DIFFERENT WORLDS ◎

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This issue is dedicated to John Lennon, 1940-1980.

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ADVICE

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Polonius had some advice for his son
Laertes which I thought could be given to any player character
going off to adventure, fame, and fortune for the first time:

"Yet here, Laertes? Aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with you!
And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaim the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!"

(Act I, Scene III)

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ehara

Running Low Level Dungeons

By Robert Plamondon

Perhaps the most crucial adventure in fantasy role-playing is the first game, when a novice player with no experience plays a first level character and enters into a dungeon scenario.

In spite of its importance as a means of "hooking" people on FRP games, the low-level adventure is often casually thrown together by Game Masters because it's "only first level," and doesn't hold his attention the way Asmodeus' bedroom torture chamber does.

This leads to discouraging or boring first-level dungeons, even when run by competent GMs. To help rectify this problem, I have some suggestions for running a first-level dungeon, which apply equally to all versions of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and most of the other FRP games as well.

First off, I'd like to comment on the philosophy of GMing.

KILLER DUNGEONS

For the last time, the GM is not supposed to be trying to kill off the players! Some GMs have decided that since they are playing all of the monsters, their goal must be to beat the players. This is horribly wrong — if you kill off an entire party as GM, do you win? Is it a moral victory if you design dungeons so nasty that everyone dies and no one enjoys the game?

FRP games are supposed to be fun and the GM is the one who's in charge of coming up with an enjoyable campaign.

Even though this point has been stressed in all of FRP literature, I keep hearing of GMs who take sadistic delight in killing off the whole party in every expedition.

This would be no problem if they could find a group of masochists who wanted to be killed once a week. Unfortunately, these "killer" GMs depend on novice players coming to their games, as no one with any experience wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot halberd. Thus we have the worst GMs doing much of the recruiting of new players; and after having their characters killed two or three times in a row, these players will probably forswear FRP games forever.

Keeping this in mind, let's look at some common problems in low-level adventure campaigns.

LOW HIT POINTS

As I said, probably the most discouraging thing about first-level characters is that they die all the time, many GMs (even of the sane variety) think
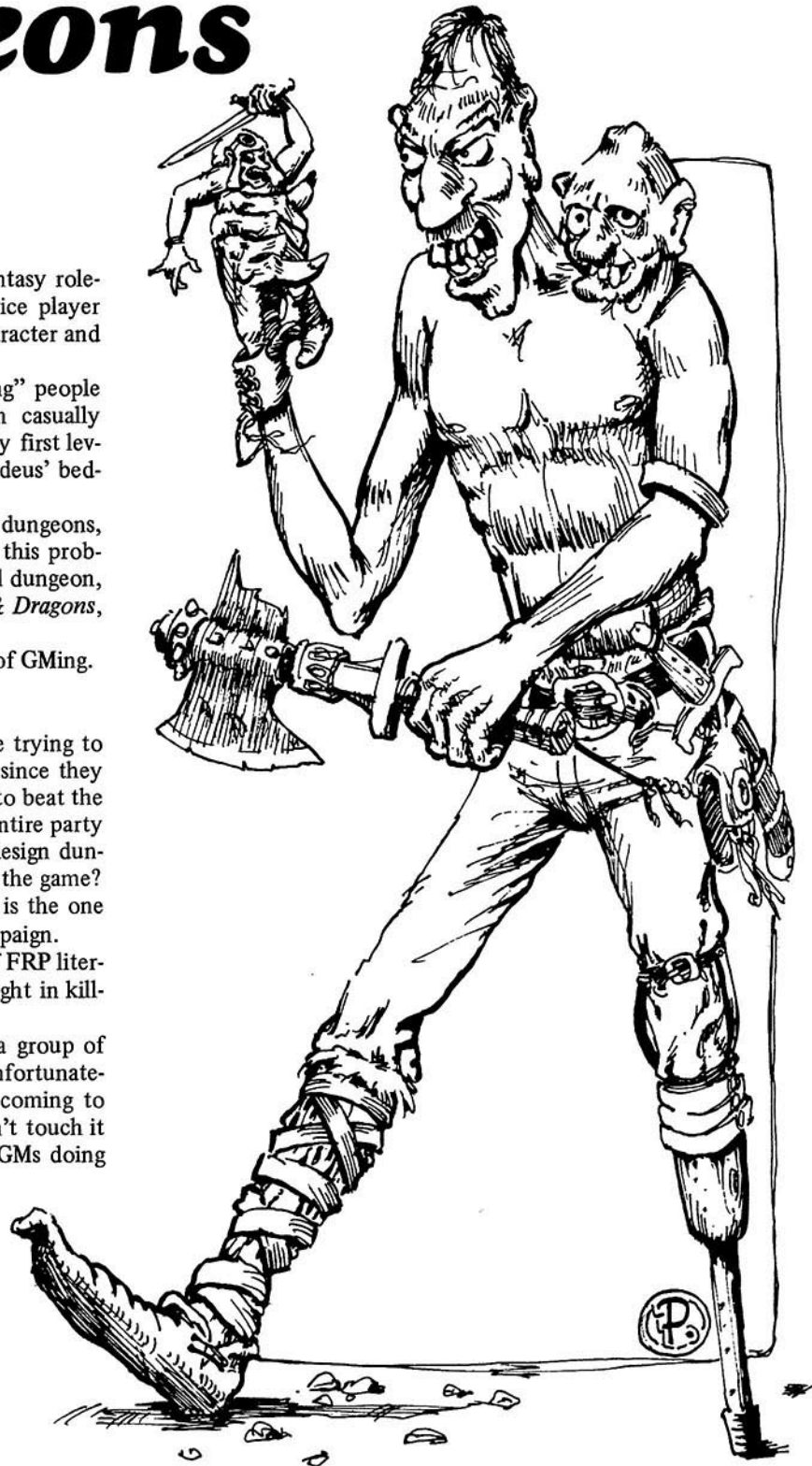
that this teaches the players valuable lessons, but by the time a player's third fighter in a row dies from a giant ant bite, he tends to get discouraged. I've seen too many promising characters die at first level because they had only one hit point or just 20 gold pieces of starting money.

To alleviate this problem I start first level characters with the maximum hit points for their class, with constitution adjustment, and with maximum starting money. This takes their chances of survival away from the vagaries of the dice and keeps the characters from feeling that they're doomed because of poor rolls.

BADLY RUN MONSTERS

Another common problem is lack of imagination on the part of the GM when creating and playing the monsters. Although it's certainly easier to have every Orc in your campaign armed with a spear and a short sword, it tends to be excruciatingly boring. The monsters need variety, in kind, weaponry, and in attitude.

An example is a low-level campaign where Goblin swordsmen would always charge directly to the attack even though it kept their archers from getting off any shots. Given this kind of uniform stupidity on the part of the Goblins (and the GM), it's not surprising that the party developed strategies that involved destroying the Goblins with arrow fire, since the GM never let the Goblin archers shoot.

After that, the players found Goblins extremely tiresome; and rightly so. What the GM should have done was to vary the Goblin's tactics, since the survivors would learn something from their previous encounters. At worst, the Goblins should have fled the party that had massacred so many of their fellows in the past. At best they would have set traps and ambushes, and hired help (such as Ogres, for example) to get rid of the party.

When the monsters start changing their tactics to protect themselves from the players, the players find their job getting harder all the time — which means that the game is still challenging and therefore interesting.

Another problem with first-level adventures is that there never seems to be any parleying between players and monsters. I have found that trying to outwit monsters is often more fun than fighting them, especially when they're too big to kill.

Good situations for negotiation can be set up by putting a relatively large monster with no treasure hoard in the dungeon. For example, the party would have no particular reason to attack a pair of Ogres met in a hallway if the Ogres didn't want the party for lunch. On the other hand, the Ogres might be persuaded to lead them to a suitable treasure on a bribe or profit-sharing arrangement. If properly handled, the party could even con the Ogres into fighting for them. On the other hand, the Ogres would try to kill off the party by misdirection if they thought they could get away with it.

A typical plot would be for the Ogres to show the party to some area of the dungeon with a pit trap. The Ogres would bring up the rear. The leading party members would fall into the pit and the Ogres would push in the rest.

This kind of plotting and counter-plotting adds depth to campaigns that otherwise would devolve into a hack-and-slash exercise, and requires that the players use their imagination in finding the best way to deal with the monsters.

TRAPS

Traps are another method of causing the players to find another GM. Many GMs are fond of putting killer traps in dungeons, Since first-level thieves have about a snowball's chance in hell of finding traps, it's very easy to kill off player characters this way.

Players resent having their characters bumped off by traps, and to keep the players in the campaign, the GM should follow the following guidelines when placing traps in lower levels:

★ Traps should wound, not kill (at low levels — about fourth or fifth level the characters are fair game).
★ If you're working with inexperienced players, don't get too clever with your traps — they have enough problems.
★ Channeling traps are often more fun than killer traps. Channeling traps are used to either block off a party's retreat or split the party into two groups. A falling portcullis is a typical channeling trap.
★ Traps on treasure are standard operating procedure, so feel free to use traps here.

TREASURE

Treasure on the first levels tends to be a bit on the lean side; copper and silver, rather than gold and platinum. This is fine, as too much treasure gets you into the "Monty Haul" giveaway show syndrome. On the other hand, treasure can be made to appear more interesting than a small pile of low-value coins.

For example, weapons, armor, and provisions are often in short supply for the first few expeditions. Players will be very happy to have an opportunity to re-outfit themselves in the middle of an adventure. The gear on the bodies of dead monsters is certainly treasure — especially if the monster was wearing classy armor and your character is a fighter who could only afford leather.

Other examples of non-monetary treasure are tapestries, spices, silverware, and hostages (ransoms can be quite large if you capture someone important). GMs should do their best to put lots of variety into the treasure; it adds depth to the game and gives the players fits trying to decide what's worth taking back with them.

KEEP IT MOVING

My final suggestion is to keep the game moving. Not long ago, I played in a dungeon where fully three-quarters of the rooms were empty and there was often several hundred feet of corridor between rooms. Mapping took almost the whole game.

This was sufficiently boring to cause the players (including me) to start doing incredibly stupid things just to break the monotony. The adventure netted us a lot of gold by the time we were through, but it wasn't any fun.

To keep this from happening in your campaign, arrange things so that the game is fast paced. Put monsters in at least half and maybe in as much as two-thirds of the rooms. Make your dungeon simple enough geometrically that it's possible to draw in the current room (or have the players put it on their map) in very little time.

CONCLUSIONS

Running a low-level dungeon campaign can be enjoyable for both the GM and the players if the GM keeps the basic points of this article in mind. While there are many tricks to the trade I have not dealt with, you should now be aware of the most common problems in low-level dungeon design.

Better Role-Playing

A Change of Hobbit

By Ronald Mark Pehr

obbits are probably the most popular non-human character type in *Dungeons & Dragons*. Alas, it usually isn't just to honor Tolkien, whose creations they are, as the inspiration for the fantasy aspect of role-playing games. Rather the rules are such as to make Hobbits a superhuman adventurer type, able to do almost anything a Human can do and with additional overwhelming advantages in certain game situations. OK, we all know that Hobbits were supposed to be a peaceful people, fun-loving, luxury-loving, clever but certainly not brilliant, honorable, able to endure stress and hardship, extremely accurate with the small weapons they can use but certainly not anywhere near as powerful or skilled at combat as most Human soldiers. Yet, Hobbits in *D&D* bear only little resemblence to the above description.

In the original rules set, Hobbits were not allowed to be anything but Fighting-men. For no apparent reason they were limited in level advancement to Level 4; their supposed accuracy at hurling missiles was accounted for by assigning them +3 with slings. TSR Hobbies assumed anyone buying *D&D* knew what Hobbits are, there was no real description and the only reason they seemed to have been included was to reinforce the game's connection with Tolkien's stories.

The first supplement, *Greyhawk*, described Hobbits, kept the Level 4/+3 sling rule, but added a new dimension by allowing Hobbits to function as Thieves. Hobbits were given bountiful advantages in hiding, heisting, and hearing (is that the fa-

mous 3 "H"s that diligent elementary-school thief-kids study?) and were not limited to Level 4. This made Hobbits the Thief of choice.

Whatever the original intent of TSR was in regard to slow, hard-won advancement in character levels, the great proliferation of Game Masters and the many, many play hours that became part of most groups who played *D&D* meant that characters began to achieve levels very quickly in real time. This was particularly true if GMs used the treasure and experience tables from the rules, characters raked in the loot and ended-up festooned with magical weaponry to help them rake in the loot faster. Soon, a "mere" Level 4 Fighter was barely allowed into some games. That meant if Hobbits were going to be used at all they had to be Thieves, in which category they could advance levels ad infinitum.

But wait a minute here. Aren't Hobbits supposed to be honorable, peaceful people? Aren't Hobbits supposed to be only three feet tall — which means they have to stand on a couple of telephone books to pick your pocket or cut your throat? Yes, but in Tolkien's original story, the chief character was a Hobbit who was hired as a "burglar." Other than figuring out some clues, and getting lucky, while his Dwarf companions tripped over themselves like they were the Three Stooges, the Hobbit showed bravery but not the talents ascribed in *D&D* Thieves nor the inclination for a steady life of crime. (Stealing from a Dragon isn't exactly crime, and anyhow Gandalf said it was alright and if you can't trust Gandalf to give you honest,

moral advice...) Bilbo's performance in *The Hobbit* was enough. The game rules demanded a special niche for Hobbits, "everyone" knew Hobbits made good Thieves, they didn't make good Fighters (Level 4 only, says so right there on the label), and they weren't allowed to be Magic-Users. So, Thieves it was!

Advanced D&D has not altered the equation: Hobbit = Thief. The smaller size and weight of Hobbits is given but does not figure into any of the game mechanics, Hobbits still are limited in level advancement in everything but Thief, and the only acknowledgement that Hobbits aren't just Humans with good ears and dexterous fingers is that they can't have the maximum Strength rating allowed to Human characters.

It is my intention to redress the wrong that I believe has been done to this short but noble race. The way to do it is to treat Hobbits not as people with special powers such as good ears and good saving throws, but as a separate and distinct race. Hobbits aren't short Humans, they're Hobbits. As such they should be played in terms of what a Hobbit would do, not what a player who wants a Thief with superpowers would do.

HOW TO PLAY HOBBITS

Rather than making Hobbits fall into professions which were formulated by and for Humans, they should simply be what they are. Hobbits should be played as a distinct character class. Players elect to be Hobbits, and receive whatever advantages and disadvantages accrue. Mostly, in terms of *D&D*, Hobbits have disadvantages. *D&D* has a lot of combat in it (surprising?); Hobbits are not good at combat. Hobbits are three feet tall and, allowing for greater density in this hardy, long-lived race, weigh about half what a Human does. They would be far weaker. Again, allowing that they are stronger than Human children or those Humans who are naturally short (e.g., pygmies, midgets) because of being denser or more muscular/pound, they're still weaker than most people, and a whole lot weaker than standard-issue Fighters and other adventure-types. Hobbits in the Tolkien stories could function in army units, and could band together to defeat larger foes, but they usually relied on missile weapons and/or overwhelming numbers. As a *D&D* Fighter, a Hobbit would be laughable. He'd be unable to wear heavy armor or swing heavy weapons and be easily cut down by most Human Fighters. Sure, Hobbits are hardy. That doesn't make them physically strong or any more resistant to sword blades, and their smaller size would mean that each cut would do more damage in proportion to their bodies.

What about Thieves? OK, they've got the Dexterity to palm objects, are good at hiding, and we'll allow they can hear better than Humans. But that doesn't make them Thieves. Coming from communities where locks don't exist, crime is virtually unknown, and most of the folk don't even own a sword let alone know how to strike ultra-accurately from behind, where would a Hobbit get his training? He'd have to seek out Human teachers, which means any Hobbit in a Human community is somewhat suspect if he's not known to be a merchant or farmer — and if he's an adventurer we know he's not one of those. Besides, Hobbits are honest and honorable. Players are sneaky, they put their own personae into innocent Hobbit characters, but actually no self-respecting Hobbit would steal unless he had a very compelling reason. Hobbits do not turn on friends, Hobbits don't lie (almost never, and then only to save their lives), and they've got those very real disadvantages of being too short to pick pockets or backstab. Now, in an adventuring context, which already presumes that the

Hobbit has left hearth and home to put himself in danger for some doubtless very good reason, Hobbits may have occasion to steal from foes. But that's far from being a bonafide Thief.

Can Hobbits be Mages or Clerics? There was never a suggestion of it in Tolkien. Magic was something they admired at a distance when friendly Elves and Wizards did tricks. Hobbits are longer-lived than Humans, not inclined to exploit their environment, living in harmony with their surroundings, and more concerned with practical needs than obscure, unproved, spiritual/mystical doctrines. The idea of studying hard to master the environment by supernatural forces would seem to be a terrible waste of time to Hobbits; to be cooped up reading dry texts and thinking when one could be smoking dreamweed, tending the garden, or getting good healthy exercise by walking? Nonsense!

Even though magic is useful to an adventurer-Hobbit, it should not be a part of the character, it simply doesn't do justice to the concept of Hobbits as practical, down-to-earth beings. It's difficult enough for a Hobbit to be brave and adventurous — we presupposed a good reason for the player-Hobbit being there — but it is inconceivable for a Hobbit to be bored, solemn, and quiet. If a rationale is necessary to forbid the use of magic it would be that Hobbits are so much a part of the mortal, natural, material world and so integrated into nature, that their minds, bodies, and souls are too out of phase with the psychic connections that one must have with other planes to make magic work. This also explains why they have a natural resistance to magic; the out-of-phase works both ways.

HOBBITS ARE NOT HUMANS!

The rules for use of Hobbits must maximize the difference between them and Humans, players must be forced to think as a character only half the size of others. Start with the basic pre-rolled characteristics. Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma can stay the same — Hobbits can be as-smart/likeable/knowledgeable/even commanding as any other character. (Use of Charisma to inspire loyalty would depend on race to some extent in any event. A Hobbit with Charisma 18 will get nowhere with an Orc or Lizardman, but then neither will a Human or Elf.) What will change, most particularly, is Strength. Roll only 2D6. For Constitution and Dexterity, roll 2D6+1D8. Ignore % rolls for characters with 18+ in characteristics, a roll of 19

adds +1/5% to those benefits that high Constitution or Dexterity gives, a roll of 20 adds +2/10%.

The low Strength will keep Hobbits in their place, it will be impossible for them ever to be strong enough to use certain weapons, carry certain weights, or get combat bonuses, and in most cases they will be sub-average. That's the idea. Players must realize that a Hobbit cannot succeed on raw Strength ever.

High Constitution and Dexterity is not automatic, some Hobbits will be puny and klutzy, that's the way it goes. But, there is a chance that some Hobbits will have the excessive hardiness and deftness indicated by high Dexterity and Constitution rolls. This will show up as increased saving throws and resistance to system shock, and in the Dexterity bonus to effective armor class. It reflects the fact that they're small but hardy, difficult to hit and able to endure. Still, when they do get hit it is going to do damage to those small bodies. This should be reflected by allowing Hobbits to roll hit dice on 1D6 only, adding only one pip per level after the 10th Level is attained.

There still might be a tendency for players to say "Well, his Strength is so low, let's make him a Thief. He gets good Dexterity rolls and gets those automatic bonuses." But Hobbits are not official Thieves. It's not in their nature and they seldom get the training. Since Hobbit doesn't necessarily equal Thief, game mechanics should reflect this. Don't give the automatic bonuses for Thief-talents that accrue to Hobbits, as described in *Greyhawk* or *AD&D*. If they get high Dexterity bonuses that will influence dice rolls same as for any other character, and they do have a higher chance of good Dexterity rolls.

There are other limits. A Hobbit has had no training, when the game commences, in Climbing, Hearing, Pick Pocketing, or Opening Locks. He is not likely to get this training. Any sort of Thieves Guild is a basically Human institution — Hobbits wouldn't have been part of one, and might not have been accepted into it in any case. So, Hobbits don't get the pre-game training that is presumed to have been given a Level 1 Thief.

STARTING HOBBIT CHARACTERS

Hobbits should commence the game with the assumption that they are fresh from their little rural village. Being on basically a self-sufficient, barter economy, they don't collect a lot of money. (Their wealth, if any, is in their special possessions — perhaps family heirlooms — or the comfort of their homes and the good taste of their pipeweed.) So, a Hobbit commences with 1D12 gold pieces, a knapsack, 1D6 weeks' worth of dried rations, a fresh change or two of serviceable clothing, a knife, and maybe a sling. Players may blanch at this — how do they become noble adventurers? Well, any Hobbit seeking to do so

is coming from humble, simple origins and is that much further behind the power curve. Difficult to commence on only 1D12 gold pieces? Well, who said adventuring was going to be easy? No Hobbit would have accumulated any more than that before going adventuring, no Hobbit would own leather armor or grappling hooks or any of that adventurer-gear, and certainly no self-respecting Hobbit would be walking around with a sword. He'd feel quite foolish.

Hobbits commencing with four or more gold pieces may buy padded armor at the outset. Leather armor will not be immediately available, though later a Hobbit could commision a tanner to make a suit of it. The price will be the same as for a Human, due to the small, close stitching involved. Metal armor of any type, except Elfmail, is too heavy for Hobbits to wear.

Hobbits are limited in weaponry, due to their size. They can use daggers, slings, and darts but can throw them only half as far as other characters. Swords, clubs, and spears must be used in two hands and cannot be thrown. The same is true of handaxes, although Hobbits may own small-sized hatchets which can be held in one hand and thrown half as far as other characters throw axes. Hobbits can use shortbows, but they must be specially-made for their small sizes and shoot only half as far as regular shortbows. All other weapons are too large or heavy, including crossbows. This is regardless of actual Strength roll for the Hobbit, remember he's small and can't get proper leverage to use large weapons.

Hobbits have some advantages in terms of game mechanics. They may always Move Silently and Hide in Shadows as a Thief their Level, due to their small size and natural caution. They receive +1 to hit when battling Giant-class foes and add +1 to their armor rating. They gain surprise on a roll of 1-4, their size and quietness again, and recover from wounds twice as fast as a Human of equivalent Constitution. As an option, you may allow that Hobbits can Detect/Remove Traps as a Thief of his level due to a great sensitivity to their surroundings and a dexterous touch with their tiny hands, have Hearing as a Thief due to better ears, and have an innate sense of Good /Evil when confronting foes.

If you insist on training Hobbits as Thieves, they must pay for it once the game commences and must have access to a teacher. (Let's say a Master of the Thieves Guild or a renegade Monk or Assassin). They may then learn to Open Locks, Pick Pocket, and Climb, achieving Level 1 competency at whatever Level they are at already and gaining increased competency with increased Level. (E.g., a Level 8 Hobbit learns Thief-talents, he is Level 1 at them, when he becomes Level 9 he will be at Level 2 Thief.)

The prime disadvantage that GMs should always be alert for is the small size. Hobbits never get extra damage from behind no matter how well trained because they're too small to hit all vital areas of Human-sized foes, Hobbits have a movement base of 9 because of their short legs, Hobbits can't pick a Human pocket unless the latter is sitting or down, and even ordinary tasks become a problem: can't reach the counter from the barstool, can't see over ledges, can't carry large objects (such as sacks of loot!), can't get on a horse.

Do the disadvantages outweigh the advantages of having a Hobbit who can progress levels and live in the fantasy world without being only a carbon-copy Human Thief with big ears? If you enjoy role-playing a unique character they do!

Gems & Gaming: Part Two
Gems & Magic

© 1978, 1980 By Stephen R. Marsh and Margaret R. Gemignani

Lots of people use magical gems and jewels in their gaming. To make this easier, we have taken all the traditional magical attributes of common gem stones (and some uncommon ones) and listed them alphabetically. We hope that this listing will provide both added material for your campaign, and inspiration for new ideas. We have, however, left many favorite gems (aquamarines, for example) out because they didn't have historical legends of magical powers or functions. You may wish to add them, fashioning uses for them from the general principals discussed below. In general, the color of the stone gives the principal clue to its uses:

Red is associated with war as the color of Mars/Ares, of iron, and of blood, and from this takes a meaning of strength. It is also associated with healing and the healing arts by way of blood. Thus red stones are often used as protection from fire or lightning, and in healing magics such as stopping the flow of blood.

Rose is associated with mellowness of personality.

Orange is associated with luxury and pleasures. It is also associated with cooling fires, and with power against disease.

Yellow is associated with logic. It is also associated with autumn and the passing of strength, and thus with treason, fear, and also with greed.

Yellow and green together are associated with triumph and victory.

Green is associated with living plants, fertility, rain, and strength. It is a color of hope and confidence, and has associations with water and the sea.

Light blue is associated with powers of the mind, with clarity of thought and depth of intelligence. It often reflects some hope and/or aspiration.

Blue is associated with chaste affection, but it also signifies royalty in some contexts, or nobility of thought.

Lilac is associated with freshness.

Violet is associated with intelligence or knowledge.

Purple is associated with pride and arrogance.

White is associated with the hottest and purest flames, and thus with purity, truth, and joy. White stones are considered to carry the powers of heaven.

Grey is associated with quiet and peace.

Brown is associated with grief, and repentence.

Black is associated with sorrow, but it is also the color of protection and denial.

Clear or sparkling stones are considered to have powers of diffracting magic, just as a well-cut crystal diffracts the light. They sometimes are considered to have the opposite power, that of focussing magic.

These correlations are not hard and fast, but are helpful in producing a consistent system of your own, even if you decide to change some aspects to meet specific needs in your campaign. Dr. Heinrich Seligman and Dr. Budge have both written extensively on the subject of gems and their attributes in a scholarly, yet readable manner. Andre Norton has recommended the latter's *Amulets and Talismans* to beginning sword and sorcery writers. P. E. I. Bonewits' books on magic are another useful source of ideas. Note that each of these differ in some respects from each other and from the associations used in this article. You will have to use your own judgment on what to use.

Gems and gem stones were in very limited supply in the middle ages in Europe. In a high-magic culture, such a thing would not matter, as the people would have access to stones from the world over. In a low-magic society, gems may be hard to come by. If the occurance of gems in your campaign is small, it makes sense to let any have magic attributes as this increases their value. If there are lots of gems in your campaign, it may be best to allow only relatively flawless gems have magic properties, say about 10% of them. The rest of the gems would simply be used as money, or for decoration.

