

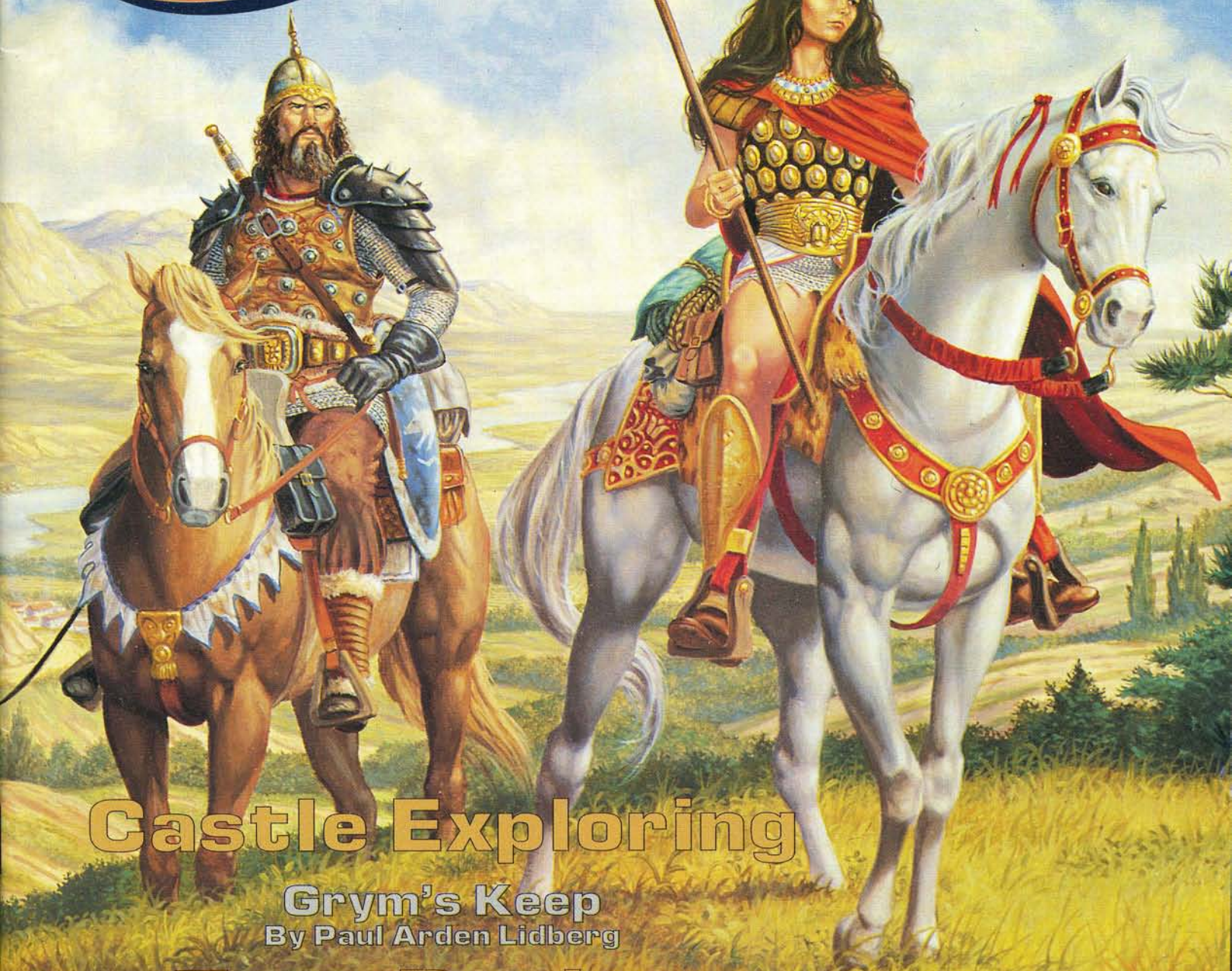
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Issue Number 5

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JOURNEYS

JOURNAL OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL ROLEPLAYING



Castle Exploring

Grym's Keep

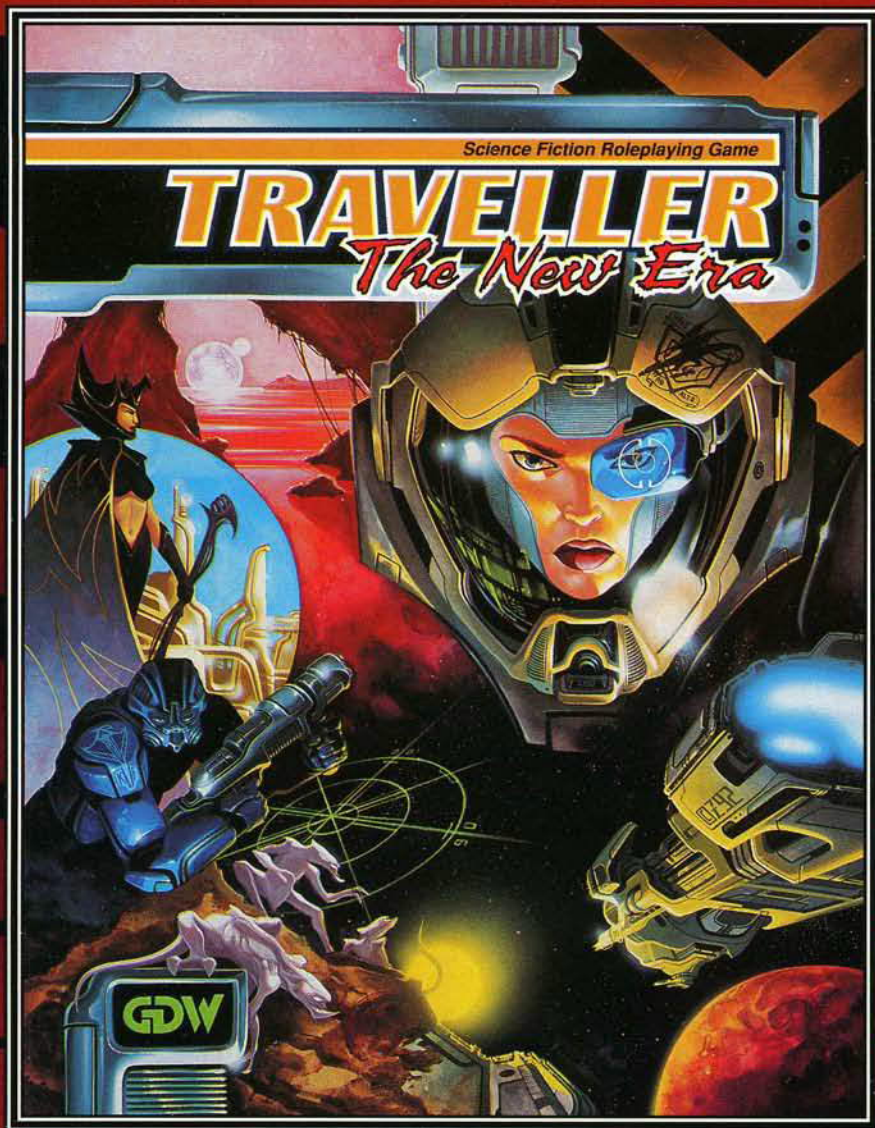
By Paul Arden Lidberg

Torg Realms

Integrating the Realms

By Sandy Addison

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ACTUAL UNSOLICITED LETTER TO WEST END GAMES

October 6, 1992
Todd Furler
Allentown, PA 18103

West End Games
RR 3, Box 2345
Honesdale, PA 18431

Sirs,

I just wanted to take a few minutes to compliment your crew on creating one of the most fun games that I've ever played!

Four of my friends and I have been playing *AD&D* for 13 years. (We range in age from 28 to 35 years old. Sigh.) I've been the DM for most of our games. The *AD&D* game was really fun at first, but lately I've enjoyed it less. The players have become so attached to their characters that they literally spend *hours* planning an attack on a tough opponent. And every time they tried to do something creative, I'd have to figure out a way to handle it. If I was lucky, I'd stumble upon the same method of resolution that I thought up the last time the innovation was tried (perhaps years ago). If I wasn't lucky, I devised a method that was heavily biased in one direction or another — quite unintentionally, of course; but the players never believed that. That, of course, assumed that I could come up with any method at all for handling the situation. And roleplaying? ... Why was *AD&D* ever called a roleplaying game, when all of the non-combat interaction was determined by the DM's mood because the game system never really addressed it?

But your game is a marvel of simplicity. It has all the rules that a roleplaying game needs, and what it doesn't have for a given situation can be easily extrapolated from what's already there. Since everything is based on a character's attributes, the system is easily extended; as opposed to *AD&D*, where every action has a special chart that comes directly from God. Pity the poor character who tries an action for which there is no Special Chart. But your system is a DM's dream come true! (Or, rather, *GM*. Pardon me.) Would you believe that I got excited about your game *just reading the rules*?

And our first experience at playing the game was a blast! Two the guys who normally just push their figures around during our *AD&D* games came to life and stole the show during their first *Torg* episode. Both of them later told me that they were wound up for hours after the game! And we're not talking about excitable kids here. (Not that I'm slighting young people, but the blood certainly does cool a bit after several years of taxes, mortgage, and working for the man. Or woman.)

So I wanted to thank Greg Gorden, Douglas Kaufman, Bill Slavicsek and everybody else who was (and is) involved in the creation of this immensely playable gaming system. (I realize that I sound effusive — I haven't written a letter with this many exclamation points in a long time — but I really wanted you to know that every aspect of your system impresses me. Especially the mathematics that you've put into it. Somebody's *really* done his homework here.)

Thanks once again for the amount of work you put into *Torg*. I've found it to be very rewarding. I hope that you do, too.

Sincerely,
Todd

Don't you think it's time you tried *Torg*?

All West End Games products are available through your local hobby store, book store, Waldenbooks and B. Dalton Booksellers.

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GARY GYGAX'STM
DANGEROUS JOURNEYSTM

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GDW: 5005

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Issue 5

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EXCITEMENTS

Greetings one and all. The first thing to do is introduce myself and explain the origin of this column. In November of last year, I mailed a letter to the designer and prime author of the **Dangerous Journeys** system, Gary Gyax, and he wrote back. After corresponding for awhile, I got a call from Dave Nilsen of GDW, who wanted yours truly to edit the **Ærth Bestiary**. Soon after, the matter of answering reader questions in **Journeys** came up, and I said I would do it.

As I write, I have a large envelope full of people's comments and questions. I shall endeavor to consider each epistle in a

timely fashion. Some questions (with replies, of course) could appear in the pages of this journal. And as far as possible, I will personally reply to each letter. Naturally, a SASE with your missive would be a great help. Those of you residing outside the US please include a self-addressed envelope with two IRCs.

I should point out that I'm as new to the system as you are, so I'm bound to make a few mistakes. I shall not ask you to send in corrections because you'll do it anyway. But please, whenever you correct an error in any of my answers—and you will—be kind, and I will endeavor to do likewise.

Above all, my advice is this: Don't become obsessed with following the rules, or my interpretations of them, slavishly. **Dangerous Journeys/Mythus** is supposed to be a game of exploration and adventure, not an exercise in tort law. If your group has come up with an interpretation of an obscure or vague rule, and we publish a clarification that contradicts your ruling, you are free to continue doing it your way. When I was running games of *AD&D*, there were occasions when I'd have to come up with rulings off the top of my head. Later, when Gyax would come out with the "official" ruling, I would try to switch to the official way of doing it, and my players would tell me, "The heck with official; we want consistency."

Put it this way: If your **Mythus** game mutates into a whole new system, I hope you and your players have loads of fun with it. So send in your questions, and I shall answer them as best I can.

Avoidance Figure Corrections

I enjoyed **Journeys 4**, especially the adventure "The Sceptre of Amun-Re." I did, however, notice an error in both that article and "The Inn of the Prancing Pony." In both cases, the Avoidance figures were wrong.

To quote **Mythus**, page 212, "The base chance for successful Avoidance is the total of the CATEGORY Speed ATTRIBUTES involved—Mental, Physical, Spiritual." It is not the average of the two Speed ATTRIBUTES.

So I present the corrected Avoidance figures for the OPs in the adventure and locale writeup:

"The Sceptre of Amun-Re":

Katerine: 29/32/25

Kaspar: 34/27/30

Kaman-Non: 21/30/33

Starfire Guild Thugs: 17/27/16

Kaman-Non's Followers/Men: 18/24/18

"The Inn of the Prancing Pony":

Bellias the Innkeeper: 20/34/24

Elaire (Wife of Bellias): 23/24/18

Alan Kellogg
Official DJ rules lawyer

You can send your **Dangerous Journeys** rules inquiries to Alan Kellogg c/o GDW, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646.

Letters from our Readers

I must say that I was quite surprised to see that my acquaintance and sometimes associate Ernst Grumbold has seemingly determined to become a regular contributor to your publication. Not that I think it amiss, not by any means! His articles have been both interesting and informative in the extreme. There is a glaring error in the first one, however, which I cannot ignore for fear of having your readers badly misinformed and misled.

In his initial treatise, Grumbold seems to suggest that with the advent of a safe and relatively efficient steam engine, **Ærth** will soon develop extensive rail systems for the carriage of persons and goods over considerable distances. I assert that this is utter nonsense.

Setting aside the difficulties of surveying lines, building rail beds and all the rest, there is an obvious impossibility in his suggestion. Steel production capacity, even in western **Æropa**, cannot possibly meet the demand extensive rail lines would make.

Furthermore, the steel produced anywhere on **Ærth** is not of sufficient quality to withstand such use as a steam locomotive and cars would place upon it. Track wear would require frequent replacement of rails. Costs are thus prohibitive. Not even the use of Heka will enable steel production in the quantity and quality extensive, long-distance railroads demand.

Until alchemical progress on **Ærth** catches up a bit and rolling mills are constructed—a century or more from now by my best estimates—**Æropans** will see little in the way of steam locomotion by rail line. At best, I believe that in a decade or two, there will be a few short stretches of track laid down and in use.

Gary Gyax

TM

The City of Ascalon is a teeming port city, a setting of political intrigue and swashbuckling high adventure. The city of Ascalon is a large seaport located on the border of Ægypt and Azir, at the junction of land trade routes from Azir and Afrik. Ships and caravans come to Ascalon from the far reaches of Ærth, bearing a thousand exotic cargos: gold, silks, precious stones, ebony, sandalwood, myrrh, fine wines, fruits, marble, slaves, ivory, furs, amber...the list is endless.

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The book contains more maps, zeroing-in to view sample buildings in detail. Each neighborhood is covered in its turn: the gleaming temples and brooding citadel of the city center, the opulent mansions and teeming tenements of the residential districts, the bustling market squares of the mercantile districts, the prosperous shops of the trade districts, and the warehouses, wharves, and piers of the waterfront.

As with all cities of Ærth, there are thieves, merchants, magick, beggars, smugglers, soldiers, caravans, ships, and sailors, plots and politicians, and more, all in one box. GDW: 5006, \$26

The City of ASCALON

Campaign Setting

GARY GYGAX'S
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Bloomington, IL 61702-1646

Privileged information for the GM! What's this? Something more disallowed to players? Not at all. This is by no means confidential, let alone secret. If I have the attention of players not otherwise prone to read this sort of article, I consider it a valuable step. Do read on, and if you find the information such that you believe your GMs would benefit from it, tell them so.

The goal of this writing is to im-

By Gary Gygax

prove and enliven the many new Dangerous Journeys multigenre roleplaying game (MGRPG) system campaigns, and to do so it is necessary to reach the persons responsible for creating and conducting them, the gamemasters of the world. What is in this column, however, is in one sense privileged. It is assumed that the readers are all special, more knowledgeable, in some measure because they are readers. Therefore, what is contained herein will certainly benefit gamemasters, players and the latter's Heroic Personas in no small measure!

The Grand Campaign in the Mythus FRPG, Part III

As stated last issue, we are now going to consider the multigenre campaign. Before discussing that, though, it is a good idea to consider the drawbacks of such a campaign. To accomplish this, I'll give the advantages of the single-genre campaign first, then list potential problems with the many-genred one. In truth, some of these arguments speak to the whole concept of offering a multigenre game system, not merely whether or not the campaign should be set in one or more. Some gamemasters might not agree with the list, finding that some arguments are specious, that supposed objections are not valid, that stated drawbacks are not actually negatives at all. They might also think of things not shown here which they do find nonconducive to their gaming. Fair enough. I don't claim to be an encyclopedia, and these articles are to involve you in the decision process by stimulating your thinking and creativity. Enough. Let's get on with it!

Advantages of the Single-Genre Campaign

1. None of the participants have the least interest in or desire to switch from the one genre they love. They roleplay in that single genre and cannot imagine play in any other as interest-

ing or exciting. They cannot believe in any other milieu.

2. The single-genred campaign allows the gamemaster and players to concentrate on that milieu. They focus there, get into character and stay there. The adventures are within a known realm. Personas are developed so as to operate most efficiently therein.

3. As personas are developed, their roles in the milieu of the one-genre campaign become clear. Players can attempt to assume major positions within that milieu.

4. Gamemasters and players are not called upon to know or learn details outside of the single genre considered. There is, therefore, less demand on their free time. More play is possible because free time isn't spent reading material dealing with information which doesn't pertain to the campaign's genre.

5. As the players' personas in the single-genre campaign develop and become more powerful, the gamemaster, too, is developing his milieu so as to accommodate the rising abilities of the personas. In this manner, scenarios are not likely to be unchallenging or pose the impossible for the team.

Problems of the Multigenre Campaign

We move now from the single-genre campaign into the larger one which allows milieus beyond that of fantasy. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?

1. The gamemaster's abilities are not strained by an attempt to deal with genres he is not conversant with. He selects that genre which is his forte, then finds a player group which is likewise devoted to the genre. Excellence is encouraged by such specialization.

2. There is no lack of interest. The participant group opted for play in the genre considered, and that indicates sufficient devotion to it to merit the sole attention of the gamemaster. To move outside of the single genre will possibly alienate some or all of the players.

3. The cost of maintaining a single-genre campaign are lower than the multigenre one. This isn't necessarily speaking to the basic cost of amassing game rules and support materials. It addresses the ancillaries—reference works and fiction principally—from which background information and ideas are drawn.

4. There is too great a difference between most genres. Fantasy doesn't really mesh with any other, because it employs magick. The past and the future can't merge either. In order to have continuity in a campaign, and in the thinking of the participants, only one genre can be treated.

5. The author as well as the publisher of a single-genre roleplaying game is more knowledgeable in that lone body of work than the one who offers a multigenred game. The single genre's potential will be maximized thus, and the materials provided will be superior. The lone genre will be covered as broadly as possible, in greater depth than possible for the less-focused work.

To begin the apology, as it were, let's first establish that the multigenred campaign does begin with a single milieu. In the primary genre, the gamemaster and players develop their skills, and the personas, too, grow more able and knowledgeable. At some point—whether early, after sub-



stantial activity, or perhaps even years later—the gamemaster and players will address the matter of whether or not to broaden the scope of the campaign by adding one or more other genres to the base. This decision-making process might be rather arbitrary—the GM simply goes ahead and does it. In such a case, unless he is a very good judge of his players, there might be discontent. It might be occasioned by flagging interest on the part of the gamemaster or some players or both. Most probably, though, it will come because everyone knew it was planned eventually. The event might come as a surprise only as to timing, not occurrence, in such a case. That, Dear Reader, is desirable.

To be candid, I find virtually all of the objections noted to a multigenre campaign to be absolutely specious. A few have some merit—after all, I tried to be as fair and open-minded as possible in making up the list. However, even the first, seemingly most compelling argument, is probably an objection based on nothing other than speculation or ignorance. That is, without trying something, how can you know if you really like it or not? Going further, even an unsatisfactory experience with another system doesn't necessarily make a later objection to this one valid. Until the individual tries the **Dangerous Journeys** system and judges it on its merits, an informed opinion is not held, and a valid objection cannot be made from ignorance. Let's see why.

The opening of the campaign to another genre or many genres can perhaps be better likened to diet than to reading. Think of it this way: just because one's favorite food happens to be Chinese cuisine, why preclude sampling Japanese, Korean or Thai, let alone such major ones as Italian, French and Hungarian? Not only do you experience variety, but the possibility of discovery of a new co-favorite exists. At worst, one knows what one dislikes, and the old favorite remains always available! Of course, an analogy to taste in reading does have some validity. If the participants tend to agree that the literature in one genre or another has absolutely no appeal to them, then it is unlikely that they will find *long-term* play in that genre to be desirable. A brief foray into such a genre, though, will be doubly challenging to them because of their lack of knowledge, and thus such an attitude by no means precludes some occasional and limited use of the "foreign" genre.

