume them, with a frenzied typist taking twenty moves for every single one that a casual player might input, and in the multiplayer context commands must be throttled to ensure fairness. To avoid either extreme, such games implement a central timing system that permits events to occur asynchronously, without awaiting user input, and also disallowing a character from doing twenty irreconcilable things in the span of second. Once it is made available, a central clock allows all sorts of timed events to occur in game, from sunrises and sunsets to the spawning of random monsters.⁴⁴

Another key element in *Adventure* and *Zork* which a multiplayer environment cannot replicate is saving the game. In those text adventures, if a player needs to close the program or turn off their computer, they can always save the game to disk and resume later in the same spot. In a multiplayer game, however, the game state does not freeze the moment a single player logs off. The state of the game exists independently of any given player, and persists even when no one is logged in. Thus, in a single-player game like *Adventure*, if you found the wicker cage in one room, you could pick it up, go somewhere else, drop it, and reasonably expect to find it there again when you returned (barring wandering computer-controlled thieves);; only if you abandoned the game and started over from the beginning would the cage and all the rest of the game reset to its original,

default state. Not so in a multiplayer environment, where the state of the game always remains in flux and will almost never entirely return to a prior state (short of operational disasters like a database reset). This property of the game world persistence took the place of saving, and it conferred to these early games something like an independent reality.

⁴³ Some of the early PLATO dungeon adventure variants allowed multiple players to form up into a party. See Barton, *Dungeons & Desktops*.

⁴⁴ *The Temple of Apshai!* illustrates that a central clock is useful for managing wandering monsters even in a single-player game. Monsters spawn randomly in *Apshai*, and if a character sits in any one place for too long an enemy is bound to approach. If a player actively inputs moves, the computer treats them like turns and gives the monster its own turn to move;; however, an internal clock awaits player input (for five seconds or so) and then assumes that the player has defaulted on their opportunity to act that turn.

When you replace saving with persistence, you take away the ability of players to retroactively undo mistakes by returning to a prior save the consequences of actions in a multiplayer game do not admit of such easy reversals. The occurrence of asynchronous events forces the player into a reactive stance, rather than one where they act at their leisure. In both these respects, a multiplayer role-playing game more closely simulates the universe, as Lebling would have it it can create a more immersive experience for players, though certainly not a more relaxing one. As the game world grows increasingly continuous and consensual, rather than intermittent and personalized, it necessarily appears more real. In their persistent realism and moreover in their transcendence of the solipsistic origins of computer gaming, these earliest multiplayer games deriving from *Dungeons & Dragons* became the first virtual worlds. When Essex University connected the PDP-10 running MUD to the ARPAnet, and fielded a few remote connections, effectively this joined those virtual worlds to the connectivity afforded by the fledgling Internet.

By the 1990s, widespread academic connectivity and consumer dial-up Internet access allowed MUDs to flourish in innumerable independently-operated instances and variants, each of which supported scores of simultaneously connected players;; the largest might support a few hundred. Hobbyists operated virtually all of these MUDs free of charge, and in some respects that operational role retains some vestiges of the responsibilities of

the traditional dungeon master who sets the fundamental parameters of the world and has some ultimate say over the commonwealth of the game. These modest services proved that a potential market existed for a commercial offering that might address thousands or even millions of players massively multiplayer games in enormous, professionally-designed virtual worlds. To transition to the mass market, however, these games had to turn their back on the now-archaic textual interface and rely on the increasing networking capability of personal computers to support a graphic world. *Ultima Online* (1997), the first commercial game of this new family, presented its persistent world in a compelling graphical interface honed by nearly two decades of *Ultima* titles, a world players could see and hear. It included all of the mainstays of the role-playing genre: carefully delineated modes of exploration, combat and logistics, progression systems and a sophisticated economy.⁴⁵ *Ultima Online* ran without any human dungeon master it simply presented a world that the players could plunder, a platform for various goals and digressions an open-ended game with a scope of agency that allowed players to advance or dally wherever they saw fit.

