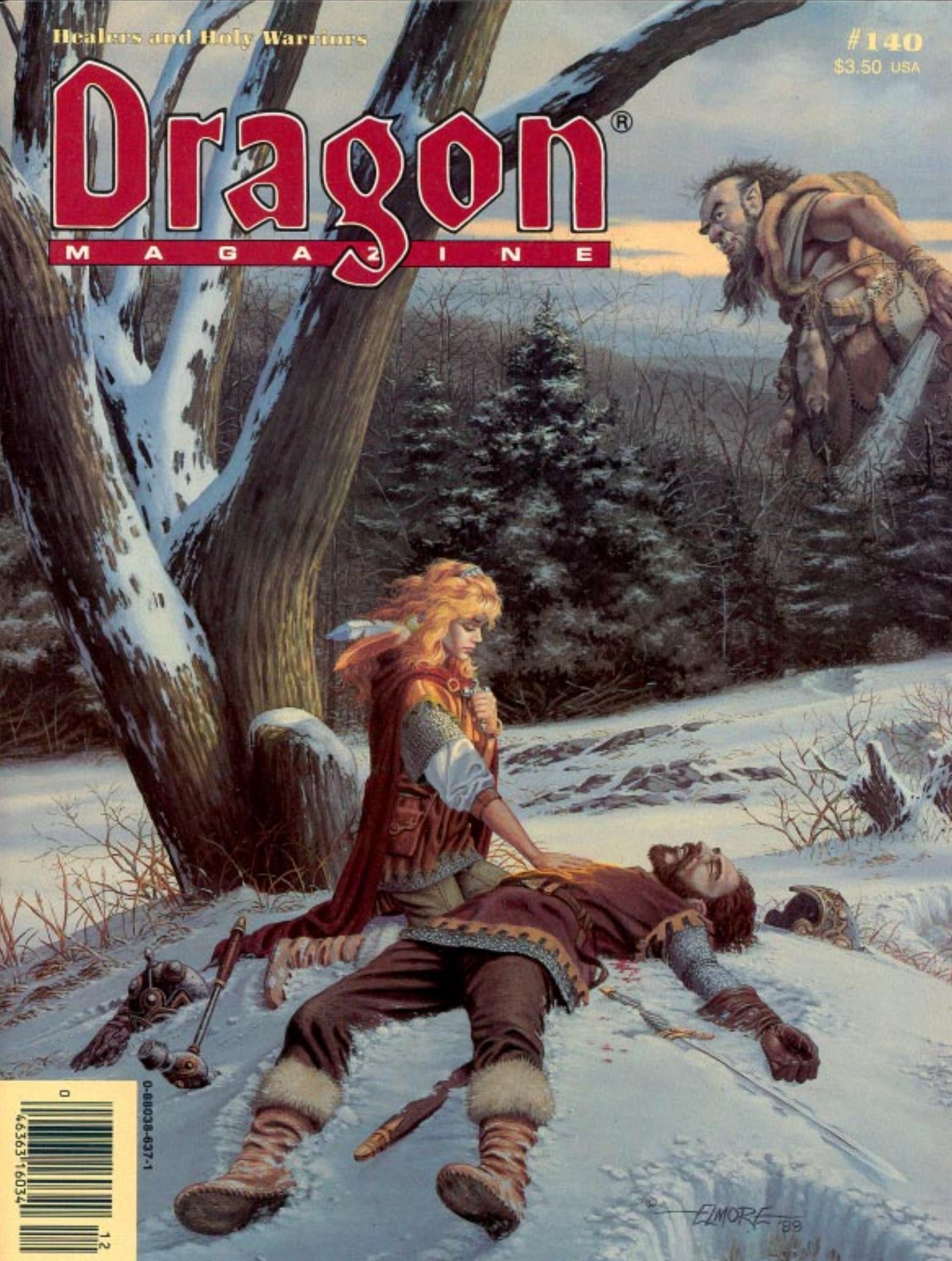


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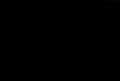
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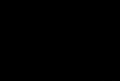


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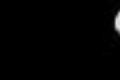
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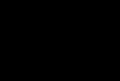
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December 1988

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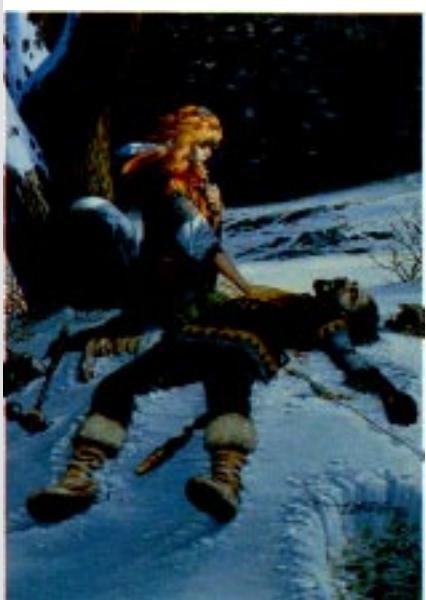
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## COVER

Fans should have no trouble recognizing the cover artist for this issue — Larry Elmore, who reported that the giant's footprints were the most difficult part to paint. Indeed, the level of detail is extraordinary. Notice the pigs?

# LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom.

## Errors R Us

Dear Dragon:

In issue #136, on page 19, the 13th line reads: "Manacles are medieval versions of manacles, made out of iron." Shouldn't the second "manacles" read "handcuffs?"

Aaron Goldblatt  
Fort Worth TX

*Yes, the second "manacles" should have been "handcuffs" — but this was the 13th line on page 18 of that issue.*

## Gone, but not...

Dear Dragon:

I am not certain whether or not Little Wars magazine is still being published; however, as a former avid reader of it, I would like to inquire about a couple of things.

First, do you still publish Little Wars or any other magazine for military/fantasy miniatures in which I could place a classified ad to purchase a hard-to-find line of fantasy figures?

Second, do you know if Heritage Models (based in Dallas, Tex.) exists in any form? If not, do you know the whereabouts of their miniatures ranges if they have been bought out by another company? I am very interested in acquiring Der Kriegspiers Fantastiques, which I am afraid are no longer on the market. Any help in this area would be most appreciated.

Jonathan R. Casey  
Vienna VA

*Little Wars ceased publication in the spring of 1979 and was merged with DRAGON Magazine at that time. For several years after the acquisition of the assets of SPI, Inc., TSR, Inc. published STRATEGY & TACTICS® Magazine, but that periodical was sold to World Wide War-games (3W), Inc. in 1987. S&T® Magazine currently runs classified advertising; write to: STRATEGY & TACTICS Magazine, P.O. Box F Cambria CA 93428, U.S.A.*

*Our best information on Heritage Models is that it no longer exists, and we have no information on what became of the molds used for its miniature figures.*

## Things to come

Dear Dragon:

How about adding a small section in each

issue which states what will be in the next issue, or at least a few highlights?

Matt Amundsen  
Marietta GA

*We don't do this because there is always the chance we will have to change the magazine's contents at the last minute. Changes in advertisement layouts, placement of articles using color, and other glitches have unexpectedly rearranged the contents more than once, though we do schedule themes for issues and expect to regularly use certain features such as reviews. So, no "next issue" announcements.*

## Microzines?

Dear Dragon:

I could easily spend \$150-\$200 in an attempt to gain all of the information printed in your magazine that would be useful to my game playing. Why don't you edit out all of the advertising, reviews of books and games, etc., and art, then put the first 100 issues of your magazine on microfilm (or on a hard disk) and sell it to libraries? You could include the fiction separately. This would more than compensate for what is missing from the Best of DRAGON Magazine anthologies.

David Romney  
Yakima WA

*We'll make a note of this idea, but we cannot promise that you will actually see it in practice.*

*On a related topic, we have no further anthologies of DRAGON Magazine material planned for the foreseeable future. In a reply to a letter in issue #133 ("Four questions"), we mentioned that module anthologies taken from DRAGON Magazine and DUNGEON® Adventures were tentatively planned for release in 1989; unfortunately, these products were removed from the schedule. They might appear at a later time.*

## Okay to copy

Dear Dragon:

Often, I find myself in a situation in which there is a great article in DRAGON Magazine that I want to put into my role-playing binder without butchering my magazine. Is it okay to photocopy material for private use?

Damian Bruniyan  
Pittsburgh PA

*Yes, you can photocopy anything you like (for your personal use only) out of DRAGON Magazine. We only object if such copying is done for profit — say, if you ran an advertisement saying you would sell photocopies of the DRAGON issue #1 you have in your gaming library for \$5 apiece. If you made a copy of an article to give a friend but made no profit from it, that's fine, too.*

## A failure to imaginiate

Not everyone likes everything that appears in DRAGON® Magazine, as you might well guess. Among the critical letters we receive are those that protest material that doesn't exactly fit what you might think of as a typical FRPG campaign, with elves, dwarves, unicorns, and a pseudo-medieval human culture crossed with *The Lord of the Rings*. For example, the special section on African monsters that appeared in issue #122 produced several letters asking why we bothered to run it. A similar reaction came from one writer when we ran the new undead in issue #138 and from another writer when we ran the prehistoric mammals in #137. We were taken aback by the number of letters from readers who didn't like druids, after we ran the section on them in issue #119; one writer said druids simply didn't fit within a medieval-style campaign.

Now, don't get me wrong, because I rather like medieval-style campaigns, too. But variety is the spice of life — even life in fantasy games — and without it, a long-running campaign can be described using the words of a character from one of Margaret Weis's little-known fantasy classics: "How borrrring."

What we have here, to paraphrase from *Cool Hand Luke*, is a failure to imaginiate. Given a little time and a perverse imagination, it is possible to make up an entertaining short adventure involving almost any monster, magical item, or character type that falls out of the ordinary. Some AD&D® game players don't use *Oriental Adventures*, but what if a group of shipwrecked Oriental monsters or evil NPCs met your characters face-to-face? A game designer once mentioned his desire to write a humorous module in which the PCs find an island populated only by monsters that no one likes, such as the flumph from the FIEND FOLIO® tome. One of the African monsters from issue #122 could appear in a zoo, on an island, in a wizard's laboratory, as a foreign NPC wizard's pet, or as a special wandering monster on a quest of its own in any campaign. And the *Manual of the Planes* is rich with unique settings, each worth a visit.

More daring Dungeon Masters may wish to make broader changes

*Continued on page 79*

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**Dragon**  
MAGAZINE

# FORUM

"Forum" welcomes your comments and opinions on role-playing games. In the United States and Canada, write to: Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Forum, DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom. We ask that material submitted to "Forum" be either neatly written by hand or typed with a fresh ribbon and clean keys so we can read and understand your comments.

Finally, you've done something to beef up dragons! [Special attraction on dragons in DRAGON issue #134.] I don't know how many people have laughed at the game because they "tried the AD&D® game, went out and killed a dragon, and it was boring." So few Dungeon Masters have the skills necessary to make even a demon lord a challenge! In the group I DM, the players have told me that they would rather face a dragon than a group of eight orcs just because the dragon is quicker about wiping them out! The editorial about Tucker's kobolds [DRAGON issue #127] really hit home as it reminded many of the players about my orcs. I'm not a killer DM, but I don't believe orcs have survived this long because they are stupid, and I always give the monsters even breaks! What those articles did was explain to everyone how to make dragons a bit more like their legendary cousins. The only problem is that merging those changes with those presented in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting boxed set makes for a mean dragon!

In "Sage Advice" in issue #134, the question of house rules was brought up. If there is one thing I hate, it's a player who challenges a house rule. The DM had a reason for making the rule,

and if players don't like it, they can find another game. In my own world, elves cannot be clerics. The reason for this is that an elf can be almost any class, and it is usually advantageous to be an elf. Aside from the bow and short-sword adjustments, elves each have infravision and the ability to find secret doors. Combined with any class, an elven character will dominate a game if the PC is played correctly. My house rules also make dwarves most powerful as clerics (I loved the dwarven cleric in issue #129) and humans most powerful as fighters. I have corrected a major imbalance in the game regarding elves, and I have given other races, notably humans and dwarves, a chance. If I had to make one recommendation for the revised AD&D game books, it would be to make the elves less powerful and other races more powerful.

Dean Wright  
Security CO

Let's settle once and for all the matter of *Unearthed Arcana's* weapon-specialization rules. Recent letters in "Forum" have claimed that this is a good thing and that (heaven help us) it should be extended to clerics as well.

Weapon specialization is grotesque and unbalancing. Let's quote some figures here, a rather elementary thing to do which no previous writer has bothered to pester readers with. Consider our standard 1st-level fighter. He has 17 strength (a fair average for a fighter) and uses a long sword. Now, how much damage does he do? That depends on the armor class of an enemy, so what we do is calculate the average damage per round against all enemies from AC 9 to AC -2. This average comes out as 1.54 hp/round in the old combat system. With weapon specialization, it becomes 3.66 hp/round, fully 238% of the old figure. With double specialization (perfectly reasonable for 1st-level fighters; how many of them ever use more than

one sword and a bow anyway?), we get 5.43 hp/rd, a staggering 353% increase over the old average. It is obvious from these figures — and the numbers don't change radically if one considers other weapon types and strength values — that the effect of specialization is absurdly unbalancing to the game. Did anyone ever claim in the past that fighters should be able to do four times the damage they were doing? If no such claim was made, why do we need a system in which damage by fighters is virtually quadrupled by double specialization?

Actually, the laughable rules on firing a crossbow at point-blank range give new average damage figures which exceed by 600% the old damage in certain cases, but these are so outrageous that I cannot bring myself to detail them.

Weapon specialization must be written out of the AD&D® Second Edition game, together with other unbalancing elements which have produced overpowered characters: Method V character generation (if you want this type of character, why don't you save yourself the time and just write down six straight 18s?); svirfneblin and their elemental conjurations; barbarians; and drow with their spell bonuses. All these are equivalents of the treasure-packed Monty Haul in the area of character abilities.

Finally, to deal with the people who have written in about the "pitiful mages" who at 1st level have but one spell (another variant on the childish "gimme a real powerful character and gimme it now" mentality). Stop snivelling, use your brains, and you might even try doing something really radical when that spell has been used — like role-playing. A magic-user is highly intelligent, and he should have plenty of input into tactical discussions, interpreting observations, and anything else which calls for some smarts.

Steve Allen  
London, U.K.

I am writing after reading Mr. Oppen's excellent article detailing the Roman religions in issue #133. The piece was relevant and coherent, and I am well aware of the difficulty in representing an entire culture through a handful of figure-heads. I must, however, take exception to the entry under Saturn's name, as I feel that his character has been drastically misrepresented.

Saturn was primarily a Roman god, having little or no following among the Greeks. However, like all Roman gods, his origins came from the Greek myths, and in this respect he is identi-

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fied with the titan Cronus (the father of Zeus). Cronus himself was the son of Uranus and Gaea, Space and the Earth, and was thoroughly evil. He was responsible for the birth of the Furies and for castrating his own father; later, when warned that he would be similarly overthrown by his own children, he swallowed each one as it was born. Zeus' death was avoided by his mother's interference, and he went on to battle and defeat Cronus, releasing the swallowed Olympians and starting a new dynasty. Cronus (Saturn), therefore, had already been established as chaos incarnate.

Zeus was known as Jupiter in Roman mythology, and his father, Cronus, was translated into Saturn, named after a human king whose rule was known to have been fair and just. Saturn was depicted as being a frail old man who always carried a sickle and who had connections with the harvest, not with the sowing. (The plow has never been associated closely with Saturn, but see below.) The sickle should be his symbol, as it is today used by astronomers and astrologers in speaking about the planet Saturn. Further, the ideas represented by Saturn are those of destruction, death, and (at least) inertia and helplessness. The evil nature of his Greek cousin was carried through, and the chaos which was the base of his character became even more fundamental, despite the [reputation of the] good king who only managed to slightly lessen Saturn's reputation.

It is, therefore, understandable that some sources describe the god Saturn as being benign because of this king whose name was borrowed. In this context alone, Saturn was recognized as a god of sowing and of husbandry, and the earth was said to have produced abundantly under his control. Eventually, as Greek influence became less important, Saturn took on the full aspect of this king and was considered benevolent and wise, as the article depicted him. The king had also been responsible for the abolishment of slavery in his kingdom and had taught agriculture to the Italians, but a dark shadow had loomed over his rule. Periodically, he had demanded human sacrifices from among his subjects; when these ceased to come, he cursed his land with drought, poverty, hatred, and all other evils. The god inherited this legacy of kindness and absolute evil, and Saturn was named the Lord of Misrule. The golden reign of King Saturn was mentioned in the same manner as we might today say, "Germany was united under Hitler." His wrathful punishment and self-obsession became trademarks of the otherwise peaceful soul whose name the god inherited, and Saturn, both as god and mortal, implied a fickle character rooted in chaos. As Cronus had represented these traits to the Greeks, Saturn did to the Romans, ruling kindly and supportively until he felt his personal importance was diminishing, then destroying everything around him with all his power.

Saturn's position as a god was important to the Romans as Jupiter's father, and a festival (*Saturnalia*) was celebrated every year in December (winter showed the Lord of Misrule's connections with destructive elemental forces). These were seven days when all law was ignored. Homicide, sexual indiscretions, burglary, and assault ran rampant in the name of Saturn as psychological release. This proved effective, as the crimes committed were never as bad as one would expect, and the people felt as though their anxieties had been truly released. A young man was named Saturn for the festival, and he paraded around dressed in royal robes, and was encouraged to partake in immoral festivities, especially orgies. Then, after

a predetermined number of days, he was expected (and forced) to cut his throat, committing public suicide as a fee for impersonating the god. Saturn's worship, although tied to gentler pastoral days through the legendary king, was a decadent, cosmopolitan display of self-fulfillment, the pleasures of inflicting pain, and the making of noise and disruption.

It is true that later cultures have carried Saturn's bad side to extremes compared to the Roman view. The Grim Reaper was derived from the image of the man with the sickle. In astrology, Saturn is known as a malefic influence. But even in ancient times, there were [in Saturn] overtones of immortality, cruelty, and debased chaos. Saturn was seen by the law-and-order society of the Romans as being unrestricted by any laws or rules, living to the hilt his life of pleasure at others' expense.

In game terms, Saturn's movement rate should be changed to 12", his hit points to 250, his symbol to the sickle, and most importantly, his alignment to chaotic neutral. It is even more essential, however, that the DM develop a sense of what Saturn represented. Although Oppen's article does an excellent job in describing one side of Saturn's personality, albeit from an immature development of his mythology, Saturn must be visualized as a self-centered, ambiguous being who serves his followers happily — but also a being who, if shown anything less than obsession from his followers, lashes back in ire.

David Cohen  
St. Catharines, Ontario

I am writing about the article in issue #135, "When Game Masters Go Bad." Our group, which numbers nine, has found the perfect solution to this problem: co-DMing. Not only does this solve the problems of the party splitting up, it also lets either DM run an adventure if the other is sick, so the group can still go on with the campaign. It also solves the problem of players not showing up for a game, as the secondary DM can handle all the missing characters (this is not to be used often — once or twice in a row at the most). As for a DM making a bad judgment call, two DMs can have a little conference if the dormant DM thinks "prejudices" are getting in the way of playing a fair game. A couple of bad things about this whole idea is that one DM cannot have complete control over the game; but sometimes it is better to have two different viewpoints as it gives more flavor to the world (watch out for arguments — they ruin the flavor of the world). Another minus is that weaselly characters can con one DM into something that the other DM doesn't like (thus causing a civil war). This style of play is not for every group, and is not recommended for small groups.

Delmar Watkins  
Muncie IN

In issue #133's editorial, comment is called for on the future of role-playing games. In my opinion, role-playing games will probably move toward placing more emphasis on coherent campaigns rather than anything else. This trend is already visible in TSR's own decision to set up a campaign world for all AD&D game adventures. The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting is commendable, and I'm certainly looking forward to seeing modules that have a consistent campaign atmosphere.

I haven't seen GURPS by Steve Jackson Games, but I think this trend will also be a feature of this role-playing game. I hope (rather than believe) that role-playing games will lose their poor images in the minds of much of the public.

Even a sustained public relations campaign would be hard-pressed to convince those who now think of us as demon worshipers, but then every population has its lunatic fringe.

I would now like to try to convince you that spell points are not unbalancing if used in a well developed campaign. It was said in "The Game Wizards" column not too long ago that giving clerics a spell-point system would be unbalancing because of limitless healing spells being available at no reduction in the clerics capacity to cast other spells if necessary. This would be true of a campaign where clerics had automatic access to all of the spells listed in the *Players Handbook* and *Unearthed Arcana*. In my belief, clerics should not be run that way.

First, a campaign's gods should be well developed with well-defined, if not distinct, spheres of influence. Based on these spheres, spells cast by clerics of each god would be listed, and casting spells outside of one's sphere would be forbidden or incur point-cost penalties. These spell lists would include spells unique to the god and appropriate spells from other sources.

As an example, here are suggested first-level spells available to clerics of Tempus (a war god from the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting):

<i>Ceremony: witness</i>	<i>Ceremony: rest eternal</i>
<i>Purify food and drink</i>	<i>Shield</i>
<i>Cause wounds</i>	<i>Command</i>
<i>Sanctuary</i>	<i>Cure light wounds</i>

The two ceremonies have previously been detailed, (*Ceremony: witness* as a new druidic spell in DRAGON Magazine #122), and they are really the only apt ones for a cleric that I envision as being a wandering warrior priest.

*Shield* is the first-level magic-user spell.

*Cause wounds* would cause a light wound on a victim within a short range (10-20'). Damage is slight however so it's really only an *in extremis* spell used when the cleric has lost his sword. (Weapon and armor restrictions should be based on the god, not the class).

*Cure light wounds* is a feeble spell compared to the first-level spells used by clerics of healer gods, but it is better than nothing. It is the only healing spell that any cleric of Tempus can use.

The others are all as the *Players Handbook* would have them. This only gives a 1st-level cleric of Tempus eight spells from which to choose, but he would also be a good and capable warrior (+1 to hit, maybe) capable of using any weapon without restriction and wearing the best armor he could afford.

Magic-users are pitifully weak at 1st level, and spell points aren't such a terrible imbalance if they are game mastered properly. Read the relevant section of the *DMG* and you'll see what I mean; magic-users virtually have to rob fellow magicians in order to get more than the four spells they start with in their spell books.

For magic-users especially, I suggest that spell points be gained in an arithmetical progression, maybe +3 per level gained. A 10th-level magic-user would have 30 spell points, less than the current AD&D game equivalent, but he would have spontaneous choice of spells.

If a magic-user were to use 75% of his spell points, he would become fatigued, if he used every mental resource, (100% expenditure), exhaustion would set in, (as per the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*). This rule would reflect the problems of Raistlin and other magic-users portrayed in the excellent DRAGONLANCE® books.

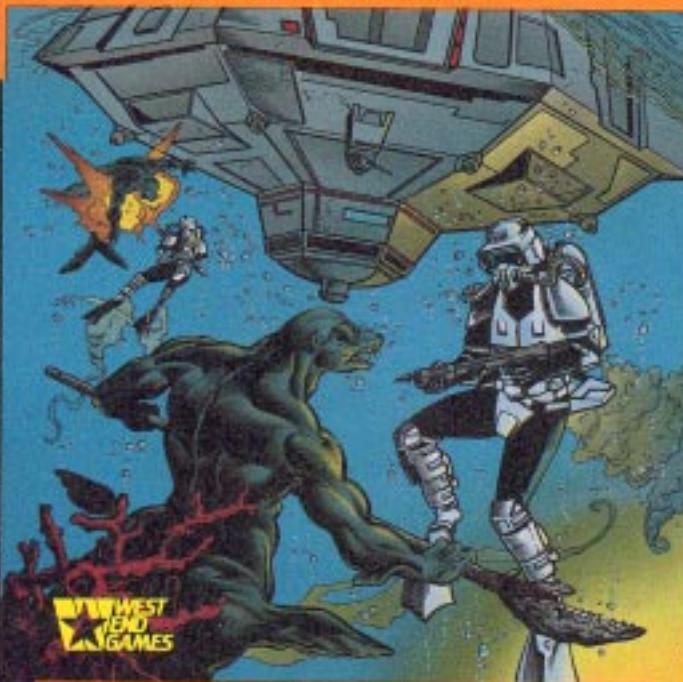
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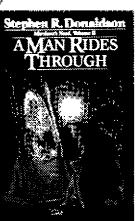
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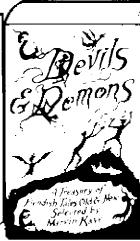
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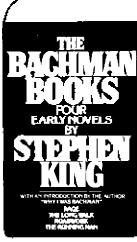
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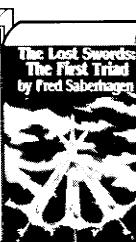
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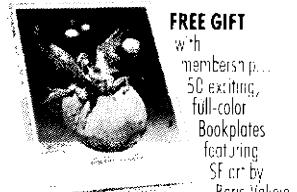
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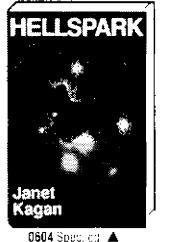


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# SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom.

This month, "Sage Advice" looks at the original (second-edition) TOP SECRET® game and the TOP SECRET Companion. These questions do not cover the new TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game. Page numbers in this article refer to the 64-page TOP SECRET game rule book, unless otherwise noted.

## Original set rules

One of my players insists that Temporary Losses are expressed as percent reductions instead of subtractions, so a -20% penalty means the loss of 20% of the trait, not a 20-point reduction of the trait.

Your player is right. This rule applies to all personal trait reductions (see page 5).

How about some guidelines on handling wounds in the field? It's fine to assume that characters get healed when on R&R, but what happens when they have to fight their way free before they can get to a hospital? What happens when a character receives first aid? Do wounds ever get infected?

How you handle this depends entirely on which rules you are using. In the second-edition game, the Administrator need not worry about what happens before the character gets to a hospital, even when using the Optional Specific Injury Determination rules on page 41. The wounded character has to live with his injuries until they are treated. As one reader pointed out, however, it's hard for wounded characters to remain inconspicuous. Note that R&R and healing are possible even without hospital care; see page 17.

The TOP SECRET Companion introduces first aid on pages 71-72 of that book. The Administrator might wish to use infected wounds as a complication (see the rule book, page 44). The Administrator is on his own when determining the effects of infections.



**Is there a Willpower check made when poison is used, or does poison automatically take effect?**

In general, Willpower does not alter the effects of poisons; however, see the sleeping-gas rules on page 39.

**If the rules on page 46 are used, how can a character ever be killed by poison?**

Since Life Level is a secondary trait derived from Physical Strength and Willpower, any poison that reduces one or both of these primary traits is potentially lethal. While unwounded characters are unlikely to succumb to poisons, wounded characters are quite vulnerable (a character might not be able to handle his current wounds at the lowered Life Level). When

a character's Life Level is reduced to zero by poison, the character is dead. The Administrator might assign particularly deadly poisons (such as cyanide) a severe modifier to the trait-reduction roll.

**When ether or sleep gas is used, what is the onset time and what is checked to see if the character is affected?**

The onset time is immediate for game purposes. Ether is considered an anesthetic; treat this as sleeping gas, using the rules on page 39.

**What are the effects of various gases, such as chlorine and nerve gases (including onset times)?**

This question is too broad to be fully answered here; Administrators will have to decide the effects on a case-by-case basis. In general, onset time is immediate, unless the gas is so dilute that characters must be exposed for several turns in order to get one dose (see page 46). Once a dose has accumulated, the effects are immediate. Chlorine is an irritant poison that affects Physical Strength, Willpower, and Coordination. Most nerve gases can be considered deliriants.

**"Spy's advice" in DRAGON® issue #91 said that certain military weapons are not available to agents and do not fit into the TOP SECRET game. I disagree; depending on the nature of the mission, agents might very well need military weapons. Please publish statistics for light machine guns, heavy mortars, and bazookas.**

It has been said before, but I'll say it again: Military weapons have no place in the TOP SECRET game. Any mission requiring heavy weaponry will be assigned to regular or special army units, not to espionage agents. It is possible, however, that characters might come across some of these weapons in the hands of NPCs. Several types of machine guns and personal missile launchers were described in "Now that's firepower!" in DRAGON issue #102. A 40mm "generic" grenade launcher (which could substitute for a light mortar) appears in the Companion on pages 61-62. The 80mm missile launcher (Companion, pages 61-62) is similar to bazookas of the era after World War II, except that a bazooka produces a backblast that inflicts 10 points of damage on anyone standing immediately behind the weapon when it is fired. The backblast will also set fire to flammable objects (paper, household furnishings, dry brush, etc.). If there is a large, solid object 5' or less from the weapon's rear, the character firing the weapon will also be caught in the backblast.

**In hand-to-hand combat, the rules say that the defender must use a defense from the attacker's table. What happens when the attacker uses a table that the defender can't use due to insufficient knowledge?**

The defender is free to use any defense from the attacker's table, but the attacker gets a +3 Injury Modifier (see page 28).

**When using hand-to-hand combat, can the participants look at the charts, or do they have to remember the available attacks and defenses? If they can look at the charts, what's to keep the attacker from always choosing the most potent attack and the defender from choosing the best defense against that attack?**

Yes, the players can look at the rule-book charts when their characters are in hand-to-hand combat. The rules assume, how-

ever, that each character's actions will be written down secretly, then revealed simultaneously.

**How is combat conducted if one character is using projectile combat and another is using hand-to-hand combat?**

The character firing the weapon has a great advantage, as projectile combat is much faster than hand-to-hand combat. The exact sequence of actions is given in the Companion on page 47.

**How long does it take for a helicopter to get airborne?**

This depends on how heavily loaded the helicopter is. If its load is light enough so that it can hover, it can be airborne on the second turn after its engines are started. If it is heavily loaded, it can still take off, but it must taxi (to get extra or transitional lift from its rotors) just as a fixed-wing aircraft does; see page 41.

**What would the effect be if soft lead bullets were dipped in teflon and fired from a gun?**

Probably none, for two reasons. One, coating something with teflon requires some sophisticated industrial processes; one doesn't simply dip an object into liquid teflon; Also, a teflon coating has to be cured in an oven at about 700°F which is about the melting point of pure lead, so coating "soft lead" with teflon is an unpredictable business at best. Two, teflon acts as a superlubricant when applied to bullets. This effectively reduces or eliminates the resistance offered by armor — particularly lightweight body armors — making them penetrable. Pure lead, however, will distort on impact, due to its softness. This negates any advantage the teflon might provide.

**When using the forced entry rules (pages 34-35), would you roll a new difficulty rating each time a character tries to force a door or window?**

Generally, yes. The Administrator, however, might assign a particularly stubborn or weak aperture a fixed rating.

**When an agent is disguised, what is the chance that another agent or NPC will notice the disguise?**

Check the agent's modified Deception score (see page 38) whenever the agent meets a new person or group of people. If the check fails, the disguise is discovered. The Administrator might require a new Deception check (possibly at a penalty) if the agent is observed continuously — say, every six hours.

**What is the chance of an NPC running away when involved in a fight?**

When in doubt, the Administrator should check the NPC's Courage trait, rolling that number or less on 1d100 to see if his bravery holds out. If not, he panics and may flee.

**What superior AOK should a character have to be good at forging documents, passports, IDs, licenses, and similar paperwork?**

The items you listed would require knowledge in all of the following areas: Literature, Photography, Metallurgy, Arts & Crafts, Law, and Linguistics.

**How much do false IDs, passports, or credentials cost?**

Generally, the agency will provide these items if they are necessary for a mission. If not required for a mission, they are not available. On the black market, prices will vary depending on the document and its Deception value. Cheap imitations with low Deception values (10-20%) can be bought for \$30 or less, sometimes legally (toy badges, for example). Well-executed false passports cost around \$200. Medical degrees cost around \$5,000. Black market documents never have Deception values higher than 80%.

**When using the Swordplay Table (page 29), does the defender have to use a sword?**

No. Common sense, however, makes it clear that the defender must have some sturdy object with which to block and parry the attacker's sword (martial artists might get by with pieces of cloth or their limbs). The Administrator might choose to make unequipped characters use the no-defense column.

**What is the chance for a train derailment?**

Under normal circumstances, none. Derailments occur when trains take sharp curves at excessive speeds, strike solid objects (other trains, semi-trucks, debris, or other obstacles on the tracks), cross damaged tracks or track beds, apply brakes improperly, or travel on damaged wheels. The Administrator will have to rule on derailments on a case-by-case basis. Module TS005 *Orient Express* has a note on derailments in Table 3 on page 9.

**The flamethrower described in DRAGON® issue #91 is missing some game statistics. How about giving a complete description?**

Flamethrowers are covered in the Companion on pages 61-62.

**Is there any way that a character can increase his AOKs or language skill levels?**

Yes; see Improvement of Character Abilities, page 18. Treat languages as specific Areas Of Knowledge (see page 19).

**What is stopping power?**

A weapon's stopping power is its ability to incapacitate a living target without killing it. Rules covering stopping power are included in the Companion on pages 41-42.

## **TOP SECRET® Companion**

The Military Record rules on page 5 of the Companion are confusing. In the example, a character rolls the rank of major, gets four promotions, and winds up as a sergeant. How can a character be promoted down to a lower rank? Also, the example makes use of two terms, "rank rolled" and "rank attained." Aren't these the same?

Rank rolled and rank attained are not the same. Rank rolled is the highest rank the character could have earned given sufficient service time. Rank attained is the character's rank when leaving the service. All uneducated characters start at the lowest rank — rank rolled not notwithstanding. Characters are promoted once every two years, so the character in the example (who spent nine years in the service) got four promotions and attained the rank of sergeant. Since the rank attained was eight ranks below the rank rolled, the character also received four decorations. Educated characters enter the service as officers (see the Companion, page 6) and do not roll for rank.

**What traits should be checked when an agent attempts to create a diversion during a getaway?**

The chance for a successful diversion is equal to the sum of the character's Physical Strength, Knowledge, Charm, Coordination, Courage, and Evasion, divided by six and rolled on 1d100.

**Please make sense of the "Departure Times" subsection on page 29 of the Companion.**

There is dropped copy in two places. The third sentence of the first paragraph should read: "If the result is equal to or greater than the time between trips, the agent has just missed the flight and must wait the full time between trips as shown on the chart; then the roll represents the number of hours until the next trip departs." That is, add the interval between trips to the die roll in order to determine how long it takes to get a flight. The first two sentences of the second paragraph should read: "The number of trips available in a single day can be calculated by adding the time until departure to the time between trips, up to a total of 24 hours. If the time between trips exceeds 12 hours, there is only one trip available each day." That is, see how many times you can add the time until departure to the die roll without exceeding 24; this is the number

of trips available per day.

**What is the chance for a getaway if an agent is detained at an airport? What is the result if the getaway is successful?**

The chance for a getaway is equal to the character's Evasion trait. If the Evasion roll is successful, the character escapes the detention, but the local police begin pursuing the character after 1-20 minutes (see the rule book, page 16).

**What are the ranges of airliners used on medium- and short-haul non-overseas flights?**

These airliners usually have ranges of 3,500 (medium range) or 1,500 (short range) miles.

**What does water travel cost for trips of over 250 miles? What is a "water mile"?**

On trips of 251-750 miles, the cost is \$.10 per water mile. On trips 751-1,500 miles, the cost is \$.08 per water mile. On trips over 1,500 miles, the cost is \$.05 per water mile. A water mile is the same as a regular mile but measured over water routes, not over land or through the air. The straight-line distance between two points is almost always shorter than the water distance, as boats have to navigate along coastlines, around reefs, etc.

**When using the Involuntary Hit Response rules, when do you check Tables 65 and 66 (Companion, page 45)?**

Whenever a character is hit, just repeat the steps on page 44 of the Companion with these two tables.

**When taking an espionage course, what is the adjustment to the course time when the agent's Knowledge score is greater than 16 but less than 85?**

There is no adjustment for a Knowledge score of 17-84.

**What are the AOK increases for the Assassination Bureau's Silent Killing course?**

Medicine/Physiology, Military Science/Weaponry, and Psychology all gain 1-10 points.

**Isn't a +10 range modifier a bit much for a sawed-off shotgun at short range? These weapons aren't that accurate. Shouldn't there be a modifier for point blank range?**

A sawed-off shotgun's RM at point-blank range is +5. At short range, the modifier is -10. Ω

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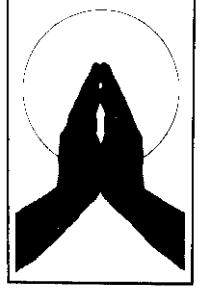
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# Keepers of the Faith





by Vince Garcia

# The Savant

*A Q&A character for the AD&D® game*

## Background and purpose

The savant is either a cleric or magic-user with a special dedication to scholarly pursuits. While not specifically a separate character class, the savant may be taken as a special split-class available to magic-user or clerical classes and subclasses.

**Clerical savants:** Within the structure of a large religious order are a unique few of the priesthood whose duty is to assist the church hierarchy in matters of decision-making through the knowledge possessed in their fields of expertise. On other occasions, these savants may function as church representatives, journeying to distant affiliated churches to deliver hierarchical pronouncements, perform exorcisms, or stand at the forefront of conflicts affecting others worshipping his deity.

A PC savant is likely to be assigned to strive against some sort of threat to the well-being of fellow worshipers, or for some other DM-determined purpose (conversion potential, extra tithes, information on a lost clerical artifact, etc.). This savant is thus most often introduced into a party of adventurers through a cleric or paladin already ingratiated with the group, who serves the same deity or temple. It is possible that the entire fellowship may in fact be sponsored by the savant's parent order.

**Magic-user savants:** The magic-user savant is not as restricted as his clerical counterpart. In his case also, the key function is to specialize in certain fields of knowledge ranging from a practical experience in fashioning potions or scrolls to those of an encyclopedic nature. While he may exist as part of a wizards' guild, fulfilling much the same function as a clerical savant, the magic-user savant may also begin his career by serving an apprenticeship under a guild sage or savant, and later separate to undertake his own magical studies while retaining an active interest in broadening his knowledge of the world and its many arcane mysteries.

## Prerequisites

Savants may be human, elven, or half-elven, and may be of any alignment. They

may not be multiclassed (in effect, they are). Minimum ability requirements are listed as follows: dexterity 16, intelligence 15, and wisdom 14. Savants receive a 10% bonus to experience if all three scores exceed 15.

## Armor and arms

Savants are limited to the armor and weaponry allowed to their primary class. They do not receive extra weapon/non-weapon proficiencies or penalties for the added savant class. They also attack and make saving throws as applicable to the primary class.

## Magical items allowed

Savants may use those magical items allowed to their primary class. They also may attempt the reading of all scroll types, based on their talent to read languages. In addition, they may read all books and librums, receiving experience point benefits as listed in Table 1 (in addition to those normally granted the primary class, if applicable). Note that a savant, by virtue of his class, avoids any detrimental effects from the reading of these works normally applicable to a nonsavant.

Table 2 lists experience point totals, levels, and titles for the savant class. While characters gain no extra hit points from the savant class, they do not suffer hit-point penalties. Experience points, however, must be divided equally between the classes. Savants of both sorts are limited to a maximum experience level equal to that possible for the primary class.

Savants need not be trained by a higher-level savant to advance in level. The funds and time used in level advancement, however, are assumed to be spent on the acquisition of reference tomes and on spell research.