Benefits of Genre Change

There are, of course, new challenges for the GM and player alike when a genre is added. When a new one is put into place for extensive use, all parties are concerned, while the short-term/occasional use of a new one is truly demanding only as regards the gamemaster. In the former case, all participants must change their mindset, shift gears so to speak. New things will have to be learned and understood, new approaches to new problems tried. In the latter, the player group must be able to adjust quickly and attempt to return to their own place. In any event, the gamemaster doesn't have to learn a new game system, nor do the players. In fact, their Heroic Personas will be fairly functional in even a highly disparate genre from the initial one. Even that sudden shift is more fun than trial. Whether or not the players desire a change in genre, the following

beneficial things apply to the campaign which does change milieu thus.

The switch is a test of abilities as far as actual play is concerned. That is, the players must stretch their knowledge, thinking and roleplaying to accommodate themselves and their Heroic Personas to the new "laws" of the cosmos they are in and its society, mores, etc.

Any success within the new genre benefits the players, for it teaches them problem-solving "on the spot" and gives them greater ability in playing the game—possibly in real life situations which might be analogous to such a genre-switch too. Furthermore, that success will broaden the HPs' Knowledge/Skill Areas to whatever extent is applicable. When the team of Heroic Personas emerges from the "foreign" genre, they will be stronger, more knowledgeable and able to function there or anywhere.

Because the players have had the experience of how that new genre operates, their thinking has been affected. The foray will either reinforce the general dislike for the bases of the new genre, assuring all that it is antipathetic not prejudicial, underscoring reasons for that opinion. I submit that this is unlikely, however. Much more probable is that the brief exposure will destroy mental stereotypes, remove false impressions, and convince the group that there is, after all, some small or even considerable merit in the genre in question.

Role of the GM

With that, we come to the role of the gamemaster in the matter of providing multigenre play and scenarios. There is a device given in the system which enables the genre to change, and no more need be said. If the GM opts for some other mechanism of switching genres, there are plenty at hand. He can employ magick, deities or any other means he finds reasonable, believable and logical in terms of his campaign to accomplish the transition. Once done, however, he must have a structure for continued play.

There are two cases in this regard. The first is that the GM simply uses the available game modules and adventure scenarios to enable the change to multigenre play. Simple, easy, straightforward. Enough said there.

The second avenue of approach is that of devising "house" rules based on the **Dangerous Journeys** system, and along with those rules, special scenarios which pertain to them. The latter places considerable demand on the gamemaster—more in respect to the establishment of the milieu and adventures therein than rules, assuming he is conversant with the genre and RPGs in general. One caution: Beware of trapping HPs in a new milieu. If magick doesn't work there, then how will they return home? If it does function, how is the genre different from the original? This isn't a paradox, of course. I have covered this in the extensive material pertaining to the rules works for the other genres planned for the system.

As a fast aside, let's cover the salient points so that the creative GM won't be stymied or find he's strayed too far. Magick doesn't work well, if at all, in most universes. That of Earth makes it impossible to get to a highly magickal universe save through *Portals*—which are rare—and very roundabout means. The less magickal the universe, the fewer the *Portals*, and in the nonmagickal universes, which include the future of Earth's

own, there are none. This doesn't make return impossible, only difficult, as noted above. In the distant future Probability Travel becomes possible. Although that mode of transference from universe to universe becomes tenuous in magickal ones, it will work with sufficient reliability to allow entrance into a cosmos in which Heka functions with enough reliability for the opening of a Portal by a skilled practitioner. Additionally, there are certain dimensions accessed in the future, as well as magickally, which transcend the science/magick considerations and allow one or the other to function sufficiently well to employ that dimension as an access route to a particular universe in the multiverse. Sure, that's vague, but for greater detail you'll have to await the release of the various modular game portions of the **Dangerous Journeys** multigenre roleplaying game system!

Okay, we have set forth the bases of the means for getting there and returning. What comes next? We'll assume that the gamemaster has sufficient acumen to deal with all rules questions. After all, the system is complete, and the mechanics work in any genre. Communications, K/S operations, unusual abilities such as psychogenics, mutations, cybernetics, robotics, androtics, genetic engineering, aliens, weapons, etc., and all manner of Heroic Persona information need be taken into account when the change occurs. That's all done. The GM knows his stuff, is highly conversant with the rules system and new genre, so that's that.

What about being there? Well, the gamemaster must have some milieu sufficiently developed so that the team of Heroic Personas will be able to operate within it in believable fashion. That is, the detail must be as factual, logical and consistent as is possible considering the genre, so that the players will believe. That way they will roleplay their HPs, find enjoyment and have fun. The extent of the new milieu can actually be quite limited, but in such case, the GM must have a tight control on the team via his scenario's options. Thus, it is clear that the milieu and the scenarios must be commensurate in their approach. The GM must set the stage and then establish the following:

What is the mission of the HP team? What is their goal in the new genre's milieu? What objectives do they have to measure their progress toward the goal and completion of the mission? What routes are open to them? Are those routes varied and possible? What are the Heroic Persona team's resources? What aid can they receive along the various routes of approach? Who and what constitute antagonistic forces? Where will opposition be encountered? Where and how strongly? Is the goal attainable with the resources at hand and available as the scenario progresses considering the antagonistic forces? What rewards will the team receive for various degrees of success in the mission?

Fine. The milieu is known, so operating within the new milieu, the gamemaster goes about the work of establishing just what sort of mission the group is on in the genre. Following that initial step, one by one, he now checks the rest of the quantifiers against his scenario to ascertain that goal, objectives, etc. are all clear to him and will be understood in some reasonable way to players, and that their HP team can actually accomplish what is set forth for them to do by the demands of the mission. The use of a commercial adventure scenario which

all participants admire as a template for the one devised by the GM isn't a bad idea. (It is a good idea, in fact, whenever devising an adventure setting, whether for submission to a publisher or simply for use by your players!)

Routine is a thing of the past when multiple genres are considered in the campaign. Not only does the group then experience the challenges of a different universe, but they might actually have to deal with three or more genres during the course of a single adventure. That could mean a chase through fantastic planes and spheres, into a parallel world of the future, along time streams and across probability lines through an infinite multiverse! All right, you say, I'm sold. What is the best mix to use in the multigenre campaign? Well, now—that depends on you, Sagacious Gamemaster, and on the group of player participants regularly (or potentially) attending your gaming sessions.

The contrast between fantasy and science fiction is always tempting—magick vs. technology and all, even if a lot of presumed future science is more magick than not. The fact is that the **Dangerous Journeys** system contrasts the two is sufficient to make it a challenge and then some! Intermediate stops along the way, as it were, might be a world of quasi-science and weird magick in combination. The future genre will also enable purely historical scenarios if time travel is included.

Another route to follow is that of the operation of Heka. Open the campaign to a genre in which magick is quite operational, go on to another where it is less so, and so forth until arriving at some universe where it is virtually functionless. This method has the advantage of gradual transition, a boon to GM and players and their HPs, but not always as wildly exciting as the abrupt shifts in game reality.

Simply relying on the **Mythus** and **Unhallowed** games as the initial bases for the multigenre campaign is fine. They both allow magick, although the two systems are radically different, and either overall milieu is suitable for a springboard into another genre, whether one prepared and published under the system or devised by the GM, when the group is ready for another transition.

While it is my opinion that the Grand Campaign must be multigeneric, it is not necessary for each and every Heroic Persona to be, in fact, multigeneric. If the gamemaster has an in-depth and fully developed "home milieu" for HPs, most players might well have two or more personas. One or more "stays home," and one or more are "farers to other universes." Dyed-in-the-wool stay-at-homes will have only a single HP who is active only when play is in the principal genre. A few "odd balls" might actually have HPs active in "foreign" milieus used when expanding play into other genres! Indeed, such a campaign goes beyond even what I suggest as the superlative, going well past the grand into realms so rare that they are the stuff of which most enthusiasts merely dream. There you are. Make dreams come true!

Next time, we leave the broad campaign considerations to focus on the more prosaic. Even though there are lots of vocational choices set forth in the **Mythus** game, we thought most inventive gamemasters and players too would be interested in seeing a select few additions—what they are and how we do them. Come along with us on that sojourn, please. ♪



GRYM'S KEEP

BY PAUL ARDEN
LIDBERG

1977

Lightning arced down and struck the ground with a loud cracking noise near the side of the road. The horse whinnied and reared, rightly afraid. The traveller brought his horse under control and searched for a place to protect them from the storm. Across a field, he saw a light in a tower. He managed to guide the horse toward the shining beacon. At the door he knocked, but there was no response. He stood in the entryway holding the reins of his horse, looking out into the storm, weighing his options. A moment later, that was the furthest thing from his mind as he was dragged, kicking and screaming, into the dark doorway.

The HPs have come to a small village during their travels in search of fame and fortune. While enjoying themselves at the local drinking establishment, they are regaled with stories of a mysterious tower and the legend of its haunting.

The gamemaster is encouraged to spice up this account with extra false or legendary details. Some appropriate legends concerning the tower and its original occupants are detailed below:

- The tower was once the home of a powerful supernatural creature. Some believe that this creature was one of the undead, a powerful liche who used his powers to enslave the citizens of the surrounding villages. What happened to the liche is unknown, but it is said that he was killed by a powerful demon sent by an Egyptian priest of Thoth.

- The keep was constructed over a dimensional rift and was meant to keep things in rather than out. The tower itself was the portal that served to keep creatures from the "other side" from crossing over. This would explain the recent interest in the tower and might be an alternate explanation for the display at the tower (rather than a magickal duel).

- The keep served as a prison for magickally proficient criminals. The tower was said to hold a bunch of magickal artifacts which were taken from these criminals and which would make a fine prize for anyone powerful enough to take them back. Unfortunately, there are also some pretty hefty wards and other magickal menaces guarding this treasure. Some think that the mage Grym was destroyed when he interfered with these powerful wards.

The GM is encouraged to come up with as many new and interesting rumors as he can. Disinformation will only enhance the mystery of this (or any other) scenario and should be handed out without compunction.

HISTORY OF THE TOWER

The tower has been there for many years. Once it was part of a much larger fort, but mighty forces lay siege to the fort, and it was eventually conquered. Peasants in the area carted away the stones of the major walls and used the half-destroyed lumber in creating their dwellings, but the tower remained intact. Some said it was blessed, because no one had started to dismantle it. Others said it was cursed, because no one *could* dismantle it.

A few years later, the tower became home to a powerful mage by the name of Grym. Although initially curious, the people of the town shied away from the tower when it became evident that Grym disliked visitors. Cows that strayed into the area gave sour milk, dogs became rabid, and people just plain disappeared. It became so bad that a major road was moved to another area so people could avoid contact with Grym.

Thirty years ago, after Grym had inhabited the tower for a very long time, it became the sight of even more bizarre happenings. Great flashes of light and horrendous explosions were seen all the way back in the town, and strange cries were heard in the night. This went on for over eight hours, and when the sun rose, the tower had changed.

Large holes had been blasted into the sides of the tower. Ethereal shapes were seen flitting in and around. Mystical magickal fire would appear, rise and dissipate continuously. Strange and mysterious shapes were seen moving inside the tower through the damage and the few windows. The land around the tower became barren, and the obviously magical (or cursed) stormclouds, thunder and lightning now appear over just the tower and the surrounding land.

The locals decided that a mage duel (quite rare) had occurred, and it appeared that Grym had lost. The cursed nature of the weather was a sure sign that the mage had been able to utter a curse on the tower before his final demise.

The biggest reason anyone cares what happens to the tower, though, is the stories of the fabulous wealth stored there by Grym. He was known to be quite powerful, and the people of the village are certain the tower contains all of his most powerful artifacts. The value would be beyond measure.

Of course, characters would be expected to turn a portion of the money recovered to the villagers. But they are free to keep any items that they wish, and the villagers offer them room and board free of charge for the rest of the characters' lives. This will make the village an interesting place to base the characters during the early portion of their careers, as well as a nice place to retire later on.

TRAVEL TO THE TOWER

The trip to the tower is mostly uneventful. It is the approach that warrants interest. When the HPs start out from the village, the sky is clear and blue. No clouds can be seen. As they approach, the sky over them grows darker and more cloud-filled. The weather continues to worsen, until they are in the middle of a full-blown thunderstorm. Lightning strikes all around them, and visibility is markedly reduced.

Once the HPs are within one-half mile of the tower, one of them will see a light from the upper floor. They will be able to use this as a beacon to locate the tower.

Once at the tower, they will notice that the surrounding area appears to be barren, with no plant life whatsoever. There is not even the remains of any dead grass or plants anywhere within several hundred feet.

The tower has a small entryway, with a large, heavy oaken door. A huge cast-metal knocker, in the shape of a demonic figure holding an iron ring, is built into the center of the door. HPs who use the knocker will hear a dull echo throughout the tower for each knock, but no apparent reaction inside.

If an HP happens to stand with his back to the door, something spectral grabs the HP and pulls him inside. There is no way to avoid this. Captured HPs go directly to the tower sub-basement (see below).

TOWER

The tower and keep were originally a base of operations for a number of quite powerful mages. These mages used their

powers to create a web of magical energy that went from the keep to each of their private towers and spread out to encompass the towers of other willing mages. This web allowed any mage attuned to it access to the towers of another mage, provided both mages were willing. The idea was to create an easy way for mages to get together and talk about their latest researches or just socialize. Many mages agreed to be part of the network. To protect their investment, the mages also magically strengthened and preserved the tower itself.

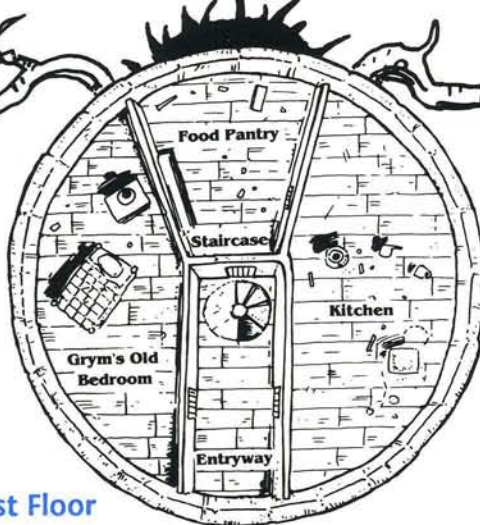
When some of the local people found out that a large number of mages frequented the tower, they became understandably nervous. These frightened commoners managed to put together a sizable army and laid siege to the tower.

The mages, being relatively benign sorts, decided to take their toys and leave. The tower would stand up to any assault that the rabble could level against it, and the keep wasn't that important. The network would remain intact, and all the mages agreed not to take up residence in the tower, using it only as a waystation of sorts. The proper wards were put up, and the mages evacuated. The enraged mob managed to tear down the keep, and they were satisfied with their somewhat hollow victory. And, until now, the tower was left alone.

First Floor

The first floor of the keep is surprisingly dry and very dusty. From inside, you cannot hear the lightning that was so incessant outside. From the entryway, you can see a spiral staircase that heads both up and down. You can also see a door to the left, a door to the right, and evidence of a

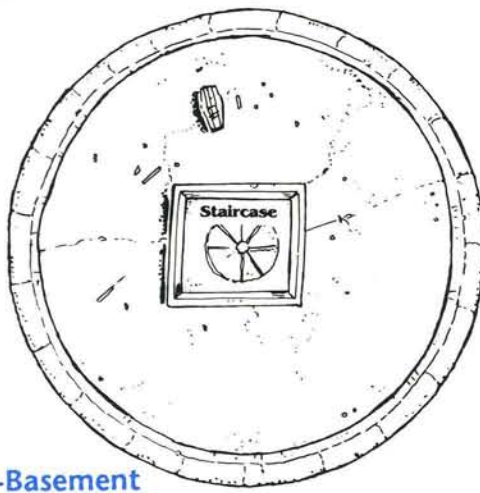
First Floor



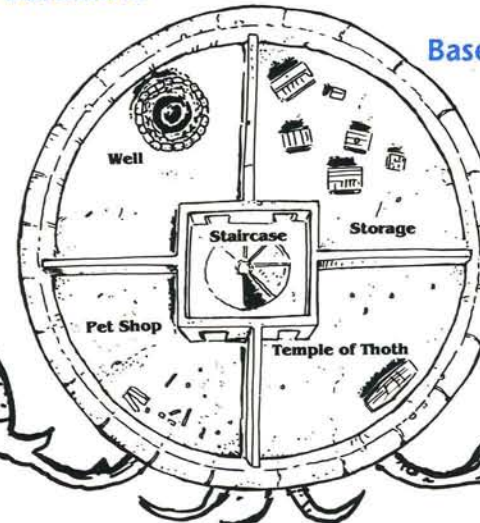
Second Floor



Sub-Basement



Basement



door behind the stairs.

The tower is built on a central column, with a spiral staircase up the center. The first floor has three rooms, plus the entryway.

Grym's Bedroom: The door to the left leads to Grym's old bedroom. Inside is a decrepit old wooden bed frame and an ancient, moldy straw mattress. A small table sits to the right of the bed, holding an empty pitcher and bowl. A small chest of drawers at the foot of the bed is unlocked. Characters who check it for magical wards or other traps will find that no such dangers exist.

Inside the chest are a number of loose pieces of fine paper, a block of wax and a signet ring (the ring has a half-moon with pentacle which is Grym's personal seal). There is also a fine ivory letter opener, which has been magically enchanted to work as a dagger. If used as a weapon, the opener gains a 10% attack bonus.

Also in the chest of drawers is a small diary that is written in a hodgepodge of different languages. The parts that the characters should be able to understand are shown below.

"What they say is not true. I can find no evidence that this is any more than an old fort, despite the fact that the tower is heavily warded and magically preserved. Though the expenditure of Heka would have been outrageous to preserve such a structure, I cannot find any reason for this magic to have been performed."

"Made a discovery today. A gate of sorts is in one of the lower sections of the tower—will activate later tonight." (This section is dated later than the one above.)

"The gate seems to act as a form of transport for a number of mages. One, Dyll by name, seemed a bit perturbed that I had found this 'magical high-

way" but agreed to meet with me later today." (The above section is dated the same as the day on which the magical duel at the tower took place.)

These hints should be enough to let the characters know what is going on, or at least let them know they are on the right track.

Kitchen: The door to the right leads to the kitchen. Rusty old pots and pans are strewn about, along with rotted and desiccated bits of food.

Food Pantry: The food pantry also has a door that leads to the kitchen. Nothing here is remotely edible, even with a load of salt.

Second Floor

Once the HPs move up to the second floor, they will see two doors exactly opposite one another. Also, the stairs continue up to the roof.

Grym's Workshop: Strewn about the room is an impressive collection of various magical artifacts in an assortment of conditions. Half-finished potions litter workbenches, and ancient, dusty, magical tomes are open all around the room. GMs should feel free to add in a couple of magic items for the characters to find, but should make these items of a mixed nature. For instance, you might put in a sword that does double damage, but the wielder suffers a third of the damage inflicted. Such magic items keep themselves in balance, as characters become loathe to use them in all but the most dangerous of circumstances.

Storage Room: This room is filled with dusty and half functional items of all descriptions. When the HPs open the door, a load of stuff will fall on them because the room is so full.

Top of the Tower

The HPs are in for a shock when they reach the top of the keep. There is no rain. No lightning. It's not even dark. Looking out over the field where the tower is situated will reveal a barren field, but no water or other adverse conditions are present.

Basement

The first level of the basement has four rooms, laid out like a square. The basement served as the research section of the tower and was heavily warded. Grym managed to do away with the largest number of the wards present here, and those that remain are designed to stop powerful mages, which no beginning character is. The only ward that works is that on the first room in this section, the warning hex.

Pet Shop: This section was used to contain a number of small- to medium-sized animals that were used in various experiments. All the animals are dead now, and the numerous cages that fill the room are empty save for bones.

There is also a long table in this room, with grooves cut around the edges. The table is slightly inclined and is tipped toward a small hole in the floor. Of course, the table was a vivisectionist's operating surface, and the grooves were meant to carry away blood and viscera into the drain hole. Touching the table starts the following recitation, in a deep booming voice:

Know ye that trespassing in this area is punishable by the most severe torments. Leave here at once, lest mighty magic strike ye as still and cold as those for whom this room was designed. Go!

Of course, nothing will happen to characters who remain here, but it does make a good scare tactic.

Also scattered about the room are various surgical devices, all of which are as sharp as the day they were forged. They are covered with dust, though, and appear to be quite old and tarnished at first glance. While these have little use as combat tools, some may do as much as 1D6 damage—they are extremely sharp and will cut through most any material, given time. (In 10 minutes, they can cut through one-eighth inch of iron. This figure can be used to estimate the time it would take to cut through other materials.)

Well: The mages who lived here had a need for pure water. The well in this room provided that at an abundant rate. The well looks like a wicked demon with its mouth over a bucket. At present, the well is deactivated. To make it work, the characters must place a handful of dirt into its mouth. This triggers magic, which then pumps pure, cold water from the elemental plane. This water can be used as the base for any potion, adding 10% to its effectiveness. When blessed, this holy water is twice as powerful versus undead or other unnatural creatures.