⁴⁵ A critical influence on the economy of early massively multiplayer role-playing games must be *Magic: the Gathering*, the collectible card game by Richard Garfield which Wizards of the Coast released at **GenCon XXVI** in August 1993. *Magic*, while ostensibly a game where players duel one another with decks of cards representing monsters, spells, lands and so on, also comprised a metagame centered around the acquisition of the cards themselves. By setting different levels of commonality for cards (common, uncommon and rare) and forcing players to purchase allotments without knowing what cards they would find within, *Magic* established an ad hoc economy for rare

The virtual worlds hosted by *Ultima Online* and its many descendants are not real worlds, but they are worlds that can be experienced in a way that seems much more immersive than clambering through steam tunnels beneath a university. computers largely resolved the dichotomy between realism and playability excel at the management of the enormous number of circumstantial modifiers that create a realistic game, but since the burden of calculating those factors falls on no human participant, the playability remains unaffected. While the helmet class of *Chivalry & Sorcery* may typify the excesses of table-top realism, the computer role-playing games of the 1980s would assign differing levels of mitigation and avoidance to

helmets, shields, gloves, boots and related accessories without burdening players with much additional complexity. Spell-point systems, which Gygax once condemned as unmanageable for *Dungeons & Dragons*, became the norm once humans no longer needed to track their expenditure and restoration. This realistic playability does come at a cost a computer cannot improvise or innovate, traits that a human referee can leverage to craft a more engrossing world. For many players, however, that trade-off is made happily. In a multiplayer game environment, the computer can also fall back to the position of an intermediary, allowing humans to improvise and innovate with one another as players, which can approximate, and in some cases exceed, the imagination of a dedicated referee. What makes these virtual environments proper worlds is not so much their scenery as their inhabitants, the community that players join when they enter the game. Like the real world, it is a place where individuals compete and collaborate as necessary to achieve their goals, and the interpersonal dynamics that this invokes, as Chapter Four illustrated, lend a depth to the game that no system can model or simulate.

The end result serves as a rebuttal to the defensive proclamation of Tim Kask, that: TSR has never ever suggested that *D&D* was meant to be acted out. How could it be, when half of what makes it so much fun magic cannot be simulated? In a virtual world, the simulation of radical forms of magic becomes simplicity itself: teleporting when you utter XYZZY in *Adventures* requires code no different from the code that moves you to an adjacent room. This feat would not be available to explorers of steam tunnels, for example. In a crucial sense, one can act out a fantasy role-playing game in a virtual world, thanks to the transparency of the system and the real-time responsiveness of the interface. If we lose ourselves in the game environment, magic can seem as consistent and continuous with our experience as events do in the real world. The tools of simulation that evolved from the earliest wargames, when combined with the vision of fantasy fiction, created the potential to model impossible things like magic in a way that felt plausible. Ultimately, computers cards, which might be traded or sold in a secondary market as players tried to assemble the most powerful decks. Especially in the earliest days of *Magic*, the rarest cards were quite scarce in the first printing, only eleven hundred of each rare existed, for example. Thus all of the *Magic* players in the world effectively competed for a finite and small set of resources, typically through sheer spending power, despite the intention of the designers that players would exchange cards

through ante mechanisms. The meta-game of *Magic* therefore can be seen as a pioneering massively multiplayer game, though not an online one. Online successors did borrow heavily from its commonality systems: both in setting different commonality for treasure dropped by foes, and by establishing player-driven auctions to set the valuation for that treasure.

immersive, even real to the player. *Dungeons & Dragons* popularized these ideas at the inception of the consumer software market, and thus seeded the computer industry with the possibility and challenge of creating virtual worlds as real to us as the world of Norse mythology was to Harold Shea. In the end, these virtual worlds attack the impossibility of simulating fantasy by standing the problem on its head: we cannot bring the fantastic into the real world, but we can elevate fantasy into something we can experience, and those experiences are inescapably real. This book has described only our first small steps in this direction.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

As this study draws heavily on fanzines and games, the bibliography that follows departs from convention on several substantial points. Fanzines often lack the qualities required by traditional journal-style citations: a fanzine may omit a date or place of publication, clear attribution of contents to authors, consistent volume or issue indicators, page numbers or even a title. A continuous zine may change all of those variables several times in a year, swap out editors regularly, merge with other zines and then strike out again on its own. Even where there is page numbering, it is often unhelpful: zines and the articles they contain are usually so short that page numbers are not necessary to locate a quote readily, and longer zines (such as APAs) where page numbering would be very welcome forgo page numbers entirely due to their method of compilation.

