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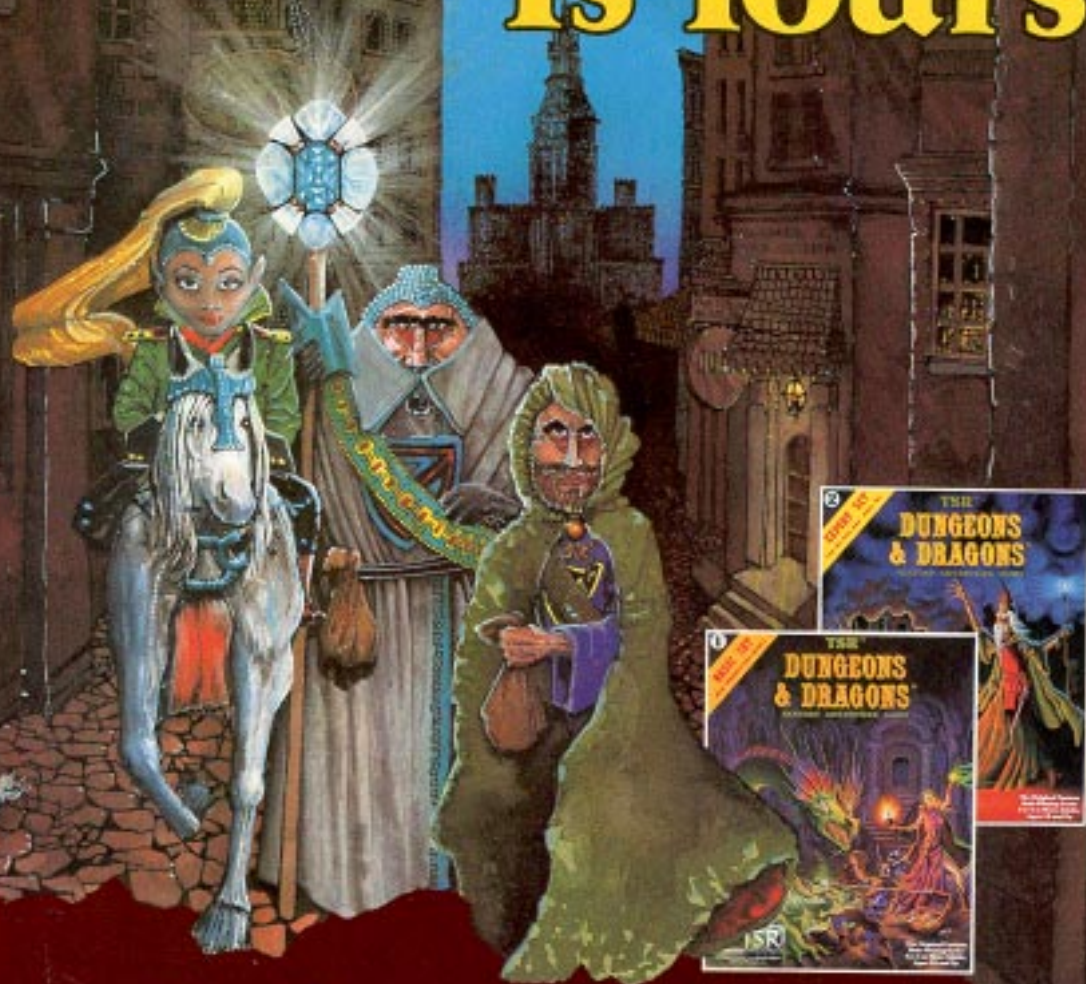
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Contents

Vol. VII, No. 8 February 1983

SPECIAL ATTRACTION

MECHICA 35
A new AD&D™ adventure

OTHER FEATURES

The Smith 5
Metal working for humans only

The hull truth about speed 8
Big ships should be faster

Giants can be awful
or awe-ful 14
Using GITE characters properly

Dwarves in Space 27
Joining fantasy and SF gaming

A second volley 31
More firearms in AD&D terms

How to make the most out of
FRP tournaments 48

The game within a game 60
Characters as chess players

REGULAR OFFERINGS

Out on a Limb 3
letters from readers

From the Sorcerer's Scroll:
Social status & birth tables ... 11
A 'caste' of characters 12
Falling damage 13

Deities & Demigods
of Greyhawk

Figure Feature: Knights 24
First in a series

Castles by Carroll 30
III: Jericho

Convention schedule 64

Off the Shelf 67
Book reviews

Game reviews:
Citybook I 70
Civilization 71
Daredevils 73

What's New 75

Wormy 77

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DRAGON Magazine (ISSN 0279-6848) is published monthly for a subscription price of \$24 per year by Dragon Publishing, a division of TSR Hobbies, Inc., P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

DRAGON Magazine is available at hobby stores and bookstores throughout the United States and Canada, and through a limited number of overseas outlets. Subscription rates are as follows: \$24 for 12 issues sent to a U.S. or Canadian address; \$50 U.S. for 32 issues sent via surface mail or \$95 for 12 issues sent via air mail to any other country. All payments must be in advance.

A limited quantity of certain back issues of DRAGON Magazine can be purchased directly from the publisher by sending the cover price plus \$1.50 postage and handling for each issue ordered. Payment in advance by check or money order must accompany all orders. Payments cannot be made through a credit card, and orders cannot be taken nor merchandise reserved by telephone. Neither an individual customer nor an institution can be billed for a subscription order or a back-issue purchase unless prior arrangements are made.

The issue of expiration for each subscription is printed on the mailing label for each subscriber's copy of the magazine. Changes of address for the delivery of subscriptions must be received at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change in order to insure uninterrupted delivery.

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Second-class postage paid at Lake Geneva, Wis., and additional mailing Offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110 Lake Geneva WI 53147. USPS 318-790. ISSN 0279-6848.

An open letter . . .

To all of you who entered our Dungeon Design Contest, and those who can't wait to find out who won: The judging will be well under way by the time you read this, and we're hoping to be able to publish one of the winning entries as soon as the March (#71) or April (#72) issue. Our plan is to try to wade through the 200+ entries and establish winners in two categories every 30 days. Even at that rate (which time will tell if we'll be able to maintain), it'll be 10 months before we can tell the world about the winners in all of the 20 categories. Have patience, and we'll do our best.

To all of you who have written En over the last few months asking for writers' guidelines: The reason you don't have 'em is because we don't have a sheet of instructions completely prepared. A half-draft has been gathering dust and coffee stains on Ye Olde Editor's desk for quite a while now. YOE has finally come to realize that the thing isn't going to write itself, and he hereby promises to finish it up and get it ready to send out before the end of February. Have patience, and we'll do our best.

To all of you who have submitted computer programs for our consideration: We almost bit off more than we could chew when we asked for reader-submitted programs. We got a *lot* of them; unfortunately, we didn't also get a big block of time to sit down at a keyboard and try them out. The work is proceeding slowly but surely. Evaluating programs is especially difficult — tougher than assessing the quality of regular article manuscripts — because (a) we have to judge every program on a relative basis; that is, how does it stack up against other programs designed to accomplish the same thing? and (b) we have to be real sure that any program we accept and print is *Perfect*: no typos, no glitches, no nothin'. Have patience, and we'll do our best.

To all of you who've read all the way through this without finding anything that interested you: If you *do* have a subject concerning any of our policies and procedures that you'd like to know about, drop us a short line, and in a subsequent issue maybe we'll use this space to answer your question. Have patience, and . . . heck, you know the rest.



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he roots of fantasy role-playing are planted in the soil of northern European culture, but that doesn't mean your campaign can't

branch out to explore other climates and other social systems. That fact illustrates the secondary purpose behind our publication of MECHICA, this month's special feature. (The primary purpose is for you to have *fun!*) DMs and players alike should find it interesting, to say the least, to deal with a situation and a society that aren't typical of the circumstances in which most FRP adventures take place.

MECHICA is not the only "un-typical" element in this issue; just in case any of you faithful readers were starting to think we were getting predictable, the articles you'll find inside should shoot that theory full of holes. On that topic, check out "A Second Volley," contributing editor Ed Greenwood's further examination of primitive firearms that might be adapted into an AD&D milieu — if both the DM and the players are very careful how they're used.

Ed's other offering is "The Smith," a new NPC born from the opinion that humans ought to be able to work with metal as well as dwarves can — if they specialize in the craft and work long and hard at their anvils.

As a counterpoint to that opinion, our other contributing editor, Roger Moore, figured that humans shouldn't have a monopoly on interstellar exploration, and he came up with "Dwarves in Space," some thoughts on how to combine aspects of the AD&D and TRAVELLER game systems — including suggestions for translating dwarves into TRAVELLER terminology, Roger came back down to earth, in a manner of speaking, to offer some general guidelines for incorporating characters from our *Giants in the Earth* series into a campaign.

From the Sorcerer's Scroll is made up of three short sections. First, E. Gary Gygax reveals to all you Good Readers the social-status and birth tables that will be a part of the AD&D expansion volume; then Frank Mentzer takes a more philosophical look at the subject of social structure within a campaign; and, last but not least, Frank provides an explanation, as we promised last month, of how the AD&D rules for falling damage are supposed to work. It may come as a surprise, but it sure is realistic.

Also in the realism department this month is "The hull truth about speed," a short essay by Bruce Evry that attempts to prove why (contrary to the DMG), large ships should move faster than small ones. And you can't get much more "real" than Ken Rolston's long look at how to succeed — or at least have a good time trying — the next time you enter a fantasy role-playing tournament. — KM



Tides and rivers

Dear Editor:

I found David Axler's article on weather (issue #68) to be quite interesting and very useful. He's obviously taken a great deal of time to assemble a system that is greatly detailed and accurate — aside from a couple of small points.

I refer specifically to the section on tides and currents (Appendix B). To begin with, anyone who's spent any time near or on the ocean knows that there are two high tides each day, not one as would be implied by Mr. Axler's explanation. The proper explanation should read, "High tides will occur when the moon is overhead and when it is on the other side of the planet. Low tides will occur when the moon is on the horizon (at a 90° angle)." (This explanation can be further developed when one considers the effects of lag — the time it will take the tidal swell to get through narrow channels, up rivers, etc.; I'm not familiar with the maps for Greyhawk, and therefore cannot offer any assistance with specifics here.) One could likely find a fuller explanation of tides in a scientific/astronomical encyclopedia.

The second point is in his appendix where he says, "All rivers flow in a general direction toward the equator." This is quite plainly not true — just examine a map of the Earth and see the Nile. Once again, this statement may apply to the World of Greyhawk, but I'm thinking of applying Mr. Axler's system to other gaming worlds.

I see both of these complaints as minor in light of the great service done by the article itself, but I felt I had to write and try to correct the errors. (For a real headache in terms of tides, try my own gaming world on for size: three moons and a cold climate.)

Jonathan Roberts
Scarsdale, N.Y.

Other games

Dear Dragon:

I play AD&D but I also play Champions, Space Opera, and The Morrow Project. In the eleven issues of DRAGON I have read, I haven't seen any articles about any of these games. If you have published articles about these games, what issues are they in? If you have not, would you please publish some?

David Hungerford
Bloomington, Ill.

We'd like to be able to completely satisfy everyone who reads DRAGON™ Magazine, but we realize — and so should David and the rest of our readers — that realistically we can't do that. There are dozens, if not hundreds, of games that each have captured the interest of a small proportion of our readership — and no

doubt that small group of people would be happy to see at least an occasional article on one of their favorites. But the vast majority of those who buy this magazine would have no use for such material, and for that reason seldom do we devote space to such games.

Our specialty is coverage of the D&D® and AD&D™ game systems — the most popular role-playing games available today. If Space Opera, or Champions, or any other role-playing game ever equals or exceeds their popularity, it would certainly be to our benefit — and the benefit of our readers — to change the content of DRAGON Magazine to reflect the change in the public's preference. We know we can't make everyone perfectly happy, so we have to "settle" for doing the greatest good for the greatest number. — KM

Staples and cards

Dear Editor:

There are a couple of things I think would help make your magazine a little better. First, I think you should get a new type of binding. Although there is nothing really wrong with
(Turn to page 19)

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The SMITH

Test the metal of this NPC

by
Ed Greenwood

This suggested non-player character type is designed to represent the powers and limitations of any metalworker encountered in an AD&D™ setting, and in particular to quantify the skills of those rare individuals who can create works of exquisite beauty and lasting durability, or even work successfully with magic.