The magical use of gems required either wearing them openly, or consuming them in the ways described below in the individual gem descriptions. If no specific means is stated, the traditional method is to grind the gem into powder, mix it into wine, and drink it. The gems whose use required open display worked by being seen by the opponent, or hit by the opposing magic. For this reason, even the most sedate individuals often wore gaudy displays of gems, and fighters wore them into battle or affixed them to their weapons, armor, and shields.

Gems were prepared for display in several ways, depending upon the sophistication of the gemsmith. The simplest was to set a raw stone into a ring, torque, or other decoration. This was common with barbarian tribes and uncivilized peoples. The more attractive method is to polish the stone, but leave it in its natural shape. This improves the appearance of the gem, but doesn't waste any of it or reduce its size. A gemsmith of still greater skill might round a gem into a polished oval shape, as opals or sapphires are done today, or cut clear stones into simple facets following the shape of the stone. The next step up is the "table" cut. This cuts a clear stone so that the facets are all of equal size. It looks like a pyramid with its upper two-thirds cut off, mounted against the base of another pyramid, as a general rule, although other similar cuts were used. The most sophisticated technique is to cut the gem so that the facets catch the light in a manner similar to that of a prism. This means that each gem stone must receive different treatment, since for example emerald has a different index of refraction than diamond or glass. This cut results in strikingly beautiful stones, and is one of the factors that enables diamonds to maintain their great value in our world.

Traditionally, gemstones were imbued with varied powers and abilities. This article attempts to list gem stones and their properties as interpreted for gaming purposes.

AGATE

RED or Blood Agate is useful as a protection from spiders and scorpions. It will repel up to 6D6 hit dice worth per charge, one charge per D4 carats, depending on quality. Must be openly displayed and will not repel any that do not have a line-of-sight on the gem.

BROWN or Tawny Agate is highly valued. It provides protection against spells causing lack of muscle control, +1 vs. such spells per 2 carats. It also is +1 per 6 carats vs. gaze weapons. It must be worn next to the skin and cut in a triangle (probably losing carats). One charge per carat.

GREEN or Sea Agate cures blindness. D20 carats are required. If worn it adds +1 per carat to saves vs. blindness. Two charges per D20 carats if washed in sea water, one charge if not.

BLACK Agate (with white stripes) wards off disease (+10% vs. catching).

GREY or Dawn Agate when worn in a square cut on a necklace will protect against damage to the neck. An amulet will require 2D20 carats and will only work if no other amulets are worn around the neck or touch clothing this amulet touches. Will repel 1D4 blows to the neck.

MOSS or Living Agate gives +1% per carat in controling plant growth (either naturally or via spell). Its powers last one year. Set uncut into armrings.

Agate in general is a limited-use stone. When all the power has been leached from the gem, it loses all of its luster and has a flat, "dead" look to it.

ALUM

This provides protection from witch powers and from hags. To properly bind it costs 3D8 ounces worth. This is mixed with pure salt from below ground that has not been exposed to the light of the sun. Then a mage must contact a higher plane successfully and summon an invisible stalker while a cleric calls upon his diety and recites CVXII Surah of the Koran (level squared chance of success for cleric). The mixture is then ground and fixed and then rolled into a cloth roll and sewed within. The invisible stalker will take the damage from witch and hag power in the place of the wearer. Lasts until the invisible stalker bound within is slain.

ALATUIR

Similar in appearance to golden amber. When burnt, it will drive off demons at a rate of one demon level per 2D6 ounces burnt.

AMBER

RED Amber when rolled into a ball (4+1D4 ounces) will protect against natural heat as long as it is held in the sword hand of the carrier.

GREEN Amber when held to wounds will stop bleeding until removed from the wound. The piece of amber must be large enough to cover half of the wound or the bleeding portion.

YELLOW Amber when burned prevents death in childbirth. It requires the entire lump as it was found to be burned, and at least 6+1D6 ounces is needed.

BLUE Amber is useful for summoning the "amber phoenix." It requires a ritual costing a year of the caster's lifespan, half of his wealth, and a complete lump of blue amber. An amber phoenix will serve for 1D6 months (as per roc, only casts spells as 12th level mage). Only mages of greater power magically than the phoenix can summon it and it requires gaining the name of the phoenix from a higher plane.

LIVING Amber (amber with animals or such trapped inside) is useful for the construction of golems. It requires the same effort as researching a 7th level spell successfully and then 1D100 gold pieces per hit point. They are restored by light and fire spells, move up to 16", strike like the creature they are modeled after, and need weapons of +1 or better to hit them.

AMETHYST

An amulet with the name of the sun and moon upon it, fastened to the neck with peacock's feathers will protect the wearer from becoming drunk. Requires at least 1D4 carats.

ANTIPATHES

SMOOTH and black, it protects from pain spells cast above water. It requires 2D6 carats, and must be polished by its wearer for a week.

ROUGH and filled with small bubbles, it protects from the side-effects of potions drunk below water. Must be cut to a 12-sided surface, and have at least 6 carats remaining. Lasts for 1D6 months after it is cut. Then it crumbles away.

ASBESTOS

This comes in many forms. Only one is useful for sorcery. This form is a natural rock crystal of at least 2 carats or larger, and uncut. When cut into a ring and worn it will heal 1 point of damage for every die of fire magic cast at the wearer (and protect from damage from same). It is good for 1D6 points per carat. It will gradually unravel into rock wool as it is consumed.

BITUMEN

When taken from the skulls of mummies slain by other means than fire (5% chance per mummy), and rolled into an armring it will protect that arm from broken or shattered bones.
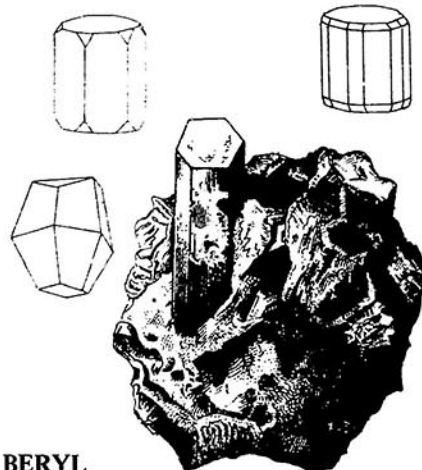
BERYL

YELLOW beryl protects from all charms that require eye-to-eye contact when cut into a teardrop and worn between the eyes. All of the gem must be used for one teardrop.

GREEN beryl is useful for curing those who are short-sighted when ground into a powder and used as an eyewash.

YELLOW-GREEN beryl protects from vitamin B-1 deficiencies for 1 month per carat. Then it leaches out into a soft white powder.

B'DISSAI

Also known as clear amber, it is good for intensifying spells using lightning. 1D4 ounces when ground into a powder and cast into the air as the spell is cast will double the spell power.

CARBUNCLE

This is useful vs. charm and hold spells, giving +1 per carat to save against such. Roll the saving throw and then destroy 1 carat for every 5% missed by. If the whole stone is consumed and the save is still not made, it will explode doing 1D4 points of damage.

CARNELIAN

CLEAR carnelian is useful for clearing the complexion of the wearer.

BLOOD or translucent carnelian is a protection against blood-drains, 1 point is stopped per ounce of carnelian worn.

SARD or opaque carnelian will add 5% once to the chances of a woman casting or resisting a magic spell.

CATER'S EYE

This is a stone the color of dried blood with a white pupil of a cat's eye within it. The wearer of it must fit it to a ring to use it properly. It makes him +1 with all spells and -3 on all reaction dice provoking strife and discord.

CAT'S EYES

These are a useful gem. They may be worn between the eyes, or on a ring or necklace for proper use. The stone will protect from death via spell (such as finger of death or deathspell) or ability once, after which the gem's eye will disappear.

CATOCHITIS

It will cling to flesh like warm tar. While it is clenched firmly in the sword hand it protects from charm spells (but not hold spells). To remove it takes 1D6 turns. It is useless if split.

CHALCEDONY

When 1D6 ounces is ground and administered with holy water, it will break fevers and add 10% on recovery chances.

CROSS STONES

These are naturally appearing gems in the form of a cross. When thrown at vampires all of them that hit explode, doing the vampire 1D6 permanent points of damage.

CRYSTAL

Naturally appearing rock crystal without flaws can be cut into balls and used as a crystal ball after enchanting the crystal (same cost as successful research of a 4th level spell).

BLUE-WHITE translucent crystal will allow a mage to summon one large storm and a heavy rainfall with 1D6 hours of work. It will begin to crumble as the storm ends.

CORAL

RED coral is useful for curing natural sterility. It requires consuming 3D20 ounces.

GREEN coral is useful for the healing of unnatural wounds that will not heal. It requires a pound per hit point thereby healed, and the coral takes the damage upon itself.

BLACK coral cures magically induced sterility when used to slay the causer thereof.
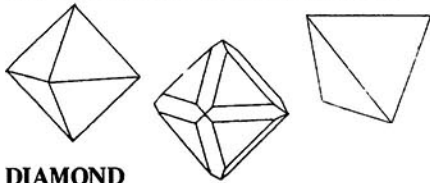
DIAMOND

BLUE diamonds can cure one disease per 3 carats. Water is used to wash the diamond with and a dose to cure each of the diseases is obtained. This power can be used once a month.

YELLOW diamonds protect from snake poisons, the wearer taking only half damage if he fails his save. At least 2 carats must be worn in a single set in a brow circlet or a ring.

RED diamonds function to protect from the powers of Hell, protecting against 2 levels of demons per carat (thus a 4 carat red diamond would stop one 8th level or four 2nd level demons).

GREEN diamonds give +1 per carat on reaction dice with woodland creatures.

CLEAR diamonds (or white diamonds) can be used to place great enchantments and lower the cost of the enchantment (not including the worth of the diamond!) by 10% per carat.

EMERALD

When worn on the right side of the chest it will cause snakes to die of fright, one hit die per carat. Must be seen by the snake to work.
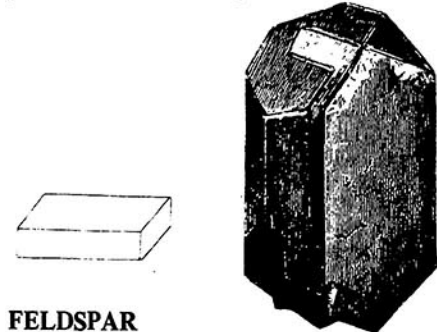
FELDSPAR

This is a green stone that when worn upon the neck protects from sunstroke. It adds +1 to save vs. light spells per carat. Destroy one carat per 5% save failed by. It does 1D4 damage if it can't make up the difference.
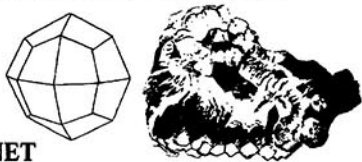
GARNET

This is often worn upon the arms set in bracers. Each stone adds +1 to saves, etc., vs. hags and their powers. It will return nightmares to the sender.

HAEMATITE

Often called bloodstone, it cures any internal bleeding that occurs while it was worn.

HEMITITE

Known as black diamond, it adds +1 to re-

action rolls with people of the opposite sex/same race. Requires at least 5 carats.

IRON PYRITES

Known as foolsgold, this stone will repel any crocodile or alligator of 2 hit dice or less. Must be mounted uncut and worn exposed to the air and against the skin.

JADE

GREEN jade dispels astral sendings, forcing them back to their bodies, 1 per ounce.

RED jade when made into axes (about 4 pounds worth) will slay demons (one use).

YELLOW jade protects one from being charmed by voice when conducting business if held in the hand and stroked with the thumb.

WHITE jade protects from lightning-based spells, absorbing 1D6 of energy per ½ ounce worn.

BLUE jade is very rare and treasured. It removes the need of the wearer to drink fluids, each carat replacing 1 quart per day of water for 6 months, before the luster fades and with it the power.

JASPER

GREEN jasper is useful for calming woodland beasts, 1 ounce per 2D4 dice of creatures.

GREEN WITH FLECKS OF RED is used for sorceries changing the nature of men (polymorphs), each ounce adding +1 to the casting of spells of that type by the wearer. An amulet made of gold and set with such jasper is good for 20 spells.

RED OR BLOOD jasper is known as the Blood of Isis. It protects pregnant women for the time of one pregnancy (+5% per ounce with everything).

JET

This is the black stone of power. It has two uses for which it finds great competition.

Worn by a fighter, it protects him from all spells that reduce strength (for 3D4 months of wearing).

Worn by a mage, it protects him from 1D4 attempts at demonical possession.

For use by both of these it is formed into a disk with a cross on one side and a nonstylized human heart on the other. The finished carving will weigh about 5 to 10 ounces and will be worn from the neck or on the arm.

LAPIS LAZULI

This is a gem favored by clerics.

Cut into a sphere (1½" radius) it will protect from 2D10 levels of clerical spells cast.

Cut into a cylinder (3"x1" radius) it will allow a cleric to cast 1D10 extra levels of spells.

There will be many "fake" spheres and cylinders found made of pressed powdered stone. They have the same appearence but explode doing 1D4 points of damage when use is attempted.

MAGNETITE

This is the bound demon stone. It will draw lightning if worn, but it will also add 1D4 to strength.

When cut into a 5 pointed star and fed the blood of virgins slain for it for 5 successive weeks and given the metal filings from a purposeful sword +3 (consuming the sword) it can embue a dagger with very powerful poison for 5 blows. Those hit must save or die, saving vs. magic spell. A person wearing such a weapon cannot benefit from clerical spells nor walk upon holy ground.

MALACHITE

When cut into arrowheads and with the name of a demon written upon the shaft of the arrow it strikes doing damage (and exploding) equal to the demon type/level in D8s. This causes the demon 1 point of damage for every 4 points caused and tends to draw his attention.

MELITITE

When formed into balls and carried by children, this results in their parents being aware of what befalls them. The parent must carve the amulet and wash it in their blood for it to work. Its powers last 1 week per ounce.

MILKSTONE

Also known as galaktite, it is semiholy. It is also useful for all things having to do with milk, adding 10% per ounce destroyed/consumed in this use.

MOONSTONE

Beloved of Diana and Hectate, this gem when cut into teardrops of 3 or more carats is useful for the control of all animals who hunt by night (+5% per carat on reaction dice).

ONYX

The wearer is -5 on all reaction dice but all witch magics are reflected back upon the caster. Each amulet takes 5+1D20 carats and reflects only one spell.

OLIVINE

Worn on a ring, this gem reduces the wearer's anger and contention (protects vs. that symbol and power). Very rare.

OPAL

CLEAR and fire-filled opals add +1 to all damage spells cast by their wearer for 1D6 spells per carat.

MILKY and fire-filled opals multiply one plus 1/10 the number of carats the power of any gaze weapon the wearer has. Thus a two carat opal would give a 1.2 time increase in power. There is a 10% chance per use of the opal consuming its powers.

BLACK and fire-filled opals are luck stones. +2% per carat (thus 5 carats would be +10%).

PEARL

These provide protection from drowning, at one large pearl per ten minutes under wa-

ter. Pearls are also used for healing.

PERIDOTE

This is a yellow-green gem of rulership, adding +1 to the morale of the followers of its wearer if set in 3 carat rings. Very rare.

RUBY

When made into a ring, ruby is good for protecting from hunger for days equal to carats x 1D6.

A ruby with a star will reflect all disease spells back upon the caster, with a 10% chance of the reflection consuming the stone's power.

Ruby, when cut into a cube at least ½" to a side, allows the holder to fly from sundown to sunrise (only in darkness, other than star-light/moonlight) at any speed consistent with encumbrance and wind resistance.

SALT

If quarried in crystal form and never exposed to light, salt will harm the undead, doing them 1D6 points of damage per ounce of rock salt crystals that strike when thrown.

SAPPHIRE

BLUE sapphires are potent with wind magic and add 5% per carat to the user's powers over such.

YELLOW sapphires are useful when casting light magics and add 5% per 2 carats.

GREEN sapphires will add 5% per carat to the user's control over water magics.

BLACK sapphires can be keyed to any magic type and thereafter the wearer is +5% per carat with that form of magic.

If the stone also contains a star then the wearer is doubled in range when casting magic under the stars.

These stones must be set in rings in order to make proper use of them.

SARDONYS

This gem, when worn touching the skin of the user, protects against touch attacks, including monkish stun/death powers, such as the "quivering palm" attack.

SCHIST

This is good for the casting of one fire spell, at +1 per carat, and then its luster fades along with its power.

SELENITE

This is a form of moonstone that when cut into bezels and worn between the eyes protects from insanity and feeblemind, once per carat.

SERPENTINE

When made into goblets it detects poison poured within it for 1D6 times.

SUNSTONE

This gem permits creatures of the day to act in darkness as if nocturnal, their night vision being the equal of creatures of the night. It is consumed as a powder in wine, and lasts one hour per carat consumed.

TOPAZ

This protects the wearer from from all manipulation of his emotions at +5% per carat with its powers lasting for many years. It does not protect against charms.

TURQUOISE

When worn in large necklaces (3D6 stones of one ounce each) it adds to armor class vs. cold blooded animals by +4.

Used to brace a weapon (2D6 stones of 5 carats each, cut like diamonds — not smooth) it will add a total of 4D4 D6s extra damage (1D6 at a time) to blows striking man-eaters.

Rare sky turquoise is loved by the air dwellers, and adds +5% per carat to all their magics. It is clear, unlike the normal opaque stone.

By Bill Hassart © 1980

A NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM FOR TRAVELLER

By Martin Connell

Since *Traveller* was released in 1977, sporadic articles have appeared in the various gaming magazines augmenting the basic system. These have added great new aspects to the game but, through my own experience and through discussions with other players, I found that what everyone was most dissatisfied with was not any limitation of scope, but with the original computer rules. The computer system presented in Book 2 is slow, stupid, and grossly overweight. It's straight out of the 1960s. Truly representative of the far future, is it not?

In this article I present a variant computer system based upon what I see as trends in the industry and my own experience with computers. I preface this by saying that I am not a computer specialist. I am a student of Mechanical Engineering. I have used an IBM 360, and IBM 3033, a PRIME, and several hobby computers. Several friends who are computer science majors were also consulted.

I. HARDWARE

Traveller groups all the various aspects of a computer under one term, the central processing unit, or CPU. I believe a ship's computer of the future would be more like today's home computer, a main processor (MP) surrounded by modular peripherals to suit individual needs. These peripherals are represented in Figure 1.

The input to the computational part of the computer (the MP) comes from two sources, the program file and the data base. The program file is fairly self-explanatory; it is the storage unit for all programs. The data base is the source of values for the variables required by the programs. It consists of three elements: the ship's sensors, library, and the computer user. The inputs are processed in the usual fashion in the MP where it is then directed to either the output file or the ship/computer interface.

The output file is where any data that is to be stored goes, such as generated flight plans, while the ship/computer interface is the link by which the computer directs such physical mechanisms as weapon control and directional guidance. Both files are relatively permanent, i.e., the contents will remain in the files for a long period of time (several weeks) should the power fail. The MP file is where the MP stores quantities it's currently using. It is a "scratchpad" and is not permanent.

As the data base and the ship/computer interface are essentially integral parts of the ship, the purchasable units are the program and output files, and the MP. Each are purchasable according to the number of "volume points" they are able to handle. (For further explanations of volume points see *Software.*) Also available is a combined program/output file which has a user partitionable memory. A user may alot volume points to program and output files as he sees fit. The advantage of this is that the unit is more flexible but it has the drawbacks of increased cost and all memory in one location (a higher chance of having all memory wiped out in combat). The only other piece of purchasable equipment is the computer terminal. These are part of the data base hardware but since the number of these that a ship owner would desire varies, I point them out separately. Remember, any computer requires at least one terminal.

For a list of costs and sizes see Table 1.

II. SOFTWARE

A review of the list of software and their descriptions in *Traveller* will reveal several instances of incomplete information or a general lack of thought. In contrast to the three categories of programming the rules use (those being offensive, defensive, and routine) I prefer to use only two: weapons and movement.

What follows are my modifications to *Traveller* software.

FIGURE 1 -- REVISED COMPUTER SCHEMATIC

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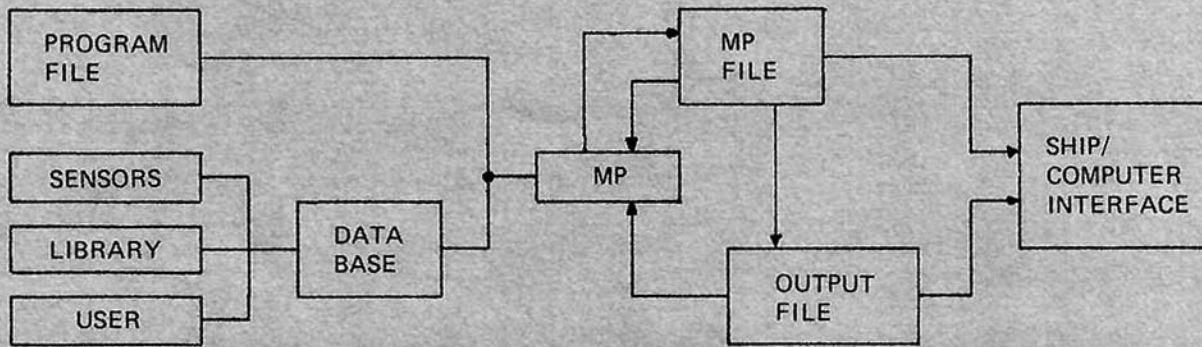
As an engineer, my intent in design would be to have the computer be able to run the majority of normal ship operations thus enabling the average size ship to be run by only one or two crewmen. I have included my rationale for each change as I feel that, being aware of it, the reader will be batter able to make his own adaptations.

WEAPONS

Eliminate the TARGET program

A glance at Figure 2, which flowcharts the original firing sequence, clearly illustrates that the firing of any weapon is completely dependent upon the TARGET program. A turret is useless without it and the reverse is true. Why, therefore, would these two items exist independently of one another? Such a program as TARGET would most likely appear as a piece of the turret itself, an integrated circuit chip about the size of your thumb. (We are talking about the future, remember?) Even today, most of the tin cans to come out of Detroit have a microprocessor in them which monitor emission devices, carburation, etc.; you don't need to buy a separate computer and program it to be able to take a drive.

Eliminate the LAUNCH program

For the same reason as above, a LAUNCH program would be a piece of hardware integrated into the launcher itself.

Redefine the PREDICT programs

If it is possible for a computer to predict the location of a ship thousands of miles away, as the original PREDICT program does, it may as well control the actual aiming of the turret. This eliminates the necessity of a gunner in most cases (see the PRIORITY program).

Eliminate the GUNNER INTERACT program

With a computer directing the aim of weaponry, there is little a gunner can do to improve hit probability. It is important to realize that, at a distance of one thousand miles, one mile only subtends an arc of little more than one tenth of a degree. It is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve this type of precision rapidly by human means. (Note: I play a game where psionics don't exist, so they cannot aid stellar combat.)

Add the PRIORITY programs

When the computer is faced with multiple targets, a PRIORITY program analyses sensor data to decide upon a preferred target. In the case of a multi-turreted vessel this program

TABLE 1 -- HARDWARE COSTS

MAIN PROCESSORS (MP)

1. Computer specifications are designated by two numbers: m/n. m is the maximum program size. n is a time indicator.
2. The minimum m is 8.
3. m is always increased in 4 volume point increments.
4. n is always less than or equal to m, and always greater than or equal to 8. n can never exceed 24.
5. Each MP is abbreviated by a computer model (CM) number. CM = m/4 - 1.
6. The MP costs (CM - 0.4) x (0.44 + 0.07n) in MCr.
7. The MP weighs CM/4 + (n - 8)/2 in tons.
8. The CM can never exceed 13.

FILES

1. Files, whether output, program, or combined, are rated by their volume point (VP) capacity.
2. A file's minimum VP is 20. It's maximum is 100.
3. The cost of a program or output file is (VP x 0.7) + 14.1 in MCr.
4. Combined files cost VP - 20.15 in MCr.
5. Any file has a mass of VP/8 - 2.25 in tons.

TERMINALS

Standard terminal including CRT	1000 Cr
Terminals with disc reader	1200 Cr

DISCS

Stores	2 VP	2 Cr
	5 VP	4 Cr
	10 VP	6 Cr

GUNNERLESS TURRETS

Single Weapon	100,000 Cr
Double Weapon	200,000 Cr
Triple Weapon	250,000 Cr

FIGURE 2 – ORIGINAL PROGRAM FIRING SEQUENCE

FIGURE 2 – ORIGINAL PROGRAM FIRING SEQUENCE
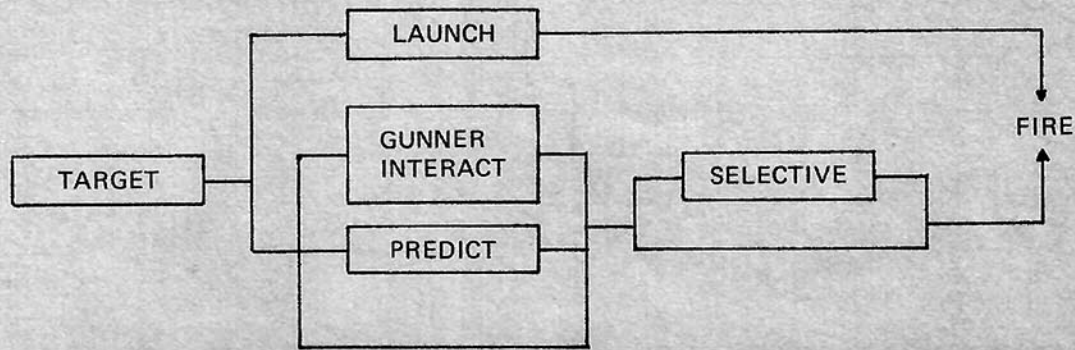
would be controlled by the central computer to create a coordinated attack. This program is left in a software form to facilitate the updating of data weights to meet various situations. The overriding of this program is the only need for a gunner; given that certain situations require the subjectivity of human judgment.

Eliminate the MULTI-TARGET programs

Now that the turrets act independently, this program is no longer necessary.

Eliminate the ANTI-MISSILE and ECM programs

These are automatically part of the PRIORITY program and are therefore obsolete. Both of these factors are still subject to gunner override.

MOVEMENT

Add the GENERATE 1 program

GENERATE 1 creates the flight plans for interplanetary and atmospheric travel.

Replace the GENERATE program with GENERATE 2

This performs the same function as the GENERATE program, being for the creation of flight plans for interstellar trips. The program size is relatively small until after it is run; the parameters generated require a great deal of space. This is based upon experience with present day languages such as DYNAMO where a relatively small amount of code, even under 200 lines, can produce pages and pages of data for an output file. Such a highly used type of computation as this would develop its own compact language such as these.