Savant skills and spells are listed in Table 3. Additional spells not listed in any of the AD&D® game books are given in Table 4 and explained in the text. All spells are provided in addition to the spells acquired from the savant's primary class. Savant skills are also listed, along with areas of

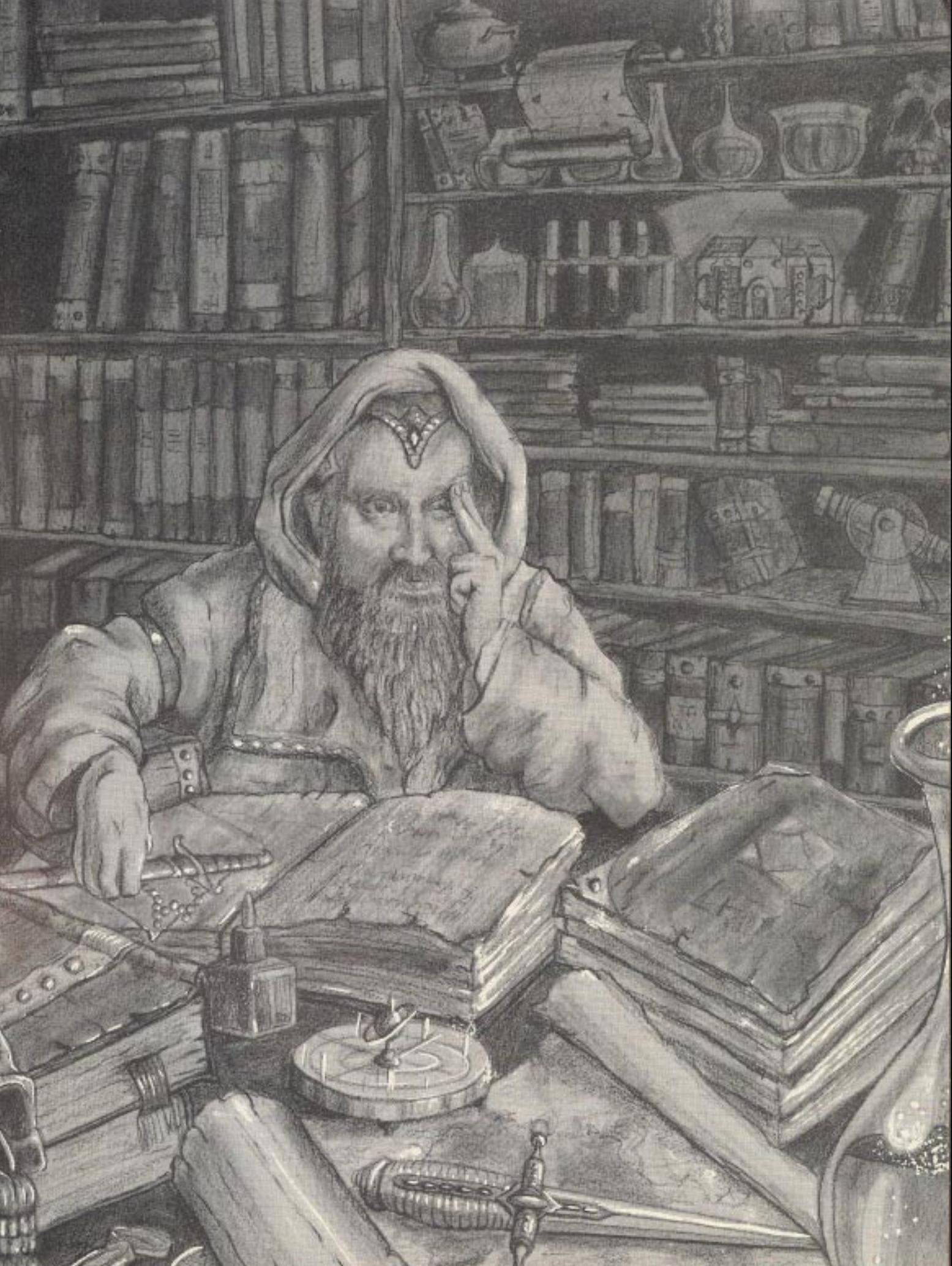
the savant's specialized knowledge and expertise.

## Explanation of skills

**Read languages:** This skill allows the savant to grasp a basic understanding of a text written in an unfamiliar language. It should be noted, however, that successfully rolling the skill does not confer a discernment of the text equal to that of linguistic fluency; rather, the savant comprehends the overall meaning of the passages — main verbs and nouns, for instance. If the savant also possesses a specialty category in linguistics, he is then able to correctly decipher the manuscript following a period of reference work (1-4 days, as a general rule). Note that this is true only if the initial *read languages* roll was successful and if the savant has access to his (or someone else's) library.

It is also through this skill that the savant is able to decipher and read magical scrolls from classes other than his primary one (akin to the thief's skill). His base chance of success is modified downward by 5% for each level of the spell inscribed on the scroll. If the roll is failed, normal repercussions result.

**Legend lore:** In no way is this skill a substitute for *detect magic* or *identify*. This skill is limited to recognizable objects with notable histories, or to legendary people or places. It indicates that the savant is aware of the general history of the object. For example, a savant makes his roll when examining a magical sword and realizes this sword belonged to Goth the Paladin, who disappeared 10 years earlier on a quest to recover the *Mace of Cuthbert*. According to legend (which isn't always accurate), the sword was a holy blade of great power, and had special potency against dragons. In another example, the savant's party has discovered an ancient temple in a swamp. Examining some of the inscriptions and paraphernalia found, the savant concludes that this was once an important temple abandoned when a ceremonial conjuration spell went awry, releasing a great evil.



**Table 1**  
**Experience Gained from Magical Books**

<b>Magical book</b>	<b>Experience points gained:</b>	
	<b>Proper alignment</b>	<b>Improper alignment</b>
<i>Book of exalted deeds</i>	4,000-16,000	1,000-4,000
<i>Book of vile darkness</i>	3,000-12,000	2,000-5,000
<i>Libram of gainful conjuration</i>	4,000-24,000	2,000-12,000
<i>Libram of ineffable damnation</i>	5,000-20,000	2,000-8,000
<i>Libram of silver magic</i>	6,000-36,000	4,000-16,000

**Table 2**  
**Savant Experience**

<b>Experience points</b>	<b>Experience level</b>	<b>Level title:</b>	
		<b>Cleric</b>	<b>Magic-user</b>
0-2,500	1	Novice	Student
2,501-5,000	2	Delver	Reader
5,001-10,000	3	Seeker	Searcher
10,001-25,000	4	Expositor	Tutor
25,001-50,000	5	Minister	Instructor
50,001-80,000	6	Inquisitor	Researcher
80,001-115,000	7	Adviser	Examiner
115,001-155,000	8	Theologian	Scholar
155,001-205,000	9	Oracle	Philosopher
205,001-280,000	10	Savant	Savant
280,001-380,000	11	Savant	Savant
380,001-500,000	12	Savant	Savant
500,001-650,000	13	Master Savant	Master Savant

200,000 experience points per level above 13th

#### Explanation of special abilities

The following special abilities are listed by level in Table 3. These abilities are available to both types of savant and are limited as described in each entry.

A. Beginning at 1st level, and every four levels thereafter, the savant gains fluency in a language of his choice. Any human or demihuman tongue is included in this (Egyptian, Dwarvish, etc.). If the savant seeks to learn a monster language, two language proficiency slots must be used.

B. At 1st level, the savant possesses a specialty category within his required major: theology and myth for clerical savants, or legends and folklore for magic-user savants. The initial knowledge level of these specialty categories is fixed at 20%. Beginning at 2nd level, and every other level thereafter, the savant may increase his knowledge level in this or another specialty category by 10% (to 99%, rather than 100%). At his option, the savant may otherwise acquire another such category within one of his majors.

C. At 1st level, the savant begins campaign play with a knowledge level of 30% in a single sage major (see *Dungeon Masters Guide*, pages 31-33 for more details). For either type of savant, this sage major must be humankind for humans, or demihumankind for elves; half-elves may

choose either. Starting at 3rd level, and every three levels thereafter, the savant may increase his knowledge in this or another sage major by 10% (to 99%).

D. Beginning at 6th level, and every six levels thereafter, the savant may choose a new sage major with a base knowledge level of 20%, or he may add 10% to his knowledge of another major or specialty category of his choice (to 99%).

#### Savants, sages, and sage skills

As mentioned earlier, one of the primary functions of the savant is to act as a reference specialist, offering the benefit of his knowledge to his superiors as it relates in matters of decision-making. This position differs somewhat from that of a sage, who may frequently work with the savant, for while the savant is a "walking encyclopedia," the sage often forsakes learning the arcane processes of magic to perfect his knowledge in a few select areas. The savant therefore occupies a middle ground between spell-caster and sage, offering up his acumen in relation to his particular spell-casting class. Thus, regardless of level, the savant rarely occupies a position of ultimate control over any collective body apart from the savants or possibly the sages. Diagrams 1 and 2 represent two possible heirarchical positions held by the

savant within a church or wizards' order.

It will be noted that sages are absent from the clerical structure. In the majority of cases, they are found only operating for and within a wizards' guild, with clerical savants alone filling the roles of both savant and scribe. An example of this type of situation takes place in the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting, wherein an organized group of savants operates out of the city of Ravens Bluff, hiring themselves out for those in need of their talents.

The major fields of savant knowledge and the specialty categories within them can be quite varied. A listing and brief description of these follows. This list may be added to or have entries deleted by the DM at his discretion.

#### Humankind

This subject includes general knowledge of human culture and behavior.

*Art and music:* This topic comprises a general knowledge of human artwork and music. At the player's discretion, this specialty field may be narrowed to knowledge of one particular group's art and music (such as a certain nation, tribe, etc.). The narrowed skill would also include a rudimentary ability to perform with instruments common to the specific culture (though certainly not even approaching the talent of a bard).

*Biology:* This includes a working knowledge of the human body. The savant possesses the equivalent healing talents of someone with a nonweapon proficiency in that skill — excluding reversing the effects of poison. A roll against the savant's knowledge level in this field, of course, is necessary to effect any healing on wounded characters.

*Demography:* This field provides a general knowledge of where assorted human races may be found.

*History:* This field provides a general knowledge of human history.

*Languages:* This skill is indicative of a talent to reference and decipher written human languages. It is not a substitute for language fluency.

*Law and customs:* This skill represents a general familiarity with human legal systems and customs. As an option, this skill could be narrowed to include detailed knowledge of this sort of information for one particular area or people.

*Linguistics:* This skill includes the talent to grasp the basics of the human spoken word. Once again, it does not substitute for true linguistic fluency, but it does allow the character to grasp a rudimentary understanding of certain key words and phrases after two to eight hours of contact with a willing subject.

*Legends and folklore:* A character with this skill has made a study of humankind's various myths and legends.

*Theology and myth:* This skill indicates a general study of humankind's religions and well-known myths surrounding major deities. This skill further imparts a basic

understanding of various religious taboos.

#### **Humanoids and giantkind**

This field includes a general knowledge of humanoid monsters (orcs, trolls, etc.) and true giants. For more information on these subjects, see the skill listed under "Humankind."

*Biology:* In addition to "Humankind" skill knowledge, this skill imparts a rangerlike understanding of the vulnerable areas of giant-class humanoids, giving a damage bonus of +1 per savant level when making either physical or magical attacks (if a roll against the skill is successful).

*Demography*

*History*

*Languages*

*Law and customs*

*Legends and folklore*

#### **Fauna**

This topic includes a general knowledge of animals and some monsters. These categories are listed below. Knowledge of these creatures includes details of relative strengths and abilities, weaknesses, habitats, mating habits, gestation periods, and other related information similar to the general, nonmechanical (i.e., hit points, armor classes, etc.) game data provided in the "Ecology of . . ." articles.

*Amphibians:* This field includes amphibious animals and monsters.

*Arachnids:* This topic covers all varieties of spiders.

*Avians:* This category covers flying animals and monsters, including naturally airborne humanoids and demihumans.

*Cephalopods and echinoderms:* Cephalopods includes squid, octopi, and so forth; echinoderms includes starfish, sea urchins, etc.

*Crustaceans and mollusks:* Crustaceans includes crabs, lobsters, and so forth; mollusks includes all varieties of shellfish.

*Ichthyoids:* This category includes waterborne humanoids such as sahuagin, mer-men, and so forth.

*Insects:* This category includes all insects, insectoids, and related creatures.

*Mammals:* This category includes all mammalian animals and monsters, but not humanoids or demihumans.

*Marsupials:* This topic includes kangaroos, wombats, and other pouched creatures.

*Reptiles:* In addition to nonmonster and monster reptiles, this category includes reptilian humanoids, such as lizard men.

#### **Supernatural and unusual**

This field includes a general knowledge of supernatural and occult phenomena.

*Astrology and numerology:* This field allows the savant to perform the equivalent of an *augury* spell. Note that the base success figure is equal to the savant's skill (unlike the spell).

*Calligraphy:* With this skill, the savant is granted the abilities of a scribe, including the talent to fashion scrolls of any sort —

including those that cannot normally be cast through either of his classes. To do so, research must first be made as if the savant were a character of the proper class (equal in level to the savant) attempting to independently create the particular spell. Note that the savant's ability to later read these scrolls is tied to his *read languages* skill as outlined earlier. In no way does this successful research allow the savant to actually cast the spell — it only allows him to write a scroll of it.

*Cryptography:* This skill allows the savant to decipher runes and symbols such as those found upon a treasure or merchant's map.

*DweomerCraft:* With this skill, the savant may note the magical properties of an item. This discovery requires a period of study and analysis of approximately one to four weeks. If the roll is failed, the study time is still spent. In this instance, the savant may not attempt a second research of the item.

*Medicine:* This skill includes the abilities of the biology skill but further allows the savant the knowledge of how to cure nonmagical diseases and poisons (DM's discretion on whether the character may have access to the required materials).

*Planes (Astral, Elemental, and Ethereal):* This field of study grants the savant a

Diagram 1

### **Clerical Savants**

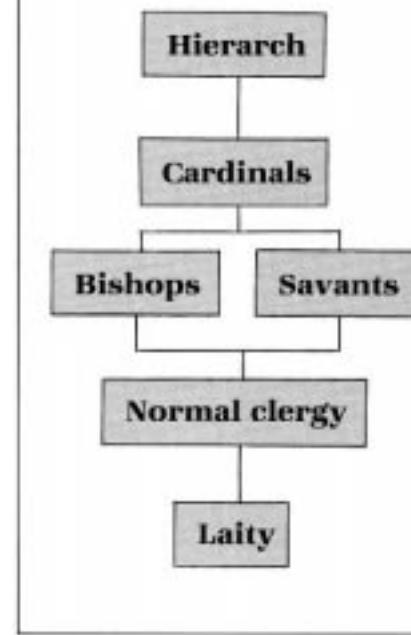
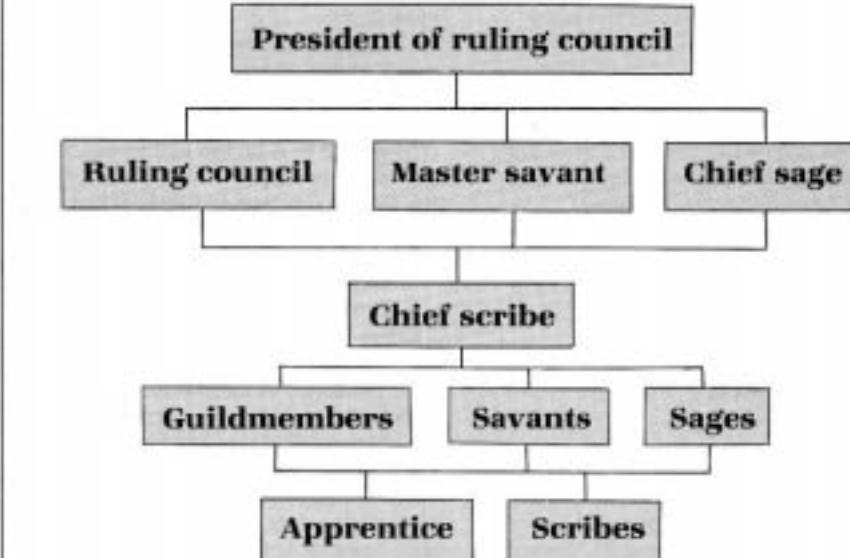


Diagram 2

### **Magic-User Savants**



**Table 3**  
**Savant Skills and Spells \***

Level	Read languages	Legend lore	Special abilities **	Spells gained (level and number)						
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	30%	20%	A	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	35%	20%	B	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	35%	25%	C	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	40%	25%	B	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	40%	30%	A	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
6	45%	30%	B, C, D	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
7	45%	35%	—	2	1	1	—	—	—	—
8	50%	35%	B	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
9	50%	40%	A, C	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
10	55%	40%	B	3	2	1	1	—	—	—
11	55%	45%	—	3	2	2	1	—	—	—
12	60%	45%	B, C, D	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
13	60%	50%	A	4	3	2	1	1	—	—
14	65%	50%	B	4	3	2	2	1	—	—
15	65%	55%	C	4	3	2	2	1	—	—
16	70%	55%	B	4	3	2	2	2	1	—
17	70%	60%	A	4	3	3	2	2	2	—
18	75%	60%	B, C, D	4	3	3	3	2	2	1
19	75%	65%	—	4	4	3	3	3	2	2
20	80%	65%	B	4	4	4	3	3	3	2
21	80%	70%	A, C	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
22	85%	70%	B	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
23	85%	75%	—	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
24	90%	75%	B, C, D	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
25	90%	80%	A	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
26	95%	80%	B	5	5	5	5	4	4	4
27	95%	85%	C	5	5	5	5	5	4	4
28	99%	85%	B, D	5	5	5	5	5	5	4
29	99%	90%	A,	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

\* For spells in addition to those of primary class.

\*\* See "Explanation of special abilities" section for descriptions of these special abilities.

general knowledge of the conditions and inhabitants of the Outer planes.

**Planes (Outer):** This field of study grants the savant a general knowledge of the conditions and inhabitants of the outer planes.

#### Demihumankind

This field includes a general knowledge of demihumans (elves, dwarves, etc.). For more information on these subjects, see the skill listed under "Humankind."

*Art and music*

*Biology*

*Demography*

*History*

*Languages*

*Law and customs*

*Legends and folklore*

*Theology and myth*

#### Physical universe

This field of knowledge includes a general understanding of the physical laws of the universe (magnetism, gravity, thermodynamics, etc.).

**Alchemy:** This skill represents the character's training in the secrets of alchemy

and the transmutation of materials. In a practical sense, the character may attempt to change materials from one form to another in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Elements can be transmuted one factor higher or lower on the Periodic Table of Elements (see your handy dictionary). Thus, platinum or mercury could be transmuted to gold, but neither could be converted to copper. At the DM's option, the factors can be increased beyond one.
2. The amount of transmutable material is equal to 1 lb./level.
3. The cost is 1 gp/lb.
4. The time necessary equals 1 day/lb.

Other transmutations may be possible based on the DM's discretion. Also included is the ability to fashion all sorts of potions, including those normally denied the primary class (*healing* for an illusionist, *polymorph self* for a cleric, and so on).

**Astronomy:** This skill includes a knowledge of the stars, allowing the savant to both navigate and note the passage of time if conditions allow a clear view of the sun or night sky.

**Chemistry:** The savant with this skill can

identify and create chemical materials such as acids, metallic poisons, smoke-puff grenades, incendiary fluids, etc.

**Geology and mineralogy:** This skill grants the savant the talent of identifying and refining precious metals from crude ores. Further, the savant may be considered familiar with underground conditions, and can note such things as gas pockets, unstable rock areas, etc.

**Meteorology and climatology:** This skill allows the savant to determine weather conditions with full accuracy for the next 24 hours, with partial accuracy for the next 72 hours. A savant in possession of this skill who conjures forth an air elemental by use of a spell may roll against his knowledge level to bring the elemental into willing submission without the need for a periodic check for control loss.

**Oceanography:** A savant with this skill may be familiar with the sea, as well as with the general handling of ships and boats upon its surface (although not to the extent of a sailor). Also included in the skill is a working knowledge of shallow-water creatures and monsters. As with the meteorology and climatology skill, the savant may check to bring a conjured water elemental under willing submission.

**Topography and cartography:** This skill allows the savant to read and create maps. Further, the savant may direct a party to a particular point if he possesses an accurate map of the area.

#### Flora

This field includes a general knowledge of plants and plantlike creatures.

**Flowers:** This skill grants a general knowledge of flowers, both normal and fantastic.

**Fungi:** The savant with this skill may be considered familiar with poisonous and nonpoisonous mushrooms and mushroom creatures (myconids, shriekers, etc.).

**Herbs:** A character with this skill has a practical knowledge of various herbs and vegetables. In addition, the character possesses the equivalent of the healing nonweapon proficiency.

Note that only very general interrogatives may be posed to a sage major. More detailed queries must be referred to an applicable specialty field. As an example, a savant with a major in demihumans might be aware of the fact that halflings live in ground burrows, but would not know the exact location of any without checking the special category of demography. As a general rule, then, if a query falls within the realm of a specialty category, a roll must be made against that category for a precise answer.

As has been mentioned, the special categories themselves tend to provide only general information on all subjects falling within them. As an allowed option, the categories may be narrowed to provide specific and detailed information on a certain group falling within the particular

category. Referring back to the example of halflings, a savant making a successful check against his demography skill notes that halflings may be found in the north of the province of Greenshire.

Assuming the skill has been narrowed to halflings alone, the information noted would be correspondingly more detailed, to the extent that the savant would know that halflings dwell just outside the towns of Webley and Greenville in the northern reaches of the province of Greenshire.

In the case of a true sage, the knowledge possessed would from the start be far more detailed. The sage would be considered to have precise and exacting knowledge on all creatures or groups falling within a known specialty category. Thus, to keep the skills of the two groups in balance, the savant's level of knowledge is generally less than that possessed by a sage counterpart.

### Savants and spells

As relentless researchers of knowledge and arcane mysteries, savants achieve an ability to successfully research and cast spells from classes other than their primary one. The majority of these spells are informational in nature, and each time the savant gains an additional spell from the savant spell table, the DM may consult with the player and ascribe one from the following lists. Other normal AD&D game spells corresponding to those spells that may be cast by a savant may be obtained through normal adventuring; these may be written into the character's spell book and memorized at his leisure without the need to roll for learning the spell. Naturally, the savant may research normal or special savant spells on his own time with additional funding, in the same way a magic-user or cleric does.

All spells from the general list are identical to the listed AD&D game spells with respect to casting times, material components, spell functions, etc., with the exception of *detect evil* or its reverse, which successfully functions against even low-level or level/hit dice creatures, and the *legend lore* spell, which explains fully the details of a noteworthy object or place, including magical powers for items and a general history for people and places — in clear language.

### Special savant spells

#### **Detect Untruth** (Divination, Reversible)

Level: 1 Components: M  
Range: 3" CT: 1 segment

Duration: 3 rounds ST: None

AE: 1 creature

**Explanation/Description:** When the savant employs this spell, he is able to note an untruth spoken by a creature, including even a minor evasion of the truth. The reverse of the spell allows the savant to lie or evade the truth without being discovered by any means. The material component is the forked tongue of a snake.

**Table 4**  
**General Savant Spell List**

Level	Magic-user	Cleric	Illusionist
1	<i>Comprehend languages</i> <i>Erase</i> <i>Identify</i> <i>Read magic</i> <i>Write</i>	<i>Detect evil</i> <i>Penetrate disguise</i> <i>Portent</i>	<i>Detect illusion</i> <i>Detect invisibility</i> <i>Read illusionist magic</i>
2	<i>ESP</i> <i>Know alignment</i>	<i>Augury</i> <i>Detect charm</i> <i>Detect life</i> <i>Find traps</i>	<i>Misdirection</i>
3	<i>Clairaudience</i> <i>Clairvoyance</i> <i>Material</i> <i>Secret page</i> <i>Tongues</i>	<i>Locate object</i>	<i>Nondetection</i>
4	<i>Wizard eye</i>	<i>Divination</i>	
5	<i>Contact other plane</i>	<i>True seeing</i>	
6	<i>Legend lore</i>	<i>Find the path</i> <i>Stone tell</i>	<i>True sight</i>
7	<i>Drawmij's instant summons</i> <i>Duo-dimension</i> <i>Symbol</i> <i>Mordenkainen's disjunction</i>		<i>Vision</i>

### Protection from Energy Drain

#### (Abjuration)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M  
Range: Touch CT: 1 round  
Duration: 1 turn ST: Special

AE: 1 creature

**Explanation/Description:** This spell protects the recipient from the effects of undead energy drain, allowing a saving throw vs. death magic to avoid losing experience points through this means. The material component is a vial of holy water rubbed over the body.

#### Exorcism (Abjuration)

Level: 2 Components: V,S,M  
Range: Special CT: Special  
Duration: Perm. ST: Special

AE: 1 affected object or creature

**Explanation/Description:** A clerical savant casts this spell to rid one object or area of an evil spirit's inhabitation. The casting time is equal to one turn per hit die of the spirit, during which the caster is shielded by *protection from evil* 10' radius. The material components of the spell are a small silver bell, a book of prayers, and a blessed candle which must remain lit throughout the ceremony. Each turn of casting, the savant must roll 4d6 for a total below his constitution, subtracting one from the roll for each three levels of his experience. Failure ends the spell, subjecting the savant to possible attack from the enraged spirit. Another attempt may be made 24 hours later.

At the spell's completion, the target creature must save vs. spells or be forced back to the realm of the dead. If the saving throw is successful, the creature remains in the general area but loses one-fourth of

**Table 5**  
**Special Savant Spell List**

Level	Spell
1	<i>Detect untruth</i> <i>Protection from energy drain</i>
2	<i>Exorcism*</i>
3	<i>Know intent</i> <i>Call spirit*</i> <i>See hidden doors</i>
4	<i>Hold undead*</i> <i>Greater vision*</i> <i>Phase shift**</i> <i>Psychic impressions</i>
5	<i>Turn undead **</i> <i>Bestow hit points</i>
6	<i>Life steal</i> <i>Recall spell</i>
7	<i>True name</i> <i>Spell drain</i>

\* Clerical savants only.

\*\* Magic-user savants only.

its hit points. If subsequent exorcisms reduce the creature to zero hit points, it is permanently driven from the area. Those subject to the spell include any singular undead possessing or haunting an individual, object, hallway, room, etc. Note that this does not include intelligent undead in the area of a specific lair (vampires, liches, death knights, etc). Upon completion of the spell, the savant snuffs out the candle and destroys it.

**Know Intent** (Divination)

Level: 2 Components: V, S  
Range: 5" CT: 1 segment  
Duration: 1 round ST: None  
AE: Special

**Explanation/Description:** When this spell is cast, the savant becomes aware of the intent of an encountered individual or group. Information revealed is along the lines of the following one-word descriptions: friendly, neutral, hostile, etc.

**Call Spirit** (Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 3 Components: V,M  
Range: 1" CT: 2 turn  
Duration: 1 rnd./lvl. ST: None  
AE: 1 dead human or demihuman

**Explanation/Description:** This spell allows the savant to summon forth the spirit of a dead human or demihuman, which is bound to answer all questions fully and truthfully. While the spell is in effect, anyone who speaks (other than the savant or the spirit) breaks the spell and causes the spirit to return from whence it came. The material components for this spell includes an iron censer filled with 50 gp of burning incense, as well as the skull of the deceased, which shatters at the completion of the spell (successful or not) and cannot be mended in any way.

**See Hidden Doors** (Divination)

Level: 3 Components: V,M  
Range: 4" CT: 1 round  
Duration: 1 round ST: None  
AE: 1 wall less than 50' long

**Explanation/Description:** This spell allows the savant to note secret or concealed doors within the area of effect. The material component is a polished glass lens through which the caster peers.

**Hold Undead** (Abjuration)

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 1" /level CT: 2 segments  
Duration: 1 rnd./lvl. ST: Neg.

AE: Up to 4 undead creatures

**Explanation/Description:** With this spell, the clerical savant is able to hold corporeal undead creatures — even those not normally affected by *hold* spells. If the creature is attacked while under the influence of the spell, the *hold* is broken (use the Assassins' Table for Assassination on page 75 of the DMG to determine if the creature is slain outright). The material component is the cleric's holy symbol.

**Greater Vision** (Divination)

Level: 4 Components: V  
Range: 0 CT: 2 turn  
Duration: 1 round ST: Neg.  
AE: Savant only

**Explanation/Description:** If the savant is presently striving against a threat to his church, he may attempt the casting of this spell once. If the target fails a saving throw vs. spells, the savant glimpses a momentary vision of his enemy — lich, demon, necromancer, paladin, etc. If the

target saves, it glimpses a vision of the savant.

**Phase Shift** (Alteration)

Level: 4 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 0 CT: 1 segment  
ST: None AE: Savant only  
Duration: Once to and from per 3 levels; max. 1 turn

**Explanation/Description:** This spell allows the savant to instantaneously teleport to and return from the Ethereal plane when attacking (an action similar to that employed by the phase spider). The material component is a bit of phase spider webbing.

**Psychic Impressions** (Divination)

Level: 4 Components: M  
Range: Touch CT: 1 round  
Duration: 1 round ST: None  
AE: 1 object

**Explanation/Description:** If the savant handles an object while using this spell, he is allowed to glimpse important happenings which befell its previous possessors. Thus, a savant examining a sword next to a skeleton may receive a vision of the fighter in his former life, and possibly what killed him.

**Turn & Dead** (Abjuration)

Level: 4 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 4" CT: 3 segments  
Duration: 1 rnd./lvl. ST: Neg.  
AE: 1 undead creature/level

**Explanation/Description:** This spell allows a magic-user savant to approximate a clerical turning by means of a spell. If an undead fails its saving throw, it departs from the area as though it has actually been turned. This does not bring an undead into the service of an evil savant. The material component is a cleric's holy symbol. (DMs may disregard this spell if they wish to maintain a separation between spell-casting classes.)

**Bestow Hit Points** (Alteration)

Level: 5 Components: V,S  
Range: Touch CT: 1 round  
Duration: Special ST: None  
AE: 1 creature

**Explanation/Description:** With this spell, the clerical savant may bestow up to one of his hit points per level on an intelligent creature. This has the effect of restoring lost damage or even increasing the target's hit points above his normal maximum. The magically bestowed hit points last until they are removed by damage or until the savant dispels the enchantment. For the spell's duration, the savant is without these hit points. In the event the target is slain, the savant permanently loses the hit points bestowed — even if the target is subsequently raised or resurrected. Only one spell at a time may be enacted upon a creature.

**Life Steal** (Necromantic)

Level: 5 Components: V

Range: Touch CT: 1 segment  
Duration: Special ST: Neg.

AE: 1 creature

**Explanation/Description:** This spell allows the savant to leech up to 1 hit point per level from a living (i.e., not undead) human or humanoid and bestow it upon himself or another within a time limit of three rounds. The leeched hit points can increase the recipient's hit points beyond his normal maximum, and last up to one hour. Any damage suffered is first subtracted from these additional hit points.

**Recall Spell** (Alteration)

Level: 6 Components: V  
Range: 0 CT: Special  
Duration: Special ST: None  
AE: Special

**Explanation/Description:** This spell allows the savant to recast any previously cast savant spell. (Material components must still be obtained if the spell requires them.) The casting time is equal to that of the spell in question plus one segment.

**True Name** (Divination)

Level: 6 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 3" CT: 1 round  
Duration: Perm. ST: Special  
AE: 1 creature or object

**Explanation/Description:** This spell allows the savant to discover the true name of a creature if it fails a saving throw. It may also be used to discover the command word of a device (no saving throw allowed). The material component is a *potion of ESP*, which must be consumed by the caster.

**Spell Drain** (Alteration)

Level: 7 Components: V,S  
Range: Touch CT: 1 segment  
Duration: 1 hr./lvl. ST: None  
AE: 1 spell-casting creature

**Explanation/Description:** Through the use of this spell, the savant is able to drain and utilize the memory of a spell possessed by a spell-using creature. The savant, if aware of the spells known by the target, may declare the spell which is drained; otherwise, the most recently memorized of the target's highest-level spells is drained. The savant may not regain the seventh-level spell slot until the stolen spell is cast or the memory is lost. Material components are also necessary if the spell normally requires them.

As a final note, all savant spells, including those of a clerical nature, are stored in a spell book. This spell book may be considered equal to that of a magic-user in terms of weight and in terms of the number of spells it may hold. Ω

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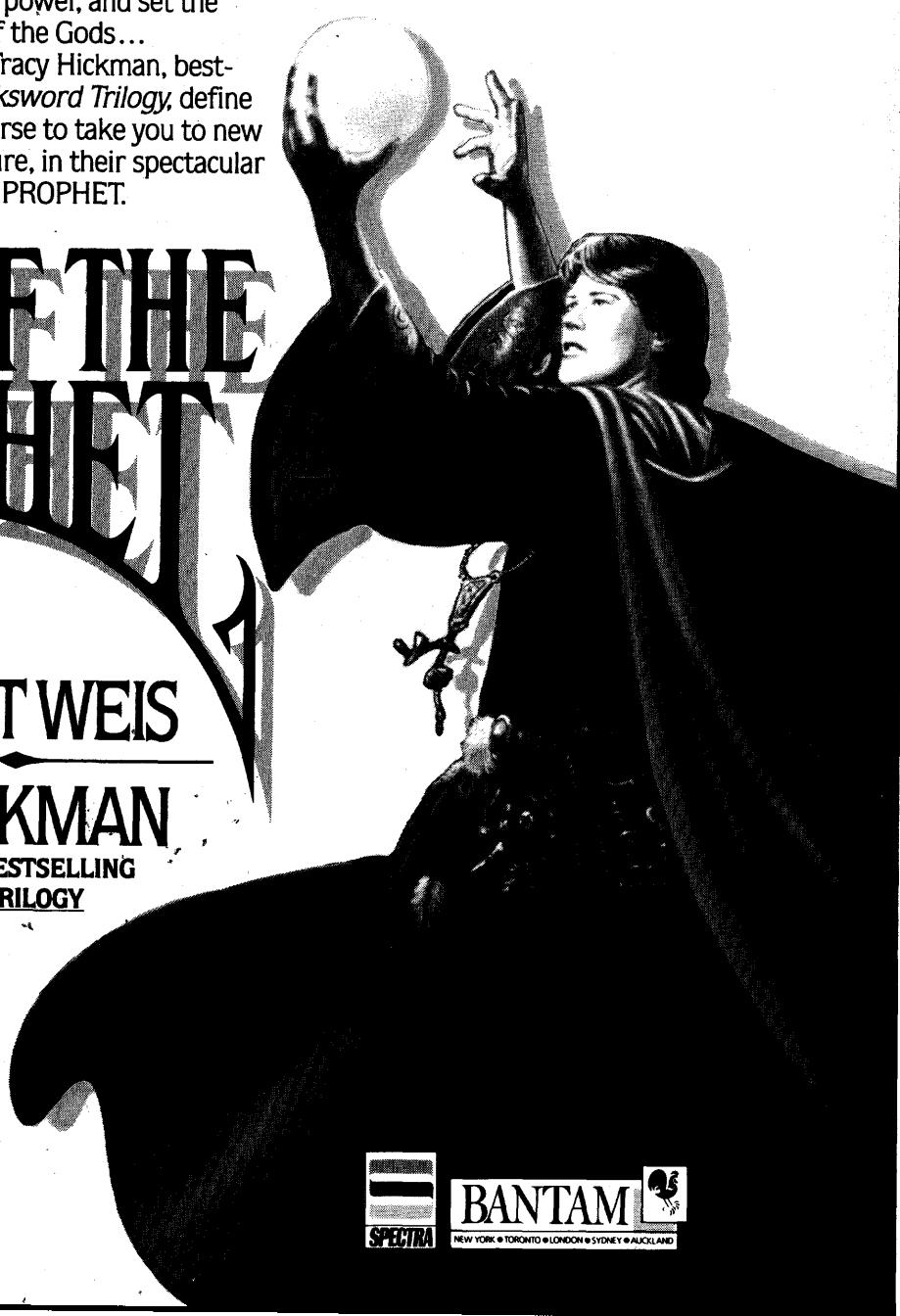
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# So Many Gods So Little Time

*Designing unique clerics and pantheons*

Most players of the D&D® or AD&D® games have had to address the question of religion in the game, whether they liked to or not. Few DMs relish the thought of dealing with a complicated religious system, and players rarely want to bother with living up to a god's demands, particularly if they aren't playing clerics or paladins. Consequently, most PCs either avoid gods altogether by professing to atheism or fail to take the gods they worship seriously. This is too bad, because religion can greatly enrich the game by providing depth of character for PCs and NPCs alike.

As a rule, the religious system presented in the AD&D game is oversimplified. All clerics, whether they worship Bast or Odin, use the same spells, armor, and weapons. The personalities, motives, and relationships of the gods are almost ignored in the official rule books. In fact, the only difference between clerics of different gods is their alignments. No provision is made for organized priesthoods, and if the gods are offended by the actions of a mortal, punishment is invariably the same (religion takes such a small role in many campaigns).

This weakness of the official rules isn't due to any fault of the game's designers. When the AD&D game rules were written, most people played games consisting of a group of stereotypical characters venturing into the depths of no-man's-land in search of ready cash. In this type of campaign, all the religious guidelines needed were a few practical rules about the PC and NPC clerics. Since the early game format emphasized action over role-playing, gamers didn't really need detailed information about role-playing the worshiper of a certain god. In recent years, the AD&D game has taken on a broader

scope, and many players want their worlds to be as detailed and "realistic" as possible. For these gamers, the official religious system has a number of faults.

## Selecting a pantheon

To cultivate a workable, fairly complex, and interesting religious system, the DM should first select which gods are to be worshiped in the campaign area. The culture of the people should be worked out in advance, because the gods need to fit in with the society that worships them. Also, the DM should be sure that the players will be able to relate to the gods he chooses. There may be some difficulty in using real mythological gods (particularly the Greek and Roman ones) because of this. Most of our information about these gods comes from plays written by Greek scholars, many of whom didn't take their gods too seriously. Furthermore, many of these plays are comedies, attributing human vices to the gods. Accordingly, we snicker when our characters are expected to pay homage to Aphrodite, and we see Zeus as a skinnier version of Archie Bunker. But religion should be a real force in a campaign. As a result, if players have trouble taking the Olympians seriously, don't use them.

When using another pantheon, like the Finnish or Egyptian, one encounters another problem. Since these gods were produced by real people, they reflect the values of their respective societies. If the DM doesn't know a whole lot about medieval Finland or ancient Egypt, he may be uncomfortable role-playing the gods of these pantheons. Players, too, will have difficulty relating to a god whose name they can't even pronounce. If a DM really wants to use a pantheon from history, he

should get his hands on a good handbook of mythology. From the myths, the personalities of the gods may be extrapolated. The *Legends & Lore* book is more concerned with the physical capabilities of the gods, and neglects to cite examples from mythology. It is useful in comparing the powers of the gods, and lists holy days, sacrifices, and the like, but it isn't very helpful in selecting a pantheon or getting familiar with the deities.

As an alternative to hunting through libraries in search of gods that don't fit the campaign world, the DM can create his own pantheon. He can then be sure of effectively role-playing the gods, and can inform the players of the deities' powers and reputations. He can tell the players exactly what he wants them to know about the deities. Each player may be told a great deal of information about his own god and some details concerning others, while other deities could remain a mystery. This allows the DM to introduce some mystery into the game, as players could be unsure of the motivations of other gods (even those of their companions). Actual alignments will almost certainly remain unknown; even that of a player's own god could remain a mystery!

## Polytheism

In historical polytheistic societies, people didn't choose one god and worship him to the exclusion of all others. Instead, they simply prayed to one god more often than any of the others. In Ancient Rome, for example, soldiers spent a lot of time praying to war gods, farmers to gods of fertility, and so on. People prayed to whatever deities had influence over them at the time. Thus, within the AD&D game campaign, a fisherman who prays to Poseidon



on a regular basis wouldn't hesitate to ask Hermes for a hand while gambling.

Even clerics should pray to gods other than their patrons. It is for this reason that evil gods are tolerated and worshiped; although evil, they still have divine powers. Just because someone worships an evil god doesn't mean he is necessarily evil. People selected gods more by their spheres of control than by their alignments and attitudes. Clerics would not be an exception to this. The alignment of a cleric character is influenced primarily by the god he worships, but there are just as many personal factors as there are for other character classes. The cleric's alignment really depends on how he interprets and follows his god's will. As a historical example, the monks who conducted the Spanish Inquisition aren't commonly thought of as being nice guys. Nevertheless, they were respected (albeit feared) members of the Christian church.

Clerics whose alignments are different from those of their gods may find themselves forced to perform certain acts out of alignment. Provided that this act is in accordance with the desires of the deity, they should not be penalized; indeed, differently aligned clerics may incur the wrath of their own gods if they fail to fulfill their demands. Clerics will never

question the actions or will of their own gods, as such behavior signifies a lack of faith. Thus, even a lawful-good cleric whose god demands human sacrifices will perform the ritual out of fear of his god if not love for him.

Because people often pray to other gods within the same pantheon, there is seldom any friction between the priesthoods of two deities of the same culture. The gods themselves may be locked in a deadly struggle, but their human followers will display nothing more than distrust and aversion. If there is any hostility in the world due to religion, it is more likely that the conflict will be between religions rather than individual gods.

### **Montheism**

Another rarely discussed alternative to paganism is monotheism: the belief in one god. Although it may seem odd at first, monotheism fits in well with the game. In fact, the cleric character class seems to be loosely based on Christianity. They wield hammers and maces, as did the real fighting priests, because they were forbidden to shed blood. Many spells seem to be based on the spiritual powers of biblical saints and similar figures. In fact, a close look at some of the illustrations in the rule books will reveal clerics with crosses

emblazoned on their surcoats. Monotheism, then, can't be totally foreign to the AD&D game system.

There are several factors that make a monotheistic religion desirable in the campaign. First, monotheists don't have to deal with other deities in their own pantheon, so they are less likely to be tolerant of other religions. Since there is only one god, more people have alignments that differ from that of their deity. This is as true of clerics as other persons. Accordingly, there can be a lot more corruption among clergymen. There will also be a number of semifaithful people who can't always be trusted to live up to the god's ideals. With only one divine power, a single god can place any restrictions whatsoever on the populace. The theory of divine rule is a lot more convincing if there aren't any other gods to contest the choice of a king. The list goes on.

A monotheistic religion may or may not approximate one from actual history. Judaism, Islam, and Christianity would all be exciting aspects of any campaign world. Christianity fits in particularly well if it is organized in such a way that it reflects the less-than-ideal moral environment of the pre-Reformation Catholic Church. But the DM could easily come up with a plausible monotheistic religion that fits into his

world perfectly. Examples may be taken from literature as well. Druidism, as described briefly on page 21 of the *Players Handbook*, could also be developed into a worthwhile game religion.