A smith must be human, and will usually be a member of one of the official character classes (fighter, thief, etc.) in addition to having status as a smith. (A dwarven or gnomish smith, or any other sort of non-human character, can be roughly equated to the levels and skills of the smith as given here, but these characters possess other abilities unattainable by a human smith.) A smith may not advance in his or her "primary" class while practicing smithywork, however: The profession is too time-consuming to allow an individual to "keep his hand in" another specialized activity at the same time.

The sole exception to this occurs if the character is involved in armed combat. A smith who actively practices with and uses his weapons engages in battle (when it occurs) as a fighter, and gains one level of fighter ability for every four smith levels advanced. When a smith engages in combat for the first time, he will begin as a 1st-level fighter, regardless of his present smith level, and will reach the 2nd level of fighting ability only after gaining four additional levels as a smith. Note that no tutoring is required for this fighter advancement, beyond what is necessary to advance as a smith.

A fighter who opts to become a smith, on the other hand, retains his present fighter level in combat, gaining an additional level only after gaining four smith levels. A smith who has no other class fights as a 1st-level fighter.

A smith, unlike other "normal" fighters, can use *any* weapon of a type he has made proficiently. A smith who also belongs to another class besides the fighter class (and its subclasses) may manufacture, but not use, weapons forbidden to the "primary"

class. (For example, a smith/cleric could forge, but not use, a sword.) A smith who is also a member of another class gains 1 hit die (of the type allowed for the other class) only when advancing in that other class. A smith who has no other class begins with one 10-sided die and gains 2 hit points per smith level advanced thereafter.

Smiths are always busy, rarely unemployed, and usually wealthy. Their expenses (i.e., the purchasing of metal, the construction and upkeep of a workshop and forge) are high. A smith must have a minimum strength of 12 and a minimum dexterity of 13. High intelligence is also useful, and the best smiths have high scores in all three abilities. Smiths may be of any alignment. Most independent smiths (those having no other class) tend toward a neutral alignment and will make goods, including weapons, for customers of all alignments, causes and interests.

SMITHS TABLE 1

Exp. points	Exp. level	Level title
0—1,500	1	Prentice
1,501—3,000	2	Journeyman
3,001—6,000	3	Hammerman
6,001—9,000	4	Millman
9,001—15,000	5	Locksmith
15,001—21,000	6	Smith ("Truesmith")
21,001—33,000	7	Smith ("Shieldsmith")
33,001—45,000	8	Smith ("Finesmith")
45,001—69,000	9	Smith ("Swordsmith")
69,001—93,000	10	Master Smith
93,001—141,000	11	Armorer
141,001—189,000	12	Master Armorer

96,000 experience points per level for each additional level beyond the 12th.

How smiths learn their trade

The training and advancement of smiths is only standardized in areas where strong, stable guilds exist. Elsewhere, smiths learn by working for those who can teach them new areas or techniques of their craft. Knowledge can be learned in any order; that is, a dwarf could give a 1st-level smith (or an ordinary 0-level peasant, for that matter) the secrets of properly working mithril, but to apply this knowledge, the smith would have to wait until his craftsmanship had sufficiently advanced. This craftsmanship — the learning, practice, and honing of skills — must be acquired in a certain order, building on what has previously been mastered. If a smith cannot find a tutor for any particular field of the craft, he or she cannot advance. Most smiths never advance beyond the 5th level of experience. Experience points are awarded to a smith by the DM on the basis of such training, according to the variety and difficulty of work undertaken by the smith (and success thereof, if any), and on the basis of time spent at the craft. For example, a busy smith might gain 2 experience points per working day, plus awards for exceptional workmanship, artful or elegant designs and solutions, and for other circumstances at the DM's option.

Smiths are usually too busy to tutor others unless such apprentices can be of help in the workshop, and they can contribute money or materials (raw metal or weaponry) to the smith's business.

SMITHS TABLE 2

(percentage chances for outstanding performance)

	Experience level of smith											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Exceptional workmanship (per item made): ¹	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60 ²
Artful or elegant design, or solution to design problem (per project undertaken): ³	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24 ⁴

¹ — Add a modifier of +3% per point of smith's dexterity over 16. If the roll is successful, the item made will clearly be of exceptional quality to even a cursory examination, and can be sold for more than the usual value. Such an item is also suitable for use in an *Enchant An Item* spell (to become an enchanted weapon), since it is "crafted of the highest quality material and with the finest workmanship." If the item is a weapon, a second roll should be made on the table, and if this roll is successful, the weapon is of such extraordinary quality as to make it +1 on damage. (It can be enspelled with further powers by a spellcaster, but a smith — and only a smith — by his arts can give such a weapon only a +1 damage bonus, plus the extraordinary balance, sharpness, strength and durability this includes.)

² — Increases to a maximum chance of 65%, attained at 13th level.

³ — Add a modifier of +4% per point of smith's intelligence over 16. Success on this roll can indicate that the smith will receive an experience-point bonus for the project in question (as mentioned in the text above), and/or that the item produced will be higher-priced than a "non-elegant" item of the same type, and may have other ramifications as well, at the DM's option.

⁴ — Increases 2% per level to a maximum chance of 36%, attained at 18th level.

Smiths' skills by level

Prentice: First-level smiths are usually trained by higher-level smiths; a Prentice usually receives no wages, and works in a smithy for room and board, learning his trade from others there. (Some famous smiths in large cities can even charge a Prentice — or his family — a fee for such an arrangement.) A Prentice is so named because his skills are so rudimentary that he could not go into business on his own. Usually a Prentice masters one specific task (since that is how he can be most useful at a large smithy), and acquires the basics of his trade: how to identify

metals, and how they differ; how a fire is properly made, lit, and kept at a certain temperature (and what different fires are needed for different tasks); and how to identify the work of various smiths by their marks and workmanship. A Prentice of even a month's experience can correctly identify the various pieces that make up armor, even when such a piece is alone, out of context, or fragmented or distorted by use.

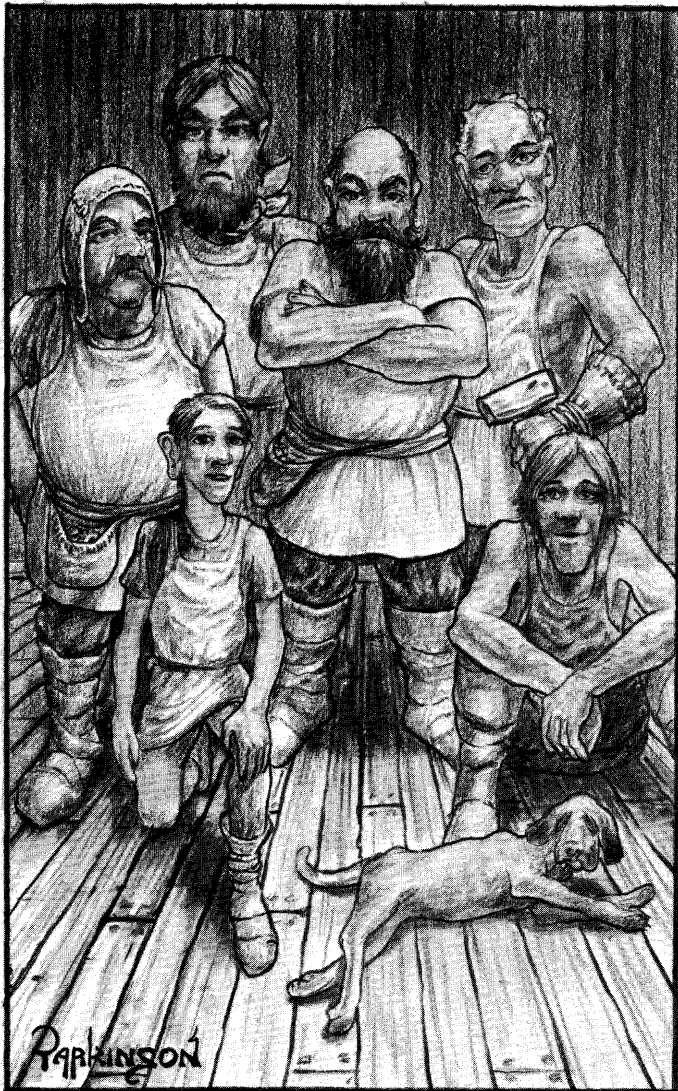
Journeyman: At second level, a would-be smith is trained in all basic types of smithywork, rather than the single task concentrated on before. (A Journeyman can thus be useful at any smithy and, as the level title implies, many of them travel about and hire on where needed.) Specific skills gained are the rudiments of cold-working ("hammerwork"); how to correctly hold work while another strikes it, so that it will not slip or jump; the art of quenching; how to mix and refine oil (by filtration and separation) for the best tempering, and similar tasks. A Journeyman can properly — or improperly, if he so chooses — shoe a horse. (A favorite trick played on travelers by unscrupulous smiths in medieval times was to shoe a horse so that one of the nails pricked the sensitive frog in the center of one of the horse's hooves. About five miles from the smithy, the beast would pull up lame — and an accomplice of the smith would be waiting to buy the horse for a fraction of its true value. After the nail was removed, the horse would recover, but few travelers knew this, or had the time to wait for the beast's recovery. A Journeyman or any higher-level smith can shoe a horse in this manner, so that the shoe will appear properly fitted to anyone but another smith of equal or higher level.)

Hammerman: In a large workshop, the Hammerman's job is to shape large plates of armor over molds by the use of various hammers. Precise control of the heavy hammers is required to deftly bend metal to the desired contours. A Journeyman of sufficient experience can advance to the level of Hammerman by learning this skill, plus gaining both knowledge of, and practice in, the ways of cutting or splitting metal plates. It is at the third level of training that a smith is entrusted with "white" metals, copper and tin. They are both more delicate (harder to work without failure) and more expensive than the "black" metals — chiefly iron, although lead and others are included — so special training is required. (This is how the term "blacksmith" originated. "Whitesmith" is a title that fell into disuse long ago, in favor of the more specific "coppersmith," "tin-smith," and the like.)

Millman: In a large smithy, the Millman has the task of polishing, oiling, and otherwise preparing metal to give it a finish. A Hammerman who gains the requisite experience points to advance to fourth level must also learn about the difficult techniques of finishing metal to advance further. (Some smiths consider finishing "an art all its own.") Many smiths never attain this level, because the training is typically long and expensive — if a tutor can even be found.

Locksmith: The term "locksmith" today refers to the detailed manufacture and repair of devices largely unknown in medieval times. The medieval locksmith was concerned with fastenings, catches, and hinges as well as keylocks. As defined for use in the AD&D game, a Locksmith's skills are required for the making of armor or any metallic device which must bend, flex, or move readily. A Locksmith can make lockpicks, chests, chastity belts, and sword-harnesses (scabbards, cross-belts, buckles and ornaments for both, and the like), as well as locks. The locks may have needles or scything blades to protect them, and may have hidden catches or require more than one key to be used in a certain order — but all such locks will be only key-activated devices, not "combination" locks or otherwise guarded in nature, and cannot (unless made under the first-hand, continuous direction of a magic-user of sufficient level) involve magic. Only smiths of 13th or higher level have been known to produce unique locks involving magic and combinations.

Smith ("Truesmith"): Upon reaching this level, a smith can perform all of the skills already learned without supervision or assistance, and yet produce top-quality work. He or she can also supervise, oversee, and handle the minutiae of a large,



specialized smithy crew, and is familiar enough with metals and working them to improvise an alternative to some missing tool or method. A Truesmith can buy supplies without fear of being deceived as to the type or quality of metal, can step in at a moment's notice to successfully complete a partly finished task in any of the specialties already learned, and (with supervision) can accomplish the skills learned fully at later levels.

Smith ("Shieldsmith"): A Hammerman can create a shield that appears to be of professional quality, but there is an art to making the best possible shield for any bearer. A Shieldsmith learns how to match a shield to an individual by weight, dimensions, and balance, and through training and practice learns the specific properties of different metals and common alloys (such as bronze) so as to derive maximum strength and durability from them. A shield must stop a blow, and spring with it so that the wearer's arm beneath the shield need not absorb the entire force of the blow. It must not crumple or shatter, even in conditions of extreme temperatures, unless faced by strength vastly greater than that of another human. (For instance, a dragon might crush a well-made shield, but a footman wielding a mace should not be able to.) A Shieldsmith can create such an item. Shields made by smiths of lower levels may not stand up to such severe tests.