The room is pretty much barren other than the well, though there is a small hidden door on the eastern wall. Characters who find this door can open it easily and will discover a small sack with 2D10 gold coins in them. All the coins are without seal or sign of any sort on them.

The coins were placed in the tower when a mage was concerned that thievery was going on between mages. The coins were bait that a thief would have to go for, as the mage wasn't all that secretive about what he was doing.

The coins are much more than they appear and radiate a slight magical aura if checked. If the coins are removed from their hiding spot, the character who takes them will begin to feel lethargic and generally slow. The character will suffer a -10% penalty on all actions and will only be able to carry half his normal weight allowance. If the character is examined with magical sight of any sort, he appears with vertical black stripes on his face. This marks him as a thief. The coins are cursed and can only be gotten rid of through the use of powerful castings to counteract the curse.

Storage: This room once contained a number of magical ingredients, but now holds only dust. There are a number of sturdy vials around, though, which cannot be broken through any means. Characters who take some of these will probably be able to make a hefty profit on them and won't have to worry about any of their potions getting spilled during a fight. The downside is that all the vials are slightly flawed. The magic used to make them unbreakable is not always compatible with potions placed within them, and potions have a one in 10 chance of becoming inert when put into these vials.

Temple of Thoth: A good number of the mages who studied here were also servants of Thoth in one way or another, and this temple was built to venerate their god. This temple is, unlike the rest of the tower, completely devoid of dust, and every surface shines as if recently polished.

All the religious accoutrements that could be expected are here, and more. Ceremonial chalices, daggers, vestments and all manner of icons are ensconced in wall niches

scattered about the perimeter of the room.

There is also a jug of wine sitting on the altar, and a chalice inlaid with Egyptian symbols is next to the wine. Any character drinking from the glass will be visited by a dream that evening. In the dream, Thoth berates the HP for daring to taste the wine of his church. This dream will continue until the character manages to find a priest or temple of Thoth and make proper amends (all the character's current wealth should suffice). The character will be at a -15% on all actions until such amends are made because he cannot fully rest, due to the dream.

The above dream also affects any HP who is not a priest of Thoth who takes any of the religious items here.

Sub-Basement

This section of the tower has been destroyed. It once contained the nexus of the magickal highway, which the mage Dyll sealed with his magickal wards. Now, the only way to travel the highway is to converse with the vampire.

A small chamber in the sub-basement is the lair of the vampire. The room is 40 feet square, rough-hewn from the solid bedrock beneath the tower.

A long time ago, what is now the vampire was Grym the mage. During the final battle with Dyll the Unworthy, Grym let his guard down, and Dyll turned him into a vampire with a powerful Casting. During the transformation, Dyll also managed to place a curse on the tower. Grym cannot gain the eternal rest he desires unless his life is ended by an outside force. Use the stats in *Mythus* for a supernatural vampire (page 317).

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Grym was meant to serve as a guardian for the highway, and is magickally bound to harm none of those who are authorized to use the route. For this to work, Grym was forced to become attuned to the highway, so much so that his destruction will also result in the destruction of the highway.

Dyll is able to see all that the vampire sees and will know the identity of anyone attempting to kill Grym. This could become quite tricky for the characters, as several powerful mages aren't going to be at all happy to find something they worked so hard for destroyed. Characters will have to walk very carefully from here on out! Merciful GMs may have Dyll appear and demand the characters perform some task for him in order to appease him. Cruel GMs can have the mage work from the shadows to torture the characters and ruin their lives. Of course, this gives the characters a long-standing enemy which they can strive to defeat for many years.

Also in the vampire's chamber is a collection of magickal artifacts that Grym accumulated during his living years. The GM should be very careful when filling this room, so as to avoid overpowering the HPs too early in the campaign.

Any HPs who may have been captured during the adventure are here, caged in a small cell, bereft of all weapons and nifty equipment. Upon exhaustive search, 75% of their equipment may be found in the keep (provided you have time to make the search).

WRAPUP

The HPs may manage to kill the vampire, in which case the curse on the tower is also released. Magickally, the area around the tower will return to what it was before the coming of Grym and the mage duel. Plants will appear in the ground around the tower, and the sky will clear. Unfortunately, this release of the curse also has its price.

Within minutes of Grym's death, the tower will begin to feel its age. Starting slowly and increasing at a geometric rate, the tower will begin to crumble. Any HP caught inside is subject to damage from the falling rock, subject to GM discretion (depending on the level of the HPs).

If the HPs don't kill the vampire and still manage to escape, he will attempt to follow and attack them with all his power. If they are able to make it more than one-half mile from the keep, they have successfully escaped.

Any HPs killed in the keep will return within a few days as vampires, aiding Grym.

EXPERIENCE

The following are good approximations of the number of General Accomplishment Points the HPs should get when playing this adventure. Be sure to consult the rules in *Mythus* (pages 303-304) for more specific information.

If the HPs defeat Grym, they should receive an average of 20 General Accomplishment Points each.

If the HPs don't kill Grym, survive the adventure, and manage to get some of the magickal artifacts in the keep, they should get 10-12 points.

If the HPs don't kill Grym and don't collect anything of note from the keep, they should get 5-7 points for the adventure.

If any of the HPs are killed during the adventure, subtract 2 points for each one that died. Ω



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A Journeyer's guide to Aerth

By Ernst Grumbold

The last issue of this journal was still not complete when there came to our submissions desk yet another of the odd-colored envelopes which we now recognized immediately. Gary Gygas's associate, the inveterate author of several articles on Aerth, Ernst Grumbold, was at it again. One look at the material he had sent was sufficient for us to approve it for inclusion in this publication. Mr. Grumbold himself tells you why.

Castle Rooms and the Manor Lands

Details of what divisions of space are within and outside the castle, along with a plot of a manor and lists of things pertaining to life-styles of the noble and the peasant.

While knowing the organization of a castle is all well and good, to truly comprehend the matter requires greater knowledge. Readers are asked for their forgiveness of my neglecting to include this in my previous exposition pertaining to the matter of who lives in a castle and does what, so to speak.

Following all of that, I append a stylized plot of a *manor*. After the necessary explanations of that graphic, we will return to the exposition of what sorts of things are concerned with the whole. That is, there is much more to relate. One cannot be ignorant of the food and drink, cloth worn and possessions of the nobles and the others in the noble lord's demesne. In this regard, I offer informational details noted by observation and questioning while visiting the domain of the Sieur deVal in company with my Francian guide, M. Marcelus François.

Before giving a listing of typical space allotment, I must mention that the furniture and furnishings of a castle are much dependent upon the relative wealth of the lord. In general, however, the goods therein are quite extensive and resemble things drawn from the late medieval, renaissance and possibly even up to the late 17th/early 18th century of Earth. Thus, one will notice such things as ceramic stoves, large clocks and a case with perhaps a dozen or more books! Upholstered chairs and divans are unremarkable, as are pillows and cushions and mattresses filled with feathers and/or down.

The rooms of the castle are something like this:

Basement: *Main Building:* Well or cistern, wine cellar, buttery, root cellar, lumber room, coal cellar, firewood room, bakery, store rooms, cells for confinement of prisoners. *Separate:* Aging cellar for brewed or vinted beverages, various store rooms.

Ground Floor: *Main Building:* Great hall with upper gallery (musicians), lesser hall, antechamber, salon, library, offices, strong

room (plate), butler's pantry (dishes and glassware), linen room, various passages/hallways, garderobe/lavatory. *Separate:* Various offices, chapel, kitchen pantry larder, scullery, laundry, servants' hall, brew house, granary, stables, transport barn, smithy, armory, livestock barn, piggery, poultry sheds, dovecot, barracks, refectory/mess hall, garderobe.

First Story: *Main Building:* Gallery, lord's chambers and wardrobe, lady's chambers and wardrobe, bath room, garderobe/lavatory, solar (sun room), oriel (bay room), guest chambers. *Separate:* Various minor offices, various quarters for retainers, servant's quarters, barracks, arsenals (weapons and ammunition including stones, timbers, oil, combustibles, etc.), feed storage rooms, store rooms.

Second Story: *Main Building:* Private chambers of greater officials, garderobe/lavatory. *Separate:* Guard rooms, barracks, arsenals (weapons and ammunition including stones, timbers, oil, combustibles, etc.), store rooms.

Third Story: *Main Building:* Small private bed chambers (retainers), male dormitory, female dormitory, servants' quarters, garderobe/lavatory. *Separate:* Guard rooms, barracks, arsenals (weapons and ammunition including stones, timbers, oil, combustibles, etc.), store rooms.

Outside: Gardens, orchards, hay and straw stacks, apiary.

Typical Entertainers & Musical Instruments: Acrobats, animal trainer/act, buffoon (fool), dancers, jester (comedian), juggler, jongleur (travelling minstrel and story teller), minstrel, musicians, play actors.

Typical Instruments: (Newer ones in italics.) Cello (also bass and double bass cello), clarinet, cornet, drum (various sorts), dulcimer, flute, francian trump (similar to a french horn), guitar, harp, harpsichord (instrument recently purchased by the Sieur), keltic trump (similar to an English horn), lute, lyre, mandolin, oboe, oliphant (great horn), organ (pipe, recently reed organ), recorder, sackbut (trombone), saker, shalmes (reed pipes), tambor, tambourine, viele, viola (also bass viola), violin, virginal.

CASTLE LANDS

It is now time to move on to the lands belonging to the castle. In general, each castle will have a number of manors. Manors are principally agrarian in nature. A local appointed to the office of reeve will see to the lord's affairs there, while a bailiff oversees his activities, checks on agisters and so forth. The reeve is of social rank equal to that of a freeman of middling sort.

Plot of a Manor

The plot of a manor is highly abstracted for the reader's convenience. It doesn't depict any actual place. What is depicted hereafter is in graph-like style in order to illustrate the amount of land by type and usage. The graphic plot is also shown to enable you to better visualize the whole of the manorial territory. The area is relatively small, and a manor's extent might be twice that shown, as a small size was chosen for convenience of illustration. Note also that an actual manor's various areas will be broken up to some considerable extent, so that parts of the stylized blocks shown neatly in my plot will actually be scattered here and there in the manor. This is especially so with regard to water courses, roads and tracks.

Approximately 10% of the harvest (actually about 18 acres in this example) of any area belongs to overlords. Over half will go to the noble lord, the balance to the manor house or temple.

Spring Planting (144 Acres): In this example, the 144 acres of this area will be planted in spring, harvested in the autumn.

Autumn Planting (144 Acres): Before frost, this area will be plowed and sown with seed. Harvest will then be made in late spring.

Fallow Fields (144 Acres): These arable lands are not planted for a year in order to assist in fertilization and keep them from becoming depleted. In the autumn before the year they are to remain fallow, they are sown with a mixture of grasses and legumes (such as alfalfa). They serve as pasture land while fallow. In the autumn of the year, when grazing is virtually over, they are manured. In the spring of following year, they are plowed under and planted for fall harvesting.

Meadowlands & Pasture (108 Acres): Meadowlands provide hay for winter fodder. Pastures are for grazing of livestock. The proportions shown here assume that the manor does not support a concentration of large livestock (cattle and horses). Where large herds or flocks are maintained, larger manors must be used, and there will be proportionately less cultivation and more meadow (hay) fields and pasture land allotted.

Woodland (108 Acres): Firewood and some small amount of timber for construction might be harvested here. Management of manor woodlands is careful, so as to make certain that the allotted area remains wooded. Firewood is thus typically dear in price and dwellings cold in winter. In cold regions, either much greater woodland must be allotted or other fuels employed for heating of villeins' dwellings.

Wasteland, Wetlands, etc. (108 Acres): This is shown to depict the actuality of most areas of land. In some regions, there will be little or no wasteland, scant area of water. That is atypical.

Wasteland is that acreage unusable for planting or grazing due to rockiness, soil conditions, steepness and so forth. Possibly goats (able climbers and browsers) might be kept on some such lands, some wild crops or game taken, or fuel gleaned from it. If so, it will be done! Here we assume 36 acres of wasteland.

Wetlands are marshes and the like. Hunting and food gathering use might be made of such area. In the plot, 24 acres are allotted to wetlands.

Water refers to rivers, streams, tarns, ponds, pools, etc. In the plot, 24 acres are allowed for the existence of water. Note that in cases where a fairly large river flows through a manor, the total will be about twice that allotted.

Roads include tracks to various fields. Even so, they will not be extensive. Traffic is light, and only 12 acres total are allowed for this usage.

Manor House and Lands, or Temple and Lands (60 Acres): This area will usually be adjacent to the manor community for obvious reasons.

Manor House and Lands: If the manor is held in fief for the noble lord by a vassal, then that individual will have his domicile (five acres extent) here, and the remainder of the area (55 acres) will be in fields and pasture. If this area is ruled directly by the noble lord, then all land will be in fields belonging to him, save in the case of some temple presence, which is usual. Manor villeins will have to maintain this area by their labor regardless of who has control of it.

Where no temple lands are present, manor inhabitants will typically travel to a nearby village, or possibly even to the nobly lord's castle for religious observances.

Temple Lands: If the manor is held directly by the noble lord, there might by an allotment given by him to a temple. (Note that over the past five centuries, Aropan monarchs have limited actual possession of lands by temples to the extent that possession is in fief, not ownership. Thus, for example, *glebes* are no longer common at all.) In most such cases, it will not be more than half of the total of 60 acres, so that 30 acres will be the lord's fields, 30 of those of the temple.

The temple will have a shrine, chapel or chantry building. That, with associated constructions for ecclesiastics, will typically take up no more than two acres of land. The remaining 28 will be in

productive fields used to support the temple concerned.

Manor villeins by and large tithe gladly, of course, considering the marvelous benefits in husbandry and health they receive from ecclesiastics—more so when they are actually present.

If the manor in question is the fief of an ecclesiastical overlord, then the manor and temple holdings become one, although in the not uncommon case of some petty noble holding, the manor is sub-fief from the temple, and this rule does not hold.

Community and Lands (48 acres): The community is actually best identified as a hamlet (from the Francian for a small village), because it is, by and large, a community of villeins. There will be some eight to 12 dwellings, possibly a mill and granary and one or two small shops. Nearby will be any manor house and its buildings or constructions of the temple if such presence exists in the manor. Some members of the community might rent small plots of land or actually own them outright. There will be some acreage set aside for vegetable and herb gardens, orchards and apiaries, and small livestock raising—typically poultry, rabbits and small fur-bearing rodents yielding valuable pelts.

Salable Produce & Goods of a Castle Manors & Lands

Some, but by no means all, of the following representative produce and goods will be exported from the demense of the noble lord for sale: ale, beer, bricks, butter, cheese, cloth, distilled spirits, dried eels/fish, dried fruit, fodder, flax, fur, grain, herbs (dried), hides, honey, leather, livestock, lumber, meat, metal ore, nuts, oil, pitch, pottery, preserved fruit, salt, stone, tar, wax, wine, wool and vegetables.

Sale income will be used to generate money to pay officers, retainers and servants. The annualized net income thereafter for a small holding might be zero to 20,000 BUCs, while average holdings will show a net gain of 21,000 to 50,000 BUCs. Large demesnes will generate in excess of 50,000 BUCs.

Villeins & Villagers

Life isn't particularly comfortable for the peasant class, but it is by no means anything like that of Earth's medieval age. Brickmaking is now common, and the use of bricks in construction of even the row cottages of hamlets is usual. Fireplaces, if not brick ovens, are near standard inclusions in such dwellings. Charcoal and some coal are sometimes available for heating. Cheap, crude glass is often used in windows. Wooden and earthenware dishes are owned. Cooking is in iron and tin pots and pans.

Exploration and discovery, importation of new animals and plants, and increased trade have improved the lot of the commoner to a great extent. If trade made silk available to the upper classes, velvet to the middle, it brought cotton to the lowest. Oriental carpets grace aristocratic floors, woolen rugs the freeman's, and peasants have floor coverings of woven grass and the like. Sandals and crude boots are now inexpensive enough for all.

Diet too is much better than before. The arrival of peanuts, maize, lima beans, varieties of squash, and tomatoes from the western continents of Vargaard and Amazonia have considerably improved the nutrition available to even the poorest of villeins. Most peasant-class persons enjoy one daily meal which includes milk, cheese, eggs, fish, poultry or rabbit. Even pork, mutton and beef are consumed, if only weekly and usually as filling for meat pie or in soup or stew or sausage.

Special treats include small beer, cheap wine and tea, for these are not beyond the means of many of the lower class of Aërth. The same is true of tobacco, the use of which has spread throughout the world, it seems.

Finally, the metal plow and availability of the ass and the mule to



the villeins have brought more productivity and eased the labor of this strata. The ox is being gradually replaced by mule as a harness animal in locales where this is feasible.

Dwellings (Owned by Lord) & Possessions

The lord provides draft animals, now usually a team of mules, and tack, to the hamlet. The villeins must in turn shelter, feed and care for these animals and maintain their harnesses.

Material: Rarely of wattle and daub or even timber and plaster now. Stone and brick are now most common.

Size: Ground floor about 350 square feet. Two rooms with loft, rear work/animal shed. Ground floor of stone, brick, or even wood plans consisting of main room has kitchen, living and eating areas, second room for adults. Loft for children sleeping. Shed for handiwork and for keeping small livestock. (Separate pens and hutches probably exist as well.)

Sanitation: Usually outhouse.

Furniture and Bedding: Bed, pallet(s), mattress, sheet(s), blanket(s), comforter(s), trestle table, two chairs, two benches, two stools, chest, cupboard, rush or grass mats or rugs, possibly a braided and hooked rug, work bench, spinning wheel or loom or potter's wheel, etc.

Utensils: Iron kettles and skillet, tin pots, earthenware jugs, ceramic pitchers and bowls and tea pit, wooden dishes and spoons, tin cups and plates, steel knives, wooden pails and buckets, large tin tub.

Clothing (Per Person): Head covering, scarf and mittens (where climate dictates) outer garment (cloak typically), coat or shawl, apron, two smocks, shirt or blouse, two pairs of leggings or hose or two skirts, belt or sash or girdle, two pairs of stockings, pair of boots, pair of sandals, two sets underlinens (usually cotton now).

Linens: Towels, small amount of uncut homespun cloth, rags.

Tools: Plow or harrow or drag, scythe, sickle, axe, hatchet, wheelbarrow, harrow rake, shovel, hoe, hay fork, threshing flail or pruning hook, broom, card and comb for making yarn, rug hook, knitting needles, needles, thread—possibly adz, chisle, file, hammer, saw, etc.

Livestock: Dow (and piglets) or several goats or sheep, geese or ducks, chickens, rabbits, pigeons, sometimes vicuna, coypu, or mink.

Miscellaneous: Barrel, box, tin or brass tray (uncommon), coal scuttle (rare), earthenware mugs and plates (uncommon), comb, brush, scissors (rare), tobacco pipe, dog or other pet (uncommon).

Food & Drink: These things are generally available throughout western Aropa. Despite the length of the list, it is not exhaustive. Those in bold type are the commonest fare of villeins. Those indicated by an asterisk (*) are items usually available only to the gentry or aristocrats due to prices or lack of availability in most market places: *almonds, **apples (regionally)**, apricots, *artichokes, *asparagus, *avocados, *bananas, **barley**, **beans (dried, many sorts)**, beans (green and wax), *bear, **beets (and greens)**, blackberries, blueberries, *boar, **bread (all varieties)**, broccoli, brussel sprouts, butter, **cabbage**, **carrots**, *cashew nuts, catsup, cauliflower, celery, **chard**, cheese, cherries, chicken, *chocolate, *cocoa, *coconuts, *coffee, cookies, crab apples, crabs, cranberries, *crane, crawfish, cream, cucumbers, currants (fresh and dried, black, red, white), *dates, duck, eels, eggplant, eggs, *elk, *figs (fresh), figs (dried), fish (see list below), frog legs, *game hen, garlic, goat, goose, gooseberries, *grapefruit, grapes, *hare, herbs (many varieties for seasoning), honey, **horseradish**, kid, lamb, lark, leeks, *lemons, **lettuces (several)**, **lima beans**, *limes, *lobsters, **maize**, melons, millet, mushrooms (many kinds), **mustard greens**, mustard sauce, **mutton**, *nectarines, noodles, **nuts (beechnuts, chestnuts, hickory nuts, walnuts)**, oats, *octopus,



oil, *olives, **onions**, *oranges, parsnips, peaches, *peacock, **peanuts**, **pears (regionally)**, **peas**, *pecans, *pepper (black and red), **peppers (hot and sweet)**, *pheasant, pickles, **pigeon**, *pistachio nuts, *plover, plums, *pomegranates, pork, **potatoes**, prunes, pumpkin, *quail, rabbit, **radishes (black, white, red)**, *raspberries (black and red), **rhubarb**, rice, rutabagas, raisins, raspberries, **rye**, salt, scallions, shellfish (clams, *cockles, *mussels, *oysters), *sherbet, snails, *spices (all kinds), **spinach**, *squab, squash (many kinds), squid, strawberries, sugar, *swan, *tangerines, tea, toad, tomatoes, *truffles, turkey, *turtle, **turnips (and greens)**, *vanilla, *veal, *venison, vinegar, watercress, watermelons, whale, **wheat**, **whortleberries (regionally)**, wine vinegar, *woodcock, yogurt.