Redefine the MANEUVER program

MANEUVER will essentially be a NAVIGATE for the maneuver drive. When operating in conjunction with GENERATE 1, it will act as an auto-pilot. The two programs remain separate so the GENERATE 1 can be run to provide flight plans for inspection, pilot use, and possible storage.

Redefine the JUMP programs

JUMP now incorporates the NAVIGATE program (neither one is useful independent of the other).

Eliminate the NAVIGATE program

As above.

III. NOTES ON IMPLEMENTATION

Looking at Tables 1 and 2 shows that the size and cost of this computer system is less than that of the original system. The reduction in size is due to the obvious strides in technology that will occur between now and the far future, at the very least there will be a perfection of bubble memory. The home computers of today, some smaller than a portable TV set, can handle such high power languages as FORTRAN, PASCAL, and COBOL. Think of what will be possible a hundred years from now. The prices will be lower than in *Traveller* for much the same reason. Remember, just ten years ago a calculator cost over a hundred dollars. Now you can get the same thing, at about the same size of a thick credit card, for $20. The intent of these reductions are to make it possible to have more than one computer on a ship. Wouldn't it make sense to have a medical computer in the sick bay, or an astronomical computer in the observatory? These would be independent, yet interconnected systems.

The proliferation of computers and their associated hardware does add complexity to the determination of damage in combat, but it's not that difficult to overcome. Whenever a 'computer' result occurs on the standard damage table in Book 2, assign each computer on board a number and roll a die. Reroll on unassigned numbers. Once the system has been determined, roll for whether it's the program file, the output file, or the MP that has received the damage. In the case of the combined program/output file, there is only two options, the combined file or the MP. The actual damage is determined in the same fashion as in Book 2 except that each hit a file receives has a DM of -2 to operate. Once a file malfunctions all information in the file is permanently erased.

The possible erasure of all file contents points out the importance of having copies of programs and other critical data. This is achieved by having information loaded onto discs. Discs are a circle of treated plastic, also referred to as floppy discs, which can have encoded data stored on them much like a cassette tape. They come in various sizes according to storage capacity, and are themselves very compact and storable. Terminals can have their own disc reader for replacing information into the computer or into the program file. With a disc reader it becomes possible to run all the necessary programs a ship requires without a program file, but ship's business is slowed down by the turn it requires to load the computer by this method. For a list of disc costs, see Table 1.

It should be noted that the output file is not strictly neces-

TABLE 2 — REVISED SOFTWARE LIST

Title	Class	Size (X/Y/Z)	Cost in Cr	Effects and DMs
Weapon Programs				
PREDICT 1	Offensive	2/3/*	750	+1
PREDICT 2	Offensive	3/3/*	1000	+2
PREDICT 3	Offensive	4/2/*	1500	+2
PREDICT 4	Offensive	5/3/*	2500	+3
PREDICT 5	Offensive	6/2/*	5000	+3
PRIORITY 1	Offensive	1/1/*	1000	A PRIORITY N program permits the
PRIORITY 2	Offensive	2/2/*	1500	independent operation of N turrets or
PRIORITY 3	Offensive	3/3/*	2500	sets of turrets.
PRIORITY 4	Offensive	4/4/*	5000	
PRIORITY 5	Offensive	4/4/*	8000	
SELECTIVE 1	Offensive	2/5/*	500	-2 Allows selection of main
SELECTIVE 2	Offensive	2/6/*	750	-1 compartment or engineering.
SELECTIVE 3	Offensive	2/7/*	1000	
Movement Programs				
AUTO/EVADE	Defensive	2/2/2†	1000	-2
EVADE 1	Defensive	2/4/*	1500	-1 per 4 Pilot expertise.
EVADE 2	Defensive	2/4/*	2000	-1 per 2 Pilot expertise.
EVADE 3	Defensive	2/5/*	3000	-3 per 4 Pilot expertise.
EVADE 4	Defensive	2/5/*	5000	-Pilot expertise
EVADE 5	Defensive	2/6/*	8000	-1½ Pilot expertise
EVADE 6	Defensive	2/7/*	10,000	-5
GENERATE 1	Routine	2/2/5†	750	Interplanetary Flight Plans
GENERATE 2	Routine	3/7/12†	5000	Interstellar Flight Plans
JUMP 1	Routine	4/1/*	1000	Required for a jump of 1.
JUMP 2	Routine	4/1/*	1000	Required for a jump of 2.
JUMP 3	Routine	4/2/*	2000	Required for a jump of 3.
JUMP 4	Routine	4/3/*	2000	Required for a jump of 4.
JUMP 5	Routine	4/4/*	2000	Required for a jump of 5.
JUMP 6	Routine	4/5/*	3000	Required for a jump of 6.
MANEUVER	Routine	3/5/*	1000	Auto-pilot

* An ongoing program, cannot be stored. Volume points are used every turn.

† Optionally storable.

ANTI-HIJACK does not appear as it is integrated into the ship itself.
RETURN FIRE does not appear as it is unnecessary with my miniature rules.

sary either, since none of the programs I have presented require their output to be stored, but it is nice to have a ready flight plan which an output file can provide when one gets into a sticky situation. Another advantage of an output file is that if one only has a small MP, it becomes impossible to run anything other than GENERATE 2 and JUMP when in hyperspace as the computer's volume point capacity would be exceeded.

Volume points are an indicator of a number of things. First, in the case of files, it represents sheer space; how much programming each can hold. For the MP, volume points not only represent size, but also time. The volume point rating of the MP is the amount of programming it can handle in one turn, ten minutes. As an example, a four point program in an eight point MP would take five minutes.

Software is designated in the following form: X/Y/Z. X is the number of volume points that the unrun program program requires for storage on a disc or in the program file. Y is the number of points required of the MP, and Z is the number of volume points for output file storage.

The MP is rated by two numbers, M/N. M is the total program size that the MP can handle, while N is a time indicator. An example of this is that a 5/3 MP can handle a 2/4/3 program but not a 2/6/3 program. In the first program, the pertinent number is four. It will fit in the computer because the size four is less than the computer maximum size rating which is five. It would take 13 minutes to run this program as four divided by three (the MP's time indicator) multiplied by ten minutes (the basic turn) equals 13 (eliminating fractions). The second program, on the other hand, cannot run in this MP as its size of six is greater than the MP's size of five. It should be noted that this makes it possible to run more than one program at a time provided the sum of their sizes does not exceed the size rating of the MP.

The Fourfold Way of FRP

After having read many points of view concerning fantasy role-playing gaming styles, including those of Glenn F. Blacow and Lewis Pulsipher in these pages and those of various other authors in amateur publications, I have come to parallel, but different, conclusions on this topic. While I agree in the main with the details espoused by the aforementioned authors, I hold a different view of how the points they raise fit together.

It is my opinion that there are only two major considerations in analyzing FRP campaign styles. The first consideration is the degree of adherence to earthly realities as represented in game systems, and the second consideration is the emphasis placed on personal goals, those of the player characters, as opposed to goals stemming from the campaign setting itself.

It behooves me to acknowledge that there exist in most FRP campaigns elements (such as magic) which in no way adhere to earthly norms. Similarly, to some extent, all goals must relate back to the campaign setting. Hence, players must judge the realism present in a campaign by its mundane aspects, and must consider to whom the benefits of player-characters' actions will accrue. A fair measure of the latter is whether the player characters are willing to undertake missions for the sole benefit of non-player characters, gaining nothing for themselves save honor and increased social stature within the campaign world.

I view the two main aspects, realism and goal orientation, as a plane continuum and suggest a two axis model for examining campaign styles. One axis I label the Realism Axis and the second I label the Goals Axis. These two axis form a plane in which all FRP campaigns can be placed. Interestingly enough, the extremes of the axis represent the four categories of FRP gaming named as archetypes in Glenn F. Blacow's recent article. These are shown on the Gaming Graph.

The extremes on the realism axis are well represented by some of the existing FRP rules systems. *Chivalry & Sorcery* and the "Stanford System" lie at the simulation end of this axis, while games such as *Bunnies & Burrows* and *Tunnels & Trolls* lie at the opposite extreme. The extremes on the goals axis are less well defined with campaigns which cater to the players' values lying near the power-gaming extreme and those campaigns where the values of the Game Master are enforced tend toward the story telling end.
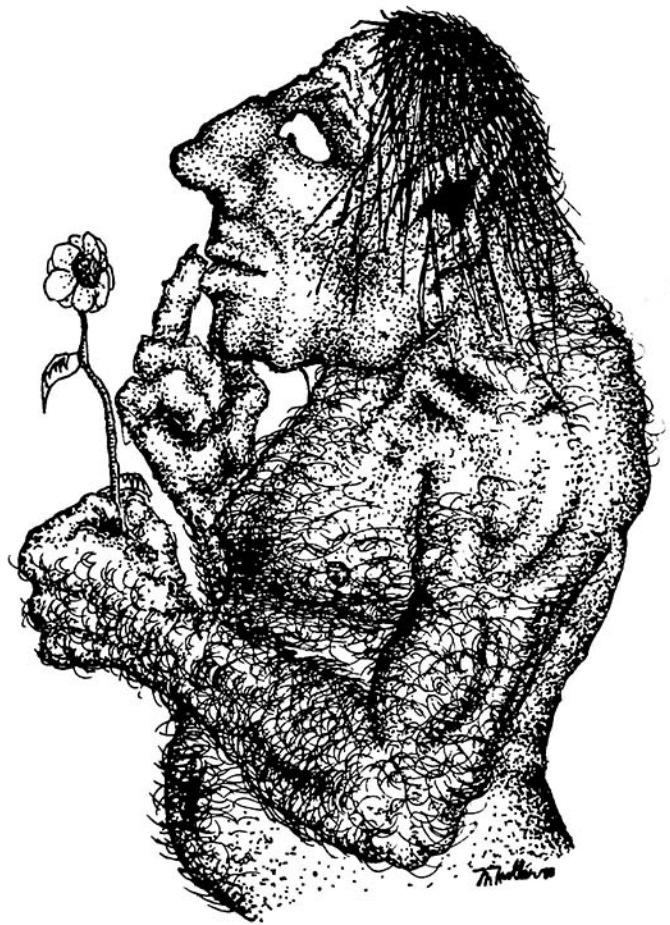
It is my distinct impression that all the extremes are undesirable and can bring about the untimely demise of a campaign. Ideally, a balance must be struck between realism and

GAMING GRAPH

Personal Goals
(Power-Gaming)

Goals Axis

Pure Fantasy   Realism Axis   *Simulation*
(Role-Playing)   *(Wargaming)*

Campaign Goals
(Story Telling)
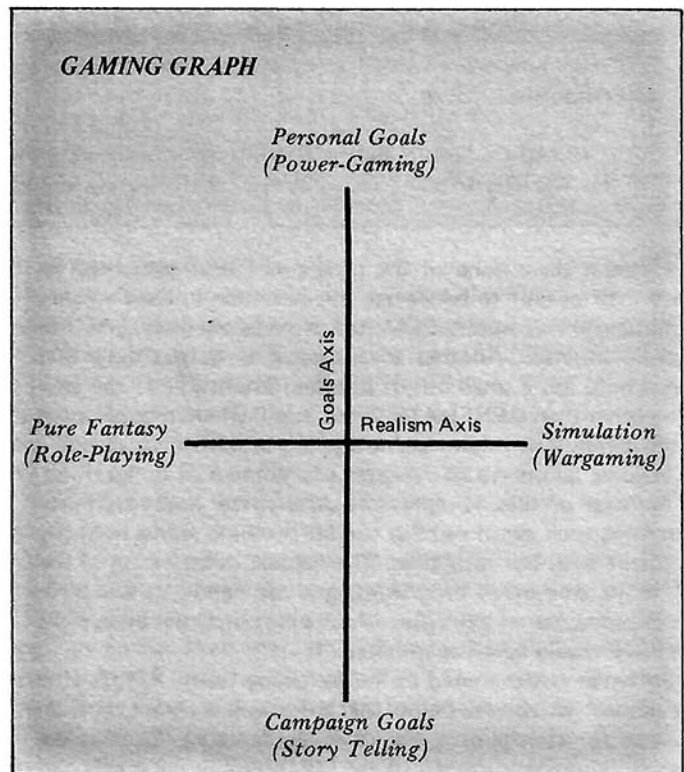
playability on the one axis and between player goals and GM goals on the other. This will allow play to flow smoothly without the rules "getting in the way" and will keep player interest high while preserving the viability of the campaign. Different players (and GMs) prefer different aspect mixes and a near-central position in the style continuum, while not perfect for anyone, at least offers something for everyone.

Lewis Pulsipher in *Different Worlds 8* does some interesting hypothesizing concerning campaign traits. Believability, degree of uncertainty, player skill required, real time vs. game time, extent of the supernatural, combat vs. puzzle, the role of fate, referee interference, player character level, the lords of the world, risk and reward, basic GM style, degree of player character immortality, homogeneity of characters, rigid vs. free form, umpire vs. god, and technology level are the traits he deems present to some degree in most campaigns.

Some of these traits are variables of placement on the realism axis: Believability, degree of uncertainty, player skill required, real time vs. game time, extent of the supernatural, and combat vs. puzzle. There are fewer variables of placement on the goals axis: The role of fate, referee interference, player character level, and the lords of the world. All, save one, of the remaining traits are variables of placement on both axes: Risk and reward, basic GM style, degree of player character immortality, homogeneity of characters, rigid vs. free form, and umpire vs. god. The final trait, technology level, has little bearing on the campaign style if universally applied and as such is neutral.

The proposed model incorporates the views of both Blacow and Pulsipher very neatly. The majority of gripes, as Glenn Blacow suggests, stem from adherents of extreme viewpoints, while the consensus of players appears to favor a happy medium. Enough reality to permit willing suspension of disbelief need not strangle innovation and creativity in masses of "red tape" mechanics. Players desire to role-play their characters and to establish their own goals without undue GM interference, although some GM discretion is needed to curb overly-enthusiastic players before the campaign as a whole suffers from their activities. Likewise, wholesale slaughter of player-characters just because an encounter was designed for a higher level party is seldom appreciated.

How much of any one trait is desirable is an oft-argued and seldom-resolved question. I say, to each his own. Fortunately for all of us, we tend to latch onto and expand upon those influences in a campaign which best suit our own preferences. This is the advantage of incorporating some of each aspect in a campaign. Players in a campaign with an emphasis contrary to their own preference will bring to the fore previously "hidden" aspects. One cannot (and should not) claim a "One True Way" philosophy if there are other players in the campaign who desire otherwise.

This creates a natural system of checks and balances which favors all concerned over the long run. The only hazard is that differences in emphasis preference can cause breakdowns in player/player or player/GM cooperation. The one common requirement of all FRP games is a cooperative effort in maintaining the livelihood of the fantasy world. We all need each other and should never lose sight of this single all-important realization.

AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING

Frank Chadwick and Marc Miller
Game Designers Workshop
$21.98

Azhanti High Lightning is a set of personal combat rules similar to, and compatible with, the standard *Traveller* combat system. The boxed set includes scenarios set aboard a class of large starships, with detailed deck plans and information on these vessels. The set consists of two booklets, a sheet of 240 die-cut counters, fourteen 14"x22" sheets of deck plans, a separate sheet with the combat tables printed on it, and a pair of six-sided dice.

The physical components of the game are up to GDW's usual high standards; the deck plans, done in half a dozen or so colors, are particularly pleasing in layout and execution. The ½" square counters, printed on the front with a silhouette and an identifying code, and on the back with combat information, are pleasing to the eye, and carry all of the necessary information about each character.

The combat rules (which fill most of the first book) are descended through GDW's earlier *Snapshot* system from the original *Traveller* system. Although not as fast and easy as the original system, they are an improvement over the *Snapshot* system. The original 15 second melee turn is still around but mostly as a background bookkeeping convention ("Twelve turns until the bomb goes off/alarm is raised/Marines arrive," etc.); the major time segment is the "action phase" three seconds long. During each phase, a character may expend up to six "action points," which regulate the activities possible in a given phase. Action point costs range from one (for trotting forward one 1.5 meter square) to six or

more for actions requiring more than one phase to complete (such as climbing between decks, crawling about in machinery, etc.). At the beginning of each turn, each character's general actions (cover fire, aimed fire, movement) are written down, and the characters carry out these actions (with a few exceptions and options) for the next five phases.

The gun combat tables are rather interesting, and show one of the major differences between these rules and the standard *Traveller* system. In the usual system, different weapons have various base chances to hit at standardized ranges, and the same roll is used for gaining a hit and for penetration, with skill increasing the chance to hit and the chance of penetration at the same time. In the *Azhanti High Lightning* system, weapons have a standardized set of base chances to hit (8+, 10+, and 12+) which are applied over a set of ranges (effective, long, and extreme) which vary according to the weapon. Thus, a revolver has an effective range of twelve squares (18 meters), and has a base 8+ chance of hitting a man-sized target at that range (rolled on 2D). Penetration is resolved separately from hitting, with weapon skill counting only towards hitting; each weapon has a penetration value, and each type of armor a resistance value, which modify the rolls on the damage table. Damage is somewhat more abstract than in basic *Traveller*, the damage table giving results of "light wound," "serious wound," and "death," which have various results singly and in combination. There is also a slightly abstracted hand-to-hand melee system.

The last part of the book consists of ten scenarios, all part of six "incidents" set aboard Azhanti High Lightning class starships. The ones we played seemed well thought out and balanced, except for the 'blob' scenario. The nasty alien 'blobs' cannot inflict any

meaningful damage, and the game settled down to a protracted tour of 59 decks. The blobs ineffectually inflicted light wounds along the way, hoping to produce unconsciousness, since there is no limit given in the rules as to how many light wounds a character can suffer and still live.

The second book in the set, titled *Supplement 5: Lightning Class Cruisers*, contains "a detailed treatment of the background, specifications, capabilities, and interior layout" of these ships, which are 60,000 ton monsters designed according to *Traveller Book 5: High Guard*. A large amount of information of interest to those people running "standard" *Traveller* campaigns is given here; other people will find it mostly useful only as a guide to running the scenarios given in the rules booklet.

Overall, the system is very good, though people who run non-standard campaigns will not get as good a value for their money as other people might — I imagined that all of those large and colorful deck plans are responsible for the price tag, and not everyone will need them. Still, for the Game Master who cares to come up with a damage comparison system, blade weapon adjustments to the sketchy melee system, and animal ratings, this system can prove to be an interesting alternative to standard *Traveller*; and, of course, *Azhanti High Lightning* can still be played for its own considerable enjoyment.

Michael Blum

Bridge Stations: The bridge consists positions, both on and off the central a

Command Locations.
1. Captain.
2. Supernumerary Station.

Engineering and Maneuvering.
3. Chief Engineering Officer.
4. Maneuvering Officer.
5. Jump Drive Bridge Repeaters.
6. Jump Control Officer.
7. Power Plant Bridge Repeaters.

ODYSSEUS

Marshall T. Rose
Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc
$5.50

Odysseus is apparently an attempt at a role-playing system for the Homeric Age of Greece, the Heroic Age of which Homer sings in his epics *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. As a *mise en scene* for the Bronze Age in the Aegean Basin it fails miserably. As a role-playing system it is disorganized, clumsy, and incomplete. The game lacks color, both of the Homeric Age, which it claims in its title, and of the later Classical Age which, in fact, it more closely approximates.

The rules include character generation, ship movement and combat, weapons, armor and warriors, combat and movement, campaign rules, and a section on the gods. They are written from the point of view of a fanta-

sy role-player, and assume the reader to be one as well. There are repeated references to a "moderator," but no concrete description of the moderator's function in the game. Combat is emphasized, but uses a rather awkward system. Each character, for example, has a Fighting Skill Number, or FSN, which is increased by the number of kills or assists a character makes, and decreased by the number of wounds he or she sustains. Theoretically, a character's FSN can be infinite. There is an interesting method of combat resolution, where players select combat posture cards, attack and defense, and cross reference results, but this and a few other good ideas are obscured by the cloudiness of the overall system. On the whole, the rules are disorganized ("Movement with the ship . . . is similar to movement on land," but we haven't been told about land movement yet!), incomplete (we are never told how to go about acquiring a ship), and lack development. Essentially, it is left to the moderator to finish writing the rules from a rather disordered and clumsy outline.

The world in which *Odysseus* is set is confused and inaccurate. It is a peculiar game of the Homeric Age of Greece when a player character cannot hail from Troy or Crete, wear a boar's tusk helmet as Odysseus himself did, carry the Boeotian figure-eight style shield, or use a club for a weapon as did the greatest hero of the age, Herakles. In the section on the gods, Demeter is not to be found among the Olympians, but Hades, lord of the underworld, is! The first clue as to what is going on comes upon opening the rulebook to a map entitled "Classical Greece," a period some 800 years after the Heroic Age of Greece. The final explanation comes in the "Notes On Realism" section at the end of the rules, which begins "It is very difficult to find or even predict a time period in ancient Greece when iron was being introduced, and bronze armor was still in predominant use. Because of this, an entire time period has been used rather than a specific date for the game." It is indeed very difficult when one's sources and recommended reading consist entirely of Cliff's Notes on Mythology! It is therefore not surprising that the rules demonstrate little knowledge or understanding of ancient Greek civilization, either of the Bronze Age or of the Iron Age.

Odysseus is a disappointment. The role-playing world could use a good Heroic Age game system. With a great deal of interpretation and interpolation, *Odysseus* is perhaps usable by players familiar with role-playing systems, but the confused nature of its rules, and the lack of color in its world hardly make it worthwhile.

Donald Dupont

THE TOMBS OF VALLA

John Scott Clegg
$6.00

The Tombs of Valla is an underground adventure booklet in the *World of Dyon* series. It is designed to enable the Game Master to incorporate it into his/her own campaign at the level of challenge for the players that he/she desires. Each time it is played can be different by using the provided tables to vary the monsters and treasures.

The booklet describes each room on the five levels of the tombs, gives background information on many of the people entombed there, as well as an interesting history of the surrounding area.

"The Quest for the Amulet of Kysh," the scenario given in the booklet, is a difficult and dangerous undertaking for all but the most powerful characters. The Tombs of Valla, un--like so many other dungeons, is not abandoned. In fact, the King of Mooria keeps the tombs well guarded. Soldiers and priests patrol the corridors and fearsome beasts await the unwary behind closed doors. Deep down on the lowest level, Asperakysh the Demon, plots revenge against the human race for imprisoning him beneath the tombs. Woe unto those foolish enough to break the seals on his prison! The King of Mooria has good reason to guard these tombs! They contain the remains of the sorcerer kings of Mooria along with their treasures and favorite magical tools. Vampires and mummies guard fabulous wealth. In return for their services, they are allowed refuge of the tombs.

In addition to these features, there are practical rooms such as kitchens, sleeping quarters, and storerooms. These rooms can mislead adventurers and waste their precious time, as they try to find the object of their quest and escape before they are discovered. For once the alarm is sounded, few will live to see the light of day.

There are 32 magical items listed. Upon first glance they appear to have too little said about them, but after some use of the booklet, I found that I could adapt them however I desired. I was able to use many of them in my campaign by adding my own notes where I thought more information was needed.

There are 16 beasts listed. Information is provided about each beast so that it can be used with both *Dungeons & Dragons* and *RuneQuest*. Sandy Petersen, who wrote *Gateway Bestiary* for *RQ*, adapted these beasts for use with either game system. I wish the descriptions by John Clegg had been more detailed as four of them do not have accompanying illustrations. From the fine illustrations that are presented, it seems that these beasts have
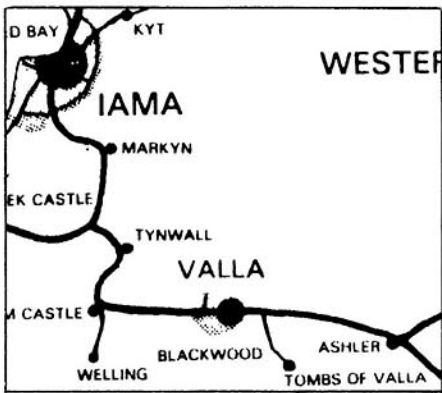
been adapted from real animals from the earth's past. Only a few changes have been made so that they could be used for fantasy gaming. My favorite is his morgird. Its savage ferocity and stubborn tenacity enable it to fight on after it has taken enough damage to kill it.

My one complaint about the beast section is the lack of a description for the mesoc. It is mentioned in the text, accompanied by a tantalizing illustration, but no statistics are given.

One aspect that I liked was that the players in this module need to use their brains as does the GM. Mr. Clegg has set the stage, given the plot outline, but left the direction up to the GM. He has done most, but not all of the work needed to set up the adventure, leaving the final details up to you. He has provided more than enough information to help the GM set up the campaign. I prefer this type of module to those that are rigidly fixed and unchangeable like many of the available modules have been.

This booklet and map set are a valuable part of my collection. I can easily modify it to serve as a similar complex in many parts of my campaign by using the alternate beasts and by substituting different guards and treasures. All the random tables needed are included, making this simple. I have found that playing it has been an enjoyable and exciting experience.

Jeromy Wolfe

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HIGH FANTASY

Jeffrey Dillow
Fantasy Productions
$6.00

SHORT DESCRIPTION

High Fantasy is a fantasy role-playing game system. The rules cover character generation, character classes and sub-classes, the combat system, the magic system, the experience system, and some campaign notes. While *High Fantasy* is perhaps the most original FRP system to be printed since the original *Dungeons & Dragons*, it has the flaws of being highly abstracted and in many areas very artificial. The main value of owning *High Fantasy* is to understand the very excellent scenario books which are issued by the publishers.

LONG DESCRIPTION

To create a *High Fantasy* character, one first decides what character class is desired. The choices are Warriors (Missile Users or Melee Weapon Users), Wizards, Animal Masters, and Alchemists. Warriors are weapons use specialists. Wizards can use magic spells and create magic items. Animal Masters train animals to perform actions (scout, fight, etc.) on command. The Alchemists are masters of potion creation, and have reserved to themselves the mystery of using firearms.

Then, some inevitable characteristic rolls are made, all characters must have rolls for Strength, Quickness, Coordination, and beginning money. All but Warriors roll for beginning proficiency, and Wizards roll for the number of beginning spells. Sub-classes may also be chosen. These are those of Armorer, Healer, Historian, Hunter, Jeweler, Martial Artist, Sensitive (ESP specialist), and Thief. There is no provision for cleric types as such in the game.