Smith ("Finesmith"): Knowledge of the properties and the working of gold and other rare and precious metals is learned by one becoming a Finesmith. Jewelry requiring intricate settings, much curved and welded wire, and the sculpting of leaves or patterns, usually in miniature, is almost always made by a smith of this level or higher, or at least under the supervision of such a smith. Work not done under these conditions will be of

lesser quality. A Finesmith learns how to securely bond a plating or coating of one metal over another, which metals will interact through electrolysis, and how all finework can be designed and treated for maximum strength and weather resistance. Gauntlets of the finest quality are made by smiths of this level and higher.

Smith ("Swordsmith"): A Finesmith who has gained sufficient experience with metals and alloys can be trained in the techniques of smelting, of devising one's own alloys (or at least varying the proportions and methods of manufacture to heighten the properties desired), and of forging sword blades of the finest quality (considering balance, temper, edge, and strength). These are the skills of the Swordsmith, who may re-forging a blade a hundred times until it is just right for its intended user. A lowly Prentice can sharpen a blade, a Journeyman can produce a crude sword, and a Truesmith can turn out a serviceable weapon — but a Swordsmith can produce blades of outstanding, lasting quality.

Master Smith: A Swordsmith of sufficient experience learns the most intimate familiarity with all weapons, and is then ready to learn the techniques of repairing even the finest weapons to "good as new" condition, and of replacing and matching ornamentation exactly. A Master Smith also learns and practices the art of creating and repairing magical weapons in such a way as to infuse a dweomer or retain an existing dweomer. (Note that very few smiths, if any, can *Enchant an Item*. Smiths merely work with a magic-user patron to create a weapon that will be magical, or repair magical weapons in such a way that their magic is not lost.)

Armorer: A crude suit of armor (that is, coat-of-plate or any armor that includes some moving or shaped plates, rather than a simple mail-shirt) can be fashioned by any smith of the 6th level or higher. The plates will not stand up to heavy blows unless their maker has the skills of a Shieldsmith or a smith of higher level, and the armor will not fit the wearer as armor should (providing optimum mobility, visibility, and protection) unless the smith is of Armorer level. (However, adequate horse barding can be made by a Shieldsmith. Extra body-plates for use in tilting can also be made by a Shieldsmith, as long as they do not require joints or flexible armored areas.) An Armorer can design and fashion all pieces of a suit of armor so that the suit will fit a particular physique perfectly (including bodies that are deformed or have tails, horns, and the like not normally found in a human form), and can oversee the rapid production of helms, shields, and breastplates by smiths of lower level.

Master Armorer: A smith of 12th level can identify raw ores, smelt and process these singlehandedly (or oversee the process, with maximum efficiency and quality of output) from the ore to finished product, can judge the suitability of any ore for a particular use, and can oversee the making of suits of armor by other smiths (even if they are of low level and could not, unaided, construct such items). The Master need never touch such suits, but if he oversees their production closely, their workmanship will be of Armorer-level quality. A Master Armorer can himself construct armor with unusual features; e.g., with decorative fluting to lighten overall weight, studded with spikes, or armor designed to protect — and yet not hamper the movements of — a prehensile tail.

As a rough rule of thumb, a Truesmith can work (that is, complete a project from the initial order or idea to the finished product) twice as fast as a Prentice, a Master Smith twice as fast as a Smith, and a Master Armorer twice as fast again. In practice, of course, factors such as strength, dexterity (and the advances of age), availability of materials, and freedom from distractions all affect the time needed to complete a project. Master Armorers (all smiths of higher than 11th level) have mastered their craft so completely that any experimentation and innovation they attempt has a reasonable chance of success; a Dungeon Master should keep careful track of advances (or losses, should high-level smiths die without training others in their knowledge and skills) in technology resulting from the work of a Master Armorer.



The hull truth about speed

Larger ships make faster frigates

by Bruce Evry

Well, there they were: After a night of serious drinking, my party of would-be adventurers had woken in the dismal hold of a ship at sea, victims of a press gang. Possessed of nothing more than their hangovers, these brave souls were ready to begin one of their greatest adventures.

And then, to fill in the details, I turned to the Waterborne Adventures section of the Dungeon Masters Guide, nodding my way down the lists of size, winds, movement. . . . But when I got to the Speed Table, there was a moment of shock.

For there, in black and white, were listings showing that smaller boats of all types had a greater maximum speed than that of their larger cousins. This, I said to myself, must be the mistake of some itinerant landlubber — not those old salts up at TSR. So I quickly wrote a letter to the people at DRAGON™ Magazine and offered to explain the laws of fluid mechanics and the worship of the great Froude, God of Marine Engineering, to their many good readers. Unfortunately for me, they just wrote back and said, "Sure, sounds like a good idea."

So, here goes:

Most boats float in water. This statement was, of course, more true in older times than it is today, but in the AD&D™ game there are very few hovercraft and jetboats. Slower boats, especially those that are either sailed or rowed, float because their hulls displace a volume of water equal to the weight of the ship. Failure to do this simple thing is often called, by laymen, "sinking."

When a boat pushes its way through the water, it also pushes the water. This movement tends to build up a high wave at the bow, the first point on the boat to meet the water, and one or more secondary waves later on. While these waves are often quite picturesque, the energy needed to raise them is taken directly away from the boat, which is very wasteful from the sailor/boatman's point of view.

As the boat picks up speed, the height of the bow wave increases, raising the water in the wave farther above the level of the surrounding sea. The water in the wave has a property called mass, which means that gravity acts upon it, seeking to pull it back down. This mass of water takes a certain amount of time to fall

back to sea level, and because of inertia (the tendency of a mass in motion to keep on moving) it actually goes below sea level.

In this way a wave is born. But although a wave will appear to be moving across the surface of the sea, the water in the wave stays in pretty much the same place, moving mostly just up and down. Of course, the larger a wave is, the longer it takes the water in it to fall, and then to rise again. This increases the length of the wave, which for our purposes can be measured as the distance between one wave crest, the highest point, to the next.

When a ship or boat goes faster, it creates a larger and longer wave. By using models of ships under controlled laboratory conditions, the great British marine engineer William Froude discovered in the late 1800's that there was a relationship between the velocity and the length of a wave. And he found that this "Froude Relation" could be used to determine the best speed for a ship.

To put it simply but scientifically, the inertial force divided by the gravitational force is equal to the velocity squared divided by the length of the ship. This gives one the appropriate "Froude Number" (best speed) for any watergoing vessel. Translated into real-world terms, this means that a longer ship will have a higher best speed than a shorter one.

For example, let's say we have a sailboat that is 25 feet long at its waterline. When our small boat starts off at an easy 4 knots (4 times 6,076.10 ft. per hour), the waves it makes are about 10 feet long. Our boat will be riding, then, on top of three wave-crests: one at the bow, one 10 feet back from the bow, and another one 20 feet back, near the stern.

If we increase the boat's speed to 6 knots, the distance between wave crests is about 20 feet, and we will have lost the support of the third crest. Luckily, two crests are enough to still keep the boat fairly level, especially since each of them is larger than each of the crests were when they were 10 feet apart.

At 6.75 knots, we have one wave-crest at the bow and one wave-crest precisely at the stern. This, of course, still keeps the boat in good balance, but note that a boat shorter than this one would only be riding up on its bow wave.

Now the wind becomes stronger, we start to go faster, and our wave length becomes greater. Once we go over 7 knots, the distance between the bow

wave and the second wave becomes greater than the length of the boat. With the bow on top of its wave, and the stern down in the low water between two crests, we are now sailing uphill.

Sailing uphill naturally takes more power, and, what's worse, the faster we try to go, the steeper the hill gets. So the best, most comfortable, most economical, speed for this boat is just under 7 knots, where we still have two waves supporting the hull.


Of course, if you buy (or, for those with piratical tendencies, steal) a larger boat, for instance one that is 30 feet long at the waterline, at 7 knots the boat will still ride on two wave-crests and can speed along quite nicely — until you hit about seven and a half knots. And a 100-foot-long ship would do fairly well until the distance between wave crests becomes more than 100 feet (this occurs at about 13.5 knots).

To figure out the best speed for a ship you've built, borrowed, or otherwise acquired for AD&D adventuring, all you have to do is to take the square root of the length (waterline) and multiply by 1.35 (a "fudge factor" which can be used in place of going through Froude's complicated calculation). This gives a rough approximation of the boat's best speed in knots. (Translating this into miles per hour, a measurement which a true sailor never uses, yields a slightly higher number, but it is of course exactly the same speed.)

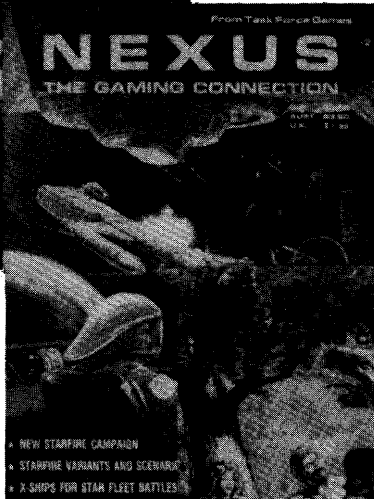
To answer the understandable question about the difference between fast, narrow ships and slow, wide, bulky ones: Yes, a narrow ship requires less energy to reach its best speed than a fat one. But the overriding factor, once that speed is attained, will always be the length of the boat.

A table of best speeds

Length at waterline	Best speed
(in feet)	(in knots)
10 4.3	70 11.4
15 5.2	80 12.1
20 6.0	90 13.0
25 6.8	100 13.5
30 7.4	150 16.5
35 8.0	200 19.0
40 8.5	250 21.5
45 9.0	300 23.5
50 9.5	400 27.0
60 10.5	

Note: All of the above are approximate best speeds. Absolute top speeds are slightly higher. 

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TASK FORCE GAMES

The NEW FORCE in gaming.



Social status and birth tables: New for AD&D™ play

by Gary Gygax

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There are at least two reasons for the inclusion of social status and birth information in the upcoming **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** expansion volume. First, such information will enable both DM and player alike to develop more of the data necessary for role-playing. Social status will also make meeting NPCs a lot more fun. Such information will also be necessary if the *cavalier* sub-class of fighter is included in your game. Thus, I submit for your inspection and comment the following:

Social class

The DM should determine the social class of each character he or she has in the campaign. This is accomplished by use of the *Social Class Table* (given below). You will note that this table does not include any social or political information, but that guidelines of this sort are included in a reference immediately following the table. This allows the DM to model the social class distinctions to the tenor of his or her individual milieu.

SOCIAL CLASS TABLE

Die roll	Social (/Economic) class
01-04	Lower lower class (LLC)
05-10	Middle lower class (MLC)
11-20	Upper lower class (ULC)
21-35	Lower middle class (LMC)
36-55	Middle middle class (MMC)
56-87	Upper middle class (UMC)
88-96	Lower upper class (LUC)
97-99	Middle upper class (MUC)
00	Upper upper class (UUC)

Typical members of a class:

LLC: Freed slaves, peasants, tinkers, vagabonds, beggars, criminals, low-level thieves and assassins
MLC: Herdsmen, laborers, peddlers, actors, jugglers, men-at-arms, low-level barbarians, thieves,

high-level assassins, low-level bards, low-level jesters
ULC: Freemen, tradesmen, petty officers, money-changers, mountebanks, fences, low-level fighters, high-level thieves
LMC: Artisans, craftsmen, petty merchants, junior officers, bankers, landless knights, druids, rangers, low-level mystics
MMC: Landed gentry, merchants, petty officials, senior officers, landless petty nobles, fighters, low-level magic-users and low-level illusionists
UMC: Guild masters, great merchants, military commanders, officials, landless nobles, lesser clerics, high-level fighters, mid-level magic-users and illusionists, low-level savants
LUC: Great landed gentry, generals and marshals, greater officials, knights, clerics, paladins, cavaliers, high-level magic-users and illusionists
MUC: Knights, commanders, great clerics, nobles, high-level paladins, very high-level M-U's
UUC: Great nobles, sovereign nobility, royalty

The various occupations and status positions can be adjusted as required by the background of each milieu. The positioning of non-humans is entirely dependent upon the individual milieu. As a general rule, a human society would most probably consider the non-humans as:

Dwarves — MMC (they are reputed to have gold and gems!)
Elves — ULC (wood elves) to LUC (gray elves)
Gnomes — ULC to LMC
Halflings — ULC (they are small and rustic)
Half-elves — Slightly above a human counterpart
Half-orcs — LLC

BIRTH TABLE FOR HUMANS

Die roll	Order of birth
01-05	Only child
05-10	1st child
11-20	2nd child
21-35	3rd child
36-50	4th child
51-65	5th child
66-80	6th child
81-85	7th child
86-90	8th child
91-94	9th child
95-97	10th child
98-99	11th child
00	12th child

PARENTS' MARITAL STATE

Dice roll	Marital state
01-80	Parents legally married
81-00	Parents unmarried; child is a bastard ¹

¹ — A bastard child is typically one class lower than the status of the father.