Games also resist traditional methods of citation. Outside of the work of a small circle of celebrity designers, most games have titles far more famous than the names of their inventors some publishers fail to declare design credits, even so a serviceable index must order games alphabetically by title. The distinction between published and unpublished works also applies poorly to games that circulated dozens or perhaps hundreds of copies in fanzines, in stapled pamphlets or in manila folders. Even the lion's share of the seminal works of fantasy fiction appeared first in briefly-available

periodicals, then in scarce hardcovers and only later, during the fantasy boom, in mass market paperbacks;; at each stage in the process, the text conformed to the fancies of new editors or post-facto collaborators, leaving a trail of differing versions that posterity may speculate that a Gygax or Arneson read. The complexity and obscurity of this reference material has been a significant impediment to scholarship, and thus one of the primary aims of this book is to lay out the sources perspicuously.

To achieve that aim, this bibliography is divided into five subsections: game zines, science fiction zines, games, fiction (including comics) and further reading. Citations in the text given within square brackets typically point to either the first or second section of the index. Game zine citations are abbreviated but not italicized (e.g., [A&E] for *Alarums & Excursions*), while major science fiction fanzine distributions are both abbreviated and italicized (e.g., [APA-L] for the Los Angeles Amateur Press Association). Two game publications receive enough citations to warrant their own abbreviations: [FFC] for the *First Fantasy Campaign* and [OD&D] for first-edition *Dungeons & Dragons*, both of which are found under Game Citations in this bibliography.

GAME ZINE INDEX

Fanzines are whenever possible cited by volume and number (e.g., [IW:v1n6] signifying Volume 1, Number 6);; for those zines that dispense with volumes altogether, a hash is given to signify the issue number (e.g., [WGN:#116]). When both volumes and numbers are omitted or problematic, a date will appear (e.g., [SIM:Apr1970]). Note that over the course of their lifetimes, some zines switch between these conventions, including [S&T], [PZF] and even briefly the [IW].

[A&E] *Alarums & Excursions*, published by Lee Gold. Monthly but skips December, first issue June 1975. Los Angeles area. APA format, *Dungeons & Dragons* and later role-playing games. [AHG] *Avalon Hill General*, published by Avalon Hill Game Company. Edited by Thomas Shaw until early 1972, and later by Donald Greenwood. Bimonthly, first issue May 1964. Baltimore, Maryland. Board wargaming, Origins convention.

[ASD] *All Sports Digest*, published by Negamco. Monthly, first issue February 1962 (typo states 1961). Duluth, Minnesota. Sports simulation games, some wargaming.

[AW] *American Wargamer*, organ of the American Wargaming Association. First edited by George Phillips, then by election of the AWA (Kevin Slimak and Rod Burr were subsequent editors). Monthly, first issue

August 1973. Boston, Massachusetts. Board and miniature wargaming, *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[BMSS] British Model Soldier Society's *Bulletin*, organ of the British Model Soldier Society. Edited (in the 1950s issues cited here) by A. G. Clayton. London, United Kingdom. Ten issues per year (monthly except only two between June and September), first issue January 1938 (earlier newsletter goes back to September 1935). Miniature collecting, manufacture and painting, some miniature wargaming.

[CB] *Cosmic Balance*, published and edited by Scott Rosenberg. Irregular on a monthly schedule, first issue April 9, 1976. Jamaica, New York. *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[CO] *The Courier*, formerly *Newsletter* (up to [v1n8]), organ of the New England Wargames Association (NEWA), edited by R. Bryant. Published eight times per year, first issue (as *Newsletter*) January 1969. Brockton, Massachusetts. Miniature wargaming.

[COTT] *Corner of the Table*, organ of the University of Minnesota Military History Club and subsequently Midwest Military Simulation Association, published and edited by Dave Arneson. Irregular on a bimonthly schedule, first issue January 1968;; after final issue of 1972, discontinues until October 1974. Frequently missing issues in schedule. Only two issues each printed in 1975 and 1976, then folded. Occasional brief supplements. Note that both the 1970 and 1971 COTT identify themselves as Volume 3, and thus there are distinct issues bearing the label [v3n2] and [v3n5];; Arneson corrects this for the final issue of 1971, which he labels [v4n6], but then as 1972 COTT is denoted as Volume 4, another issue also bears the label [v4n6]. Convention in citations is thus to put the year between the name and the volume number;; e.g., [COTT:72:v4n6]. However, many issues bear no dates or volume/number identification, and can be dated only by internal evidence. St. Paul, Minnesota. Club news, *Diplomacy*, Blackmoor and other Twin Cities campaigns.

[CW] *Canadian Wargamer*, published by Jack A. Hutchings. Irregular (roughly quarterly), first issue spring 1967. Linked to the *Trumpeter* (common subscription). Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. Wargaming, regional interest.