Fish: *Caviar, cod, *flounder, herring, mackerel, mullet, pike, pilchard, plaice, ray, *salmon, shad, shark, *sole, stockfish, *sturgeon, *trout, whitebait (minnows).

Animal Fodder Typical of a Manor: Acorns, hay, maize, maize ensilage, oats, turnips, vetches.

Cloth and Clothing Material Types Available: *Brocade, bur-lap, canvas, *camelhair, *cashmere (wool), cotton, felt, *fur, flannel (cotton), *lamme, leather, linen, mohair, *satin, *silk, *suede, *velvet, wool. Ω

Operation Connecticut

By James L. Cambias



When I was a kid, I loved to read about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. So when I heard there was a mission being planned to go back in time and visit the real Camelot, I pulled every string I could think of to get assigned to the team.

Big mistake. When you're a kid safe at home, it's a lot of fun to read about valiant knights, battles, dragons and heroic quests. It's a lot less fun when the knights are trying to cut you in half. And as for the dragons....

The PCs have been selected for an historical research mission to uncover the truth, if any, behind the legend of King Arthur. An historian specializing in the time period, Gerald Ashland, will give the PCs a briefing on what is known.

The gamemaster should adjust the details of the mission to fit his ongoing campaign. Since this is a scholarly expedition, large amounts of weaponry will be frowned upon. On the other hand, since the Arthurian era is poorly documented, the characters will not have to be especially careful about what they do and say.

Historical Data: Facts about post-Roman Britain are sketchy, and most of the information comes from stories distorted by centuries of retelling, all jumbled together with ancient myths and literary inventions. A few chronicles kept by monks provide some data, but they are vague and often contradictory.

What is known is that after the collapse of Roman power in Britain in AD 409, the Britons were left to defend themselves against the invading Anglo-Saxons. Around the year 500, a king or general named Arthur commanded the British forces and won several decisive battles, securing Britain against invasion for a generation.

Mission Plan: The plan is to go back in time to the year 520, to the town of Glastonbury, which was a religious center frequently associated with Arthur in legend and reputed to be his burial place. Once there, the party can try to learn more about Arthur and his whereabouts.

Dark Ages

Assuming there are no problems with the time machine, the characters arrive outside the town of Glastonbury in the year 520. It is morning on a day in early spring. The valley is shrouded in mist, and only the monastery-crowned hill of Glastonbury Tor protrudes from the fog.

Suddenly, the air is rent by a loud war cry as a dozen men armed with swords charge the PCs. Attempts to parley with them are unsuccessful.

"Saxons!" cries Ashland. "This must be a raiding party!"

The battle is fierce, but the time travellers are outnumbered two to one by the raiders, who are all hardened warriors glad to die in battle.

Just as all seems lost, the thunder of hoofbeats and the sound of horns panics the Saxons. Abandoning the PCs, the raiders flee as half a dozen men on horseback come galloping to the rescue. Those Saxons unable to get away in time are cut down or trampled. No prisoners are taken.

When the raiders are all gone, the horsemen wheel about and return to the PCs. The leader eyes the party for a moment, then sheathes his sword.

"Greetings," he says in heavily accented Latin. "I am Caius Pendragon, brother to the *Dux Bellorum* Artorius. It is danger-

ous to travel the roads unescorted—where are you going?"

Ashland quickly interprets for the PCs. "This is wonderful! Caius Pendragon—we know him as Sir Kay. And Artorius is Arthur himself!" he adds.

If the adventurers ask to see Artorius, Caius will grudgingly assent. Otherwise, he and his men will escort the party to Glastonbury and leave them there. Caius and his men will be very suspicious if the PCs claim to be Britons, but will accept a sufficiently plausible cover story. (Characters who speak in English will sound like Saxons to the British.)

Camelot

Arthur's headquarters is at Cadbury Castle, near the town of Camel. The castle is an ancient Celtic hill-fort, dating back to pre-Roman times. It has recently been refurbished, with a log palisade atop the earth walls and with several new buildings erected inside. The fortress is only 10 miles or so from Glastonbury, and the group can reach it by mid-afternoon.

King Arthur's Court: The largest building is where Artorius and his troops stay. The adventurers arrive during the midday meal and are welcome to join the soldiers at dinner. Inside the hall are about 100 tough-looking soldiers seated around a long table. At the head of the table is Artorius, lying on a couch Roman style.

Artorius will be curious about the newcomers and will question the PCs closely. He is sufficiently curious to strain a poorly constructed cover story. For example, if the PCs claim to come from Gaul, he will want to know about conditions there.

Gerald Ashland (50 points)

Ashland is an historian at the University of Bath in England. He is a stocky, ruddy-faced man with a bushy mustache. Ashland is an authority on Roman Britain and Arthur's period, but defers to the PCs on matters of practical time travel.

ST: 9, DX: 11, IQ: 13, HT: 10.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Immunity to Disease, Stubbornness.

Skills: Archaeology (Roman Britain)-11, Area Knowledge (Modern England)-12, Fencing-10, Heraldry-11, History (British)-15, Latin-13, Literature-11, Research-12, Riding-10.

Caius Pendragon (75 points)

Caius (Sir Kay) is the older brother of Artorius. He is a tall, muscular, older man, equipped like the other knights. Caius is something of a grouch and resents the fact that his younger brother has risen to be his commander. Caius handles much of the administrative work for Artorius and feels underappreciated.

ST: 13, DX: 12, IQ: 10, HT: 12.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Bad Temper, Code of Honor (-15), Duty (to Artorius, -5), Literacy, Military Rank (Captain), Miserliness, Status (+2).

Skills: Area Knowledge (Britain)-10, Axe/Mace-11, Broadsword-13, Leadership-11, Riding-13, Running-8, Spear Throwing-13, Tactics-9.

The adventurers must make a successful History roll to avoid making any serious blunders. If the characters fail to give a convincing account of themselves, Artorius will assume they are spies sent by the Saxons, perhaps to assassinate him.

Cataphracts: Artorius is not King of Britain. In fact, the PCs may be surprised to learn that he is not king of anything at all. He commands an independent military force, but has little civil authority. Arthur is the commander of an independent force of heavy cavalry, modeled on the Cataphracts used in the eastern Roman Empire. They wear mail, ride heavy warhorses, and fight with swords, javelins or axes. Because they do not have stirrups, they cannot charge with lances like later knights. Artorius's cataphracts are a powerful and highly mobile elite unit which can get around Britain rapidly and stiffen local forces against invaders.

Myrddin: The time travellers will notice a tall, black-bearded

Medraut (50 points)

Artorius's nephew (some say son) is like the warlord in many ways—including being ambitious and hot-tempered. Medraut thinks he is a natural military genius and wishes for a more important position. His ultimate goal is to become *Dux Bellorum* like his uncle, and he dreams of using his power to subjugate the civil rulers of Britain.

Medraut looks very much like a younger version of Artorius. He is slender and red-haired, with a slightly dissipated look.

ST: 12, DX: 12, IQ: 10, HT: 11.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Code of Honor (-5), Greed, Impulsiveness, Literacy, Military Rank (Captain), Overconfidence, Status (+1).

Skills: Axe/Mace-12, Axe Throwing-13, Broadsword-12, Carousing-11, Politics-9, Riding-12, Running-9, Spear-12, Tactics-8.

Nimue (150 points)

An agent from the Time Research Emirate sent to find the lost timeship. She found the wreckage and replayed the mission recorder, so now she is looking for Murad abd-al Emir. Nimue is quite clever and has hunted down several renegade time travellers before. Consequently, she will be very careful not to reveal herself until she has identified her target.

Nimue is very beautiful, with dark hair and eyes. She wears perfect period costume, with her weapons concealed but easily accessible.

ST: 10, DX: 14, IQ: 14, HT: 12.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Beautiful (+2/+4), Combat Reflexes, Duty (to her agency), Fanatic (about job), Immunity to Disease, Literacy, Overconfidence, Stubbornness.

Skills: Acting-14, Arabic-14, Beam Weapons (TL8)-15, Criminology (TL8)-13, Detect Lies-13, Disguise-14, First Aid (TL8)-13, Gesture-14, Greek-13, History-13, Holdout-14, Karate-14, Knife-15, Knife Throwing-15, Latin-13, Riding-12, Running-9, Sex Appeal-14, Shadowing-14, Stealth-14.

man standing nearby. Artorius occasionally will ask him for advice in an undertone. He is introduced as Myrddin, Artorius's soothsayer, doctor and advisor. ("This is astounding," Ashland comments to the others, "It has always been assumed that Merlyn was a completely fictitious character.")

Myrddin will be especially interested in the PCs if they have any equipment that is obviously from the future. He will be careful not to give himself away and will be genuinely puzzled if the PCs try to address him in modern English. If Myrddin suspects the adventurers are time travellers, he will immediately tell Artorius that he thinks they are spies and urge that they be tortured to learn the truth. To avoid this, the PCs must convince Artorius that they are not spies—or else somehow fight off a roomful of Britain's best soldiers.

Guests at Camelot: Assuming that the time travellers avoid being suspected of spying, they will be welcomed as guests. Those with entertainment skills or interesting stories to tell will be particularly favored. Quarters will be provided for the characters—a clear patch of floor in the main hall and a rough blanket.

During the next few days, the PCs will be able to meet all the notables at Cadbury: Artorius, his wife Gwynhyfar (Guinevere), his nephew Medraut (Modred), Myrddin, Caius, and Bedwyr (Bedivere). Depending on their actions, the characters can become involved in the various intrigues going on.

Nimue: There is another guest at the fortress—a woman named Nimue, who arrived recently and is waiting until she can get an escort to continue travelling to Londinium. Actually, she is another time traveller from an alternate future, searching for a renegade. She suspects that Myrddin is the one she has been sent to recover, but if the PCs have been acting notably anachronistically, she may decide that they are her quarry instead.

Nimue has secretly allied herself with Artorius's nephew Medraut. He is infatuated with her, and she has promised to use her "magic powers" to make him *Dux Bellorum* in place of Artorius (needless to say, she is lying).

Quest

A day or so after the time-travellers have arrived at Cadbury, a messenger arrives from the north. He has an urgent request for Artorius from Pelenor, the King of a tribe of Picts living in what is now Northumbria. A horrible monster has been ravaging the countryside, and King Pelenor needs Artorius' heavy cavalry to slay the creature.

"King Pellinore and the Questing Beast?" says Ashland to the PCs. "But that can't be factual—it's pure fantasy!"

Riding with the Knights: Intrigued by the request, Artorius will lead a dozen cavalry north to assist Pelenor. He will allow anyone willing to help to come along. Myrddin volunteers, as do Medraut and Nimue (both hoping to accomplish their goals during the hunt). If the PCs don't take advantage of the chance to go on a quest with King Arthur, they're in the wrong line of work.

The journey north takes about two weeks. The characters will rapidly discover why Artorius was so casual about inviting people along on this trip: He doesn't have to feed them as the party spends its nights in the strongholds of local kings. The strongholds are mostly refurbished Celtic hillforts or Roman

villas that have been fortified with walls and earthworks.

The collapse of civilization is clearly evident in the areas the travellers pass through. Farms are becoming overgrown by woods, villas are falling into ruin, Roman roads are becoming rutted and impassable, and the towns are full of empty buildings. Outside the holdings of local kings, the countryside is full of danger from bandits, former slaves, and occasional Saxon and Irish raiding parties.

Questing Beast

After two weeks on the road, the group reaches Pelenor's stronghold—actually an old Roman military post near York. Pelenor is another Romanized Briton like Artorius, though his subjects are mostly Picts. King Pelenor has no cavalry of his own, just a small force of local infantry armed with swords and spears.

Hunt: The monster lurks in the forests north of Pelenor's fort. It isn't really hard to track, as the thing leaves a very obvious trail of broken branches and trampled undergrowth. Anyone with Tracking skill can tell that the Beast is *big*! Pelenor wasn't kidding when he called for help. Its footprints look like those of a huge bird.

Beast: The Questing Beast is actually an *Albertosaurus*, a predatory dinosaur related to *Tyrannosaurus Rex*. It hatched from an egg aboard Myrddin's timeship and has managed to survive and grow to full size in the past 12 years. The creature has a yellow-gray coat with brown spots, and huge teeth. Characters from the 20th century or later will immediately recognize it as a dinosaur.

ST: 100, DX: 12, IQ: 3, HT: 16/50, Move: 10.

Size: 10 hexes. Armor: tough hide, PD 2, DR 3.

Attacks: Bite, 5D cutting attack; Trample, 3D crushing.

Fighting the Beast: The Questing Beast is a top predator and isn't used to fleeing anything. Consequently, when the hunting party catches up with it, the monster will attack. Artorius's cavalry will charge, trying to do some damage with swords and spears without being obliterated by the dinosaur. Trained warhorses will behave normally, but any other mount will panic upon seeing the creature. Even if the rider can bring his horse back under control, it will not go back toward the dinosaur.

During the confusion of the battle, a number of important things will happen. If the beast seems to be winning the fight, Myrddin will use his laser pistol against it, revealing himself to the other time travellers. Nimue will try to assassinate Myrddin (or whoever she thinks is the renegade). Medraut will try to kill Artorius. The PCs will probably get involved in one or more of these goings-on.

Endings

Since the period is not very well documented, almost any ending is acceptable. But some resolutions leave many questions unanswered.

If the PCs can get Myrddin or Nimue to speak frankly, they can learn Myrddin's true identity and figure out where the dinosaur came from.

If Artorius survives and is impressed by the characters' combat abilities, he may offer them positions in his army.

Artorius Pendragon (150 points)

Artorius comes from a Romanized land-owning family in Somerset. He joined the hastily organized British Army under the general Ambrosius, and his skill and courage rapidly led to positions of command.

Artorius is a tall, heavyset man with thinning red-brown hair and very fair skin. He goes clean shaven. He is armored and equipped like the other cavalymen, with chainmail, a sword and several javelins. He carries a very handsome old Celtic sword, which he found hidden in some rocks as a boy.

ST: 12, DX: 13, IQ: 13, HT: 11.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Code of Honor (-15), Honesty, Impulsiveness, Literacy, Military Rank (40), Reputation (+2), Sense of Duty (-5), Status (+4).

Skills: Administration-12, Area Knowledge (Britain)-13, Broadsword-13, Leadership-14, Old English-10, Politics-12, Riding-13, Running-8, Spear Throwing-14, Tactics-14.

Myrddin Emrys (150 points)

Once he was Murad abd-al Emir, a technical slave in the Caliphate's Time Research Emirate in an alternate future dominated by Muslims. He was aboard a timeship on a dinosaur-hunting expedition when he murdered his superior and smashed the controls, crashing his ship in northern Britain in the year 508. Murad met up with Artorius, and became his soothsayer, doctor and magician.

Myrddin still has several items of advanced technology: a first-aid kit, complete with antibiotics, painkillers, and surgical equipment; a laser pistol with two full power packs; a magnetic compass; binoculars; and a solar-powered TL8 personal computer (which requires knowledge of Arabic to operate).

He is constantly worried that agents of the Time Research Emirate will be sent after him; this makes Myrddin extremely suspicious of strangers. He will use any resources at his command to get rid of anyone he suspects of being a time traveller. Because he is from an alternate future, Myrddin has never heard of "Merlyn the magician" and is unaware of his own importance.

ST: 10, DX: 12, IQ: 15, HT: 10.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Alertness (+2), Combat Reflexes, Immunity to Disease, Literacy, Paranoia, Reputation (as a magician, -1), Status (+2), Stubbornness, Strong Will (+3).

Skills: Acting-14, Arabic-15, Beam Weapons (TL8 lasers)-14, Computer Operation (TL8)-11, First Aid (TL8)-16, History-14, Judo-11, Knife-13, Latin-14, Naturalist-15, Riding-7, Sleight of Hand-10, Stealth-11, Temporal Operation-15, Zoology-15.

Anyone who wishes to be an original Knight of the Round Table may do so. Otherwise, the time travellers will return to their own time with an utterly fantastic story—and probably photos to prove it! Ω

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- ☐ Hyborian War (Reality Simulations Inc.)
- ☐ Illuminati (Flying Buffalo)
- ☐ StarWeb (Flying Buffalo)
- ☐ World Wide Battle Plan (Flying Buffalo)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

15. Best New Play-By-Mail Game, 1991

- ☐ Buck Rogers (TSR Inc.)
- ☐ El Mythico (Graaf Simulations)
- ☐ Middle Earth (Game Systems Inc.)
- ☐ The Realms of Fantasy (Graaf Simulations)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

16. Best Fantasy/Science Fiction Computer Game, 1991

- ☐ Death Knights of Krynn (SSI)
- ☐ Eye of the Beholder (SSI)
- ☐ Might & Magic III (New World)
- ☐ Pool of Darkness (SSI)
- ☐ Secret of Monkey Island (LucasArts)
- ☐ Wing Commander II (Origin Systems)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

17. Best Military or Strategy Computer Game, 1991

- ☐ Castles (Interplay)
- ☐ Civilization (Microprose)
- ☐ Red Baron (Dynamix)
- ☐ Warlords (SSG)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

18. Best Professional Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1991

- ☐ Challenge (GDW)
- ☐ Command (XTR)
- ☐ Computer Gaming World (Golden Empire Publishing)
- ☐ Dungeon Adventures (TSR Inc.)
- ☐ White Wolf (White Wolf)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

19. Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1991

- ☐ Alarums & Excursions
- ☐ Berg's Review of Games
- ☐ ETO
- ☐ MWAN- Midwest Wargamers Association Newsletter
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- ☐ Precision Details 15mm ACW Buildings (Stone Mtn.)
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5. Best Miniatures Rules, 1992

- ☐ Command Decision II (GDW)
- ☐ Ogre Miniatures (Steve Jackson Games)
- ☐ Red Baron (Emperor's HQ)
- ☐ Toy Wars (Crunchy Frog)
- ☐ Warhammer (Games Workshop)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

6. Best Role-Playing Rules, 1992

- ☐ Al Qadim (TSR Inc.)
- ☐ Call of Cthulhu 5th Edition (Chaosium)
- ☐ Dream Park (R. Talsorian)
- ☐ Shadowrun 2nd Edition (FASA)
- ☐ Werewolf (White Wolf)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

7. Best Role-Playing Adventure, 1992

- ☐ Any: Grimtooth's Dungeon of Doom (Flying Buffalo)
- ☐ AD&D Forgotten Realms: Haunted Halls of Evenstar (TSR Inc.)
- ☐ AD&D Ravenloft: Thoughts of Darkness (TSR Inc.)
- ☐ Call of Cthulhu: Blood Brothers II (Chaosium)
- ☐ GURPS: Cyberpunk Adventures (Steve Jackson Games)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

8. Best Role-Playing Supplement, 1992

- ☐ Any: City Book VI (Flying Buffalo)
- ☐ Any: Grimtooth's Traps Lite (Flying Buffalo)
- ☐ AD&D: Ravenloft Forbidden Lore (TSR Inc.)
- ☐ AD&D: Forgotten Realms Menzoberranzan (TSR Inc.)
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- ☐ GURPS Illuminati (Steve Jackson Games)
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10. Best Pre-20th Century Boardgame, 1992

- ☐ Across Five Aprils (Avalon Hill)
- ☐ Bloody Roads South (The Gamers)
- ☐ Four Battles of the Ancient World (Decision Games)
- ☐ Franco-Prussian War (Decision Games)
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- ☐ SPQR (GMT)
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- ☐ Advanced Third Reich (Avalon Hill)
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- ☐ Bloody Kasserine (GDW)
- ☐ Guderian's Blitzkrieg (The Gamers)
- ☐ Hacker (Steve Jackson Games)
- ☐ Nippon Rails (Mayfair)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

12. Best Fantasy or Science Fiction Boardgame, 1992

- ☐ BattleTech 3rd Edition (FASA)
- ☐ BattleTech Technical Readout 3055 (FASA)
- ☐ Minion Hunter (GDW)
- ☐ More Cosmic Encounter (Mayfair)
- ☐ Nuclear Proliferation (Flying Buffalo)
- ☐ Uncle Al's Catalog From Hell (Steve Jackson Games)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

14. Best Play-By-Mail Game, 1992

- ☐ Continental Rails (Graaf Simulations)
- ☐ Illuminati (Flying Buffalo)
- ☐ Middle Earth (Game Systems Inc.)
- ☐ Starweb (Flying Buffalo)
- ☐ State of War (Game Systems Inc.)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

15. Best New Play-By-Mail Game, 1992

- ☐ Lords of Destiny (Maelstrom)
- ☐ Isle of Crowns (Adventures By Mail)
- ☐ Galactic Overlord (Gem Games)
- ☐ Darkness of Silverfall (Ark Royal Games)
- ☐ Star Queen (Deltax Gaming)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

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- ☐ Wizardry VII- Crusaders of the Dark Savant (Sir-Tech)
- ☐ Ultima 7 (Origin Systems)
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- ☐ Might & Magic: Clouds of Xeen (New World Computing)
- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

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- ☐ Carriers At War (SSG)
- ☐ Computer EastFront (Columbia)
- ☐ V for Victory (Three-Sixty Pacific)
- ☐ Hellcats Over the Pacific (Graphic Simulations)
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- ☐ Title _____ Company _____

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The Thinking Villain

By Brent Raymer



Of all the criteria which make for a good roleplaying session—drama, intrigue, suspense, good dialogue, senseless violence, and so on—one which is vital to bind the entire story together is a challenging antagonist. Whether it be a power-mad tyrant, diabolical wizard or rampaging killer, most adventures have a primary foe who, above all others, must be defeated. In the history of fiction, this intimidating rival is almost universally portrayed to be cunning, devious and in control of the situation around him. That is, in control until the heroes bring his plans crashing in around him.