NON-HUMAN BIRTH TABLES

Dwarves: Use human tables, -15 on dice rolls.

Elves: Use human tables with the following modifiers:

Sylvan: -10 on dice rolls

Drow: -15

High: -20

Gray: -30

All others: -15

Gnomes: Use human tables, -20 on die rolls.

Halflings: Use human tables, -10 on dice rolls.

Half-elves: Use human tables, -10 on dice rolls.

Half-orcs: Use human tables, +10 on Birth Table, +75 on Marital State.

Other pertinent data should be developed by the DM as needed for the particular campaign.

Profession of the character

Any character must have, at the least, a social status of but one rank below that of his or her profession; note that any individual character born to the Lower lower class (LLC) can be only a thief or assassin!

A 'caste' of realistic characters

Build role-playing possibilities on a social structure

by Frank Mentzer

Social status is in your AD&D™ campaign whether you realize it or not! The player characters constitute a professional class in themselves (probably far richer than those characters comprising the bulk of their encounters), and then there's "everybody else" — from the powerful, rich castle owner to the rarely seen but everpresent beggar by the door of the inn.

Many good DMs have never seriously thought about this aspect of their campaigns and, frankly, probably haven't noticeably suffered for the lack of it. Those with a flair for verbal color have no doubt waxed eloquent about the farmers' friendly bartering with stout housewives in the morning market square, the colorful confusion of the trade bazaar, and the hundreds of "atmosphere people" plodding through their mundane lives in the streets and alleyways of the local town. Characters must beware of thieves, as the Guildmaster has no doubt assigned certain well-traveled corners of the town to his Rogues and Footpads for their Independent Studies (the boundaries of these Training Territories being carefully observed by their wary brothers), but these have become expected and almost routine facts of town life. And of course there are the ruffians and "mysterious cloaked figures" populating the taverns, providing both clues for future adventures and exciting brawls in the meantime.

Indeed, many "campaigns" are built on a simple series of dungeon adventures, with little or no play occurring in a populous setting. I know that mine was, initially; the world was there, waiting, but nobody ever ventured far from the Old Home Town other than to sack a few rooms of the nearby dungeon. So we just didn't worry about it.

At one point, however, the characters began to travel; I'd let them know that a new dungeon had been discovered (i.e., designed) somewhere, and of course there'd be a town or two along the route to it, and . . . one thing led to another, and before I realized it I had a continent with a dozen thriving towns. Their very existence stimulated more thought on the matter: How are these people surviving? Inter-city trade, plus NPC professions (chandler, cooper, wright, and so on), plus — oh, definitely — trade with adventurers. Come to think of it, those townsfolk specializing in PC-related trades, providing horses, supplies, and magic potions (though the initial investment in

the latter trade must be formidable) would probably end up running things; power gravitates toward the rich. But, I digress into economics.

Get two people together and you have a society, and within every society is an implicit social structure of some kind. (Get three people together and they'll invent politics, but that's another topic altogether.) Where there is opportunity, there eventually comes someone to take advantage of it. Unless your campaign is in a post-cataclysmic setting of utter chaos, society is there, and opportunity is there. If anyone's taking orders, someone else is giving them; and when someone is giving orders, someone else is higher up the chain, as well as lower down.

But why worry about it? As a case in point, we theoretically use one-minute melee rounds, but you only get one swing (exceptions disregarded for the moment). The rest of the battle action is "assumed"; why not social structure likewise? Let's assume that there are beggars, laborers, tradesmen, gentry and so forth, and let's just not worry about the details.

You agree? Fine. Assume. The system works as is.

But a little simulation is good for a campaign. The game would be much less appealing if we were portraying Marzelts on a far planet, battling fierce Bolyks with our two-tentacled Shargums. Instead, it's based on something we can relate to: King Arthur-ish knights, and dragons, and a medieval flavor (sans plague) blended with epic fantasy. Just gimme the good stuff, we say, ignoring starvation and toilets and . . . social structure.

Stop and think a moment. If you live in a city suburb, how many close friends or business associates do you have in your immediate area? Okay, how many are from the "bad part" of the inner city? How many are deep in farm country? Now, consider the fact that modern communications and travel make those relationships far more possible for us than they would be in a medieval world, and that we can more easily divide ourselves geographically to live near our peers — those of our own "caste."

So why is your son-of-a-peasant fighter running around with a merchant's daughter who was tutored in the use of magic? They shouldn't even have met, let alone be on speaking terms — and in many games, they're trusting each other with their very lives!

With just a bit of consideration, social

structure can add a more realistic feel to the AD&D campaign without getting in the way. Note that if the limitations on professions as described in Gary's short article start messing up your campaign, you should make exceptions, excuses, changes, or do anything necessary to keep a firm grip on your world. If you're starting (or re-starting) a game, try the social system presented here; it provides a nice framework around which to base a nicely self-consistent campaign. It fits well (unsurprisingly) with the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ setting, as you'll see when more items in that line start appearing. But be careful in applying it to a game already going at full speed; you'll probably have to make modifications.

Imagine the intricate net of clues and adventures opening up with the introduction of social strata, whatever the details. A common field hand at a nearby farm turns out to be a medium-level assassin, spying on local Lawful Good activities. The brewery on the river bank is a cover for the Guild Headquarters itself. The beggar on Glenview Bridge is a 14th level magic-user, laying low after a scuffle with the druids — who are in turn hiding out disguised as cattle at a nearby farm. The mage bought his beggar's outfit from a glassblower, who fences stolen goods; the glassblower, in turn, notified a junior officer of the town guard (for a price, of course), who furthers her career by specializing in providing supplies for those "on the lam." Don Diego, a landed gentry, is a masked Robin Hood by night, fighting a never-ending battle against evil greed. Three escaped criminals kidnap a goose girl at the well, only to discover that she's the illegitimate daughter of the duke, who will pay handsomely for her safe return and even more for secrecy. And in each case, intervention by player characters is only possible if someone is of the same social level. . . .

When characters get together for an adventure, they'll have more rationale for doing so than saying, "We just all happened to be in the same bar, so. . . ." A social system helps provide ideas for character background: What happened to him in those 16-19 years that a fighter spent before becoming a professional? Does he remember anything that could lead to glorious (and, he hopes, lucrative) adventures? Or, more probably, is anything known about a town that could lead to inside information, the intrigue of politics and power, or simply who to talk to to get a regeneration spell? Town adventures can be fun, too.

But watch out for thieves. ❧

FALLING DAMAGE

by Frank Mentzer

I must preface this brief article with a statement on Officiality. Please note that game-related information appearing in this magazine, under the name of any author, is presented for the consideration of the Gentle Readers, and feedback is definitely encouraged. The regular columns by E. Gary Gygax are, indeed, Official, but are not Final. You who are now reading these lines can affect the course of AD&D™ rules, by responding with your comments, both good and bad, on the information offered. The *Final* versions of the spells, character classes, and other *Official* tidbits from Gary will be published separately in the future. We will definitely release a new hardback book, the AD&D Expansion volume, within a few score fortnights. It will, it is hoped, contain details to explain and correct all the little holes in the system that we can find, along with vast amounts of new information. And by the way, Monster Manual Vol. 2 is already in production, and will appear this year, long before the Expansion volume. And MM2 looks so good that I won't say another word about it.

As to the problem with falling damage — well, it all started back in the early 1970's. (*Editor's note: The problem came to light during the preparation of Mr. Gygax's column on the Thief-Acrobat "split class," which appeared in issue #69 of DRAGON™ Magazine. It was addressed in a brief note published along with that article, with a promise that a more detailed explanation — this article — would be forthcoming.*)

Gary has always used a geometrically increasing system for falling damage in AD&D games; the trouble arose because that system simply never made it into the rule books.

When the AD&D Players Handbook was being assembled, a brief section on falling damage was included: a mere 7½ lines that offers more advice on broken bones and sprains than on falling damage. As we now understand the event, the section was not included in the first draft, and the editors requested a brief insert on this frequently referred-to topic. So Gary hastily wrote a sentence describing damage as "1d6 per 10' for each 10' fallen." Someone removed the "per 10'" as being (so it was thought) redundant, and off we went. That section was later quoted in passing in the Aerial Adventures section of the Dungeon Masters Guide, thereby becoming further entrenched in our game procedures.

The main point of current controversy seems to be the simple fact that everyone has been using "1d6 for each 10' fallen" for years, and the social inertia of Custom is still being cited as a reason to override common sense. And everyone *still* wants to know if you get a saving throw against falling damage; items do. (Note, however, that the "fall" category on DMG p. 80 mentions specifically falls of 5' or so; in other words, a dropped item, rather than one that sustains a long fall. Adjustments should be applied for descents of greater distance than 5'.)

Please understand first that when Gary writes something, he assumes that no important changes are being made between manuscript and printed product. (I'm sure most, if not all, other accomplished, best-selling authors assume the same thing.) So Gary checks the overall look before we in the TSR word factory send the final product off

to the printer — but he doesn't review all the details. After all, he knows what he wants to do in his home-style games, and he writes more generalized, system-applicable details for us. He doesn't play AD&D games strictly by the book, and usually has no reason to double-check details in the books and other products before they are sent out for printing. (I usually end up with those tasks these days.)

So it was not until years after that first appearance of the "1d6 per 10' fallen" rule that Gary finally noticed we've been doing it wrong all these years.

The "correct" damage incurred by falling is 1d6 for the first 10', 2d6 for the second 10' (total 3d6 for a 20' fall), 3d6 for the third 10', and so on, cumulative. The falling body reaches that 20d6 maximum shortly before passing the 60' mark. This is definitely more realistic than a straight 1d6 per 10'; using the latter rule, I've seen a tough fighter dive off a cliff into a deep canyon, get up and dust himself off, and then start chasing monsters. If the DM had added, say, a saving throw vs. death with a -12 penalty, that would have been fairer; but there are no guidelines for such a save, and DMs are free to encourage fantastic stunts by ignoring inertia, the effect of acceleration on a falling body, and other "real" principles that apply in the "fantasy" world.

Note that the 1d6 is appropriate in the first place because the gravity of Oerth (Gary's "world") approximates that of our own planet, which accelerates a falling body by 32 feet per second for each second of fall. This would not be the case for worlds with weaker gravities, where 1d4 might suffice, or some other method might be used. In any case, however, the nature of gravity is such that you speed up as you go: a 20' fall *should* be more than twice as damaging as a 10' fall.

This cumulative system obviously makes pits a lot nastier, and monks, thief-acrobats, and *fly* and *feather fall* spells a lot more useful.

Personally, I'd tend to be as tough as Gary's old/newly announced system, and then some. Add a system shock roll for any falls of 60' or more (the "break point" for maximum damage), plus a save vs. death for similarly long falls, to see if you broke your neck or something. I might even want to modify that saving throw — say, a penalty of -1 for each 10' fallen (*not* cumulative), but +1 per character level. (This isn't Official, it's opinion, and this opinion continues:)

For saving throws, the cumulative system is so much more deadly that I'd allow a saving throw vs. death, for half damage if successful. But in turn, I wouldn't stop accumulating damage after 60'. The 20d6 maximum would still apply, but *after* the "real" damage is totaled. For example, a 60' fall inflicts 21d6 damage (save for half); a 70' fall, 28d6 (save for 14d6, or half, damage); an 80' fall, 36d6 (18d6 if saved against), and so forth. The 20d6 maximum should apply to the net effect, used if the save is failed in the examples above, instead of the rolls of 21d6, 28d6, or 36d6 mentioned.