The combat system is different from any I

have previously encountered. Each character and monster has a calculated or assigned an offensive total and a defensive total. The percent chance to hit is the first minus the second. Once a hit is scored, damage done is again based on the calculated chance to hit, modified for various factors. Damage done is applied against the opponent's offensive and defensive totals. There is provision for critical hits, which do various types of special damage. Damage may be done to both armor and to the character's body; this repaired respectively by armorers and by healers.

The magic system consists of spells, which are organized into categories of difficulty called planes. There are five planes. Spells are cast by expending quantities of magical energy called mannas. It costs the plane number of a spell in mannas to cast it, and under some circumstances a lower plane spell can be cast at enhanced effect by putting more mannas behind it. The spell list provides for all the standard FRP magical effects. Spells succeed when the Wizard's innate ability overwhelms the target's magic resistance.

The experience system involves the acquisition of victories over 'roughly equal opponents.' Five such victories advance a character to another skill level, and for every four skill levels the character attains a new plane of competency. Skill levels and planes both affect the character's ability to attack and defend himself and to perform various actions successfully.

Monsters in *High Fantasy* are assigned various factors, which generally remain constant for all individuals of the monster class. These factors are: offensive factor, defensive factor, damage bonus, quickness (which affects the order in which attacks are resolved) the skill level of the typical monster specimen, the movement factor, the relative size, the quality of intelligence (U or I), any magic resistance, and undefined quality called the difficulty factor. There follows a glossary providing a minimum description of each monster type. The monsters are mostly of the same familiar beasties we know from all the RPGs that have been published before, with some illiterate variations in name to avoid the usual copyright problems. (When is a Balrog a Ballor or Balro? When it's in a publication not blessed by the Tolkien heirs that wants to sell copies in England!)

The campaign notes are mostly a guide to how the characters should expect to spend the treasure they find after killing the monsters. Wizards must buy research materials to discover more spell types for their repertory, Animal Masters must build shelters for their performing beasts, Alchemists need exotic ingredients and gun makings, and Warriors seek the price of castles and armies. There is no hard guide on how much loot to provide monsters of a given level.

DISLIKES

I suppose that the author found merit in his system, for he has spent quite a bit of effort in compiling it. For me, however, *High Fantasy* has little to offer as a gaming system. The melee system is highly artificial. While this artificiality could be excused for some benefit, such as simplicity, from the playtesting I have done, there is little to choose in that category from the other systems, especially the alternate combat system of *D&D*. The magic system is as purely mechanical as *D&D*'s, with the feature of a spell point system, and a better graded magic resistance system, but nothing to recommend it over many non-*D&D* games which have similar features, but which are better developed (e.g., *The Fantasy Trip*) or have a greater base in traditional arcane lore (e.g., *Chivalry & Sorcery*) or are simpler (e.g., *RuneQuest* battle magic or the *Tunnels & Trolls* magic system). The lack of any clerical types in the game cuts it off from most of the mythic lore in human history, where the gods are always making waves, usually involving their priests. Finally, the text is poorly written, both in terms of organization and in terms of proofreading and grammar.

LIKES

I found little that was pleasing in this book. The cover is not exactly something to write home about, and the interior illustrations are of average quality. The game system is an interesting lesson on how most of the other FRP systems in print are relatively similar in form, by contrast to the stark originality of *High Fantasy*.

CONCLUSION

High Fantasy is a system with a difference, but not much else. I'm not going to change any of my gaming rules because of this book, which is unusual — I almost always find some neat twists in the latest set of rules I've read. As I stated in my first paragraph, there is one reason to buy these rules, and that is to be able to understand the series of scenario booklets written by the author for his system — these contain many elements worthy of adaptation for the individual campaign, set in the Game Master's regular system.

Anders Swenson

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FORTRESS ELLENDAR
MOORGUARD

Both by Jeffrey Dillow
Fantasy Productions
$5.00 each

Fortress Ellendar and *Moorguard* are scenario books written for the *High Fantasy* rules system. They involve expeditions by the player-characters into dangerous situations where they must use their skills (or the players their wits) to overcome strong guardians and accomplish specific actions. Both of these adventures are written for the game to progress along a particular plot-line, instead of the more usual player-initiative exploration of a static environment. They both come with separate map sheets apart from the rules.

Fortress Ellendar is located in the desert somewhat to the north of Moorguard. The fortress has been taken over by an evil enemy of lawful civilization. The adventurers are charged to go to Ellendar and deny its use to the enemy by releasing a deamon who has been bound somewhere in the depths of the place. Only limited information is provided on how this is to be accomplished; solving the riddle of just how the deamon is to be released, as well as how to get away afterwards are important parts of the action. *Fortress Ellendar* just might be won in a long evening.

Moorguard is an adventure into the fortress/workshop of a Wizard-Artificer named Cars Marath. The adventure begins as the party of adventurers is captured by the Bengoli tribesmen. The whole party is overwhelmed, and tied up while the tribesmen arrange a suitable fate for their captives. On the sixth day of this captivity, a Wizard-Thief rescues the characters, and exhorts them to travel to Moorguard. There, they are to capture the axe Duramael and the shield Solloment and make off with them, denying their use to Cars Marath. The trip to Moorguard is uneventful; upon arriving there the adventurers must enter the Wizard's domain, find and recover the artifacts, and escape. The plot is complicated by the local inhabitants, the Wizard himself, a number of wierd beings called travelers, the Bengoli tribesmen, and other interesting problems. This scenario will certainly take more than one evening to run.

Both of these adventure books have the feature of presenting puzzles for the players to fathom, as well as trials for the characters to overcome. The last adventure of this sort I reviewed, *Temple to Athena* (see *DW 10*), came out very poorly because the information which the Game Master was to present to the players was so poorly organized to defy comprehension, even by the GM! In the case of these books, we have a much happier situation — there are clear expositions not only of what the information is, but also paragraphs telling the GM what to do, and suggestions on his course of action should the players do one thing and another. The organization is very good the monster descriptions are complete (within the *High Fantasy* game system) and each monster is keyed to the portion of the text where it occurs.

The point of both of these adventures is that there is a plot which the players are expected to follow with their characters. While the characters will face danger in following this plot, things get much worse if they get on the wrong track. In order to run this sort of adventure, the GM must have all of the facts and details in mind throughout the run. It is not really adequate to go from point to point, reading each description for the first time as the party encounters a new phenomenon. The job of the GM is made simpler for the inclusion of separate sheets of information to be
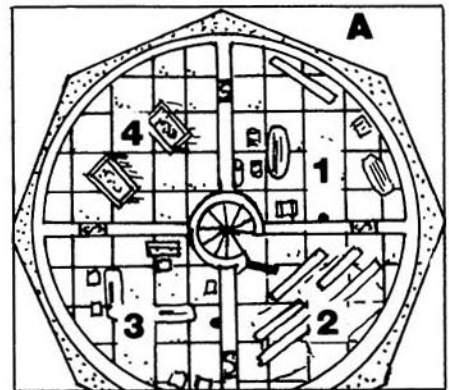
handed over to the players, freeing the GM of a lot of unneedful description.

The main problem with both of these adventures is that they have been written for the *High Fantasy* rules, rather than for a more popular system. I certainly understand that the whole point of the operation is to help sell more copies of *High Fantasy*, but in this case, the scenarios are considerably better than the rules for which they are written. A secondary gripe is about price — these books are each $5.00. The price is simply out of line for the material presented — while the text is well done, the price for so small a book is absurdly high, in comparison to what is offered by other publishers in the field.

Overall, the decision to purchase these books will ride on whether or not the potential buyer wants to use the *High Fantasy* system, or on whether he wants to pay a premium price for what is, in fact, a superior scenario. With a copy of *High Fantasy* in hand, it is easy to transliterate the monster notation to correspond to most of the major game systems, and these books are both very good examples of the narrative style of scenario, which many GMs may wish to examine to upgrade their own campaigns.

Anders Swenson

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TUNNELS & TROLLS

Ken St Andre
Flying Buffalo, Inc.
$14.95 for complete game
$8.95 for rulebook only

Unlike most gaming fans, I was introduced to fantasy role-playing through *Tunnels & Trolls*, rather than through *Dungeons & Dragons*. Since *T&T* has been around a long time (since 1975) and since it is simpler and less expensive than competing FRP systems, I have often wondered why *T&T* has not enjoyed a wider popularity among gamers. Most particularly, I have wondered because I so greatly enjoy *T&T*; a richly satisfying circle of FRP gamers grew up locally with the *T&T* system, and even though I have gone on to play many other systems — *D&D*, *Advanced D&D*, *RuneQuest*, *The Fantasy Trip* — and have familiarized myself with most of the other alternative systems, I believe that the two years in which I played *T&T* exclusively were some of the most rewarding FRP experiences I have ever had.

The reasons why *T&T* has been overlooked or ignored are complicated and subject to various interpretations. Flying Buffalo has in the past pursued a fairly low-key merchandising policy, but with the release of the completely revised and re-illustrated edition, an attractive boxed set, and stepped-up advertising in fan magazines, it is clear that an attempt is being made to seek a wider audience for *T&T*. For this new fifth edition a review is in order — first with a description of the system for the uninitiated, and then with a discussion of those distinctive features of *T&T* that recommend it to FRP gamers.

DESCRIPTION

The *T&T* system is complete in one 96 page booklet, shorter by far than any other complete system. Often reviewers will discuss the logical presentation of a system, but the brevity of *T&T* eliminates the need for a detailed consideration of the structure of the rules. Sections requiring frequent reference (i.e., weapons and spell lists) are easily referred to, and the rules are discussed roughly in the order of their need for play. The graphics and layout are particularly pleasing and designed to facilitate reference, rather than to cram information into a limited space.

The rulebook is divided into three main sections. Section one covers basic rules concerning character creation and outfitting, the monster system, combat, saving rolls, and advancement through adventure points. The rules are accompanied throughout with entertaining examples, much like *RQ* with its excellent and absorbing examples and illustrations of play. This first section essentially prepares one to understand the basic concept of role-playing and melee conflict. The second section is really just a continuation of section one, giving basic rules for character types, magic, sequence of play, being a dungeonmaster, and an example of a dungeon. The sample dungeon is rather unextraordinary to the experienced FRP gamer, but it adequately illustrates planning a dungeon for a beginner. Section three contains elaborations that are entertaining but not specifically necessary for playing the game; there are discussions and explanations in some detail of the basic concepts, suggestions for play, and optional rules. A glossary of common and exotic weapons is provided for the curious.

As for the system itself, *T&T* is a lineal descendant of *D&D*. Character abilities are determined by die rolls; the player determines, based on his abilities, his character class (area of specialization); he outfits his character from a list of weapons and/or spells, according to his class, and he sallies forth into the world searching for adventure, gold, and personal advancement. However, many of *T&T*'s systems differ significantly from *D&D*'s systems. For example, in the magic system, a *T&T* mage has more rapid access to higher level spells, and a spell point system is used to limit the amount of magic a mage can produce in a given time period. Mages in *T&T* can wear armor without penalty and are, in general, a little better able to protect themselves in melee combat. Even more distinctively, no systemic saving throw versus magic exists in *T&T*. Saving throws in *T&T* are largely a matter of dungeonmaster discretion, and may be awarded not so much against magic as against any great misfortune. The saving roll here is intended for situations where only tremendous dumb luck will save a character.

T&T's combat system is completely different from *D&D*'s: for melee, *T&T* employs a very simple system with little attempt to simulate a realistic melee, while armor absorbs damage, as in *RQ*, without *RQ*'s more detailed hit location system. Character classes differ

in *T&T* from the *D&D* classes — no cleric, no thief, none of the more esoteric classes, just the fighter, magic-user, rogue, and wizard-warrior (the latter two classes simply being varying mixtures of fighters and magic-users). Monster descriptions are marvelously simple, consisting of a single 'monster rating' number, which is at once an abstraction of the relative awesomeness of his menace and a description of his natural defenses and offensive capability. The monster rating is the only figure you must know in resolving a combat with that monster. Personal characteristics are increasable through bonuses awarded upon changing levels, unlike *D&D*. *T&T* also has some entertaining rules for the use of guns and for berserk melee, which some folks are very fond of.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of *T&T* is the relatively small volume of text and the low cost. The *T&T* rulebook costs only $8.95, and the boxed set, containing the rulebook, a solitaire dungeon, a DM's dungeon, and six-sided dice (*T&T* uses only six-sided dice) is only $14.95. I must emphasize that *T&T* is complete in its single rulebook, while two comparably priced items are not: *D&D*'s beginner's rulebook is only a stepping stone to the complete *D&D* or *AD&D*, and the inexpensive *In The Labyrinth* requires either basic or advanced *Melee* and *Wizard* for play.

Incidentally, those who have earlier editions of *T&T* will find the changes quite significant; Liz Danforth details the major revisions in Winter 1979 *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, the *T&T* prozine, but the earlier editions and the fifth edition are somewhat incompatable.

EVALUATION

Among *T&T*'s most attractive features is its basic attitude toward rules. *T&T* is basically an open-ended and non-restrictive system. *D&D*, in particular, has acquired the reputation of a One-True-Way system — that is, a standardized and authority-centered rules system. *T&T*, on the other hand, explicitly states its cardinal rules system. *T&T*, on the other hand, explicitly states its cardinal rule in the rulebook's introduction, ". . . adjust the system as you see fit to suit your own style of play." I respect the comprehensive and consistent system represented by the texts of *AD&D*, but *T&T* is designed to encourage the player to place the stamp of his own personality on the game, rather than to acknowledge the stamp of the developer's personality. I find literal dependency on the text discouraging in a game whose special significance is in the fantasy and creativity of the players. *T&T* invites you to develop your own systems to a certain extent, and, at very least, to rely on common sense rather than a literal interpretation of the rules. To illustrate the *T&T* philosophy, compare the *AD&D Dungeonmaster's Guide*, which devotes 44 pages to detailed listings and descriptions of the types of magic treasures that may be encountered, with the *T&T* rulebook, where no such listings or descriptions are given — in fact, the subject of magic items is nowhere explicitly discussed. In *T&T* campaigns I have run or played in, each magic item is a unique creation of the DM, sometimes unremarkable, sometimes fascinating; in many of the *D&D* campaigns of the high school club where I am the unofficial advisor, reading the character sheets reveals most of the same magic trinkets I would find anywhere else in the United States.

Magic is more fun for a beginner in *T&T* than in other systems. *D&D*, *RQ*, and *Chival-*

ry & Sorcery tend to be relatively restrained in their access to magic for beginning characters; in varying degrees, each permits more entertaining magic as the character progresses. *T&T* permits rapid access to more sophisticated spells, relatively frequent use of spells known, and spell lists open to fairly broad and flexible application; also, a *T&T* beginning magic-user is somewhat better designed to defend himself in combat, even after his magic fails. A *D&D* beginning magic-user is particularly pathetic; after he has shot his crummy one or two spells for the day, he is practically incapable of defending himself from a determined rat. Magic is a big entertainment feature of FRP, and serendipitous use of magic spells is highly regarded; in *T&T*, there are plenty of opportunities to cleverly and creatively use magic spells, even for the lowest of hedgewizards.

The rhythm and pace of play in *T&T* is fast and simple: combat and magic use is quick and uninterrupted by chart references, and because the rules do not pretend to have the same authoritative status of other systems, there is little opportunity for extended debate and textbook reference by dungeon lawyers on the interpretation of conflicting texts or omissions in the rules. Also, the tendency to rely on common sense rather than literal rules often speeds play, at least in my experience. One of my major complaints about systems like *RQ* and *C&S* is how slowly they play; preoccupation with the rules detracts from concentrated role-playing.

For a DM, the *T&T* system is easy and simple to set up for adventures. Unlike *D&D* and *RQ*, with their complex systems of statistics necessary to describe a monster, *T&T* encourages improvisation. More time can be spent on the 'role' of the encountered being, rather than on his combat statistics. When I set up a dungeon, I may do no more than write down the name of a creature, a distinctive feature, and an arbitrary 'monster rating'; the detailed description and personality of the creature will develop on the spot as I play him, remaining flexible and open to adaptation. For example, one wandering monster chart listed "toasted corpse, animated, 40 mr (the *T&T* monster rating, his only statistic)." When this item appeared down a corridor before a party, and the players fired arrows into it, I reasoned to myself, "That wouldn't affect it; they'll have to think of something clever to get this one." However, instead of trying to kill it, the party decided to capture and question it. This unusual approach to handling undead appealed to me, so I improvised a little mini-adventure where the players set the soul of the animated corpse to rest by digging up a stolen magic lamp from the fire-marred ruins of his mansion and returning the lamp to its rightful owner. By leaving myself open to the humor and suggestion of the party, and to the inspiration of the moment, I avoid many hours of wasted planning of a creature that the party either never encounters or isn't particularly interested in. In *AD&D*, of course, a zombie is a zombie, and a mummy is a mummy, and every player knows exactly how they work and what they do, and, as a DM, you had better have all this stuff ready in your notes, or you'll have to waste time looking through the *D&D Monster Manual* when your players have an encounter with one.

One particularly attractive feature of *T&T* is the fact that beginning players start out weak, vulnerable, and broke. One of the most

satisfying challenges is keeping these turkeys alive, earning the gold to buy their first decent armor, their first metal weapon — these minor triumphs are poignant in *T&T*. For example, an average *T&T* fighter must be content to begin adventuring with leather armor, a small buckler, and a club. Many beginning *RQ* and *C&S* characters begin with few possessions and little protection, but an average beginning *D&D* fighter would be able to afford chainmail, shield, and a shiny long sword.

Most experienced players buy new systems not with an eye to changing their current systems, but to garner ideas to add to their existing systems. FRP fans buy compulsively — I know from experience — just because we're interested in other ways of doing it. In this sense, *T&T* is a relatively small investment. Particularly woth noting are the weapons and armor charts, the glossary of arms, the hit point system, the spell point system, the monster rating system, and the character class of the rogue. I mention these because I have used, and continue to use, certain features of these systems in my own personal FRP variants.

T&T, unlike most other systems, has a desireable emphasis on the use of information yielding spells. Two important detection spells are very inexpensive to use at the first level. The 'detect hidden' spell (called Oh-There-It-Is) also detects invisible and secret doors, unlike its *D&D* counterpart, and a 'detect magic' costs no spell points — an inherent power of magic users. At the second level a unique spell is fairly inexpensive, called the 'omnipotent eye.' This spell determines the nature and/or level of a spell found on persons or objects or active in the environment. This spell enables prudent players to avoid messing with inordinately powerful objects or persons, and permits intelligent diagnosis and planning in response to magical bounties or calamities. I find that in other systems 'detects' and other information spells are rarely used, either because of restricting limitations or because a player feels compelled to save his few spell casting powers for offensive weaponry. A sophisticated player should use spells to avoid perils rather than have to count on blasting their way out of them.

About *T&T*'s combat system: first, let me say that I am not interested in a realistic combat system; in fact, I doubt if I'd recognize one if it came up and bit me on the bottom. However, I suspect that the more realistic a combat system is, the more complicated and time-consuming that system is. Of the three systems I am most familiar with, other than *T&T*, *D&D* seems least preoccupied with realism, with *RQ* and *C&S* being, in that order, progressively more realistic, more compli-

cated, and more time-consuming. *T&T* is less complicated or time-consuming than any of these systems, and, therefore, it is probably less realistic. For some, a realistic combat is a necessary element in establishing a proper atmosphere to slip imaginatively into the fantasy role; others find that preoccupation with the details of the setting interferes with the action. Using the literary analogy, preference for plot or setting may be simply a matter of taste; *T&T* is more likely to satisfy those primarily interested in the narrative, while those who are primarily interested in wargaming and combat simulation would prefer another combat system.

One thing I can say from long experience with the *T&T* combat system: the outcomes of combats in *T&T* seem to be more consistent and predictabe than the combats in other system. It is difficult to precisely compare such dissimilar combat systems as those of *RQ*, *D&D*, and *T&T*, but several factors are worth noting. The 'impale' and 'critical hit' rules of *RQ* provide the potential for instant death on a single unlucky die roll, even when matched against a vastly inferior foe. In *D&D* and *RQ*, the saving roll and POW versus POW tables, respectively, introduce a great deal of uncertainty about whether your combat magic will be effective. In *D&D* the roll of a single D20 generates a linear curve of probability, with a very poor outcome just as likely as a very fortunate one; in *T&T* multiple D6s are thrown, generating a bell curve of probability, with average, median outcomes much more likely than the extremes of poor and good fortune. In *T&T*, and *RQ* and *TFT*, armor protects against a constant number of damage points; if you can fairly accurately anticipate the range of probable damage points that an opponent might inflict in a given combat, as you can with *T&T*, the risk of combat can be intelligently assessed. With fairly predictable outcomes, combat becomes a sensible tactic rather than a major gamble; playing the role of a combatant, I would rather rely on being smart for my own survival rather than trust to luck.

Avoiding combat can also become a sensible tactic in *T&T*. One peculiarity of *T&T* combat is that when one side begins to win, it just keeps winning. With this kind of system, it is easy to tell when running or surrendering might be a sensible course of action, while in other systems, you are encouraged to keep on fighting to the last breath, on the chance that you might get in a lucky shot. This feature encourages alternate means of conflict resolution other than combat — for example: negotiation, surrender, bluff, head-long flight, hiding · each with its own particular dramatic flavor. Another interesting peculiarity of the *T&T* system is that closely matched oppo-

TUNNELS & TROLLS

NAME *Fane the Delectable* T...

ST ___13___ IQ ___16___ LK ...

CON ___13___ DEX __6__ CHR ___12___ ...

GOLD: _____ -0- _____ ADVE...

WEAPONS: short sabre (3+1)

ARMOR: buckler (takes 3 h...

nents can fight almost indefinitely without a decisive outcome. How often have your FRP combats ended in a draw? The addition of the draw to the conventional win-or-lose outcomes opens up a whole new set of dramatic possibilities for respectful negotiations between evenly matched opponents.

There are some things I found unsatisfying in my use of the *T&T* system. The movement system makes perhaps a little too great a demand on common sense — a few arbitrary guidelines might be nice, though it is easy enough to develop your own. I also found the chore of bookkeeping for spell points and regaining strength points a nuisance. The system seemed to encourage petty fudging and attention to time duration that I found distracting; the bookkeeping for each magic-user every turn while in combat gets to be a pain. Basically, however, many of the features that I have described as assets might be distinct liabilities to some tastes — for example: the rapid but unrealistic combat system. Here the final arbiter must be individual preferences.

ASSOCIATE PUBLICATIONS

One striking feature of *T&T* is the line of associated publications put out by Flying Buffalo. Just like most other FRP systems, dungeon modules have been produced as aids to DMs. *T&T* dungeons of this type are not remarkable, compared to the *RQ* and *D&D* scenarios.

However, two varieties of Flying Buffalo's *T&T* associated publications are distinctly worthy of examination — their prozine, *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, and their line of solitaire dungeons. *Sorcerer's Apprentice* is probably the most handsome of the FRP fan magazines. The graphics and illustrations are strikingly good and appropriate to their subject; I usually don't notice such details, except in the negative, but a brief scan through any issue will confirm my impressions. There is some unusually good fiction in the magazine; fiction is usually disdained by FRP magazines, and considering some of the fiction I have seen in other prozines, what they do print perhaps should have been disdained. In fact, the fiction in *Sorcerer's Apprentice* provides a much more useful model of FRP atmosphere and narrative than a module or an expository essay. The articles are well-enough written and generally interesting, but seldom do they cover any other systems than *T&T*. The editorials are lucid, sane, and personal, with a frank good humor that contrasts sharply with the sometimes ponderously serious postures of other prozines. The discouraging lapses in proofreading that seem to plague most FRP fan magazines have been largely avoided by *Sorcerer's Apprentice*; the magazine sets high standards for itself and persistently adheres to them. Even if you don't play *T&T*, you will find this magazine interesting reading.

The most distinctive of the *T&T* associated publications are their solitaire dungeons. *T&T* has tried to supply a game aid that no one else has been very successful at providing. The solitaire dungeon is a good way for a beginner to become familiar with FRP rules, and the solitaire dungeon fills the needs of the gamer lacking game partners, whether from geographical isolation, or from temporary unavailability of customary partners. The difficulties of providing quality solitaire dungeons can only be appreciated after playing one; Flying Buffalo's writers have been creative and resourceful in dealing with many of these

difficulties. It is probably worth buying and learning *T&T* just to play one of their solitaire dungeons; it is an unique and interesting experience. There is an unusual review of the *T&T* solitaire dungeons in the Winter '78 issue of *Sorcerer's Apprentice* which is uniquely and refreshingly candid about varying degrees of quality in these solo dungeons. It is difficult to imagine many other magazines permitting publication of reviews that are openly critical of the publisher's products.

IN SUMMARY

T&T is simple to learn, and quick and easy to play. It is inexpensive and complete in one booklet. The system emphasizes creativity and common sense rather than adherence to text or rules. It is probably most attractive for those interested in dramatic narrative and action rather than realistic simulation. Its solo dungeons are unique in the FRP world, and worth examination in their own right, serving a distinct need for many gamers. *T&T* is a system which I believe compares favorably with the other FRP systems available, and one which I believe is worth your attention. I have enjoyed the years I have played the system, and I believe *T&T* represents a particularly attractive philosophy of FRP — a philosophy that deserves your consideration whether you play the *T&T* system or not.

Ken Rolston

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DUCK TOWER

Paul Jaquays and Rudy Kraft
Judges Guild, Inc.
$5.98

Duck Tower is a *RuneQuest* scenario booklet. Briefly, it is the exploration of a ruined fortress-temple. The adventurers will mainly be searching for treasure. A very complex set of ruins is presented; there are 100 rooms, some with dangers of their own, and some with treasures. There are also 17 groups of non-player characters and monsters which the referee sets individually in the ruins, and a number of found objects ranging from the trivial through the dangerous to the wonderful which occur on a chance basis in the rooms.

Duck Tower is a ruined temple-fortress of Humakt, set up by a prosperous tribe of ducks. In *RQ*, the ducks are a mutated/cursed race of man-like creatures, physically similar to the various cartoon creatures such as Donald or Howard. Functionally, they are similar to hobbits or halflings in other role-playing games, although of an admittedly comic aspect. They are small and weak, but of great dexterity. They have feathers, and swim. The

idea of a duck temple to Humakt, the god of swords and death is outrageous, but there it is.

