

= Uearthed Arcana =

Uearthed Arcana (abbreviated UA) is the title shared by two hardback books published for different editions of the Dungeons & Dragons fantasy role @-@ playing game . Both were designed as supplements to the core rulebooks , containing material that expanded upon other rules .

The original Uearthed Arcana was written primarily by Gary Gygax , and published by game publisher TSR in 1985 for use with the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons first edition rules . The book consisted mostly of material previously published in magazines , and included new races , classes , and other material to expand the rules in the Dungeon Masters Guide and Players Handbook . The book was notorious for its considerable number of errors , and was received negatively by the gaming press whose criticisms targeted the over @-@ powered races and classes , among other issues . Gygax intended to use the book 's content for a planned second edition of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons ; however , much of the book 's content was not reused in the second edition , which went into development shortly after Gygax 's departure from TSR .

A second book using the Uearthed Arcana title was produced by Wizards of the Coast for Dungeons & Dragons third edition in 2004 . The designers did not reproduce material from the original book , but instead attempted to emulate its purpose by providing variant rules and options to change the game itself .

= = Advanced Dungeons & Dragons = =

= = = Development history = = =

The original Uearthed Arcana was written by Gary Gygax with design and editing contributions by Jeff Grubb and Kim Mohan , respectively , and published by TSR in 1985 . Gygax reportedly produced the book to raise money as TSR was deeply in debt at the time . He announced in the March 1985 issue of Dragon magazine that Uearthed Arcana would be released in the summer of that year . He proposed the book as " an interim volume to expand the Dungeon Masters Guide and Players Handbook " , as the information was spread out in several places and difficult to keep track of . Uearthed Arcana was to include material previously published in Dragon , written by Gygax and updated and revised for the book . The book would also contain previously unpublished material , some of it written by other contributors to Dragon . According to British writer Paul Cockburn , some of the material in Uearthed Arcana had been previously published in Imagine magazine .

The original Uearthed Arcana contains errors in its text , which readers discovered and reported to Dragon magazine . Even some positive reviews of the book pointed out the considerable number of mistakes . Dragon editor Kim Mohan , with ideas from Gygax , Frank Mentzer , and Jeff Grubb , addressed the many errors found in the book . In the November 1985 issue of Dragon magazine , Mohan printed four pages of rules corrections as well as new supplementary material intended to be inserted into the book , and some explanations and justifications for items which were not actually errors , and compiled a two @-@ page list of type corrections meant to be pasted into further revisions of Uearthed Arcana . Dragon also devoted the entirety of its " Sage Advice " column in the January 1987 issue to answering readers ' questions about Uearthed Arcana , as a follow @-@ up to Mohan 's prior column . However , the errata were not incorporated into later printings of the manual .

The original Uearthed Arcana was reproduced in a premium edition with gilded pages , released on February 19 , 2013 , after the premium reprints of the 1st Edition Player 's Handbook , Dungeon Masters Guide , and Monster Manual . This reprint is the first printing of the book to be modified with the errata previously published in Dragon magazine incorporated into the corrected text .

= = = Contents = = =

The 128 @-@ page Uearthed Arcana was written for use with the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

first edition rules and was divided into two sections : one for players and one for the Dungeon Master (or " DM " , the game organizer) . The book provided new races , classes , and other expansion material . The book gives details on using " subraces " of the standard races , such as dark elves (drow) , and deep gnomes (svirfneblin) , for use as player characters and non @-@ player characters .

Unearthed Arcana includes the barbarian (found in Dragon # 63) , cavalier (found in Dragon # 72) , and thief @-@ acrobat (found in Dragon # 69) character classes , and also includes expansions and revisions of the druid and ranger classes . The book presents a large addition to the range of character races , including the drow and svirfneblin . The book includes new weapons , and revised information on character level maximums for non @-@ human player characters . Unearthed Arcana details the weapon specialization rules , in which a fighter or ranger " can adopt a weapon as a special arm , and receive bonuses in its use " . The book also describes the comeliness attribute , and contains new spells . The DM 's section covers suggestions for handling player characters , social class and rank tables , many new magic items , weaponless combat rules , and nonhuman deities .

= = = Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd edition = = =

By 1985 Gygax was planning a second edition for the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD & D) rules , and intended beginning work on this in 1986 . He intended to incorporate material from Unearthed Arcana , Oriental Adventures , and the original Players Handbook into the new edition 's Players Handbook . Gygax used the book to explore some ideas he had for the new edition , such as changing the mechanics for hit dice (the measurement of a character 's " health " in the game) , and altering the game 's mechanics to allow the game system to work other genres , and to allow characters to have skills that complement the character classes . Shortly after announcing his intentions for second edition , Gygax was removed as TSR 's President and Chairman of the Board . In 1986 he resigned all positions with TSR , leaving the shape and direction of the Dungeons & Dragons game to other designers .

The designers of second edition Advanced Dungeons & Dragons removed material from the original Players Handbook in the new edition , as well as much of the new material that had appeared in Unearthed Arcana , which they considered to be " unbalanced " . The book had five printings after the release of AD & D 2nd edition with the last printing published two years after the new edition was released .