### Rival religions

After selecting or creating the first pantheon in his world, the DM may wish to introduce one or more other religions. Besides providing more variety for players' religions, religious conflicts are an excellent source of action for any game. With the introduction of rival religions, clerics whom the *Players Handbook* describe as warrior priests have someone to war against. Paladins clash in bloody, glorious crusades. Martyrs, heretics, and saints inspire people to violence and uprising. Perhaps one of the religions in the game is in some way oppressive, conquering unbelievers or banning witchcraft. Player characters can easily be swept up in religious conflicts. Imagine a campaign world like Arthurian England, where the druids still practice their secret ways and the pagans slowly yield to the growth of Christianity. Each of these religions is in conflict with the other, though not always open warfare. Multiple religions help players fit more easily into a variety of roles, and heroic characters may become great crusaders, rallying the faithful to defend their beliefs, rather than participating in a shallow, boring struggle against the cosmic forces of evil.

When selecting a second religion, the DM should exercise the same degree of caution. If a violent conflict is desired, the second religion should be sufficiently different from the first to merit this. The DM may wish for the second religion to be purely evil (i.e., composed entirely of evil gods). It may be more rewarding for the second religion to be merely different from the first, so the players aren't sure who is right. Any religion will have less respect for another pantheon than for even the most unpopular god in its own. Some religions may be aggressive, believing that their divine duty is to conquer and destroy all heathens. Others may see all foreign gods as evil spirits or devils. Most, however, will simply profess that other religions are false, and place restrictions on associating with such heathens.

Whenever religious warfare springs up, the DM must decide its cause. Was it the direct will of one or more of the gods involved or a human action based on the gods word? This is important — not from the players' point of view but from the DM's. To the players, a religious war is a religious war. It is important for the DM to know if one or more gods are directly supporting the armies, however, for purposes of spell-casting. If a god is supporting his clerics in warfare, the enemy troops will be considered evil for such spells as detect evil, and reversed spells are more likely to be granted. If, however,

the war is the result of a human decision, such spells will only work on individuals with evil alignments. Most, if not all, conflicts in the campaign should be of the latter description. War gods always grant effective evil-related spells to be used against the enemy, regardless of alignment. Such spells, however, are only effective against enemy soldiers and followers of enemy religions, and not against evil-aligned people.

Religious conflicts result in more than open warfare, however. Long-term hatreds are likely to be spawned, particularly if conquest is involved. The conquerors will despise and subjugate the conquered, who will in turn hate their oppressors and plot revolution. Social division is also possible if two religions coexist in the same geographical area. To cite another historical example, many towns and villages in Germany during the latter Middle Ages were either Catholic or Protestant, and no members of one religion inhabited the town of another. Player characters unwittingly walking into a town populated by members of a different, hostile religion may find themselves very unwelcome despite their gold coins.

### Purpose and other considerations

When creating his own pantheon, a DM should first have a good idea of what the people who worship these gods are like. The gods of a culture will invariably reflect the values of that culture. The values of a culture are, in turn, dictated at least partially by its environment.

Before detailing individual gods, the DM should determine the underlying theme of the religion. Does it believe in a cosmic struggle of some kind, like good vs. evil or man vs. nature, or does it preach harmony, unity, and balance? Cultures coming from harsh environments are more likely to have conflict as their religious theme. Religions with a theme of harmony are likely to have an inordinate number of neutral or lawful clerics, while those with a theme of opposition will have few or none. Harmonious themes are found mostly in Eastern religions in the real world, although some tribal religions also display this theme.

After the underlying purpose of the pantheon has been determined, the DM may determine the types of gods involved. Some mythologies, like the Greek pantheon, involve abstract elemental deities. Other pantheons have natural spirits or abstract concepts as divinities. Again, hostile environments are more likely to produce elemental gods. Such pantheons needn't be as simple as four gods in dynamic opposition; there could be many gods in control of one element, and some elements that have no gods. This will be dictated by the culture. Anything that is important to a society will result in many gods controlling it; otherwise, it will be the responsibility of one particularly powerful

god. Thus, an island nation might have four gods of the sea: one causes storms, another is in charge of fair winds and currents, another is god of marine animals, and the last personifies the mysteries of the depths. Elemental gods may be somewhat abstract: there might be gods of the sun, trees, love, or whatever. The DM may wish to experiment with different alignments and spheres of control, producing evil sun gods or good gods of death, or placing a single god in charge of two conflicting spheres.

Abstract gods are those that personify less tangible quantities: destruction, harmony, or limitation. They are most likely to be produced by more civilized, philosophical societies. These gods can be a lot of fun; not many cultures in the real world worship abstract gods, so such a pantheon is novel and intriguing. The closest historical examples to this concept are Hinduism and some Oriental religions. Some abstract gods will be found in every elemental pantheon, but it is very rare for an entire religion to have no elemental gods.

After determining the types of gods, the DM should come up with spheres of control for each god and rank them according to their overall influence over people's lives. Those with the most influence are likely to be the most powerful, unless the DM chooses to introduce an "overlord god" with a somewhat less important sphere of control. Remember that the culture of a people dictates the spheres of their important gods. For example, a landlocked nation in the mountains (like Switzerland) would be unlikely to have an important sea or water god, but one of earth, mining, or perhaps weather would be important. With abstract gods, it becomes more difficult to determine the primary gods. Whatever the culture values most (i.e., honor, luck, dedication, knowledge, etc.) will dictate the most important divinity.

It is important for the DM to determine the values of each of the gods as well as those of the cultures that worship them. The alignment of the god will depend mainly on how the people see his sphere of control. Due to the historical unpopularity of death, gods of death have been widely considered to be evil. Likewise, fertility and nature have been widely viewed as good, therefore most earth gods are good. However, the culture may have some unique insights regarding their environment. Death may be seen as a necessary part of the natural process, for example. Likewise, the people may be aware that the sun is the source of life, but they may also be aware that they have no control over it, and that it is prone to causing droughts and the like. Each god will have a general alignment dictated in this fashion, but specifics are drawn more from mythology.

The specific personalities of each deity

are as much a matter of dumb luck as anything else, therefore the mannerisms of the gods should be determined by the DM according to his whim, keeping in context with the general concept of the god formed by the culture's reaction toward him. It might be a good idea to construct a code of behavior for the god, something like the code of chivalry in *Unearthed Arcana* or the code of honor for bushido in *Oriental Adventures*. This will not only show how the god would act, but will also provide guidelines for clerics. It helps to write a few myths because they solidify the god's personality and display his relationships with other gods. Myths also add flavor to the game, particularly if one of the PCs is a bard.

#### Other options

There are some other options when creating a religion that are often overlooked. One of these is the worship of spirits or intangible divinities. Such religions are practiced in the real world; examples are Japanese shintoism and African animism. Ancestor worship also falls into this category. The main difference between these religions and traditional pantheons is that dozens or even hundreds of lesser spirits compose the metaphysical environment (as opposed to a few powerful gods in most traditional pantheons.) Each of these spirits shares its

sphere of control with many others, and clerics do not devote themselves to one spirit but rather to the whole religion. Most people don't even know the names of all the spirits in such religious systems.

#### Unique priesthoods

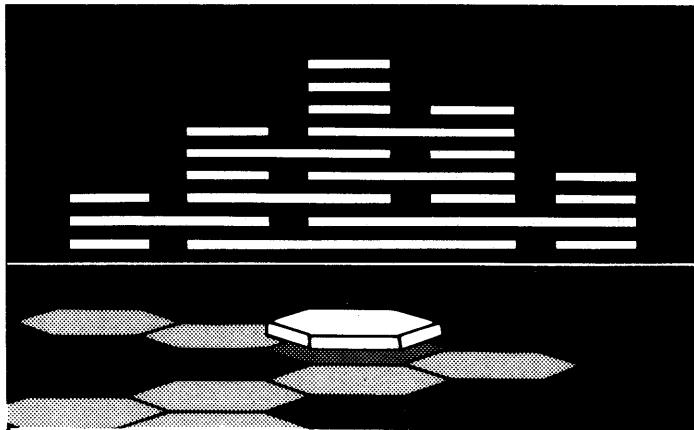
Once the religions are all detailed and placed throughout the campaign world, the DM may wish to differentiate between the priesthoods of different gods. Previous articles in DRAGON® Magazine have discussed the possibilities of allowing alternate weapons and special abilities to clerics of certain gods at middle and upper levels. DMs may take this a step further by altering the weapons, armor, and spells permitted to clerics according to their deities. The reason for this is that small, gradual changes do not reflect the great differences between gods and religions.

This is where the *Legends & Lore* book comes in handy, if you're using mythological gods. Whatever weapons the god uses, you can bet he'll let his clerics use them, too. The DM must be careful not to allow inordinately powerful weapons (like the long bow or lance). Some weapons are better than others. When selecting weapons for a god's clerics, take speed factors, lengths, armor class adjustments, and damage figures into account. Avoid permitting weapons that are much better than a mace in any of these respects. If a really

good weapon (like the long sword) is permitted, it's a good idea to reduce the range of available weapons from five to three or four. Avoid missile weapons at all costs, unless it's something small like a dart, or unless the cleric worships a god of archery. Be sure to select weapons that tie in with the god's personality. For example, war gods may permit clerics to use deadly edged weapons, while a god of love or healing would not be terribly big on weapons at all.

It's all right to change the cleric's permissible weapons as long as the change is counterbalanced. For example, a DM might want to give the clerics of a war god the spear, short bow, battle axe, and broad sword as weapons. This renders the cleric much more dangerous in combat, especially against armored opponents. This choice of weapons may be counterbalanced by restricting the clerics of the god to chain mail armor or less, by making them adhere to a strict honor code (e.g., always fight to the death), or by reducing the size of their spell lists appreciably.

Armor is another area that may be changed. Gods that value movement may forbid its use altogether, and most peaceful gods will restrict armor to the lighter types. War gods will naturally permit heavier armor types. Gods with good armor and weapon choices for their clerics should restrict their spell lists, how-



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ever, and those gods who forbid the use of powerful weapons and good armor should offer considerable spell-casting rewards.

Most gods will offer spells related to their spheres of control and restrict the use of spells that are contrary to it. For example, war gods will offer both offensive and curative spells, but won't offer *locate object* and *speak with animals*. For every level of forbidden spells, a level of spells should be added to the lists, and vice versa. Spells may be written by the DM or borrowed from magic-user, druidic, or Oriental spell lists. When doing so, the DM should reevaluate the level of the spell as it is to be used by clerics.

Religion should take a major part in the functions of any campaign world. Not only is it a source of international conflict, but it also adds a greater depth of character to PCs and NPCs alike. Religious warfare provides an alternative to hacking one's way through hordes of humanoids that spontaneously spring from the wilderness. With more than one religion in the world, humans become prejudiced against more than half-orcs, and players are faced with formidable role-playing challenges which never require them to draw swords.



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by Gregory Detwiler

# Fantasy Clerics and Clerical Fallacies

## *Addressing the myth of clerical healing*

There has been a lot of loose talk lately about how peasants in a fantasy world would be much better off than their real-life counterparts, due to the availability of magic; chiefly clerical healing magic. Except in the most magic-rich worlds, this will not be true for the common people, especially those in rural districts.

Given the great potential for receiving fatal injuries in the AD&D® game, it is surprising that little emphasis has been placed on the ability to heal. This healing ability is one of the hallmarks of being a cleric, and druids partake in it to a lesser extent. Even paladins and rangers get into the act at very high levels. But healing spells are generally treated as just another kind of magic.

This lack of emphasis is illustrated in *The Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology, Volume II*. In the first section is a description of a new character class: the healer. From the name, one would think that this class concentrates on healing spells, perhaps to the exclusion of all else. This is wrong! Not only does the healer use some nonhealing spells such as *haste* and *slow*, but the class has no healing spells at all at first level! All it has is a host of detect spells (*detect magic*, *detect poison*, etc.). The so-called healer cannot heal anyone until he reaches third level, when he can use second-level spells of his class. A generalized cleric can do better than that at first level with *cure light wounds*, plus some specialized spells such as *remove fear* and *bless*. The idea of a healing class is good, but this particular one is less than satisfactory.

*Oriental Adventures* offers the only bright spot when it comes to an emphasis on healing: the shukenja. Although he gets healing spells in the same slow manner as regular clerics, he has more reason to use them in nonadventure situations. Every time a shukenja uses a curative spell on someone not associated with the party, he gets 100 experience points per level of the spell he used. Although he does not get more low-level curative spells, at least the shift in emphasis is refreshing.

Every cleric-type character in the game system, no matter what emphasis is placed on healing, is limited by his ability to gain curative spells. Here is where the healing power of clerics is most nullified in all but the most magic-rich worlds. Many of the small villages out in the country are unlikely to have a cleric; in areas without a temple, of course, no one could train to become one. Not only that, but the overwhelming majority of clerics in *any* campaign world will be low-level. In many worlds this means that keeping a cleric around would not be worth the bother to peasant farmers; there's just too little good he can do. This is due to a combination of magical limitations and the needs of peasant farmers.

### **Level limitations**

The needs of a farming village are often quite different from those of a party of adventurers. Leaving out the specialized curative spells *bless* and *remove fear*, a 1st-level cleric has only one true healing spell: *cure light wounds*. This spell is fine for adventurers who engage in combat all

the time, but unless a peasant accidentally belts a fellow reaper with his scythe at harvest time, it won't be needed much in the everyday life of a farming community. Peasants don't get involved in battle much, and with their poor weaponry, lack of training, and low hit points (all peasants discussed here are NPCs by definition), they would generally be killed if they did. The real killers of peasants in peacetime are starvation, disease, and poison (due to both tainted victuals and poisonous plants and animals). This requires higher-level spells, and hence higher-level clerics, to remedy. The situation is aggravated by the fact that there are no true curative spells of the second level of power. With no antidotes or *neutralize poison* spells available, slow poison is rather ineffective as it only delays the inevitable.

Thus, to peasant farmers, the first really useful curative spell, *cure disease*, is a third-level spell, requiring at least a 5th-level cleric to cast it. So we can see that any village of people living the same general life-style as that of ancient or medieval Earth will not find it worth their while to maintain a cleric of less than 5th level. Actually, this is cutting things finer than they should be, for there are times when the ability to cast one *cure disease* spell will not be enough.

As in the real world, plague can be a devastating evil in a fantasy world. If villages are spread rather far apart, their isolation could prove to be an asset, as this could limit the spread of a contagious disease. Let one disease get a foothold, however, and a major disaster is at hand.



Depending on the disease (fantasy worlds, needless to say, are not limited to our known diseases), several people might be infected before anyone actually shows any symptoms. The more people have the disease, the more *cure disease* spells are required. Remember, too, that the spell is not called *immunity from disease*. The germs infecting the victim are destroyed by this spell, but there is nothing to keep one from catching it again. Quarantine helps, but if symptoms are slow to appear, it might not be instituted until it is too late. There is really no way the cleric can tell people are ill until the symptoms appear. Not even the highest-level clerics can cast enough *detect disease* spells to cover the population of an entire village at one go, and previously covered people might catch the disease from someone else while the cleric is praying for "refills." Needless to say, the highest-level clerics all live in major cities or towns; they don't hang around dinky little villages out in the boondocks on the off chance that a plague might start. Even if they did, the highest-level cleric allowed in the AD&D game could only cast nine *cure disease* spells per day. Unless quarantine is used (and even if it is, in some cases), the possibility of reinfection by uncured victims is everpresent.

*Neutralize poison* is a fourth-level spell, requiring at least a 7th-level cleric to cast it. Fortunately, mass poisonings are far less

frequent than plagues in peasant villages, but unpleasant incidents could still crop up if food is spoiled and if this fact is overlooked until it's too late. In addition, there is a family of fungi which infests grains. The most famous is ergot, but there are others as well. These fungi do not harm people of themselves, but they secrete poisons (specifically, mycotoxins) which do. Since these fungi reproduce at a rapid rate, not noticing them in the village's stock of grain creates the potential for poisons spreading with the speed of a regular epidemic. With the victims being poisoned instead of infected by disease germs, *cure disease* is useless. These fungi wreaked havoc on farmers from ancient times to the 1940s, and they will do the same in most fantasy worlds, especially in areas where there are no clerics of 7th level or higher.

As far as ordinary curative spells are concerned, there are no others that would really be useful. *Heal* requires a cleric of at least 11th level (assuming he has a wisdom of 17 or 18), and would generally be a waste when a lower-level spell could do just as well. *Cure serious wounds* and *cure critical wounds* would be healing overkill for zero-level characters. If a person with from 1-6 hit points reached the point of needing those spells, he would be dead. *Restoration* is generally useless for the same reason; if the typical peasant mixed it up with a wight or other energy-drainer, he would be killed outright and probably turned into a monster himself. Zero-level characters simply can't reach the point where they require the fancier healing spells, and there would be no one nearby, who could cast them anyway. Students of the "healing magic advantage" school state that clerics could cast expensive healing spells on faithful followers even if they can't afford to pay. But they can't cast the spells if they don't know the spells, and that's all there is to it! If a character needs *restoration* of a drained energy level and no cleric in the party can do it, the local clerics probably can't either. That character will just have to wait until the party gets back to the big city.

### Raising the dead

With all the possibilities of death by violence, poison, disease, etc., someone is inevitably going to die. Now we get to the biggies: *raise dead* and *resurrection*. These require clerics of 9th and 16th levels, respectively, and only clerics with a wisdom of 18 can learn seventh-level spells.

This is a good time to discuss another problem for villages that rely on their cleric for curative spells. A cleric who stays at home, as opposed to adventuring, is not going to rise in levels, and thus is not going to be able to improve his ability to help his parish (the shukunja could be an exception to this rule). As we have seen, a cleric has to rise to at least 5th level to be of any practical use to a community in the healing department. This

means going on adventures. In the case of high-level clerics, anyone who dies while the cleric is gone will have to wait until his return to be brought back to life. And here we have an interesting dilemma.

*Raise dead* is the lower-level spell, and hence the most common. Its effectiveness, however, is negated if the number of days the person has been dead exceeds the cleric's level. Therefore, even the highest-level cleric (who probably wouldn't hang around a village) will only be able to use *raise dead* if the person has been dead roughly a month or less. If he's been dead for longer than that before the cleric returns from his quest, said cleric will have to go on more and longer quests in order to reach 16th level and gain the ability to cast *resurrection*. Another problem with *raise dead* is that the body must be intact. If it's not the dead of winter, and the village doesn't have enough salt to preserve the body (they probably won't), the dear departed will have to be buried — not only as an act of reverence, but also as an act of sanitation.

A village in a remote wooded area might be able to get healing help from a druid, but this class is less useful than clerics for the purpose of healing. The druid doesn't even get *cure light wounds* until 2nd level, when he can use clerical spells of the same level. This puts the druid neatly between the regular cleric and the healer class. The druid also cannot bring back the dead. *Reincarnation* doesn't help if the return of a specific person is desired. A human widower who had a beautiful blonde wife might not appreciate getting a half-orc in her place. If a high-level cleric isn't handy, players won't be able to bring back dead friends unless they can get their hands on a *wish*. A *rod of resurrection* might work, but the players will still need a cleric, as only a cleric can use the thing.

In summary, the advantages of clerical healing, though vital for adventuring parties, are mostly impractical for small villages for two reasons. First, there won't be enough clerics of high enough level (at least 5th) to go around. Second, the cleric will often be off adventuring in order to raise his level and thus increase the power and number of spells he can cast. As a result, he will often be absent when his presence is most needed. Some campaign worlds may have powerful clerics behind every bush, but in most worlds, specialists are relatively scarce — especially specialists in magic. This may seem cruel, but it is nevertheless a fact of life. Besides, the rarity of magic in a village has one advantage for the purpose of the game: peasants wishing to escape the inevitability of disease are a major source of NPC recruits for a party of adventurers who are willing to share their healing resources with their hirelings. After all, why else would zero-level nobodies go on adventures that are often lethal for even high-level, professional adventurers? Ω



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by Robert Stockdale

# As the Cleric Turns

*Redefining undead turning for the cleric*

Table 1

## Old and New Ratings of Undead Turning

Undead	Old Level	New Level
Skeleton	I	I
Zombie	I	I
Ghoul	III	III
Shadow	V	V
Wight	VI	VI
Huecuva	III	III
Ghast	IV	IV
Monster zombie	III	III
Wraith	VI	VI
Coffer corpse	II	II
Penanggalan	V	V
Mummy	VII	VII
Son of Kyuss	IV	IV
Paladin (L 1-2)	—	VII
Spectre	VII	VII
Apparition	VI	VI
Juju zombie	III	III
Paladin (L 3-4)	—	VII
Vampire	VIII	VIII
Vampire (cleric)	IX	IX
Vampire (magic-user)	X	X
Paladin (L 5-6)	—	IX
Ghost	VIII	VIII
Paladin (L 7-8)	—	X
Lich	X	X
Paladin (L 9-10)	—	Special
Special	—	Special
Paladin (L 11 + )	—	—

When the *Dungeon Masters Guide* was first published in 1979, its table entitled "Matrix for Clerics Affecting Undead" was comprehensive in its coverage of all known undead creatures and showed how they were affected by clerics of various levels. However, in the seven years that have passed since the *DMG*'s first printing, the AD&D® game has advanced considerably. The table, however, has not.

Three major deficiencies exist in the table. First, undead of similar strength or power are not turned in the same manner. Levels did not appear in the AD&D game until the publication of the FIEND FOLIO™ tome. With its publication, the existing table listing only the original *Monster Manual* creatures is no longer realistic (see Table 1). Why should a zombie be more difficult to turn than a skeleton, both of which are Level I creatures? Why is a ghast (Level IV) more difficult to turn than a wight (Level VI)? When you compound this with the haphazard way in which the undead types have been added, utter chaos exists (as if these undead were not chaotic enough). For instance, a Level IIcoffin corpse is as hard to turn as a Level VI wraith, while a Level III juju zombie is only slightly less difficult to turn than a Level X magic-user vampire.

Second, characters are acquiring higher levels in today's games. The existing table halts progression of the clerical undead-turning ability at 14th level. Len Lakofka's article in DRAGON® Magazine #80 unified the *DMG*'s attack matrices and extended them to clerics of 19th level. As turning undead is an attack (and at upper levels, a very deadly one), a cleric's ability to turn should also progress up to the same level as that of standard fighting ability.

Finally, the existing table's treatment of a cleric's ability to affect paladins is inconsistent with its treatment of creatures that falls under the category "Special." Classified under that category are "evil creatures from the lower planes . . . from 1-2 in number. (As a rule of thumb, any creature with . . . 11 or more hit dice . . . will be unaffected.)" Thus, it is inconsistent to allow paladins of higher than 11th level to be affected by clerics, while creatures of the Lower planes with 11 HD are unaffected. Also, the table allows an 8th-level cleric (or a 10th-level paladin) to turn a 20th-level paladin.

Knowing the shortcomings of the current matrix, the obvious solution is to devise a new matrix. This new matrix, shown in Table 2, allows for progression

## Table 2

### Matrix for Clerics Affecting Undead\*

Level of undead	Level of cleric												
	1-2	3	4-5	6	7-8	9	10-11	12	13-14	15	16-17	18	19 +
I	9	4	T	T	D	D	D *	D *	D *	D *	D *	D *	D *
II	14	9	4	T	T	D	D	D *	D *	D *	D *	D *	D *
III	19	14	9	4	T	T	D	D	D *	D *	D *	D *	D *
IV	20	19	14	9	4	T	T	D	D	D *	D *	D *	D *
V	—	20	19	14	9	4	T	T	D	D	D *	D *	D *
VI	—	—	20	19	14	9	4	T	T	D	D	D *	D *
VII	—	—	—	20	19	14	9	4	T	T	D	D	D *
VIII	—	—	—	—	20	19	14	9	4	T	T	D	D
IX	—	—	—	—	—	20	19	14	9	4	T	T	D
X	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	19	14	9	4	T
Special	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	19	14	9	T

\* Paladins turn undead (et al.) as a cleric two levels below their level.

## Table 3

### When Creatures are Affected

Undead	Level	Old			New		
		T#	T	D	T#	T	D
Apparition	VI	5	14	—	4	12	15
Coffer corpse	II	3	9	14	1	6	9
Ghost	IV	2	8	14	1	9	12
Ghost	VIII	7	—	—	7	15	18
Ghoul	III	1	5	7	1	7	10
Huecuva	III	1	7	9	1	7	10
Juju zombie	III	5	14	—	1	7	10
Lich	X	8	—	—	10	18	—
Monster zombie	III	2	8	14	1	7	10
Mummy	VII	4	14	—	6	13	16
Paladin (L 1-2)	VII*	4	14	—	6	13	16
Paladin (L 3-4)	VIII *	5	14	—	7	15	18
Paladin (L 5-6)	IX*	6	—	—	9	16	19
Paladin (L 7-8)	X*	7	—	—	10	18	—
Paladin (L 9-10)	Special*	8	—	—	12	19	—
Paladin (L 11+)	—	8	—	—	—	—	—
Penanggalan	V	3	9	14	3	10	13
Shadow	V	1	6	8	3	10	13
Skeleton	I	1	4	6	1	4	7
Son of Kyuss	IV	4	14	—	1	9	12
Special	Special*	8	—	—	12	19	—
Spectre	VII	4	14	—	6	13	16
Vampire	VIII	6	—	—	7	15	18
Vampire (cleric)	IX	6	—	—	9	16	19
Vampire (magic-user)	X	6	—	—	10	18	—
Wight	VI	1	7	9	4	12	15
Wraith	VI	3	9	14	4	12	15
Zombie	I	1	4	6	1	4	7

\* Level with respect to clerical turning.

T# = Cleric is able to turn only given a roll of the dice.

T = Cleric is able to automatically turn.

D = Cleric is able to automatically destroy.

of clerical undead turning to continue up through 19th level (identical in the level groupings and upper limits to that in Len Lakofka's article), along with 11 groups of undead (one for each of Level I to X and Special). Progression in the table is in 25% increments in increasing from one clerical level grouping to the next, as well as in the difficulty in turning successively higher levels of undead. As was done on the original matrix, a slight chance (1 in 20) is given for each level group in turning a higher-level creature. For example, a 1st-level cleric has a 1-in-20 chance of turning a Level IV undead (such as a ghast). Table 1 also shows the new grouping of undead, including paladins as derived from Table 2.

Table 3 contrasts the old and new matrices. Arranged in alphabetical order, this table shows three differences for both the original *DMG* matrix and the new matrix: the level at which it is first possible to turn a creature given a roll of the dice (T#); the level at which a turn is automatic; and the level at which the creature is automatically destroyed (D). Several things are apparent from this table. First, paladins of greater than 11th level are no longer affected by clerics, making their treatment consistent with that of creatures of the Lower planes. Second, with the exception of liches, vampires (magic-users), "Special" characters, and level 7-10 paladins, it is possible for high-level clerics to instantly destroy any type of undead. Ω

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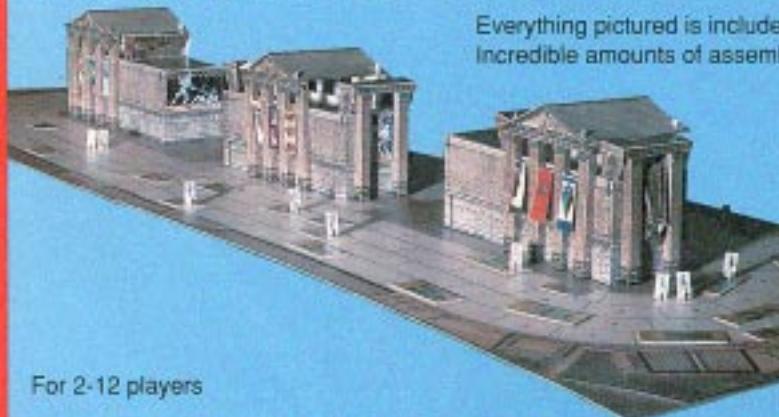
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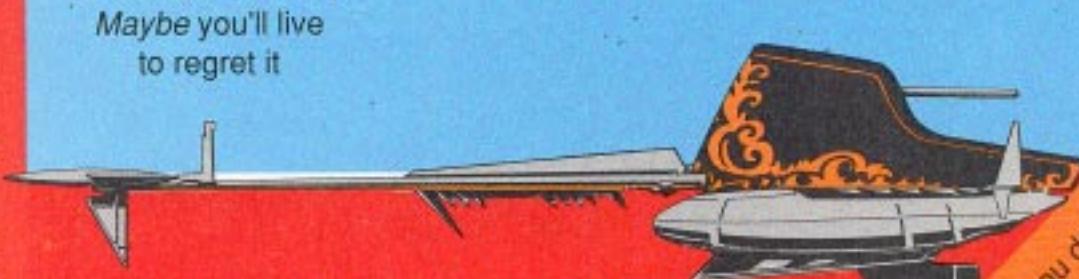
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## (Cut Down to Size)

A revised weapon-specialization system for the AD&D® game

For some Dungeon Masters, the weapon specialization rules introduced on page 18 of *Unearthed Arcana* are troublesome. The melee advantage conferred to fighters and rangers who specialize in a weapon can be quite powerful, as evinced by Lenard Lakofka's analysis in DRAGON® issue #104, page 28. A 1st-level fighter with single specialization in the long sword has his offensive power dramatically improved. A 4th-level fighter who gains double specialization with a weapon is a serious threat to game balance in many campaigns, dominating play over less powerful characters. For these reasons, Lenard Lakofka and others have suggested revising the existing rules to tone down the efficacy of weapon specialization.

This article presents one such revision of the official system, with a more gradual progression of weapon specialization modifiers for melee weapons provided. The idea of double and triple specialization with a weapon is extended to include all weapons, both melee and missile.

The advantages of single specialization in a melee weapon are altered for characters of 1st through 3rd levels, as shown in Table 1. The +2 hp damage bonus is reduced to +1, and the attack routine is changed to four attacks every three rounds, for an extra melee attack every third round. The official advantages of single specialization are not gained until 4th level.

Double specialization in a melee weapon is not possible until a fighter attains the 7th level. Double specialization grants only a +2 on "to hit" and damage rolls.

Characters may receive double and triple specialization in missile weapons as well – a change from the official rules. Double specialization cannot be achieved until 7th level, and triple specialization must wait until 10th level, as with melee weapons. Tables 2-4 give the bonuses for bows, crossbows, and all other hurled or missile weapons. In each table, under the range columns, two numbers are given for each level of specialization. The number before the slash is the "to hit" bonus; the number after the slash is the damage bonus. The number of attacks for each missile weapon at a given experience level is unchanged from the Weapon Specialization Table for Fighters and Rangers in *Unearthed Arcana*, page 18, regardless of double or triple specialization.

Rangers suffer an odd problem when they specialize in bows. Because each ranger must spend all three of his weapon proficiency slots in order to specialize in a bow, he cannot be proficient in any melee weapon until he attains 4th level. Some Dungeon Masters may feel this is an unfair penalty to be imposed upon a bow-specialist ranger at the start of his adventuring career. The DM might consider allowing the ranger to use one of his non-weapon proficiency slots as a fourth weapon proficiency slot with which the bow-specialist can acquire one melee

**Table 1**  
**Melee Weapon Specialization**

Specialization	Experience level	"To hit" bonus	Damage bonus	No. of attacks
Single	1-3	+1	+1	4/3
Single	4-6	+1	+2	3/2
Double	7-9	+2	+3	2/1
Triple	10-12	+3	+3	2/1
	13+	+3	+3	5/2

**Table 2**  
**Bow Weapon Specialization**

Specialization	Experience level	Point blank	"To Hit"/Damage bonuses		
			Short	Medium	Long
Single	1-6	+2/+2	+1/+1	0/0	0/0
Double	7-9	+3/+2	+2/+1	+1/0	0/0
Triple	10+	+3/+3	+2/+2	+1/+1	+1/0

**Table 3**  
**Crossbow Weapon Specialization**

Specialization	Experience level	Point blank	"To Hit"/Damage bonuses		
			Short	Medium	Long
Single	1-6	+2/+2	+1/+1	+1/0	0/0
Double	7-9	+3/+2	+2/+1	+1/0	+1/0
Triple	10+	+3/+3	+2/+2	+1/+1	+1/0

**Table 4**  
**Other Hurled or Missile Weapon Specialization**

Specialization	Experience level	"To Hit"/Damage bonuses		
		Short	Medium	Long
Single	1-6	+1/+2	+1/+2	+1/+2
Double	7-9	+2/+2	+2/+2	+2/+2
Triple	10+	+2/+3	+2/+3	+2/+3

weapon of proficiency.

Some weapons, such as the spear, dagger, and hand axe, can be considered both melee and missile weapons. Just because a fighter is specialized in wielding a hand axe in melee does not mean he is also highly skilled in throwing that axe. Melee and missile specialization in a single weapon must be considered separately. The DM might allow a PC to obtain both forms of specialization in a weapon. For example, a fighter who has melee specialization in the spear at 1st level might take missile specialization with his spear at 4th level by expending a weapon proficiency slot. At 7th level, the fighter takes double specialization with the spear as a melee weapon, and at 10th level, he takes double specialization as a missile weapon. The fighter may ultimately attain triple specialization with the spear in melee and as a hurled weapon at 16th level.

By enforcing a more gradual progression of weapon specialization advantages for melee weapons, the Dungeon Master restores fighters and rangers to a fairer, more balanced position in the game.

Instead of being highly efficient hack-and-slash machines with a strong damage bonus and impressive attack routine, fighter and ranger weapon specialists are more in balance, keeping them from becoming the sole centers of attention in a low-level campaign.

By providing for double and triple specialization with missile weapons, the DM encourages characters to be led away from always choosing the trusty long sword as the only weapon for specialization. A fighter who wishes to emulate William Tell or Robin Hood can continue to improve in his mastery of the crossbow or long bow as he gains levels.

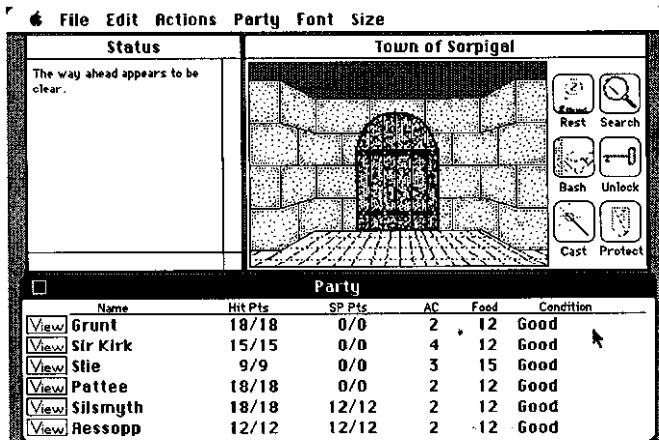
Weapon specialization need not be an overly powerful ability of PC warriors that forces the Dungeon Master to increase the number of monsters in every encounter to restore balance to the campaign. Specialization can instead be a moderate advantage that allows PCs to pursue their weapons of interest and to portray the heroic characters of interest to the players, whether swordsmen or archers.

Ω

# The Beastie Awards

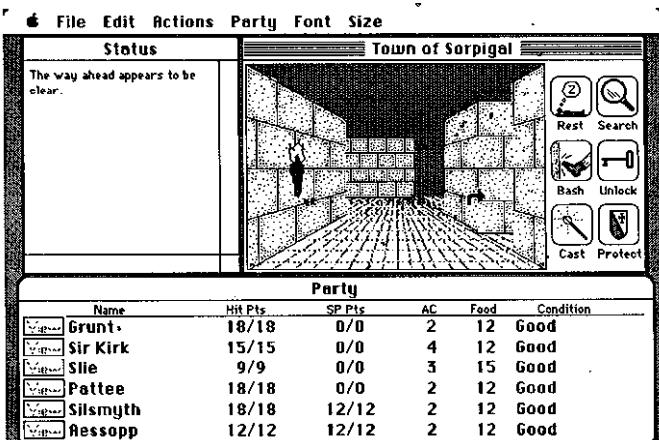
*The year's best entertainment software products*

**Might and Magic:**  
You see a door....



The Macintosh screen reveals the party, the current location in 3D, and offers information as to the party's status. Clicking on VIEW presents the statistics for the selected character.

**Might and Magic:**  
The torchlit streets  
of Sorpigal.



As we amably wander down the halls of a town, the mouse cursor icon indicates the path of travel you've indicated you wish to take by moving the Macintosh's mouse in the desired direction...in this case, the mouse is moved to the right as we want to go down that corridor...(FOOLS!)

Thousands of new software products are released each year. Perhaps 40-50% of these products are recreational, ranging from adventure games to microcomputer-translated versions of popular coin-operated arcade games. With enhanced computer systems offering more colors, digitized sound, three-dimensional effects, and faster play, computer entertainment products continue to dominate as the software purchase of preference by most consumers. It is not uncommon for new technology, state-of-the-art ideas, and no-holds-barred programming to be used initially in computer entertainment products. Once software companies have proven their ideas successful in the gaming world, the ideas are moved to the productivity arena where they grace word processors, data bases, and spread sheets.

We are proud to present our first Beastie Awards to the software programs rated as best by DRAGON® Magazine readers and software columnists (that's us). The award range is from August 1987 through August 1988. Next year's awards will span the July 1988 to July 1989 period. Only one vote is allowed per reader. The Beastie Award is presented to the software game that receives the highest number of votes. The game must be offered in more than one computer system format. Award recognition of other programs is determined by the software columnists.

## The Beastie Award

*Might and Magic* (New World Computing/MEDIAGENIC)

C64/128, Apple II, Apple Macintosh, and IBM micros and compatibles

*Might and Magic* received more votes than any other software package, it also received more honorable mentions in combination with other software programs on award ballots. Four times as many votes were received for the Apple II version as for the IBM version, with a small number of votes cast by C64/128 users. Since the Macintosh version has just been released, there could be additional votes for the Macintosh format of this game in next year's awards.

*Might and Magic* has accomplished a feat few other software fantasy-adventure games can equal: the game has ported its exciting environment to a variety of computer systems. Playing one computer version over another in no way diminishes the various adventures nor the game's playability. All game formats have been expertly programmed to take advantage of several computers' specific abilities. Add the awesome, geographic scope of the game and the number of hours players will become embroiled in its puzzles, battles, and quests, and you have an enormous dollar value. As a multiformat, multienvironment fantasy-adventure game, *Might and Magic* is the readers' selection as the first winner of the Beastie Award.

### The Beastie runner-up

*The Bard's Tale* (Interplay Productions/Electronic Arts)

Apple II, C64/128, Commodore Amiga, and IBM micros and compatibles

Of note for *The Bard's Tale* is that the voting was overwhelmingly Apple II-based, with a low number of IBM micro-user votes tallied. Also of interest is that voting for *The Bard's Tale II* was equally split between Apple II and C64/128 users. *The Bard's Tale II* is the sequel to the *The Bard's Tale*; it ranks in third place for the popular vote!

### Specific system awards

The following system-specific products have been awarded the Beastie for recognition of high entertainment value in their individual computer categories.

#### Atari ST

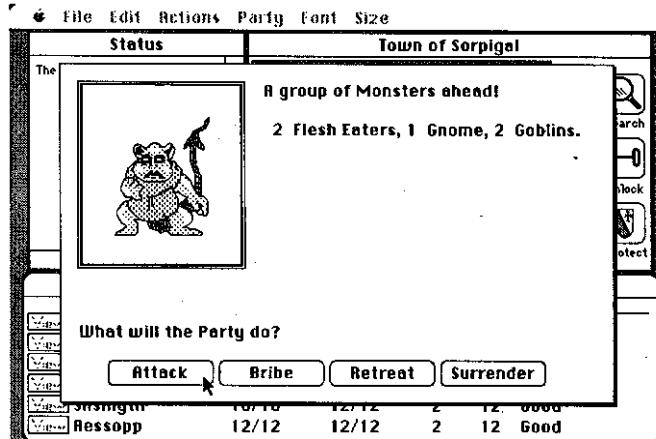
*Dungeon Master* (FTL Games)

If *Dungeon Master* can duplicate its playability, graphics, sound, user-interface, and solid adventuring for other computer systems, this could easily be the Beastie Award winner next year.

#### Apple II

*Ultima V* (Origin Systems)

This game is a real eye-opener, especially when you consider the company entered a 10-year old technological environment and



*Might and Magic*: A surprise encounter with hostile opponents.

When an encounter occurs, a new window appears onscreen requesting the player to make a decision as to how to handle the usually hostile adversaries!

produced a fantasy role-playing game that possesses entertaining 8-bit animation, truly intriguing puzzles, and advanced combat and spell systems.

#### Apple IIGS

*Dream Zone* (Baudville)

This game is a graphic treat that takes full advantage of the Apple IIGS by using innovative puzzles.

#### Apple Macintosh

*Quarterstaff* (Simulated Environment Systems)

This is as true a role-playing environment as any offering has been able to manage. Multiplayer characters manage their affairs as though ordered by adventurers sitting about a table listening to the environment roll of the tongue of a game master.