[DGN] *Dungeoneer*, published by Paul Jacquays, later organ of the Judges Guild. Targeted bimonthly, first issue June 1976. Spring Arbor, Michigan. *Dungeons & Dragons* and other role-playing games. Morrison. Monthly,

first issue December 1975. [DD] *Dankendismal*, published by John M. Moorestown, New Jersey. *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[DB] *Domesday Book*, published by the Castle & Crusade Society of the International Federation of Wargaming (originally IFW LGTGA/Militaria Medieval). Edited by Gary Gygax, Chris Schleicher, and then Rob Kuntz. Irregular: first biweekly (issues #1 #3), then monthly (issues #4 #7), then roughly quarterly through 1971 (#8 #11), followed by two issues in June and July 1972 (#12 and #13). First issue March 15, 1970. Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, for the Gygax and Kuntz issues, Chicago, Illinois for the Schleicher issues. Medieval miniature wargaming, *Diplomacy*, Blackmoor.

[DR] The *Dragon*, organ of Tactical Studies Rules, originally edited by Tim Kask. Bimonthly until #13 (April 1978), then monthly, first issue June 1976. Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Successor to the *Strategic Review*. Role-playing games, fantasy.

[DW] *Different Worlds*, house organ of the Chaosium, published by Tadashi Ehara. Bimonthly, first issue February 1979. Albany, California. Role-playing games.

[EC] *El Conquistador*, published by Viking Systems, edited by Gordon Anderson. Monthly schedule, first issue September 1973, irregular by 1975. Chicago, Illinois. As of January 1974 (Vol. 1, No. 5), *El Conquistador* resumed the incomplete subscriptions of former *IW* subscribers under a deal brokered by Len Lakofka. *Diplomacy*, wargaming, role-playing games.

[EU] *Europa*, published by Walter Luc Haas. Irregular schedule with multiple double or sometimes triple issues, first stand-alone issue designated #1a in August 1974 (Haas considered true issue #1 of *Europa* to be *Signal* #60). Basel, Switzerland. Subscriptions measured by numbers which equate to 32 40 pages each;; a subscription therefore purchased a fixed number of pages divided across the corresponding number of mailings. Wargaming, role-playing games, general games, books.

[FTA] *Fire the Arquebusiers!*, published by Greg Costikyan. Irregular schedule: one single then a double issue, first issue November 22, 1975. New York, New York. *Dungeons & Dragons*, other wargaming.

[GL] *Gamesletter*, organ of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (NFFF) Games Bureau, edited by Don Miller. Irregular, no consistent schedule (mid 1972, for example in #41, stated schedule is every 2 4 weeks, but only two double issues appear in the whole of 1974), often double issues, first issue February 1965. Numbered issues, though also volume numbers. Wheaton,

Maryland. Game reviews, zine catalogs, wargames, chess and *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[GPGPN] *Great Plains Game Players Newsletter* (or *Great Plains Game Player* (#6), *Great Plains Games Players* (#7 and after)), edited by Jim Lurvey. Irregularly on a monthly basis (#3), perhaps six or seven per year, first issue early 1973. Vermillion, South Dakota. Later evolved into *Gamelog*. Wargaming, *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[GRS] *Graustark*, published by John Boardman. Biweekly, first issue May 1963. Brooklyn, New York. First postal *Diplomacy* zine, though quickly expanded into subjects of general interest in addition to *Diplomacy*.

[GWPL] *Guide to Wargaming Periodical Literature*, published by George Phillips. Quarterly, with volumes stretching over two years for eight issues in a volume, first issue is first quarter of 1970. Expands on a previous one-off called *The Big Six* indexing wargaming articles from 1964 1969 which had appeared in the six most important early board wargaming zines ([AHG], [IW], [PZF], [S&T], [T&V] and the *Mercenary*). Boston, Massachusetts. As of 1976, becomes *History of Wargaming Quarterly*. Index of articles on wargaming, *Diplomacy*, *Dungeons & Dragons* published in fanzines.