The temple-fortress fell hundreds of years ago, and any treasure which was easy to spot and carry away is gone long since. Currently, Duck Tower is home to explorers, outlaws, dangerous beasts, and the inevitable archeologist. There is still treasure there, odd items left undiscovered, and hoards left there by more recent inhabitants. The whole complex is really an above-ground dungeon adventure, with a more reasonable rationalization for the monsters and treasure than is usually given.

Setting up the adventure is like populating a new dungeon map. For each monster group, the referee rolls a D100 to assign a location in the ruins. For each separate adventure into Duck Tower, then, the monsters can be in different positions. The found objects occur on a set chance in each room, varying from 5% to 60%. When it is determined that an object exists in a room, another table is entered to determined what it is — there is a good chance of a bizarre, worthless thing, and a small but significant chance of an important magical treasure.

Running the adventurers through the tower requires a bit of preparation on the part of the referee. There is only one map, showing all of the Duck Tower complex. This map does not have the usual gridiron pattern overlay which is usual in the hobby to organize space and allow easy mapping from book to game table. However, local players have found a useful system for using the map which does not depend on a gridiron.

Instead of building up the picture of the adventure locale in detail, 10x10 foot square, the referee presents the players with a sketch map, possibly just traced from the book map, showing what is visible from a distance as the party approaches the temple. As the adventurers come nearer, more details can be traced onto the referee's map. The players can sketch their own map from what the referee shows them, if they so wish. Fighting encounters can be fought out with figures on a battle board as usual.

Adding to the monster encounters should be easy. Suitable groups of *RQ* monsters can be found in *FOES, Militia & Mercenaries, Scorpion Men & Broos, Trolls & Trollkin*, or any of the *RQ* adventures published by Judges Guild and by the Chaosium. These groups could be added to the list of parties in the ruins, or could be used as substitutes. The monsters from *Duck Tower* can be easily used to augment any of the other published adventures as well, and also are very useful addition to referee-written scenarios.

To play this scenario, more preparation seems necessary than in most. Experienced

CHOMPLOMP, BLESSED OF TH[E]
STR 30 CON 14 SIZ 11 INT 10 [...]
Move 8
Defense: 15%
Bastard Sword, 1 hand (1D10+1[...]
Club (1D8+1D4) 45% SR 9
Fist (1D3+1D4) 45% SR 9
Shield, Large (16) 40%
Spells: Ignite 1; Extinguish 2; Dis[...]
Skills: Listening 60%; Spot Hidd[en...]
Treasure: 43 Coppers, 55 Silvers

players have complained to me that they couldn't quite figure out how to run it at all! Referees will also want to look over the found magic items carefully, as once they are given away, they will be in his campaign, and will affect play balance.

Duck Tower is a good game to play, however. First of all, it is a realistic portrayal of the investigation of a set of ruins where anything could happen. Secondly, the encounters are tough enough to be worth playing, while in general not of an invariably fatal nature, unless your characters habitually insist on attacking sylphs and salamanders. The concept is one which should be applicable to many individually-written adventures, the found magical items are a new dimension to the game (there are no 'standard' *RQ* magic items in the tower as written) and overall it is a good investment for all *RQ* campaign referees.

Anders Swenson

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RESEARCH STATION GAMMA
ACROSS THE BRIGHT FACE/
MISSION ON MITHRIL
Both by Marc Miller
Game Designers Workshop
$4.98 each

These adventures feature the surface exploration of single planets. The Travellers (player character adventurers) find themselves marooned aground by various circumstances, and follow through the scenarios in order to get off of their various planets and regain their status as true Travellers. Each adventure features a hex-style planetary map, a concise summary of local physical and cultural conditions, and enough clues for the players to extricate their characters from the various predicaments. In *Double Adventure 2: Across the Bright Face/Mission on Mithril*, the focus is on planet-wide travel and exploration, while *Traveller Adventure 2: Research Station Gamma* emphasizes the detailed investigation of a single dungeon-like structure.

Detailed review of these books is made difficult by the author's insistence on secrecy — the books are carefully labeled 'For Referees Only' — the implication being that players reading the text in advance would spoil their enjoyment of the scenario. While it is difficult to write a respectable review without describing the product in detail, I shall attempt to forge ahead while spilling as few of the really important beans as possible. Actually, the enjoyment of these particular adventures is in the doing, not in revelation of a particular secret — in order to leave their planets of entrapment, the Travellers must run the course,

prior knowledge or no prior knowledge.

The books begin with instructions to the referee on the proper conduct of a *Traveller* game. Pre-figured Travellers are listed, for players who want a quick start into the game, and items are listed for special purchase by the characters at the start of each adventure. There is a concise presentation of the circumstances of each party, then a description of the world where Travellers will find their destinations.

These adventures all take place on the surfaces of planets, and Mr. Miller obligingly provides the reader with suitable world maps on which to move. These maps are a modified Geodesic projection, which maps on a connected series of equilateral triangles. These can be folded to provide a near-spherical solid, or can be laid out flat to be a page in a book, as it is in these publications. The map is further divided into hexagonal areas which are the unit movement areas for the adventures. The map system reminds me very much of the system found in *Legacy*, which may well have been the inspiration for the maps used in this book.

The remainder of the books covers what is to be found as the players have their Travellers act within the game context to bring themselves back alive. In the *Double Adventure*, the characters are free to roam over the entire planet surface in handy all terrain vehicles, which come across as a sort of super Winnebago. These vehicular paragons can travel across all areas of the planets. As the players move from hexagon to hexagon, different types of terrain are entered, and different circumstances, flora and/or fauna are found. Man, of course, is just a particularly deadly type of fauna. In *Research Station Gamma*, less attention is paid to the hazards of overland travel, and more time is spent on specific encounter details. There is no reason at all why detailed encounters could not be made for the planets in the *Double Adventure* book, nor why a terrain type encounter matrix could not be made for Vanejen, the planet containing Research Station Gamma.

As far as they go, these books are remarkably well written, with only a few problems. The small format is well filled. The treatment of a map-hex of hundreds of thousands of square miles as a single unit made impassable from one direction by the luck of one die roll would stand revealed as crude if the map system were to be used for continuing back-and-forth travel. For this advanced use of the scenario, a slightly more complex treatment of the impassable landforms would have to be devised.

Overall, these books are pleasant to read and provide cheap entertainment, considering the going price for movie tickets. The *Double*

Adventure in particular is self-contained and suffices for evenings when neither referee nor players wish to extend themselves to invent new situations, nor to worry about the consequences of their actions in the subsequent segments of a campaign. The activities in *Research Station Gamma* will definitely have lasting consequence, and a sequel adventure is promised to tie up various themes suggested in the present volume. Finally, the author's system of creating and mapping a world should be of interest to all referees concerned with world-building, whether they run *Traveller* worlds or sword & sorcery campaigns. These two books are well done.

*Anders Swenson*

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SKULL & CROSSBONES
Gerald D Seypura and
    Anthony le Boutillier
Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc
$12.00

Early this year, several player characters from the *Traveller* campaign which I referee were transported back in time to the Caribbean, circa 1680 AD. I prepared for this by spending nearly a week of spare time in the bowles of a library, and my preparation paid off when the adventurers ignored their ostensible mission and took up with a group of pirates. Ashore and afloat with the crew of the bad ship True Lady, the characters had a grand time of it, getting the feel of the period: gambling, wining, wenching, and sightseeing ashore, and traveling about Jamaica and the Carribean on foot, in carriages, and on board various vessels. After a year or so of mischief, the adventurers returned regretfully to their proper time.

About two weeks after this, I saw an early copy of FGU's role-playing game *Skull & Crossbones*, and was understandably surprised. If this had come out a month or two earlier, would all of my own research have been in vain? Eventually, of course, I had to buy the game.

Skull & Crossbones consists of a 32 page rulebook, a separate sheet with the various combat tables, and other information listed on it, a sheet of die-cut playing pieces, a sample of a ship record sheet and a character record sheet, both to be copied, a 17½''x23'' sheet of deck plans of period ships and boats, a smaller sheet of 69 cut-out deck guns, and finally a hex pattern map of the Caribbean and nearby areas backed with a hex grid left blank to be used in ship to ship combat.

The quality of the material components is good, with few typos and fair artwork by

MITHRIL
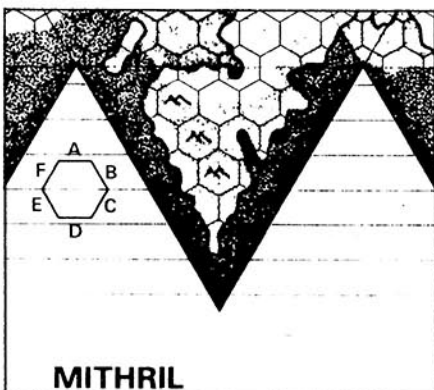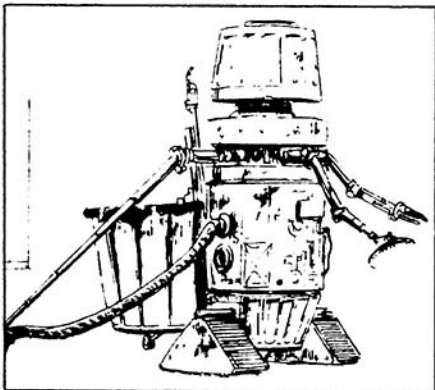
Mike Gilbert. The inclusion of die-cut counters for marking positions is certainly welcome, since not everyone owns lead figures, which are in any event scarce for the Spanish Main period; a listing of acceptable figures is included on the last page of the rulebook. The counters themselves are not inspiring, falling heir to the limitations of a half inch square format.

The rules themselves are easy to understand and play. They are divided into three sections: Character Generation, Combat (both by ships and between men), and a Game Master's section.

In the Character section, players generate characters by rolling 4D6, finding the characteristics of Strength, Agility, Intelligence, Constitution, Luck, and Leadership. The player then chooses a specialty for the character. Characters may be either gunners, sail masters, or navigators. This is followed by a final roll, this time for beginning equipment, and then the character is ready for play, at level one with no experience points.

The experience system is similar to that used for the other games using experience points, such as *Dungeons & Dragons, Tunnels & Trolls, Chivalry & Sorcery*, etc. I, for one, have never liked experience point systems, preferring individual skill increments as in *RuneQuest* or *Traveller*. Characters in *Skull & Crossbones* can rise to level seven, pirate chief, or even to pirate king (effectively level eight), by gaining experience points and thereby enhancing their abilities. Most experience points come from the acquisition of money (one point per gold piece) and the defeating or killing of opponents. Officers can get success bonuses for doing well in their various specialties. Pirate chief requires 100,000 experience points and pirate king 1,000,000, but both of these ranks can be reached only with the connivance of some non-player characters, since they require election (shades of *D&D*'s Grandfather of Assassins!).

The ship combat system is very sketchy, but easily playable. GMs who desire more detail and realism can add to the system if they so choose (for example, by differentiating between types of cannon, or by adding systems from *Bireme & Galley* or from *Tradition of Victory*. The hand to hand combat system is rather interesting, with a matrix of various tactics and their combined effect; this is one of the better rules in the game. Weapons expertise is entirely separate from experience level, which I find commendable in the game.

The GM's section contains notes and tables on what has come before, with all of the obvious necessities (healing of wounds, sea encounter tables, land encounters, reactions of NPCs, general notes on play) sketchily laid out. The whole book uses a rule numbering

system, and this, combined with the small glossary, should ease the task of the GM in finding references. There is no index and no table of contents, however.

The game overall has a very 'light' feeling — there is just not enough substance here. In an attempt to get both a RPG and a miniature ship game in one book only 32 pages long, the authors have severely cramped both. This makes for a disappointing product, given the many excellent games which have been released in recent years. Important subjects, money (both its form and what it will buy), inland communities, the presence of Indians among the pirates, etc., are ignored, or only sketched in.

In general then, no, my own extensive research was not done in vain — while this game presents an adequate framework for a West Indies campaign, the picture isn't there. In fact, the rules themselves give very little feel of the period I have gained from my own studies. The last page of the rulebook says that FGU has a set of 'advanced rules' in the works, along with specific scenarios for the game.

Skull & Crossbones is a reasonable investment for the GM who wants to run a pirate campaign in the classic Caribbean period. The ship drawings and maps are very useful, while the rules themselves should provide at very least a strong base on which to construct a campaign.

Michael Blum

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DATESTONES OF RYN TEMPLE OF APSHAI

Jon Freeman
Automated Simulations
See review for prices

With the advent of microprocessor technology, it was perhaps inevitable that some disgruntled role-player would try to replace his Game Master with a computer. Automated Simulations' *DunjonQuest* games are the result of this effort — dungeon adventures that can be played solo on the APPLE, TRS-80, or PET microcomputers.

Computerization of role-playing games has many advantages, especially in solo adventures. The computer can handle the arithmetic in combat very quickly, allowing "real-time" fighting. A ten second combat round takes several minutes to play in a standard game, while in a computer version a ten second round can easily played in ten seconds.

Computer GMs lack human frailty; they don't have colds, midterms, or jobs to worry about. If you wake up at four in the morning

and want to play a computerized dungeon, you can. Computer games are neat.

They're also limited; by memory space, by the TV display format, and by their inflexibility — you can't do anything the programmer didn't decide to let you do.

Automated Simulations has put out a number of fantasy role-playing adventures known as the *DunjonQuest* series. These conform to the traditional "kill the monsters and take their treasure" scenario. The action is usually in an old underground cave complex, with secret doors, traps, and wandering monsters   the typical dungeon setting.

Heroism is more fun if you know just how well you're doing, so the *DunjonQuest* games award experience points at the end of each adventure.

The games make extensive use of computer graphics. The outline of the room is drawn on the TV screen, and the player character, monsters, and treasure are all shown in the room. In the APPLE version the character and monsters are drawn in high-resolution graphics, and look great.

The programs are done in "real time" — most games will wait forever for you to enter a command, but if you dither in *DunjonQuest* the monsters will happily march on your unresisting character. You gotta be fast, and this adds to the excitement.

Commands are entered by pushing a single key. To move forward you type a number from one to nine, to search for traps you type "S," etc. There are lots of commands — the number varies from game to game — but you can parley with monsters, grab treasure or drop it, fire normal or magical arrows, drink potions, and do many other things. There are also lots of things you can't do, but the scenarios are so well set up that I've rarely wanted to do anything that wasn't covered in the commands.

Characters are generated by obtaining six characteristics with ranges from 3 to 18. This isn't very original, but it wasn't intended to be — the game was designed to correspond closely with the traditional FRP games. This allows people with an FRP background to play the *DunjonQuest* games with ease; all of the concepts are familiar.

DATESTONES OF RYN

This is an introductory module for the series. The player always plays the character Brian Hammerhand, and always starts with the same equipment.

The scenario is as follows: Rex the Reaver and his band of robbers raided the keep of the Duchy of Ryn and made off with the Duchy's most prized posession, the Datestones. The bandits fled to a conveniently located cave complex when the local cavalry gave chase. The Duke decided to send in a volunteer to scout out the caves, kill some robbers, and perhaps recover some Datestones. Lots were cast, and you, Brian Hammerhand, lost. The game starts when you enter the first chamber in the cave complex.

Datestones of Ryn has a time limit; the game lasts 20 minutes. If you aren't out of the caverns when your time runs out, you do not get experience points for any Datestones you may have picked up; and recovering the Datestones is the way to clean up on experience points. This time limit may be frustrating at first, but it's what keeps the game interesting even after you've memorized the caverns and their contents. There are too many rooms to loot in the time allowed, and
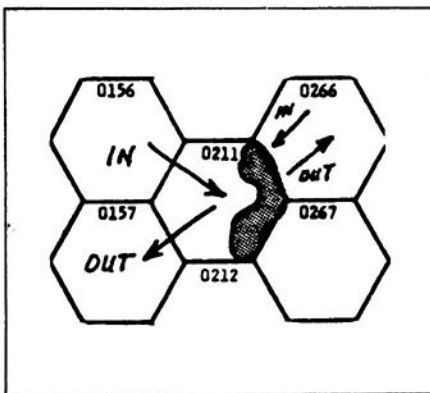
the "race against time" keeps the challenge alive even after 20 or 30 playings.

Because the game is easy to play, and challenging enough to play many times, I would recommend *Datestones of Ryn* to all of you with access to an appropriate computer.

Cassette version are available for the APPLE with 32K and APPLESOFT in ROM, or 48K with cassette APPLESOFT; the TRS-80 Level II with 16K; and the PET with 16K. All cassette versions cost $14.95.

Disk versions are available for $19.95 for the APPLE with 48K and ROM APPLESOFT and the TRS-80 with 32K and TRSDOS.

TEMPLE OF APSHAI

I liked *Datestones of Ryn* a lot, but I love *Temple of Apshai*. This is a much larger game — it has four dungeon levels and more than 200 rooms — and has extra features.

The adventure takes place in the ancient underground caverns once dwelt in by the worshippers of Apshai, the Insect God. The human inhabitants seem to have died out, and the caverns are populated largely by giant insects and the undead. The caverns were known for their deposits of gems and gold.

Temple of Apshai gives you a lot more options than *Datestones of Ryn* — you can choose your equipment, pick one of four dungeon levels to explore, play as long as you like, and play any character you like.

Characters can purchase equipment from the innkeeper when not in the dungeon; this turns out to be a very enjoyable exercise in haggling. There is an "asking" price on each item, but by patient haggling the price can be reduced, sometimes dropping as low as one-third the asking price. If you don't like this sort of thing, you can save time by paying the asking price.

There are several armor types available, ranging from none to full plate, as well as two sizes of shield. There are five types of edged weapons: dagger, short sword, broadsword, hand-and-a-half sword, and great sword. Characters can also buy bows, arrows, and healing salves (which aren't very potent).

This wide range of weaponry and armor allows you to try widely different strategies. I have tried Conan-type characters; all brawn and no brains, carrying a shield but no other armor, and bashing everything they see. I've also tried characters armored with full plate and shield, clanking slowly through the dungeon. Picking armor and weapons is a lot of fun, and helps characterization.

The temple has four dungeon levels of increasing nastiness; an inexperienced character would be unlikely to survive the first three rooms of the second level, and I have yet to work a character up enough in experience to allow him to survive the third level.

You can have the innkeeper roll up a character for you, or you can choose his characteristics yourself. This allows you to transfer characters from other RPGs games into *Temple of Apshai*. Since the weapons and combat are set up for human fighters you'd have trouble trying to fit other character classes into the scenario, but transferring fighters works pretty well.

I've never noticed any bugs in *Datestones of Ryn*, but *Temple of Apshai* has a couple (perhaps a program involving the Insect God has to have some bugs). Sometimes the innkeeper raises his prices during bargaining, instead of lowering them. This is annoying, and I'm sure it's not supposed to happen. If you offer him zero silver pieces for the item he'll start over, and usually he behaves himself on the second try. The other problem occurs when you're lurking in a doorway. If you listen at the door and hear a monster, while at the same time a wandering monster appears behind you, the program gets confused as to which monster is where. Usually it will display the wrong monster, although it will behave like the right one.

The disk version of *Temple of Apshai* differs from the tape version. On the disk version you can store your characters on disk; in the tape version you have to write everything down if you want to play the same character again. The disk version lets you store the current state of the dungeon — which treasures are gone, what monsters are dead, etc. — while on the tape version you get the dungeon in its original state every time you load it into the computer.

The tape version costs $24.95 and is available for the TRS-80 Level II with 16K, the APPLE with 48K and either cassette or ROM APPLESOFT, and the PET with 32K. The disk version costs $29.95 and is available for the TRS-80 with 32K and TRSDOS, and the APPLE with APPLESOFT in ROM.

I found both *Datestones of Ryn* and *Temple of Apshai* highly enjoyable. *Temple of Apshai* is more expensive, but well worth the extra cost because it is so much bigger than *Datestones of Ryn*.

Robert Plamondon

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DRAGONQUEST

Eric Goldberg
Simulations Publications, Inc.
$9.95

DragonQuest (formerly *DragonSlayer*, before that *DragonFlayer*) consists of three booklets, 120 die cut counters, and a hex map printed on both sides. The set is boxed with a full color cover.

Overall the game is what many gamers have come to expect from SPI over the years. The tactical display map is interesting; finally a game company has included some of the equipment that almost all of the them recommend on having to play their games. The counters are passable, though hardly the best that SPI has ever produced. The rules are vintage SPI.

The booklets of rules are ordered by subject and I will deal with them in sequential order as they are presented in the game. The first booklet deals with character generation and combat, the second contains the magic system and the third presents skills, monsters, and adventures.
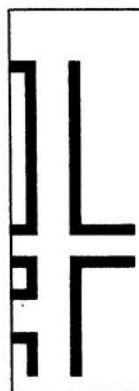
As everyone knows, fantasy role-playing games begin with the generation of a character to play with during the game. In *DQ* the system is really quite simple. First the player rolls 4D5. If you don't have a five-sided die (and no one in this dimension has any) you merely roll 1D10 (not provided, but 20 of the counters will substitute nicely), divide by two and round up. Once you have your total you compare that total (a range of 4-20) to a table and get a number (the number of total attribute points your character will have) and a letter. You then go to another table and compare the letter to it to get another number. This number indicates what the maximum for any one of your attributes may be.

Once the player has determined how many attributes points he has to work with and what the maximum number any attribute can be, he must then divide the attribute points between six attributes. Each character can have one attribute equal to the maximum that his attribute can be, two attributes that are one less than the maximum and two that are two less than the maximum unless he has no attributes at his maximum in which case he may have three that are one less than the maximum or up to all six being two shy of the maximum.

Once attribute points are portioned out, the player can easily compare his endurance attribute to one table to get his fatigue points and compare his agility to another table to get his action point total.

The actions cited above are the action one must take to have a basic character. In fleshing out the characters one must roll dice to determine the following; right or left handedness, race (if one desires to be other than human), aspect of birth (a determination of your time of birth that may or may not help or hinder actions for an hour of the campaign year), and heritage (which determines position of birth, social standing of family and initial experience and money). Perhaps the most silly portion of the character development that involves dice is the determination of sex. If a male player wants to play a female character, he must roll 01-25 on D100 to be able to play this cross sexual role. If, on the other hand, a female wishes to play a male character she need only roll 01-75 to be allowed to do so.

The character generation system was poorly thought out. The whole system could have been simplified into one or two tables that deal with rolls of D10 or D100, eliminating the bothersome necessity of having to deal with 1D5. A D100 creates just as workable a bell curve as 4D5, with much less work. Forcing players to have to keep track of the aspect of their birth is non-functional as it does not affect the majority of the characters more

①	ROOM NO. 52
②	WOUNDS: 100%
③	FATIGUE: 100%
④	WGT: 42 LBS
⑤	MONSTER SLAIN!
⑥	CRUNCH! SHIELD HIT!
⑦	ARROWS: 23 MAG AR: 3
⑧	ANT MAN
⑨	TOTAL SLAIN: 21
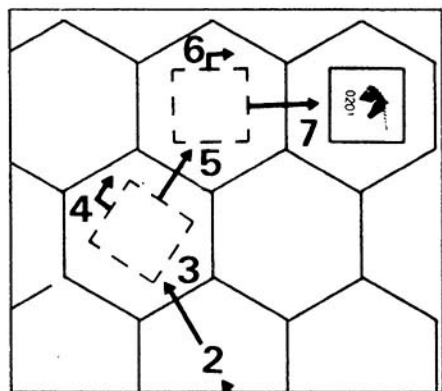
than four times in a game year, and it forces the Game Master to keep track of the time of year and the aspects of the player characters in his game.

The next section of *DQ* is combat. The combat system is cumbersome and vaguely workable. Each combat round lasts for ten seconds and consists of a variable number of pulses. During these pulses each character performs an action, either martial or movement, by expending action points (a function of agility). Agility also determines who moves first in each pulse.

Every weapon in the *DQ* system has a base percentage to hit a foe. When in range the player who expends action points for an offensive martial action rolls D100 to see if he hits his opponent. If he does hit he checks to see if he rolled low enough for a grievous wound or damage on endurance (as opposed to fatigue points). This is important since endurance must reach zero before the character can die. To determine the amount of damage done the player rolls 1D10 and adds the weapon bonus for that weapon. The damage comes off of fatigue points, unless the roll indicated a grievous wound or an endurance wound (when fatigue points are all used up damage is taken on endurance).

This seems fairly easy to work out and the list of moves and martial action would seem to supply option that would yield a highly realistic combat system.

Reality is one thing that is neatly removed from the combat system. Each character, on the average, has over 40 hit points. Most characters can afford some armor or a shield making killing them very difficult as the most damage that can be done by the most powerful weapon is 20 points. In addition to this the standard tactical procedure used by most players is to delay acting until their foes have used up their action points, run around behind them (placing their foe at a disadvantage) and then hacking the life out of them. Since no one dies easily this pattern gets repeated ad nauseum.

The realistic nature of the combat system is really exploded when you consider the case of a prisoner being executed by beheading. If the executioner uses a great ax and has the prisoner bound and on his knees he has a 90% chance of hitting his target. Even if he does maximum damage for his weapon, 16 points per hit, it would take him at least two strikes to do the job, and that is only if he did damage on endurance both hits.

In determining the percentage you need to roll to hit your foe you must consult one of three tables. Each table is poorly organized and forces each person to either memorize it or search through it each time he or she wishes to attempt to hit anyone. All three tables

could have easily been cross referenced for ease and speed of play.

Though the majority of the combat system is a dark cloud (or white elephant) it does have its silver lining. The Grevious Injury Table is worth its weight in gold. It is witty and would function as a magnificent substitution or addition to a critical hit table for any other system.

Overall the combat system is tedious. A simple man-on-man fight took five minutes to resolve, when any number of other systems could have finished it in a minute or so. While assigning actions per pulse does add an interesting sort of choreography and graphic realism to the fight, it creates a nightmare for a GM if he is going to run a larger twelve-on-twelve fight.

The second *DQ* booklet deals with magic. Of the three books this one is the best. The magic system is well balanced and logical. Magic is divided into three branches: Thaumaturgies, Elementals, and Entities. Each of these divisions are subdivided into colleges. The branches consolidate the spells of one type together and provide a background for an alignment of magic users (alignment here deals with how each mage deals with members of other branches, not how they deal with the world in general).

The magic system works on a fatigue point expense for spells, or a time and material cost for rituals. Each spell or ritual has a base chance of success, rolled against D100. Each spell or ritual may be raised in rank, increasing the duration or effects of the spell. The effects of each spell is described fully, though sometimes one has to look to a similar spell in another college for the full description.