Popular fiction has brought us such bone-chilling geniuses as Hannibal Lector from *Silence of the Lambs*, *Die Hard*'s Hans Gruber, and the many incarnations of Count Dracula. These were nemeses who commanded respect from their opponents, not by brandishing a fearsome array of swords, rifles and missiles (though these may have been available), but by using a much more effective combination of subtle manipulation, careful forethought, efficient organization and a ruthless, cold-blooded dedication.

Hans Gruber, for example, took a great deal of care in his execution of a highly unorthodox robbery. First, he ensured a minimum of trouble by choosing to undertake the operation at a time when the building would be mostly empty and expecting little trouble. Second, he went about making the robbery appear to be a terrorist attack, which he knew would bring the FBI, who he knew would cut the buildings' power in standard antiterrorist fashion, removing the last barrier to the vault. Last, he destroyed the building (and the FBI guys) in an explosion, providing a fantastic distraction for his escape.

This intellectual pattern of behavior continued even after his plans were interrupted. Hans gave his unforeseen opponent as much attention as he was due, but didn't drop his schedule in order to eradicate him. Though this ended up being a bad decision in the long run, it was the one which made the most sense (he had no way of knowing John McLean would be so formidable), and easily could have worked (McLean was also lucky).

Hans is an excellent blueprint for a villain who is supposed to act as intelligent as his attribute ratings label him. If you are having trouble creating an antagonist who can actually give your players a run for their money without making him a hulking monster undefeatable without a small army (or at least a *really* big gun), then the problem lies less likely in your character than in how he is run. Here are a few simple facts about cinematic villains to use in setting up both your character and your story.

They Want Something

In addition to the joy of just being mean, most villains have some goal they want to accomplish. Whether that goal be short term (such as killing someone, destroying something or going somewhere) or long term (such as becoming rich, powerful or happy), they still have a definite objective.

They also have a reason to pursue that objective. Perhaps the someone the villain wants to kill has wronged him (or he at least feels wronged), or the something the villain wants to destroy is evidence that could result in an unpleasantly long prison term. This motivation should be the central theme of the character's personality and should influence all his decision making. In his mind, nothing can come between him and his purpose. For example, in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, Khan Noonian Singh was obsessed with two purposes—his return to a position of

power and revenge against Captain James Kirk. He would let nothing interfere with his goals, even the crippling of his stolen starship. Finally, he went so far as to destroy himself in an attempt to kill Kirk, and to, in some small measure, show that he still had power over others.

Not all villains need to be willing to die to achieve victory. In fact, most who are cunning enough to devise these intricate schemes have the good sense to know that they can try again some other day. Only a fanatic will go so far as to die trying.

If the same villain is appearing in a string of adventures, he may have different short-term goals in each that contribute to his overall goal. For example, if you were playing a string in which a corrupt businessman's goal were to bankrupt a company competing with his, in one session his goal may be to damage its production, in another it may be to buy a small but essential part of the company away from it, in another he may be trying to kill the opposing company's owner. While each of these is a completely different goal, they all contribute to the overall goal of bankrupting the other company.

Two of the most common villainous motivations are wealth and power. It's hard to go wrong creating someone whose goal is to conquer, steal or rule. Although these may be the most common of motives, they require the most clever of minds. People who have money and power are not keen on giving them up and will go to great lengths to prevent their loss. If you are playing an intelligent villain who is in pursuit of such, put special care into making him as formidable as possible. Be careful, though, to avoid making him too powerful to defeat—formidable does not mean invincible.

They Plan Ahead

An archenemy who rushes headlong into action without considering the consequences of what he is doing is probably one who couldn't beat the player characters in a game of jacks, much less offer them a challenge in a battle of wits. A villain should have a specific plan of action through which he intends to carry out whatever activity it is he wishes to do that makes him so villainous.

This plan of action should be prepared before play and written down. By writing it down, you will be less tempted to make rash decisions that contradict the current plan. It should include all the steps necessary to complete his goal for this adventure. Those villains who are especially prepared will have anticipated setbacks and prepared contingency plans in case something goes wrong with the original.

As shown before with Hans, a good plan anticipates problems. If Hans could not obtain the computer code key for the vault from Takagi, he brought a hacker who could discover it anyway. In the case of any visitors to the building, one of his men was stationed at the front desk to masquerade as the guard. He even forecast the police assault on the building and brought a rocket launcher with which to destroy any armored vehicles. Obviously, only something as unplanned as MacClaine could counter such a well-thought-out scheme. If he had anticipated this, a contingency plan may well have guaranteed success.

If you are playing the villain, remember that no player likes to lose consistently. Don't make your plan so comprehensive that there is no possibility of the players being successful except through luck. On the other hand, it is not wise to make the plan too rigid, so that if the heroes defeat any one part of it, it cannot

be completed—the adventure will lose some challenge if you do. Some aspects of the plan should be vital, however, or else the plan could not be defeated. For example, no matter what else happened, Hans had to have the detonators to explode the building or he would not be able to escape.

They React

An arch-rival does not sit back idly and watch as his plans are systematically destroyed around him. He is strongly motivated and does not wish to be defeated. So as the characters act against him, he will take increasingly drastic steps to prevent them from doing so again. What these steps are depends greatly on the situation and the character—the GM should consider these carefully before deciding what action he will take.

The villain should first know something about who he is up against before he acts. If he does not know anything, have him take steps to find out. This knowledge does not have to be exactly who they are, where they live, and what their favorite brand of coffee is (though knowing these would help). Rather, he should have an idea of how they think, what they are up to and how they will respond in a given situation.

Once he has figured out (or thinks he has figured out) his opposition, the villain will move to eliminate it. The degree of force he uses depends on how subtle he wishes to be, his willingness to kill and how valuable the PCs are to him. This force does not always require a physical assault on the characters. An intelligent foil will never kill without reason. He will kill only in order to protect himself or his plan, to take revenge on someone who wronged him, or to make a point. Random violence, and especially murder, tends to bring intense retribution in the form of police, vengeful family and friends, and the constant need to hide from the crime.

Options to violence include bribes, attempting to prove his innocence (either to the characters or the police), turning the PCs into fugitives (usually by framing them for the same crime he is committing), discrediting them so no one else will believe their claims, or more direct means such as kidnapping, blackmail or taking hostages.

He is intelligent, however, and will be careful in his execution of this response. Most villains have some limit to their resources and will not waste men, equipment or time on a hazardous operation. This degree of caution and timidity will decrease greatly as the heroes continue to damage his plan. Normally, around the third interference, he is willing to commit a good deal of force to eradicating this nuisance once and for all ("That's enough! He dies!").

They are Manipulative

The best nemeses have an uncanny ability to use people. They will coerce, trick or anger others into doing or saying what they want. One common thread among them is their tendency to talk at length with the heroes. The thinking villain takes delight in the debate and uses it to great advantage. He will use whatever piece of information is available to put the players off their mark, make them feel uncomfortable and overly wary, and especially show that, no matter what they think, he is in charge.

I can think of no better example of a highly manipulative villain than Hannibal Lector. Through the course of the story, he manages to bring an FBI agent so much under his spell that she begins asking him for advice and causes one man to kill himself,

and arranges, without anyone realizing it was by his design, the situation whereby he will be able to escape.

There are few tips to offer on how to be manipulative—it requires good roleplaying from both the players and the game-master, and a well versed understanding of both the characters and the people playing them. Make sure that any personality traits possessed by characters are taken into account when the situation arises (if a PC is an animal lover, then make sure that when a villain kills a dog in front of him and laughs, the player has him react appropriately).

Manipulation is not a vital trait to play out, but it does add a great deal of flavor to the roleplaying and provides terrific motivations for the PCs to hate the villain.

They are Arrogant

The superior mind has a strong desire to prove itself so, or at least that's the way it is in fiction. James Bond films would hardly be worth watching if we didn't know that at some point in the movie there will be a scene where the villain reveals his devious plan to the supposedly helpless Bond.

Roleplaying villains do not need to be quite so dramatic, but they should still carry with them this air of smugness. No one, especially someone like the PCs, could ever conquer them. Don't use this as an excuse for foolhardy action—they do realize that a mistake on their part could bring defeat. The thinking villain should be unafraid to take reasonable risks in the pursuit of his goal and be especially eager to show how much more intelligent he is than others.

Often this will involve a direct confrontation with the player characters. Common situations involve the capture of the heroes or an invitation to meet with the villain. Upon their being brought to him, he explains to them why they stand no chance against him and how, if they continue with their current course of action, they will end up very, very dead. He may offer them money, a pardon for their previous behavior or possibly even a position in his organization in return for their cooperation. This scenario should be roleplayed to the hilt, with the villain being as evil and intimidating as possible.

Also, this tendency toward arrogance can be evidenced by other, less obvious methods. The villain may continue with his plan no matter what he knows the players have prepared for him, or face the PCs on their own home ground, or just refuse to look upon them as a serious threat. Though this makes him weaker by giving him a character flaw, it adds to roleplaying. Which brings us to our next point.

They have an Achilles Heel

Whether it be his arrogance or something else (such as greed or a weakness for attractive women), the good villain has something which the players can use to their advantage—if they discover it. Often, the villain's primary motivation is also his weakness. For example, knowing of Khan's drive for revenge, Kirk used it to lure him into a nebula where Khan lost his advantage over Kirk's damaged ship.

How the players discover this weakness is up to the referee, but in fiction it tends to be something they can figure out from his behavior and dialogue, such as Khan's hatred of Kirk. It can also be the converse, something which they could not know unless they either research him or are told. An odd example is the

computer in *Wargames*. Its weakness was a need to learn about futility—this was nothing that could have been deduced without the characters first talking to Falken (the computer is also an unusual villain in that it had no evil intentions, only a misunderstanding of what was right).

Once the PCs are aware of this weakness, they can try to make use of it however they wish. The exact effect of its use could range from momentary distraction to rage, whatever is appropriate.

In the Game

We now know a good deal about how to set up and control our brainy villains. All that is left is the actual running of the character during the game. Too often, no matter how well he is created, an unexpected move on the part of the players or a lucky die roll leaves our anti-hero dead in the street halfway through the adventure. There are many ways to avoid this very unclimactic end for your villain. The easiest is to cheat. No matter what the dice say, you tell your players they missed. If you do all the dice rolling for your game (which I highly recommend), this will be relatively easy to accomplish. If not, you will have to explain the alteration in some fashion, or you will not have players so much as a lynch mob, which will most certainly rob the game of much of its fun.

This is not a technique to use with any kind of regularity. Roleplaying is built on the premise of the players deciding the course of the adventure by their actions, not on having a domineering overlord who has to have things go his way or else. So the best policy is to avoid situations where this has to happen.

The thinking villain, as opposed to the physical villain, manipulates from the shadows, seldom exposing himself to danger, using others to do his dirty work for him. By his very nature, he should spend little time in combat. He should, however, make an occasional appearance to the players, just to remind them who they are truly up against. But he should do so in situations under his control and with severe repercussions if the PCs try anything drastic (a roomful of armed guards is always a good deterrent).

Next, when he appears in a scene where you do not intend him to be killed, captured or otherwise have an end put to his career as a bad guy, be sure to pre-arrange an escape route for him. Whether it be a secret passage, a bulletproof vest, a getaway car or a band of henchmen waiting to rush to his aid, the narrow escape has been a staple of cinematic villains since their inception. Also, since you set it up in advance, your players will not be justified in anger at you for disallowing them an easy victory.

Give your villain a limit on the amount of men, material and time he has, and require him to use some of it for the completion of his task. If Dr. Darkshadow has only so many men and most of them are preoccupied with getting his time eradication bomb into place, he will be less likely to send unrealistically large numbers of goons after the player characters. By doing this, you will also reinforce the concept of the villain having a goal other than turning the heroes into paté (unless that is his goal, in which case the players are in trouble).

If you have PCs who are very powerful and tend to wade through adventures without even working up sweat, a thinking villain is a good way to give them a dose of humility. After they first act against him, have your evil genius devise some scheme with which to strip the heroes of their power—possibly the theft or destruction of high-powered weapons and armor, an injection of a drug or potion which dampens their fighting ability, or the ruining of a vital piece of

equipment (magic users' spell books are particularly good targets). After such an occurrence, players will be less likely to underestimate their opponent and more driven to defeat him.

Having matched wits with each other for the whole story, it is now time for the player characters and the villain to meet in the climax. The final encounter with the villain himself should be dramatic and exciting. Start by setting the conflict somewhere interesting. Locations such as perilous heights, a moving vehicle, in the heart of an operating factory, or in the villain's inner sanctum all provide excitement in and of themselves, much less when coupled with a battle to the finish against a hated foe.

In the final conflict, the heroes should find themselves thrust into a situation which is out of their control. Some event (a fire, explosion, natural disaster, vehicle going out of control, etc.) can make the situation one where the players are not entirely in command. Other options may involve the villain having a previously unknown weapon, henchman or escape route.

Along with the usual drama, this scene should involve the villain having his last hope for victory. Even if his original plan is hopelessly doomed, he should have the chance to serve vengeance on those who destroyed it. One who has struggled with and challenged a capable group of players deserves his shot at redemption, and so does the GM who played him. By giving him a chance, even if it is a slim one, an extra degree of suspense is added to the game that lets it end with a bang.

On Killing a Villain

The sad fact of most adventure stories is that they end with the death of the man we love to hate, the thinking villain. This should be handled with the greatest sense of accomplishment in roleplaying—a great villain has earned a great death. Have him fall from a terrific height or get caught in a spectacular explosion or, for the truly grand finale, give him a long death scene with lots of dialogue. It will make you feel better for eliminating such an enjoyable character.

Not all archvillains have to die. Some are sent to prison, others stripped of their power, and some even live on to fight another day (e.g., Darth Vader in *Star Wars*). If you intend to use him again, having him live is much better than trying to explain how he came back from the dead.

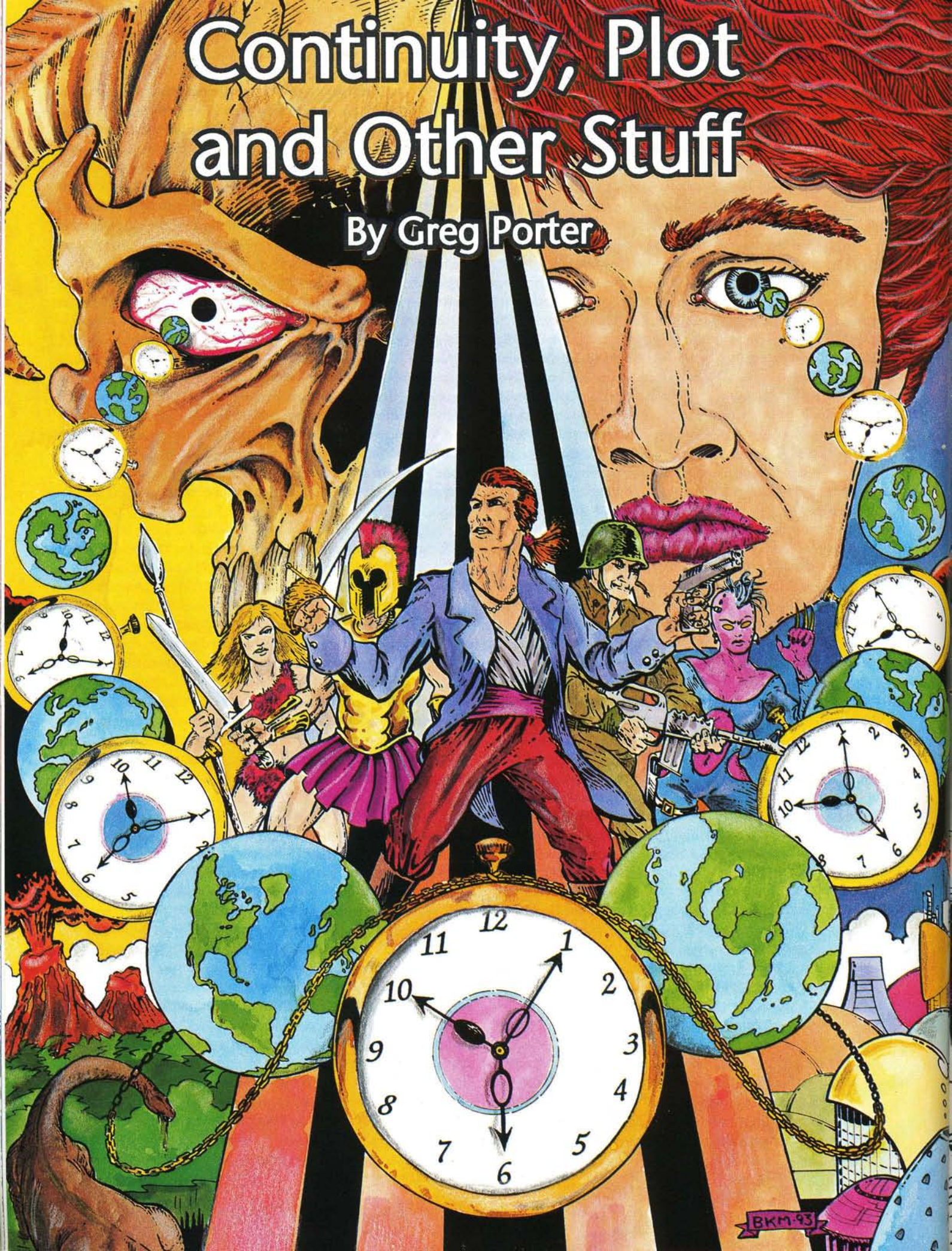
Before I Go

Villains are as varied and personal as the people who make them. My purpose in writing this is to give you some ideas on how to make yours more interesting, not to lay out a unchangeable lawbook for all villains. Keep what you can use and ignore the rest—you know better than anyone else what sort of opponent works best for your players. Also, experiment with the whole idea of the villain. Perhaps yours is not a single villain, but the entire board of directors of a corrupt corporation or the collective hatred of an angry mob. This sort of creative adventure design will add tremendously to the amount of enjoyment you and your players receive from roleplaying.

These tips should help you make a much more formidable nemesis for your players without making an opponent who is nothing but attributes and high-powered weapons. I have found sessions played against such cunning opponents to be more challenging, exiting and fun than the all-too-common tedium of hack-and-slash gaming. Ω

Continuity, Plot and Other Stuff

By Greg Porter



In looking back over the roleplaying game industry, cohesive, universal systems, especially for a multiple-dimension campaign setting, are one of the later developments.

With a traditional old hack and slash game, objectives were rather simple: Kill anything that is remotely hostile, and loot the bodies. Repeat as necessary until you rule the world. At this point, pull out a guide to known deities, and starting with the letter A, wipe them all out. Then retire the character and start over.

Later developments included the radical notion of things like *plot* ("You mean there's a reason this dragon is terrorizing the countryside?"), *consistency* ("If the monster fills the entire 50'x50' room, and the door is only five feet wide, how did he get in?"), and *continuity* ("You think the priests of Set are still mad that we desecrated their temple last week?"). But players and characters knew their limits. The world is a certain number of kilometers around, and there are *n* alternate planes, where *n* is a fairly small number. It takes longer, but becoming the meanest being in the known universe is still possible.

Enter the multiple-dimension games, or games that are exceedingly large in scope. Players who actually think about the world background, the campaign and the eventful goals of the characters often get a serious case of "multernity ennui." This is the feeling that no matter what the players or characters do, they will never, ever make a real difference in what is going on. For instance, in *Renegade Legion*, the campaign setting is a "county" of a few dozen star systems, part of a province of some number of counties, part of some larger area of space, ad infinitum. In addition, players know that their characters are just a few of countless hundreds and thousands of similar warriors, and that their ultimate enemy is so powerful and so far away that they will never encounter him, her or it directly. Oh boy, I can barely contain my excitement. The same can be said of *Star Wars*, for instance. *BattleTech* at least keeps the scale down to a manageable number of star systems and a clearly defined area of space, and of course, most *BattleTech* players aren't in it for the character development anyway.