Write! Tell us what you've been doing for falling damage, and what you think of the more realistic system recently offered. Gary *does* read your input — many of you have received replies from the Good Sage by now — and he'll clean up this debated area soon.

Giants can be awful or awe-ful

by
Roger
Moore

One of the frequently appearing columns in DRAGON™ Magazine is *Giants In The Earth*, which started many moons ago in issue #26 (June 1979). It features characters from popular fiction and fantasy, and many from historical myths and legends, who have been translated into D&D® and/or AD&D™ game terms. While the series is fascinating to read for its own sake, the question naturally arises as to what sorts of things one can do with it in real game situations. Obviously, the "Giants" would make highly entertaining encounters in any game universe; the problem is how Dungeon Masters can bring this about.

There are several problems inherent in using *GITE* characters (or heroes and heroines from other sources, like the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopeda, or other *GITE*-like articles in DRAGON Magazine) as NPC's in a campaign. The first problem is that the Dungeon Master might start bringing all sorts of extremely powerful characters into the game just to impress the players, or to emphasize the player characters' relative puniness in the scheme of things. If every time the group goes into a bar they meet John Carter, Conan and Belit, or Kane, then the game is going to take on a distinctly unrealistic tone.

Even worse is the possibility that the DM has brought these super-toughs into the game to trash the players out. I heard of one game in which several characters got together and began mugging people who were walking through an alleyway. The third potential victim was a huge barbarian from Hyborea, who proceeded to slay everyone present. This was entertaining as a story, but it might not have been so entertaining to the players involved. Certainly the DM can introduce a "ringer" among a group of common NPC's, but using Conan for this purpose is like using an H-bomb to kill flies. The group had no chance of winning. Before long in games like this all the characters are dead, the players get frustrated, the referee gets bored, and the game goes to pot. This leads to Rule One for using super-NPC's: There should be a reason for the NPC to be in a scenario, beyond that of satisfying the DM's ego.

Another possible difficulty is what we could call the Player Power Trip Problem. What if, thinks the player, I slip

something into Conan's drink, or if I bump off Elric and get his sword Stormbringer? . . . Sometimes, of course, it's not just one player but the whole group, all of them (for one reason or another) having decided that they want to kill or capture a *GITE* character. Usually the group is motivated by greed and a childish desire to claim that their characters are tougher than this hero or that one. This is stupid beyond description, but unfortunately it is often not discouraged by the game referee properly, and is sometimes even *encouraged* by the DM.

At this point we should make a distinction between two types of game situations. It isn't wrong to set up a scenario in which, for example, an evil character like Maal Dweb, Lucounu, or the like makes some attempt to do something nasty to the characters or to their world; someone could make a fascinating campaign around a premise like this, and it wouldn't be wrong to allow for the possibility that the good characters of the players might not only defeat the evil leader but might also slay him or her. The problem comes when the referee decides that it would be great to let Chuckie get Stormbringer because he's my friend and he's begged and pleaded with me for months to do it, so maybe if Elric turns his back for a minute. . . you get the idea. The referee creates the scenario for the purpose of letting the *GITE* character get killed, so the players will come to think they are really hot stuff.

There's nothing that can be said about this sort of game if people are determined to play it that way. Before long, of course, everyone will have all the known artifacts, they will slay everything they meet to keep getting those Almighty Experience Points, the referee will get frustrated (what can stand up to Stormbringer?), the players will get bored, and so on, until. . . no more game. Rule Two (actually a variant of Rule One) goes like this: Super NPC's are not for satisfying player egos, either.

So, what's left? You can, after looking over a list of super NPC's, make some distinctions in the ways these characters could be used. There are three ways to classify characters in terms of how frequently they will be used in a campaign: They can appear as one-time-only's, as infrequent passers-by, or as frequently

encountered, live-just-down-the-street sorts. When using NPC's that will appear only once in your campaign, you could structure a particular adventure around the group's meeting with that NPC and use the NPC as written up in the *GITE* column or elsewhere. Infrequently encountered NPC's might live some distance away from the player characters and would only now and then make their presences known; they might hire or briefly be hired by the player characters, might compete or fight against them, or briefly join them on adventures. Finally, some NPC's might serve as the players' henchmen, or take the players on as permanent assistants, or just live in the immediate area where the player characters live.

This is interesting, but there is still one problem. Famous NPC's from fantasy and literature are automatically more intimidating than other NPC's because they have their names behind them. Conan *sounds* like a much tougher opponent than Tosok or Xatha. There also is a problem in trying to role-play the NPC when the DM hasn't read the books the character was drawn from, or cannot remember particular details of that character's life; often the players, to the DM's embarrassment, know more about a particular fictional NPC than the DM does. And there is the problem of Big-Name People attracting all the immature sorts who want to bump them off and steal their magical items. The simplest solution is to change the NPC's names and a few details in their backgrounds, so that they "belong" strictly to the referee's game universe and no other.

Consider this example: In a particular campaign, a referee has set aside an area inhabited by bandits who oppose a local evil lord. Having access to DRAGON issue #55, in which Katharine Kerr outlined Robin Hood and his Merry Men as AD&D characters, the referee adopts the group for use in his game. However, because it could be tricky trying to explain how Robin Hood and company got into that particular game universe from England, the DM simply changes Robin's name to, say, Arlan the Red (giving the NPC red hair and beard at the same time), and similarly renames the whole gang. To further close the link to the AD&D environment, the referee gives

out several magical items to the gang (a +2 longbow to Rob— uh, Arlan the Red; some clerical items to Bubba the Monk; and so on), and changes the Sheriff's name and the name of the local town to something else as well, like Lord Qor of Wildland's Edge. Presto: In effect, you have your own version of Robin Hood now, role-played in very much the same way as Ms. Kerr described Robin Hood and company, but now fully integrated into another campaign. The referee adds some more detail of his own to personalize the NPC's to his own taste (Arlan became a reiver when the Lord of Wildland's Edge had his father imprisoned and his land confiscated; the old man died in prison and Arlan plans to bring the Lord down someday in retribution), and that's that.

Example two: A group of players has set up a shipping service, and they are getting more interested in sea-going encounters. The DM picks up DRAGON issue #48, notes Tom Moldvay's version of Tiana Highrider, and sets to work. Tiana becomes a short-haired brunette with golden-brown skin, and her alignment shifts to neutral (with evil leanings). Tiana's other statistics are adopted as they are given, except for changing her past history (she is the daughter of the former captain of the pirate ship she runs; her father died in battle but the crew rallied around her leadership) and

her name, of course: She is Jelala. Ka-Gola now, queen of the sea-rovers. Her first mate is her current lover, Xarmak One-Eye (actually Caranga, renamed). The DM decides to discard the possibility of a high-level mage teleporting in to help Jelala, instead allowing the ship to have a fairly powerful illusionist aboard. Jelala gains Tiana's bonuses with rapier and dagger, a bit of her personality (with a nasty touch to it), plus her ship and crew, and now the player characters have a tough adventure ahead of them, not impossible to win against but sure to be a challenge.

Example three: One lucky DM has access to DRAGON issue #36, in which Conan the Barbarian was described in the *Sorcerer's Scroll* column. However, for her own reasons, the DM decides to make Conan a female NPC: Ferra White-flame, so named for her pale skin and hair (she comes from the very far north). Some of the statistics need to be adjusted; Ferra only made it to 4th level as a thieving little kid before taking up the life of a warrior. When introduced into the campaign, Ferra will be 30 years old, and highly experienced in fighting. Having fought gnolls most of her life in the frozen wastes, as well as rare tribes of arctic hobgoblins, Ferra is made a ranger of 16th level. Ferra gets all of Conan's statistics, except for strength (reduced to 18/43, but the DM gives her a *girdle of*

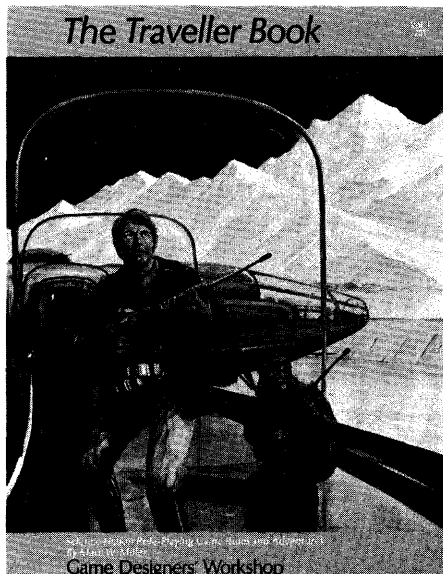
frost giant strength to make up for it). Conan's other special abilities, as many as possible, are also transferred to the "new" character. Ferra, when completed, is introduced as a neutral good warlord who rules a small northern kingdom of generally peaceful but potentially fierce people. She may hire player characters to go on special missions for her if they are deemed trustworthy, or she might send warriors after the group if they are harassing caravans going into Ferra's kingdom. If the player-character group is of exceptionally high level, they may meet Ferra herself; male characters who try to get too familiar might discover that she (like Conan) is a master of unarmed combat, and they might require time to recuperate before going on to other matters.

Certainly, some famous NPC's may be used just as they are. For years I wondered just what sort of magic-user Baba Yaga (a legendary witch of ancient Russia) would actually be. The *Dungeon Masters Guide* lists Baba Yaga's walking hut as an artifact, and several of my friends in various gaming groups have more than once commented that they'd love for their own high-level characters to get hold of it. Well, if you're a *Dungeon Master* who likes to discourage this sort of thing, it might not hurt for the player characters to get just a little taste of what Baba Yaga is like, and the fascinating

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article by David Nalle on the Bogatyrs (superhuman warriors of old Kiev) in DRAGON issue #53 also includes Baba Yaga's statistics. She is a true high-level character's nightmare as described, and probably too strong for any group but those characters in giveaway campaigns.

However, an adventure could be created in which Baba Yaga and her walking hut might cross planes into the current campaign out of curiosity; her coming would be preceded by hundreds of grave omens, fearful prophesies, and other unsettling happenings. The player characters might be hired to discover the source of these evil omens, and might eventually discover the walking hut. The DM could allow Baba Yaga to let the characters into the hut (which has as much room within it as a gigantic castle), but she will send minor servants of hers — demons, undead, and the like — to try to trap the party. If the group manages to escape, Baba Yaga will let them go, since she likes the idea of tales of her powers being spread across the universes. While Baba Yaga probably cannot be stopped by most groups, some of her plans might go astray if player characters catch on to them (perhaps they might free some prisoners within the hut, or manage to take some magical items that she might not miss immediately, and so on).

Even if the players earn Baba Yaga's hatred, that isn't necessarily the end of them. Baba Yaga has more things on her mind than crossing planes to catch some 5th-level thief who took some jewels of hers. Instead, once every so often she might send a minor demon or undead creature to track the character down. This provides a long-playing scenario in a campaign that may run through many adventures. It may be interrupted by different adventures, but it should provide some additional excitement for the player characters' lives. It isn't everyone who can claim that they are hunted by an ogre-witch; after all, only important people have important enemies.

The important point to remember is that famous NPCs, renamed or not, should not be used to batter helpless parties, and should not allow themselves to be battered by parties, either. Special NPC's are there to give a campaign spice and flavor, to make things more exciting for the players and the DM, and should be treated and played with care. Renaming such characters does remove the possibility of running an adventure in which Conan actually gets killed, which can prove rather embarrassing for the DM; in addition, players will react differently to NPC's they know little or nothing about. The *Giants In The Earth* column provides a long list of useful NPC's for DMs to integrate into their games, and should serve as a guideline for making up unrelated characters as well.

Another possible use for characters from the *GITE* series is as role models for

player characters. Someone may have a female magic-user with the personality, if not the same name and statistics, of Circe the Beast-Mistress (from DRAGON issue #52). Another player may have a bard and may want to role-play the character after Muirtagh the Bowman (issue #35) or Myal Lemyal (issue#64). Characters from literature can be invaluable as aids in defining different player-character personalities.