The magic system in *DQ* is the most complete section of the rules. It not only provides a workable magic system that can be adapted for other FRP games, but it also provides the closest thing to a world view that one can find in the rules. Most of the spells can be traced to commonly described magic from fantasy or the real world; all of the demons used by the College of Greater Summonings are straight from Terran mythology.

The last book of *DQ* deals with skills, monsters, and adventure. *DQ* has a new and novel system for using experience points. Experience points are spent to increase your rank with a skill or spell, or to increase an attribute (not beyond your maximum). Skills are divided up into professions. Weapons skill rank increases increase the percentage chance of hitting. The weakness of this system is that the initial experience point cost (1000) for reaching novice (rank 0) is very high, leaving beginning characters with only their weapons and spells to aid in their initial survival.

Perhaps the most disappointing section in all of the *DQ* system is their monster section of the rules. It seems to me that the majority of the monsters in *DQ* are incredibly close in description and actions to those from the *AD&D* monster manual. *DQ* does not seem to have even attempted to do anything innovative in the way of monster creation, action, or research.

The adventure section of the rules is not much better than the monster section. In the adventure section of the rules we are told how we may organize a party and the number of experience points we are to be awarded if we complete our "mission." The GM is instructed how to work the mechanics of an adventure without any suggestions of adventures or

without any sort of hint at world view. This is not bad, in and of itself, but it leaves the GM only with suggestions about how to handle experience and the timing of the GM's actions.

In genearl *DQ* appears to be a game system that was designed with good intentions. There are several good and innovative ideas in the game design, but they get obscured by the clumsy methods used in implementing them (like the 4D5 for character generation and the proliferation of tables that could have been better organized). The system is workable, but not easily so, and to my mind, less playable because of that fact.

DQ functions as a FRP game the same way a sledge hammer functions as a mousetrap. Both get the job done, but the effort involved in getting it to work is not worth the end result.

Michael A. Stackpole

THE DESIGNER REPLIES

The regularly scheduled 'prideful designer versus opinionated reviewer' debate has been temporarily shelved while the designer rambles on about the genesis of his game.
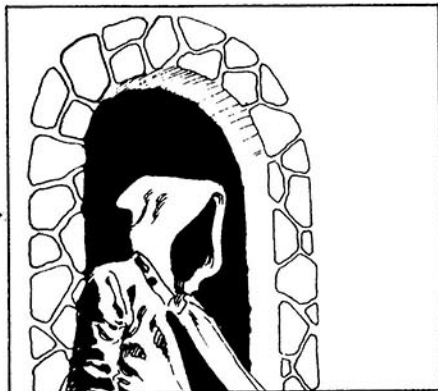
DESIGNER NOTES

Thank you. The idea to do a fantasy role-playing game for SPI came out of a discussion between Greg Costikyan and myself on the plane back from the 1978 GENCON. We both were familiar with the then existing FRP systems, and knew — in our heart of hearts — that we could do better. Therefore, the proposal was rather enthusiastically sprung upon SPI management immediately upon our return. Then, things became complicated.

As everyone knows, New York contains some of the very best FRP referees and players. So Greg and I felt obliged to invite five of these immensely talented individuals to join in this bold new venture. Before anyone had quite realized what was happening, the general consensus was that the game would be designed by committee. And since the combined design fire-power could easily tackle all but the most challenging of problems, the finished product should be configured as the be-all and end-all of FRP games.

With all the bothersome details of the project solved (and armed with a host of impressive demands), Greg and I returned to SPI management. They saw a proposal designed to appeal mainly to veteran FRP gamers, costing at least six times the normal game budget, involving seven people, only one of whom was a full-time employee of the company. I like to think that it was because of the respect Greg and I commanded that our scheme was considered quite seriously.

There was, and is, no doubt in my mind that a superior FRP game requires a lengthy development period. Very soon after reaching that conclusion, I began to have serious misgivings about working on a complex game as part of a fully democratic committee. I felt if I were to be responsible to my employers to deliver a completed manuscript by such-and-such a date, and then place myself in a position where I could not be sure of doing so, my ethics would be compromised. The committee was then informed that I would have to be vested with a certain degree of authority. A few severely strained friendships later, the design group was hopelessly splintered.

Meanwhile, back at SPI management, this

rift had been noted. Well, if the prospective designers weren't in agreement, the company was certainly not going to take a large gamble. SPI's counterproposal involved simplifying the game considerably, and doing the whole thing on the cheap. I rejected this out of hand, and went off to work on *Kursk* (an excellent game, by the way; even though it has nothing to do with role-playing, you should all rush out and buy it). Greg Costikyan joined with four ex-members of our ill-fated committee, and began work on *High Fantasy* (yes, they know the title will have to be changed). No one is sure whether that FRP game will be completed in our lifetime, as the authors promise a rulebook larger than the *Encyclopedia Brittannica*. On the plus side, the finished product is unlikely to be missing anything players are likely to need to know.

Dragonslayer, as it was then called, went into hiding for a few months. Come the winter of 1979, the SPI management, in its infinite wisdom, decided that a FRP game was an appropriate release for the next year's ORIGINS. A hasty compromise was effected, which is to say neither party was satisfied with the arrangements, and I dragged out my notes of several months previous.

I soon began to miss the deadlines which had been so optimistically arrived at, and so Dave Ritchie was shepherded into the project as a co-developer. Dave had not had much previous experience with FRP games, but he was (and is) an ardent medievalist, and was willing to make decisions where I would hesitate. Ted Woods was brought in to flesh out the magic system, and the project ran smoothly for a while.

I won't pretend that what Dave Ritchie received from me was a polished design, and he saw no reason to do so either. Because Dave can be — um — rather stubborn about his beliefs at times, parts of the project began to diverge from the course I had originally envisioned for them. This, for those who follow Gigi D'Arn in these pages, is one of the main reasons why I no longer work for SPI.

Still, the original design is quite recognizable in the final rules. The combat and monster rules are currently not as I would like them to be, and do not interface with some of the other systems quite as well as they should. Despite this rather unusual admission of dissatisfaction with a facet of a personal design (after all, designers must have large, airy offices in which their prodigious egos can fit), I consider *DragonQuest* — renamed after a brief legal skirmish with a miniatures company — to be one of the best FRP games. It certainly has the highest component value, while providing innovative systems and correcting some problems which have plagued all previous FRP games. And I hope the FRP game I'm now de-

signing for Avalon Hill will come to be considered the best in its field.

NOW FOR THE REBUTTAL

Yes? . . . What do you mean my time has run out? I was just getting started . . . Well, I understand that Mr. Stackpole is a busy man, but couldn't he — . . . Alright, I'm going to give him a piece of my mind!

Reviews which methodically plow through sub-systems in order, and then only lightly touch on how these sub-systems work as a whole do not bring out the best in me. A FRP game is the sum of its parts, and should be considered that way. However, if that's how Mr. Stackpole chose to do his review, than my response ought to follow the same format.

After brilliantly deducing that the abbreviation "D5" required the players to halve the result from a D10 roll, the review concludes the character generation process could have been streamlined into a two-part operation. Unfortunately, such a change would skew the carefully worked-out probabilities for the occurrence of each value. The reasoning behind the limitations on playing characters of opposite gender is that, in a medieval society, adventuring females are quite rare (this reasoning, I must admit, looks a bit specious upon reflection). I believe the character generation system to be superior to any other, an opinion shared by Forrest Johnson in *The Space Gamer*: "The character generation system is the best I've seen, a brillian compromise between "rolling up" characters and distributing points between the characteristics."

My view of the combat and monster systems has been stated earlier, though two points raised by Mr. Stackpole require an answer. An execution hardly qualifies as a combat situation. I can't believe that any referee would really use the combat procedure for a beheading. Secondly, since *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* attempts to include every mythological creature, it is not surprising that *DragonQuest* duplicates it in this regard. One would expect two different games on the defense of Moscow in 1941 to include the same historical units.

Naturally, I am pleased that the magic system is to Mr. Stackpole's satisfaction; Ted Woods deserves full credit for originating the college concept.

Mr. Stackpole errs in criticizing the initial cost for skills: he should have noticed that one skill can be acquired for one-tenth the normal cost (and each character begins with enough Experience Points to use this benefit right away). Also, guidelines are given for how to construct an adventure, which is as far as a designer can go without actually providing a "canned" adventure.

If the most clumsy methods hampering

players from enjoying *DragonQuest* require halving a die-roll and searching through slightly disorganized charts (all located in the same section of a rulebook), then the game is the easiest to play on the market.

Alright, Mike Stackpole and I disagree, and let's leave it at that. In closing, I note that while mice have escaped from conventional mousetraps, none have survived being spattered about by a sledgehammer.

Eric Goldberg

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CITY OF LEI TABOR

Paul Nevins and Bill Faust
Judges Guild Inc.
$7.98

This is a *RuneQuest* playing aid by the authors of *Verbosh*. The book is 96 pages long and contains illustrations by Kevin Siembeda, Aaron Archero, and Bill Faust.

This book is similar to the city/campaign books published by Judges Guild for use with *Dungeons & Dragons* rules. It contains the plan of a small fortified town with detailed descriptions of some of its inhabitants, with an emphasis on the military types, all in a well detailed *RQ* format. Maps of the territory surrounding the town are also provided, along with descriptions of some of the more interesting inhabitants thereof.

The town of Lei Tabor is the seat of the Ducal House of Lei, which is a relic of a once proud imperial line. The Duchy of Lei Tabor extends for an indefinite distance from the city, and is defended by the collection of standing and militia army units in the capitol city. Bandits range where the armies cannot catch them, and beyond the bandits range trolls and broos. The town itself is dominated by the ducal house, the various military units, and the Cult of Lei Kung.

The ducal house and the several military units are closely linked. The House of Lei is run by the current duke, who is a Rune Lord and head of the Lei Kung Cult. His daughter is a powerful adventurer who vanished in the wilderness. His four sons are in town — they are above average in all attributes except for the second son, who has an INT of only 11. The ducal guards, the Hammars of Kung, are a crack military unit. Other regular army units are stationed outside the walls. In addition, there are city wall guards, guard cavalrymen, various weapons masters, free mercenaries, and the city militia. Anywhere from four to ten of each type of soldier are detailed in the book, as are the duke and his sons.

The Cult of Lei Kung is described according to the excellent outline used in *Cults of*

FIRE GIANT

Natural Habitat: Rough, Caverns

Frequency: Rare   **Number:**

Description: Fire giants are large huma
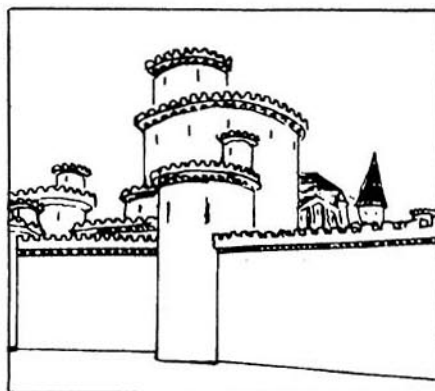
Talents, Skills, and Magic: See 6.6

Movement Rates: Running: 400-500

PS: 15-33	MD: 4-22	AG: 3-2
EN: 20-38	FT: 18-24	WP: 4-2
PB: 5-23	AP: 7-11	NA: No

Weapons: Fire giants prefer the club an Rank 1-3 with these weapons. Armor he rare, although it does occur.

Prax. Lei Kung is a Storm cult with a secondary emphasis on armor and weapons making. It would make a good adventurer's cult in a non-Gloranthan world. A Rune Lord and several Rune Priests are listed with all statistics. Between the temple and ducal family and the various military officers, there are a lot of useful high-level characters described which could be used in any scenario calling for high-power human non-player characters.

Another city cult is T'sei, the Thieves Guild. This cult is also well done, and covers the same thorough outline from *Cult fo Prax*. The Thieves Guild has all the facilities attributed to it in the *RQ* rules. There are some master thief Rune Lords and Rune Priests, and a number of lesser stealthy and light-fingered types all of whom could show up anywhere. The city also contains lesser temples, including some of the standard cults.

There are disproportionately few buildings and enterprises in the book not connected with the military or their support. Those described include several inns, a tailor shop, an engineer, a butcher, a baker, and a brewery. Outside the walls are another inn, an undertaker's, and a gathering place for trolls.

The most interesting groups described in this book are the wandering criminal bands found in the wilderness. There are the Via Duck Gang, Ch'ao Kai's Ogres, the People's Liberation Front, Fass Duck's Gang, and the tough Fey Brotherhood. Somewhere in the hills live some nasty Broo, and the low criminal who provides them with armor.

As a city, Lei Tabor is laid out in a conventional, traditional pattern. There are identifiable features not keyed on the map, such

as the market square and the community wells. Many of the buildings drawn on the map are not described in the book, allowing the referee to vary the town as he sees fit, possibly adding the civilian facilities badly needed to balance the military. There is only one gate to this town, a common feature of places designed by the authors, and one which I find highly unusual — most historic walled towns had several gates. Although the map shows a large river flowing just outside the town walls, there are no water-oriented institutions, such as bridges, boating concerns, or fishermen. The size and population of the town are not given, a practice common to all Judges Guild cities.

There are a few details of the city which the ambitious referee will want to fill out for himself:
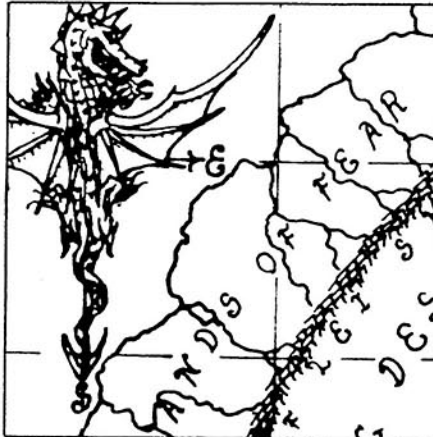
— Duke Lei's daughter is probably running around the landscape with a hefty entourage. She would make a dandy encounter.

— There are no details of the city bureaucracy, nor of the ducal government. With all those soldiers running around, there would be no need for a separate watch, but the odd quircks of various officials in town would spice up any game.

— Most referees will want to make a list of the military units — they come thick and fast in the book, and may get confusing.

— The city is definitely Chinese in character -- a little research in the local library could provide more details to add to the effect.

— More encounter groups can be found in other *RQ* games and aids, just mix and match.

Overall, I am glad that the authors have turned their energies to write a city in the *RQ* system. Purchasers should not be put off by the ugly cover. Lei Tabor could be transplanted into any world to be the 'town' from which most adventures start. With the publication of this book, many *RQ* referees will never have to write out an NPC soldier again, ever. This book should be in the library of all ambitious *RQ* players.

Anders Swenson

Books & Gaming

Scorpio Rising

By John T. Sapienza, Jr.

OLiff·7·80

If fantasy gaming can be said to have an equivalent in books, surely that equivalent is in the pulp fiction of the 1930s and 1940s. Full of exotic cities and peoples, fabulous treasures, and beasts of shapes and powers that could only have crawled out of nightmares, these tales of adventure in far continents or alien worlds gripped the imagination of hundreds of thousands of readers, including those who grew up to be the famous writers of science fiction and fantasy today. These stories may have lacked literary polish and intellectual depth, but they had life and action in plenty. Probably the most famous of the writers in the pulps was Edgar Rice Burroughs, author os many series of novels starring Tarzan, John Carter of Mars, and others perhaps less memorable. His novels still sell briskly today.

How is pulp fiction the equivalent of fantasy gaming, you may be wondering? Consider the elements used: Characters that have little depth in personality or "real" history, societies that have pizazz and flashy colors but little to suggest that they really would hold together a culture, feudal nobility that seems to outnumber the commons, small nations at war with each other but with borders that the characters seem to cross with ease, monsters with little apparent reason for existing where and how they do, treasures spotted around seemingly at random, and in amounts that could keep everyone in luxury if it weren't for the fact that their arrival in public would cause the value of gold to drop abruptly, and similar features are found in many fantasy gaming campaigns. It seems likely, in fact, that a lot of the approaches taken in gaming have their

origin in pulp fiction. It works in books and in gaming so long as the participants are so tied up in the action that they don't have occasion to stop and worry about details.

Given an acceptance of the conventions and limitations of pulp fiction, it can be very enjoyable as light entertainment, either as gaming or reading. And so it is still being written, often in slavish imitation of 1930s formulas, but sometimes with a bit of originality in details and a sufficiently light touch as to keep it from bogging down.

The most successful series being written today of this kind of book is the Scorpio books published in the USA by DAW Books. The series is now eight years old, having begun in 1972 with *Transit to Scorpio* by "Alan Burt Akers" (DAW Books, UY1169 $1.25). The latest volume, the 23rd, is *Beasts of Antares* by "Dray Prescot" (DAW Books, UJ1555 $1.95). The authors are in quotation marks because they are really pseudonyms, the actual author being a mystery. However, the January issue of *Fantasy Newsletter* identified the author as Kenneth Bulmer, a well-known British SF writer.

The Scorpio books are what the Barsoom books should have been, an open ended adventure series that takes the reader from one end of the planet to the other. In fact, these books go farther than that, since the author explicitly states that in some of them the hero has been transported in time to deal with a problem his masters want done in such a way as to influence what is going on in other areas in a certain way. This may sound confusing, but it's actually lots of fun, and has the

handy effect of letting the hero interact with his grown children after leaving them still infants in a prior book.

The series begins with what is surely a parody of the convention that introduces the Burroughs' Barsoom books, notes transmitted by the hero to Earth from another world and prepared in book form by the author, who pretends to be merely the editor of real histories told by a real person. But the Scorpio notes arrive in the form of cassettes, of all things, from a world in which the tape recorder does not exist! Where does he get all those spare cassettes to record on? Don't let this bother you, it's all picture framing that vanishes once the story starts, in any book of this nature.

Dray Prescot, as the story goes, was born on Earth in 1775. He was an Englishman who served as a Lieutenant in the British sailing navy, and was a regular roughneck. For reasons never fully explained, he was rescued from African shipwreck and native attack by a glowing blue scorpion that appeared in the sky over him, a symbol that was to haunt him throughout his later life, for its appearance signified the transition from where he was to somewhere in Kregen beneath the twin suns of Antares, naked and required to not only cloth and arm himself, but also to perform some task for his masters that his natural wit must discover for him, since they almost never explain his mission. And you think *you* have troubles. . .

Prescot finds himself pushed back and forth by the two main, although hidden, powers on Kregen. The first are the Star Lords, whose power carries him from Earth to Kregen and back again several times in the series. Against them, at least partly, are the Savanti of the hidden city of Aphrasöe, whose medical knowledge makes Prescot effectively immortal in the first volume, an extended lifespan of about 1000 years, with rapid healing of wounds. He still hasn't found out exactly what each side wants of him, but has begun a campaign to eliminate slavery in the later books, probably more the influence of the Savanti than the Star Lords. I think.

No matter, the campaign sense of the books is in Prescot's exploration of Kregen, uncovering wonders and misery, friends and enemies and sometimes both, depending on which identity he is wearing at the time. There is an arms race between the empires on the northern and southern continents, with a power-mad magic user working behind the scenes to keep war going someplace at all times, including wars of conquest and civil war in Prescot's own country of adoption. On top of it all, you have secret societies, both religious and paramilitary, political and economic struggle, pirates and bandits, arenas and other entertainments. And the relationships between the different intelligent races of Kregen, of which there are many: Apim (humans) are only barely the majority race, if that, for there are many "Diffs," Fristles and Jiklos, Lamnias and Miglas, Rhaclaws and Chuliks, and many other beast-men, each described sufficiently to distinguish it from the others by appearance and behavior. There are so many different beasts and places and weapons and cultures that the author has been doing a series of glosseries at the end of a number of volumes.

What does this have to do with gaming? Well, to begin with, a Scorpio fan could set a campaign on Kregen and have ready-made a vast number of details to plug into that campaign. You can run any level of adventure in such a setup, for the novels provide situations for anything from single combat in the arena or as a player in a live game of *jikaida*, to the march of the phalanx in the civil wars in Vallia, if mass battles are your thing. In addition, one of the recent novels contains the most effective fictional setting of a dungeon expedition I have read.

A Fortune for Kregen (DAW Books, UJ1505 $1.95) is a transitional volume in Jikaida Cycle in the series. The books are written in groups of three to six volumes, each cycle carrying forward a main theme in itself, but also tying into other cycles in the history of the adventures of Dray Prescot and the people around him. In this book, Prescot is recovering from a near-fatal wound incurred in a live game of *jikaida*, the local version of chess, in which the pieces are warriors who must battle to the death for possession of the square the attacking piece attempts to move into. (Shades of Barsoom, in *The Chessmen of Mars*!) The plot thickens when Prescot is rounded up by the local police in a sweep through the slums for victims for the games, survives his game, and is sold into slavery. His new owner drags him along on an expedition into Moderdrin, the Humped Lands, whose most prominent feature is a series of moders, small hills containing tombs whose treasures have been protected by a network of traps and guardians presided over by a moder-lord who delights in trapping victims and feeding on their psychic energy as they struggle and die within the tomb. Needless to say, our hero escapes slavery and emerges from the moder to face his real enemy at the end of the book. The author seems to have had great fun, since the last chapter contains a suggestion that Prescot will return to Moderdrin again.

In the course of exploring the tomb, Prescot encountered a number of novel monsters. I have written up some of the most distinctive, with some changes from the novel to fill in missing information (including names), or to modify some features for game balance.

In addition to the monsters, *Fortune* contains a number of interesting treasure items. Actually, you could turn the Hollow Carapace into a potential treasure, by giving the +2 plate armor and the +2/+2 sword a higher chance of not dissolving. But more distinctive are the following:

The *Room of Heart's Desire* provided the hero with his favorite weapons when he needed them, but they dissappeared when he emerged from the moder. This suggests another treasure guardian, an enchantment that creates tangible illusions that detect as magical objects. The chances are that the most attractive treasure in the room will be illusionary, and the party will carry out illusions instead of some of the genuine treasure there, with the illusions disappearing one day after they were removed from the room.

The *Blade Bracelet* made the user guaranteed to hit every time, for one fight. This suggests a more restrained bracelet that gives the wearer +2 to hit with any hand weapon, or possibly only with weapons of a certain type, with no duration limit or with a certain number of charges. That's the equivalent of one combat class promotion, not nearly as severe as always hitting.

The *Belt of Invulnerability* made the user totally unhitable for one fight. This suggests a more restrained belt that gives the wearer +4 protection against a specific type of weapon, with no duration limit or with a certain number of charges. Possibly it might be a useful power-limiting feature to make the bracelet and belt interfere with each other, so that you can use only one or the other; the combination of bracelet and belt in the book made the hero invincible at a critical time in the action.

to the monsters of Moderdrin...

DUST MONSTER

Armor Class: 5
Move: 6"
Hit Dice: 4
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: Special
Size: M
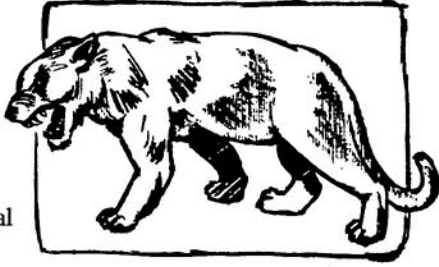
The Dust Monster is a more powerful version of the Rust Monster. They look like powerful leopards covered in dust. A successful attack by the monster causes the area hit to turn to dust (save vs. magic prevents this) regardless of what material it is (unlike the Rust Monster, which can only affect metal). While the monster is alive, a hit onto its dusty hide will cause the weapon used to turn to dust after 1D4 melee rounds if it fails to save vs. magic for every hit. After the monster is killed, its dusty hide is harmless, and the dust if collected will provide 2D4 doses of powder which if thrown on skeletons will cause them to turn to dust.

ENERGY SHEET

Armor Class: Special
Move: 6"
Hit Dice: 6
No. of Attacks: 1 per victim
Damage/Attack: 2D6
Size: L

The Energy Sheet looks like swirls of smoke or folds of insubstantial gossamer, white and leperous in appearance. It is accompanied by an aura of blue sparks that sizzle and spit. It is usually big enough to enfold up to three victims at a time. It's armor class is irrelevant, since weapons pass right through — the monster is only subject to magical attack. When killed, it dissipates, leaving a few (1D6) little glittering blue stones. Throwing or slinging one of these Pellets of Lightning creates a 20 hit point lightning bolt.

GIANT HYPNOTIC SPIDER

Armor Class: 4
Move: 3"/12"
Hit Dice: 4 + 2
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: 1D6+1
Special Attack: Hypnotic gaze (save vs. Paralyzation)
Size: L

The Giant Hypnotic Spider is very much like other spiders in its appearance and habits. But it has a gaze weapon that hypnotizes the victim into standing perfectly still staring at the spider if the victim fails to save against it.

HOLLOW CARAPACE

Armor Class: 0
Move: 6"
Hit Dice: 4-6
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: 1D8+2
Special Attack: See below
Size: M

The Hollow Carapace is a magical automation, a walking suit of plate armor, usually purple in color and carrying a purple sword and a purple shield emblazoned with the image of a ferocious creature such as a dragon or griffin. The sword is +2 to hit and +2 to damage. Attacks on the Carapace have a 25% chance of hitting the shield, in which case the weapon dissolves if it fails to save vs. magic. If the Carapace is "killed," it dissolves leaving the shield and sword behind. The shield, however, turns into the monster emblazoned upon it 1D6 melee rounds later. The resulting monster is in miniature form, no larger than a horse, with the same specifications as the Carapace had. The purple sword will kill the monster with one blow, if used. When this monster is killed, it dissolves. Normally (90% chance) the sword will dissolve also, doing 2D6 damage to the hand of the person holding it if it is not dropped promptly when it begins to dissolve.

LAUGHING SHADOW

Armor Class: 7 in the
 dark or with a See
 Invisible spell, oth-
 erwise 0 from invis-
 ibility
Move: 12"
Hit Dice: 3
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: 1D6
Size: S
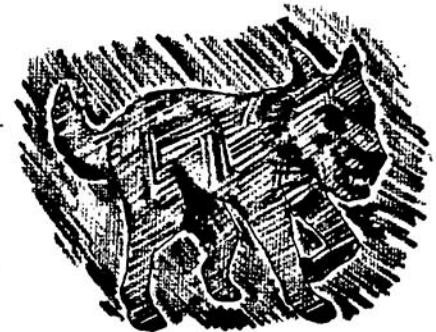
The Laughing Shadow is a doglike creature with a peculiar defense — it is visible only in the dark, as a faintly outlined figure (as with a Fairy Fire spell). If there is any light in the room, the Laughing Shadow is completely invisible, even when attacking. It usually lives in areas inhabited by other monsters that the attacker needs light to see, but which can themselves see in the dark . . . this can be quite frustrating if the victim cannot see invisible objects. The monster is named for its hyena-like laugh.