A number of the "dark future" roleplaying games have this problem, but to a lesser extent. Characters are more realistic and have their limits. It seems that the dark corporations or other forces they sometimes fight against are going to be there long after the characters are dust, so why bother? How many *Cyberpunk* or *Shadowrun* players have actually thought about what their character wants to be doing five years from now, aside from not having their chips recycled into toaster ovens? They live for the moment, because to do otherwise is to invite a serious angst attack.

The problem is even worse with time travel, dimension travel or other multiple-dimension games. If the number of possible dimensions is large, the role that characters can play is correspondingly small, and, if the GM is not careful, it can vanish altogether.

Interestingly, the problem potentially exists in *all* games. If playing a generic hack and slash game, you don't usually consider that even if you are becoming king of the world, you are still only king of an insignificant dust speck, orbiting an average star in a nondescript galaxy, one of countless millions just like it. You don't think about this, because you are *king of the world*. You have achieved your goal. Similarly, in real life, we

don't often contemplate the vanishing small importance of ourselves, because to be honest, it's just so damn depressing.

In a multiple-dimension game, you get your nose rubbed in it *every time* you play. Every time you go from one continuum to another, the ability to make a difference on "the big scale" gets smaller, and if you don't go from one continuum to another, you wonder what's going on elsewhere. Multernity ennui begins setting in, and instead of having fun in your game, you just get the urge to go back to a simpler era of looting temples and bashing orcs. Not good.

Curing the Multernity Ennui

The cure for this malady is the same for *any* game: *You have to make the characters a central part of the game.* This is easy in a one-world game, but GMs too often treat a multiverse as just a bunch of "one-world" settings. This doesn't work. Whatever the characters do, and wherever they go, they are part of a universal (or multiversal) plot or plots, which eventually will result in some final confrontation that will draw a close to the entire campaign. For instance, the *Star Wars* movie trilogy ended appropriately. If that were a campaign, those characters should be retired, or new characters started, and the old ones made into NPC fixtures. After all, they've killed the Emperor, toppled the Empire, rehabilitated Darth, and blown up the Death Star (twice). Admit it, it would be real tough to keep player interest with more mundane plots after that, although the audience might continue to enjoy it.

If you have a campaign that spans multiple dimensions, you need a campaign theme which spans multiple dimensions, and which can involve the characters in each. What this theme is depends on the reason for multidimensional travel in the first place.

TimeLords Sample Theme

Multernity ennui is common in a number of *TimeLords* campaigns, a game where characters are catapulted through time and space by an artifact they only gradually learn to control. Too often, a GM has just a series of one-shots and odd settings whose only common question is whether or not the characters brought enough ammunition. Here is the overall theme to help combat it.

The Designers, aliens from near the end of time, invented time travel so they could save their race from extinction when the last stars in the universe burned out. They moved their entire culture back to around 50,000 BC by our reckoning and set up shop somewhere in our region of the galaxy. They experimented on various developing races in this region of space, one of which was *Homo sapiens* and another which was the race the Destroyer came from. Their name is lost to the records. Experimentation and augmentation on a member of this race went ghastly awry, and with his power and access to Designer technology, he wiped the Designers out. If any survived, they stayed very well hidden. The Destroyer, now a paranoid megalomaniac, took off to blast the Designer colonies and research outposts, one of which was experimenting on humans. When the Destroyer began his assault, a dying Designer deactivated the locks that prevented the augmented human from using his full capabilities, and he jumped to another dimension.

The Destroyer, thwarted, continued his hunt to wipe out the Designers, which occupied him for quite a while. Meanwhile, the human, who named himself Lightbringer, went home and began to change history. The development of human culture is directly attributable to Lightbringer, and he, in turn, was a product of the Designers. With his own abilities, he began to scavenge Designer relics from the ruins of destroyed bases, and he trained select humans in their operation. These were the first-generation TimeLords.

Constantly going to the possible futures to see how his handiwork fared, eventually he and his followers were able to create enough cultures capable of advanced technology to build a small fleet of starships, for the express purpose of hunting down the Destroyer. The attack was only partially successful and cost Lightbringer half his TimeLords to only wound the Destroyer. Many of the survivors took their relics and left. As they passed on, their technology was spread to a next generation, the second-generation TimeLords. Many of these knew the original TimeLords directly and had enough of a grasp of the theory of the multiverse to do well on their own. Some of them were less than stellar specimens of humanity, and multernity drove them insane in various ways. At least one seeks to rebuild the technology that let the Designers move their entire solar system billions of years back in time. With this, he hopes to take part of our universe and make it into a new one, one where he controls the laws of nature at his whim. He is human.

Meanwhile, Lightbringer and his few remaining TimeLords discovered that the Destroyer, after being wounded, prepared for himself a refuge where such forces could not be brought to bear against him again. But it had the flaw that he could not use his forces to maximum effect either. Lightbringer and his followers recruited an army of 10,000 from across the spectrum of cultures and times, and made an all-out assault on the Destroyer's fortress. A handful made it in the door, and after a bloody battle, the Destroyer was defeated. Stripped of his powers, he was left to die of thirst in an impenetrable force bubble, a death that would take thousands of years thanks to his closed metabolic system.

Lightbringer was eventually murdered by one of his followers, and one of the others now chases the assassin through time and space. The assassin is fond of using Designer technology

to confuse the pursuit by giving it his psychic signature and leaving it where unsuspecting mortals can trigger it.

Where the Characters Fit In

Humankind has most of the Designer technology that survived the Destroyer's assault, because Lightbringer, a human, recovered it and brought it back to Earth and alternate Earths.

Therefore, when it comes to time travel, dimension travel and altering the history of any humanity, humans hold most of the cards. At least the fate of the universe is in your ball park. However, a few alien races have tidbits of this technology and have developed time travel on their own. A few of them pose a direct threat to humanity as invaders and despoilers.

Lightbringer recruited his original TimeLords from humanity that developed from his tampering. Therefore, it is probably more than chance that led the characters to their first encounter with Designer technology. If not Lightbringer, then his assassin, who might have an entirely different agenda in mind.

In a campaign of this scope, it turns out that the characters are potential recruits to be the *original* TimeLords. The other TimeLords they might encounter are also on this path and may be enemies, but all are heading unknown to the same goal of eventually ensuring the survival of the human race. At the same time, some of the second- or third-generation TimeLords, for whom the universe has already been saved (it's a time travel thing—don't ask), may seek the Designer technology the characters have for their own ends.

At the same time, characters also have to deal with the most powerful of the second-generation TimeLords, who want to take the multiple human histories and put them in a cosmic goldfish bowl to play God for all eternity. Again, the characters are directly involved in the future of not just *their* Earth and *their* humanity, but *all* Earths and *all* humanities.

And last, somewhere, the Destroyer lurks silently in his hidden prison, waiting for some unsuspecting time traveller to release him. Not the world-wrecking menace he used to be, he is still powerful and retains his knowledge of Designer science. He is relatively weak now but has the potential to become again what he once was.

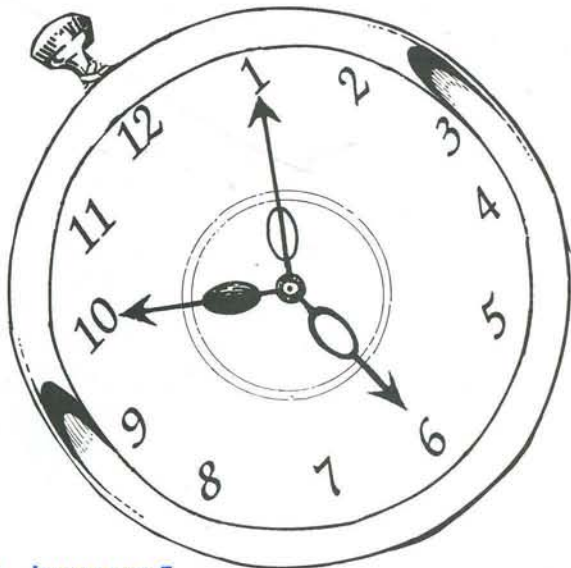
Compare this to the alternative, where characters aimlessly jump from one world to another, gaining experience and skills, but with no eventual end in sight, and no point to their seemingly endless journeys. Which has more "bite" to it? Which will keep the players on the edge of their seats, trying to see how it all fits together?

For *TimeLords* then, some GM planning turns a series of unconnected adventures into a mind-boggling plot, where a group of ordinary characters may eventually be:

- Responsible for destroying an alien menace who threatens not just humanity but virtually all intelligent life in the galaxy.
- Saving most of humanity from an eternity of suffering under a lunatic god.
- Saving some of humanity from ravages by alien time travellers.

This is in addition to all the adventures characters will have on the way to these goals, and there is no guarantee they will ever survive to reach any of them. But nothing in life is certain, and no goal without risk.

Otherwise, there wouldn't be any fun in it. Ω



D-Cubed 1993, June 5-6 at the Pensacola Civic Center, Pensacola, FL. Contact AGI, Inc., PO Box 37186, Pensacola, FL 32526-0186.

Heroes Convention, June 11-13. Note the change in date! Contact Heroes Aren't Hard to Find, PO Box 9181, Charlotte, NC 28299.

CapitalCon IX, June 12-13 at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield, IL. Contact CapitalCon, 2617 Selkirk, Springfield, IL 62702.

St. Joseph Valley Gamers 1993 Convention, June 18-19 at the IUSB campus in South Bend, IN. Send a SASE to St. Joseph Valley Gamers, 121 W. Colfax, South Bend, IN 46601.

HexaCon III, June 18-20 at the Camelview Resort, 7601 East Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale, AZ. Contact HexaCon III, PO Box 62613, Phoenix, AZ 85082.

AtlantiCon, June 18-20 at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, MD. Contact ADF Inc., PO Box 91, Beltsville, MD 20704.

MichiCon '93, June 18-20 at the Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, MI (the first suburb north of Detroit). Contact Metro Detroit Gamers, M-93, PO Box 656, Wyandotte, MI 48192.

WyverCon '93, June 18-20 in Mount Vernon, WA. Contact WyverCon '93, c/o S.V.G.A., PO Box 2325, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273.

Glathricon '93, June 18-20 in Evansville, IN. Contact Glathricon c/o Evansville Gaming Guild, PO Box 15414, Evansville, IN 47716.

ArCon 9, June 25-27 at the University of Oslo, Vilhelm Bjerknes' Building, Norway. Contact ARCON, PO Box 46, Blindern, N-0313 Oslo, Norway.

Origins '93, July 1-4 at the Tarrant County Convention Center in Ft. Worth, TX. Write to GEMCO, PO Box 609, Randallstown, MD 21133.

CowCon, July 2-5 at Sheraton Denver Tech Center, CO. Write to CowCon/Westercon 46 Bid, 7735 Osceola St., Westminster, CO 80030.

Archon 17, July 9-11 in St. Louis, Mo. Contact Archon 17, PO Box 50125, Clayton, MO 63105.

PheenCon '93, July 10-11 at the Stadthalle Bad Godesberg in Bonn, Germany. Contact GFR e.V., c/o Taro Lachéra, Marsiliustr.35, 5000 Köln 90, Germany.

DragonCon '93, July 16-18 at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers. Contact John Froehlich, 140 Village Lane, Fairburn, GA 30213.

Grand Game Con, July 17 at the American Legion Post on Wilson Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI. Send a SASE to Will Holdin, 1023 California NWm Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

OPERATION GREEN FLAG: BattleTech III Plus, July 24-25 at the Embers in Carlisle, PA. Contact M. Fonier's Games Only Emporium, 200 Third St., New Cumberland, PA 17070.

CanGames '93, July 30-Aug. 2 at the Citadel Inn (formerly the Skyline Hotel) in downtown Ottawa, Ontario. Contact CanGames '93, PO Box 3358, Station D, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 6H8.

GameFest, Aug. 4-8 in historic Old Towne in San Diego, CA. Contact GameFest XIV, 3954 Harney St., San Diego, CA 92110.

KingCon '93, Aug. 6-8 in Dayton, OH. Contact KingCon '93, PO 31174, Dayton, OH 45431.

1993 GenCon® Game Fair, Aug. 19-22 at the MECCA Convention Center, Milwaukee, WI. Send a SASE to GenCon® Game Fair, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

FRON 9, Aug. 28-29 at the Buergerhaus Griesheim, Schwarzerlenweg 57, Frankfurt, Germany. Contact 252 e.V., c/o Martin Kliehm, Inder Roemerstadt 164, 6000 Frankfurt am Main 50, Germany.

Sioux City GameCon VIII, Sept. 3-5 at the Marina Inn, 4th and B streets, South Sioux City Nebraska. Send a large SASE to Kurt Lyons, 2801 Jennings, Sioux City, IA 51104.

Gateway '93, Sept. 3-6 at the LA Airport Hyatt Hotel. Contact Strategicon, PO Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849.

ConFrancisco/Worldcon 51, Sept. 3-6 at Le Meridien and Parc 55 hotels and Moscone Convention Center, San Francisco, CA. Contact ConFrancisco, 712 Bancroft Road, Suite 1993, Walnut Creek, CA 94598.

DemiCon 4, Sept. 24-26 at the Sheraton Conference Hotel, Dulaney Valley Road and Fairmont Avenue, Towson, MD. Send a SASE to Harford Adventure Society, c/o The Strategic Castle, 114 N. Toll Gate Road, Bel Air, MD 21014.

Earth '93, Sept. 25-26 at the Freizeitheim Stocken, Eichsfelderstr.101, Hannover/Germany. Contact Arne Rassek, Berliner Str.23, D-W 3005 Hemmingen 1, Germany.

NOVAG VIII, Oct. 2-3 at Elks Lodge #2188, Fairfax, VA. Contact NOCVAG VIII, PO Box 729, Sterling, VA 20167.

Rally 'Round the Flag '93, Oct. 8-10 at the Columbus Convention Center, 400 North High St., Columbus, OH. Contact HMGSNT, PO Box 14272, Columbus, OH 43214.

P.E.W. KAHN-UII, Oct. 16-17 at the Embers in Carlisle, PA. Contact M. Fonier's Games Only Emporium, 200 Third St., New Cumberland, PA 17070.

U-Con '93, Oct. 29-31 at the University of Michigan Union in Ann Arbor, MI. Contact U-Con '93, PO Box 4491, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-4491.

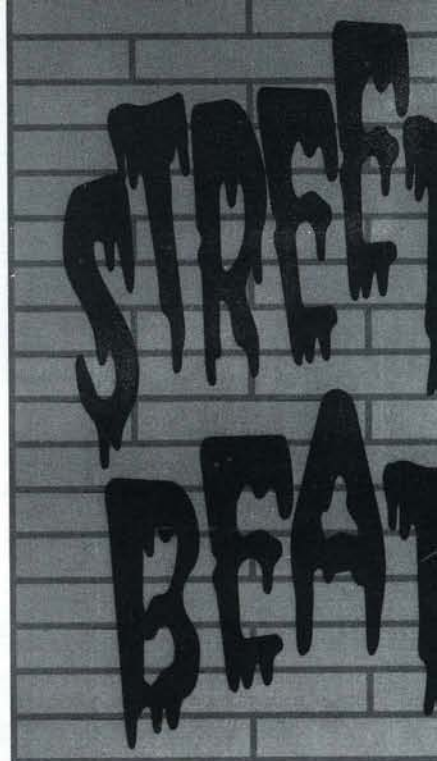
LagaCon 16, Nov. 6 at the Fraternal Order of Eagles, 116 North 8th St., Lebanon, PA. Contact the Lebanon Area Gamers Association, 806 Cumberland St., Lebanon, PA 17042.

Pocon '93, The Rematch, Nov. 12-14 at the Holiday Inn, Bartonsville, PA. Contact Ed Dowgiallo, The Pocono Encampment, PO Box 390, Effort, PA 18330.

PentaCon IX, Nov. 13-14 at the Grand Wayne Center, downtown Fort Wayne, IN. Contact Steve and Linda Smith, 836 Himes, Huntington, IN 46750.

ShaunCon VII, Nov. 19-21 in Kansas City, MO. Contact The Role-Players Guild of Kansas City, c/o ShaunCon VII, PO Box 7457, Kansas City, MO 64116.

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Integrating

By Sandy Addison

the Realms



Within each of the realms within *Torg*, there are many skills, spells, miracles etc., which have powers that apply to only that realm. These powers give character to each realm and make it unique. But what happens when some of the unique aspects of each realm come in contact? For example, when an *Orrorsh* storm knight tries to use the True Sight power in the Nile Empire? Or when an *Aysle* wizard casts a true light which can drive away any darkness, whether physical, mental or spiritual, in *Orrorsh*? This article is an attempt to examine some of these situations and give a means by which they can be resolved.

Given the ever-increasing world *Torg*, it would be impossible for this article to be a complete list. However, these may give the gamemaster some ideas on how to better integrate the various *Torg* realities.

Aysle Spells

As the land of magic, *Aysle* has many spells which can have an effect within other realms. But sometimes these effects might not be what the castor expected.

Talking Dead: *Orrorsh*: A very useful spell which can reveal a great deal of information. However, dealing with the dead can be a horrifying experience. Therefore, each time the spell is cast, subtract 1 from the group's Perseverance.

Sense Life: *Orrorsh*: This spell can detect any horror in much the same way that it can detect undead in *Aysle*. Most horror's souls have been dead at least once, and corrupted souls have lost some attachment to life itself. To detect horrors, use the horror's Corruption Value or the Willpower, whichever is higher.

Space Gods: This spell can be used to detect and identify biotech devices.

True Light: *Orrorsh*: This spell can affect horrors who have weakness in regard to sunlight. (This applies not only to *Orrorsh*, but creatures from any realms which may be affected by sunlight.) Also, since the spell drives away any darkness, whether physical, mental or spiritual, a horror must have a Corruption Value higher than the Effect Value to enter or remain within the spell's effect.

Eradicate Fear: *Nile Empire*: This spell is also effective against the effects of the fear pulp power.

Orrorsh: This spell can counter the effects the setback resulting from the Law of Fear (if the mage can cast the spell, that is). However, since the fear caused by the horror is reinforced by the Law of Fear, the spell total must overcome the Corruption rating of the creature, not the affected character's mind.

New Hope: *Orrorsh*: The spell description states, "New hope causes the targets to feel as if all obstacles have been removed and that nothing can stop them from their goals." Therefore, if the Effect Value of this spell is greater than the Corruption of the horror, than a new Perseverance total is rolled. The first Perseverance total is disregarded, and only the effects of the second roll are considered. This bonus is over and above any other positive effects the spell might have.

Destroy Magic: This spell can affect all types of magic, including Nile mathematics and engineering and occult spells.

Extradimensional Gate: This spell can be used to travel to any other cosms if they are connected by a maelstrom bridge. Travel to other realities upon earth are also possible. Therefore, a character could use this spell to travel from Nippon Tech to *Aysle*.

Mirror to Other Worlds and Scrying Eyes: *Orrorsh*: If either of these spells are used to view regions in *Orrorsh*, the gamemaster may still call for Perseverance checks.

Conceal Evil: *Orrorsh*: The results of this spell may also be added to the spirit of a character to avoid being detected by the True Sight skill.

Aysle Miracles

Detect Miracle: This miracle can detect any miracle from any reality, not just those from *Aysle*.

Elmir's Ring: This miracle will work against all *Orrorsh* horrors, Tharkoldu, gospels and creatures created through technomagic. It does not work upon Akashan's biotech items or victims of the Comaghaz plague.

Passing Shadows: *Orrorsh*: If this spell is used in this reality, then a Perseverance check may be required if the invoked views a "horrific" scene.

Orrorsh Skills

Although many skills in *Orrorsh* create contradictions, while in other realms, some of them can be very useful.

True Sight: Because of its ability to see into the soul of the person/creature that is being examined, True Sight is one of the most powerful skills available in *Orrorsh*. When the power is used elsewhere, no negative effects are applied to the user.

Aysle: This skill can be used to determine if the person has either the *Aysle* Honor or Corruption skill. The target number for the roll is either of the above skills. The degree of information gained depends upon the level of success: *Minimal/average* success reveals just if the person has either the Honor or Corruption skill. *Good/superior* success reveals the measure of the target character's honor or corruption (i.e., whether the person is honorable, noble or foul, etc.). *Spectacular* success reveals the exact number of adds the person had in the relevant skill.

Also, if a person examines an NPC whose features are covered by magic illusion, compare the True Sight total to the effect total of the spell. If the True Sight total is greater, then the actual appearance of the person is revealed to the character. True Sight will not work with other types of illusions. What the character is able to determine is that the soul of the NPC does not match with the surface appearance. From this he is able to determine that something is amiss.

Nile Empire: With True Sight, the characters may determine the inclination of the person they are examining. The target number is the person's Spirit or Faith skill. If successful, the *Orrorsh* character is able to determine if the person is good or evil.