Yet another use, but one that isn't necessarily recommended for regular play, is to allow players on a one-time basis to take one *GITE* personage and role-play that character as described, using whatever sources the character is drawn from, in a special adventure. If this is done, the DM had better take the time to come up with an adventure that will be a challenge for very powerful characters

(some *GITE*'s range up to the 30th level of ability), unless the DM restricts the list of heroes that may be chosen.

In any case, in games using *GITE*'s as player characters, it might be advisable to declare that if a character is knocked below zero hit points, or similarly put in danger of immediate death (like touching a *sphere of annihilation*), then the character is teleported out of the game and back to his or her home universe for good, leaving the other characters to carry on.

No matter how you choose to use the "Giants," always remember that they are provided for game participants to *enjoy* — not as a source of frustration (for some) or ego gratification (for others). Players and DMs who keep this "rule" uppermost in their minds probably won't go wrong.

APPENDIX

Past *Giants In The Earth* & other heroes

Following is a list of famous characters from myth, legend, and popular fantasy literature who have appeared in the pages of DRAGON Magazine. While some of the issues mentioned are now out of print, some people may have access to early copies of the magazine, and this listing will at least help them. Along with the *Giants In The Earth* personages, other articles that have described similar heroes and heroines are mentioned as well. Most *GITE*'s are male humans; exceptions are noted.

Issue	Characters	<i>Giants In The Earth</i> Level, class, alignment, etc.
26	Cugel the Clever Kane Tros of Samothrace	14-thief, N 30-fighter/20-magic-user/14-assassin, CE 15-paladin, LG
27	Durathror Fafhrd The Gray Mouser John Carter of Mars	13-paladin, LG (dwarf) 20-fighter/8-thief, NG 16-fighter/16-thief, CN 30-fighter, LG
28	Eric John Stark Welleran	15-fighter, CG high-level fighter (no info given), LG
29	Shadowjack Iucunu	25-thief/9(18)-fighter/9(18)-magic-user, CE 20-magic-user, NE
30	Sol of All Weapons Zorayas	20-fighter/14-monk, LN 23-magic-user, LE (female)
35	Muirtagh the Bowman Umslopogaas Edward Bond Ganelon	20-magic-user, LE 16-bard/7-fighter/6-thief, CG 15-fighter, N 9-fighter, LG 25-fighter, CE
36	Captain Blood Richard Upton Pickman Silver Bells	17-fighter/10-thief/8-cleric, CG 9-fighter, CN 15-ranger/13-paladin, NG (minotaur)
39	Bodvar Bjarki Egil Skallagrímsón	16-fighter, CG (werebear) 14-fighter/14-magic-user, CN
41	Jirel of Joiry Ayesha Valeria Sigurd Fafnirsbane Starkad	14-fighter, NG (female) 27-cleric/9-fighter, LN (female) 17-fighter/9-thief, CN (female) 20-fighter/12-magic-user/8-cleric, LG 23-fighter, N (part giant & elf)
42	Tauno Kraken's-Bane Sir Geros Lahvohettos James Eckert/Gorbash Orvar-Odd Heidrek	8-ranger, CG (half-elf) 9-fighter, LG 0-level/10-HD monster, NG (dragon) 21-fighter, LG (part sea-troll) 15-fighter, LE
44	Reepicheep Professor Challenger	7-fighter, LG (mouse) 16-fighter, LN
47	Camilla Medea	10-fighter, CG (female) 18-magic-user, CN (female)
48	Sparrowhawk Tiana Highrider	21-illusionist/20-magic-user/14-druid, N 12-fighter/12-thief, CG (female)

49 Holger Carlsen	14-paladin, LG
Hugi	5-fighter, NG (gnome)
Ellide	6-fighter, N (female)
52 Prospero	14-magic-user, LG
Circe	18-magic-user, CN (female)
54 Juss	15-fighter/14-magic-user, LG ("demon")
Spiffire	16-fighter, LG ("demon")
Goldry Bluszco	20-fighter, LG ("demon")
Brandoch Daha	18-fighter, LG ("demon")
Gaveral Rocannon	11-fighter, LG
57 Morgaine	17-fighter/3-m-u, CN (female half-elf)
Vanye	7-fighter, LN
Riffkid	14-fighter/16-cleric, LN (female)
Belit	10-fighter, CE (female)
Dark Agnes	11-fighter/9-thief, CN (female)
59 Sir Roger de Tourneville	10-fighter, NG
Harold Shea	7-fighter, CG
Anthony Villiers	10-ranger/7-thief, NG
Mark Cornwall	4-fighter, LG
Sniveley	3-fighter, LG (gnome)
61 Deucalion	10-cleric/18-fighter, LN
Tarl Cabot	20-fighter, LE
Dossouye	7-ranger, NG (female)
64 Myal Lemyal	9-bard/5-fighter/8-thief, CN
John Henry	7-fighter, NG
Finn MacCumhal	15-ranger, NG

Other DRAGON articles featuring heroes and heroines are listed below:

"Conan!" in the *Sorcerer's Scroll* column, issue #36, by E. Gary Gygax.

"The Bogatyrs of Old Kiev" in issue #53, by David Nalle.

"The Righteous Robbers of Liang Shan P'o" in issue #54, by Joseph Ravitts.

"Robin Hood" in issue #55, by Katharine Kerr.

"Four Myths From Greece" (Atalanta, Daedalus, the Sybil of Cumae, Chiron) in issue #58, by Katharine Kerr and Roger Moore.

"Elfquest" in issue #66, by Karl Merris.

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OUT ON A LIMB

(From page 3)

your current staple binding, the staples seem to "dig" into the magazine. A "square-back" binding would be much better. It would help prolong the life of the magazine. Second, I wish you would insert cards which the readers could use as order forms, such as when someone wanted to order back issues. There is nothing I dislike more than having to cut up a magazine, especially a new one.

Tommy Buttress
Shady Point, Okla.

We appreciate both of Tom's points, and maybe someday both of the changes he suggests will happen. But for the time being, we'll explain why things are done the way they are.

Both of the changes he — and, no doubt, many other readers — would like to see would cost money, and we might not be able to afford the extra expense without (gasp!) raising the price of the magazine. We're pretty proud of the fact that our prices haven't gone up in almost three years (how many other businesses can make that statement?), and we aren't anxious to have that happen.

Like Tom says, staples aren't all that bad. And stapling is the least expensive way to bind the magazine, which is good for us and, indirectly, good for our consumers. Inserting an order-blank card into the magazine is, obviously, more expensive than not doing so, and that's another example of an improvement that we haven't made because we aren't convinced that the benefit would outweigh the disadvantages.

Incidentally, Tom and anyone else with the same problem should be aware that it isn't necessary to turn in an "official" order blank when you want to order merchandise. All you have to do is enclose a short note telling us what you want, along with your payment, instead of cutting up a magazine. — KM

Day and night

Dear Editor:

With regard to the article "Thieves' Cant: Primer" (issue #66):

The author's sources were either ignorant of, or died before relating, the differentiation of "inefe" and "obinefe" ("dayspeech" and "nightspeech"). Obviously, thieves' cant is spoken a good deal of the time in a whisper. But if we take the sentence "You run upstairs and put the guard's body in a big barrel" a put it in "dayspeech," we get "Sene fu sosan, kunine ly sio sahas salarka ro sarho." Even if the sentence is whispered, each of those sibilant s's would be like a snapped twig in a silent house!

"Nightspeech," used on a job or in other situations requiring silence, avoids this. In "nightspeech" the consonant "s" is replaced by the unvoiced "th" (or, in some areas, with the "Welsh double l," a lateral lisp aspirated between the tongue and lower molars); the sharp "t" moves toward the softer, unvoiced "dh"; and the harsh "k" approaches the "kh" sound. These changes create a strangely lisped version of the Cant, but one which won't travel any further than your conversant's ear.

Kurt K. A. Giambastiani
San Luis Obispo, Calif.

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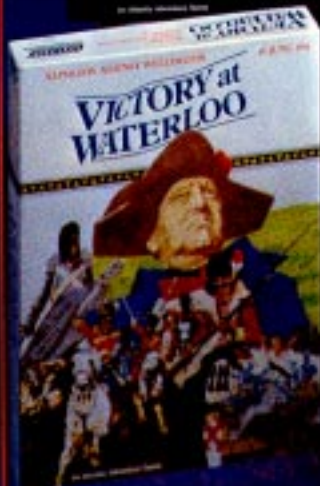
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by E. Gary Gygax

BOCCOB

(The Uncaring)

Neutrality, Magic, Arcane
Knowledge, Foreknowledge,
Foresight

Major god

ARMOR CLASS: -8

MOVE: 18"

HIT POINTS: 354

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*
+2 (strength bonus)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +5 or better
weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 125%

SIZE: M

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Any*
(clerics, neutrals)

SYMBOL: *Eye in a pentagram*

PLANE: *Concordant Opposition*

CLERIC/DRUID: *Nil*

FIGHTER: *Nil*

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *24th level*
in each

THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*

MONK/BARD: *Nil*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *1*

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

S:18 I:26 W:20

D:22 C:20 CH:20

Boccob, called The Uncaring, is the Lord of all Magics and Archmage of the Deities. Whether or not any worship or serve him seems of no importance to him. Naturally, he is entreated for omens by seers and diviners. Likewise, those seeking new magics are prone to ask his aid. Sages also revere him.

Boccob rarely leaves his own hall, preferring to send his servant, the mad archmage Zagyg (*q.v.*), in his stead. Boccob is always arrayed in garments of purple upon which shimmering runes of gold move and change. He has many amulets and protective devices. It is said that in his palace there is at least one of every magic item (except for artifacts and rel-

ics) ever devised by magic-user or illusionist. The favorite weapon of Boccob is his *staff of the archmage*, combining a *staff of the magi* with a *wand of conjuration*. This device can always absorb 24 spell levels, regardless of its charge.

All planes and times are open to Boccob. He is able to draw either positive power or negative force from the appro-

prate plane so as to strike *fear* into undead creatures or actually deliver a rolling cloud of energy like unto a double strength *wall of fire* as to its area and effects upon them. He can likewise use a net of negative power to affect creatures drawing on the Positive Material Plane.

Boccob neither seeks nor avoids confrontations; he desires balance above alignment, knowledge above all. In combination, these two forces can rend demon or devil, deva or elemental. Once per round the Archmage can cast a *disc of concordant opposition*, a plane of mixed forces which will blast into nothingness any creature under 13 hit dice or less than 50% magic resistance. Those with fewer than 13 levels or hit dice (96 or less hit points if dice are not used) or having less than a 50% magic resistance are destroyed by the 1"-square force web. Those of more than 12 hit dice take 100 points of damage, less magic resistance doubled. Those above 12 levels of experience take 50 hit points of damage, less their magic resistance, less each +1 of protection expressed as 10. Creatures with at least 50% magic resistance are unharmed.

Boccob can be hit only by +5 or better weapons. He has vision of double normal range into all spectrums. He can regenerate 1-4 points of damage per round. No spells of mental control or possession will affect Boccob, nor will *feeblemind* or similar magics. He otherwise has the attributes typical of greater deities.

The worshippers of Boccob are spread throughout the Flanaess. His clerics wear purple robes with gold trim; those attaining the 9th level or higher are actually able to handle simple magic items normally usable only by magic-users (*wand of illusion*, *crystal ball*, *robe of useful items*, and any similar devices).

Services to honor Boccob involve complex rituals, incense, recital of formulas, and readings from special works honoring knowledge.



ZAGYG

*Humor, Occult Studies,
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Demi-god

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 18"

HIT POINTS: 121

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type
+6 (strength bonus)*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *+2 or better
weapon to hit*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 100%

SIZE: M

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic neutral (good)*

WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Any
(none known)*

SYMBOL: *Rune of madness (insanity)*

PLANE: *Prime Material-Concordant
Opposition*

CLERIC/DRUID: *Nil*

FIGHTER: *8th level fighter*

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *18th level*

magic-user / 10th level illusionist

THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*

MONK/BARD: *Nil*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *III*

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

S:18/00 I:23 W:17

D:22 C:19 CH:18



Zagyg, the Mad Arch-Mage and punster, is the sole known servant of Boccob, for the latter recognizes no others except on special occasions. Zagyg is mad only in that none but his master seem to be able to fathom his reasoning and sense of humor; few, if any, hold him as their deity.