#### Commodore Amiga

*The Bard's Tale* (Interplay Productions/Electronic Arts)

This is the first unique fantasy role-playing game introduced for the Amiga that was probably responsible for some sales of the computer itself! Graphics, animation, and sound combine to offer one of the finest adventure environments ever delivered.

#### IBM micros and compatibles

*Star Command* (Electronic Arts)

This is one of the most addicting games to yet appear for IBM micros and compatibles. Not only do you create a variety of interesting characters, but on-screen players are required to use their various talents to enable successful quests in space. *Star Command* is not only one of the first PC-based games to offer support for Enhanced Graphics Adapters (EGA), but also to bundle both 3½" and 5½" disk formats in the same package at no extra cost!

### Honorable mention

The following products received high vote counts from our readers.

*Balance of Power* (Mindscape)

*Maniac Mansion* (Lucasfilm Games)

*Phantasmie* (Strategic Simulations, Inc.)

*Pirates!* (MicroProse)

*Wizard's Crown* (Strategic Simulations, Inc.)

### Specific category awards

#### Best Arcade/Strategy Games

*Blockbuster* (Mindscape) C64/128

*Dark Castle and Beyond Dark Castle* (Silicon Beach Software) Apple Macintosh

*Ebonstar* (Microllusions) Commodore Amiga

*Oids* (FTL Games) Atari ST

*Shanghai* (MEDIAGENIC) Apple IIGS

*Soko-Ban* (Spectrum Holobyte) IBM micros and compatibles

*Wings of Fury* (Broderbund Software) Apple II

#### Best Driving/Racing Simulations

*Ferrari Formula One* (Electronic Arts)

Commodore Amiga

*Test Drive* (Accolade) all formats

#### Best Flight Simulators

*Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* (Electronic Arts) Apple Macintosh, IBM micros and compatibles, Apple II, and C64/128

*F/A-18 Interceptor* (Electronic Arts) Commodore Amiga

*F-15 Strike Eagle* (MicroProse) Atari ST

#### Best Science Fiction Game

*Star Command* (Strategic Simulations, Inc.) IBM micros and compatibles

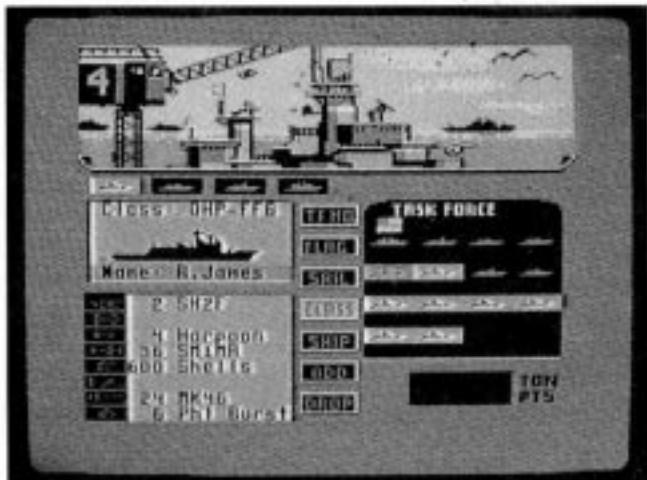
*Maniac Mansion*: A comedy of terrors from Lucasfilm Games.



*Ferrari Formula One*: In the pits and on the international racing circuit.



*Strike Fleet*: Gunboat diplomacy for the Apple IIGS.



#### Best Software Conversion

*Might and Magic* (New World Computing/MEDIAGENIC) to Macintosh  
*Questron II* (Strategic Simulations, Inc.) to IBM micros and compatibles

#### Best Sports Simulations

*Earl Weaver's Baseball* (Electronic Arts) Commodore Amiga and IBM micros and compatibles  
*The Games* (Epyx) C64/128  
*Winter Games* (Epyx) Apple II  
*World Tour Golf* (Electronic Arts) Apple IIGS and C64/128

#### Best Military Strategy Games

*Decisive Battles of the American Civil War, Volume One* (Strategic Studies Group/Electronic Arts) Apple II  
*PT-109* (Spectrum HoloByte) Apple Macintosh  
*Strike Fleet* (Lucasfilm Games) Apple IIGS  
*The Ancient Art of War at Sea* (Broderbund Software) IBM micros and compatibles  
*The Universal Military Simulator* (Rainbird/MEDIAGENIC) Atari ST

#### Most Unusual Game of the Year

*Gone Fishin'* (Electronic Arts) Atari ST

#### Games to Watch for 1989

*Bard's Tale III* (Electronic Arts)  
*Wizardry IV: The Return of Werdna*  
*Wasteland* (Origin Systems/Broderbund Software)

Now is a good time to keep track of your votes for next year's awards. As you play different games, write down their good and bad points. Then, when the call goes out for ballots, you'll be ready to mail in your important vote for the Beastie Awards. We thank everyone who voted for the first awards.

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| M64 Queen Arhendhirl & her maids | M69 Silvan Seer      |
| M65 Legolas                      | M70 Silvan Bowman    |
| M66 Galon The Butler             | M71 Silvan Swordsman |
| M67 High Captain of Aradhrynd    | M72 Silvan Tracker   |

by Len Carpenter

# Roll On!

## Expanding *Unearthed Arcana's* character-generation Method V

Among the many rule additions presented in *Unearthed Arcana* is a new method for rolling up human player characters. This new Method V on page 74 allows a player to first choose a desired character class and then roll from three to nine six-sided dice to generate each of the seven character abilities. This new character-creation method could be expanded beyond just the human characters of traditional AD&D® games. Method V of *Unearthed Arcana* could also be used for creating single-classed demi-human characters with little or no modifications to the table. The same system could even be applied to generate the many possible multiclassed characters of the game, as well as the new character classes described in *Oriental Adventures*. The two tables listed hereafter provide such an expansion of Method V to include these multiclassed and Oriental characters.

The table on page 74, although intended for human PCs, could easily work with single-classed demi-humans and half-orcs. The dice rolls given in the table are already adequate for generating such characters, although the DM could rearrange a few dice rolls here and there to suit the needs or general characteristics of certain races.

For example, elven and half-elven cavaliers might instead roll nine dice for dexterity and only seven dice for constitution, as these cavaliers would train to rely more on agility and defensive speed in battle rather than on physical endurance. Elven and half-elven fighters might roll 8d6 for dexterity and 7d6 for constitution for much the same reason, and to help provide these fighters with a better chance to attain the high dexterity scores needed to become skilled archers.

Halfling fighters might roll only 7d6 for strength and 9d6 for dexterity, since halfling warriors would strive to be agile and evasive in combat above all else. Also, halfling fighters usually favor the use of missile weapons to defeat foes rather than engage in the sweat and muscle of melee combat.

As other possible examples, dwarven and gnomish characters of the thief class might be limited to rolling no more than four dice for comeliness, and half-orcs of any class should roll only three dice for this attribute. The DM can easily make other such changes in the table that are deemed appropriate.

Now, on to multiclassed characters. Table 1 below gives the dice rolls that may be made for all the "legal" multiclassed combinations listed in the *Unearthed Arcana* additions and corrections in DRAGON® Magazine #103 (page 49). The choices made on how many dice are to be rolled for each ability of any character are based on the prime requisites, ability minimums, general racial characteristics, and estimates of the relative importance of the ability scores for each multiclassed combination. Often, dice roll choices are a matter of personal opinion, especially when trying to decide which prime requisite of a multiclassed character receives the most dice. Other DMs may wish to modify or rearrange these figures based on their own opinions.

Where fighter/spell-caster multiclassed characters are concerned, priority is given to the intelligence, or wisdom score over strength; having a high ability score in these prime requisites helps multi-class magic-users or clerics in the long-term advancement of their spell-casting classes. Furthermore, by limiting fighter multiclassed characters to only seven or eight dice for strength, the single-classed fighters maintain a slight edge over those multiclassed fighters in spite of their broader range of capabilities.

Thief, assassin, and illusionist multiclassed characters usually get nine dice for dexterity, since a high dexterity score is very important for the success of these characters. A high dexterity also provides a vital armor-class bonus that is beneficial to any character in the game. The one exception is the druid/thief, who rolls only 8d6 for dexterity, as 9d6 is reserved for the charisma score with a 15 minimum.

Some multiclassed characters may have

difficulties in meeting all the ability-score minimums if the multiclassed combination has a number of abilities with high or very high minimums. Ranger multiclassed characters especially suffer from this problem. A ranger multiclassed character may often have to be satisfied with modifying a low roll upward just to meet an ability score minimum, because the ability minimums or prime requisite of the other class requires a high number of dice. As examples, the druid/ranger has a high charisma minimum to meet and the ranger/magic-user has intelligence as a class prime requisite. But regardless of other ability-score needs, a ranger multiclassed character still rolls 7d6 for strength to give the character a decent average strength score. Intelligence, wisdom, or constitution rolls may be reduced for a ranger multiclassed character compared to the single-classed ranger, but this may sometimes give the single-classed ranger an advantage over these powerful multiclassed combinations.

Overall, multiclassed characters are often lacking in one or more important ability scores because these characters have special prime requisites or abilities with high minimums that demand high numbers of dice. This often places a single-classed character at a slight advantage over a comparable multiclassed character. Multiclassed fighters have fewer dice for strength and constitution than single-classed fighters. Multiclassed clerics and magic-users may suffer dice reductions in strength, dexterity, or constitution compared to single-classed spell-casters. In addition, those characters with three classes have fewer dice to roll in a range of important abilities.

Table 2 gives the suggested dice rolls for the new character classes of *Oriental Adventures*. The dice rolls are arranged to meet class minimums or are set in relative order of importance for the character class. Although some of the classes of *Oriental Adventures* have close counterparts in the traditional AD&D® game, these Oriental characters may have their dice rolls ordered in a somewhat different manner than the Occidental characters.

Bushi roll only three dice for comeliness compared to four dice for Occidental fighters, because bushi are often low-born characters lacking in etiquette and culture, and because they usually have a dishevelled appearance since their suits of armor are often scavenged rather than thoughtfully put together. Bushi roll 8d6 for dexterity and 7d6 for constitution since so much reliance is placed on defensive speed and agility in Oriental combat.

Samurai roll more dice for strength than intelligence, even though the intelligence minimum is higher. Great strength is ultimately more important than genius for a samurai to become a mighty warrior. Rolling 8d6 for intelligence also gives samurai a slightly lower average intelli-

gence compared to wu jen sorcerers, which is only reasonable.

Samurai roll three dice for charisma and four dice for comeliness, since samurai are a cavalier subclass. The style, etiquette, and courtly manner of the samurai enable them to make strong first impressions on others, just as their chivalrous Western counterparts.

Sohei roll 9d6 for strength and only 8d6 for wisdom because sohei are more warrior than priest. Rolling only 8d6 also gives the sohei an average wisdom score less than that of the holy shukenga class.

Wu jen sorcerers are, on the average, slightly stronger than Western magic-users, since their martial skills are noticeably better than those of Occidental magic-users or illusionists. Because wu jen live lives of isolation, they are less likely than magic-users to develop skills of dealing with other persons (as reflected in their lower-than-average charisma scores).

Ninja are a special class in the game, and are therefore treated separately. A ninja character may be rolled up in one of two ways. The DM could require that the player must first choose the class that will be the ninja's cover — bushi, sohei, wu jen, or yakuza — and then roll up a character that also meets the ninja's ability minimums. But even with this character generation system, the player may have to roll up a number of characters before he finally finds a set of ability rolls that also satisfies the ninja's minimums.

If the DM so allows, a player may first choose which ninja split-class he wants to play, then use the dice rolls of the particular split-class given at the bottom of Table 2. The dice rolls for these split-classes are arranged to best suit the ability minimums of both the ninja and cover class. If a dice roll is less than the character's ability-score minimum, the roll is adjusted upward to meet the ability minimum just as with any other character created using Method V.

Ninja/bushi are quite strong on the average and have good intelligence, dexterity, and charisma scores. Ninja/sohei, on the average, also have good scores in these abilities, but have wisdom scores that are usually less than that of the common sohei. Ninja/wu jen naturally have the highest average intelligence scores of all the ninja split-classes. Ninja/yakuza are rolled up in the exact same way as ordinary yakuza, because the ability minimums of both characters are identical.

Oriental nonhumans pose a special problem with this character generation method, because they have some demanding racial minimums to meet as well as class minimums. The DM may handle this problem in any of several ways. The DM could use the dice rolls in Table 2 to create non-human characters, and simply adjust the dice rolls upward to meet both racial and class minimums. If the DM chooses to adhere to the rules of *Oriental Adventures*, he might instead not allow

**Table 1**  
**Multiclassed Characters**

Class	Str	Int	Wis	Dex	Con	Number of dice rolled for:	
						Cha	Com
Cleric/fighter	8	4	9	6	7	5	3
Cleric/ranger	7	6	9	5	8	4	3
Cleric/magic-user	5	9	8	7	6	4	3
Cleric/illusionist	4	8	7	9	6	5	3
Cleric/thief	6	4	8	9	7	5	3
Cleric/assassin	6	5	8	9	7	4	3
Druid/fighter	7	4	8	6	5	9	3
Druid/ranger	7	5	8	4	6	9	3
Druid/magic-user	4	8	7	6	5	9	3
Druid/thief	6	4	7	8	5	9	3
Fighter/magic-user	8	9	4	7	6	5	3
Fighter/illusionist	7	8	4	9	6	5	3
Fighter/thief	8	5	3	9	7	6	4
Fighter/assassin	8	6	4	9	7	5	3
Ranger/magic-user	7	9	6	5	8	4	3
Magic-user/thief	6	8	4	9	7	5	3
Magic-user/assassin	6	8	5	9	7	3	4
Illusionist/thief	5	8	4	9	7	6	3
Cleric/fighter/magic-user	7	9	8	6	5	4	3
Cleric/fighter/thief	7	4	8	9	6	5	3
Cleric/magic-user/thief	5	8	7	9	6	4	3
Fighter/magic-user/thief	7	8	4	9	6	5	3

**Table 2**  
**Oriental Adventures Characters**

Class	Str	Int	Wis	Dex	Con	Number of dice rolled for:	
						Cha	Com
Bushi	9	4	5	8	7	6	3
Kensai	7	5	8	9	6	4	3
Samurai	9	8	6	5	7	3	4
Shukenga	7	5	9	6	7	5	3
Sohei	9	4	8	6	7	5	3
Wu jen	5	9	7	8	6	4	3
Yakuza	6	7	3	8	5	9	4
Ninja/bushi	9	7	4	8	5	6	3
Ninja/sohei	9	8	5	7	4	6	3
Ninja/wu jen	5	9	4	8	6	7	3
Ninja/yakuza	6	7	3	8	5	9	4

any character who hasn't met the racial minimums fairly, or might restrict the character to being a human or a nonhuman of a different race.

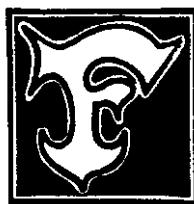
The DM might opt to rearrange a few of the dice rolls of Table 2 to improve the chances for a nonhuman character to meet the racial minimums fairly. Spirit folk characters could roll a greater number of dice for charisma to help achieve the 14 minimum, at the expense of other abilities. Of course, the DM might simply decide this system is unsuitable for creating Oriental nonhuman characters.

The main reason for extending Method V to include as many character classes and races as possible is simply to save time. In those campaigns where the DM grants the players full freedom of choice of character class and race, this system provides a

quick way to roll up a desired character type. Instead of rolling the dice over and over again until a suitable set of ability scores is finally found, the player chooses the character class first, rolls seven sets of dice, adjusts for minimums, and the character is soon ready for play. This method is especially useful where preparation time is short, such as with quick pick-up games, impromptu module adventures, or when a new player joins the campaign. Ω



JEM 88



LESH AND BLOOD the battered wooden sign read, hanging dead in the late afternoon heat; under the once-ornate letters was a painted porkchop peeled and faded with age. There was a noise on one side of the curtained doorway, a scuffle, and then the body of a lean young woman flew headfirst out of the small butcher shop to land face down in the dusty street.

"And stay gone!" said the burly man in the blood-stained apron. "Next time I catch you snooping around my place, I'll make sausages out of your tripes!"

Jennet lay still for a moment, then rolled over and sat up with a sigh. Buying Lord Onomai's daughter back from the man who'd bought her as an infant in the Isle slave market was proving to be a difficult task: Butcher Hapricot drove a hard bargain. No doubt the man smelled a profit. Unfortunately, he was perfectly within his rights; just because Onomai now had a use for the little girl he'd sold five years previous didn't mean that he could have her back for what he had paid. The trick was to make Hapricot want to sell, and at a fair price.

Well. Time to get the magic working.

The old witch was waiting for her in the smelly hut just outside the city gates. She looked up from her brazier as Jennet entered.

"So, grand-dam," Jennet said. "Have you considered what I want?"

"It's not a good thing you ask me to do, Jennet from Iberia," the old woman said, her voice cracking with age. "To make a child ill — it's wrong."

"I don't want her ill," Jennet said patiently. "I want your spell to make her *seem* ill so that the butcher will listen to reason. Can you do it?"

The witch stirred the brazier. Her eyes were brown, ringed with a darker color around the iris like all true witches' eyes.

"If the temple discovers what I have done —"

"They'll burn you and hang me," Jennet interrupted. "And if I tell them I saw you selling love philtres to the prostitutes in Three Moon Street, they'll just burn you. Do as I ask, and you'll get paid instead of burned. Come on, old woman!"

The witch closed her eyes and sighed heavily. At last she said, "Do you have what I need?"

Jennet grimaced and felt around in her pockets for the hairbrush she'd lifted that afternoon from the small living quarters behind the butcher shop. It was tangled with dark, curly hair, and Hapricot was bald.

"Will this do?"

"For a start. Sit down."

Jennet sat, watching uneasily as the witch teased a single strand of hair free and delicately dropped it into the brazier. The sudden cloud of smoke — too much from a single hair, surely — made her cough.

"Hmm, so." The witch was thoughtful. "Now tell me."

"Tell you what?" Jennet asked, trying not to breathe. She didn't really like magic; it was chancy.

"Tell me about the child."

"I already did," Jennet said, impatient now. "She's small and dark — you can tell that from the hair — and

# Flesh and Blood

by Mary Frances Zambreno

she's thin all over. She's got a high thin voice, and I think blue eyes — I didn't really get close enough to be sure, but some light color."

"What is her name?"

"Hapricot calls her Marga. I don't think Onomai ever bothered to name her."

"Why does he want her back?"

Jennet shrugged. "His wife's dead and he's childless. Even a girl is better than no blood heir."

"Surely, he can marry again."

"And surely that wife can die too. I don't think he wants to take any more chances." Not like the chance her own father had taken when he'd driven her out of her sun-drenched Iberian home — some men were more daring than others about dying alone. "And Onomai's rich. It will be a good enough life for the child."

"Well." The old woman leaned over the brazier, made a swift pass with one hand. "Marga, then. A pearl of great price to be desired by two fathers in Isle where girls are worthless. What says the butcher's wife?"

"Nothing. She died two years after they bought the girl."

The brazier suddenly glowed with heat. Jennet started back.

"What are you doing?" she asked suspiciously.

"For plague, there must be fever."

Jennet swallowed, tried to look away, but couldn't. The witch intoned something alien and strange: air in the little hut was thick with fumes, and foul.

"Pay me," the witch said.

Scowling, Jennet reached into her purse. "Here. Take your money."

The silver disappeared, and the old woman began to rock back and forth in the swirl of smoke. Her words were louder now, harsh and heavy with meaning.

"Ban," she said. "Ban-haga feor. Forleton, forhelan. Ban."

The hair on Jennet's neck prickled as the smoke coalesced, solidified, took form: a child's white face gazed at her from the air, a child sleeping with mouth half-open.

Why had she been thinking about her father just now? Maybe it was Hapricot and Onomai, both gambling as her father had gambled that he might have a daughter who would be of some use to him. They didn't sell girl babies in Iberia, but they might just as well: her father had given her to the servants to raise after her mother's death, and disowned her the moment he realized what an unmarriageable liability she had become by publicly refusing the betrothal he had arranged for her. Funny now, to remember how scared and helpless she'd felt that day.

"Blod," said the witch, achingly chill. "Blod, ban, an-deor brun. Gimma!"

The witch gasped and gave a great cry. Jennet half-rose at the eldritch sound, her mouth dry and her eyes frozen to the child's sleeping, smoky form. Eyes opened above the figure in the smoke, the witch's eyes glowing with unnatural fire. Brown eyes ringed with black, staring through her as her father's had that day, as if she weren't there. Into her, past her, *beyond* —

The witch flung back her head and keened to the hut: "Gimma!"

Flame like lightning streaked across the brazier from the old woman's fingertips; Jennet put up an arm to shield herself. The air *burned*.

"Blood," the witch said then, softly. "It is a matter of blood."

Jennet gasped, "What are you doing?"

The witch's eyes filled the space between, the hut, the night itself. The eyes owned her — possessed her. She was drowning in them.

*It is a matter of blood, Iberian,* the witch's mind beat against her. *Yours, mine, the child's. I will not do this thing.*

She could feel herself slipping away now, into some warm, velvet darkness where she did not want to be. Feel herself slipping away *from* herself, into another's will as she had not been since she was seventeen and had apprenticed herself to a wandering gladiator. Since she was sixteen and had left her father's house for the last time with tears locked inside her heart.

*Jennet. Leave Isle. Leave the little girl, and me, and the butcher, and the lord. Jennet, child whose father did not love her, go and leave us in peace.*

Her father hadn't loved her. Yes, that was true, but why should he? Why should she care? It was the way things were. With a strangled cry, she lunged forward. A flailing hand caught the brazier by one leg and spilled its red-hot contents all over the floor of the hut. The witch moaned, her concentration broken, and Jennet's knife caught her against the throat.

"Get out of my mind, witch!" she hissed. "Whatever you find there is *mine*, and none of your concern. Now are you going to do as I ask, or do I cut your throat? You took my money, you do what I paid you for!"

Trembling the witch nodded. Jennet pulled back but not far; her eyes were streaming from smoke and concealed fear, but they held steady on the old woman. The witch's eyes were on her knife.

"I didn't lie," she whispered. "I sought to send you away, forgetful and unsatisfied, but I didn't lie. There must be blood if I am to do this thing for you."

So. Why did magic always have to hurt? Jennet turned the point of the knife and flicked it against her own palm. A drop of blood welled darkly in the uncertain light. She turned her hand palm-down over the pile of smoldering coals half-spilled from the brazier's mouth and shook the drop loose. Fire hissed.

And went out, in a crash like thunder.

A half-hour later, Jennet staggered back through the empty city streets. Her head was throbbing, her mouth tasted like old washrags, and she'd barely made it back inside the walls before the gates closed for the night, but she had what she needed. The smelly little bag around her neck contained ashes from the brazier, her own blood, and what was left of Marga's hair — it should be enough. Time to finish the job, and fast. She'd had hangovers that had felt better than this.

She paused on the street corner, looked up at the full moon.

*I feared you, mercenary,* the witch had said. *I fear you. We get so few women trained to fight in Isle. I was afraid of what you would do if I told you no.*

Well. The butcher ought to be somewhat harried by

now; best go see.

He was harried, or at least he was awake late. There was light streaming through the shuttered windows at the front of the shop and around the back, too. Jennet was standing directly in front of the door and contemplating knocking when it opened.

Hapricot had dressed hurriedly.

"You!" he said in surprise. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm on my way out of the city at first light," she said smoothly. "I thought I'd give you one last chance to reconsider taking advantage of Lord Onomai's sentimentality. What he offers is more than a fair price for his daughter —"

The butcher went red. "I've no time to talk to you now. Marga is feverish. I've got to fetch the healer —"

"A fever in summer? Is there swelling?"

"Yes — no!" He looked frightened. "It's just a little fever. Children often —"

"There's plague in the stews," she said grimly, and that part was true enough. It was where she had gotten the idea. "You go to a healer and you'll lose business, shop, daughter, and all."

He stared at her blindly. "It's just a little fever."

"There's no cure for plague!" she told him sharply. "You know that."

"I can't — Marga —"

"She's only a child," Jennet said. She eyed the man curiously. "Too little to be of real use to you. Why did you buy an infant anyway?"

"My woman — our babe died, and the milk was paining her. The midwife said she couldn't have another, and I — never mind. The little ones grow into good workers."

He turned back inside, and Jennet followed.

The child was laid down on a cot in one corner. She was flushed and twisting restlessly; the butcher gently pulled one of her arms free and lifted the small shift.

"Come, child, don't fuss so. Let me look —"

The red marks were there, and the swelling. Jennet smiled sardonically as the man pulled away in sudden fear.

Hapricot turned a pale face to her.

"She won't live," Jennet said.

"What can I do?" he asked helplessly.

Jennet pretended to consider; she gnawed her lip; frowning.

"I'm from Iberia. I've seen plague before, and lived: I suppose I could take her to Lord Onomai. His price is good no matter what condition the child is in, and he's rich enough not to mind temple displeasure if he hires a sorcerer to heal her, I think."

That was Hapricot's cue to take heart, start bargaining, but the man just stood there. Well, it was a shock and a terror. Persuasively, she held out Onomai's purse, wrapped the butcher's hand around it. He took it from her absently and set it down on a small table, and that took care of *that*. Once he'd accepted money for the child, she wasn't legally his anymore. Only —

"Wait here," he said. "Stay with Marga."

Wait? What for? He moved slowly past her. By the time he reached the front room, he had broken into a run.

Jennet watched him for a moment, puzzled: she had seen men terrified into hysteria by plague before, but the butcher had the reputation of a hard-headed businessman. He ought to have been suspicious, at least, but he hadn't even counted the money. Brow wrinkled, she turned to the child.

The little thing did seem to be suffering. It couldn't really be plague, could it? Perhaps she should use the amulet she carried to break the spell. She touched the small face with one hand; Marga turned in response, her eyes opening in the candlelight. Jennet pulled the amulet off over her head and bent to tie it around the child's neck. Eyes stared up at her — blue eyes, with smoky rings. Witch's eyes.

She gaped. The child was cool! The swelling was fading, and the marks — but the spell couldn't be broken yet! What — how —

Filled with sudden fury, Jennet straightened.

A witch. The child was a witch, and no spell would hold her long. That was why Onomai wanted her back, not because his wife was dead and a girl was better than no heir, but because young witches were worth *real* money. He must have discovered something when his wife died — perhaps she'd had witchblood in her veins and never told him until then. Whatever, his daughter was now a valuable commodity indeed.

"Papa?" said a small voice from the bed. The little witch sat up and rubbed her eyes. "Papa, is it morning yet? Why are the candles lit?"

The child's voice confused Jennet. She was so small to be a witch, and a witch growing up in Isle? As out of place as — as a girl who refused to marry in Iberia. What would become of the poor brat? Onomai would sell her overseas, unless — in Isle, magic lived in the shadows and the slums.



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"Your papa's gone, Marga," Jennet said. "You're going to have a new papa now."

The child's eyes went wide. "Did papa go away like mama?"

"No, I —"

There was a noise at the door. Jennet went for her knife, but it wasn't the Watch, it was only the butcher come back again with —

With the witch from just outside the city gates. Jennet stared in shock as the man ushered the old hag into the room as formally as if she were a priestess-healer from the temple heights.

"This way, good mother," he was saying. "My daughter's in here. If your magics can heal as they say — I've money put by, I'll pay whatever it takes."

Jennet met the old woman's ringed eyes: eyes like Marga's.

"He came for me," the witch said, lifting her head. "I thought he might. I would have told you what I saw in the smoke, in my mind's eye, but I feared you wouldn't believe. He is willing to risk temple displeasure, to bribe the guards at the gate — willing to risk exposure to plague, and all to save his daughter's life. He loves her."

He loves her. The words rang in Jennet's ears. He loves her. But that was ridiculous. She was a brat, not even his own but a girl-child he'd bought in the slave market. How could he love her?

"Papa!" shrieked the little girl. "You came back!"

"Marga, you're better! But —"

The purse she had put into the butcher's hand lay on the table where he'd set it. That was her job done, by law; he wouldn't be able to deny under the question that money had passed between them. All she had to do was point to the purse, take the child to Onomai, and collect her fee for services rendered. Jennet thought of the man's confused look, his abstracted air when she'd wrapped his fingers around the gold. None of that would matter if she left now, with the child. Least of all the love. She felt the witch's eyes on her, not demanding and engulfing, but simply waiting.

Three adults and a child, in a crowded, candle-lit room. Smoked meats and sausages hung from the dark rafters alongside skins of stale blood used for seasoning. Jennet thought of Onomai's rich house, of the soft-voiced, velvet-footed servants she'd grown up with, the great brass lamps that had lit her way into exile. She looked at the butcher. His eyes were beginning to go white with understanding and new alarm; he looked from the witch to Jennet and hugged his daughter until she squirmed. His daughter.

"Papa, you're hurting me! Papa, what's wrong? Why is everybody here?"

Jennet reached for the purse on the table; she weighed it in her hand. Odd, she had had to come all the way to Isle to find that some fathers could love even daughters — to understand what that looked like, what it meant, and how it hurt.

"Nothing's wrong, Marga," she said in a hard voice. "Your father just wanted to talk to this woman about your apprenticeship."

The butcher gulped, looked at the witch. "Her — her

apprenticeship? Then — then Marga — is — is —"

The old woman nodded but said nothing. Hapricot stared for a moment, then took a deep breath and turned back to Jennet.

"Thank you," he said humbly. "For many things. If you hadn't come, I wouldn't have known about — about Marga needing special teaching until the temple marked her and took her. I know you serve Lord Onomai, but I'll pay whatever you want —"

"Don't be silly, man, Onomai already has," she told him briskly, and tucked the purse into her own tunic. Onomai had deceived her, after all; that made him fair game. "And you'll need all the money you have to leave Isle. A witch can't live well here; ask the old woman. You'll have to go to Cilia or Bregal or someplace else where magic is welcome. I suppose they need butchers in those places too, and your guild would help."

He smiled tentatively. "It would. Won't — won't Lord Onomai try again?"

"I doubt it," she said. "He can't defy both the temple and the law, if he wishes to stay rich, and he has no legal rights in this case. Which he well knows, or he wouldn't have hired me in the first place. Now don't you and the old woman have some business to discuss?"

The butcher shook himself free; he bowed slightly and turned to the witch.

"Yes, and Marga must go back to sleep too. Why, it's almost moonset! Good mother, if you'll come with me —"

He walked by Jennet as if she weren't there. The witch regarded her enigmatically for a moment.

"It wasn't you," she said. "All men are different."

Jennet pushed bleak memories of her father into the back of her mind: her father hadn't loved her, and she had to live with that. She always had.

"It was me," she said. "And it was him, and it was the way things were. And it doesn't matter, really."

The old woman shook her head and smiled.

"You're young," she said. "You'll learn — life is more complicated than that. There is never any single reason, or simple right."

Then she turned to follow her new employer.

Jennet stared after her for a moment, then snorted. Young, was she? Perhaps, and perhaps there was more to learn than what she had this night, but she already knew enough to get out of town while the getting was good. She had enough money to travel fast for a while, and she'd need to, once Onomai realized she'd cheated him. The law would protect Hapricot, but not a foreign mercenary female. Ah, well. She'd never cared much for Isle, anyway. It was almost as hot as Iberia.

Considerately, she braced the door closed as she left the shop. No sense encouraging early customers: Hapricot had enough to do. Overhead the butcher shop sign swayed slightly in the moonlit breeze: **FLESH AND BLOOD**, it read.

Ω

by James M. Ward

# The Game Wizards

*TSR's best for 1989 — for your eyes only*

Sometimes this column (and I know you all are going to find this hard to believe) is a chore to write. The editor of this magazine is very generous with this space, and we in the Creative Services Department of TSR appreciate his allowing us to place material here for your inspection. Nevertheless: it can be a bit taxing on one's abilities to come up with something that you will like to read and the writer wants to write. Fortunately for me, this is not one of those times. TSR is going to put out some great products next year, and I want to tell you about a few of them.

## January

Topping my list is the RED STORM RISING™ board game. It's Tom Clancy's story about modern-day warfare in West Germany, and it's fun for both the full-time war gamer and the simple-game enthusiast. Another good product appearing this month is the DRAGONLANCE® module DLE-1 *In Search of Dragons*. It's the first in a trilogy about the dragons on Krynn. I've read it and liked it a lot.

## February

The FORGOTTEN REALMS™ accessory, *Hall of Heroes* is going to make a big impact on the role-playing market. Old-timers who remember the product *Rogues Gallery* will see some of that style in this product, which deals with the good, bad, and ugly characters of the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game lovers should look for *Web of Deceit* this month. It's the first of a trilogy of TOP SECRET/S.I. modules that takes characters all over the world to fight Web plots.

## March

The big news is the release of the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*. It hits the stands this month, and everyone should be pleased with the result. Another hit should be the Doug Niles book, *Darkwell*, which closes the Moonshae trilogy.

## April

*Darkness and Light*, the first novel in the DRAGONLANCE prequel trilogy, comes out this month. The book covers the lives of Sturm and Kitiara in the five years before they went on their adventures in the DRAGONLANCE Chronicles trilogy. Another great product that I've been playing for a few years is Tom Wham's *Great Khan Game*. It's a fast and fun political game that TSR has set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting.

## May

May is packed, and it's impossible to pick the best two items, so I'll review several of them for you. First is the FORGOTTEN REALMS calendar, which will be its usual visual delight.

The AD&D 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide* is going to be a must-have for all AD&D game players. You can count on AD&D 2nd Edition products in general to be graphically more appealing, to be clearer and easier to read, and to cover many of the errors in the AD&D game that all of you have to sent to TSR.

One of my personal favorites is the revision of the DUNGEON!® board game. It's going to come out bigger and better than ever, and will have much more material in it than any DUNGEON! game has ever had. In addition, the first book of the new BUCK ROGERSTM trilogy should be out this month. If you like science fiction, you are sure to approve of this novel.

Also released this month is the new *High-Rise* game. It's a real-estate game where you build your own style of city. I've play-tested it several times now and can't get enough. I think it will be a big hit with everyone.

## June

This is another jam-packed month with more than its fair share of great products. The AD&D 2nd Edition *Monstrous Compendium* #1 is a top-notch product, but it's a bit difficult to explain. It's a revision of the *Monster Manuals*, but it's not a book. This product comes in a full-color, three-

ring binder. There will be about 130 monsters in the pack, and each will have its own full-page spread. There will also be eight full-color divider sheets with the binder. I'm sure all the new and old information will appeal to AD&D game players everywhere.

TSR will also present a new MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ boxed game set this month. The company has gotten a good bit of mail on the need for a product that better explains the skills of game mastering. This product is going to do just that. Set in New York, the boxed set provides useful rules and adventures for both new and experienced referees.

Also appearing this month is an interesting product called *Cities of Mystery*. It's a folio item set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, but it is an item with an intriguing twist: There is a set of cut-out town buildings included. Now all you have to do is make a few simple cuts and folds, and you can use the maps and buildings to better visualize your adventures. The best players of the game know that miniatures enhance role-playing, and when your miniatures are moving along the streets and buildings of this folio set, your gaming should benefit greatly.

## July

The GREYHAWK™ City boxed set has been a long time in coming, and now that it's finally happening, I can't wait to get the first rough drafts to review. Now the oldest role-playing city can be shown in vivid detail for everyone to enjoy. The product includes maps of the city and underground areas, a poster, some unusual single-sheet adventures, and two large booklets detailing the city and all of its most interesting characters.

Also scheduled for release this month is the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game boxed set *Dawn of the Emperors*. The boxed set deals with Thyatis and Alphatia, two of the largest kingdoms in the D&D® game world. It seems that these cities are at war with each other, and the PCs are thrown into the middle of the struggle. This is one product that all D&D game players will have to buy.

## August

The AD&D 2nd Edition *Monstrous Compendium* #2 comes out this month; it, too, has about 130 monsters. Although this accessory won't come in a binder, it will be five-hole drilled for your convenience (and for inclusion in the *Monstrous Compendium* binder). Like the first compendium, it has eight full-color divider sheets, and the monsters will each get a full page of text.

The DRAGONLANCE trail map comes out in August. Trail maps are an interesting idea that TSR Acquisitions Editor Bruce Heard came up with. What is a trail map? It's an inexpensive, full-color map of some well-traveled sections of a campaign world (in this case Krynn). Players and DMs alike can carry this map around and

use it during play just like a character would use a map he has purchased for adventuring. There will be trail maps for all of the AD&D and D&D game campaign worlds. If the idea works out as well as I think it will, there will eventually be trail maps for all of TSR's role-playing products.

#### September

The big news this month (and for a long time to come) is the arrival of the AD&D 2nd Edition game boxed set, *Spelljammer*, which takes your fantasy warriors, wizards, and clerics out into the magical reaches of outer space. That's right; *Spelljammer* is outer-space fantasy fun.

*The Art of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Fantasy Game, Book II* hits the stands this month. It's filled with full-color art taken from the AD&D game, game-book covers, and lots of other previously unpublished artwork.

#### October

The DRAGONLANCE boxed set will please all Krynn fans. This material deals with the previously undescribed regions of the world of Krynn, regions where new dragons and peoples live. If you've ever wondered what happens when you sail off the map on present-day Krynn, you'll have your question answered when playing this product. MARVEL SUPER HEROES game accessory MU-5 also comes out this month.

It's just like the four other highly popular MU books: full-color, five-hole drilled, and packed with new and old MARVEL SUPER HEROES game characters.

#### November

I think the best product this month is the AD&D® 2nd Edition BATTLESYSTEM™ accessory softbound book. It has full-color pictures of miniatures and miniature battles, it details more than the boxed set ever did, and it's rewritten by Doug Niles in an easy-to-understand style that hits all the best features of miniatures gaming.

Also appearing this month is the AD&D game *Complete Fighter Manual*. It's a product that has been begging to be written for a long time. Although the AD&D 2nd Edition game rules completely cover how to role-play a fighter character in the AD&D game world, this book goes into glorious detail on this character that the AD&D 2nd Edition game rules didn't have space to handle.

#### December

The final book in the DRAGONLANCE® prequel trilogy is called *Brothers Majere*. This novel details what happened to Caraman and Raistlin in the five years prior to the DRAGONLANCE Chronicles trilogy.

Also to be released this month is the AD&D game *Complete Thief Manual*. It's a book detailing much of the never-before-

told mysteries of thieves. Numerous thieving concepts are covered, including special thief equipment, new character subclasses, and magical items designed for the powerful members of the thieves guild to give them an edge against other character classes in battle and spell casting.

Well, those are some of the highlights of the year. I think everyone will agree there are items here to please every role-player. Naturally, there are lots more that I haven't listed but hope you will pick up when you find them at the better hobby and book stores in your area.

## We Moved!

Well, actually, our mailing address has changed slightly. The new address is now: DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. See the difference? Our street address for UPS shipments is still: DRAGON Magazine, TSR Inc., 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147, U.S.A.

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by Edwin C. Mason

# An Assortment of Knives

*A few new twists on an old weapon*

The common dagger is a wonderful weapon: it weighs a pound; is 15" long; has a speed factor of two; does 1-4 hit points against small- and medium-sized creatures, and 1-3 against larger threats; has reasonable adjustments against most armor classes; and can be flung to a range of 30' indoors and 30 yards outdoors. Rarely is there a fighter, thief, or magic-user who does not carry a dagger or a knife. Clerics often carry one or the other as a general tool. Daggers and knives can be found in backpacks or boots, on belts, strapped to ankles, forearms, chests, and thighs (and concealed up a character's nose, if the player can talk the DM into it).

It seems strange, then, that while there are six swords in the *Players Handbook*, two more in the *Unearthed Arcana*, and three more in the *Oriental Adventures*, there is only the dagger in the first book and the knife in the second. The parang (machete) in the third book is logically treated as a sword, although it is usually defined as a knife.

## All-purpose tool

First of all, a dagger is not an adequate tool. It was designed specifically for fighting, and that is the only thing it does well. It cannot efficiently split wood or shave it for kindling, scrape skins, or cut bait. A much better choice for this is the standard knife. Modern hunters have used a reduced bowie-pattern blade for much of this century, and this is a style often used for many sorts of "survival knives" available today. A reduced bowie and a variety of similar knives can be easily lumped together under the heading *knife*, and standard AD&D® game statistics can be used to define them.

There are many accessories placed on modern all-purpose knives, but these reflect this century and are inappropriate for the AD&D game setting. The only exception that the DM might allow is a saw blade on the back of a knife; saw-backed knives date from the 18th century. The only change that this feature makes is the addition of a small sum (perhaps 2 gp) to the price; in addition, it allows the knife to be as effective as a small axe in clearing brush or gathering wood.

## Concealable weapons

The main problem with the standard dagger is that it is a formidable weapon. It is 15" long, 10" of which is blade. The blade is 2½-3" broad at the haft, and the crossguard is easily 6" across. Such a weapon is extremely difficult to hide, especially in boots and sleeves, which seem to be the two most commonly attempted locations.

A kidney dagger has a substantially reduced blade and a much more compact hilt (especially the kidney-shaped crossguard). The blade is very sharp and is intended to cut through clothes, not armor. This kind of dagger was often carried by ladies; it is a good choice as a spare knife for any serious adventurer.