Nile Empire Spells

Ward Off Good/Evil: *Aysle*: This spell is also effective against characters with either the Honor or Corruption skill, with Ward Off Evil working against Corruption and Ward Off Good working against Honor.

Orrorsh: Ward Off Evil will work against creatures with corruption.

Nile Empire Miracles

Bounty: *Aysle*: If the Focus total of the miracle exceeds the Corruption Value of the region, then the land within the area of effect is turned from dark to light for the duration of the miracle. Ω

NPC Warriors

By Wayne Peacock

How many times has your player group waded right through the supposedly elite forces of your favorite NPC? If you used the NPCs found in the *Hero System* rulebook for the opposition, this has probably happened fairly often. Even with good weapons and armor, the lackluster stats and skills aren't much of a match for a 150-point character.

To remedy the situation, we present six types of NPC warriors that any heroic level group may encounter. They are intentionally not genre-specific, although originally designed for the *FH/Ninja Hero* game. These are intended as frameworks for the GM to construct his own warriors, which will be more specific to the GM's genre.

Each warrior type contains a brief description of the warrior's experience and training. Below is a list of the point totals to use as a reference:

Name	Base	Dis	Exp	Total
Regular	25	10	0	35
Heavy	25	25	0	50
Elite	50	25	0	75
Veteran	50	50	25	125
Hero	75	50	25	150
Master	75	75	50	200

Weapons and Armor

Depending on your campaign, the warriors should be equipped with moderate to state-of-the-art weaponry. The greater their point total, the better their weapons should be.

Choosing armor may be a bit trickier than weapons. While it is true that more powerful NPCs have access to better armor, it was often the case that great generals in history (Master Warriors) would proceed into the field in ornate but relatively light armor. In a modern setting, assault-type forces (Heavy-Hero) would usually be the only soldiers to wear heavy armor.

Included are some combinations of weapons, armor and related equipment for *Cyber Hero*, *Fantasy Hero*, *Star Hero* and *Western Hero*, with a selection of contemporary equipment taken from the *Hero System* rulebook.

Free Points

"Free points" can be used to buy up existing skills or even characteristics. Following is a complete list of common skill options for warriors: Area Knowledge, Bases, Breakfall, Combat Sense, Defense Maneuver, Enhanced Senses, Fastdraw, Followers, Fringe Benefits, Knowledge Skills, Martial Arts, Money, Movement (+ Running), Oratory, Paramedic, Riding, Professional Skills, Range Levels, Skill Increases, Skill Levels, Survival, Tactics, Transport Familiarities, Weapon Familiarities and Weapon Smith.

Familiarities are listed as skills with an 8- chance. Enhanced Senses (a Power) is listed as an option for free points (experienced warriors/scouts should be able to buy+1-3 for

various Sense Perception rolls.)

Points for Martial Arts (MA) have been allocated for some of the warriors. I suggest using *Ninja Hero* to create your own brand of MA to fit your campaign. If the GM is not using any MA, allocate the MA points as free points.

Disadvantages

Disadvantages are listed with each description, but feel free to mix and match with the disadvantages below or come up with ones more appropriate to your game.

Common Disadvantages	Cost
Age 40+	5
Distinctive Features (Soldier)	5
DNPC: The Troops, 8-	5
Monitored by Government, 11-	10
Unluck: 1D6	5
PL: Missing an Eye	5
PsL: Honorable: Common, Total	20
PsL: Obeys Orders: Common, Strong	15
PsL: Obeys Orders: Very Common, Moderate	15
Rivalry, Professional	5
Rivalry, Professional with Superior	10

REGULAR

A regular warrior represents a soldier who has had basic training but has probably not seen much action.

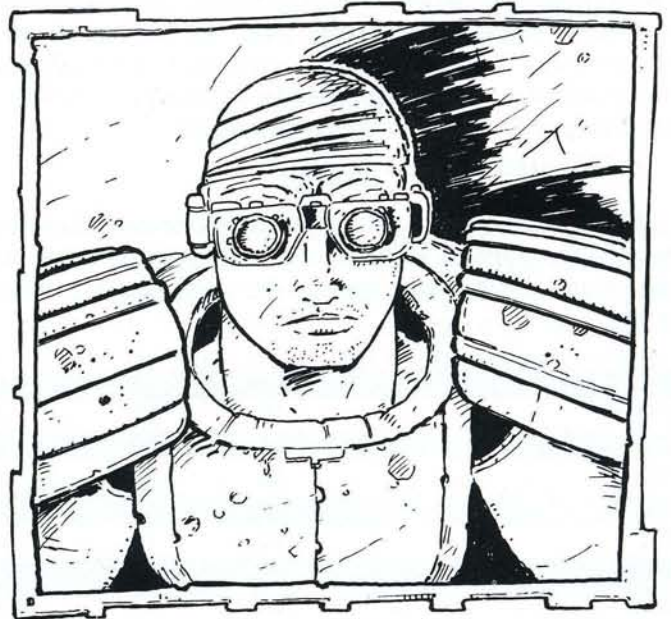
Char	Value	Base	Cost
STR	13	10	3
DEX	11	10	2
CON	13	10	6
BODY	10	10	—
INT	10	10	—
EGO	10	10	—
PRE	10	10	—
COM	10	10	—
PD	4	3	1
ED	4	3	1
SPD	3	2.1	9
REC	6	6	—
END	26	26	—
STUN	25	23	3
Character Total			24

Weapons and Armor

Contemporary: 9mm Browning Pistol and M1 6A1 Rifle, Light Kevlar Stan. Vest, Boots and Helmet.

Cyberhero: Bren 10 Pistol and Squall, Ceram Vest, Adv. Radio Earclip, Photosensitive Glasses.

Fantasy Hero: Dagger and Broadsword or Spear, Studded Leather and Shield.



Star Hero: Safeguard Body Armor, Blaster and Omicorp Autocannon, Button Communicator.

Western Hero: .45 Revolver, 12-Shot Carbine, Knife, Riding Horse.

Skills

AK: Country/City	8-	1
Tactics	8-	1
PS: Soldier	11-	2
Skill Levels		
Weapon (3 pts.)	+1	3
Streetwise	8-	1
Weapon Fam w/Comm.	Y	3
Skill Total		11

OCV: 4 DCV: 4 ECV: 3 PHA: 4, 8, 12

Disadvantages: PsL: Obeys Orders: Very Comm., Mod.: 15

Costs: Char+Powers=Total=Disadv.+Base (24+11=35=10+25).

Free Points: Area Knowledge, Bases, Breadfall, Combat Sense, Defense Maneuver, Enhanced Senses, Fastdraw, Followers, Fringe Benefits, Knowledge Skills, Martial Arts, Money, Movement (+Running), Oratory, Paramedic, Riding, Professional Skills, Range Levels, Survival, Tactics, Transport Familiarities, Weapon Familiarities, and Weapon Smith.

HEAVY

A heavy warrior represents a physically superior soldier who has had some special combat training, but has probably not seen much action. Heavy warriors are often assault or shock troops.

Char	Value	Base	Cost
STR	18	10	8
DEX	11	10	2
CON	13	10	6
BODY	12	10	4
INT	10	10	—
EGO	10	10	—
PRE	10	10	—
COM	10	10	—
PD	6	4	2
ED	4	3	1
SPD	3	2.1	9
REC	6	7	-2
END	26	26	—
STUN	30	28	2
Character Total			32

Weapons and Armor

Contemporary: 9mm Browning Pistol and M-60 LMG, Kevlar Long Jacket, Boots and Helmet, 3-6 Grenades.

Cyberhero: Thunderer Pistol and Inquisitor or Hydra, Mesh Armored Bodysuit, Adv. Radio Earclip, Photosensitive Glasses, Free points in Cyber Enhancements.

Fantasy Hero: Dagger and Greatsword or Military Pick, Ring Mail and Plate Helm.

Star Hero: Omicorp Assault Armor, Blaster and Mauler Mark VIII, Button Communicator, 3-6 Grenades.

Western Hero: Two .45 Revolvers, 12-Shot Carbine or Scattergun, Knife, Riding Horse.

Skills

AK: Country/City	8-	1
Fam. w/Tactics	8-	1
PS: Soldier	11-	2
Other Skill/Perk/Talent	4	
Skill Levels		
Weapon (3 pts.)	+2	6
Streetwise	8-	1
Weapon Fam w/Comm.	Y	3
Skill Total		18

OCV: 4 DCV: 4 ECV: 3 PHA: 4, 8, 12

Disadvantages: Monitored by Government (Army), 11-: 10

PsL: Obeys Orders: Very Comm., Mod.: 15

Costs: Char+Powers=Total=Disadv.+Base (32+18=50=25+25).

Other Familiarities and Etc.: Area Knowledge, Bases, Breakfall, Combat Sense, Defense Maneuver, Enhanced Senses, Fastdraw, Followers, Fringe Benefits, Knowledge Skills, Martial Arts, Money, Movement (+Running), Oratory, Paramedic, Riding, Professional Skills, Range Levels, Skill Increases, Skill Levels, Survival, Tactics, Transport Familiarities, Weapon Familiarities, and Weapon Smith.

ELITE

Elite warriors are different from regular warriors because they have superior physical abilities and extraordinary training.

Char	Value	Base	Cost
STR	13	10	3
DEX	14	10	12
CON	13	10	6
BODY	10	10	—
INT	13	10	3
EGO	11	10	2
PRE	13	10	3
COM	10	10	—
PD	5	3	2
ED	4	3	1
SPD	3	2.4	6
REC	6	6	—
END	26	26	—
STUN	25	23	2
Character Total			39

Weapons and Armor

Contemporary: 9mm Browning Pistol and M16A1 Rifle or MAC 10, Heavy Kevlar Long Vest, Boots, and Full Coverage Helmet, 3-6 Grenades.

Cyberhero: Gyodo and Cyclone, Mesh Bodysuit, Adv. Radio Earclip, Free points in Cyber Enhancements.

Fantasy Hero: Dagger and Broadsword or Bastard Sword, Bow or Spear, Warhorse and Lance, Scale Mail and Shield.

Star Hero: Safeguard Heavy Armor, Blaster and Stinger Rifle, Button Communicator, 3-6 Grenades.

Western Hero: .45 Revolver, .45 Rifle, Knife, Trained Horse.

Skills

AK: Country/City	1-	2
Breakfall	8-	1
KS: Soldier	12-	3
Movement:+ " Run.	+1"	2
Free Points	N/A	4
PS: Soldier	11-	2
Skill Levels		
Weapon (3 pts.)	+1	3
H-t-H Levels (5 pts.)	+1	5
Streetwise	11-	3
Survival	11-	3
Tactics	8-	1
Weapon Smith	8-	1
Weapon Fam w/Comm.	Y	3
2nd Weapon Group	Y	3
Skill Total		36

OCV: 5 DCV: 5 ECV: 3 PHA: 4, 8, 12

Disadvantages: Monitored by Government (Army), 11-: 10

PsL: Obeys Orders: Common, Strong: 15

Costs: Char+Powers=Total=Disadv.+Base (32+18=50=25+25).

Other Familiarities and Etc.: Area Knowledge, Bases, Combat Sense, Defense Maneuver, Enhanced Senses, Fastdraw, Followers, Fringe Benefits, Knowledge Skills, Martial Arts, Money, Movement (+ "Running), Oratory, Paramedic, Range Levels, Riding, Professional Skills, Skill Increases, Skill Levels, Transport Familiarities, and Weapon Familiarities.

VETERAN

These warriors have been on a few campaigns and generally know how to stay alive.

Char	Value	Base	Cost
STR	13	10	3
DEX	15	10	15
CON	13	10	6
BODY	11	10	2
INT	13	10	3
EGO	11	10	2
PRE	13	10	3
COM	10	10	—
PD	6	3	3
ED	4	3	1
SPD	4	2.5	15
REC	6	6	—
END	26	26	—
STUN	30	23	7
Character Total			60

Weapons and Armor

Contemporary: As Elite.

Cyberhero: Thunderer and Cyclone or Hydra, Gyodo and Cyclone, Mesh Bodysuit, Adv. Radio Earclip, free points in Cyber Enhancements.

Fantasy Hero: Dagger and Broadsword or Bastard Sword, Bow or Spear, Warhorse and Lance, Scale Mail and Shield.

Star Hero: Safeguard Heavy Armor, Blaster and Stinger Rifle, Button Communicator, 3-6 Grenades.

Western Hero: .45 Revolver, .45 Rifle, Knife, Trained Horse.

Hero

Skills

AK: Country/City	1-	2
Breakfall	8-	1
KS: Soldier	12-	3
Movement:+ "Run.	+1"	2
Free Points	N/A	4
PS: Soldier	11-	2
Skill Levels		
Weapon (3 pts.)	+1	3
H-t-H Levels (5 pts.)	+1	5
Streetwise	11-	3
Survival	11-	3
Tactics	8-	1
Weapon Smith	8-	1
Weapon Fam w/Comm.	Y	3
2nd Weapon Group	Y	3
Skill Total		36

OCV: 5 DCV: 5 ECV: 3 PHA: 3, 6, 9, 12

Disadvantages: Age 40+: 5

Distinctive Features (Soldier): 5

Monitored by Government (Army), 11-: 10

PL: Missing an Eye: 5

PsL: Obeys Orders: Common, Strong: 15

Rivalry, Professional w/ Superior: 10

Costs: Char+Powers=Total=Disadv.+Base (60+65=125=25+50+50)

Free Points: Area Knowledge, Bases, Combat Sense, Defense Maneuver, Enhanced Senses, Fastdraw, Followers, Fringe Benefits, Knowledge Skills, Martial Arts, Money, Movement (+ "Running), Oratory, Paramedic, Range Levels, Riding, Professional Skills, Skill Increases, Skill Levels, Transport Familiarities and Weapon Familiarities.

HERO

Heroes are legendary warriors—looked to by their comrades as examples of martial excellence.

Char	Value	Base	Cost
STR	15	10	5
DEX	16	10	18
CON	15	10	10
BODY	13	10	6
INT	13	10	3
EGO	12	10	4
PRE	13	10	3
COM	10	10	—
PD	6	3	3
ED	5	3	2
SPD	4	2.6	14
REC	6	6	—
END	30	30	—
STUN	35	28	7
Character Total			75

Weapons and Armor

Contemporary: As Elite or Heavy.

Cyberhero: Thunderer and Cyclone or Hydra or Ogun, Mesh Armored Bodysuit & Confusion Mk.II, Communication Earclip,

Megavisor, Free Pts. for Cyber/Neo, Enhancements.

Fantasy Hero: Dagger and Broadsword or Bastard Sword, Bow or Spear, Warhorse and Lance, Plate Mail & Shield, free points for Magical Weapons.

Star Hero: Safeguard Heavy Armor

Reflect Armor, Tight Beam Blaster and Ion Auto Rifle, Button Communicator, 3-6 Grenades.

Western Hero: .45 Revolver, .45 Rifle, Knife and Saber, Trained Horse.

Skills

AK: Country/City	11-	2
Breakfast	8-	1
Free Points	n/a	10
KS: Soldier	12-	3
Martial Arts	N/A	15
Movement:+'' Run.	+1''	2
Oratory	8-	1
Paramedic	INT	3
PS: Soldier	11-	2
Skill Levels		
Combat Levels (8 Pts.)	+2	16
Streetwise	11-	3
Tactics	8-	1
Weapon Smith	8-	1
Weap. Fam w/Comm.	Y	3
2nd Weapon Group	Y	3
3rd Weapon Group	Y	3
Skill Total		75

OCV: 5 DCV: 5 ECV: 4 PHA: 3,6,9,12

Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (Soldier): 5

Monitored by Govern. (Army), 11-: 10

PsL: Honorable: Common, Total: 20

PsL: Obeys Orders: Very Comm., Mod.: 15

Costs: Char+Powers=Total=EXP+Disadv.+Base (75+75=150=25+50+75).

Other Familiarities and Etc.: Area Knowledge, Bases, Combat Sense, Defense Maneuver, Enhanced Senses, Fastdraw, Followers, Fringe Benefits, Knowledge Skills, Money, Movement (+''Running), Range Levels, Riding, Professional Skills, Skill Increases, Skill Levels, Transport Familiarities & Weapon Familiarities.

MASTER

The distinction of master usually falls upon extraordinary leaders, but master warriors may be lone masters of martial arts or master assassins.

Char	Value	Base	Cost
STR	15	10	5
DEX	18	10	24
CON	15	10	10
BODY	13	10	6
INT	13	10	3
EGO	12	10	4
PRE	13	10	3
COM	10	10	
PD	6	3	3
ED	6	3	3

SPD	4	2.8	12
REC	6	6	
END	30	30	
STUN	40	28	12
Character Total			85

Weapons and Armor

These warriors are so powerful that they may have practically any weapon or device they want.

Contemporary: As Elite.

Cyberhero: 2mm Auto Pistol (Babalawo), Mesh Armored Bodysuit & Con. Mk. III, Communication Earclip, Mega Visor, free points for Cyber/Neo Enhancements

Fantasy Hero: Dagger and Broadsword or Bastard Sword, Bow or Spear, Warhorse and Lance, Plate Mail & Shield, free points for Magical Weapons.

Star Hero: Blaster w/ Laser Spotting Scope, Flicker Force Belt, Improved Reflect Armor, Flicker Personal Communicator.

Western Hero: .45 Revolver, .45 Rifle, Knife and Saber, Trained Horse.

Skills

AK: Country/City	11-	2
Breakfall	8-	1
Free Points	n/a	15
KS: Soldier	12-	3
Martial Arts	N/A	25
Movement:+'' Run.	+2''	4
Oratory	8-	1
Paramedic	INT	3
PS: Soldier	13-	4
Skill Levels		
Combat Levels (8 Pts.)	+3	24
Overall Level (10 Pts.)	+1	10
Streetwise	11-	3
Survival	11-	3
Tactics	INT+2	7
Weapon Smith	8-	1
Weap. Fam w/ Comm.	Y	3
2nd Weapon Group	Y	3
3rd Weapon Group	Y	3
Skill Weapon Group	Y	3
Skill Total		115

OCV: 6 DCV: 6 ECV: 4 PHA: 3,6,9,12.

Disadvantages: Age 40+: 5

Distinctive Features (Soldier): 5

DNPC: The Troops, 8-: 5

Monitored by Government. 11-: 10

PsL: Obeys Orders: Uncommon, Strong: 10

PsL: Honorable: Common, Moderate: 10

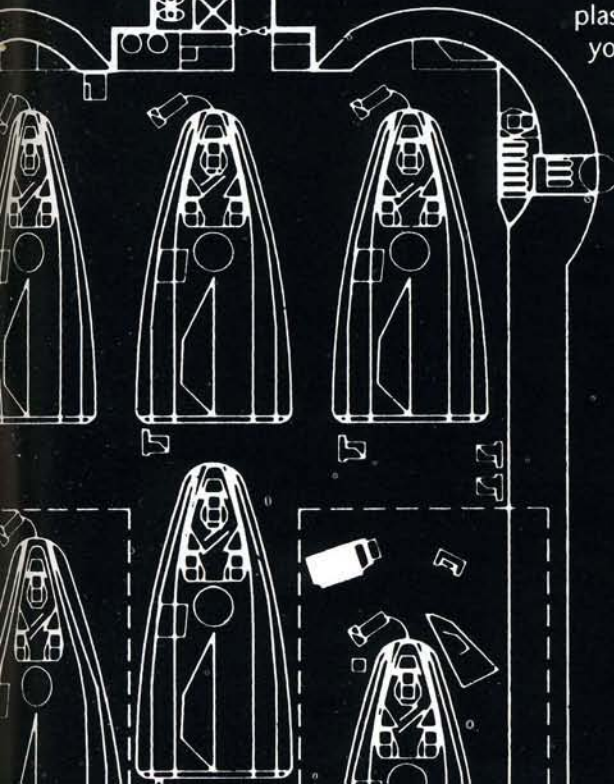
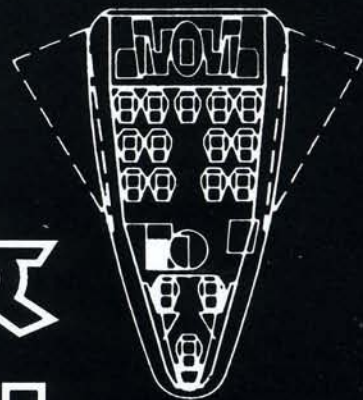
Rivalry, Professional: 5

Costs: Char+Powers=Total=EXP+Disadv+Base (85+115=200=50+75+75).

Free Points: Area Knowledge, Bases, Combat Sense, Defense Maneuver, Enhanced Senses, Knowledge Skills, Money, Movement (+''Running), Range Levels, Riding, Professional Skills, Skill Increases, Skill Levels, Transport Familiarities & Weapon Familiarities. Ω

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Sea Kings of the Purple Towns

Chaosium, Inc. \$18.95.