[HH] *Haven Herald*, published by Stephen Tihor. Irregular, though monthly during bursts of activity, first issue May 1, 1975. Princeton, New Jersey. *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[IW] The monthly periodical of the International Federation of Wargaming, 1968 1972, with some issues in 1973, which appeared under various titles during that period. Editors include Scott Duncan, Phil Pritchard, and John Bobek. First as the *Spartan* from January 1968 [v1n1] to [v1n5];; [v1n6] bears the name the *Cardboard Commander*;; [v1n7] is untitled;; [v1n8] returns to the *Spartan*. From [v2n1] to [v2n7], known as the *IFW Monthly*, then as of [v2n8] as the *International Wargamer*. Note that [IWQ] previously used the title *International Wargamer* for some issues in late 1968 and early 1969 before the monthly adopted that title. Also note that [v1] The *Spartan* should not be confused with the 1966 1967 USCAC predecessor also called the *Spartan* (issues in 1966: March, April, June, October, December;; 1967: bimonthly up until June, afterwards discontinued), nor should it be confused with any publications of the Spartan wargaming club (see [SIM]). Chicago, Illinois and elsewhere. Board and miniature wargaming, chess, *Diplomacy*, conventions and miscellaneous.

[IWM] IFW *Messenger*, published as an official organ of the IFW Senate. Very irregular, per voting activities of the Senate, first issue in 1969. Club news, ballots, constitutional amendments, some announcements.

[IWQ] *International Wargamer* quarterly of the IFW. Only three issues produced: [v1n6] late 1968;; [v2n1] January March 1969;; and [Spring69] March June 1969 designated only as Spring Issue. Wargaming, amateur game design.

[IWS] *International Wargamer Supplement*, published by the IFW as a companion to the *International Wargamer*. Intended for monthly publication, but with many lapses, first issue December 1969. The [IWS] carries the club news, announcements, reports, ads, etc. which formerly appeared in the *International Wargamer*.

[JGJ] *Judges Guild Journal*, house organ of the Judges Guild. Bimonthly, first issue October 1976. Decatur, Illinois. *Dungeons & Dragons* and role-playing games, with catalogs.

[KR] *Kranor-Ril*, published by Bob Jousma (first issue published by Chip Charnely). Irregular, first issue September 1975. Grand Rapids, Michigan. *Dungeons & Dragons*, variants, other role-playing games.

[LD] *Liaisons Dangereuses*, published by Len Lakofka in association with the IFW. Monthly with irregularities, first issue May 18, 1969. Chicago, Illinois. *Diplomacy* and later *Dungeons & Dragons*. [LG] *Lowrys Guidon*, published by Don Lowry. Quarterly with irregularities, first issue January 1972. Evanston, Indiana, and later Belfast, Maine. Miniature catalogs, some wargaming articles. [LOC] *Lords of Chaos*, published by Niall Shapero. Quarterly, APA format, first issue spring 1977. Belmont, California. *Dungeons & Dragons* and other role-playing games.

[LW] *Little Wars*, published by Tactical Studies Rules. First bimonthly (alternating months with the *Dragon*), quarterly in 1977, returning to bimonthly for three issues in 1978, first issue July 1976. Assimilated the NEWA house organ the *Courier* ([CO]) with its first issue. Wargaming.

[LV] *La Vivandière*, published by Greg Scott of GHQ miniatures. Quarterly, first issue Fall 1973 (subsequent issues adopt a volume/number designation). Minneapolis, Minnesota. Wargaming, *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[MD] *Midgard*, published by Hartley Patterson, later edited by Will Haven, then by Rowan Edwards and Graham England. Irregular, first issue January 1971. Beaconsfield, UK. Midgard postal fantasy game of the same name. Later issues incorporated *Times of Caran*, which Patterson edited. Rules, ballots, events, letters.

[MF] *Midgard Forum*, edited by Tom Drake. For its first year, roughly monthly, afterwards very irregular, first issue February 1973. Logan, Utah, and then Cookeville, Tennessee. Paired with the *Midgard Journal* as of issue #6. Dedicated to the Midgard II postal fantasy game. Rules, ballots, events, letters.

[MJ] *Midgard Journal*, edited by Tom Drake. Distributed with *Midgard Forum* (see above) on the same schedule, first issue late 1973. In-character news and events, advertisements relating to the Midgard II postal fantasy game.

[MGR] *Midwest Gaming Review*, previously *Michigan Gaming Review* (until issue #5), editor Len Scensny. Comes out at least three times per year and only once each three to four months [#3], later bimonthly, first issue 1972. Rochester, Michigan. Wargaming, some *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[MM] *Miniaturas Militares*, a.k.a. the *Bulletin* of the Southern California Military Figure Collectors Society, edited by Joe Fowler and later Jack Scruby. Monthly, with some double issues (typically ten or more mailings per year), first issue 1953. Tipton, California. Miniature collecting and manufacture, some wargaming.

[MV] *Moves*, published by Simulation Publications, Inc., edited by James Dunnigan. Bimonthly, first issue February 1972. New York, New York. Wargaming, reviews.