The push knife is shaped like a capital τ. The crosspiece is grasped so that the blade extends between the second and third fingers. The character then punches with

**Table 1**  
**Knife Statistics**

Knife	Weight gp	Cost gp	Damage S-M	L	Length	Space required	Speed factor
Cinquedea	20	6 gp	1-6	1-4	15"	1'	3
Kidney dagger	5	3 gp	1-3	1-2	7"	1'	2
Push knife	5	4 gp	2-3	1-2	6"	—	2
Buckle knife	3	8 gp	1-3	1-2	2"	—	1
Throwing knife	6	10 gp	1-2	1	10"	1'	2
Throwing knife (thrown)	6	10 gp	1-4	1-3	10"	1'	z
Saw-backed knife *	4 gp	—	—	—	—	—	—
Folding knife*	2 gp	—	—	—	—	—	—

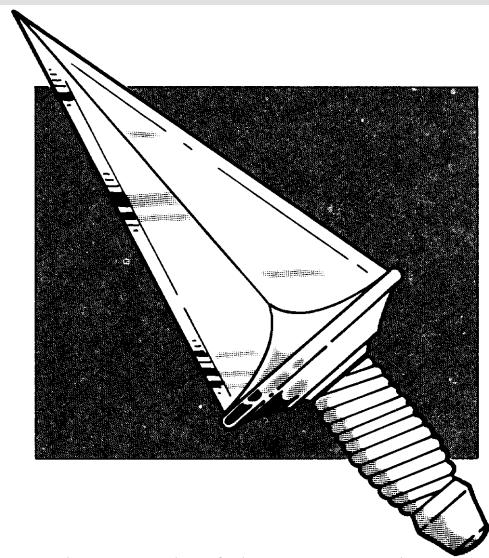
\* See "knife" in *Unearthed Arcana*.

the hand holding the knife. Due to the unusual position of the blade, blows with the push knife can be struck with considerable force.

There is a magical item detailed in *Unearthed Arcana* called the buckle knife. It is a small knife hidden in a belt buckle, and treated as a knife for damage. Small push knives have been hidden in this way; the sheath lies horizontally along the inside edge of the belt. Fortunately there is a provision allowing the knife to be drawn without the belt coming undone.

### Cinquedea

The cinquedea is an enormous dagger, no longer than the most common variety but almost twice as broad. The name derives from the tradition that the blade is five fingers broad at the haft. This weapon is recommended for magic-users. It cannot compete with the short sword or weapons of that type for a berth in a fighter's arsenal, but it can give a low-level magic-user a better chance to survive being cornered in a dark alley by a couple of thieves after his spells have run out. Although a magic-user



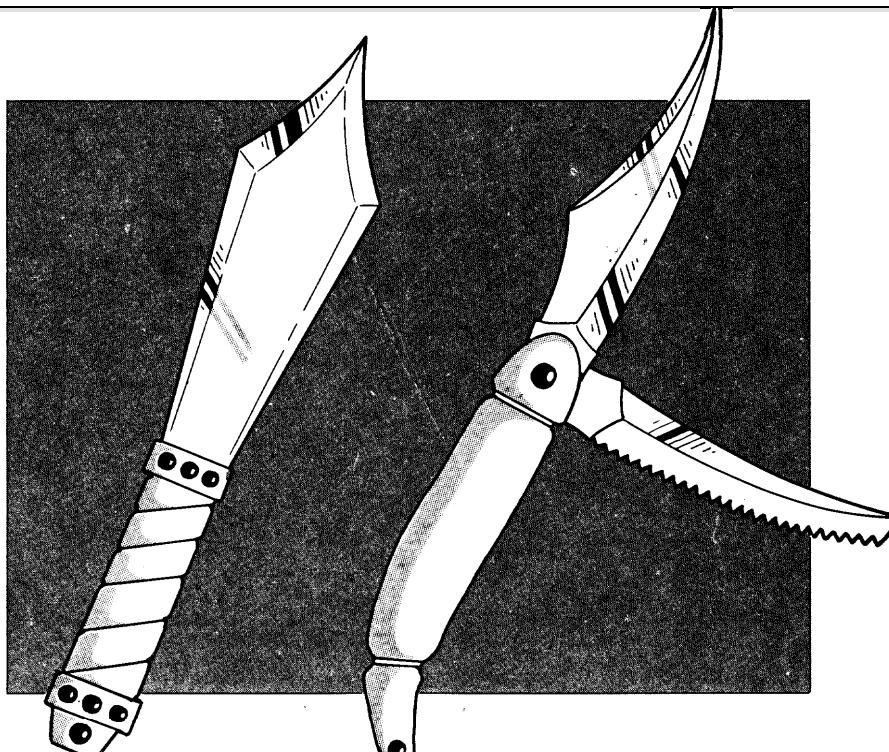
isn't supposed to fight, sometimes it's unavoidable. A quarterstaff helps in these cases, but it takes more space to use and is much slower. Also, a quarterstaff is a hard weapon to overlook, whereas the cinquedea can be carried far less conspicuously.

**Table 2**  
**Knife Firing Rates and Ranges**

Knife	Fire rate	Ranges		
		S	M	L
Cinquedea	1	1	2	3
Kidney dagger	2	1	2	3
Throwing knife	3	2	4	6
Saw-backed knife	2	1	2	3

**Table 3**  
**Adjustments vs. Armor Class**

	Adjustment vs. AC										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Knife	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cinquedea	-4	-4	-3	-2	-1	-1	0	0	+1	+1	+3
Kidney dagger	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	0	+2	+1	+3
Push knife	-4	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	0	+1	+2	+2	+4
Buckle knife	-5	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	0	+1	+1	+3
Throwing knife (hand)	-7	-7	-6	-6	-5	-5	-4	-4	-3	-3	-2
Throwing knife (thrown)	-7	-6	-5	-3	-2	-1	+1	+1	+3	+1	+3



### Special purpose knives

The throwing knife is a most unusual knife. The blade is 7 or 8" long, with a 2½ or 3" hilt. It has neither guard nor pommeled and, although 2" at its widest, it is less than one-eighth of an inch thick. It flies faster than other knives, doing damage out of proportion to its size, but it is a pathetic weapon for melee, as it does little damage. Its compact size makes the throwing knife an excellent hidden weapon.

Another interesting item is the folding knife (also known as the clasp knife or jackknife). It is a fairly large transition from a normal knife, but not really hard to produce once you know about it. It is also rather inexpensive. The form didn't exist in 14th-century Europe, but there is no technological reason it couldn't have. The DM may allow an additional blade in the jackknife, either a second knife blade or a saw. To keep within the medieval setting, the DM should allow no more than two blades on any folding knife.

by Ed Greenwood

# The Dragon's Bestiary

*More rare beasts from the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting*



Last month, we presented some strange and frightening creatures unique to Elminster's home lands — the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ fantasy setting. More of these creatures have found their ways out of our files — and are presented here by the creator of the Realms himself.

## GLYPTAR

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 1-3 (1d6 -3, mm. of 1)  
ARMOR CLASS: 5  
MOVE: 9" by levitation (MC: A)  
HIT DICE: 1-4 hp (to shatter stone)  
% IN LAIR: Nil  
TREASURE TYPE: See below (possible magical weapon, or salvageable gem-stone fragments after death)  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1 hit point (hurl self at creature) or by animated weapon  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
INTELLIGENCE: Very  
ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil  
SIZE: S  
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Glyptars are rare living gems that possess strange powers (or so most men believe). A few sages and demihumans know the truth. Glyptars are rock crystals animated by the spirits of male medusas known as maedar (see "The Ecology of the Maedar in DRAGON® Magazine, #106).

When a maedar dies by choice (usually because of the death of his mate) or with forewarning (such as in old age, with its onset of weakness and disease), he merges with stone and remains within, giving himself back to the rock. Some maedar spirits of great evil do not pass from the Prime Material plane but drift within the solid rock, noncorporeal and powerless, until they enter certain stones — natural crystals, such as those formed by feldspar, quartz amethyst, and many other gemstones. Crystals trap maedar spirits,

though they have no effect on the bodies of living maedar. For some unknown reason, maedar spirits cannot leave crystals after entering. At length, they go insane due to imprisonment, powerlessness, and frustration.

If the rock in which this spirit is confined is subsequently shattered, the spirit is freed and passes from the Prime Material plane, unnoticed and powerless to affect others. If a stone containing a maedar spirit is freed from the rock by cataclysm or mining (and is not shattered), the maedar spirit can animate its crystal and anything inorganic attached to it, up to 1,700 gp weight. (Note that skilled gem-cutting, facet-cutting, and polishing rarely cause a stone to shatter.) Thus, if the gem is fashioned into the eye of a statue, the statue is animated as a stone golem.

Similarly, if a glyptar is set into the pommel of a sword, the sword can be animated to strike as though wielded by the living maedar. In this latter case, weapon damage is figured at + 2 (as living maedar strength averages 18 with no percentile) and hits are calculated as though the sword were wielded by a 6th-level fighter, with + 1 to hit, again due to the saving-throw bonus. Note also that a glyptar's *stone to flesh* power (see hereafter) allows it to carefully sink a bladed weapon into stone (as in the legend of the sword in the stone).

Glyptars retain the powers of a living maedar. Thus, the glyptar and any inorganic attachment may *pass through stone* at will at a normal movement rate (a *phase door* spell cannot harm a glyptar) and perform a *stone to flesh* attack by touch once every three turns. Glyptars remain immune to paralyzation and petrification of all sorts. A glyptar in a crystal cannot be trapped within a second crystal while passing through rock.

Glyptars cannot be mentally contacted, influenced by mind-affecting spells (including *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*, *command*, etc.) or psionics, or controlled in any way. They cooperate only as it pleases them and cannot communicate by telepathy. Gly-

ptars can, however, cause an attached sword or bodkin to scratch out messages; they can also cause a connected statue to write. These messages will be scrawled out in common, medusa, lawful-evil, or any other language (usually 1-2 in number) understood by the maeder.

Glyptars can be destroyed only by shattering them (and as they seldom care whether or not this happens, will act fearlessly and recklessly as a result). From one to three glyptars may be found together in veins of rock. Glyptars freed from the surrounding rock, however, tend to be solitary. Glyptars can perceive up to 9" on the Astral and Ethereal planes, and have 9" infravision in all directions. A glyptar-animated weapon or an item wielded by a being in a manner the glyptar disapproves of will turn against the wielder.

## MAGEBANE

FREQUENCY: Rare

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 5 (*see below*)

MOVE: 13"

HIT DICE: 2 + (*see below*)

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 11-14 (10 + 1d4)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Tail (*see below*)

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75% (*see below*)

INTELLIGENCE: Animal to low

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

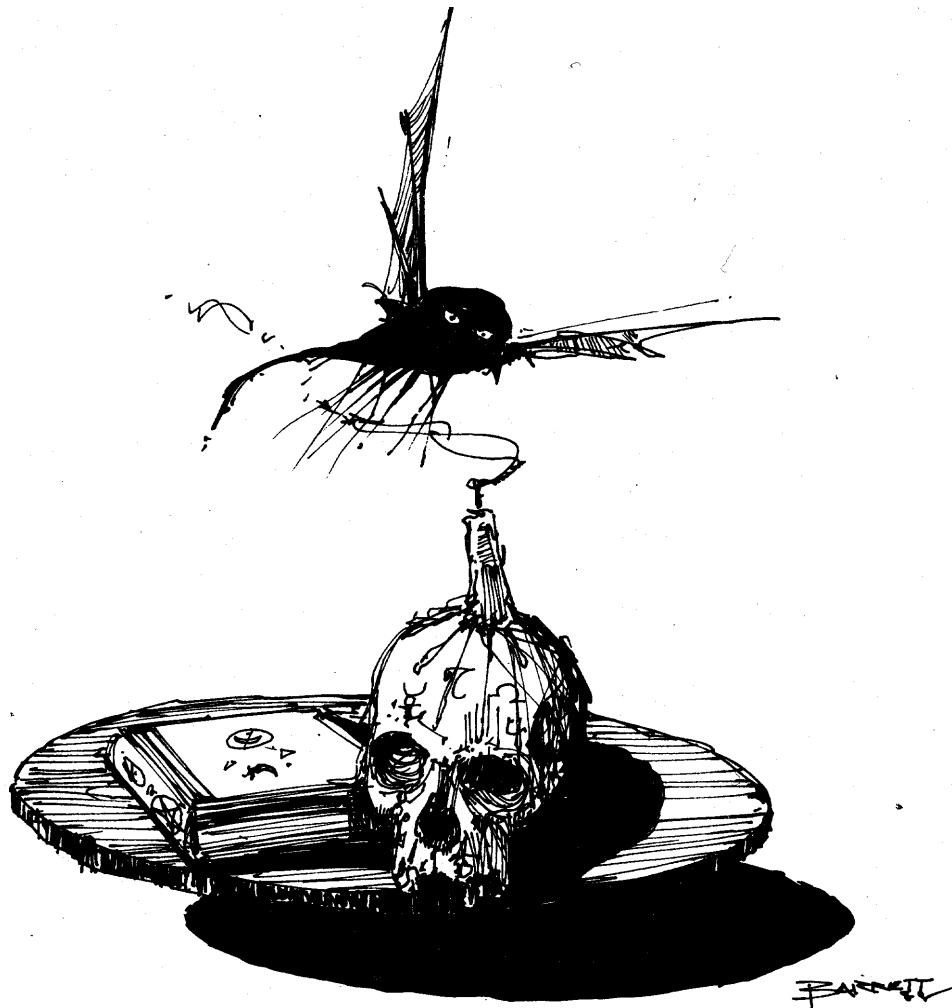
SIZE: S (up to 3' long, wingspan to 5')

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

A magebane is a mysterious creature found in ruins, tombs, subterranean places, and wilderness caves in the Prime Material plane. It is also found in Pandemonium and perhaps other planes as well. Magebanes are solitary creatures who are attracted by the use of magic nearby (their means of sensing magic is presently unknown). Magebanes follow any spell-caster who thus attracts their attention, seeming to prefer magic-users over other types of dweomer-crafters. A magebane shadows its chosen mage, flitting about nearby behind the chosen one.

The magebane is invisible (unless *true seeing* or other means are employed to reveal invisible creatures) to all beings except its chosen spell-caster. Thus, those who attack it suffer a -4 penalty to hit until the magebane is made visible.

Furthermore, the magebane feeds upon spells cast by the chosen one. The effects of this feeding depend on the magical source. Whenever the chosen spell-caster casts any spell (or cantrip); there is a 60% chance that the magebane robs the spell of all (1-2 on 1d6) or part (3-6 on 1d6) of its magical energy. When a magebane drains all of a spell's energy, the spell is lost and does not take effect (as per a *rod of absorption*). When only part of a spells



energy is drained, the spell effect occurs but with lessened force, having one or more of the modifications listed hereafter. The modifications to the spell are determined by rolling 1d8 with the following results: 1-3 = modification 1; 4-6 = modifications 1 and 2; 7 = modifications 1, 2, and 3; and 8 = all four modifications. These modifications are listed below:

1. Spell has minimum duration.
2. Spell does minimum damage.
3. Targets of spell gain + 2 on their saving throws.
4. Spell affects a lesser area or volume of matter.

At the DM's option, spells of the highest levels (7th, 8th, and 9th) may be largely immune to the feeding of a particular magebane and thus, if not entirely drained, will work at full efficacy.

Magebanes are silent and do not seek to unnecessarily reveal themselves to their chosen spell-caster (as they, are most easily seen and slain by that spell-caster). As a result, their presence may be unknown to the spell-caster or the latter's party for some time. A magebane is 100% resistant to any spells directed at it by its chosen, spell-caster and 75% resistant to the spells of others. Note that harmless spells affecting an area, or spells enabling the spell-caster to more easily attack the magebane physically, take effect unless randomly eaten by the magebane. The magebane

cannot recognize a spell being cast nor read the intentions of a spell-caster.

A magebane may switch its chosen spell-caster if it encounters a powerful alternative to its present one; otherwise, the only way to get rid of one is by slaying it. A magebane will seldom move from one party member to another. It seems to shun the presence of former chosen ones.

A magebane never attacks its chosen one, taking instead an interest in the safety of the spell-caster. In some cases, the magebane may actually swoop down (invisibly) to rake with its claws at anyone launching a physical attack upon its chosen one. This includes missile-fire attacks, but not spells (the effects of which the magebane seems unable to anticipate) or psionics. In the latter case, a magebane cannot detect psionics, and in turn cannot be psionically contacted or attacked.

A magebane will, however, defend itself against attacks from its chosen spell-caster or other creatures by means of its claws. It may also attack with the sting of its tail, which delivers a jolt of magical energy similar to that delivered by a *magic missile* (2-5 hp damage, no saving throw; a successful "to hit" roll required for tail to strike and the sting to occur).

Like a *rod of absorption*, a magebane uses its magical energy for growth and sustenance, gaining roughly 1 permanent hp for every six spells fully drained and powering its activities as a consequence. The magebane stores the rest of the magic

drawn from its chosen one to dispense via its tail, which therefore has a limited number of stings — usually a dozen or so and one dying burst. If slain, a magebane explodes in a burst of magical force, doing 2d6 hp physical damage to all within 1" and causing all spell-casters within 4" to save vs. spells at -2 or be blasted into a state of *feeblemindedness* (as by the fifth-level magic-user spell). Precise details of how a magebane absorbs and converts magical energy remain a mystery.

Magebanes are small, black, amorphous creatures who have two cold blue eyes (9" infravision, seemingly keen normal vision), bat wings, and 10 or more long, black claws on their undersides. A magebane's body tapers into a needlelike tail. Magebanes have no visible mouths, and their means of reproduction and other biological activities are unknown. Mages report that magebanes are affected by poison.

## QUEZZER

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FREQUENCY: *Rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 1-12  
ARMOR CLASS: 2  
MOVE: /30" (MC: A)/7"  
HIT DICE: 1 + 6  
% IN LAIR: *Nil*  
TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 4  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5/2-5/2-5 + *push*  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spits acid*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Low*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
SIZE: S (2-4' long)  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

The quezzer, or "lightning beast," is a rare beast that hunts in swarms, preying on birds and creatures of up to mammoth size. A quezzer swarm has no lair but wanders constantly in search of prey, resting atop rocky pinnacles or lying flat on open ground. A quezzer generates a strong natural *levitation* field, which accounts for its ability to fly. A quezzer attack consists of a slash from its razor-sharp body spines (1d4 + 1 hp damage) and a *push* (equivalent to the first-level magic-user spell). This latter action comes from the force of momentary contact with its field. Because of these fields, *webs* cannot touch a quezzer.

A quezzer moves with lightning speed, launching four slashing attacks per round. (A *slow* spell causes a quezzer to slow to two attacks per round, drops it to a 15" move, and reduces its armor class to 4.) In this flurry of attacks, the quezzer flits all over the place, never crashing into its fellows or surroundings (due to its field). Likewise, it never becomes dizzy or disoriented by complex aerobatics executed at awesome speeds. A quezzer can back up in midair, but usually prefers to loop about rather than slowing down. Quezzers will attack large prey (such as bears, elk, and rothe) by slashing them into immobility, or goading and herding them into fatal falls.

Once the prey is killed, the quezzer fastens onto it with its suckerlike mouth, exuding tissue-dissolving acid and thereby taking in nutrients from the prey. Quez-

zers absorb blood in like manner, and always seek to immobilize prey so they can feed at leisure. If pressed, quezzers can spit a glob of tissue-dissolving acid. This may be performed once per round in place of a slashing attack, at 2" range with a "to hit" roll required, and does 1-3 hp damage. Quezzers can spit acid a dozen times a day. If a quezzer's acid remains on the flesh of a creature, it continues to dissolve tissue for the three following rounds, doing 1-2 hp damage per round. A mobile creature can readily wipe or shake this acid off.

Quezzers are slate-gray in color, and look like a shorter version of a walking stick (insect). They are two to four feet in length and have yellow-green eyes that provide 16" infravision, 20" vision, and 16" ultravision. They can pass through water (such as waterfalls, heavy rain, and shallow pools) without harm, but avoid deep water, as it dilutes their acid to ineffectiveness and slows them to one attack per round, 7" movement rate, and AC 8. Quezzers hate stirges and always attack them on sight.

Quizzer brains are an essential ingredient in *haste* potions, and one of several alternative ingredients for the ink used in writing out that spell.

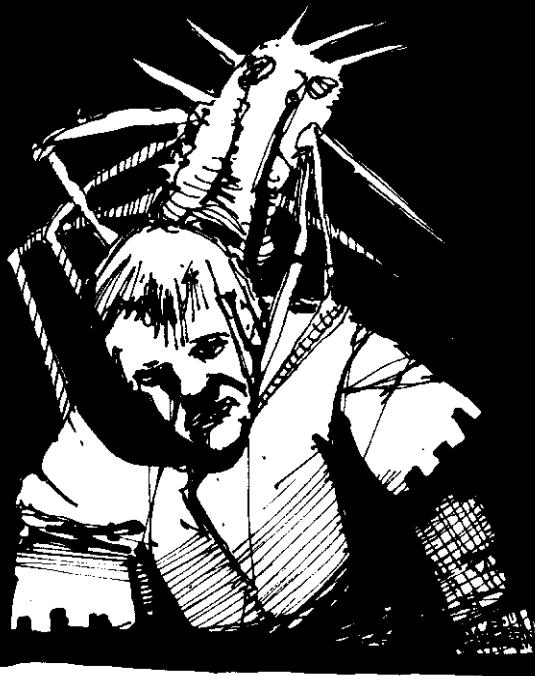
## SCYTHETAIL

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FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*  
NO. APPEARING: 1-6 (1d10-4, min. of 1)  
ARMOR CLASS: 5 (tail: AC 3)  
MOVE: 13#  
HIT DICE: 2 + 2  
% IN LAIR: 40%  
TREASURE TYPE: J, K, L, M, N, Q possible  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spell use, claws*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Protective barbs*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Low*  
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
SIZE: M (body to 4', tail to 7')  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

A lizardlike predator that inhabits rocky areas and cold wastes, the scythetail is actually a mammal. The scythetail eats berries and rock lichens if it has to but prefers freshly killed meat. Scythetails hunt alone for the most part but band together temporarily to attack formidable prey (such as caravans or herds of livestock). Cunning and daring, they like to hit and run, attacking repeatedly without allowing a return attack. Scythetails will follow armed prey tirelessly (for days, if necessary), awaiting an opportunity to strike with advantage.

A scythetail gains its name from its principal weapon: a bony, scythelike tail that the creature wields as well as a man wields a scythe. With it, the scythetail can slash for 2d4 hp damage or stab for 1d4 + 1 hp with the barbed end of its shaft



or with the point of the scythe blade. Scythetails attack with a slash 75% of the time and with a stab 25% of the time. A scythetail can also bite with its turtlelike jaws for  $1d4 + 1$  hp damage. If it lands atop or clammers atop a victim, the scythetail can also rake with its four claws (for 1d4 hp damage each).

Nevertheless, the scythetail rarely approaches prey so closely, preferring instead to dart about, slashing with its tail, until its prey is killed or rendered helpless. The tail has an armor class of 3 and takes 9 hp damage before it is broken or severed. A scythetail can regenerate a lost tail slowly, at the rate of 1 hp per day of rest, until the 9 hp are restored (this occurs in addition to any normal healing).

A scythetail has limited magical powers. Once per round, it can cause fleeing or escaping prey to *trip* (as the second-level druid spell) by utilizing something it has touched previously (for example, a vine or branch). This ability is used sparingly — thrice per day.

A scythetail's gray, horny hide protects it well. In addition, its body is adorned with a row of razor-sharp barbs which can gash unwary opponents for  $1d4$  hp damage. The scythetail's bones are rich in iron (it always cracks the bones of its prey to eat the bone marrow), and are thus hard and durable. A scythetail's tail will serve a human as a scythe weapon, although it cannot keep an edge sharp enough to cut grass or crops satisfactorily.

The knotted muscle at the base of the tail is a prized delicacy, and scythetail rump roasts are welcome on any royal table. The belly of a scythetail often contains coins and gems gained from civilized prey, for a scythetail will eat anything that fits in its maw. Scythetails are resistant to poison (+2 on all saving throws) and quick to learn the habits of prey. Scythetails wander afar in search of food, staying briefly in caverns, rock ledges, or large trees. Scythetails seldom drag prey back to a lair, unless the lair is used for raising their young.

In spite of this care, few scythetail young ever make it past the early stages (25% chance). Those scythetails that are raised from birth are cared for only by the mother; the father disappears shortly after mating. Scythetail young have 1 HD, do half damage on all attacks, and have poor control of their *trip* ability (all potential victims save vs. spell at +3 to avoid effects).

## XANTRAVAR

FREQUENCY: Rare  
NO. APPEARING: 1-4  
ARMOR CLASS: 6  
MOVE: /16" (MC: A)/14"  
HIT DICE: 3 + 3  
% IN LAIR: Nil  
TREASURE TYPE: Nil  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2



DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/1-4  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Poison, blood drain  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: See below  
INTELLIGENCE: Low  
ALIGNMENT Neutral  
SIZE: L (two 6-7' bulbs with variable linking field)  
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

The xantravar, or stinging horror, is a silent, deadly predator that inhabits swamps, salt marshes, and remote sea-coasts with tidal caverns. In these locations, the xantravar drifts about, preying upon any living thing it can reach.

A xantravar's body consists of two rubbery teardrop-shaped balloons — great, tough bulbs ending in strong, corded muscles that can drive home the two hollow bone stingers at the base of either bulb. The bulbous bodies range from wine-red to gray in color and are mottled. They are roughly the same size and appear identical in form. One ends in a poisonous stinger which is usable once per round up to four times per turn. Thereafter, the venom must be replenished — a

process requiring two turns.

The venom of the xantravar *paralyzes* prey of any size that fail to save vs. paralyzation (a successful save negates the effects). A blow from the stinger does  $1d4$  hp damage. Even so, the merest scratch injects venom into the flesh of a victim. If a creature saves against the venom of a particular xantravar, however, the creature is forever immune to the venom of that particular xantravar. Small or man-size creatures save at -3 to avoid the effects of this virulent venom and are affected for 1-3 turns. Larger creatures save at -1 and are paralyzed for one turn minus one to two rounds (if affected). A xantravar is immune to its own toxins.

The other stinger, identical in appearance to the first, also strikes for  $1d4$  hp damage. In this case, though, each blow sucks blood, sap, or nutrient fluid from prey by strong suction, draining  $1d6 + 3$  hp per round. Such nutrients are used with a xantravar's energy to sustain and invigorate it.

Above the stingers on either bulb of a xantravar's body are multiple eyes: eight set in a ring around each body stalk.



These eyes have 9" infravision and normal sight that matches a humans. Infravision is used most often in hunting, for a xantravar prefers to hunt at night or in the concealment of heavy fog.

Above its eyes, a xantravar has a circle of indentations encircling each body-stalk. These are iris valves that emit ventral jets of gas from the creature's interior. These jets are used for steering the xantravar. The gas created is hydrogen and is thus highly flammable. Any contact between such a steering jet and an open flame causes a 1" gout of flame to shoot outward from the xantravar in the direction of the jet. This jet deals 1-3 hp damage to any creature in its path, and the xantravar itself suffers 1-2 hp heat damage before it closes off the jet.

Above these jets, in the large head of each bulb, are two flotation chambers of hydrogen gas. The xantravar expels gas from these chambers to sink closer to the ground; conversely, they take in air to rise. (This is facilitated by the skin of the xantravar, which is high elastic.) This latter process is accomplished by the curious glowing energy field that joins the two bulbs of a xantravar's body. This field is of variable length. The two bulbs can be side-by-side and about 2' apart (the normal position); when the creature is hunting or exploring, they can be up to 20' apart and vertically separated by up to 12'.



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The energy field is constant and natural. It is not affected by *dispel magic*, will disrupt beams, rays, and other fields of force that contact it, and seems to be indestructible (save by slaying the creature). The field smells of ozone as it separates hydrogen from surrounding air or water, and is augmented by spells involving heat, magical energy (such as *magic missile*), and electrical energy (such as *lightning bolt*). Treat any hit-point damage from these as hit-point energy gained by the field and by the xantravar. This extra energy is used by a xantravar to heal damage to the rest of its body at a regeneration rate of 1 hp per round if it has such an excess to draw on.

The bulbs of a xantravar's body, however, are harmed by heat, electrical, and magical energy attacks. Otherwise, the creature has "standard" magic resistance. Note that a single attack could harm a xantravar's body bulbs and strengthen its field simultaneously. Note also that in any serious combat, a xantravar separates its body bulbs by up to 10' for self-protection. It is not known precisely where the brain of a xantravar is. It has a network of nerves throughout each bulb, linked by the field, and may have no vulnerable center of this network. Physical attacks that disrupt a xantravar's energy field scatter and spill energy from it. As a result, they do normal damage.

A xantravar can be destroyed by any attack (such as a flaming arrow) that punctures a flotation chamber and introduces an open flame into it. For this to be successful, the attack must occur in the same round or in the following round (a xantravar will have sealed off the leak by the third round). This typically causes a violent, 3-HD *fireball* of 20' radius, which kills the xantravar and causes damage to any one within the 20' radius. Heat or flame attacks (even a *fireball*) without a rupture or penetration of a xantravar's gas chamber will not cause such an explosion.

Xantravars are mysterious predators believed to hunt alone, but that coexist peacefully with others of their kind in deep caverns or swamps during the day, when they avoid large, active creatures and feed instead on plants or disabled prey. Xantravars seldom mate. When they do, they join hollow stingers to produce a thin-walled, floating balloon egg that drifts alone and untended on the breeze for weeks, absorbing hydrogen and nutrients from the moisture in the air. At length, the balloon bursts to reveal a miniature xantravar (1 + 1 HD, bulbs 2' in length, attacks at half damage) that fends for itself and grows rapidly to adult size. □

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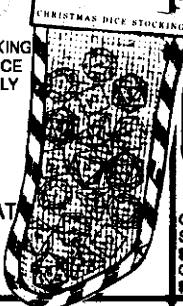
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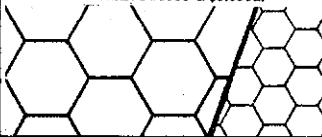
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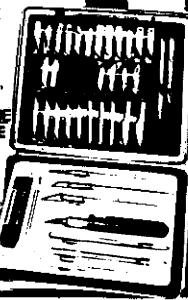
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# Through the Looking Glass

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*Miniature forests  
and fortresses*

Welcome to yet more advice and reviews in "Through the Looking Glass." The reviews in this column come from miniatures submitted by companies and individuals. In many cases, these samples (especially those of smaller companies) come with little information other than the company name, price, and stock number. These reviews, depend upon the honesty of a company submitting miniatures regarding the uniqueness of their product, the legality of the product's license, and the company's right to distribute the product for public sale.

During the course of the GEN CON®/ORIGINS™ 88 Game Fair, I heard several accusations about the figures I was about to review. These comments ranged from charges of blatant piracy to charges that products were made on expired licences. In at least one case, the piracy charge was true, and in four out of five of the remaining instances, the manufacturers had lost their licenses to produce the figures. In two of these latter cases, the license had been revoked *after* the figures had been submitted. Nevertheless, there was no attempt to contact me.

Let me take this opportunity to state my position on this topic once again. I will not knowingly publish false information in this column. Because of recent events, large amounts of research may be required to verify facts regarding submissions to this column. As a result, I would rather skip a months review or have a short column than publish incorrect information. I apologize for problems that may have occurred thus far, and hope they will not occur again. Now, on with this months column.



Tom Meier's Limited Edition Sorcerer and Wizard: Mages of different mettle.

#### Getting started

Winter is a time when the gaming urge is at its strongest. The snow, ice, and harsh, miserable weather cause us to stay in our warm homes and wage hot battles or campaigns. It also frees up time we would normally spend outside, thus removing the last excuse for not launching a new facet of gaming interest: miniatures painting.

Painted armies and well-planned exercises don't just happen; they take planning and require the effective use of some basic tools and aids. This months column deals with the materials used, space required, and knowledge needed to get you started.

The first thing you should do is establish some goals for yourself. These goals should include the type of unit you want to work with (an orc army, a dragon colony, an adventure party, British Napoleons, etc.) and a realistic schedule of when you wish to complete the project. The type of figures you choose will determine the amount of time, money, and work area needed. If you've never painted miniatures before, you'll want to pick up some figures for practice painting. It's a good idea to practice on the same type of miniature you intend to use as your first project.

The reason for setting project goals is to avoid burying yourself in unpainted miniatures you may never need. Having fallen prey to this problem in the past, I can attest to the relative ease of buying without a goal; I can also attest to how discouraging it is to look at an ever-growing pile of miniatures that need painting. In addition, planning and doing one group at a time reduces the cost of miniatures painting. By planning ahead, you only need to pick up a few colors at a time instead of buying several different, expensive colors to paint a wide variety of figures.



Tom Meier's Limited Edition *Male and Female Barbarian*: Living by the sword.

Money is an important consideration for effectively painting miniatures. Often, you may find that you can't work any further without a certain color and don't have enough money to get it. Remember that you'll need tools, so price and purchase those before buying the miniatures and paint.

Research what you are going to paint — if it's a special unit or character, find out everything about it before you start. Make sure you're familiar with any bizarre colors that may be needed (or know how to make them if you can't buy them), and be aware of any insignia or additions that might change the way you paint the figure. Planning ahead will keep you from ruining a figure or having to redo it.

After you've finished the research and are ready to start painting, establish a work area. This is the most important step outside of painting your miniatures. Often, the work area contributes greatly to the quality of the paint job. The things you need to look for in a work area are listed as follows:

**Lighting:** You need a clear area free of shadows and colored light. Shadows prevent you from seeing details, identifying paint hues, and effectively shading the miniature. Colored lights cause the same problems, by starting you off with the wrong color, thus requiring adjustments in shades and hues to make up for the color cast by the light.

**Accessibility:** The area you pick should be easy to get to, but difficult or impossible for other people or pets to get to while you're painting. There is nothing worse than a paw print or fingerprint on a figure that you've just painted. Likewise, it is virtually impossible to get black paint off white fur. Avoid high-use areas such as dining rooms or kitchen tables. As a rule, dinnertime falls exactly at the time when you can't stop painting.



Tom Meier's Limited Edition *Antipaladin and Paladin*: Forces of good and evil.

**Cleanliness:** The work area should be free of dust, hair, lint, and moisture. By paying attention to these details, you can avoid many of the little imperfections which stick to wet paint, or leave unsightly bumps or blurs.

**Spaciousness:** The work area should have sufficient room in which to work, set up paints, arrange tools, and still have room for spreading out and assembling miniatures. Cramped areas lead to spills, marred paint jobs, and broken figures.

**Ventilation:** Last and most important, the work area should have lots of ventilation and should be far from stoves or open flames. Many of the adhesives used in constructing miniatures have toxic fumes that can damage your lungs and sinuses if they are allowed to build up. Similarly, these fumes might explode if exposed to flame. Oil-based and petroleum-based paints (and even some of the water-based paints) fall into this dangerous category. Be safe rather than sorry: Have a window close by and open it slightly when painting. If the fumes get strong, stop working and take a breather. If possible, keep a chemical-flame fire extinguisher nearby in case of emergency.

That's all for this month. Take this opportunity to work on what I've covered so far. Next month we'll cover the tools needed to begin constructing and painting your miniatures.

#### Minatures reviews

This month's miniatures-review column is not limited to metal figures; scenery and buildings are included in this installment as well. All of these miniatures will receive coverage from now on to help improve your battlefield games and to give strong combat objectives, battle obstructions, and cover. This month's column introduces the new rating structure for figure

quality. As requested in your letters, I have adjusted my rating system to be more in line with the other DRAGON® Magazine review columns. The star ratings are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Minatures Review Ratings**

Rating	Explanation
*	Poor; get this figure only if you need it.
**	Below average; the concept is good, but there are problems with this product.
***	Average; the concept is good and the problems are few.
****	Above average; the concept is good. In all, this is a recommended product.
*****	Excellent; this product is guaranteed to shine in your collection.

#### Goldring Miniatures, Inc.

11605 Goldring Road  
Unit H  
Arcadia CA 91006

TRAVELLER: 2300 Miniatures  
Stock No. 102302, French Legion \*\*\*\*

Goldring Miniatures is a small company with big ideas. The company bills itself as a successor to Dark Horse Miniatures and uses the Dark Horse emblem in its packaging. Many readers will remember Dark Horse as the company that produced favorites like Palladium's TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE™ and ROBO-TECH™ game figures.

The package submitted for review contains four figures representing members of the French Legion. The figures are a mix of action poses, with three males and one female. These figures are positioned



TAG industries' *Children of Valhalla Series*: The gods themselves.

as follows: one male marching, one male advancing with weapon ready, one male with weapon at port arms, and one female in a casual stance.

Equipment varies from figure to figure, as does weaponry. The female wears a flak vest and web belt, and carries what looks like a laser weapon. One male wears a helmet with optical enhancement devices and heavy-duty body armor from the waist up. The other males wear garrison caps (as does the female); one of these male figures carries a field pack as well.

All figures are crisply detailed from the top of the garrison hat or helmet to the magnetic soles on their boots. Gun straps appear almost as separate castings, with the belts finely detailed and pronounced. The mold marks (areas where the molds join to form the figure) are evident only on the bases and on one hat. There is no flash (mold overflow) on any of the figures, meaning that little preparation is needed to ready these figures for painting.

I would be interested in seeing more of this line to determine whether this quality is maintained throughout. I not only highly recommend these figures for GDW's TRAVELLER: 2300™ game, but suggest their use with Timeline's MORROW PROJECT™ and FGU's AFTERMATH™ games. These are tentatively priced at \$5.00 each.

#### **Woodland Scenics**

P.O. Box 98  
Linn Creek MO 65052

#### *Forest Scenery*

Stock No. TK 28, Hardwood Forest \*\*\*  
Stock Nos. TK 12, 14, and 17 \*\*\*\*

Woodland Scenics has long been known to those in the hobby of model railroading and is now becoming known to gamers as well. This company makes a wide variety of products, most of which are aids to making great scenery. These products range from tree kits to turf used in simulating ground covering. The products submitted for review came about because

of an urgent need for scenery at the GEN CON/ORIGINS® 88 Game Fair.

Woodland Scenics' materials are easy to use. The tree kits come with three to five lead trunks with highly detailed bark. The kits also contain foliage materials for simulating leaves and vines. While there is quite a bit of flash on several of the trunks, these casts can be easily trimmed and cleaned with a knife and file. The foliage and ground foam are easy to spread by hand. White glue may be used as an adhesive.

Trees should be primed and painted to represent the bark color desired. After the paint dries, gently bend the trunk to the form you want. (The word "gently" is stressed here, as overbending of the soft metal leads to breakage.) After you've bent the tree, apply the leaves as described in the package instructions. Bases for these figures can be made out of standard materials; in this case, we made the base out of a shaped ceiling tile, which was used to form a small hill.

These products are highly recommended for anyone who wants quality trees for gaming scenarios or miniatures dioramas. They can be purchased through local hobby shops or by contacting Woodland Scenics directly. Prices vary from \$1.79 to \$18.00, depending on the product.

#### **TAG Industries**

316 Main Street  
Castalia OH 44824  
(419) 684-5238

#### *Children Of Valhalla Series*

Stock No. 5502, Norse Gods:  
Thor and Sif \*\*\*  
Stock No. 5503, Norse Gods:  
Frey and Freya \*\*\*

Mythological figures have long been ignored or reluctantly produced by miniatures companies. Several companies have issued one or two gods, goddesses, or attendants, and then gone on to other fields. While there is no end of demons or

devils, there seems to be a severe shortage of high-powered good guys.

DMs who run campaigns in the northern reaches or players whose clerics worship Thor now have the opportunity to "flesh out" their deities by using these figures to represent them. The *Children of Valhalla* series presents all the major Norse gods and goddesses, along with most of their allies, opponents, and followers.

The figure line submitted for review contains all the major Norse gods and goddesses. These figures are packed two to a blister, with one god and one goddess to the pack. The miscellaneous remaining unmatched gods are packed with other unmatched gods, most of which have no obvious connection to one another except in their cultural origins.

My first opinion upon seeing the figures was that the wrong figures had somehow gotten into the packs. Upon studying and measuring the figures, the height scaled out to between seven and eight feet. While the height was about right, none of the figures looked quite right, and Thor's hammer was all wrong.

Actually, the only things wrong with the figures were my observations. Many of us grew up reading the Marvel Comics representation of Thor and the other Norse gods. Luckily, the sculptor of this line got past those comic-book representations.

The figures correspond closely with the Norse gods of mythology. As a result, Thor's hammer is depicted as more of a cross than as a stone-headed war hammer. The pointed, winged helmets, the cloth over chain armor, and the wooden, band-ed shields with which the figures are accoutered truly inspire visions of the Vikings who honored these gods.

The detail in these miniatures is the only drawback. Many of the clothes are thicker than they need to be, and although the detail is good enough to make them interesting, it is not good enough to make them collectable.

These miniatures are strongly recommended for anyone playing the AD&D® game, the RUNEQUEST® Vikings game, or any other game in which the characters are apt to run into Norse gods. Prices for these miniatures are \$2.50 per pack.