By Fred Behrendt, Nick Hagger, Mark Morrison, Anthony Utano, Richard Watts.

Published in 1992.

Review by Jimmie W. Pursell Jr.

Stormbringer players rejoice! The latest *Stormbringer* release from Chaosium, *Sea Kings of the Purple Towns*, has arrived. The 128-page book provides rules, background and adventures on the Merchant Isle.

Following in the format of *Sorcerers of Pan Tang*, *Sea Kings* takes a nation from the Young Kingdoms and explores it in great detail. For those unfamiliar with the Young Kingdoms, they are the setting of the *Elric* novels by Michael Moorcock and thus the setting of *Stormbringer*.

The first section of *Sea Kings* deals with the history and background of the isle itself. Maps of the four major settlements are provided, along with a short history of the isle in the time of Elric. The geography of the isle, from the Bay of Menii to the Central Highlands and beyond, is described briefly, along with the flora and fauna. Statistics are given for one of the isle's unique life forms, the splitleech, a dog-sized, two-headed leech which can drain you dry.

The second chapter is devoted to the people of the Purple Towns. The customs, fashion, appearance and general demeanor of the isle's inhabitants are described, along with an overview of the Sea Lords and the justice system. The last half of this chapter will be of great interest to players—the character creation rules are found here. Following in the tradition of *Sorcerers of Pan Tang*, *Sea Kings* provides detailed charts and skills for Purple Town characters. Where the basic game allows for a priest or warrior, the advanced rules in *Sea Kings* allow for a priest of Donblas or a Purple Towns marine. Rather than getting general skills, the specific skills possessed by these professions are gained, making a lawful priest of Donblas quite different from a chaotic priest of Pyaray.

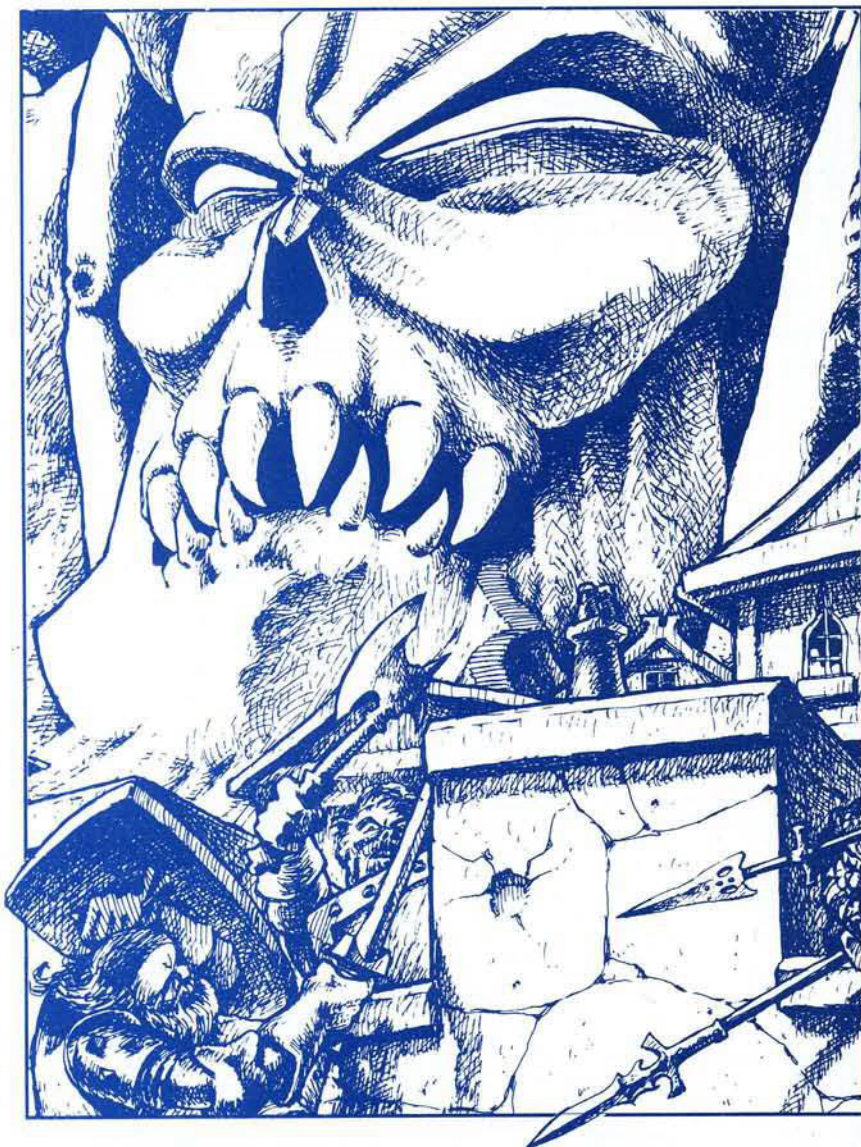
Stormbringer players take note: The marine has Primary Weapon Attack and parry at 70%, plus attack and parry bonuses, 20% higher than any other warrior. In addition to the detailed professions, five additional skills are

added which can be given to earlier professions as well.

The chapter on the churches of the isle provides background for the cults of air and water, as well as all the lawful deities. Though the background is interesting and the elan charts specific, don't look for new rules on elemental magic. It is not covered in the detail demon magic is in *Pan Tang*. A sidebar note in one of the adventures mentions that expanded magic will be included in the Melnibone sourcebook, which should be available early in 1993.

The most useful section for gamemasters is the Purple Town Digest. Included are statistics for the town's most interesting inhabitants, as well as generic statistics for common sorts, such as marines, guards, priests, etc. Sample individual characters are also given to fill niches in Purple Town society. How many gamemasters have had players go off on a tangent from the planned adventure? Wouldn't it have been nice to be able to reach into a book and pull stats for almost any type of character? Need a rich merchant? How about an agent of Donblas? You got it, along with guards, sea lords, sailors, priest, peasants, et al. Many games would do well to take this lead from Chaosium.

Another useful section is the encounter charts. In addition to the obligatory island encounters, Chaosium chose this supplement to provide encounter charts for all of the Young



Kingdoms' oceans. An interesting note on the Boiling Sea provides rules for crossing this steaming nightmare. Remember the novels?

Four adventures are included in the supplement, some of which tie to previous published adventures, though ownership of those adventures is not required to play anything in *Sea Kings*. I don't want to go into too much detail for fear of giving something away, but one of the adventures illustrates the Unholy Fortress. 'Nuff said for *Stormbringer* players.

While the book is a wealth of information, it is not perfect. There is an oversight in the statistics of Smiorgan Baldhead, one of the characters from the novel. Smiorgan fights with two weapons, an axe and a sword. A footnote after the statistics is supposed to provide rules for two-weapon use, but it is vague and ambiguous. While this is extremely minor, it frustrates veteran *Stormbringer* players who are fond of the Florentine style and have patiently awaited such detailed rules. Hopefully, Chaosium will explain it a bit better in one of the upcoming supplements.

Despite the minor problem mentioned above, *Sea Kings of the Purple Towns* is an excellent product, and I cannot recommend it enough. The background and statistics, especially the generics, are worth the price of the book, but the adventures add icing to the cake. I hope that Chaosium continues to expand on this series of books.

Mythic Europe

White Wolf. \$18.00.

By Roderick Robertson and Curtis Scott.

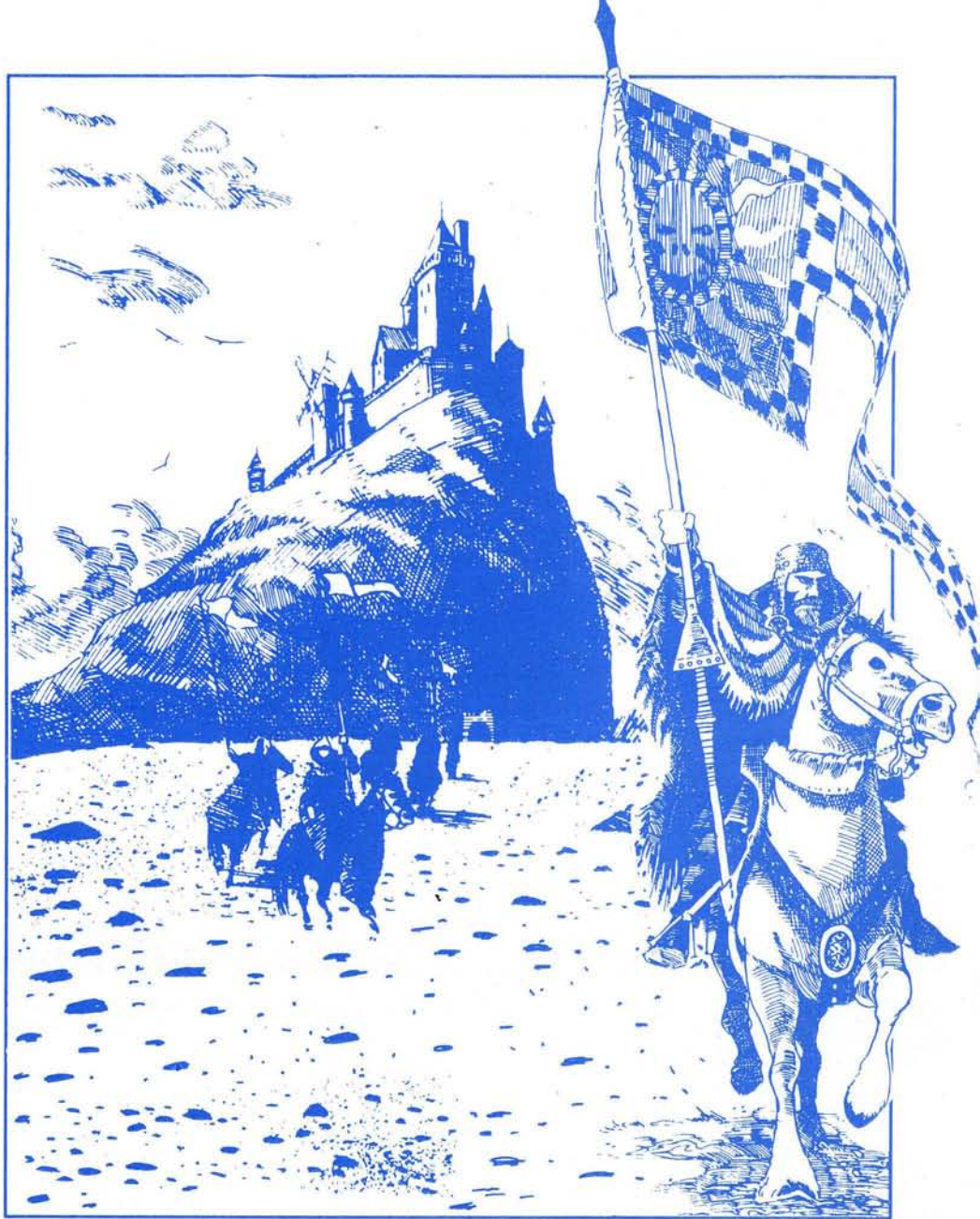
Published in 1992.

Review by Jimmie W. Pursell Jr.

This long-awaited, 184-page world sourcebook for *Ars Magica* players details the lands of Medieval Europe, as the people believed it to be.

The setting and background are a unique blend of historical fact and fantasy. On the surface, the world appears historical, yet closer examination reveals that much is different. Magic exists (betcha didn't see that coming), and monsters are real. All the petty superstitions held dear by the peasants and nobles of 13th-century Europe are valid and grounded in fact. In short, the world is how the people perceived it.

The supplement is organized into 12 chapters, each



detailing a different region or aspect of medieval life. Following a short introduction, during which the authors adamantly deny that the book is history text, the reader finds a chapter on the history of *Mythic Europe*. The history presents the events of our own past in the context of the game. For instance, I seriously doubt that Frankish Magi aided Charlemagne against the "Muslim sorcerers and their djinn" at the siege of Saragossa. This chapter is interesting to read, especially the stories of Charlemagne and his peers.

The second chapter discusses medieval society, from the church to the cities to roads and travel. The chapter is very effective in giving the player or gamemaster a proper feel for the world in which he plays. The trivial information included especially lends "authenticity" to the setting. Descriptions of inns, money, trade, etc., give a clear picture of what a character will encounter.

Following chapters cover the Church and the Crusades, respectively. Again, these chapters are well written and interesting reading. They set the mood and feel for the game and the environment. The chronology of the Crusades is

particularly interesting, especially for gamemasters who have set years for their campaigns. It's nice to know when a certain Crusade will sweep across a certain part of the world, such as Iberia.

The remaining text describes different areas of the known world. From Iberia to Islam, Europe is detailed. The descriptions are vivid and definitive. Most chapters have a "traveling to" section, which describes the approaching scenery of the region. Imagine the "reality" a gamemaster can project if he can tell his players which end of a mountain range has the steepest slopes and which months the rains will close the passes.

Appendices list the kings of many countries, from early in the 9th century through the end of the 13th century, as well as all of the popes of the same period. No details of the rulers are provided, merely the name and the years of the reign, but this adds a ring of truth to any scenario if the gamemasters can inform the players who ruled the kingdom during the time of play.

The book's production value is equaled only by other supplements in the *Ars Magica* line. The printing, binding, and cover are all superb. The color map of Mythic Europe is reprinted from the third edition rulebook itself, but the quality and feel of the map are worth a second mention.

On the subject of artwork, I feel compelled to mention certain illustrations in the supplement. The black and white drawings are outstanding; they are clear and distinct, and

convey the look and feel of Mythic Europe perfectly. The particular illustrations I refer to bear the initials WOC, and I can only presume they refer to William O'Connor. To coin a phrase, I may not know art, but I know what I like. For owners of the third edition, O'Connor has several drawings in that book as well, and a glance over those will give a hint at what's in store from *Mythic Europe*.

Despite the production value and wealth of information in the supplement, it does have its drawbacks. The major problem with the work is a complete lack of game material. No statistics, rules or attributes are provided. The cover claims the sourcebook is for *Ars Magica*, but it could just as easily be a world for any roleplaying game. While many will see the benefit in this and adapt it to their own campaigns, no matter the system, others like a firm "hook" of rules and statistics on which to hang background material. Indeed, I consider statistics mandatory when describing a person or group. For instance, the crusades chapter would have been more useful if it had included stats for Moors or Saracens.

The quality of the product is excellent; and the artwork and information are superb. I would recommend *Mythic Europe* to any *Ars Magica* player, or any player interested in a near-historical campaign.

The lack of game material is a drawback, but it also allows for ease of incorporation in any system. The \$18.00 price may be a bit high for a supplement with no rules, but it's still probably worth it. Ω

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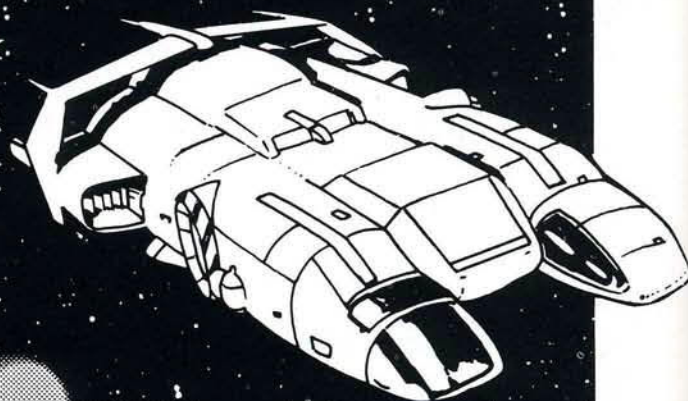
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COPIES OF ANY ARTICLE to do with Steve Jackson Games' *OGRE*. Any article with background fiction, scenarios, maps, etc. Any from *Space Gamer* would be appreciated. Will pay for postage, copies, time and trouble. Please send details to Edward Markle, PO Box 3324, St. Augustine, FL 32085-3324.

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TRAVELLER MATERIAL: GDW: Adventure 8: Prison Planet, Supplement 12: Forms and Charts, Adventure 12: Secret of the Ancient, Best of JTAS 2-4 or JTAS 1-19, Alien Modules 2: K'kree, 4: Zhodani, 5: Droyne, 7: Hivers, 8: Darrians, Fifth Frontier War. DGP: *MegaTraveller Referee's Gaming Kit*. Willing to buy or trade photocopies of other Traveller material. I have most GDW and DGP material not listed above. For a list, send a SASE to J. WEharton, 144-88th St., Newaygo, MI 49337.

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OLD COPIES OF JTAS, Challenge, Travellers Digest, High Passage or any other magazine or fanzine entirely devoted to Traveller. Also seeking old Traveller material from GDW or other publisher. Send a list to Paolo Bertiglia, Corso Siracusa n. 198, c.a.p. 10137, Torino, Italy.

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INQUISITOR: *Warhammer 40,000* newsletter/forum for experienced players. Open forum and resource for all players. Scenarios, Titan rules, Q&A, army calculation worksheets, unit stat cards and more! Write to *Inquisitor*, PO Box 14485, Santa Rosa, CA 94502-6485.

IMPERIAL NEWS SERVICE seeks writers and artists. Our fanzine is devoted entirely to original Traveller (not MegaTraveller or any new version). We publish adventures, supplements and campaign aids. Please contact Star Quest Games, RR 1, Box 81, Flat Rock, IL 62427-9735 for subscriptions and guidelines for writers and artists.

MELBOURNE TIMES: Newsletter of the Earth Colonies Development League (ECDL) provides background material for completely new, non-Imperium Traveller setting with 3D campaign area based upon system locations from 2300 AD Near Star Map. Features news service, world briefs, character sketches, sophont descriptions, corporate portfolios, political analysis, cultural events and more. Subscribers and contributors send SASE to *Melbourne Times*, c/o David Johnson, PO Box 18956, Boulder, CO 80308. Overseas include three IRCs.

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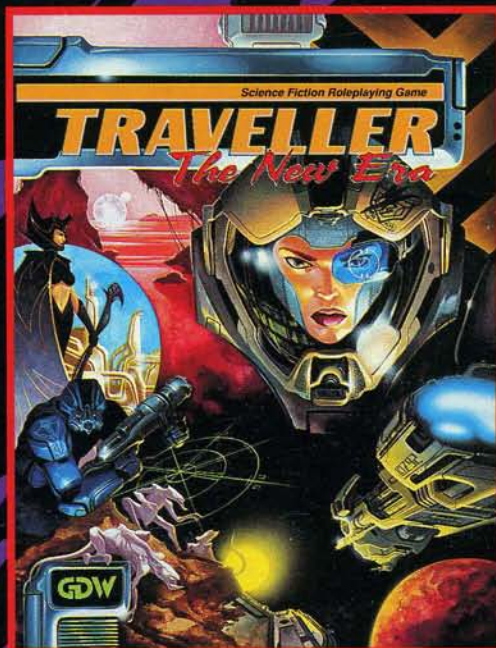
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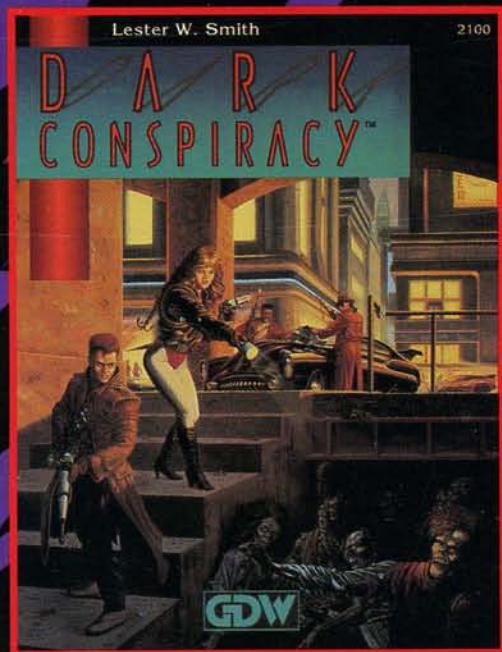
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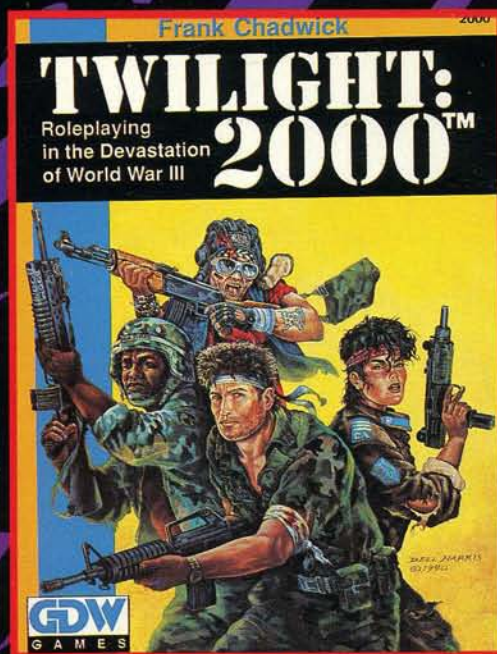
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