[NFB] *News from Bree*, published by Hartley Patterson, originally as an organ of the Tolkien Society. Initially very irregular (three in the first month), later quarterly, first issue November 1971. Beaconsfield, UK. Tolkien Society news, subsequently games, especially Midgard and *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[NWR] *New War Reports*, published by Tullio Proni, then Gary Gygax, then Bill McDuffie. Irregular, first issue April 7, 1967;; first Gygax [v2n1] April 28, 1969. Originally Hollywood, Florida, then Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and later Nyack, New York. Postal science fiction game, rules, book reviews.

[O&W] *Owl & Weasel* by Games Workshop, editors Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson. Monthly, first issue February 1975. London, UK. Became *White Dwarf* [WDF] as of issue #25. Games, especially *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[PZF] *Panzerfaust*, published by Don Greenwood and later Don Lowry, sometime official organ of Pennsylvania Organized Wargamers. Monthly skipping May and December, thus ten issues per year, first issue April 1967.

Under Greenwood, from Sayre, Pennsylvania;; under Lowry, from Evanston, Indiana, and then Belfast, Maine. Folded into Lowry's magazine *Campaign* as of issue #71. Changed from volume/number convention to absolute numbers in 1970.

[QQG] *Quick Quincey Gazette*, published by Howard Mahler. Originally monthly, then quarterly, first issue October 1976. First Princeton, New Jersey, later Flushing, New York. *Dungeons & Dragons*. [RC] *Ryth Chronicle*, published by John van der Graaf. Irregular, first issue March 1975. Mt. Clemens, Michigan. *Dungeons & Dragons*.

[RD] *Ramsey Diplomat*, published by Pete Gaylord. Biweekly, with gaps, first issue November 1969. Roseville, Minnesota. *Diplomacy* and some Twin Cities wargame campaign info.

[S&T] *Strategy & Tactics*, published by Chris Wagner and subsequently by Poultron Press/SPI. First issue January 1967, roughly monthly for first year, bimonthly in 1968 and 1969, only four issues in 1970, afterwards steady bimonthly. Moves from volume/number convention to absolute numbers after [v3n2] with #19. Early volumes republished in compendiums (#1-#4) with valuable historical essays by Wagner. Wagner published from Japan, later Poultron Press published out of New York, New York. Wargaming,

[SG] *Space Gamer*, organ of Metagaming, edited by Howard Thompson. Quarterly, first issue Spring 1975. Austin, Texas. Wargaming, science fiction, *Dungeons & Dragons*, role-playing games.

[SL] *Slingshot*, published by the Society of the Ancients, founding editor Tony Bath. Bimonthly, first issue September 1965. Southampton, UK, moving with editors. Ancient and medieval miniature wargaming, related historical topics.

[SIM] *Spartan International Monthly*, previously *Spartan National Competition League Monthly*, published by Spartan International, edited by Dan Hoffbauer. Monthly, first issue as *SIM* December 1969. Hollywood, California. Wargaming, club news, conventions, tournaments.

[SN] *Supernova*, published by Lewis Pulsipher and later Rick Loomis, affiliated with the IFW and subsequently Flying Buffalo. As of May 1977, edited by Ken St. Andre. Monthly with irregularities, first issue April 20, 1971. Wargaming, fantasy and science fiction games, later role-playing games.

[SR] *The Strategic Review*, published by Tactical Studies Rules, edited by Gary Gygax and subsequently Tim Kask. Quarterly until the end of 1975

then bimonthly, first issue January 1975. Last issue April 1976 [v2n2], after which replaced by the *Dragon*. Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Wargaming, *Dungeons & Dragons*, other role-playing games.

[SSGJ] *Spartan Simulation Gaming Journal*, published by Spartan International Competition League, edited by Dan Hoffbauer. Quarterly, first issue Winter 1972. Long Beach, California. Wargaming, conventions and tournaments.

[THG] *Thangorodrim*, published by Bill McDuffie, associated with the IFW and NFFF Games

Bureau. Irregular, first issue [v1n1] June 21, 1969 (though curiously, two undated Rules issues bear the label [v1n0] and [v1n00]). Nyack, New York. *Diplomacy*.

[TTT] *Table Top Talk*, published by Jack Scruby. Bimonthly, first issue January 1962. Visalia, California. Wargaming, miniatures, catalogs.

[T&V] *Tactics & Variants*, originally *The Stormtrooper* (until [v2n6]), organ of Aggressor Homeland and successor wargaming clubs, edited by John Rancourt. Monthly, first issue June 1967. Waterville, Maine. Wargaming.