#### **Greenfield Garrisons**

2914 Inman  
Ferndale MI 48220

#### *Medieval Castle*

\*\*\*\*\*  
Special Limited Edition Set  
Stock No. 2436, Medieval Castle \*\*\*\*\*

When we think of medieval times, our first vision is that of a knight and his retainer, with a huge castle in the background. Even in fantasy games, when we visit cities we often see the king cloistered within his castle. Castles are integral parts of gaming, but you rarely see them used in miniatures scenarios.

Enter the Greenfield Garrison Medieval Castle. This castle premiered at the GEN

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Perkins





CON/ORIGINS 88 Game Fair and was one of the most often-discussed miniatures shown. The castle measures 20" X 21" at its base, and consists of a massive gate structure and large courtyard big enough to house troops and royalty. Four large towers are added to make this a true castle; these include three walled sections and four thinner, taller towers grafted onto each large tower. The detail is excellent; random block detail is molded into the outer and inner walls, and random flat-stone detail is built into the walkways, turret tops, and the top of the great hall. There are no outbuildings included with the kit, but there is ample room for them in the large courtyard.

The castle is made of a lightweight epoxy foam that accepts any type of paint. Assembly is quick, although it does entail some problems (the only thing I could find wrong with this product). Part of the problem with this structure comes from the material used to make the castle. Although extremely strong, this material comes out slightly different every time a piece is cast. (This is due to the flexibility of the molds and the great pressure used in forming pieces.) As a result, the parts need to be trimmed and worked to fit correctly, and may require some light forming to fit these pieces tightly together.

The castle is scaled for 15mm figures, such as the Alliance Miniatures™ figures featured in "Through the Looking Glass" in DRAGON Magazine #136. There is more than enough room to maneuver miniatures, allowing the placement of hundreds of figures to defend the castle against attackers. The castle could also be used with 25mm figures, although their larger sizes cause the castle to look more like a large fortified outpost.

This castle is highly recommended to anyone who games either with historical or fantasy figures. The gaming crew at our hobby shop was greatly impressed by this miniature; consequently, it will probably be the main castle of choice in our

group. You will see more of this submission in the battle section of upcoming review columns. The price for this gem is \$99.95, although it may go up to \$135.00 when the molds are replaced in February of 1989. For further information, contact Greenfield Garrisons.

#### **Games Workshop, U.K.**

Chewton Street  
Eastwood, Nottingham  
United Kingdom, NG 16 3HY

#### **Games Workshop, U.S.**

1220 Key Highway  
Baltimore MD 21230

#### **Fortress Miniature**

Stock No. 86810, Mighty Fortress      \*\*

Products that have great potential for use in both historical and fantasy gaming are often introduced into the marketplace. These releases usually have something to do with either scenery or buildings, and are often the centerpieces of large-scale battles. One of the most heralded structures of this type is Games Workshop's *Mighty Fortress*. This castle/fortress received rave reviews in both *White Dwarf* and DRAGON Magazine advertisements. Many people looked forward to using it with GW's WARHAMMERTM and WARHAMMER 40K™ game products, and well as with 25mm medieval figures.

The packaging of this product is intended as practical protection against damage. The box the fortress comes in is designed to be a carrying case for moving the fortress when it is not in use. The contents fit snugly inside, allowing some room for movement in case you bump the box. This helps to prevent damage to the contents.

This product is comprised of six wall sections and four square towers made of four pieces each. The dimensions at the base are 28" X 18", and 7" high at the towers. The six sections of wall, two of which have built-in gates, allow you to place the gate locations wherever you

desire. The doors for the interior, gates and gate-frame sections, ladders, and tower trapdoors are all made of plastic. Because of this, they need to be removed from their molding sprues and trimmed before assembly. Once trimmed, they assemble easily. It is at this point, however, that the first glitches in the kit appear. Most notably, there simply aren't enough doors for the niches and entryways built into the walls. As a result, those areas that do not have doors look funny when compared with the door areas.

It is at this point that the fortress fails as a serious gaming article. The walls are molded in an off-gray color which loosely passes as stone, and the walls are engraved to present the appearance of assembled stone. The problem with this is that virtually every stone has an injection mark that looks like a round plate with five bolt heads. This is fine for WARHAMMER 40K, but bolts do not exist in medieval periods (at least not in this form). This alone would not normally be that great of a problem; in most cases, these marks could be sanded off or covered up. Unfortunately, these marks cannot be removed easily.

We encountered a major problem when we removed the marks — a problem which only became apparent when we set about assembling one of the errant towers. This product is made of compressed styrofoam and is sealed with a hard outer coating to contain the small pieces. If you pierce the hard outer covering, the area beneath crumbles into small round balls the size of pinheads. This is great if you're into battle damage, but not so great if you want to keep the fortress for years of use. We found that a good repair method was to fill the damaged area with white glue, allow it to harden, then paint over the repair. For all practical purposes, the white glue restores the outer shell.

If you purchase this fortress, we also recommend (in addition to keeping white glue handy) that you immediately apply at least two coats of water-based paint and two coats of water-based sealer. This reinforces the outer seal and should prolong the life of the fortress. *Do not* use oil-based paints, or nonwater-based adhesives or paints: they eat both the outer coating and the styrofoam beneath.

The last major problem with this unit is availability. Being a store owner myself, I was frustrated by the fact that my order for this product was cancelled due to unavailability, and that many orders at the distributor level were unfilled. I contacted Games Workshop about the problem and was given the following reply, which was verified by other sources:

"The manufacturer that we contacted in England to make this piece was unable to produce either the quality or the quantity that we needed to fill our orders for this product. With under a 50% fill rate on those orders, we will probably have to discontinue this item for the present and

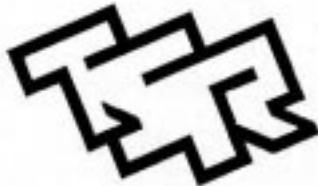
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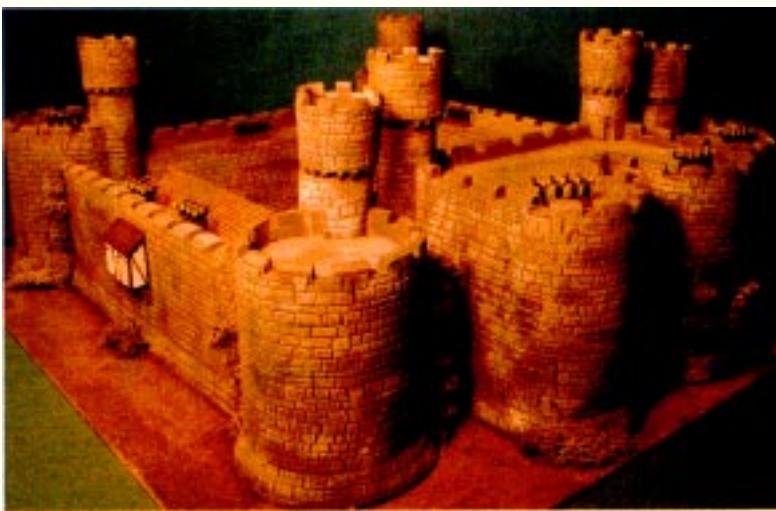
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Greenfield Garrisons' Limited Edition Medieval Castle: A formidable fortress in miniature.

reissue an improved product when we find a qualified manufacturer. We hope to reissue the item in 1989."

When they reissue the item, I hope they add several of unbroken wall sections. By doing so, gamers will be able to place a couple of 25mm buildings inside the wall parameters and still have room for placing troops. With little room inside and no buildings, this product is less of a mighty fortress and more of a strong outpost. At \$49.95, it is also a mighty investment.

In its present form, I cannot recommend this item unless you have the time to put the necessary work into bettering it. The idea is good, however, and I look forward to the castle's reissue. If you have questions or comments regarding this product, you can reach Games Workshop at either the U.K. or U.S. offices listed at the opening of this review.

**Thunderbolt Mountain Miniatures**  
P.O. Box 37024  
Roselawn  
Cincinnati OH 45222-0024

*Tom Meier, Limited-Edition Miniatures* \*\*\*\*\*  
Stock Nos. AA-AF, Various Characters

I had to save the best of the figure reviews for last. At the GEN CON/ORIGINS Game Fair, one of the senior people from Ral Partha presented me with six small boxes marked AA-AF, and smiled as he asked me to review them. He admitted that they weren't Ral Partha products, but thought that everyone should have a look at them. At the time, I was busy running the miniatures area and said that I would look at them later. When I finally got around to doing so, I wished I'd done so earlier; it would have been nice to have picked up a second set.

The set placed for review is part of an ever-growing group of miniatures produced by award-winning sculptor Tom Meier. These six figures are sold by the set only, and each set is numbered. There are only 999 sets in the U.S., and it is not

known at this time if any are destined for overseas markets. While it is difficult to review these miniatures in any way other than figure by figure, some comments may be made about the group as a whole. Other curious points include the fact that all the figures were cast separately, without their bases, then joined later, thus making them sharp and crisp at the shoe lines — a point where many other miniatures fail miserably.

Another common point is the hexagonal bases. As a rule, I don't like hexagonal bases, and I'm not really sure I like these. But painting these miniatures as display models or highlight pieces in a collection would work with these bases, which allow for ground cover to be placed in a convincing manner. Aside from these similarities, these miniatures are distinctly different in art and craft. A figure-by-figure review follows.

#### *AA, Female Barbarian*

This figure is perhaps the one weak point in an otherwise superb collection. The figure is well done and has good muscle and facial detail, especially in the small tiara in the figure's hair. This figure is armed with a sword and shield (although I'm not sure the shield would raise her armor class significantly with what she's wearing). This figure is definitely underdressed for cold weather, even though the costume is tastefully done. I think that it is probably this lack of bulk which makes this figure look out of place with the others.

#### *AB, Male Barbarian*

This highly muscled figure appears to be coiling back to deliver a blow with the huge two-handed sword he carries. The severely displeased look on his face, the hollowed cheeks, and flowing hair exaggerate the illusion of movement. There is little apparel to get in the way of this figure. Overall, this is one of the better miniatures in the set.

#### *AC, Sorcerer (with fire demon staff)* \*\*\*\*\*

This figure (as well as the following one) gives off a uniformly evil aura. While I restudied the miniatures at my shop and wrote this review, many of our gaming club members got their first look at the figures. There wasn't a single person who looked at the figures and failed to say this piece and the following one were evil.

The sorcerer is dressed in a vaguely Oriental fashion, with pointed boots and a staff that twists its way up into a demon's head. The mongol hat and Fu Manchu mustache contribute to the aura, but the most important feature of this figure is the face: It seems to glare at you from every angle, and you can almost hear an incantation ready to burst from its lips.

#### *AF, Antipaladin (in demon armor)* \*\*\*\*\*

Like the preceding figure, this figure exudes an attitude of unrestricted evil. Clothed in demon armor, this antipaladin just seems to be waiting patiently for you to attack him. His massive runeword is held tightly between two hands, and the skull pommel begs for red eyes. The snarling demon's head almost taunts you to do something so it can later mock your feeble efforts. In spite of this great detail, you never see the antipaladin's face; it hides behind a furred collar and skull clasp, visor tightly closed, exuding evil to those who challenge the antipaladin.

#### *AD, Wizard (with soul staff)* \*\*\*\*\*

Next in line is the wizard with the soul staff, his face set in steady concentration, arm extended outward, and two fingers stiffly pointed as he casts a spell. His highly ornamented robe rustles in a undetectable breeze, wrapping around his staff, which rises to form many faces. His belt and pouch are firmly drawn, and his cape billows in the wind.

#### *AE, Paladin (in firebird armor)* \*\*\*\*\*

Finally, the paladin in firebird armor seems to be relaxing after a tough battle. He stands tensely, his great sword resting with its tip against the ground, his mailed left hand clenched tightly in a fist, his body straight and erect. At various points, his chain-mail jerkin pokes through the breaks in his plate mail armor. Last but not least is the crest on his helmet: a large firebird. As you look closer, the illusion goes to work. Is the firebird insignia really a crest, or is it truly a firebird whose purpose is to protect the paladin and help him kindle a burning passion for truth?

These figures stand out far and above the others. The best recommendation I can possibly give is in stating that I intend to pick up at least one more set. I honestly believe these figures will become collectors' items. Presently, this set lists for \$18.00, and can be ordered through Thunderbolt Mountain Miniatures.

## The GEN CON/ORIGINS 88 Game Fair

The GEN CON/ORIGINS Game Fair was a rousing success this year in the miniatures and strategic board-games areas. Many of you who participated in the novice and tutorial games got to see a variety of games being run. For those of you who didn't get to go, we'll give some quick highlights of this, my favorite area of the convention.

The majority of the miniatures events took place in West Hall in the Milwaukee MECCA convention center. We had over 80 tables or gaming areas in this hall, and with the exception of Sunday and Thursday, it housed nonstop action from beginning to end.

Some of the major showcase events included the return of the *Empire of the Petal Throne* game, which consisted of several minibattles and the siege of a wall over 23' in length. Thousands of 25mm figures were positioned for combat on a table that spanned an area 8' wide. You could almost hear the clash of arms.

The Civil War was represented in several miniatures simulations during this convention. In addition, John Hill, the creator of Game Designers Workshop's *Johnny Reb*, ran both novice games and a *Johnny Reb* tournament. Scenery included 15mm stone faces, roads, and fields painstakingly done by hand. These were greatly appreciated by all who played.

West Germany held its ground and threw the Soviets back in *The Fall of West Germany II*. Once again, this game drew both novices and experienced players as it seesawed back and forth. It was the convention's single longest game, starting when the doors opened on Thursday and ending when they closed again late Sunday afternoon.

Once again, Custer died, the Zulus roared, the Indians scalped, and the British fought to a standstill as the Historical Miniatures Gaming Society put on a huge selection of historical games representing several centuries. In two different cases, history teachers took notes to use in the classroom. (Readers may indirectly benefit from the convention after all, even if they couldn't make it.)

This year also heralded the largest number of computer-assisted games I've ever seen. Many of you have computers at home, and some of you use them for form generation, character building, and world planning. The judges this year used computers for hit generations, record-keeping, and the elimination of many of time-consuming gaming obstacles. We saw computers used in TFG's STAR FLEET BATTLES, WWII naval, modern naval, FASA's BATTLETECH®, and TSR's BATTLE-SYSTEM™ games. This year was also the first year in which a large area was designated specifically for computer gaming. Over 80 computers loaded with all sorts of games were provided.

Fantasy miniatures, whether GW's

WARHAMMER or WARHAMMER 40K, BATTLESYSTEM, or Ral Partha's CHAOS WARSTM games, comprised about 25% of the games and miniatures events in our hall. Fog was simulated in one game, and two other games were played blind (neither side knew where the other was until they were encountered). At least two units of dwarves died in ambush in one game, but they took quite a few orcs with them in the process.

BATTLETECH games were big winners in the growth area. This year brought in more and better-painted 'mechs units and far fewer illustrated cardboard counters. With the increasingly large number of 'mechs available from Ral Partha, the games are also becoming more varied, as ground and air vehicles hit the field.

Two BATTLETECH games come to mind immediately. In one of them, the 'mechs were fighting over a crashed ship. The terrain was different, but what caught my eye was the "kitbashed" crashed spaceship. Kitbashing involves combining parts from several kits to make one new miniature. This method of making miniatures that are not available for purchase is when used in historical gaming or model railroading. I would love to hear what went into making the spaceship.

The other BATTLETECH game consisted of a three-part scenario in which 'mechs that were damaged in the preceding scenario fought in that condition. Those previously destroyed were gone forever. This must have provided some of the players with their first lessons in strategy, as many went full tilt into the first game and consequently had no 'mechs left for the second. Although this sounds like an unreasonable set of rules, these players did play in the third part of the scenario, and were playing much better by that time. All in all, the quality of miniatures gaming and scenery was up this year.

I have really enjoyed the mail that has come in so far, and have gotten some ideas for future columns from your letters. Please continue to write. I'm trying to respond to letters as time becomes available. If you want to make comments or suggestions, please send your letters to:

Robert Bigelow  
c/o Friends Hobby Shop  
1411 Washington Street  
Waukegan IL 60085  
(312) 336-0790

I look forward to hearing from you.  
Until next time, enjoy.

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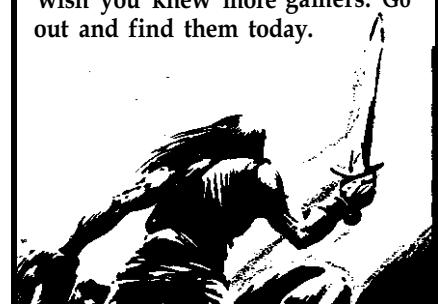
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## LOOKING FOR A GAME CONVENTION?

If your gaming group is too small or if you've just moved into the neighborhood, finding friends who are also gamers can be a problem. However, your local hobbies and games shop may have a bulletin board where gamers can advertise their groups and meeting times. The hobby store may also know of local game conventions where you can meet dozens of other gamers with the same interests. The Convention Calendar in this issue may also be of help. Don't sit at home and wish you knew more gamers. Go out and find them today.



# The Role of Computers

*Cleaning up after the CES product flood*

There is an international trade exhibition held twice annually called the Consumer Electronics Show (CES). Held in January and late spring of each year, the show spotlights products from a variety of electronics companies, ranging from stereos and video equipment to music digitizers. Also making appearances at the CES are computer-software publishers, mostly in the entertainment-software

category. The products announced by publishers at January's CES are now making their way to retailers' shelves.

This means that there is a sudden surge of new products to review. In this month's "Role of Computers" column, we'll try to offer some insight regarding the freshest crop of computer offerings, plus some comments on packages we've postponed reviewing due to the press of business.

#### Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive  
San Mateo CA 94404  
(415) 571-7171

#### F/A-18 Interceptor

Commodore Amiga version

\*\*\*\*

\$49.95

#### Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer

Apple Macintosh version

\*\*\*\*

\$49.95

What a quandary: two superb flight simulators from the same company. In one of our earlier columns we indicated that

*Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Simulator* was a magnificent program worthy of purchase. The Macintosh version only substantiates our feelings regarding the value of this offering. The Mac II version of this program operates in full color. This flight simulator actually teaches you how to fly, thanks to a full, program-based tutorial designed by General Yeager. Add in a variety of antique, current, and futuristic experimental planes, and you have a truly exciting program. We managed to fly the SR-71 to 210,000 feet and were beyond

*F/A-18 Interceptor: A Sidewinder — when you want to send the very best*



the Earth's atmosphere in space! Unfortunately, during our rather rapid descent, our wings left the plane and we crashed, much to the displeasure of the General.

As for *F/A-18 Interceptor*, this flight simulator is without a doubt one of the easiest to learn and most graphically pleasing of any such offering presently on the market. When you consider that Electronic Arts also publishes *Chuck Yeager's Flight Training* simulation program, the only good flight simulators that Electronic Arts does not possess are *JET* by SubLOGIC and the *Microsoft Flight Simulator* by Microsoft Corporation.

*F/A-18 Interceptor* truly imparts to the player the feel of flying an advanced jet fighter. The setting for this simulation is the San Francisco Bay area. Within this setting, you select the Bay area runway from which you wish to take off (including the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Enterprise* in San Francisco Bay). Training courses are given to familiarize the pilot with specific maneuvers in preparation for combat missions. A holographic, heads-up display offers a complete guide during flight, and advanced weaponry systems assure at least a fighting chance against incoming MIGs. One of the most difficult operations is learning how to take-off and land on the U.S.S. *Enterprise*, but this is a critical talent. Without a successful landing on the carrier, you won't be allowed to move on to combat missions.

The only reason this flight simulator did not get a five-star rating is due to the fact that some users could become frustrated over their inability to land on the carrier, thus eliminating the excitement of taking part in combat missions. As the simulation includes a variety of examinations for other types of flight (such as barrel rolls), perhaps passage of these difficult maneuvers could enable the combat-mission scenarios. Otherwise, we recommend that Amiga users purchase this simulator, or get both *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* and *F/A-18*. In either case, you won't be disappointed!

#### DataSoft

19808 Nordhoff Place  
Chatsworth CA 91311  
(818) 886-5922

#### Global Commander

Commodore 64/128 version \$29.95

Here's a twist on the usual "win that combat" scenario. Set in the future, the goal of this game is for the player to become the successful Global Commander by preventing conflict between the 16 member countries of the U.N.N. Some of these countries are full-fledged bullies, while others are just plain wimps. Each nation possesses technological capabilities, natural resources, and missile technology, all at varying levels. If you're not balancing one nation's missile stockpile against another's, you're reprimanding a U.N.N.

member from a starving nation for the assassination of the ambassador from a nation with a surplus of food.

You also have laser-defense satellites that can be positioned to knock down missile attacks from one U.N.N. nation to another (but only if you guess correctly and place them in an appropriate geostationary orbit). There are also three "Big Bird" Reconnaissance Satellites that can detect military activity, but again, these satellites must be precisely positioned to work to your advantage.

Warnings come to you in the form of memos, as one nation requests or demands something from another nation. You can also scan the different radio frequencies for coded messages; these serve not only as indicators of potential hot-spots but are also data sources marking compatible countries. Compatible nations won't require your full attention, so those in severe straits are able to receive the full benefit of your wisdom.

*Global Command* requires constant review of national relationships and tracking international relationships; this is done with the aid of national icon pieces and a global map. Your ability to negate major hot-spots before they explode determines your final success. Even the theme music, usually a deterrent to some strategy games, is quite enjoyable. For C64/128 users, *Global Command* offers a challenging game that doesn't require hours of study to master yet incorporates a variety of different elements to ensure a different approach each time the game is played.

**Mandscape, Inc.**  
3444 Dundee Road  
Northbrook IL 60062  
(312) 480-7667

**Road Runner** \*\*\*  
Commodore 64/128 version \$34.95

The famous Warner Brothers cartoon duo, the Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote, are now starring in an action-arcade game for your C64/128 computer and the Atari ST. In this game, you direct the Road Runner, who has to complete various levels of activity while avoiding Wile E. Coyote and his various weapons. Some of the weapons seen on Saturday morning cartoon reruns are present, and the devious devices always seem to have a will of their own (i.e., they work against Wile E. Coyote).

The object of this game is for the Road Runner to complete a level before his energy runs out; if he fails, the poor bird runs out of gas and cannot run from his persistent pursuer. At the successful close of each level, the Road Runner obtains points for eating birdseed or drinking lemonade, or by destroying Wile E. Coyote. This is a good game with great graphics. The chases, however, tend to get boring after the game has been played several times.

### New World Computing

P.O. Box 2068  
Van Nuys CA 91404  
(818) 480-7667

### Might and Magic

Macintosh II version \*\*\*\* 1/2  
Macintosh Plus version \*\*\* 1/2

Okay, Macintosh gamers; now there is no excuse for self-pity. *Might and Magic* is now available for use on the Apple Macintosh. The Macintosh version is as fine a gaming environment as are the Apple II, C64/128, and IBM micros and compatibles versions. One often forgets that the Macintosh has a black-and-white display (with some shades of gray), due to the fine resolution of the system itself. Instead of vague coloration depicting trees or mountains, the Mac version graphically defines each separate geographical locale. Furthermore, the onscreen three-dimensional effects in dungeons and cities are amazing!

With the Macintosh version of this game, one also receives a simple user interface for game control. By positioning the mouse cursor and clicking the mouse button, a variety of information is displayed: character statistics, spell-casting commands, and attack modes. All of the environments presented in the game's earlier formats are included in the Macintosh version. The hints that apply to other system formats also apply to this version.

Why the difference in game ratings? We initially played this game on our Macintosh II, with which we have only started working. (Incidentally, if you're looking for a spectacular computer system, the Macintosh II has just about every conceivable technological nicety.) The game ran without a single glitch, although the larger screen of the Macintosh II isn't utilized by the game itself. When we ran it on the Macintosh Plus, however, we discovered a fatal glitch which occurred after a victorious battle. We found that the on-screen cursor would not move; the arrow icon simply froze in place. We could still maneuver through the use of the cursor

keys on the keyboard, but when it came time to choose a course of action by selecting a dialogue box, we could not move the cursor into that box. This resulted in having to reboot the computer, losing all of the gains made since our last game-save.

We are also unhappy with this product's software copy protection. Granted, entertainment software copying has to be halted, but this should not be at the expense of the product's fun and efficiency. New World has selected the master-disk method of copy protection for those who copy the game to their hard disk or to another set of micro disks. This means that when you boot the game, you must insert the original program master into the disk drive in order for the game to verify the program. We suppose this is as good a method as any, but what happens if you lose the master program disk or forget where you stored it?

Despite these minor drawbacks, New World Computing has managed to effect a perfect translation of their fantasy role-playing world to the Macintosh computer, and they are to be heartily congratulated for this fine endeavor. Operation on a Macintosh II and Macintosh SE occurred without a flaw. The price for both versions of this game is \$59.95.

### SEGA of America, Inc.

573 Forbes Boulevard  
South San Francisco CA 94080  
(800) USA-SEGA toll free

### Penguin Land

SEGA Master System version \$49.90

*Penguin Land* is one of the first strategic games for a home video-game system. It contains an added bonus — a special RAM chip that allows the player to create 15 of his own mazes to save and come back to later. Your character is a penguin; his goal is to successfully navigate through 50 mazes and bring his eggs safely to the end of each game level.

Play begins with a detailed, animated



Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer: fly the Macfriendly skies

*Serve & volley:*  
going to court with  
the pros.



scene: your penguin rolls his egg along and thus begins his mission. You must avoid feisty opponents and other obstacles, such as condors, bears, crushers, and dead ends. At the same time, you must avoid dropping your egg from heights that exceed its shatter-resistance range. Your penguin can gnaw away at ice to get at tunnels below the surface of the ice, or to part the way between him and danger. You must beware, however, of ice that cannot be crushed and of tunnels through which the egg can travel, but the penguin cannot. There are tubes located throughout the maze that allow access to the penguin or the egg; there are also sparsely located blocks that the player can use to squash the hungry bear. If a maze is completed, the player is rewarded with some quick animation, a bit of self-gratification, and entry to the next level. A nice touch is that of choosing a level on which you would like to start your mission; only the first 30 levels are available, though. The rest are mysteries.

*Penguin Land* is a nice relief from the arcade games released by video-game marketers. Still, it may only satisfy the hunger of strategic players. Many arcade enthusiasts will not find as much pleasure in this game as they would find in other entertainment cartridges, such as those wherein killing less-than-lovable creatures is the object of the game. SEGA has made an effort that puts the video-arcade market one step closer to the computers. For this effort, we applaud them.

**Spectrum HoloByte**  
2061 Challenger Drive  
Alameda CA 94501  
(415) 522-3584

**PT-109** \*\*\*\*  
Apple Macintosh version \$49.95

This torpedo-boat simulation has become one of our favorite combat simulations. In fact, there is rarely a day that passes without one of us running a patrol. Players

learn the history of the craft, as some patrol boats can be piloted only during specific stages of World War II. The feel of actual command is realistically ported through to the Macintosh mouse. A real plus is the fact that the program is not copy protected, meaning you can copy necessary files to your hard-disk drive.

To familiarize new players with the operation of the boat, the game starts in the practice-tactics mode. In this mode, players learn how to fire torpedoes, how to read radar on 32-, 8-, and 2-mile diameter displays, when to use the engine muffler for a quieter approach, how to operate smoke screens, and how to find other weaponry (such as .50 caliber machine guns, rockets, and 20mm and 40mm cannons). When you find yourself opposing a sizable enemy force (say, two destroyers, a cruiser, a submarine, and other enemy craft), the patrol boat's navigability, radical turn mobility, and effective weaponry can make the craft an extremely efficient tool in the hands of the right captain.

Additional features include four difficulty levels, radio messages to your base for additional air or ship support, automatic pilot, and assigned patrols. Not only can you initiate individual patrols, but you can participate in entire campaigns. Be successful in your theater of operations, and you will eventually become a member of the Top Skipper's Roster. For our entry into that august listing, over 30 hours of patrol work was required. With keyboard equivalents to the mouse commands, you'll find a combination of mouse and key presses are best suited to specific activities (such as combat). Soon, you'll become quite proficient at deciding how to approach various enemy task forces in an effective patrol run.

*PT-109* was created by Digital Illusions, also known for its *GATO* (submarine) and *ORBITER* (space shuttle) simulation games. They have continued their high-quality programming, and are to be congratulated for another fine offering.

## News and new products

### Accolade

550 South Winchester Boulevard  
Suite 200  
San Jose CA 95125  
(408) 985-1700

Accolade was one busy publishing company at the CES, where they introduced several new software entertainments. One such product is a scrolling, arcade-style action game entitled *Jet Boys*, which is presently available for the C64/128. The player takes the role of a jet-packed commando whose mission is to enter an enemy-controlled reactor room and deactivate the reactor. Enroute to this final destination, the player must survive numerous waves of deadly galactic-terrorist attacks. This game is \$14.95.

Accolade has also introduced four new sports-simulation games: *Fast Break* (basketball), *Serve & Volley* (tennis), *Rack 'Em* (billiards), and *T.K.O.* (boxing). Designed for one or two players, these simulations will soon be available for the C64/128 (\$29.95), Apple IIGS (\$44.95), and IBM micros and compatibles (\$39.95). *Bubble Ghost*, a multilevel arcade game from Accolade, has just been released for IBM micros and compatibles, the Apple IIGS, the Commodore Amiga and C64/128, and the Atari ST. The object of this game is to blow a bubble through 35 different rooms in a castle filled with obstacles and hazards without breaking it. There are obstacles to negotiate, and the ghost must succeed at his task before he runs out of air. Pricing for this product ranges from \$29.95 for the S-bit systems to \$34.95 for the 16-bit computers.

### Addison-Wesley

Jacob Way  
Reading MA 01867  
(617) 944-3700

If trying to escape the dreaded Nazgul is your bent, then *The Shadow of Mordor*, the third Middle-earth software adventure released by Addison-Wesley, is for you. Like *The Fellowship of the Ring*, this new text-adventure program is based on J.R.R. Tolkien's highly popular and much-loved fantasy trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*. This game is adapted from "Book IV" of *The Two Towers*. In *The Shadow of Mordor*, players must tame the stealthy Smeagol, outwit the Black Riders, and defeat the monstrous spider Shelob. The hardy hobbit explorers must descend treacherous cliffs, navigate deadly swamps, catch their own food, solve the mysteries of winding underground tunnels, and sneak through the evil city of the Nazgul. Their mission is to keep the Ring from the greedy clutches of the Dark Lord Sauron. This adventure is available for the Apple II and IBM micros (\$39.95), and the C64/128 (\$29.95).

## **Broderbund Software**

17 Paul Drive  
San Rafael CA 94903-2101  
(415) 492-3200

Broderbund has recently released five new entertainment offerings. First, for Atari ST aficionados, there's *Typhoon Thompson in Search for the Sea Child*, an arcade-adventure authored by Dan Gorlin, whose *Choplifter!* game is already a software classic. *Typhoon Thompson* is a deluxe version of *Airheart*, a game previously released for the Apple II computer family. The story line is reminiscent of an adventure movie: Typhoon Thompson must rescue the infant survivor of a space-cruiser crash on a remote planet. The game is priced at \$34.95.

Also upcoming from Broderbund is the officially licensed software version of *Star Wars*, which is based on the popular coin-operated video game from the Atari Games Corporation. The player assumes the role of Luke Skywalker as he pilots his X-Wing fighter in an attack on the Empire's *Death Star*. The game will be released for the C64/128 (\$39.95), and the Atari ST and Commodore Amiga (\$29.95).

If you enjoy skiing, check out Broderbund's *Downhill Challenge*, an interactive ski-racing simulation that features realistic three-dimensional animation. You can try your skill at downhill, slalom, and giant slalom skiing, or at ski jumping. You'll also find separate runs for beginner, intermediate, and advanced skiers. This game is currently available for IBM micros and compatibles; the Apple IIGS, the Commodore Amiga, and the Atari ST (\$29.95); and for the C64/128 (\$24.95).

Broderbund also has a new program for the Macintosh, called *Shufflepuck Cafe*. This simulated air-hockey game takes place in a seedy bar reminiscent of the *Star Wars* cantina. It pits the player against nine different opponents. This game is priced at \$39.95.

Nintendo players will be glad to hear that Broderbund is releasing four new Nintendo Entertainment System programs. These include: *Legacy of the Wizard*, a game in which you must defeat an evil dragon; *The Battlefields of Napoleon*, the first true war simulation for Nintendo; *The Guardian Legend*, in which you battle your way into an alien world to destroy evil lifeforms; and *Deadly Towers*, in which young Prince Myer (your character) must destroy the King of the Devils' seven magical bell towers.

## **Electronic Arts**

1820 Gateway Drive  
San Mateo CA 94404  
(415) 571-7171

Electronic Arts now has an affiliated license agreement with the Strategic Studies Group. Already, this agreement has resulted in the debut of *Rommel Battles*



*Rack 'Em:* Applied physics and geometry, right on cue.

for North Africa, a simulation game comprised of eight crucial World War II battles set in North Africa. Included with the game is *Warplan*, a scenario-creation program, and *Warpaint*, a complete graphics editor. This World War II simulation is available for Apple II and C64/128 computers (\$39.95).

## **Epyx, Inc.**

600 Galveston Drive  
Redwood City CA 94063  
(415) 366-0606

There are so many new releases from Epyx that we do not have room to list all of them in this month's column. First, the company is expanding beyond software entertainments with the creation of a new division known as its Consumer Electronics Division. This new division will be responsible for new audio and VCR-based games. In the former category, there is *Head-On Baseball* and *Head-On Football* — games that combine the strategy of calling your own plays with play-by-play announcements on audio-cassette tape.

In *Head-On Baseball*, each player selects his team from the game's 30 batter and pitcher cards. Once the teams are selected and the batting order is determined, each player sizes up the opposing pitcher and hits away. When a spectacular play occurs, players go to the audio tape to hear the outcome of their strategy.

In *Head-On Football*, players act as coaches, and select from 20 offensive and 12 defensive formations. When either the offense or defense makes a big play, players turn on the tape to hear the announcer call one of more than 200 play-by-play highlights. These audio games will cost from \$19.95 to \$29.95.

The VCR games include *VCR Golf*, *Play Action VCR Football*, and *VCR California Games*. *VCR Golf* offers eight of the world's most challenging golf courses. Players move the ball from the tee to the green by making their own shot selections. Players can choose a club card with a

predetermined distance, roll the dice, or go to the video where the pro golfer making the shot may be none other than last year's U.S. Open champion. Quadrant segmenting, a new VCR innovation, splits the TV screen into four parts, thus enabling each player to watch the specific play relating to his position on the course. The game includes the video cassette, golf-club cards, and game board.

*Play Action VCR Football* has the player assume the role of coach. This game uses a videotape featuring highlights of more than 200 NFL plays. When the calls dictate a big play, the videotape is turned on. All play outcomes are based on statistical probabilities derived from the combination of offensive and defensive plays selected.

*VCR California Games* places the player in a race from San Francisco to San Diego. In order to earn enough money to finish the race, the player must enter a variety of competitions: BMX biking, bodyboarding, skateboarding, sailboarding, and roller skating — more than 200 events in all.

## **ICOM Simulations**

648 Wheeling Road  
Wheeling IL 60090  
(312) 520-4440

Having recently terminated its distribution agreement with Mindscape, ICOM Simulations will now handle its own product distribution and will be responsible for its own marketing and sales. As a matter of fact, their director of product development called us recently to inform us that we had left out a number of program formats in our review of *Shadowgate* a few issues ago. To correct that oversight, we offer the following complete listing of all of ICOM Simulations' latest game offerings and their available formats:

*Deja Vu*: Apple Macintosh, Commodore Amiga, C64/128, Atari ST, and IBM micros and compatibles;

*Uninvited*: Apple Macintosh, Commodore Amiga, Atari ST, Apple IIGS, and IBM

micros and compatibles;

*Shadowgate*: Apple Macintosh, Commodore Amiga, Atari ST, Apple IIGS, and IBM micros and compatibles;

*Deja Vu: Lost In Las Vegas*: Apple Macintosh, Commodore Amiga, Atari ST, Apple IIGS, and IBM micros and compatibles.

*Deja Vu: Lost in Las Vegas* is the company's latest game and, as of this date, has not yet been released.

#### Lucasfilm Games

P.O. Box 2009  
San Rafael CA 94912  
(415) 662-1966

This division of Lucasfilm Ltd. handles its software entertainment products. Recently, this division has released *Zak McCracken and the Alien Mindbenders*, a comedy/thriller for IBM micros and compatibles (\$44.95), and Apple II and C64/128 computer systems (\$34.95). The lead character is a journalist named Zak McCracken, creator of sensational (but not always accurate) stories for the tabloid newspaper, the *National Inquisitor*. He discovers that worldwide stupidity is really an extraterrestrial plot to reduce everyone's IQ to single digits. With his three pals, Zak begins a search to unplug the stupidity machine. This game is suitable for both novice and experienced players.

Lucasfilm Games also plans to directly market a new *Advanced Battle Disk* for the C64/128 and Apple II versions of their *PHM Pegasus* battle-hydrofoil simulation game. This new disk contains 10 new battle scenarios (nine for the Apple version) that pit the lightning-fast NATO hydrofoils against terrorists and Eastern-bloc armadas. The price is \$19.95.

#### Mindscape, Inc.

3444 Dundee Road  
Northbrook IL 60062  
(312) 480-7667

Mindscape was also quite busy at the CES promoting their new science-fiction games, *Captain Blood*, *Colony*, and *Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown*. *Captain Blood* uses both fractal- and vector-graphic techniques, as the player searches the stars to destroy the pesky clones of the lead character. This game will be available for the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST (\$49.95), the Commodore 64/128 (\$34.95), and IBM micros and compatibles (\$39.95).

*Colony* is presently available for the Macintosh. In this game, the player assumes the role of regional space marshal in a space-frontier colony that has been overrun by aliens. Using interactive play techniques and 3D animation, this game has the players begin by investigating the disappearance of the colony. An IBM micro version of this game will be released before year's end.

*Visions of Aftermath: The Boomtown* is a post-nuclear war simulation that allows players to recreate a world after the hol-

ocaust. Characters must learn to survive the disaster and rebuild civilization using their wits, ambition, resourcefulness, and ethics. Available for IBM micros and compatibles, this game is priced at \$39.95.

Mindscape has also signed a distribution deal with SEGA to distribute *Out Run*, *Space Harrier*, *After Burner*, and *Thunderblades*. Mindscape will soon be publishing a backlist of popular Strategic Simulation software titles, such as: *Cartels and Cutthroats*, *Combat Leader Galactic Gladiators*, and *Queen of Hearts*. Most of these programs will be available in C64/128, Atari 8-bit, and Apple II formats.

#### MicroIllusions

17408 Chatsworth Street  
Granada Hills CA 91344  
(818) 360-3715

Leading off the MicroIllusion news is the licensing of Hanna-Barbera's world-famous cartoon characters. This means you'll soon be seeing the Flintstones, the Jetsons, Scooby-Doo, and Johnny Quest on your computer monitor. At the end of this year, these games will be released for the Apple Macintosh, the Commodore Amiga, the C64/128, and IBM micros and compatibles in arcade- or adventure-style formats.

#### Microsoft Corporation

16011 NE 36th Way  
Box 97017  
Redmond WA 98073-9717  
(206) 882-8080

This company rarely shows up in our column. Microsoft is most famous for creating system software such as *MS-DOS* and *Windows* for IBM computers and compatibles, and rarely has offerings in the software entertainment field. Nevertheless, they do distribute one of the better flight simulators for IBM micros and compatibles. The company has now released the first update of their *Microsoft Flight Simulator* in several years. This game was developed by the SubLOGIC Corporation of Champaign, Ill. Version 3.0 supports EGA and VGA resolution, adds a Gates Lear Jet and a crop duster to the types of planes that can be flown, and utilizes a new 3D feature that provides multiple windows with views from various perspectives. Also added is a new learning mode featuring basic- and advanced-flight training, aerobatics, and navigation instruction. The game works with a Hercules Graphics Adapter, and costs \$49.95.

#### Clue corner

*Bards Tale II* (Interplay Productions/Electronic Arts)

The dreamspell can be found on Level One of the Destiny Stone in a small alcove inside a huge spinner room (the coordinates are N9, E18). You will need the arrows mentioned in the back of the

game's rule book in order to solve the last Snare Of Death. Finally, when you have all seven segments of the wand, go to the Temple of Narn.

Ben Pierce  
Washingtonville, N.Y.

In my travels through this game, I found something of interest that may help every one: a way to recharge magical items. First, use the magical item until it is down to one last charge. Next, make your way to Garth's Equipment Shoppe. Sell him the item, then purchase it right back from him. Surprise: You now have a fully recharged magical item. This comes in handy, especially with the Flame Horn.

Paul Belanger  
Easthampton, Mass.