Zagyg will appear in nearly any guise when upon the Prime Material Plane. His actual appearance is said to be unremarkable in a wizardly sort of way. Likewise, his garb is varied to suit the situation, usually dark blue and silver in color.

Being able to employ weapons and devices common to both fighters and magic-users, Zagyg is likely to appear with a *vorpal blade* in one hand and a *wand of wonder* in the other. (Note:

Harmful effects of items employed by this being tend to affect not him but his opponents instead. Thus, if Zagyg put on a ring of *weakness*, all others within a 1" radius might be affected instead.) He has been known to strike with a padded club, or cast a *haste* spell upon an opponent, however. Somehow, despite his seeming madness, Zagyg survives, carries out his assignments, and moves on.

Zagyg can likewise travel all planes and is the bane of many. He serves Boccob most carefully, but apparently because of his own will and a desire to retain enlightened neutrality and uncertain humor everywhere.

He otherwise has the attributes and abilities of a demi-god. He can be hit only by +2 or better weapons.

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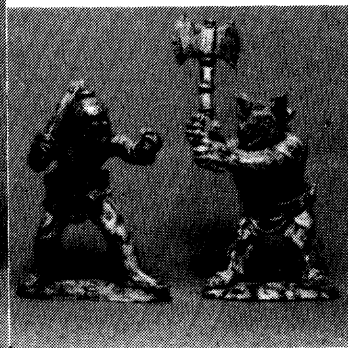
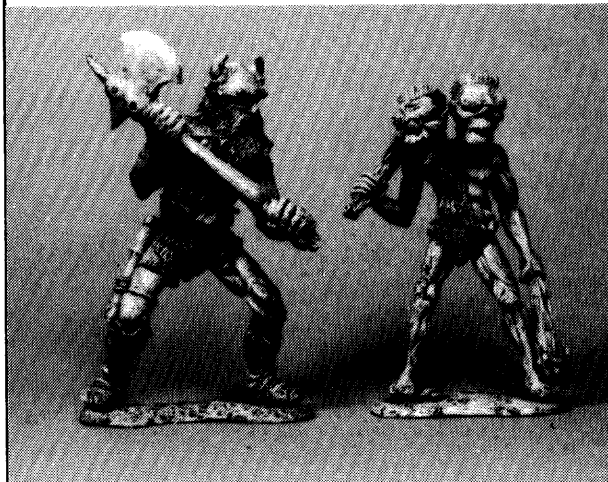
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OLIDAMMARA

*Music, Revelry, Roguery,
Tricks & Jokes, Wine & Spirits*

Lesser god

ARMOR CLASS: -9

MOVE: 18 (+ special, see below)

HIT POINTS: 199

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type
+4 (strength bonus)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better
weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

SIZE: M (5½'+ tall)

ALIGNMENT: Neutral (chaotic)

WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: Neutral,
chaotic neutral, chaotic good,
neutral good

SYMBOL: A laughing mask

PLANE: Prime Material Plane

CLERIC/DRUID: Nil

FIGHTER: 8th level fighter

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: Nil

THIEF/ASSASSIN: 12th level thief

MONK/BARD: 24th level bard

PSIONIC ABILITY: III

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

S:18/76 I:18 W:17

D:23 C:20 CH:19

Olidammara, the Laughing Rogue, minstrel and miscreant, is the favorite deity of many thieves. Worshipers include bards, jesters, vagabonds, beggars, and common folk as well. He wanders the Prime Material Plane in many guises, stealing from the rich, the haughty, or the evil. Olidammara gives wealth to those without means — often distributing his pilfered gains through high revels. His favorite haunts are city slums or their exact opposite, rural glens and woodlands. Although he always appears young, Olidammara will sometimes disguise himself as a tinker or peddler, sometimes as a foppish wastrel, and frequently as a fledgling sell-sword. He can alter his appearance to suit the situation at hand — short or tall, slender or muscular, plain or handsome. His actual appearance is said to be as follows: middling height, slender build, chestnut hair and beard worn rakishly, complexion with an olive tint, merry eyes of sparkling emerald, much given to laughter and petty tricks. Olidammara wears green and gold as his favorite colors.

Although he wears only a leather vest and high leather buskins, Olidammara has excellent protection due to the enchantments on these garments and a special +6 protection ring he possesses.

Olidammara also possesses a musical stringed instrument of great power. This device, the *Kanteel of the Eldest*, is usable only by bards of the highest level or

by certain other deities. The *Kanteel* has the following magical powers which are usable once per day:

1. Adds 30% to *charm* ability (85% for Olidammara)
2. Allows *charm monster* ability of 25%
3. Cast a *fog cloud* spell
4. Cast a *dispel illusion* spell
5. Cast an *emotion* spell
6. Cast a *major creation* spell
7. Cast a *programmed illusion* spell
8. Cast a *vision* spell (only for the deity)

Olidammara also possesses a mask which allows him to change *self* for as long a duration or as often as he wishes. The mask is not discernible when it is worn.

In addition to the spells normal to his level as a bard, Olidammara can cast the following spells as if he were a 14th level magic-user:

- passwall* thrice per day
- transmute rock to mud* twice per day
- telekinesis* once per day

When Olidammara was once trapped by Zagyg, the Mad Archmage forced him into a carapaced animal shape as punishment for attempting to steal Zagyg's trove. Even though Olidammara escaped this fate, he retains the ability to create a horny shell on his back. Beneath this cover, the "Laughing Rogue" can use his spells to escape, leaving the shell to cover his getaway. (It is said that he returned to loot Zagyg's treasury, em-

ploying the magical carapace to frustrate the Mad Archmage's capture.) The discarded carapace remains as a hemispherical shell, about 2' wide and 3' long, armor class 3. It welds itself to stone and must be smashed or otherwise destroyed (50 hit points). *Passwall* spells cast under the carapace shell are 2½' x 2' x 40'.

There are few chapels dedicated to Olidammara. They are always located in large towns or cities. Shrines are not uncommon in urban centers and rural areas. There are supposedly two rustic hostels located in the central Flanaess area — one in the Wild Coast, another in the Kron Hills region. Clerics of Olidammara are not uncommon either.

Clerics of this deity are trained to have the ability of *hiding in shadows* so as to be equal to a thief one level lower than their clerical level. They are taught musical skills equal to those of the first level bard when at third level, second level bard at fourth level, and third level bard at sixth and higher cleric level. Finally, clerics of Olidammara gain the ability to *change self* at 8th and higher level, the duration being as if the caster were an illusionist of the same level. They dress in garments of brown, green, green and brown, and green and black. Services include much singing, chanting, feasting, and libations of fermented berry beverage.

Olidammara can be hit only by +3 or better weapons. He *communicates*, *detects*, *dispels*, and becomes *invisible* as typical of a lesser god. ☼



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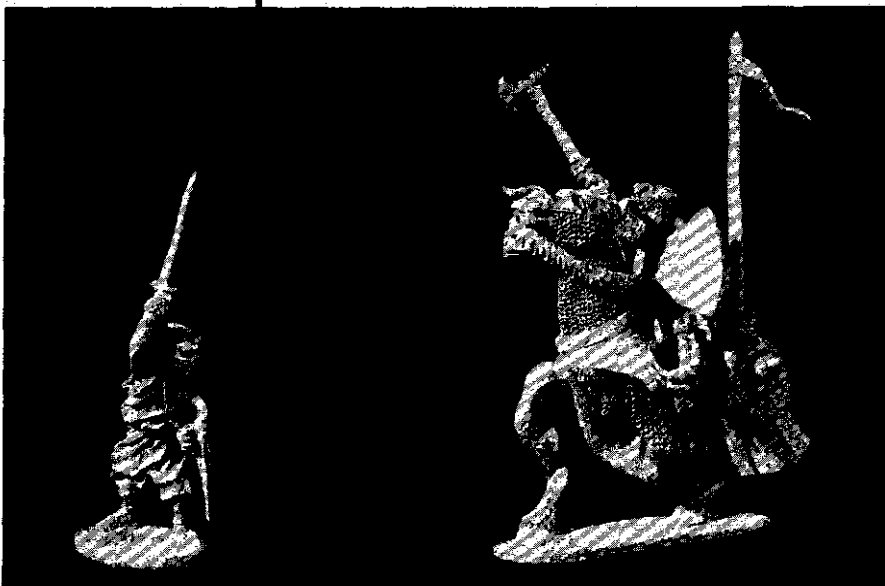


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Feudal-Medieval Line

Knight in chainmail; Armored bishop; Knight with battle axe

This is a relatively new line in this country and, as far as I know, is only available through The Reiter in New Berlin, Wis. Most of the figures come in a number of slightly different poses, and many of them have interchangeable weapons. Also of note in this line is the mounted figures, monks, and great weapons packs. These figures tend to be a bit larger than normal, actually around 30-35mm scale. Suggested retail price: 60¢ each for unmounted figures.



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Personalities Line

Knight and Mounted Black Prince

(Sculptor: Tom Meier)

Ral Partha offers many interesting knights in both its fantasy series and its historical lines, including innumerable mounted figures. The Black Prince, shown here, is a perfect example of the quality of these pieces. The face, chainmail, etc., are crisp and clean, demonstrating Ral Partha's tradition of excellence. Suggested retail price: about 67¢ each for knights (they usually come in multi-packs), and \$4.50 for the mounted Black Prince.



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25mm Wizards & Lizards Fantasy Line

Knights

(Sculptor: Ray Lamb)

For years Superior avoided 25mm fantasy figures, but when the company decided to get into that field, it did so with a bang. These three knights are excellent pieces, created by one of

the world's greatest miniature sculptors. Note the plate armor, the realistic stances, and the detailed helms. These knights make exceptional paladin figures (and there's even a female in plate). Suggested retail price: \$1.13 each (they usually come in multi-packs of the same figure):

KNIGHTS

Text by
Kim Eastland



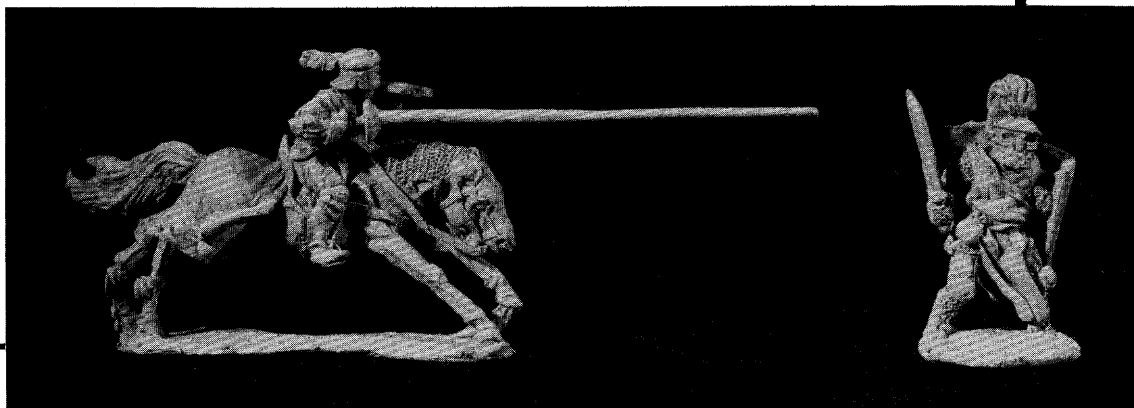
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DWARVES in SPACE

by Roger Moore

One of the most aggravating things about fantasy and science fiction, for me anyway, is the knowledge that there are few times when one will be able to confront the other in role-playing games. I'm a serious fan of both the AD&D™ game and the *Traveller*™ system, and I've sometimes wished that I could take the characters from one universe and go visit the lands of the other. . . . But even a rudimentary knowledge of both games is enough to tell that the basic differences between them are too great to bridge with a simple set of rules, the way the AD&D system can be linked to the GAMMA WORLD® game or the BOOT HILL® game. However, there is no reason why creatures and items from an

AD&D world cannot exist in a *Traveller* universe in their own right. The galaxy is a big place (100,000 light-years across, with literally millions of stars and planets) and I suppose that if you look long enough for anything, eventually you may find it.