[WB] *War Bulletin*, published by David Berg and then Hartley Patterson (as of #11). Irregular, roughly monthly, first issue July 22, 1970. *Diplomacy*. Highfield, UK then Beaconsfield, UK. *Diplomacy*.

[WD] *Wargamer's Digest* produced by Gene McCoy. Not to be confused with the *War Game Digest* of Jack Scruby [WGD]. Monthly, first issue October 1973. Madison, Wisconsin. Wargaming. [WDF] *White Dwarf*, organ of Games Workshop. Bimonthly, first issue June 1977. Successor to *Owl & Weasel*. London, UK. Role-playing games, wargames.

[WG] *Wargaming*, organ of Fantasy Games Unlimited, edited by Scott Bizar. Bimonthly, first issue 1977. Roslyn, New York. Wargaming, fantasy.

[WGN] *Wargamer's Newsletter*, published by Don Featherstone. Monthly, first issue April 1962. Southampton, UK. Miniature wargaming.

[WGD] *War Game Digest*, produced by Jack Scruby, later assisted by Tony Bath and Don Featherstone. Quarterly, 1957 1962 with one additional issue in 1971, first issue March 1957. As of 1960 [v4n1], alternating British and American editions, British editions edited by Bath and Featherstone, until [v6n1], after which Scruby discontinued the British edition. Visalia, California and Southampton, UK. Wargaming.

[WH] *The Wild Hunt*, published by Mark Swanson and Glenn Blacow, APA Format. Monthly, first issue January 1976. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Dungeons & Dragons and role-playing games. [WI] *Wargamer's Information*, organ of Flying Buffalo, edited by Rick Loomis. Monthly, first issue February 1975. Scottsdale, Arizona. Wargaming, *Dungeons & Dragons*, other role-playing games. OTHER GAME ZINES MENTIONED

Albion (Don Turnball, UK. *Diplomacy*, Wargaming)
APA-DUD (Robert Sacks, New York. *Dungeons & Dragons* APA) *Armchair General* (Pat Condray, Maryland. Wargaming)
Atlantis (Chris Schleicher, Illinois. IFW/N3F *Diplomacy*)
Bellitus (Will Haven, UK. *Diplomacy*)
Brontosaurus (Len Lakofka, Illinois. *Diplomacy*)
Cymry (Walter J. Williams, Arizona. Fantasy wargaming)
Deck of Many Things (Mike Bartnikowski, Michigan. *Dungeons & Dragons*) *Diplomania* (Don Miller, Florida. *Diplomacy*)
Diplophobia (Don Miller, Florida. *Diplomacy*)
Empire (John Boardman, New York. Games)
Fantasia Times (Jim Lawson, Ontario. Midgard)
Flying Buffalo's Favorite Magazine (Rick Loomis, Arizona. Play-by-mail games)
Gamer's Guide (Daniel O. Hoffbauer, California. Wargaming)
Games & Puzzles (Graeme Levin, London. General games)
Gamesman (Don Miller, Arizona. General games)
Glockorla (Dave Lebling, Massachusetts. *Diplomacy*)
IGHiP (Mike Bartnikowski, Michigan. Wargaming)
Interplanetary Communicator (Sam Ferris, Michigan. IFW/Space wargaming)
Jastzrab (Stan Wrobel, Ohio. *Diplomacy*)
MFCA Guidon (MFCA, Pennsylvania. Miniature figures.)
Midgard III (Irvin Koch, Tennessee. Midgard)
OD&DITIES (Richard Tongue, United Kingdom. *Dungeons & Dragons*)
Pegasus (Judges Guild, Illinois. *Dungeons & Dragons*)
Pocket Armenian (Scott Rosenberg, New York. *Diplomacy*)
Ruritania (David McDaniel, California. *Diplomacy*)
Shadizar Herald (Tony Bath, UK. Wargaming Hyboria)
Signal (John Mansfield, Canada. Wargaming)
Spellbound (Scott Johnson and Andrew Muller, New York. *Dungeons & Dragons*)
Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious (Don Miller, Arizona. *Diplomacy*)
The Crusader (Troll Lord Games, Arkansas. *Dungeons & Dragons*)

The Trumpeter (Jack Hutchings, Canada. Wargaming)

Trollcrusher (Bryan Ansall, UK. *Dungeons & Dragons*, APA)

Urf Durfal (Greg Costikyan, New York. *Diplomacy*)