#### *Might and Magic* (New World Computing/MEDIAGENIC)

In the Warrior's Stronghold, "Glass that glitters, rubies that glow, when I twinkle I cast a rainbow" can get you a crystal key. Plus, in order to enter White Wolf, find the Merchant's Pass. To rejuvenate yourself, find the hourglass in section D-I. To avoid unnecessary damage, always cast a Psychic Protection and Levitate spell in the Dungeon of Dusk. Trading with the Hermit in D-4 gets you two Pirate Treasure maps.

Christopher Brunner and Eric Keen  
Westlake, Ohio

A word of warning to all *Might and Magic* players: get your characters some Scrolls of Fire for the Council of Strength. Also, take your time on the quest. By the time I got to the stronghold (located at B-3, 14-2), half of my party was at the 8th level.

Mark Heffernan  
Birmingham, Miss.

#### *Ultima V* (Origin Systems)

To destroy the Shadowlords, you must first know their names. These can be learned by going to one of the three castles that represent the Principle that each Shadowlord opposes. Once there, ask the King (or the person who runs the castle) about the Shadowlords. The person will usually tell you where to go and whom to ask for additional information.

Once you have the name of a Shadowlord, you must then get the Shard of the Gem of Mondain from which that Shadowlord draws its power; it is located in the Underworld. Once you have the name and the shard, you can return to the castle that the Shadowlord opposes. Go to the Flame of Love (for the Shadowlord of Hatred, for example) and yell the Shadowlord's name. The Shadowlord will appear two spaces away from you. Throw the shard into the flame (by using it), and attack the Shadowlord. You should cast several Vas Flam (Large Fireball) spells at the Shadowlord, or repeatedly attack it. You might have to use some Heal spells on your characters, since the Shadowlord will

select one character and focus all of its attacks on that individual. If you destroy a Shadowlord, it is gone forever, and you can then go after the next one.

When all of the Shadowlords are destroyed, you can resume your search for the lost Lord British. Do this by first locating and obtaining the Crown, Scepter, and Amulet of Lord British. Next, enter the dungeon named Shame. Go to the bottom level of the dungeon and enter the Underworld. Search the area (using many Blink spells and climbing mountains) until you find a large area of lava. Walk through the lava until you find a large area of darkness. Yell the word "Veramocor," and you should be able to enter the Dungeon of Doom. Once in that dungeon, you will have to work your way down through the

puzzles and traps until you reach the bottom level. This is where Lord British is held prisoner!

Jayson Hogan  
Seattle, Wash.

That's all for this month. Next issue, we'll cover a few more products from the CES that were overlooked in this month's column. Until next month, game on! □

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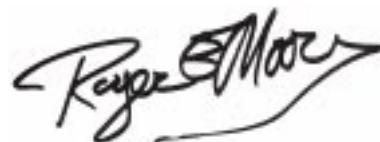
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Continued from page 3

in their campaigns using such new material. A world in which the animal life is largely prehistoric would be an interesting setting, and you could preserve nearly all of the trappings of a medieval culture as well. Replacing rhinos with arsinotheres and elephants with deinotheres, using the article "Into the Age of Mammals" in issue #137, gives the world a special flavor that makes it stand out from others that might have been like it. Many DMs allow their NPC orcs to gain levels, PC demi-humans to have unlimited level advancement, and so on — with more drastic results than having funny-looking elephants.

More radical changes can be made in a campaign world with unique material and still allow for entertaining play. The world of Krynn from the DRAGONLANCE® saga is further removed from the medieval mold of the typical campaign, with the heavy presence of draconians, dragons, kender, gnome technologists, minotaurs, and unique magic-using classes and spells. At the extreme, one has Kara-Tur, the Oriental land in which only the mechanics of the AD&D game have been preserved, giving wholly new monsters, magical items, and character classes on top of an entirely non-Western culture. Both Krynn and Kara-Tur have strong followings, too. Being different is not being unpopular.

We still want to know what you think of DRAGON Magazine's articles, and we don't believe that everyone who hates an article lacks imagination. We enjoy presenting unique material for role-playing because imagination is what fantasy is all about. Unique material challenges one to think in new ways and to get a broader view on life, even if we are just talking about games. Sit down with a pencil and paper sometime and jot down a few notes on how to use a game item you first thought was useless, whether you found it here or in a game manual. Be creative and see what happens. Your players may never forgive you.



\* Tower of Midnight Dreams, the D&D™ Cartoon Show Book that revealed that Uni the Unicorn was female. No, seriously. The quote's on page 48.

## Computer-Games Conversions Chart

### Accolade (408) 985-1700

*APOLLO 18: Mission to the Moon* to IBM micros and compatibles (with EGA support)

### Activision (415) 329-0500

*The Last Ninja* to IBM micros and compatibles, Apple IIGS and Apple II

### Broderbund Software (425) 492-3200

*The Ancient Art of War at Sea* to Apple Macintosh and Apple II

### Data East USA (408) 436-0900

*Speed Buggy* to Atari ST

### DataSoft/Electronic Arts (415) 571-7171

*Bismarck: The North Sea Chase* to Atari 8-bit  
*Tomahawk* to Apple IIGS

### Electronic Arts (415) 571-7171

*Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Simulator* to Apple Macintosh  
*Skyfox II* to IBM micros and compatibles  
*Wasteland* to C64/128  
*World Tour Golf* to Commodore Amiga

### Interstel/Electronic Arts (415) 571-7171

*Empire* to the Commodore Amiga

### MicroProse (301) 771-1151

*PIRATES!* to Apple IIGS

### Origin Systems (603) 644-3360

*Moebius* to Apple Macintosh

### Paragon/Electronic Arts (415) 571-7171

*Master Ninja: Shadow Warrior of Death* to C64/128

### Spectrum HoloByte (415) 522-3584

*Soko-Ban* to Apple II

### Strategic Studies Group/Electronic Arts (415) 571-7171

*Reach For The Stars* to IBM micros and compatibles\*

### The Avalon Hill Game Company (301) 254-9200

*Under Fire!* to IBM micros and compatibles *Wooden Ships & Iron Men* to IBM micros and compatibles

\* This package contains 3½" and 5¼" format, and supports CGA, EGA, MCGA, VGA and Hercules graphics modes.



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# Role-playing Reviews



*Remembering the  
FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting*

After years of concentrating on adventures and ignoring the benefits of a coherent campaign setting for the D&D® and AD&D® games, TSR, Inc. is now turning out campaign settings at a phenomenal rate. While the D&D game Gazetteers rapidly detail the Known World of the D&D Expert Set, all is not quiet on the AD&D game front. Three FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign accessories have appeared, each dedicated to an area of the setting touched upon only briefly in the boxed set. The three authors involved have each used a different style of presentation to paint a colorful picture of the areas in question. How well they succeed at creating a vibrant setting is the focus of attention in this month's column.

The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting was originally conceived by Ed Greenwood as his house campaign. When TSR was looking for a world in which to set the majority of future AD&D game products, Ed Greenwood's name, long associated with TSR through his many articles printed in DRAGON® Magazine, came up. Here was a man who had designed a world and, more importantly, gamed in it regularly. Ed was only too happy to have his work published, and so the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting arrived at TSR. There, it was put through the creative and manufacturing processes to finally emerge as a boxed campaign set.

In the DRAGON #129 "Role-playing Reviews" column, Ken Rolston put the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting under the microscope and mentioned the imminent arrival of the first campaign supplements. Those of you looking for more information on the FORGOTTEN REALMS boxed set and the history of campaign worlds in general should first check out Ken's review and then return here for this month's look at the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign supplements.

With the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting already established as a large campaign world, what's the point of bringing out additional supplements? Well, let's face it: The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting is huge — much larger than the North American continent (and that's an awful lot of land). When you consider that the description of a single city could easily fill a book of 64 pages or more, there's plenty of room for expansion in developing parts of the FORGOTTEN REALMS. Plus, if you want to cover a wide range of cultures, terrain types, and climates, you can always add more tracts of land to the edges of the original maps.

What you end up with is an infinitely expandable campaign world in which development can take place either in the form of more detailed descriptions of established areas, or in the form of adding new lands. The first three supplements deal with areas already covered in the boxed set. The lands of Kara-Tur, which should already be familiar to players of *Oriental Adventures*, will be the first of the

new lands to be added to the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting.

### Assessing the settings

The three supplements under review this month are FR1 *Waterdeep* and the *North*, FR2 *Moonshae*, and FR3 *Empires of the Sands*. A quick read through the *Cyclopedia of the Realms* in the FORGOTTEN REALMS boxed set provides the basic information on these three areas, but leaves many questions unanswered. It therefore falls to the supplements to bring these lands to life while, at the same time, leaving DMs room to add their own imaginative touches — those special bits which transform a campaign supplement into a series of thrilling gaming sessions.

Ultimately, a good campaign supplement should act as a springboard for the imagination. It should inspire DMs either to base their campaigns in the area under discussion or to use it as parts of their own larger campaigns. How well a supplement does so is a measure of its utility. The most carefully developed and written campaign supplement is worthless if it does not inspire the DM. This means that the information must be presented in such a fashion that it is readily accessible, easy to reference during play, and vibrant in scope. That's not to say that each setting must contain earth-shattering campaign themes in which the world is in imminent danger of being destroyed. These types of spicy themes are more suited to campaign adventures, where the whole activity of the PCs can be geared toward preventing the impending catastrophe.

Campaign supplements should lay down the basis of life in the lands in question, showing how people and demihumans live and interact with each other, and how they deal with any indigenous monster populations. The system of government and trade should be covered along with major population sites. But the supplement should be more than just a recounting of the economic and political status of the area. It should include descriptions of the various power groups which aid the established government and those that work against it. It should also provide DMs with lots of inspiration, allowing our own adventures to be created from it. These can take the form of urban adventures, wilderness or dungeon expeditions, or epic quests to right great wrongs.

As campaign packs must cater to a wide variety of adventuring tastes, they must be extremely flexible in their outlooks. The DRAGONLANCE® module series is narrow in scope and firmly geared to the actions of its main characters. While it provides a satisfying and exciting campaign, its narrowly defined scope makes it difficult for characters to adventure in the world of Krynn outside of the action of the main campaign. On the other hand, the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting is wide in scope, allowing a great variety of player and DM choice, but often at the expense

of detailed settings. The D&D game Gazetteers focus much more closely on subject matter, detailing dress, appearance, customs, and politics in such a way that they are ready to use with a minimum of effort on the behalf of the DM.

The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting supplements require DM input to bring them to life. The basic background of an area or country is given in the FORGOTTEN REALMS *Cyclopedia* in the FORGOTTEN REALMS boxed set; it supplies sufficient information to orient players. It is the purpose of a supplement to provide DMs with extra information which may be converted into background and, more importantly, into ideas for adventure sessions.

### FR1 *Waterdeep and the North*

An AD&D game supplement

64-page book

TSR, Inc.

\$7.95

*Design:* Ed Greenwood

*Editing:* Karen S. Martin

*Cover:* Keith Parkinson

*Interior art:* Chris Miller

*Heraldic escutcheons:* David E. Martin

*Cartography:* Frey Graphics and David

Sutherland

The City of Waterdeep is situated on the Sword Coast, and with a population of over 100,000, it weighs in as the most important city in the north of the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. As Waterdeep is an integral part of Ed Greenwood's house campaign, it was only natural that this detailed city should form the first of the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign supplements.

**Presentation:** The pack consists of a 64-page book, a large color map of the city, and a six-panel cover (which includes a map of the city's sewers, selected building floorplans, a schematic map of the City Wards of Waterdeep, and a smaller color map of the city). The physical quality of this product is high, and color is used to good effect to show contour levels and sea depths. The 64-page booklet is primarily concerned with describing the city and giving an idea of what life is like within its boundaries. This is done in an evocative manner which brings Waterdeep to life and makes it an ideal setting for urban adventures.

**The North:** The sections describing the northern lands are presented less successfully. Although the history of the North is colorful, the descriptions of the various settlements are sketchy. The absence of a wilderness map showing the relationship of the various settlements to Waterdeep and to each other makes reading this section difficult. Admittedly, some of the places can be found on the large-scale map (90 miles to the inch) in the FORGOTTEN REALMS boxed set, but you're left to guess at the location of most of them. The provision of a detailed map of the North would have placed all this in context and given it

more impact. As it stands, it contains some good opportunities for adventure, and diligent DMs can create their own map. Still, I cannot help feeling that a campaign supplement should come with all the relevant maps. However, DRAGON Magazine #128 published a map of the immediate vicinity of Waterdeep. The annotated map depicts the areas around the city and the accompanying text describes these places. While this goes somewhat to righting the situation, large portions of the terrain described in FR1 still remain unmapped.

**Waterdeep:** While the section on the North is weak, the sections describing the City of Waterdeep are very strong. You are first treated to a brief geographical overview of the city, followed by its history. Waterdeep was founded by local tribes who benefited from trading timber and furs with southern merchants. The deep harbor of the settlement made it an ideal place for large ships to dock; in time, it gave the city its name. But, it wasn't all peaceful trading down at the harbor. These were violent times, and the fledgling settlement was overrun by a savage human tribe. Learning from their predecessors, the newcomers set about building defenses and fortifying their new homes. This was indeed fortunate, as tribes of humanoids were on the move and were soon advancing on Waterdeep. For protection, more human tribes converged on the settlement, swelling its size and number of defenders. After savage battles against troll forces, Waterdeep emerged as a free city ruled by War Lords.

The rule of the War Lords was not destined to last forever. Ahairon, a mighty mage who had fought in the troll wars, overthrew the last of the War Lords and established a government based on wisdom instead of armed might. The new rulers of the city were Ahairon and a group of Lords who were secretly selected to govern. These Lords were always masked so no one would know their identities, a situation which allowed them to rule without fear of coercion or reprisal. The Lords governed Waterdeep for 200 years until Aghairon, an ardent imbiber of potions of longevity, drank one too many and the years caught up with him.

Aghairon's death was followed by a brief period of anarchy, as powerful guildmasters stabbed, poisoned, and otherwise disposed of each other in an attempt to gain sole control of the city. This chaos was not, however, to last long. Although most of Aghairon's fellow Lords had been slain in the fighting, there were survivors who took steps to reestablish the rule of the Lords.

Well, that's all history, but the government of Waterdeep remains the same, with only one of the present 16 Lords being known to the populace at large. The remainder still hide their identities behind their masks. Rule by the Lords has been good, for the city has prospered and grown under their watchful eyes (as one

could well expect when the only known Lord is a Paladin).

As can be seen, Waterdeep has a rich background which gives the city great character. The laws and customs of the city are colorfully presented, as are the various guilds and factions of the city. Like Lankhmar (see "Role-playing Reviews" in DRAGON #136), Waterdeep concentrates on providing a feel for life in the city, rather than on detailed descriptions of each building. Anyone looking for a house-by-house guide to Waterdeep is going to be very disappointed. Few of the city's buildings are listed, and of these, only a very small number are described in any great detail. DMs using Waterdeep are required to create their own floorplans when needed, and are expected to populate the buildings with characters of their own devising. The sample floorplans provided on the cover are a great help here as they can be used to provide a building's layout at a moment's notice. Fortunately, tables are provided which allow the DM to quickly determine the type of building according to the various areas of the city. The DM can then smugly tell the players what their characters see.

What you get instead of detailed building descriptions is a useful look at the workings of the city, outline descriptions of its various wards, and details on the services available. The city's guilds are set out in detail, and include such information as where their headquarters are, their livery, how one becomes a member, and various interests and political connections. The section on the noble families is less detailed but can easily be expanded as the need arises.

Waterdeep has an abundance of colorful NPCs, all of whom can be used to interact with a band of adventurers as adversaries, friends, or people just met during the daily routine of the city. The NPCs come in all manners of levels and classes, giving DMs plenty of scope for using them in adventures. As some of them are also Lords Of Waterdeep, PCs may well find themselves unwittingly rubbing shoulders with the city's elite.

**Adventure ideas:** To round off the package, seven adventure outlines are provided which may be used by characters of any level. As outlines, these require a bit of work to bring them to life, but they provide a good cross section of the types of adventure available within the city.

**Evaluation:** With its emphasis on atmosphere and personalities, Waterdeep is a very strong city pack. It lacks any street encounter tables, which is a pity, as this would have added even more to the city's feel and given PCs a better handle on life in the city. (As an aside, DMs looking for inspiration in street encounters should check out *Cities* from Chaosium). As it stands, Waterdeep is a good urban location in which to base adventures in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. DMs will

need to add to the provided information to personalize the city and breath life into its daily routines, but the background is provided and contains plenty of ideas just waiting to be developed.

As a guide to the lands of the North, Waterdeep is less successful. However, the North holds plenty of opportunities for adventurers looking for action and excitement. The forthcoming FR5 *The Savage Frontier* by Paul Jaquays looks at the lands to the north of Waterdeep; let's hope it also provides a map of this area.

#### FR2 *Moonshae*

An AD&D game supplement  
64-page book

TSR, Inc. \$7.95

*Design:* Douglas Niles

*Editing:* Mike Breault

*Cover:* Tim Hildebrandt

*Interior art:* George Barr

*Cartography:* Dave S. LaForce

The setting for *Darkwalker on Moonshae* (and the Moonshae trilogy as a whole) is revealed in this supplement by Moonshae author Doug Niles. DMs and players interested in basing campaigns in and around the Moonshaes now have the necessary background to do so. The Moonshaes are a group of islands to the west of the main continent of the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. They are home to the Ffolk, a druidic people who worship the Earthmother, a neutrally aligned aspect of Chauntee, the neutral-good goddess of agriculture.

The Ffolk reluctantly share the Moonshaes with the Northmen, a strong, warlike race of raiders who hail from the lands north of Waterdeep. Conflicts frequently erupt between the two races as the Northmen expand their holdings on the Moonshaes at the expense of the Ffolk. But darker things are afoot than the struggles between these two people, for a greater evil is again stirring – Kazgoroth the Beast.

**Presentation:** *Moonshae* is a 64-page book with a large color insert with maps of the Moonshae Isles printed on both sides: one at 20 miles to the inch, the other at 30 miles to the inch. Both maps contain the same amount of detail, the major difference being that there's less sea space surrounding the 20-miles-per-inch map.

The physical quality of this supplement is high, but not all available space has been used to its best effect. The inside of the wrap-around cover is blank, which is a pity, as it could have been used to provide village or town maps, or even sample monster lairs. Elsewhere, maps have been used to good effect to illustrate the text and guide the reader through the Moonshaes. Each island description is accompanied by a map reprinted in the booklet. While all of these maps are taken from the one on the mapsheet, it's a great help to have the internal maps for reference while reading through the booklet.

Maps have also been put to good use to graphically depict the extent of Northmen settlements in the Moonshaes, and to show the economies and trade routes of the Isles. Both of these maps make it very easy to see at a glance the present situation in the Isles without having to read through pages of text.

**True confession time:** Okay, I admit it: I'm mentioned in the credits as a supplier of ideas during the early stages of this project. Maybe this gives me an undue bias towards the contents, but it's more than just the background and people presented in this supplement that makes Moonshae a very strong source pack. Doug has written about the Moonshaes in his novels, a situation which means he is very familiar with them as a place where people live, work, and play.

Take this in-depth knowledge and place it in the mouth of an outsider visiting the Isles, and you get not only very colorful descriptions, but a distinctive feel of what the Isles and their inhabitants are like. When that outsider is none other than Elminster, the famed sage of the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, then whole book makes for fun reading as well.

**The Moonshaes:** After a discussion of character races, classes, politics, conflicts, geography, and economics within the Moonshaes, we have a good idea of what the Isles are like. Here, Ffolk and Northmen war against each other and squabble with their own kind. Magic-users are viewed with suspicion by both races, and clerics from elsewhere in the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign world attempt to spread their faiths in the face of druidic opposition. Elves and dwarves exist in isolated settlements, generally avoiding humans and vigorously defending their lands against human encroachments. Only the halflings mix freely with the humans, living next to settlements of the Ffolk and the Northmen.

The Moonshaes are also home to marauding firbolgs, orcs, goblins, trolls, and other more dangerous monsters. Friendlier creatures can also be found: unicorns, faerie dragons, pixies, and centaurs. All of these creatures appear in the wandering-monster tables, which strikes me as a little strange. *Moonshae* is designed as an adventure setting for characters of any level, and yet we have beholders and dragon turtles popping up here and there to devastate low-level adventurers. A more generic section on how to create suitable wilderness encounters for parties of varying levels would have been much more useful and would have added more flavor to the Isles. The various types of creatures could also have been given more specific geographical locations instead of indiscriminately spreading them throughout the Isles.

**Supernatural beings:** After physical descriptions of the lands and their inhabitants, we move on to the major supernatural entities which exist in the countryside

and seas. The most important of these is the Earthmother, who gives life and vitality to the land. Her power is manifested in the Moonwells, pools of water with the magical power to cure the wounds of those who strive to maintain the mystic balance. These Moonwells are tended by druids who can use them to charge or restore charges in magical items. In the areas where the Northmen hold supremacy, the Moonwells have dried up or become stagnant, causing the Earthmother's power to weaken.

The Earthmother is served by her three children: Leviathan, a huge whale; Kamerynnm, a majestic unicorn; and the Pack, a pack of dire wolves who roam the Isles. Each one of these children is immortal, and serves the will of the Earthmother. Arrayed against them are the forces of evil manifested in the form of Kazgoroth the Beast, who seeks to disrupt the balance and bring corruption to the Isles. Kazgoroth is aided by its magically created Blood Warriors: undead soldiers who obey its every command. Other deities and powerful supernatural creatures play a lesser part in the Moonshaes; their main spheres of worship lying across the seas in the FORGOTTEN REALMS proper. Their clerics and followers only arrive in the Moonshaes as missionaries or as part of trading or adventuring parties.

**Elminster's travels:** With the basic background of the Moonshaes set out, it's time to join Elminster in his tour of the Moonshaes. Here, the sage informs us of the people and places he has visited. The style of presentation is similar to that used in the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign set: information is available from *At a Glance* (the kind of thing that can be easily discovered by looking at an area or by asking travelers), *Elminster's Notes* (the sage's account of his travels) and *Game Information* (gaming facts and statistics).

It is in Elminster's Notes that this pack is most impressive. Here, the descriptions become very absorbing and vibrant as we follow Elminster on his travels. As well as providing an insight into life in the Moonshaes, we also get a good indication of Elminster's personality and share with him in his discomforts and pleasures. We get to see both the Ffolk and the Northmen as they follow their own beliefs and come into conflict with each other. The Ffolk are organized into a number of small kingdoms, loosely connected under the control of a High King, who is more a figurehead than a temporal power. Primarily an agricultural society, the Ffolk stand in contrast to the more warlike Northmen who would rather raid the settlements of the Ffolk for food than grow their own. Although the Northmen do maintain their own agricultural settlements, raiding and trading are their preferred pursuits.

Rather than one race being seen through the eyes of another, therefore casting them in a derogatory light, Elminster's Notes let us see the races as people with

their own beliefs and fears. Even within the same race there are people who are uncouth and disgusting, and others who have noble personalities.

**Adventure ideas:** The Moonshaes have a number of opportunities for creating epic campaigns within their confines. The *Moonshae* trilogy provides a large number of possible adventure ideas, and a few other brief adventure ideas are provided in the source pack.

**Evaluation:** The style of presentation used in *Moonshae* is superior to the styles used in the other FORGOTTEN REALMS setting supplements reviewed this month. While not containing as much detailed information as FR1 *Waterdeep and the North*, *Moonshae* contains more evocative descriptions and gives a good insight into life in the Isles.

### FR3 *Empires of the Sands*

AD&D game supplement  
64-page book  
TSR, Inc. \$7.95

*Design:* Scott Haring

*Editing:* Karen S. Martin

*Cover and interior art:* Jeff Easley

*Cartography:* Dave S. LaForce

Along the southern coast of the Sea of Swords lie the countries of Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan. Famous throughout the FORGOTTEN REALMS for warm climate and large areas of dry, inhospitable land, these regions are known as the Empires of the Sands. This is strange, for none of the three countries is an empire in the formal sense, and only Calimshan has a desert worth mentioning. Still, the lands down here are very arid and, to a northerner used to rolling grasslands, the sparse patches of scrub and brush which dot the southern landscape could well appear to be desert.

**Presentation:** *Empires of the Sands* is really three source packs in one, with each country being described in its own separate section. The booklet is 64-pages long and has the same high standard of production as the two other FORGOTTEN REALMS setting supplements. Like FR2 *Moonshae*, the inside of the folder cover has been left blank; it too, could have been used for some purpose.

Two large color maps depict the three countries at a scale of 30 miles to the inch, making them compatible with other maps in the series. The maps (at least in my copy) have been printed in slightly different tones. When you put them together, the join is very obvious, which mars their overall visual appeal.

The layout follows a standard pattern for each of the three countries, providing information on such things as languages, social customs, history, government, religions, money and commerce, cities, places of interest, and various important or interesting NPC groups. The writing, while lacking the flavor of FR2 *Moonshae*, is informative, readable, and easy to refer-

ence during play.

The large area covered in the supplement has reduced the amount of detail contained within it, with most cities receiving only a column of text on the average. While information is provided on each city, not all of the cities make for interesting reading. Some descriptions consist of little more than noting what each city is renowned for, its exports, population, government, and location. All of this information could easily have been presented in the form of a table, thereby making it more accessible and providing more space for other aspects of the campaign area to be described.

The center of the booklet is taken up with one blank character sheet, seven character sheets filled in with the statistics for the Company of Eight (see Tethyr below), and reduced maps of the area. Most of this stuff looks like filler, perhaps an indication that this project wasn't quite big enough to fill its allocated page count.

**Amn:** The northernmost of the three countries, Amn is a place where money not only talks, it rules. Everything in Amn is geared towards the acquisition of money, and the conspicuous consumption of the rich is evident everywhere.

Local speech patterns are full of references to money, even though the conversation may deal with a topic that has no connection with financial transactions. Take for instance the word *outbid*: "Since the innkeeper's crossbow outbid their beer mugs, the brawlers quieted down real fast." Or perhaps you're trying to convince somebody, maybe sell them on an idea: "I sold my wife we weren't at the tavern."

For the past 22 years, Amn has been ruled by the mysterious Council of Six. Prior to that, the country was divided, its major cities banding together only for mutual defense. The rest of the time they struggled with each other over the most profitable trade routes and frequently engaged in trade wars. It was following the last trade war that the Council of Six emerged as leaders of a united country.

The Council of Six is a mysterious body: no one knows who the members are, other than that they are members of the most powerful trade houses in Amn. Consequently, the council promotes free enterprise, with the making of money taking precedence over everything else. If you can make money by almost any means outside of robbery and murder, then you're respected. If not, well, nobody likes failure in Amn. Yet, Amn is not as free as it may first appear. Adventuring groups and magic-users are actively discouraged from plying their trades. Adventures may be licensed by the Council of Six, but magic-users on reaching fifth level must register with the government or leave Amn.

While Amn may be a merchant's dream, it is far from an adventurer's paradise. Not only does the government intervene in adventurer's actions, but Amn is also rela-

tively free from monsters (although it does have its areas of high adventure if you know where to look).

**Tethyr:** Over the border from Amn in Tethyr, things are very different. Here anarchy rules. The former royal family has been wiped out, and the country is fractured into petty kingdoms, independent villages and towns, and bandit holdings. It's a place where bold adventurers can carve themselves a respectably sized kingdom or fall to an assassin's knife in the dead of night.

The Company of Eight is a group of eight adventurers dedicated to maintaining (or more accurately promoting) peace in Tethyr. They defeat monsters, dispose of the worst tyrants, and generally act in a goodly fashion. Their statistics are provided on the character sheets in the center of the book and are also reproduced in the text, making it possible for them to be used as player characters. Nevertheless, little real background information is provided. Be prepared to fill a lot of this in for yourself, as some of these characters are 12th level plus, and should be very well established with a deep knowledge of the area, its inhabitants, and rulers.

**Calimshan:** As the only country in this supplement with a real desert (and the closest thing to an emperor in its Pasha), Calimshan could very well be an Empire of the Sands. The Calim desert covers a sizable area of the country, and dominates much of Calimshan's life and outlook as a result. The lands bordering it are only slightly more fertile.

In Calimshan, wealth is of the utmost importance. But this is not wealth for wealth's sake, as in Amn. Here, wealth is sought after so that the seeker can lead a life of leisure. Not many attain this goal, but most Calimshanites aspire towards it. Gadgets and magical items are commonly found in Calimshan, where they are widely used as labor-saving devices. Anything that reduces manual labor and drudgery, no matter how trivial an amount, is highly prized.

Magic-users are held in high esteem, being the providers of the much-sought-after magical gizmos. Many magic-users are also teachers. Anyone with the money and the free time hires a magic-user to teach him a few simple spells and cantrips. (When things get tough in Amn, you know where to go.)

In theory, Calimshan is ruled by the Pasha in Calimport. In practice, each city governs itself, with the Pasha being unable to carry out any major actions without the permission of at least some of the cities' viziers. A constant flow of messengers rides out from Calimport carrying messages to the viziers requesting their opinions on various matters of state.

Calimshan offers much in the way of adventure. Its magic-users have accidentally or intentionally summoned and released a substantial number of other-planar beings. After a good time running amok through

their summoners' homes and villages, those planar beings who are unable to undertake the return trip home on their own gravitate toward the Calim Desert, which they find greatly to their liking. If you're after less-exotic monsters, then the Forest of Mir is the place to go, as it holds its fair share of evil humanoids.

**Evaluation:** *Empires of the Sands* has a much wider focus than the two other FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign supplements, and yet it still manages to convey the atmosphere of each country in a satisfying manner. However, DMs are required to put in a fair amount of work to bring these countries to life. With three countries to choose from, though, it's really only necessary to develop one of them for campaign play. With its lack of centralized government, Tethyr makes an ideal setting for power hungry adventurers. Calimshan is a good place for magical research, and Amn is the kind of area that most adventuring groups will find very unhealthy.

### Short and sweet

*GURPS Bestiary*, by Steffan O'Sullivan. Steve Jackson Games Inc., \$14.95. Looking for an animal to throw at your GURPS adventurers? Then look no further. The *GURPS Bestiary* contains over 200 creatures to populate the various worlds of the GURPS universe. Classifying creatures by terrain type, the *GURPS Bestiary* deals primarily with animals: normal (for Earth anyway), legendary beasts, and other-world creatures. As a generic guide, this supplement doesn't contain any humanoid monsters and has only a few exotic beasts (these types of creatures are far better left to the various GURPS campaign supplements where they can be placed in the right context and developed as part of the setting's background).

As well as animal descriptions, the *GURPS Bestiary* contains GM commentaries on handling animal encounters, hunting and trapping, animals as companions, and how to create your own animals. The art is fairly poor — about the same standard as that in the *Monster Manual* — so don't expect to be thrilled by the illustrations. The *GURPS Bestiary* has much to offer GURPS GMs, but it is of limited use to anyone looking for new critters to add to his favorite game system.

*TWILIGHT: 2000 Small Arms Guide*, by Frank Frey and Loren K. Wiseman. GDW, \$7.00. This 56-page booklet contains a wide range of small arms for use with *TWILIGHT: 2000*. In this book you'll find the statistics for automatic pistols, revolvers, submachine guns, assault rifles, battle rifles, sniper rifles, sporting rifles, shotguns, automatic rifles, and machine guns. No matter what part of the world your character finds himself in at the end of World War III, the *Small Arms Guide* is likely to have something for him. This booklet will be helpful to all *TWILIGHT: 2000* players and GMs.

*James Clavell's Tai-Pan*, by Ian Bailey and Albie Fiore. FASA, \$16.00. Based on James Clavell's best-selling novel, *Tai-Pan*, this board game for two to four players is set in the 1840s, a time when the glorious British Empire was making a fortune ruining the health and economy of China. Each player controls a clipper ship; these are used to buy opium in India, so it can be shipped to China and sold to the Chinese. While the clippers race each other on the high seas, small cargo boats (lorchas) sail up and down the Chinese coast selling opium and buying tea, spices, and silks. Once a clipper reaches Canton and unloads its cargo, it can load up with other goods, and head back to England.

The rules for this game are simple and elegant, taking into account such things as clipper movement, market fluctuations, and a wide range of events. The game moves rapidly, and the use of Fate Cards allows players to better their own positions or worsen those of other players. *Tai-Pan* is a fun, family game that makes for a good evenings entertainment.

### Land of Ninja comment

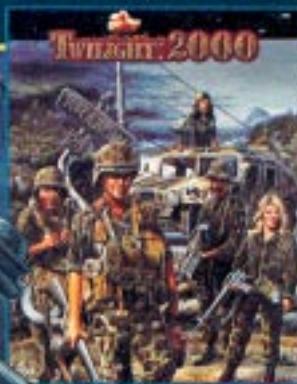
Greg Stafford of Chaosium Inc. has recently made the observation that, contrary to my review of *Land of Ninja* in DRAGON® issue #134, "unarmed combat is part of the basic RUNEQUEST® game covered in the players' rules, so that no special section needed to be added to the *Land of Ninja* supplement." Well, all I can say is that depends on your point of view.

My comment said "Notably, there are no rules for unarmed combat. This is strange as one of the attractions of the Orient is the widespread practice of unarmed combat techniques. There's definitely room for expansion here." This comment still stands. I did not mean to imply that the RUNEQUEST game lacks any unarmed combat rules, but rather that they had not received any special attention in *Land of Ninja*. Similarly, *Land of Ninja* does not include the RUNEQUEST game's weapon-combat rules, but it adds to them with rules for arrow cutting, fast-draw abilities, kenjutsu, two-sword techniques, and rules for using *ki* powers in combat.

The unarmed combat rules of the standard RUNEQUEST game work well, but they are designed to handle straightforward kicks, punches, and grappling attempts. The Martial Arts skill, as given in the standard RUNEQUEST game rules, allows a character to cause double damage with a natural weapon — feet, hands, or head. What *Land of Ninja* doesn't do is elaborate this skill or the unarmed combat rules any further. It also doesn't differentiate between western and Oriental unarmed-combat techniques.

For example, *Land of Ninja* could easily have added throws and immobilization techniques based on judo, jujitsu, or other styles, where skill takes precedence over strength or dexterity, and where a defender can turn an enemy's attack into a

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throw or an immobilization. It could have added different methods of attack based on karate, kung fu, tai chi, etc., such as flying kicks and roundhouse kicks. Rules for breaking falls and standing up quickly if thrown, and ki rules for unarmed attacks would allow impressive attacks similar to those that are possible with the rules for using a rice flail or a jo stick.

Rules similar to these would have made Oriental characters different from their western counterparts, and may have added an extra depth to Land of Ninja. As it stands, unarmed combat receives no new coverage. I would have liked to see some.

### Short and sweet, part 2

[Because of space limitations, the following reviews by Ken Rolston were dropped from issue #138's "Role-playing Reviews."]

*Vampires*, by Gali Sanchez and Michael Williams. Pacesetter, \$10.00. Pacesetter's CHILL™ game supplements occasionally equalled or exceeded the style and richness of the finest Chaosium CALL OF CTHULHU® supplements. This excellent book describes vampires from mythic settings, including the classic Dracula of Bram Stoker's novel and the vampirelike beings from Caribbean voodoo, the Indian subcontinent, colonial New England of the Salem witch trials; and various other cultures. The graphic presentation is top-

notch. The centerpiece of each treatment is a fragment written in the style of the culture, purporting to be a firsthand account of the being discussed. The writing is exceptional, particularly in the firsthand accounts. I highly recommend this supplement. [Note: No reliable address for obtaining Pacesetter products now exists, and the TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop no longer carries these products.]

*Creature Feature*, by Marc Acres. Pacesetter, \$10.00. Published after Pacesetter began its slide into obscurity, this supplement lacks the graphic quality or refined presentation of the finer CHILL supplements. However, it does have an oddly redeeming appeal in that it offers vampires, mummies, ghosts, and werewolves as PC classes, and invites the PCs to prey on helpless human victims and crusading fearless-monster-stomping busybodies. The tone is straightforward ghoulish humor, and the replay value negligible. As a result, *Creature Feature* will not be of use to most GMs, but students of the hobby may find it interesting for a brief diversion or as a curiosity. [Again, availability of this product is a problem.]

ARS MAGICA game, by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein-Hagen. Lion Rampant, \$14.95. This is a distinctive, original, and intriguing treatment of magic for fantasy

role-playing games. Here, the focus is on magic-users; other character types exist only in supporting roles as consultants and bodyguards. The setting is medieval Europe for the most part, with the addition of a small, exclusive society of scholars and technologists skilled in the magical arts. The ARS MAGICA game is earnest, colorful, and meticulous in its development of a magic system with a plausible, coherent rationale. Its attempts to integrate this magic into a historical context are persuasive, and the game master notes and staging tips are wonderfully perceptive. This is the most interesting and original fantasy role-playing system and setting I've seen in a long time. Does it work? Only time and user experimentation will tell. The ARS MAGICA game can be obtained by writing to: Lion Rampant, Box 621, Northfield MN 55057.

*The Hunter Planet Executive Pack*, by David Bruggeman. Hunter Planet, price unknown. Due to an unfortunate bureaucratic error (technically known as "bribery"), the Federation of Planets has "accidentally" declared the inhabitants of the planet known to its natives as "Dirt" (an unfortunate translation of "Earth") to be unintelligent and thereby suitable for big-game hunting. Alien file clerks and postal employees from throughout the galaxy are eager to go on safari and bag a fine specimen of the species *Homo sapiens*. There has been a bit of a snag, however; it seems that the unintelligent inhabitants are quite vicious and unexpectedly handy with primitive tools (like bayonets and Uzis). Oddly, reports of this unfortunate situation have not been allowed to reach the proper authorities, so safaris continue without warning or restraint.

You get to role-play a hapless intergalactic tourist on safari, set loose on the planet Dirt. Most of your gear is useless. Shortly after landing, you are assaulted on all fronts by the hostile environment and fierce natives. Role-playing a yokel alien visiting Earth is heaps of fun. The rules are simple and flippant, the campaign background and adventures are served up with abundant wit and good cheer, and the playing style is reminiscent of West End Games' PARANOIA™ game, wherein the PCs have lots of fun being slaughtered and otherwise abused by a relentlessly enthusiastic game master. HUNTER PLANET: The All Australian Role Playing Game, is an exotic commodity, alas, and may be tough to locate. With a little luck, you may be able to obtain *The Hunter Planet Executive Pack* by writing to: Hunter Planet, 15 Second Avenue, Box Hill North, 3129, Victoria, Australia. Good luck finding it — and g'day, mate. Ω

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# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short, succinct, and under 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

**WARNING:** We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the May 1989 issue is the last Monday of March 1989. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the copy deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to Rik Rose at TSR UK Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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One of the largest role-playing conventions in Australia will be held on the campus of Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, with AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, PARANOIA\*, WARHAMMER\*, and other games. Prizes will be awarded to winners. Registration is \$12 (Australian). There is also a \$3 (Australian) fee per game. No entries accepted after December 2. Write to: MACQUARIECON '88, c/o MURPS, Box 83 Student Council, Macquarie University, Sydney, AUSTRALIA 2109.

## EVECON 6, December 30-January 1

Now one of the largest science-fiction fantasy, and gaming conventions, EVECON 6 will be held at the National Clarion Hotel in Crystal City, Va. Features will include our usual assortment of jugglers, clowns, strolling minstrels, and vaudeville acts — not to mention such things as writers' workshops, a computer room, an art show, open gaming, a costume contest, a light show, a New Year's extravaganza, and much more. Membership will be \$15 (if postmarked before December 1) and \$20 at the door. One-day rates for CastleCon will also be available. Write to: FanTek, Box 128, Aberdeen MD 21001.

## PROJECT . . . GENESIS IV, January 15

This protoriginal fantasy-gaming convention will be held at Chiminello's Hall, 2221 N. Weber in Fresno, Ca. Featured tournament and open-play events include BATTLETECH\*, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, STAR WARS\*, TOON\*, and AD&D® games, among others. Also scheduled is computer gaming, along with Japanese films, a miniatures contest, a swap meet, and much more. Preregistration for this one-day event is \$3 if paid before January 1; after that, all registrations are \$5. Dealers' tables are \$20 for an 8' table; call or write for more information on availability. Swap meet tables are \$5 for a whole table and \$3.50 for half. Table space is required for this event. Project GENESIS IV is in need of judges for a number of events; those accepted receive a refund on their registration fees. Write to: PATCO, c/o Phillip S. Pittz, 5415 East Washington, Fresno CA 93727. Please make all checks payable to Phillip S. Pittz.

## ICON XIII, January 20-22

Only slightly delayed, ICON XIII will meet at the Rodeway Inn, at I-80 and Highway 965, at Coralville, Iowa. Author Joel Rosenberg and artist Darlene Coltrain are guests of honor, and Algis Budrys is the toastmaster. Other guests include Joe and Gay Haldeman and Mickey Zucker Reichert. Featured events include the Trans-Iowa Canal Company, a film festival, a space-opera round-robin, an art show, a writers' workshop, and more. Registration fees are \$15 until January 1, and \$18 at the door. For hotel information, call: (800) 228-2000 (toll-free) or

(319) 354-7770, and tell them you're with ICON. For con information write to: ICON XIII, PO. Box 525, Iowa City IA 52244-0525.