= = Dungeons & Dragons 3rd edition = =

The second book to use the name Unearthed Arcana was written by Andy Collins , Jesse Decker , David Noonan , and Rich Redman , and published in February 2004 by Wizards of the Coast , for use with the Dungeons & Dragons third edition rules . Cover art was by Matt Cavotta , with interior art by Steven Belledin , Ed Cox , Wayne England , Emily Fiegenschuh , David Hudnut , Jeremy Jarvis , Doug Kovacs , John and Laura Lakey , David Martin , Dennis Crabapple McClain , Mark Nelson , James Pavelec , Steve Prescott , David Roach , Richard Sardinha , Ron Spencer , Stephen Tappin , Joel Thomas , and Ben Thompson . The designers aimed the book at experienced players and DMs looking for something new , encouraging them to customize the game 's rules . The designers did not want the third edition book to be like the original Unearthed Arcana mechanically , because according to Andy Collins : " Every book on the market looks like the original Unearthed Arcana . New classes , new spells , new magic items - that 's the default " recipe " for a d20 product these days . We saw no need to do that with this book . " Where the original Unearthed Arcana had simply expanded the rules and options of the core game , this 224 @-@ page supplement was aimed at providing an extensive list of variant rules and options to change the standard game itself . The volume of options added was intentionally excessive ; according to the designers , a Dungeon Master who reads the book must be prepared to " Drink from the fire hose " and to think before using options that may radically imbalance the game . The book ends with a checklist of the

included variants , preceded by a short chapter discussing ways of transitioning among multiple games using different rulesets (one of which explicitly emulates the " Eternal Champion " stories of Michael Moorcock) .

= = Dungeons & Dragons 5th edition = =

After no appearance in 4th edition , Unearthed Arcana made a return for 5th edition in February 2015 . But instead of being a retail book like the previous volumes , 5th edition Unearthed Arcana is so far a digital @-@ only article released every month . Explicitly said to be " written in pencil , not ink " , the Unearthed Arcana articles showcase new work @-@ in @-@ progress content consisting of options for players and Dungeon Masters alike such as class archetypes , playable races , and rule variants .

= = Reception = =

Reaction to Unearthed Arcana was often critical . According to Lawrence Schick , in his 1991 book *Heroic Worlds* , " Many players regard the new character classes introduced in this volume as overly powerful and out of line with those in the *Player 's Handbook* . "

Paul Cockburn reviewed the original Unearthed Arcana in issue 73 of *White Dwarf* magazine (January 1986) , rating it 4 out of 10 overall . He summed up the book 's contents by calling them " A rules extension package of reprints , most of which add very little of interest or value to anybody 's game . " Cockburn predicted that the book would be a huge commercial success due to the seemingly never @-@ filled appetite some people have for new material . However , he felt that as a rules companion book it would not be used universally by gaming tournaments or by other publishers , or even players moving from one group to another , and that the book would wind up causing problems and confusion for gamers . Cockburn criticized the weapons specialization rules and the new character generating method , called the barbarian class " a farce " after losing their prohibition from magic , and considered the extended number of character races " virtually ridiculous " , as it added several over @-@ powerful races to the list . Cockburn noted that the bulk of the book was taken up by the new spells ; while he felt these spells were OK , he said they " add nothing very scintillating to the game " . Cockburn compared the cavalier class to the paladin , calling the cavalier " everything the paladin should have been in the first place " , and felt that when compared to the thief class the acrobat " offers possibilities that should have been attached to the thief from the beginning " .

Following Cockburn 's review , UA was subjected to further criticism by Allan Miles in two articles published in the magazine . In *White Dwarf* 85 (January 1987) , " More Than Skin Deep " , a general discussion of the subject of PC race in AD & D , touched upon the subject in the context of Unearthed Arcana . " Arcana or Errata ? " in *White Dwarf* 89 (May 1987) covered the volume specifically , opening with the observation that the material published in the book was now " definitely affecting the way the game is played , " despite the fact that the bulk of its reception had been negative . Miles began by mentioning the aspects of the book that he considered predominantly unproblematic , such as the addition of new spells , magic items , weapons , and the introduction of minimum starting values for hit points . He then went on to discuss the areas he considered disruptive of game balance at length , including the new methods for character generation , malleable limits to demi @-@ human class levels and characteristics themselves , the rules regarding the new Comeliness attribute , aspects of the Cavalier and Barbarian classes , changes to Thief alignment requirements , and the results of UA 's version of weapon specialization .

William B. Haddon 's review of the third edition Unearthed Arcana on RPGnet lauded the book 's content while criticizing the interest level of the content as " very flat " . He found the power level unbalanced for each of the new sub @-@ systems introduced , and found little in the suggested rules that he wanted to use . He did note that the book was " jam packed " with pages of variants , ideas and suggestions , and found that the " Behind the Curtain " explanations from the designers

gave him insight into their thought process behind the book 's contents . Haddon called the book 's art " terrible , " explaining that " It looks cartoony and has little of the flavor or strength found in the art of so many other WotC products . "