Xenogogic (Lawrence William Perry, San Diego. *Diplomacy* and simulation)

SCIENCE--FICTION ZINES

Citations of science fiction zines throughout the text typically list the distribution rather than the fanzine within the distribution. Thus, while zines by Lee Gold such as Haplography in *APA-L* are frequently cited within the text, typically that citation will note only the mailing of *APA-L* in which it appears. Individual zines cited below note their distribution where appropriate. Many of the more prominent fan efforts are described in Tymn and Ashley, *Science Fiction, Fantasy and Weird Fiction Magazines*, in the section on Academic Periodicals and Major Fanzines, though this source must be used with some caution. Coverage of fanzines and fan communities can also be found in Warner, *A Wealth of Fable* and *All Our Yesterdays*.

DISTRIBUTIONS

[*APA-L*] Amateur Press Association of Los Angeles, produced by LASFS (the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society), first issue in October 1964. Weekly.

[*FAPA*] Fantasy Amateur Press Association, produced by the National Fantasy Fan Federation (NFFF), first mailing in 1937. Quarterly.

[*SAPS*] Spectator Amateur Press Society, produced by the body of the same name, first mailing in 1947. Quarterly.

[*NAPA*] Another Amateur Press Association of the NFFF.

[*OMPA*] Off-trail Magazine Publishers Association, first mailing in 1954.

[*CULT*] The Cult, rotating editorship, first mailing in 1954. Mailing entitled the *Fantasy Rotator*. Triweekly. Membership capped at 13, though others received the *Fantasy Rotator* through the waiting list or various honorary appointments.

[*Minneapa*] Minneapolis Amateur Press Association, produced by Minn-stf (the Minneapolis Science Fiction Society). First mailing in July 1972. Monthly. Successor to *Lou's APA* started by Louis Fallert (a.k.a. Blue Petal).

FANZINES

[*AMR*] *Amra*, published by the Hyborian Legion. Originally edited by George R. Heap, then George H. Scithers. Irregular (mailed from time to time); [v1] began in April 1956 (thirteen issues in volume), [v2] began January 1959 and extended into the 1980s. [v1] published in Philadelphia;;

[v2] in Stanford, California then many other locations. Sword-and-sorcery fiction, history, literature.

Ancalagon (Philadelphia Science Fiction Society)

Bleak December (Jim Dapkus)

Coventranian Gazette (Paul Stanbery, Coventry. Three issues.)

Dauringa 101 (Doktor Destrukto [Frank Coe])

Dauringa Extra (Doktor Destrukto [Frank Coe])

Destrukto s Last Dauringa (Doktor Destrukto [Frank Coe])

Equation (Paul Stanbery)

Eternity (Paul Stanbery)

Fanciful Tales (Donald A. Wollheim)

The Fantasy Fan (Charles D. Hornig)

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Knowable (John Boardman)

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Mest (Ted Johnstone [David McDaniel])

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PRISCVS ORDO SECLORVM (John Boardman)

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Games are listed here alphabetically by title, and throughout this study are cited by title. This is partly a practical matter some games produced by large commercial shops lack design credits altogether;; for example, Avalon Hill advertised few individual design credits in its titles in the 1960s (though in the *General* or other sources, authorship was not guarded as a secret). Although an ongoing committee process often refined these commercial titles, where available a primary designer will be designated as author. Very common American boardgames such as *Monopoly* are excluded from this bibliography;; for more information on these games see Whitehill, *Games: American Boxed Games and Their Makers*.

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Dealing with mythological sources, the question of whether or not they constitute fiction is a problematic one. The works of the Brothers Grimm, as well as various eddas and sagas, are listed in this section.

For further information on the pulp and later periodical fiction market for fantasy and science fiction, see Moskovitz s *Under the Moons of Mars*, Weinberg s *The Weird Tales Story* and Hanning s *American Pulp Magazines*.

For encyclopedic sources on the early sciencefiction pulps, consult the magazine histories in Bleiler, *Science-Fiction: The Gernsback Years* as well as Tymn and Ashley, *Science Fiction, Fantasy and Weird Fiction Magazines*. Virtually all of the prozines changed editors, publishing houses and even titles with some regularity over their decades of existence. References here describe only their initial, or most noteworthy, incarnations. For more information on *The Strand*, *The Windsor*, *Blackwood's* and other nineteenth-century British periodicals, see Ashley's *The Age of the Storytellers*. Some of the history of early fantasy book editions can be found in Joshi's *Sixty Years of Arkham House*.

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