## JACKSONVILLE SKIRMISHES '89

### February 3-5

SKIRMISHES challenges you to conquer the river city at our second-annual JACKSONVILLE SKIRMISHES, which will be held at the Jacksonville Hotel, 565 South Main Street Jacksonville, Fla. Events will include AD&D®, TRAVELLER\*, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, CAR WARS\*, BATTLETECH\*, INTERCEPTER\*, and SEEKRIEG\* games, board gaming, a KILLER\* tournament, dealers, an art show and auction, a miniatures-painting contest, demonstrations by the SCA, and other role-playing and gaming events. Reservations may be made through the hotel by calling: (904) 398-8800. Room rates are \$49 for single to quad occupancy. Registration for the weekend is \$18 at the door. Preregistration is \$12 if mailed before January 22. Write to: SKIRMISHES, P.O. Box 2097, Winter Haven FL 33883; or call: (813) 293-7983 or (904) 246-1325.

## REDCON 89, February 3-5 \*

The Royal Military College of Canada will hold its annual International War Gaming Convention in Yeo Hall on the campus grounds in Kingston, Ontario. Special guest for this event is Larry Bond of the war-games club of USMA, West Point. Scheduled events include HARPOON\*, BATTLETECH\*, microarmor miniatures, Napoleonic, CENTURION\*, and AD&D® game tournaments, plus plenty of open gaming. Retail vendors and game-company representatives will demonstrate and sell their wares. Registration is \$5 (Canadian) in advance and \$7 (Canadian) at the door for the entire conference. Send an SASE to: RMC Combat Simulations Group, c/o OCdt Derek Buxton 4 Sqn., Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, Ontario, CANADA, K7K 5LO; or call (613) 541-6277, between 7 and 10 pm weeknights. Preregistration must be completed before January 1.

## WARCON '89, February 3-5

Texas's oldest gaming convention will be held at Texas A&M University in College Station, Tex. The featured events will be include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game and CHAMPIONS Open Team tournaments. Other events include a variety of board games, miniatures events, role-playing tournaments, a dealers' room, and 24-hour gaming. Registration is \$8 before the convention and \$11 at the door. Write to: MSC NOVA, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77844; or call (409) 845-1515.

## ORCCON 12, February 10-13

STRATEGICON will sponsor this convention, which is to be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. All types of family, strategic, and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will be offered at this convention, as well as flea markets, an exhibitors' room, auctions, seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, 5374

\* indicates an Australian convention.



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#### DUNDRACON XIII, February 17-20

DUNDRACON is back at the Oakland Airport Hyatt, 455 Hegenberger Road, Oakland, Calif. (Mention the convention name to get the special \$65 room rate for single through quad occupancy.) This year's convention offers numerous role-playing games, with over 120 events in a variety of fantasy, modern, and science-fiction systems. Also included are seminars, board games, miniatures events, a huge dealers' room and a flea market, a figure-painting contest, SCA demonstrations and armor displays, and lots of open gaming space. Preregistration for the weekend is \$20 to February 1, or \$25 at the door. One-day registrations may be purchased at the door for \$10. Write to: DUNDRACON, 386 Alcatraz Avenue, Oakland CA 96418; or call Dorothy Heydt, (415) 524-8321.

#### FAL\*CON '89, February 17-19

This fantasy and science-fiction convention will be held at the Howard Johnson's Convention Center in Meridian, Miss. Big-name guests and many panels are featured, as well as tournaments for AD&D®, TALISMAN\*, KINGS & THINGS\*, COSMIC ENCOUNTER\*, CAR WARS\*, KINGMAKER\*, and STAR FLEET BATTLES\* games. An art show, art auction, indoor pool party, masquerade and dance, SCA demonstrations, Civil War re-enactment, hospitality suite, and dealers' room are offered. Admission fees for the weekend are \$15 until December 31, and \$20 thereafter. Daily admission is \$10. Send an SASE to: FAL\*CON '89, P.O. Box 492, Meridian MS 39302; or call: (601) 693-0384.

#### GENGHIS CON X, February 17-20

Attend a special birthday party with GENGHIS CON X as it celebrates its tenth anniversary at the Ramada Inn, Westminster, Colo. This event is sponsored by the Denver Gamers Association. Gaming of all kinds will be offered, along with an official RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament and a games auction. Miniatures events will be staged by the Colorado Military Historians. Registration is \$14 for the weekend until January 31, or \$17 thereafter. Write to: Denver Gamers Association, P.O. Box 11369, Denver CO 80211; or phone (303) 433-3849.

#### OMACON 8.5 — GAME FEST, February 18

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Central, 72nd and Grover in Omaha, Nebr., from 8 A.M. to midnight. Gaming events will be offered in fantasy, historical, and science-fiction genres, with prizes awarded in several categories. Other features include a dealers' room and OMACON 9 preregistration discounts. Admission is \$5. Write to: OMACON 8.5 — GAME FEST, c/o Star Realm, 7305 South 85th Street, Omaha NE 68128.

#### CALCON IV, March 10-12 \*

This gaming convention will be held at the Sandman Inn in Calgary, Alberta. Events will feature a large variety of games, including an AD&D® game tournament, miniatures contests, guest speakers, and much more. Send an SASE to: CALCON IV, P.O. Box 204, Station M. Calgary, Alberta, CANADA, T2P 2H6.

#### COAST CON XII, March 17-19

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Gulf Coast Coliseum Convention Center in Biloxi, Miss., with accommodations at the Howard Johnson's (call (601) 388-6310 or (800) 654-2000 for reservations).

Guest of honor is Joel Rosenberg, author of *Guardians of the Flame*. Other guests include: Steven Sechi, designer of *Talislanta* and *Atlantis*; PD. Breeding-Black, artist for *Talislanta*; and John Levene, who plays Sgt. Benton on *Dr. Who*. Scheduled events include an RPGA™ Network tournament, video rooms, a meet-the-guests party, a costume contest, filk singing, a charity auction, an art exhibit and auction, and a large dealers' room. Registration is \$15 until January 1, and \$20 thereafter. Write to: COAST CON, Inc., P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533.

#### OWLCON X, March 17-19

Rice University's WARP and RSFAFA will hold this gaming convention at Rice University. Registration will take place in Sewall Hall. Tournaments will be held for RUNEQUEST\*, PARANOIA\*, CAR WARS\*, TRAVELLER\*, DIPLOMACY\*, ILLUMINATI\*, CIVILIZATION\*, BATTLETECH\*, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER\*, and AD&D® games. Open gaming and other tournaments will also be held, with prizes awarded in some of these events. Admission fees are \$10 for three days, if received before March 3; otherwise, fees are \$12 at the door. One day passes are available; they are \$4 for Friday or Sunday, and \$5 for Saturday. To preregister, send a check for admission made payable to RSFAFA. Information may be obtained by writing to: OWLCON Preregistration, P.O. Box 1892, Houston TX 77251.

#### ABBYTHON 7, March 18-19

The Abbyville Community Center in Abbyville, Kans., becomes a Guild Hall once again as the Abbython Adventure Guild hosts its seventh-annual 24-hour role-playing games marathon. New members are welcome to attend this event. Best players will be awarded prizes for their efforts. Admission to the Guild is \$5 if paid prior to February 18, \$6 thereafter, and \$7 at the door. To receive a flyer and map, send an SASE to: ABBYTHON, P.O. Box 96, Abbyville KS 67510.

#### GAMES 89, March 24-27 ♦

This major Australian games convention will offer role-playing, war, computer, and other game events on a massive scale. Nongaming events include: a formal dinner Saturday night (followed by other social events, such as cocktail parties, Easter egg hunts, etc.), show bags, films, lectures, and much more. Convention fees are \$16 for the weekend or \$5 per day. Write to: GAMES 89, P.O. Box 242, Lilydale, Victoria, 3140, Australia; or call: (03) 726-7525.

#### UMF-CON, March 25-26

This role-playing and war-gaming convention will be held at the Student Center of the University of Maine at Farmington, in Farmington, Maine. World War II miniatures, AD&D®, TOP SECRET/SI™, BATTLESYSTEM™, DIPLOMACY\*, and CHAMPIONS\* games will be featured, along with live mysteries and several board games. There will also be contests for miniatures painting, art, and so forth. Admission is \$5, with a \$2 charge per game. Send an SASE to: Table Gaming Club, c/o Student Life Office, Student Center, 5 South Street, Farmington ME 04928.

#### MARCH FANTASY REVEL

##### March 31 -April 2

Come to the fourth-annual MARCH FANTASY REVEL at the Harborside Holiday Inn in Kenosha, Wis. Activities will include a war-gaming area, a silent, used-game auction, a dealers' area, and several role-playing events.

Featured RPGA™ Network events include an AD&D® game Grand Masters, AD&D® game Masters, AD&D® game Feature, TOP SECRET/SI™ game Feature, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game Feature tournaments. Other activities include workshops, a gamers' banquet (please make reservations early), and an RPGA™ Network members' meeting. Special guests include Harold Johnson, Jean Rabe, and Skip Williams. Fees are \$8 a day or \$16 for the weekend, if paid before February 1. Thereafter, fees increase to \$10 a day or \$20 for the weekend. RPGA™ Network members receive a \$2 discount on registration. Write to: Keith Polster, 2432 Park Avenue, Apt 6, West Bend WI 53095; or call: (414) 338-8498. Gamers may also contact: Janice Ours, P.O. Box 840, Silver Lake WI 53170; or call her at: (414) 889-8346.

#### TECHNICON 6, March 31- April 2

Sponsored by the Virginia Tech Science-Fiction and Fantasy Club (VTSFFC), this sixth-annual science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held in the Donaldson Brown Center on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Va. Guest of honor is John M. Ford, author of the *Star Trek* books *How Much for Just the Planet* and *Final Reflection*, and the PARANOIA\* game module *Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues*. John M. Ford is the winner of the 1984 World Fantasy Award and the Charles Roberts award for best role-playing module. Fan guest of honor is Chip Livingston. Convention activities include three 24-hour video rooms, three tracks of continuous gaming, a dealers' room, panels, the TECHNICON play, computer gaming, a masquerade, science-fiction *Jeopardy*, a dance, parties, and much more. Preregistration is \$12 for students and \$15 for others, if paid in advance. Otherwise, fees are \$15 for students and \$18 for others paying at the door. Write to: TECHNICON, PO. Box 256, Blacksburg VA 24063-0256.

#### CONNCON, April 1-2

Held at the Quality Inn in Danbury, Conn., this convention features role-playing, board-gaming and miniatures events. An RPGA™ Network tournament will be held; it is open to all players. In addition, an RPGA™ Network tournament will be held for members only. A benefit event will be held; proceeds will go to the American Heart Association. Preregistration is \$10 for the weekend, if paid in advance. Registration paid at the door is \$15. Write to: Hobby Center, 366 Main Street, Danbury CT 06810.

#### GAME FAIRE '88, April 7-9

The tenth-annual GAME FAIRE convention will be held at the Spokane Falls Community College in Spokane, Wash. Events will run from Friday night through Sunday afternoon. These events include game tournaments, microarmor and historical miniatures, a video room, dealers' tables, role-playing games, board games, family games, and a games auction. There will also be a demonstration by the local SCA. Registration for GAME FAIR '89 is \$10 prepaid or \$12 at the door. One-day memberships are available at \$5 for Friday or Sunday only, \$6 for Saturday only. All profits received from this event go to the Wishing Star Foundation, a local charity dedicated to helping children. Write to: Merlyn's, W 201 Riverside, Spokane WA 99201; or call: (509) 624-0957.

#### AMIGOCON 4, April 21-23

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Sunland Park in El Paso, Tex. Melinda Snodgrass is author guest of honor, and Frank Kelly Freas

is artist guest of honor. Other guests include Walter Jon Williams, Rick and Pati Cook, Jennifer Robertson, Mel White, and George Alec Effinger. Advance membership is \$10 if paid before December 31. Thereafter, membership fees are \$12. Registrations purchased at the door are \$15 for all three days and \$7.50 for one day. Write to: AMIGOCON 4, P.O. Box 3177, El Paso TX 79923.

#### ONCE UPON A CON, April 28-30

The International Fantasy Gaming Society will sponsor its first-ever gaming convention in Denver, Colo. Guests of honor will include Larry Niven and David L. Arneson. Write to: ONCE UPON A CON, P.O. Box 16436, Colorado Springs CO 80935; or call: Cass Marshall, Convention Committee Chairperson, at (303) 499-2812.

#### MISCON 4, May 5-7

Science fiction, fantasy, and gaming will be the subjects of this convention, which is scheduled to be held at the Holiday Inn, 200 South Pattee Street in Missoula, Mont. Room rates are \$32.50 per night for single occupancy. Call (406) 721-8550 to make reservations. Vonda McIntyre is author guest of honor; Dan Reeder is artist guest of honor; Glen (Scruffy) Hammer is fan guest of honor; and Ray Beauvais is gaming guest of honor. Events will include an art show, a masquerade party, original Japanimation, dances, SCA events, gaming, videos, writers' workshops, a computer room, an art gallery, a dealers' room, panels, and an auction. Membership rates are \$12 until December 31; \$16 until April 15; and \$20 at the door. One-day memberships will be available for \$12 at the door. Children under six years of age get in free with their parents; children 6-12 years of age get in for half price. Dealers' tables (6' x 2') may be purchased for \$40 (membership included). Write to: MISCON, Box 9363, Missoula MT 59807; or call: (406) 549-1435.

#### LITTLE WARS '89, May 26-28

LITTLE WARS, one of the premier war-gaming conventions, will be held in the Bone Convention Center on the Illinois State University campus in Normal, Ill. All major miniatures lines will be represented, mostly by the manufacturers. There will be over 100 open games, plus a Nation Team Ancients Championship sponsored by NASAMW. We are also pleased to host the National Pike and Shot Championship. This convention will be hosted by HMGS-Midwest and its affiliate, the Central Illinois Tabletop Warriors. Admission is \$6 per day or \$8 for the weekend. HMGS members receive a \$2 discount off the admission price. Write to: LITTLE WARS, c/o Todd Fisher, 6010 North Marmora, Chicago IL 60646.

#### V-CON 17, May 26-28 \*

V-CON, Vancouver's annual science-fiction convention, will be held at the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver, B.C. The theme of this year's convention is "Humor and Satire in Science Fiction." Guests of honor include Spider Robinson, Robert Sheckley, and Bob Shaw. Events will include panel discussions, an art show, videos, gaming, a writer's workshop, a costume bacchanal and dance, a dealers' room, and "guerrilla" theater. Membership for the weekend is \$16 (\$14 U.S.) until November 30; \$18 (\$16 U.S.) until March 31; and \$24 (\$20 U.S.) at the door. One-day memberships will be available at the door at a cost of \$10 for Friday or Sunday, and \$15 for Saturday. Room rates at Totem Residence will be \$26 (Canadian) for a single and \$40 (Canadian) for a double. Write to:

V-CON 17, P.O. Box 48478, Bentall Centre, Vancouver, B.C., CANADA, V7X 1A2.

#### MOB-CON '89, June 9-11

Mobile's convention for comic books and science-fiction and fantasy gaming will be held at the Days Inn Hotel at Airport Boulevard and Interstate 65 in Mobile, Ala. Guest artists are Dave Dorman and Lurene Haines. Features include a dealers' room, movies, a D&D® game tournament, a TALISMAN® tournament, a games auction, and other events. Preregistration is \$12.50 until June 1; thereafter, it is \$15. One-day memberships may be purchased at the door for \$6. Write to: MOB-CON, P.O. Box 161257, Mobile AL 36616; or call: (205) 661-4060.

#### L.A. ORIGINS '89, June 29-July 2

STRATEGICON, the people who brought you L.A. Origins '86, will sponsor this convention, which is to be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton Hotel. All types of family, strategic, and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will be offered at this convention, as well as flea markets, an exhibitors' room, auctions, seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, 5374 Village Road, Long Beach CA 90808; or call Diverse Talents at: (213) 420-3675.

#### DOVERCON V, July 8-9

This year, DOVERCON will be held at the University of New Hampshire's Memorial Union Building (MUB) in Durham, N.H. Features include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament and many other events. A film festival will be sponsored, along with miniatures and art competitions. Fees for early registration are \$10, and must be received by May 1. Registration at the door is \$15 for both days, or \$10 for one day. Each event costs \$2. Vendor and game-master inquiries are welcome. Write to: Information, DOVERCON V P.O. Box 753, Dover NH 03820.

#### GATEWAY '89, September 1-4

STRATEGICON will sponsor this convention at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. All types of family, strategic, and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will be offered, as well as flea markets, an exhibitors' room, auctions, seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, 5374 Village Road, Long Beach CA 90808; or call Diverse Talents at: (213) 420-3675.



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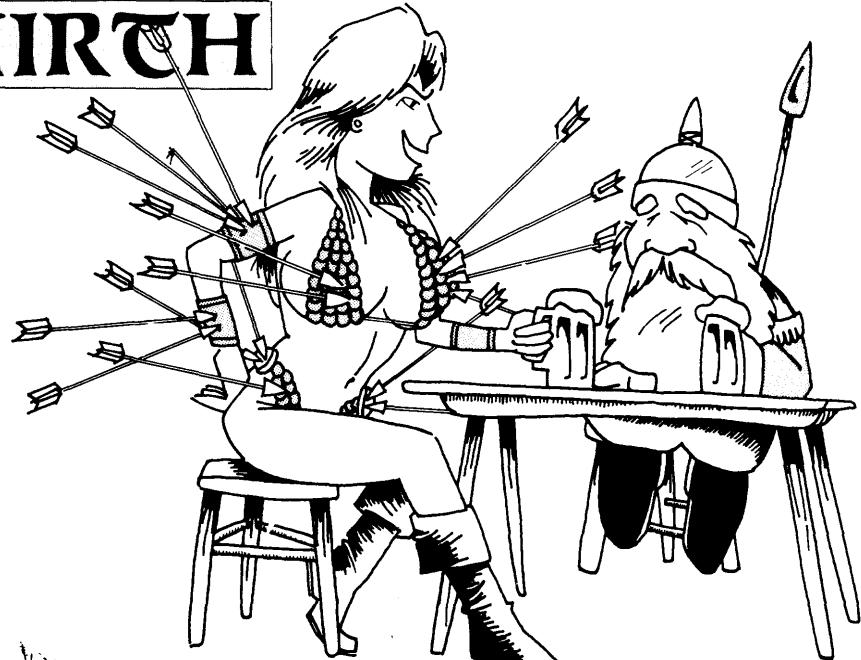
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# DRAGONMIRTH

by Richard Tomasic



"Fortunately, I was wearing my armor."

"Of course, it's not like anyone has a choice . . ."

by Joseph Pillsbury



by Dwain Meyer



"Whoops! Wrong book!"

by Ray Nadeau

## A TREASURE POTATO



by Doug Clair



"You dope! I said get me a wizard!"

## YAMARA

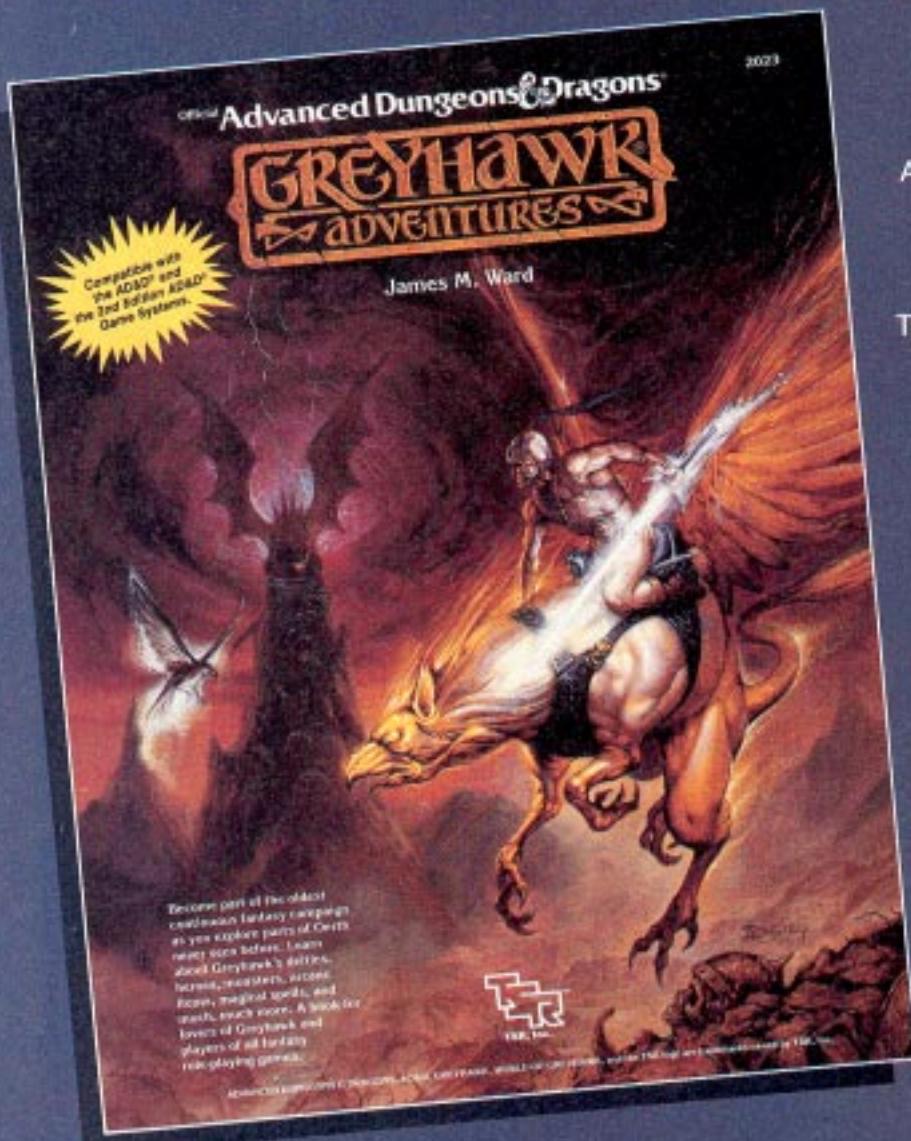


by Barbara Ward and Chris Adams





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fighters, armed transports, killer satellites, and heavily armed ground troopers commanded by six of the inner-solar systems greatest heroes and villains.

You create and command the space armadas and armies. You make alliances . . . and break them. You fight the battle to free or enslave the inner planets.

Ask for this exciting new boardgame at your local toy, book or hobby store.

Watch for new Buck Rogers books, games, and graphic novels . . . coming soon!

**Watch for these books coming this fall.**



# SNARF QUEST

#62

BY ELMORE

SNARF AND THE GANG ARE BUSY DIGGING A SHAFT IN ORDER TO FOLLOW THE MAIN GOLD VEIN.

© ELMORE '88

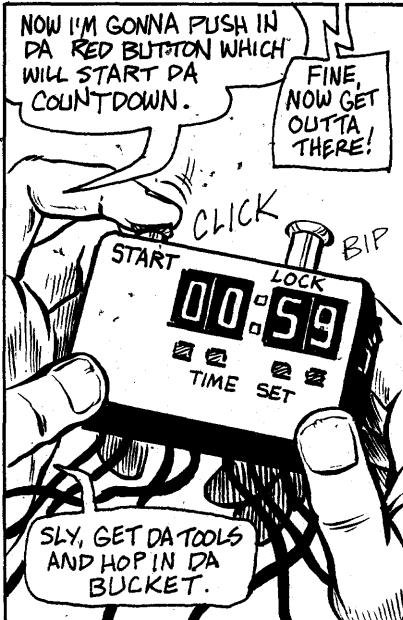
AN' WATCH DOSE LIL' ROCK ROLLIN' DUDES... DEY WILL ROLL ALL OF OUR GOLD RIGHT DOWN DA MOUNTAIN SIDE TOO.

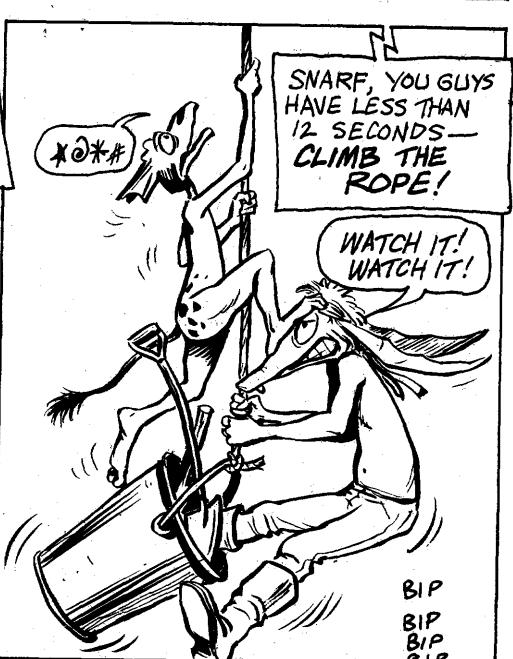
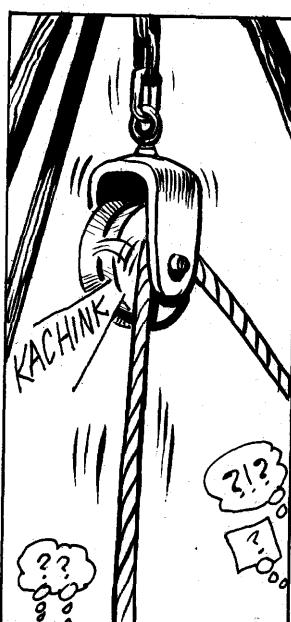
DON'T WORRY, SNARF, WE'RE PUTTING THE GOLD NUGGETS IN A CRATE.

ROLL THOSE ROCKS BOYS... CLEAR THE AREA, MORE ROCKS ARE COMING.



A FEW HOURS LATER





DOWN THE MOUNTAIN SIDE SAT THREE ROUGH LOOKING PROSPECTORS AROUND THEIR CAMP.

GEEZ, WHAT WUZ AT NOISE!?!

HEY, I DON'T KNOW!

SOMEBODY IS BLASTIN'!

8½ SECONDS LATER

WHAT TA?

CLUMPH!

THIS ONE LOOKS LIKE A CHARRED LIZARD.

WHAT IN TH' WORLD IS THAT THANG?

UUOOOGHHH

WHAT'S YER NAME?

WHAT?

WHAT IS YER NAME?

WHAT?

WHAT?

HOLD ON, OL' BUDDY,  
HE CAN'T HEAR A  
BLAME THANG.

BACK AT THE HOLE!

GUPI?

WHAT?

OH MY!  
OH MY!  
OH MY!

I SAW THEM GO UP  
AT AN 87  
DEGREE ANGLE,  
THEY SHOULD  
LAND DOWN  
HERE!  
COME ON!

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

EXCUSE ME...  
HAVE YOU SEEN...



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STORIES

## What Has . . .

Sneak previews of Palladium Books' products, errata, news, special articles about ROBOTECH® and Japanese animation, T.M.N.T., new RPG characters, rules, and source material (not published anywhere else)?

## The Magic of Palladium Books®

The Magic of Palladium Books® (MOP for short) is a 16 page tabloid produced by Palladium Books® to help us keep in touch with our fans and give 'em extra little treats and tid bits.

Treats like "Freddy Krueger" stats for *Beyond the Supernatural* (issue one). Tid bits like where to find Robotech®/Japanese Animation books, magazines, and model kits (issue two).

Oh, sure it's a self-serving promotional house organ. We want you to know all about us and buy our games by the truck load. But MOP isn't just another boring news flyer, it's a mini-magazine packed with useful and fun articles.

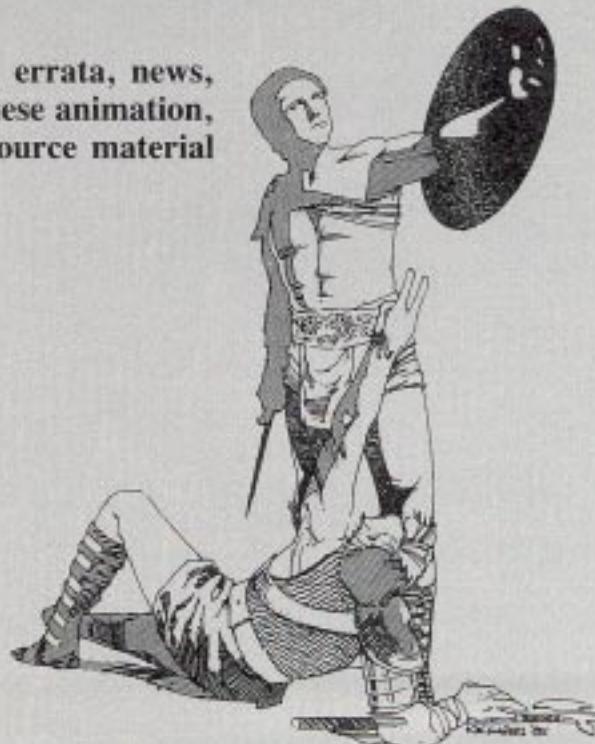
### MOP #One Included:

- A sneak preview of *Robotech II: The Sentinels*™, complete with never before seen animation.
- Three more mutant animals for TMNT®.
- Beyond the Supernatural® errata.
- Freddy Krueger for Beyond the Supernatural®.
- Questions & Answers, news and more.

### MOP #Two Includes:

- Where to find Japanese animation items (specifically ROBOTECH™) and includes addresses.
- M.D.C. modifications for the Mechanoids®.
- RPG ideas by Chester Jacques.
- Questions & Answers.
- Some hot news (like about the official Robotech™ fanzine) and more.

The Magic of Palladium Books® is available at hobby and comic stores everywhere. If your store doesn't have MOP, bound them until they get it. Or send \$7.50 (postage included) to Palladium Books®. Please indicate which issues, 1 or 2 (or 3 coming soon) you want.



## The Palladium RPG Book III: Adventures on the High Seas

Adventures on the High Seas explores the many islands of the Palladium World. From the Isle of the Cyclops near the Sea of Dread to the pirate ridden islands of the tropical southern ocean. Includes adventures, adventure ideas, random encounter tables and over 20 islands and exotic places.

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But that's not all! The Alchemist's Appendix includes 32 new magic items, magic faerie food, curses, herbs and gems. Ships of the World describes over 20 ships including the Western Empire's "Demon Ships" and ship to ship combat.

### Highlights Include . . .

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### Highlights Include . . .

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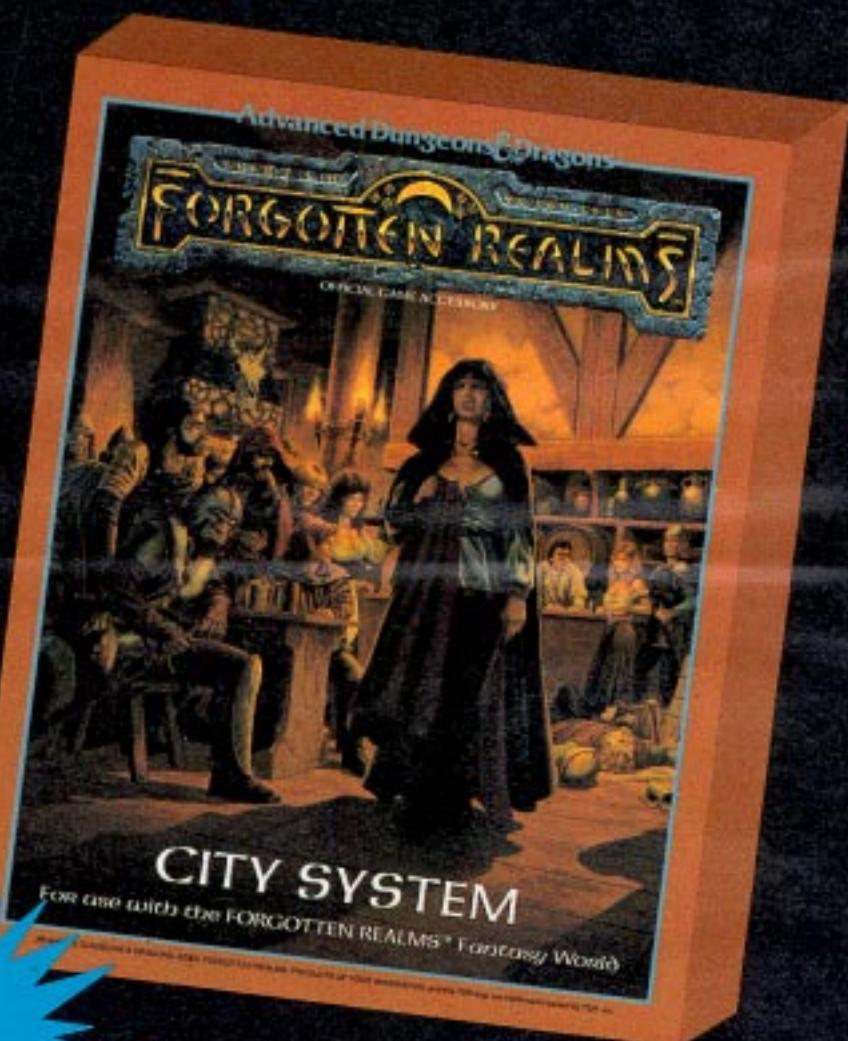
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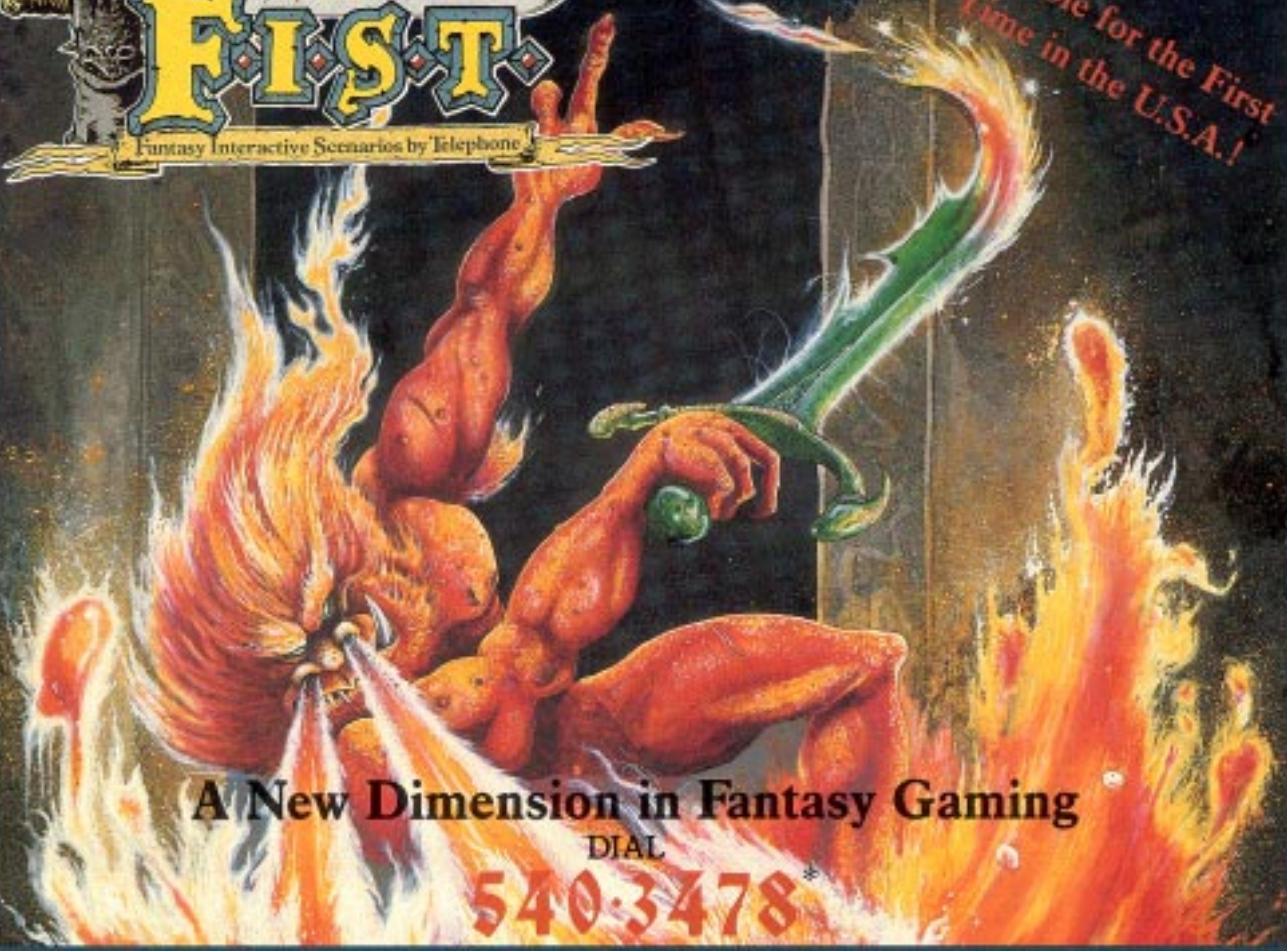


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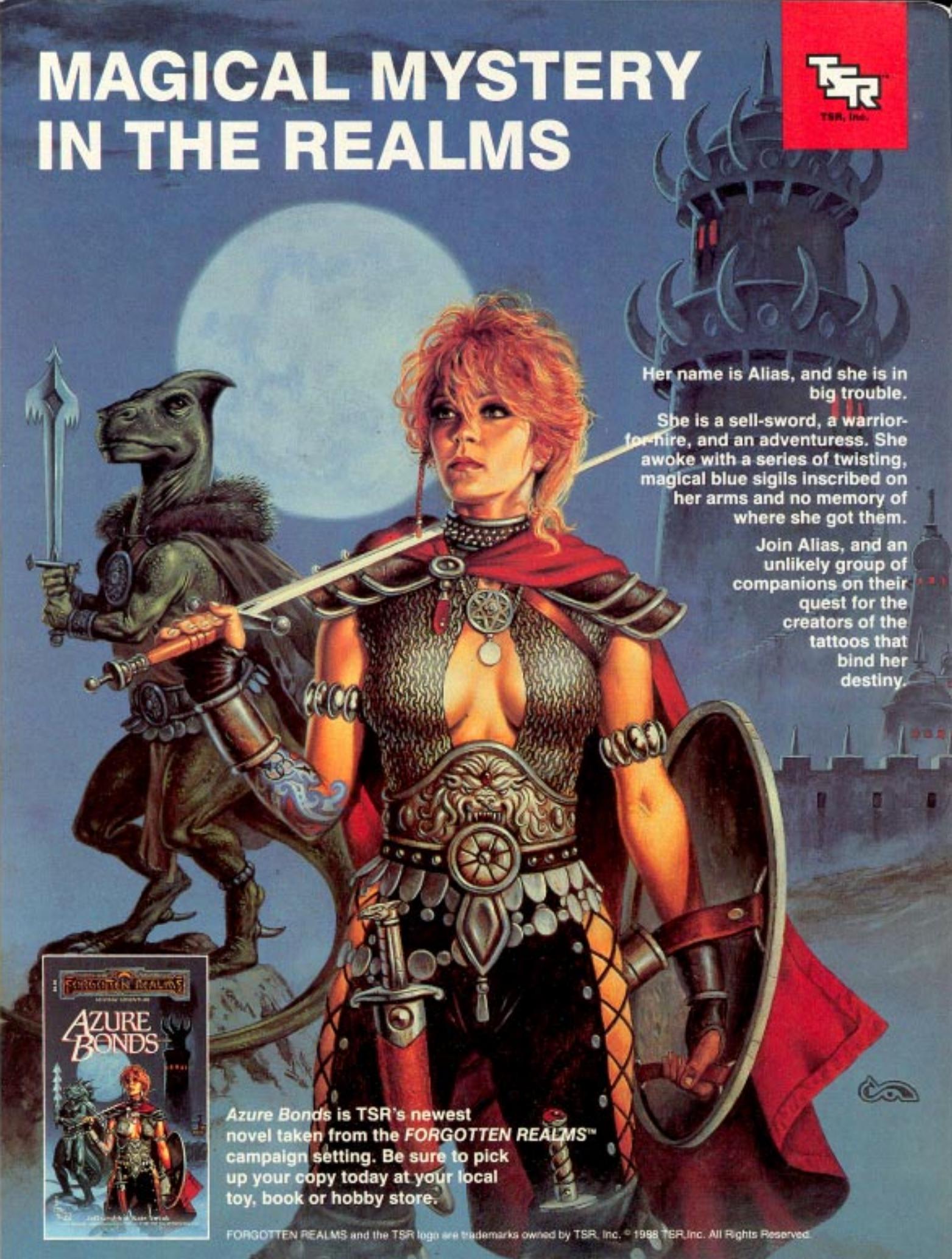
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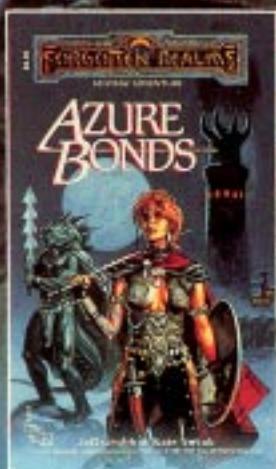
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