LEAPING JAWS

Armor Class: 5
Move: 6"/12"
Hit Dice: 3
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: See below
Size: S

The Leaping Jaws are leathery balls with enormous mouths equipped with sharp fangs. They have short arms and legs, and the ability to levitate. They usually suspend themselves on the ceilings of rooms or caverns waiting for victims to walk underneath. Then they drop down and bite, enclosing the head and drawing the victim up to the roof to be digested after the victim suffocates in 2D4 melee rounds or dies of bite damage at 1D6 per round while held this way. A complete cloak of Jawhide, requiring ten bodies to make, gives the wearer the ability to levitate.

MONSTER OF MUTUAL LOATHING

Armor Class: 7
Move: 12"
Hit Dice: 6
No. of Attacks: Special
Damage/Attack: See below
Size: M

The Monster of Mutual Loathing looks like a young man or woman with no armor, who comes walking up with a wide, zany smile. Those who see it and fail their save vs. magic insist on attacking it. A hit on the monster does its damage to the attacker, and the number of attacks and their damage are those of the attacker. This is a magical automaton, and its effect is magical, so the attacker gets a save vs. magic on damage on every hit "done" to the attacker via his/her hits on the monster, taking half damage on a save. The monster doesn't attack anyone — it doesn't have to!

POISONOUS PEAR

Armor Class: 5
Move: 12"
Hit Dice: 3
No. Attacks: 2
Damage/Attack: 1D4, plus 1D6 poison
Size: S

The Poisonous Pear is a pear-shaped creature bristling with brown spines. It bounces along, propelled by its ten legs. It hisses, and stinks like a sewer. Each leg is equipped with a poisonous sting, doing 1D6 additional damage on a hit (none if the victim saves vs. poison). After the monster is killed, 1D6 doses of its poison can be recovered. If applied as a salve, this will cause a wound to close up; it will seal off a stump, but will not restore a severed limb. It does 3D6 points of cure when applied to wounds, but at the risk of being poisoned the same amount if the poison gets deep into the wound (save vs. poison to see).

SNATCHBAN

Armor Class: 2
Move: Special
Hit Dice: 3-4
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: Special
Size: S-M

The Snatchban is another magical automaton, but one that takes many forms, such as whips, ropes, snakes, tentacles, skeletons; basically anything that can grab. Although the Snatchban can grab, it usually cannot move, so its victims must come to it. The function of the Snatchban is to foil attempted theft of treasure, and their usual method is to whip out of a chest being broken into and seize the intruder in a deathly grip that does 1D6 damage a round. The victim must roll under or equal to his/her DEX or be seized. The Snatchban cannot be hit with weapons of less than +2 enchantment.

SUFFOCATING HOOD

Armor Class: 8
Move: 6"
Hit Dice: 3
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: Special
Size: S

The Suffocating Hood is a round, umbrella-shaped translucent and shining creature that is 3' in diameter with a long thin tendril 12-15' long hanging down from its middle. The Hood floats through the air, and when it grabs a victim with its tendril, it reels itself down over the victim's head, suffocating the victim in 2D4 melee rounds. Attacks on the Hood during this are 30% likely to hit the victim, instead. ◉◉

CULT OF KALI

By Greg Costikyan

Kali is an extremely complex goddess, and the interpretation offered here is only one of many possible. Indeed, this cult is based primarily on the Thuggee cult suppressed by the British during the 1840s. The worship of Kali continues unabated in India, but apparently her worshippers no longer engage in human sacrifices — or at least, one hopes such is the case. Certainly other interpretations and visions of Kali are possible, and to most of her worshippers she is neither as vicious nor as dark as depicted here.

"Come, Mother, Come!
For Terror is Thy name,
Death is in Thy breath,
And every shaking step
Destroys a world for ever.
Thou "Time," the All-Destroyer!
Come, Mother, Come!

"Who dares misery love,
And hugs the form of Death —
Dance in destruction's dance,
To him the Mother comes."

— Swami Vivekananda

MYTHOS AND HISTORY

In appearance, Kali's body is the darkest blue, almost black. Her face is disheveled and bristly. Round her neck she wears a long necklace of human skulls. Her purple lips stream with blood; her tusk-like teeth lie over her lower lip; her tongue protrudes from her mouth. She has eight arms, each grasping a weapon or a severed human head.

According to the Devi-mahatmya, after the demon brothers Sumbha and Nisumbha subdued the gods, the gods petitioned the Great Goddess to save them. She appeared in the guise of Parvati (the wife-goddess), calmed the gods, and went forth to battle the demon armies. Growing angry in battle, Parvati's face became dark as ink, and from her brow sprung Kali, armed with a sword and noose. Kali lept into the fray, and waded through the demon hosts, decapitating and drinking the blood of all who stood against her. According to this legend, therefore, Kali is merely an aspect of the Great Goddess. In some areas of India, notably Bengal, she is herself believed to be the Great Mother, and the other major female deities are merely aspects of Kali.

Kali is, at least during this Day of Brahma, the creator of the world. Because of this, the world reflects her madness. She is giddy, terrible, drunk with power, she dances the dance of destruction with her husband Siva.

Life is suffering. People are born only to suffer miserably and then die. This is the way of prakrti — of "mere matter." But prakrti, unlike the Western conception of matter, includes mind and the ego as well as mass. Prakrti is life and thirst for life; it is the desire for sensory pleasure, for material goods, for the improvement of the circumstances of life in this world. Prakrti blinds man to his essential nature and makes him unable to come to spiritual maturity, leaving him forever on the wheel of karma without hope for nirvana.

Kali represents prakrti. The world rushes headlong toward destruction, dancing in a mad dance of constant activity, turmoil, and disruption — as Kali dances her wild and uncontrollable dance of death. Kali by her existance instructs humanity in the trap that prakrti lays for those who do not find the infinite — for she shows what underlies prakrti, i.e., suffering, death, and destruction. Before a human can achieve nirvana, he must understand and accept — indeed, embrace — prakrti. Kali, representing death, suffering, and turmoil, represents some aspects of prakrti, and a human must learn to embrace Kali fearlessly before he can achieve spiritual maturity.

As an aspect of the Great Goddess, Kali is the Great Bitch. She is the Angry Mother — a fearsome figure who may strike viciously, who cannot be appeased, who inflicts pain on her children for inexplicable reasons — but who remains a Mother, and, like all mothers, must be loved.

NATURE OF THE CULT

The Cult of Kali is a cult of murderers who believe that Kali demand lives as a sacrifice. It is the only cult in India which practices blood sacrifices. It exists on two levels; on one level,

it is an open cult with many worshippers who worship the various aspects of Kali and participate in many rituals, including animal sacrifices, without necessarily engaging in murders. On another level, it is a secret network of Thugs, who worship Kali as Bhowani the death-dealer, and periodically murder to feed her. Anyone might be a Thug, including the apparently respectable merchant next door; whole villages sometimes consist of Thugs.

Thugs are prohibited from killing wandering holy men, women, and certain classes of merchants. To do so is a crime against Kali and may result in expulsion from the cult and the disfavor of the Goddess.

ORGANIZATION

Each temple of Kali is an entity of itself; although there may be contacts and cooperation among temples, there is no over-riding heirarchy. Some temples, indeed, engage only in animal sacrifice and have nothing to do with the Thugs; temples openly practice human sacrifice only in areas where the cult of Kali dominates the local power structure, or where the power structure is decadent or in disorder and cannot prevent human sacrifice. Most temples which engage in human sacrifice do so covertly and attempts to keep such sacrifices secret from the authorities. As well, anyone overzealous in searching out Thugs and those who engage in human sacrifice is likely to find himself dead, so as long as a temple does not become too obnoxious about its practices, it is usually left alone by those in power.

Some worshippers of Kali believe that she is the preeminent goddess of the pantheon, while others believe that though important, she is only one deity among many. In either case, they recognize the existence and importance of other manifestations of the Divine Energy, and may also worship other gods and goddesses.

Anyone, including those who often or primarily worship other deities, may be a lay member. Initiates, or chelas, generally worship Kali primarily, and may be Thugs.

LAY MEMBERS

Anyone may be a lay member of the cult, simply by worshipping at the cult's temple frequently. Temples are usually situated at cremation grounds or other places associated with death and destruction, such as ancient battle fields. Services are frenzied, Dionysian rather than Apollonian, and often involve orgies. Lay members do not worship to placate the goddess of death — she cannot be placated — but because they recognize the existence of death and misery and understand that a goddess of such is as worthy of awe as any other. Wednesdays are holy to Kali, and regular worshippers generally attend services to her at that time.

INITIATES

Anyone who has attended services regularly (on an average of once a week) for three months or more, and who can find at least one initiate to vouch for him, may apply to the temple for initiate (or chelas) status. He must supply a live bullock or sheep as an offering, and is then secluded for a week, during which time he is taught the secret recognition signals of the cult, the cult jargon (which should be treated as a language of its own, understandable by others who speak the primary language of the area at a 25% modifier) which he will learn at 40%, and is subjected to various rituals. These rituals involve quite a bit of pain, and should not be attempted by the weak-hearted. Should the initiate candidate not be genuinely devoted to Kali and joining for his own reasons, he has a

CONx4% chance of hiding his true intentions. If they discover that he is joining for ulterior motives, he will be subjected to further meaningless rituals, told he is initiate, and automatically refused Rune Lord and Rune Priest status if he applies for such in the future.

Assuming he is genuinely accorded initiate status, he must then leave the company with a group of other initiates, and kill one sapient being. It doesn't matter who he kills or where, but he must kill. If for any reason he fails to do so — he finds himself unable to do so, the victim escapes, or the like — it is assumed that the goddess Kali rejects him, and the other initiates will kill him.

INITIATE BENEFITS

During the course of initiation, an initiate is taught the cult jargon at 40% and the secret recognition signals of the cult. If a weapon master is available at the temple, the temple will pay the weapons master to teach the initiate in the use of the strangling cord and the war pick at up to 35%. (Treat the war pick as a war hammer if no rules for war picks are available). Further training in the two weapons is available at half of the normal cost.

The cult will provide two weeks training in the following skills for one week of full time service: Dancing, Sexual Technique.

The cult will teach one battle magic spell from the following list to the initiate: Detect Enemies, Dispel Magic, Demoralize, Spirit Shield, Fanaticism, Vigor.

RUNE LORDS

The usual *RuneQuest* requirements must be met by a candidate for Rune Lord status. In addition, a Rune Lord candidate must kill one person on the order of the temple. The temple may choose someone near and dear to the candidate in order to make sure of his loyalty — a comrade, his child, etc. — or, more pragmatically, it may choose someone it wants offed. In either case, it should not be too difficult — physically, if not emotionally — for the candidate to kill his target.

One of the weapons skills which the candidate knows at 90% must be either the strangling cord or the war pick.

Upon acceptance as a Rune Lord (after ceremonies which last a full month), the Rune Lord will be given a war pick (possibly of iron or a Rune metal — if the last, probably truesilver or magically reinforced silver) which will return to his hand upon command. (Note that the war pick is not generally a throwing weapon, but this is useful during fumbles and the like).

A Rune Lord is generally free to do as he chooses, but the temple may require him to perform one important service each year — generally an assassination.

RUNE PRIESTS

In addition to the normal requirements for becoming a Rune Priest, or Guru, a candidate must learn to embrace Kali. To do this, he must first undergo ceremonies lasting a full month, during which time he is taught how to snap into a trance upon repetition of certain mantras. (This ability is considered learned at 80%, may not be learned at higher percentages, and makes the Rune Priest immune to Fear spells and fear-projecting magics — assuming he succeeds in snapping into the trance, of course. In a trance, a Rune Priest may not use either battle or Rune magics, but may fight and operate normally otherwise.)

After this period of training, the candidate will be taken to a cremation ground or other place sacred to Kali, where he will

spend a night. During the night, an avatar of Kali will appear and put the candidate to a test; this test may be one of several, and its precise nature is left to the referee. For instance, the avatar may engage the candidate in spiritual combat; it may demand that the candidate sacrifice something of value to Kali (the testicles are one possible sacrifice); or it may simply confront the candidate with his inner fears, which the candidate must surmount (POWx5 or less on D100 to successfully surmount fear). Should the candidate fail the test, his body will be found at the testing sight in the morning.

RUNE MAGIC

The following standard and *Cults of Prax* Rune spells may be used by Gurus of Kali: Concealment, Absorption, Divine Intervention, Extension I, II, III, Multispell I, II, III, Spell Teaching, Shield, Divination, Detect Truth, Fear, and Berserker.

In addition, the following special Rune spells are available:

STRANGLE	Cost — 1 POW point
Range — 10 meters	Duration — 10 melee rounds or death, whichever comes first
Nonstackable	Reusable

A glowing black loop appears around the neck of the spell's target, and begins to strangle him. Each melee round, 10 points of damage are inflicted. Any armor around the neck does reduce this damage. Each melee round that the target does nothing else, he may attempt to rip the loop from his neck; he has a STRx4% chance of doing so each melee round.

DEATH-WISH	Cost — 1 POW point
Range — 20 meters	Duration — 10 melee rounds
Nonstackable	Reusable

The target of the spell suddenly halts whatever he is doing; a premonition of death has come over him, and he will wait patiently for it to arrive. He will face death without fear but with equanimity; for a member of the Cult of Kali this is the appropriate and most holy way to die, and consequently, it is exceedingly good karma to kill one under a Death-Wish spell. The target will take no action to halt someone who is attempting to kill him. Each melee round, the target may attempt to break out of the mood imposed on him by the Death-Wish spell; he has an INTx4% chance of succeeding each round.

ASSOCIATED CULTS

Siva, god of destruction, is usually spoken of as Kali's husband. Also associated with Kali is Devi the mother, Parvati the wife-goddess, and Bhowani. There may or may not be some historical connection between the cult of Kali and the Moslem Hashisheem.

GAME CONS

January 16-18, 1981   **ORCCON**
Sheraton-Anaheim Hotel, Anaheim, CA
  ORCCON
  c/o Tim Curran
  3342 Quail Run Rd
  Los Alamitos, CA 90720

February 6-8, 1981   **GENCON SOUTH**
Beaches' Ramada Inn, Jacksonville, FL
  GENCON SOUTH
  5333 Sn Monica Blvd N
  Jacksonville, FL 32207

February 14-16, 1981   **DunDraCon VI**
Inquire address below:
  DunDraCon
  386 Alcatraz Ave
  Oakland, CA 94618

March 14-15, 1981   **SiliCon**
Le Baron Hotel, San Jose, CA
  SiliCon
  478 W Hamilton (147)
  Campbell, CA 95008

March 20-21, 1981   **Simcon III**
University of Rochester, Rochester, NY
  Simcon III
  Box 5142
  River Station
  Rochester, NY 14627

May 22-25, 1981   **Grimcon III**
Oakland Hyatt House, Oakland, CA
  Grimcon
  PO Box 4153
· Berkeley, CA 94704

June 12-14, 1981   **MichiCon 10**
Oakland University, Rochester, MI
  Metro Detroit Gamers
  2616 Kenwyck
  Troy, MI 48098

July 3-5, 1981   **Pacific Origins**
Dunfey Hotel, San Mateo, CA
  Pacific Origins
  PO Box 5548
  San Jose, CA 95150

July 3-5, 1981   **NanCon 88-III**
Holiday Inn, Houston, TX
  Nan's Toys & Games
  1385 Galleria Mall
  5015 Westheimer
  Houston, TX 77056

July 23-26, 1981   **Gen Con East**
Cherry Hill Inn, Cherry Hill, NJ
  Gen Con East
  PO Box 139
  Middletown, NJ 07748

July 24-26, 1981   **Atlanticon**
University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD
  Atlanticon, Inc
  PO Box 15405
  Baltimore, MD 21220

September 11-13, 1981
            DRAGON FLIGHT
Seattle University, Seattle, WA
  The Brass Dragon Society
  PO Box 33872
  Seattle, WA 98133

November 13-15, 1981   **WinterCon 10**
Oakland University, Rochester, MI
  Metro Detroit Gamers
  2616 Kenwyck
  Troy, MI 48098

THE SWORD of Hollywood

Star Trek returning to TV?
D&D movie news
More for Shogun fans!

By LARRY DiTILLO

QUESTION 1: What's the point of "Sword of Hollywood"?

ANSWER 1: As *Different Worlds* has constantly endeavored to show, the world of adventure role-playing is more than just the games themselves. Good role-playing thrives on ideas and movies and television are certainly a part of the resource material an inventive gamer can draw from. *DW* has opened up the game realm by publishing game philosophy, game business, and game resources along with the tried-and-true charts and tables, variants and reviews. This column represents one more step in that welcome direction.

QUESTION 2: What are the drawbacks?

ANSWER 2: The nature of the film and television industry is undeniably chaotic. This means that since *DW* is not (sadly) a monthly, every now and again some "hot" item I write will by the time you read it be a) not so hot anymore or b) partially or completely changed or untrue. I will do my best to confirm everything. Another major drawback is the scarcity of fantasy products from Hollywood, or to be more precise, the sword & sorcery type fantasy we associate with fantasy role-playing. Happily, for the moment there happens to be a great number of fantasy pieces in either production or planning, but believe me, this is an exception rather than the rule. S&S has been low priority to all but a dedicated few filmmakers for many reasons, the most major of which is budget. Science fiction is another story. Since the success of *Star Wars* the movies have turned more and more to SF themes, but that trend too is definitely dying down. However, it is my belief that when the Dino DeLaurentis production of *Conan* finally hits the screen it will be a blockbuster ala *Star Wars* and make FRP-type fantasy the big trend.

QUESTION 3; What is Hollywood?

ANSWER 3: When I say Hollywood in this column, take it as a generic term for the film and TV industry as a whole. Most of what I tell you about will be emanating from Los Angeles, but I also intend to drop a few lines about foreign productions, international TV, etc.

QUESTION 4: What exactly will this column be about?

ANSWER 4: Hopefully a little bit of everything. I will try and keep you abreast of the latest films and TV shows which relate directly to adventure role-playing, drop a few hints about some old movies and TV shows you might want to check out for ideas, get some inside dope from writers, producers, etc., and maybe pass along a thought or two that will contribute to raising the role-playing consciousness.

QUESTION 5: Why you?

ANSWER 5: Quite simply I love films and TV, am an FRP fanatic, and besides loving show biz I have worked in it professionally for some seven years as both writer and publicist. I figure I'm qualified.

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HAPPY POSSIBILITIES FOR TREKKIES: Gene Roddenberry, the creator of *Star Trek* announced that he has been negotiating with Paramount Pictures for a possible return of *Star Trek* to television. Roddenberry favors a format of six to eight 90-minute to two-hour episodes a season, the only format he claims the show's original stars would consider. I'll give you a little inside on this — a few years ago a brand new *Star Trek* series was in the works at Paramount. Scripts were written, other scripts were being solicited and the idea was just about ready to launch. The series would have been made sans Spock, replacing him with a full Vulcan named Xon and adding the characters of Commander Decker and Ilia who appeared in the motion picture. I went in on that series and still have the "bible" for it (a bible is show biz slang for a treatment of a show) and it looked as hot as ever, even without Spock. However, just about that time *Star Wars* hit the scene and the major film companies began to climb all over themselves to cash in on the revived interest in outer space epics. The series was shelved and the movie put into operation. I think it was the wrong move, *Star Trek* being to me the penultimate TV show. At any rate, it now looks like *Star Trek* might be back where it belongs on the tiny tube and I'll fill you in as things move along.

THE D&D MOVIE LIVES!: A few issues ago I sent *DW* an item about the *D&D* movie which Gigi D'Arn published, an item claiming that the *D&D* movie was temporarily and probably permanently shelved. To support my claim that Hollywood is chaotic, that item is now somewhat less true. A tentative title of *Dragon Maze* has been announced for the film and a director named Eric Karson is supposedly set. The film will be about the James Dallas Egbert incident if it is made. Here's the as-of-this-moment situation: the company which has the rights to the film is still considering it, but it is not their top priority. The film is still possible but it is not now in production or even pre-production. In other words, only that tentative title and director really exist (and that is probably changing as you read this). If and when production starts I shall tell you as soon as possible. Quite frankly, I have doubts about the viability of the project from both commercial and audience viewpoints. However, we can do nothing but wait and judge, so let's just do that.

FOR BUSHIDO AND LAND OF THE RISING SUN FANS: The enormous and well-deserved success of *Shogun* will without a doubt be responsible for a spate of samurai epics hitting the American market in the next year. When something makes money in Hollywood, everybody wants to do it again and again. As a long-time fan of the samurai film, I am happy about this, though I also am somewhat worried that an excess of badly-dubbed cheapies will be coming our way. Nothing is more frustrating than a dubbed samurai movie, the Japanese language being one of great impact and resonance. Nevertheless, I am overjoyed to report that in the forefront of the Japanese imports is the epic *Kagemusha (Shadow Warrior)*. *Kagemusha* is a drama of feudal warfare in the 16th century and is directed by none other than Akira Kurosawa. Those of you who have seen classics such as *Seven Samurai, Throne of Blood, Sanjuro,* and *Yojimbo* know that Kurosawa is the

undisputed master. Hopefully because of *Shogun* the film will also be widely distributed around the country. The American release is co-sponsored by Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas.

MARTIAL ARTS AND MAGIC: My kung-fu connection, Neva Jean the Dragon Queen, tipped me to two Chinese productions which mix martial arts and magic, for those of you who are fans. The first is called *Dragon vs. Dracula* and is touted as the Prince of Darkness in full battle against the King of Kung-Fu. The second is called *Kung-Fu Exorcist* and features Kathy Leen "Lady Bruce Lee" and the Holy Man of Kung Fu in a struggle against diabolic forces. While I wouldn't call most martial arts movies "art," they are usually great fun and contain much wildness that is usable in FRP gaming (weird weapons, crazy fighting techniques, picturesque magic, etc.). For you younger fans, I would strongly suggest attending such flicks with older brothers, friends, etc., since audiences can get a little roguey. Also, if there is a Chinese theatre in your town showing kung-fu flicks, by all means catch them there. The films made for Chinese audiences and in the Chinese language are usually superior to the dubbed American versions.

TITLES TO WATCH FOR: *DragonSlayer* — an epic S&S film being shot in England is a joint production of Disney and Paramount. It was originally scheduled for Christmas but now has been pushed back to June of 1981. *Hawk the Slayer* — more S&S with Jack Palance as the villain. *Knights* — epic King Arthur movie, again being shot in England, by director John Boorman. Nicol Williamson plays a surprising Merlin, a very young, vital Merlin as opposed to the usual hoary mage in old robes. *Space Vampires* — an outer space horror epic from the novel by Colin Wilson is due in December of 1981. Director is Zoran Perisic who directed the flying sequences in *Superman*. *Scanners* — a SF thriller that should be coming your way in January of 1981. *Evil Speak* — terror from the depths of a computer. And finally for all you fans of Kharis and Adef Bey (a star for the reader who knows who that is) beware, *Dawn of the Mummy* is completing shooting in Cairo.

ARE WE READY? YES!: *Revenge of the Jedi* is now set to shoot in fall of 1981 at the EMI Elstree Studios in London. George Lucas is writing the first-draft screenplay and will executive produce. No director has been set. The vast preproduction work for the third *Star Wars* epic will begin early in 1981.

QUICKIE NUMBER ONE: Charles H. Schneer was recently awarded the National Association of Theatre Owners Production Showmanship Award. If Mr. Schneer's name is not familiar, tsk, tsk, you haven't been reading the credits. Charles Schneer is none other than the producer who over the years has brought us the wonderful *Sinbad* series featuring Ray Harryhausen's incredible stop-motion animation. I congratulate Mr. Schneer for devoting himself so whole-heartedly to fantasy over the years and for winning the award. His next production which should be hitting the theatres next year is a big-budget, big star fantasy which will feature the most stupendous Harryhausen magic yet. It's called *Clash of Titans.*

QUICKIE NUMBER TWO: Several years ago, I read a novel by William Goldman called *The Princess Bride.* That novel is a must-read for every FRP freak, being both an incredible piece of story-telling and the most puckish literary joke you ever were sucked in by. After reading the novel, I was lucky enough to get a look at the screenplay version also penned by Mr. Goldman (who as you should know wrote *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* and *Magic* among others). The script was not quite as stupendous as the novel but was still pretty terrific (a hint for you purists — no movie should ever be compared to its book version, they are two different media). Unfortunately, many moons have come and gone and no word of a film production of *The Princess Bride* has come forth. At any rate, read the book, you won't be sorry. I guarantee it.

PERSONALITIES OF ROLE-PLAYING GAMERS

By Lewis Pulsipher

One of the most enjoyable aspects of participating in fantasy role-playing games is watching how the players react —what kinds of personality they adopt in the game (or what inner personality comes out), since few players adopt a really different personality for each character. Sometimes you can spot a typical personality after a few minutes of play. Quick perception may help you survive the adventure, for often your comrades can be your worst enemy, intentionally or not. Of course, many palyers combine several of the types listed.

THE BARBARIAN

This may be the most common personality. He likes to be a warrior, whatever his class he likes to attack and is impatient with planning. He does well in easy worlds but often dies when in tougher surroundings. Don't depend on him to guard your magicians. His motto or key phrase is "up and at 'em, lads."

THE NEUTRAL

If the barbarian isn't the most common personality, the neutral is. He doesn't care about principles, he just wants money (and magic)—but he perfers to despoil non-players rather than risk the enmity of his associates. His motto is "what's in it for me?"

THE CHAOTIC

This fellow is rather like the neutral, but much less predictable. In fact he doesn't much care if he lives or dies. His motto is "what the hell."

DIABLO

This guy is so lucky he must be in league with the devil, so lucky he begins to rely on it. Witness the sorcerer who, in a desperate situation, risked casting a gound zero fireball because he *knew* he would make his saving throw. He did. His key phrase is "a twenty!"

THE GLIB TONGUE

This player will try to talk to anyone he meets in hopes of gaining some advantage; and he'll try to talk his way out of any jam, especially one he got into because he talked too much. If any non-player character asks you about the glib tongue's character, say you don't know him! His key phrase is "let's talk this over."

THE EVIL ONE

This player really enjoys being evil. Killing isn't enough—torture, extortion, confidence games, complicated plots are his meat and drink, though he is not necessarily good at dreaming up such plots. Keep an eye on this guy—better yet, play with someone else or you'll regret it. His key phrase is "die a thousand deaths!"

THE COWARD

Why fight if you can run away? This rare player only steals from babies. He can be amusing in small doses. His key phrase is "not me!"

THE BIG MOUTH

This fellow talks a proverbial blue streak, but seldom contributes to the. game. Game Master and serious players must raise their voices to be heard over the bigmouth's account of what he did yesterday, or of the one (girl, boy, fish, monster, whatever) that got away. Get rid of this guy as soon as possible. His key "phrase" is "I, me, my, mine."

THE MANIPULATOR

This player, related to the bigmouth, is always saying "we do this" or "somebody do this," but when he's asked or pinned down *his* character is never doing it. He also likes to move around pieces or figures without the consent of the GM or other players. His key phrase is *"he* did it."

THE SNEAK

This guy is a loner. He likes to snoop around on his own, even when he's not a thief character. Don't depend on him, and think about frisking him at adventure's end.

THE GOODGUY

In contrast to the neutral, who will attack anyone except his associates if he can gain from it, the goodguy attacks only those who are doing, or have done, evil deeds. Moreover, he doesn't like torture or execution of prisoners, and he wants to properly bury all the dead. He is especially "good" when playing a priest or cleric character. His motto is "bless you my son."

THE PUPPET

This player does whatever his "master" tells him—or in some cases, whatever anyone tells him—as long as it isn't obviously very dangerous. The master the puppet chooses is usually an experienced player, sometimes a neutral, sometimes a goodguy. Puppets are useful, but treat them well, like a valued hireling. His motto is "what shall *I* do?"

THE CALCULATOR

This player weighs all the risks, carefully considers the alternatives, and if the odds aren't in his favor he goes elsewhere. Listen to him when things get tough but don't let him spoil the heroism of the game. His key phrase is "too risky."

THE ENTREPRENEUR

He plays the game as though it was the stock market. He is ever looking for ways to make money without stealing it —slavery, animal trapping, tolls, tax farming, you name it. For example, I knew a high level character who stuffed shields and weapons of defeated monsters into a bag of holding in order to sell them in town. The entrepreneur's key phrase is "wanna buy a used sword?"

THE SIMULATOR

Very rare in fantasy games, this guy likes to talk about weapon capabilities, the tensile strength of Toledo steel forged in 1404, the average size of medieval soldiers, and so on. Occasionally he can be useful, occasionally boring. His phrase is "we (they) couldn't really do that. . ."

QUICK PLUGS

THE TOMBS OF VALLA -- A scenario book of 68 pages, it comes with four 8½"x11" maps. Taking place in the world of Dyon, the book covers room descriptions, encounter tables, random treasures, history of Valla, magic items, and a special section on monsters. Though not geared for any specific FRP system, the monster section is keyed for *D&D* and *RQ* based campaigns. Designed and available from John Scott Clegg, 1785 N 1500 E, Provo, UT 84601, for $6 postpaid.

KNIGHTS AND MAGICK — This is a game system for medieval and fantasy combat. It comes boxed with three 48 page rulebooks, one 32 page rulebook, one 16 page rulebook, and 11"x17" sheet of charts and tables. Designed by Arnold Hendrick, the five volumes cover game rules and systems, recruiting and preparing armies, adventures, scenarios and campaigns, monster index, and magick spells

index. More medieval and miniatures oriented than fantasy or role-playing, it also contains historical information, army lists, and painting guilde. It retails for $19.95. **MERLIN** — This is a fantasy adventure game of magical combat. It comes with eight miniatures, a die, paint brush, twelve containers of paint, tray, painting guide, four pages of rules, and an 8½"x11" map, all in a box. Designed by Greg Stafford, the rules cover characters, magick spells, familiars, and others. It is $14.95. Both are available from Heritage USA, 9840 Monroe Dr (116), Dallas, TX 75220.

CARDBOARD HEROES — These are 40 figures printed on cardstock, in color, with both front and back pictures of the characters. There are humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, fighters, wizards, clerics, thieves, etc. Comes with a list of figures and instructions for their use. Figures are drawn in color by Denis Lou-

GREAT MOMENTS IN TROLL HISTORY —

LIFE IN OTHER DIMENSION

PHRAUD SPELLWORKER NOTED TROLLMAGE CONJURING FROM THE BOOK OF CRIMSON CURSES, AND DARK DOORWAYS. MAKES SUCCESSFUL CONTACT WITH NEW LIFE FORCE, WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS. PHRAUD WAS INVITED TO VISIT THE NEW WORLD!

UNFORTUNATELY HE DOESN'T SEEM ABLE TO GET BACK

bet. The retail price is $3. **KUNG FU 2100** -- This game, designed by B. Dennis Sustare, comes with 112 counters, and a 21"x32" sheet printed both sides with rules, map, record sheets, tables, ads, etc. Also available at $3. **THE SPACE GAMER WALL POSTER** — This is a 17"x22" full-color poster of the *TSG 28* cover. $1.50 is the price. All of the above are available from Steve Jackson Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760, add 25 cents per item for postage, Texas residents add 5% sales tax.

TREASURE OF THE SILVER DRAGON — This is a programmed solitaire fantasy adventure for use with *Melee* and *Wizard*. The game can, however, be used in group play or by a GM. There are special rules for encounters, escape, depletion of areas, morale, combat with wizards, rest and recuperation, experience points, Dragonodons, and ending the adventure, as well as the adventure itself. Designed by Howard Thompson, the book is 60 pages. It also comes with an 8½"x11" map. Comes boxed for $3.95. **DIMENSION DEMONS** — This is a planetary SF boardgame for two players. The components are 84 counters, a 12"x14" map, 16 pages of rules, and a die, all in a box. Designed by Fred Askew, the game involves trans-dimensional projection, popback, transports, breeders, and slags. It features a dual map system to represent dimensions. It also sells for $3.95. Both are available from Metagaming, Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761, add 50 cents for postage and handling.

HIGH GUARD — A new edition of Book 5 for *Traveller*, by Marc Miller, provides new rules for naval characters and starships, their construction and combat. Retails for $5.98. **TWILIGHT'S PEAK** — Adventure 3 for *Traveller* is a 64 page scenario designed by Marc Miller. Set in the Spinward Marches, it deals with a search for the remains of a military expedition lost on a mission over a century ago. It provides crew briefing, the Spinward Main subsector, rumors, Fulacin world data, animal encounters, description of the Octagon, library data, and notes about the Octagon Book and the Droyne. Available at $4.98. **76 PATRONS** — Supplement 6 for *Traveller* is designed by Loren Wiseman and sells for $3.98. This 48 page rulebook provides 76 patron encounter situations. They range from playboy nobles to terrorist hijackers. Each contain several different options for variety. **ASTEROID** — Designed by Frank Chadwick and Marc Miller, the components include a 24 page rulebook, eight 5½"x8½" geomorphic map, 120 counters, and a die, all in a box. The game is about a psychopathic computer out to demolish the population with the use of robots. Basically for two players, each side selecting various options. The price is $5.98. All of the above are available from Game Designers' Workshop, 203 North St, Normal, IL 61761, postpaid, Illinois residents add 5% tax.

ABYSS — A *T&T* pocket adventure, this solitaire dungeon is designed by Paul Creelman. Based on medieval Christian mythology, this 16 page scenario features a propensity of illusionary tricks and traps. Number two in the series, it is priced at $1.99. **CIRCLE OF ICE** — Another solo adventure (pocket adventure
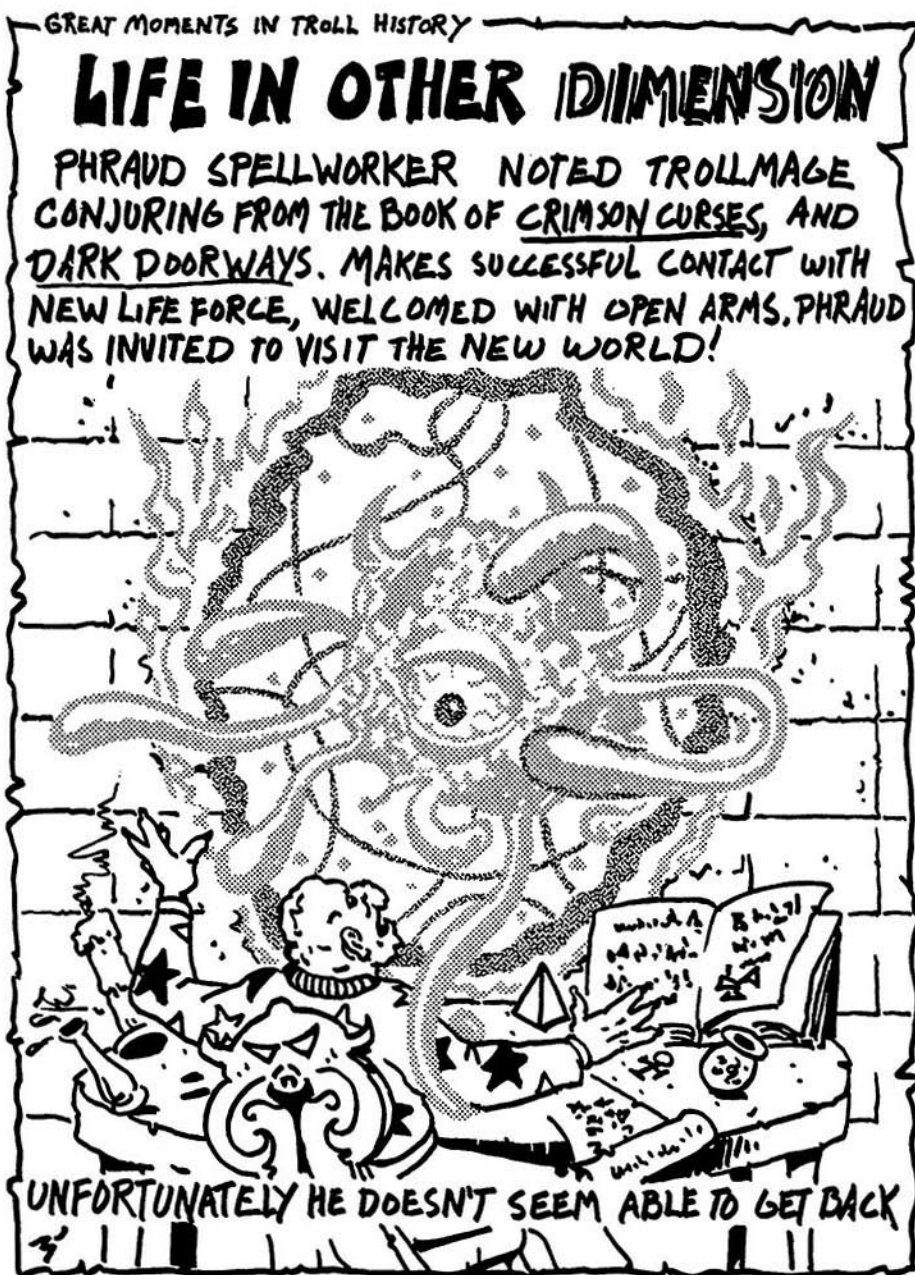
3) by Paul Creelman, this 16 pager features a quest to map a route through the frigid barrier which is a power unto itself. Also priced at $1.99, both are available from Flying Buffalo Inc., PO Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252, add 50 cents per order for postage.

THIEVES' GUILD II — This is the second book in the series designed by Kerry Lloyd, Richard Meyer, and Michael Watkins. It is 32 pages loose-leaf, and features temple-looting and tomb-robbing scenarios and adventures with a complete description of the Tombs of Shale-Chuun. There are traps, guards, throne rooms, treasure chambers, arcane items and mystical pieces, monasteries, etc. Available for $5.95 from Gamelords, Ltd., 18616 Grosbeak Ter, Gaithersburg, MD 20760, include $1 per order for shipping and handling, Maryland residents add 5% sales tax.

TIME TRIPPER — A SF boardgame by James Dunnigan, this boxed game sells for $5.95. The components are a 17"x11" map, 100 counters, 16 page rulebook, and a die. For one to four players, the rules cover random time travel, battles, command time travel, endurance, experience, and optional rules that include team play, treasure hunting, negotiations, and use of a timemaster. Simulations Publications, Inc. published it, available through mail order dealers and retail outlets.

TANCRED — Designed by Dave Sering, the 48 page rulebook introduces a new system that has only one human habitable planet. Basically a description of that one planet, it covers its capitol and starport, taverns, encounters, rumors, cities, wild animals, security, mercenaries, scenarios, and more. Approved for use with *Traveller*, it sells for $5.98. **LEY SECTOR** — Comes with a 22"x34" map and a 32 page rulebook, this approved for use with *Traveller* guidebook covers 16 subsectors along with encounter tables and rumors. Sells at $4.98. **DARTHANON QUEEN** — This 32 page approved for use with *Traveller* book is designed by Ray Harms, Michael Reagan, and Dan Hauffe. This is a scenario taking place on a merchant ship in the Ley Sector. There are 44 places to explore and is sold at $3.50. **LASER TANK** — This comes with three sheets of 33 cut out vehicles and 48 weapons for use with miniature SF armored combat rules. The scale is 15mm and there are APCs and AFVs with guns and turrets. There are two pages of simple combat rules. The cost is $1.50. **DUCK POND** — Designed by Rudy Kraft, this is an

approved for use with *RQ* campaign book. It is 64 pages with 100 areas to explore, 19 additional encounter descriptions, and 51 NPC stats. The price is $5.98. **THE TOUGHEST DUNGEON IN THE WORLD** — Approved for use with *T&T* and *M!M!*, this solitaire dungeon is designed by Ken St. Andre. Designed for first level adventurers, the object is to accumulate 10,000 GPs. The price is $4. All of the above are available from Judges Guild, Inc., RR 8 Box 9, 1221 N Sunnyside Rd, Decatur, IL 62522, add $1 for postage and handling, Illinois residents add 5% sales tax.

THE MORROW PROJECT — This is a roleplaying rulebook describing a system for survival after a nuclear war circa 1989. One hundred fifty years after cold sleep the players wake up in a world very different and perilous. The 68 pages of rules cover targets, radioactivity, biological contamination, mutations, characters, weapons and equipment, vehicles, armor, damage, poisons, diseases, weather, technology, encounters, fauna, and other notes. Designed by Kevin Dockery, Robert Sadler, and Richard Tuchloka, it is available for $12 plus $1 for postage and handling from TimeLine Inc., 31316 Carmody Dr, Warren, MI 48092.

THE IRON WIND — A 68 page book, this is an extensive description of a world. Not specific to any system, rather it provides a world description and mythos for GMs to use with their individual rules. There are descriptions of temples, palaces, citadels, military units, weather, herbs, poisons, peoples, price lists, magic items, etc. Designed by many, it is available for $8. **ARMS LAW** — Includes 35 sheets of weapon, critical strike, fumble, and movement charts and tables, it also comes with a 24 page rulebook with examples and explanations of their use. The basic premise is to provide a new logical, detailed, and manageable system for resolving combat. The battle round sequence involves spells, missiles, movement, and melee. There are rules for armor, shields, parry, and maneuvering. Designed by Kurt H. Fischer, Peter C. Fenlon Jr., and S. Coleman Charlton, it is priced at $10. Both are available postpaid from Iron Crown Enterprises, PO Box 6910, Charlottesville, VA 22906.

MAGE — The first module of the Archaeron game system, this 48 page book is designed by Wilf K. Backhaus. It is adaptable to other FRP systems and can be used alone for con-

tests between magicians. The rules include character generation, types of magic users, modes of magic, spells, and animals. Don't know the price but it's published by Archaeron Games, Ltd., PO Box 5063, Station E, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5P 4C1.

DUNGEON TRAPS — This is simply a description of eight traps for use in dungeon adventures. Diagrams and detailed descriptions for their use are included. Available from Reilly Associates, PO Box 8144, Rochester, NY 14617, for only $1 plus 25 cents for postage and handling.

RUNEQUEST — Now available in a boxed version, its contents include: the second edition rules; a 16 page booklet titled *Basic Role-Playing* which is an introductory guide to RPGing with simplified *RQ* rules; *Apple Lane*, now in a 32 page typeset format; *Fangs*, a 16 page booklet of pre-generated character and monster stats; 16 pages of character sheets; and all the dice needed, one 4-sided, one 8-sided, one 20-sided, and three 6-sided. Available for $19.95 from Chaosium Inc., PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706, add $1 for postage and handling, California residents add appropriate 6% or 6½% sales tax.

FLIPPANT FLIPPANCY ARTICLE

Dear Sirs,

Greg Costikyan's article might better have been entitled "Flippancy in Article Writing." At least I assume that the more obnoxious comments were written in a humorous vein. However, there is one area where I hope he was being flippant, but I'm not entirely sure.

This involves the various comments denigrating players who get annoyed by flippancy (or back-stabbing). I agree with Greg that the object of FRP is to have fun. However, this is also the object that the "serious" players are pursuing, albeit in their own way. I have no objection to flippant FRP so long as all those involved are aware of the gag and are interested in playing that way. Even a little bit of flippancy mixed in among generally serious FRP is unobjectionable. In days of yore when I gamed at MIT, many an otherwise deadly serious expedition was lent a touch of spice by the improbable antics of the legendary Charlie Cleric — garbed in yellow raincoat, wings of flying, and bearing his shield emblazoned with a "Smiley" face.

What I would object to, and what I'm not sure that Greg does, is FRP behavior which occurs at the expense of the enjoyment of the other players. This applies as much to serious FRPers who make life miserable for the others by playing their characters to the hilt, as to the laughing yahoo who dooms characters that his fellow players care deeply about by running through the dungeon halls banging on doors.

Greg's suggestions on how to run a flippant character are well-written, but I think that he should have recognized that any style of play which intentionally abuses the right of another player (or the GM!) to enjoy the game is despicable.

Chuck Huber
Arlington Hgts, IL

EVEN MORE ON SNOBBERY

Dear Tadashi,

TO DAVE HARGRAVE

In *DW 9* you took exception to my mention of GRIMCON I in my article "System Snobbery" (*DW 7*).

APOLOGIA — I was out of line to imply that GRIMCON I's organizers purposefully loaded the con schedule with Arduin-style dungeons. Your clarification of the problems in organizing that con showed that this was inadvertent. I was wrong, sorry.

NOT SO APOLOGIA — You take me to task for being insufficiently informed. I must protest. I was there the entire three days and when I wrote about GRIMCON the basis of my info was the Official Schedule which I still have. There are a total of 13 strictly FRP dungeon runs listed. Seven of these are specifically stated as Arduin (5) or Arduinian (2). The tournament dungeon which ran throughout the con was not categorized but since I played in it I know it was also Arduin.

ABSOLUTELY UNREMORSEFUL — Never in "System Snobbery" did I ever say or even imply that system snobbery is a trademark of Arduin. My article clearly stated that all systems of role-play are valuable and it is people themselves who perpetuate the idea that some are better than others.

I WONDER WHO — Mr. Hargrave states that the GMs in any system were actively sought at the con. I have no reason to doubt that. However, I and a friend of mine were in the open gaming room GMing throughout the con and neither of us was approached.

WHAT I DIDN'T SAY OR WHO'S MISINFORMED HERE? — I never suggested "loading" a con schedule with TSR games. Mr. Hargrave seems to be laboring under a misapprehension that I am some kind of agent for Gary Gygax or in the employ of TSR. I am

not. My idea of a good FRP convention is DUNDRACON because they do offer a wide spectrum of FRP games and styles.

TO GAMERS

If you can help out the folks at any con that is trying to provide more varied and better gaming by volunteering your GMing skills in any system, please do it. Let's keep our FRP cons growing and going! Up with FRP, down with system snobbery!

Larry DiTillio
Los Angeles, CA

a letter from Gigi...

Cliff · 25 May 79

by GIGI D'ARN

Dear Tadashi,

Some bad news from your area, dear. Apparently the Feb 1981 DUNDRACON will not occur, since the Leamington Hotel people have cancelled recently and without warning, and it is way too late to schedule another hotel (this sort of thing has to be done at least 6-8 months ahead of time). All may not be lost, but it looks that way. Pshaw: I was at the Leamington once, and it was exactly the sort of lightless, dingy place perfect for dungeon crawls. But maybe that is why it's getting a complete face-life . . . and thereby cancelling the con.

OK convention news: Metro Detroit Gamers have had to push MICHICON 10 to a week later, June 12-14, 1981, now. Please note for reservations, calendars, etc. And EASTCON has been sanctioned by the GEN-CON people and is now officially GENCON EAST.

Bad convention news again: for some reason, though, ATLANTICON (24-26 July) has been scheduled for the same weekend as GENCON EAST (23-26 July). What gives? It does look like the Game Manufacturers Association (GAMA) people will be going to GEN-CON EAST, though, and so that might be the one to attend, if you want my humble advice. Rumour reports that GARY GYGAX might appear.

Department for being over before it was started: Metagaming's $10,000 treasure hunt for the silver dragon is over, and put those shovels back in the garage. The dragon was found by THOMAS DAVIDSON, a 32-year-old student in chemical physics at Univ of Texas. Metagaming hid the dragon near the solar research facility at Sunspot, NM (kind of out of the way for you guys in Massachusetts, right?). Davidson and his wife spent about $400 for the trip, spent an hour and a half finding the right stump to fit the clues in the game, and probably were back home sometime the next morning. They pay-off was $10,000 cash and the dragon itself, worth about $4000 at current silver prices. Now that all you sleuths have one answer and can work the clues backward to see how the idea works, you can get ready for the NEW Metagaming treasure hunt game, titled *Unicorn Gold*, due sometime in 1981. And isn't gold worth quite a bit more than silver?

Congratulations to DAVE HARGRAVE for his recent marriage, but like a typical MCP he forgot to mention her name in his note!

JAMES DUNNIGAN has resigned from SPI. Several sources indicate general dissatisfaction and profound differences of opinion.

CHRISTOPHER WAGNER, the original publisher of *S&T* before Dunnigan took it over more than 60 issues ago, has stepped in as the new president of SPI. The problems must have revolved around the company's financial condition, but beyond points apparent to observers (that SPI had not kept its market share over the last 3-4 years and that it has been very late to enter F&SF gaming with real commitment of resources), I have learned very little about the situation. Comments have been polite and very closed-mouth. It seems safe to assume that Mr. Dunnigan will continue to design games and continue to impress the field with his innovative and elegant designs.

More movements within: I understand that Archive Miniatures will be moving soon to Eureka, CA, up on the north coast near the Oregon border, that being a better place for NEVILE and BARBARA STOCKEN to raise children. That is likely true: Eureka is the kind of place where people still make pies from scratch. Further, MIKE STACKPOLE (Flying Buffalo) and PAUL JAQUAYS (free-lancing artist for most of gaming's Third World) may be headed for Hartford, CT, to work temporarily for Coleco, a big-time toy manufacturer. No one seems to know what they'll do there, but I would imagine they'll be doing computer-moderated adventure games (dungeons to you). And it may not be a physical movement, but WILF K. BACK-HAUS seems to have severed relations with ED SIMBALIST and FGU: the former has launched a new game company, Archaeron Games, Ltd., producing the Archaeron Game System. The first book *Mage*, is just published, and book two, *Warrior*, has been promised for Jan 1981.

Negotiations in progress: SPI is reportedly after game rights for JACK CHALKER's *Well of the Worlds* series, hexes and all. The Chaosium's *Thieves' World* is nearly inclusive now, with agreements for *D&D*, *AD&D*, *Traveller*, and *TFT* material to appear in it. Martian Metals will be doing GREG STAFFORD's *Troll Ball*, complete with 15mm miniature figures and Troll Ball cards.

Speaking of Chaosium, Tadashi, I heard a small breeze about an exchange of letters between TSR and you guys, but more I hear not from either end. Do I have to Chaosium-watch as well as TSR-watch.

And here are some upcoming titles for 1981. The envelopes please. Ah, from TSR, a SF RPG titled *Star Frontiers*, designed by LAWRENCE SCHICK. For Metagaming, GREG COSTIKYAN's *Trailblazer*, a free mar-

ket trade and interstellar exploration micro. Task Force Games have a flyer announcing *Ultra Warrior* (SF man-to-man armored combat), *Dungeon Tiles* (a game aid?), *Federation Space* (a strategic *Star Fleet* game, and I hope it has an *Enterprise* counter), and *Heroes of Olympus* (their first RPG lets you be Jason, etc.), and the usual more. GDW will be bringing out *Leviathan* (Adventure 4 for *Traveller*), *Invasion: Earth* (a *Traveller* boardgame), and *Best of the Journal* (reprints of the more valuable material from the early *JotTAS* for all the fellow Travellers).

Along with all his other projects, PAUL JAQUAYS is also looking for monsters for his *RuneQuest/Gateway Bestiary Volume Two* project. If you have a favorite creature that has been play-tested in your campaign, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: *Rune-Quest/Gateway Bestiary*, PO Box 1528, Jackson, MI 49204.

Exchange on WJR radio: REDMOND SI-MONSEN pushing SPI's *Dallas* game, is on with SOUPY SALES. Simonsen says that buyers can role-play J.R. Sales thinks that's better than on TV: when you shove your grapefruit in your girlfriend's face in RPG, she gets vitamin C too.

From BILL SOMERS: the flea market at WINTERCON was being abused by at least one guy selling painted figures, and thereby competing with some of the dealers. When Metro Detroit Gamers followed policy and ejected him, he sued them. Now no flea markets at that group's cons.

I notice that the survey in *Ares 5* lists the top SF game as *Traveller* (7.5) and the top fantasy game as *RuneQuest* (7.4). Role-playing is really here to stay.

BILL SELIGMAN is starting an APA for fans of computers and RPGs, to be titled *MENTAT*. Those interested should contact him at 667 Rugby Rd, Brooklyn, NY 11230.

Congratulations to ALEXIS GILLILAND for winning SF's Hugo Award for Best Fan Artist. Long extensively-present in *Science Fiction Review*, his appearances in your magazine, Tadashi, give it *two* class acts. (And modesty forbids . . .)

Boxes, boxes: JEFF DILLOW's *High Fantasy* may appear in a boxed version, with scenarios. And Grimoire Games has hit a snag in producing a boxed Arduin version, titled *Basic Arduin*: an unfunny situation of typesetters refusing to set a lot of tabular material, throwing back production for weeks. The game will probably not appear till 1981, and good-bye Christmas — something that no manufacturer likes to think about.

Question of the month: who else (besides TSR, I mean) is negotiating for a movie based on their RPG? Hint: some of the principles are not pear-shaped.

Love,

Gigi