To begin with, though, I strongly suggest that the *Traveller* referee not include magical spells and items as part of the universe that he/she creates. Gunpowder and technological devices beyond medieval advancement do not exist in the world of the AD&D rules, and this preserves the flavor of the game. This prohibition also maintains game balance, as DMs who've let players get hold of laser rifles and force blades have discovered.

Any advantage that players get is sure to be exploited fully (or perverted fully), and their characters may become too powerful to play comfortably.

Traveller works the same way. Try to imagine the results of allowing *Traveller* players to find a *ring of wishes*; a referee who is confident that he or she could handle the situation is probably overestimating his or her abilities as a referee and underestimating the players. The orientation toward science and technology, and away from magic, in the "new" universe should be maintained — even played up, especially when the players hint that they'd love to see a few +5 flaming cutlasses lying around on their planet.

One area that would lend itself well to the "conversion" of an AD&D game to a *Traveller* adventure would be the introduction of new weapons in the family of blades and polearms. Granted, in a star-roving society there is not much call for expertise with a glaive-guisarme, but worlds with a tech level of 0 to 3 will likely have many types of hand-to-hand combat weapons. In particular, the character class of the Barbarian (*Traveller* Supplement 4, *Citizens of the Imperium*) would likely have access to a wide variety of archaic combat weapons that other classes would not. Statistics for the various sorts of primitive weaponry can be derived using the notes in the AD&D Players Handbook, but careful readers will discover some discrepancies between *Traveller* weapons and their AD&D equivalents. For example, a "broadsword" in *Traveller* is a two-handed affair, yet is about the same size and weight as an AD&D "broadsword," which is a one-handed weapon: it is smaller, in fact, than the AD&D hand-and-a-half sword. Further comparisons between each game system's version of daggers, swords, spears, cutlasses (scimitars), cudgels (clubs or morning stars), and so forth reveal other differences, but with some good guesswork a referee should be able to generate the characteristics of javelins, tridents, axes, and other items as desired.

A second possibility, more complicated than introducing new weapons into the *Traveller* system, is the introduction of some of the creatures common to fantasy games. It is going to take the referee quite a while to calculate the sizes, weights, attack damage, speed, etc., of the various denizens of the Monster Manual in *Traveller* terms, but the results can be very interesting indeed. Non-magical beasts like the anhkheg, purple worm, shrieker, and yellow mold can be developed as the fauna of several different worlds; retaining the AD&D name for such monsters often helps develop a clearer picture of them for the players, particularly if they are already familiar with the AD&D versions. Referees may want to modify the monsters to prevent

players from being too familiar with the creatures.

Some monsters may need to be placed in tailor-made environments; rocs, for example, probably couldn't fly unless they were on low-gravity worlds. Giant-sized versions of common terrestrial animals (badgers, rats, wolves) might be natural mutations resulting from living in a cold environment (the way mammals became gigantic during the Ice Age on Earth), or they might be the results of an Imperial genetic engineering program. Postulating that some creatures can develop psionic powers allows the referee to create beasts with some magic-like effects, like blink dogs who use a form of limited teleport ability. *Traveller* psionics, although very different from AD&D psionics, can still duplicate the attack powers of su-monsters, gray oozes, and brain moles. Even fire-breathing dragons are possible (as they are in Heinlein's *Glory Road* and McCaffrey's novels of the *Dragonriders of Pern*). As always, the referee should be the final arbiter of what is reasonable and what is not.

Creatures with strong ties to other AD&D planes (that do not exist in *Traveller*) such as aerial servants, lichs, efreeti, and ki-rin cannot be converted if they have too many magical powers or are not material beings. You could assume these sorts of beings are energy creatures or specimens of incredibly advanced cultures, but use your own best judgement.

Perhaps the most interesting, and most difficult, fantasy addition to *Traveller* would be the creation of new character races for the players and/or for non-player characters. At this point I want to urge the reader to examine or re-examine Gary Gygax's column from issue #29 of DRAGON™ Magazine. (Editor's note: *This column was reprinted under the title "Humans and hybrids" in Best of DRAGON Vol. II.*) He discusses balancing the AD&D campaign in terms of the available character races, and makes many appropriate comments. The referee should use his or her discretion, remembering that the Imperium is a human-dominated society and a human-oriented one as well. Unless the referee and players have created a sort of "United Federation of Planets" universe as in *Star Trek*, aliens will generally play second fiddle to humanity. Care should be used in creating new player races to ensure that they are compatible with the game. Storm giant player characters, for example, are much too powerful for a *Traveller* scenario, and sometimes would be at a serious disadvantage (trying to crew a missile battery without training, trying to fit through a ship's airlock, etc.). New races, therefore, should not be overly more powerful than humans. (Otherwise, as Mr. Gygax put it, why would anyone want to be a human?)

Skeptics should note that there is literary precedent for introducing fantasy beings into a science-fiction setting, not the least (and perhaps one of the best) of which is Ursula K. LeGuin's *Rocannon's World*, a book I cannot recommend highly enough to science-fiction or fantasy fans.

As an example of such a fantasy race in *Traveller*, and for the benefit of all dwarfophiles everywhere, I present here my version of *Traveller* dwarves. *Rocannon's World* had a dwarven race called the Gdemiar, but my version is drawn straight from the AD&D game, with minor changes. For *Traveller* purposes, I assume that Imperial humanity discovered a world (code X9666C72, Non-Industrial, of a K2 variable sun) inhabited by a race of beings much like the dwarves of old mythology. The variable nature of their sun encouraged their construction of underground cities, and the stronger gravity of their homeworld produced their shorter stature (1.2 m average) and greater constitution and strength. Underground living and the increased infrared from their sun also produced a form of infrared vision effective for up to 20 meters. Dwarves generally have expressed a desire to avoid contact with the Imperium, but a few individuals would be willing to make a trek to the stars if a ship were to land nearby. The *Traveller's Aid Society* has listed the dwarven homeworld as a Red Zone, due to Imperial restrictions, and special permission to land there is required from the Imperium (throw 12+ for permission, DM's applicable for Admin and Bribery skills). No starport facilities of any kind exist on-planet, though there are several space stations in orbit.

Two-thirds of all dwarves are male, and the rate of population increase is very slow. Their low reproductive rate is balanced by their longer lifespans (400 Imperial years or more). Dwarves also take a longer time to learn their initially generated skills. Some dwarves are assumed to have had previous contact with humans; the skills of Gun Combat, Mechanical, and Jack-of-all-Trades reflect this source of knowledge. They speak their own language, as well as the standard Imperial tongue. Because of their non-intervention in the matters of human politics, dwarves cannot exceed a Social standing of 10 (A) in the Imperium, though they may have higher positions on their homeworld; let any scores over 10 become 10 when the dwarf is travelling away from "home."

For game purposes, dwarven physiology is assumed to be much like human physiology, so Medical skills are interchangeable. Dwarves survive a low-passage journey on a roll of 4+ on two dice, with normal DM's if someone with medical expertise is nearby.

The characteristics of dwarven travellers are generated as per the human

norm, and they may be male or female. They must have initial minimum scores of 6 for Strength and 9 for Endurance. Dwarven travellers are generated at a starting age of 60 years (dwarven years being about the same as Imperial years), and they enter the career table from this point. Rank titles may be kept as part of the dwarf's name, if desired, when the career ends (e.g., Myrmidon Gimli the Wanderer). Psionic potential for dwarves is optional.

Enlistment into a career is automatic for a dwarf; no other option is open due to cultural and Imperial restrictions on letting non-humans into the armed forces of the Imperium. Players who consider this unfair should consider the thought that I also wanted to preserve the flavor of dwarven personality; Gimli the Wanderer has more believability with Battle Axe-3 than with Battle Dress-3.

As shown on the Aging Table, the terms of career service are for twenty years each, reflecting various cultural and personal factors inhibiting their acquiring of skills (and preventing them from becoming too powerful, as well). Survival, positions and promotions, skills and training, and reenlistment are all as per *Traveller* Book 1, p. 5-6. Reenlistment is mandatory on a roll of 12. Dwarves may serve up to ten terms voluntarily, and may retire any time after the fifth term of service. Mustering out is conducted exactly as described on p. 7 of Book 1, with extra die rolls for higher ranks and with restrictions on how many times the cash benefits table may be consulted. Except for the terms of service being quite a bit longer than the human norm, aging effects are applied in the same way as for humans. See the Dwarven Aging Table (given in this article) and p. 7-8 of Book 1 for details. Dwarves usually live to be about 520 years of age. Note that aging effects can reduce strength and endurance below the initially rolled minimums of 6 and 9, respectively.

If a dwarven character uses any of the drugs listed in Book 2, there is a chance of this action having a harmful effect on the dwarf due to biochemical differences between them and humans. On a roll of 8+ (throw each time a dwarf uses a drug) there will be serious side effects from the medication. In these cases, the drug's effect will still occur as desired, but the dwarf will take 1-3 dice of damage as well (unless Medical drug is alone administered, in which case there are no bad side effects).

Dwarven Characteristics Table

Strength:	6—15
Endurance:	9—15
Dexterity:	2—15
Intelligence:	2—15
Education:	2—15
Social Standing:	2—10
	(max. 15 on homeworld)

Dwarven Traveller Career Table

Enlistment:	(automatic)
Survival:	6+
Position:	(DM +2 if Endur 8+)
	7+
Promotion:	(DM +1 if Stren 8+)
	9+
	(DM +1 if Stren 10+)
Re-enlistment:	5+

Automatic Skills Table

Dwarf:	Blade Cbt-1, Prospecting-1
Dwarf Lord:	Leader-1

Acquired Skills Table

Personal Development Table

1	+1 Stren	4	+1 Dext
2	+1 Endur	5	+1 Endur
3	+1 Stren	6	Blade Cbt

Service Skills Table

1	Blade Cbt	4	Prospecting
2	Blade Cbt	5	Prospecting
3	Bow Cbt	6	Brawling

Advanced Education Table

1	Prospecting	4	+1 Soc
2	Medical ¹	5	Survival
3	Leader	6	Tactics

¹—Dwarven medicine, not human

Advanced Education Table

(for characters with Educ 8+)

1	Gun Cbt	4	Prospecting
2	Mechanical	5	Leader
3	Instruction	6	Jack-o-T

Table of Rank

Rank 1:	—
Rank 2:	Hero
Rank 3:	—
Rank 4:	Myrmidon
Rank 5:	Champion
Rank 6:	Lord

Benefits Tables

Material	Cash
1 Blade	1 ———
2 Blade	2 ———
3 Blade	3 ———
4 +1 Endur	4 1000
5 +1 Stren	5 5000
6 Low Psg	6 10000
7 High Psg	7 20000
(+1 DM for Rank 5-6)	(+1 DM for retired characters)

Blades and Polearms Table

Dagger	Mace
Blade	Great Mace
Hand Axe	Sword
Battle Axe	Hammer
Great Axe	Sledgehammer
War Pick	Cudgel
Great Pick	Spears
Pike	

Bow Weapons Table

Short bow
Military crossbow
Sporting crossbow
Repeating crossbow

NEW WEAPONS TABLES

Weapon	Base weight	Length overall	Base price	Wound inflicted	Range Close	matrix Short
Hand Axe	1000	450	40	2d+1	+1	+1
Battle Axe	1500	1000	75	3d	-1	+1
Great Axe	2250	1800	100	4d-3	-4	+2
War Pick	1250	900	50	2d+2	-1	+1
Great Pick	1750	1300	100	3d+1	-3	+1
Hammer	1000	500	20	1d+3	0	0
Sledgehammer ¹	1750	1500	75	3d-3	-1	+1
Mace	2000	1000	70	2d+2	0	+1
Great Mace ¹	2500	1500	100	3d+2	-2	+3

¹ — Two-handed weapon.

All weights are in grams, lengths in millimeters, prices in credits.

Attacker's Weapon	Defender's Armor					Ablat	Battle
	None	Jack	Mesh	Cloth	Reflec		
Hand Axe	+2	+1	-3	-3	+2	-2	-6
Battle Axe	+3	+2	-3	-3	+3	-2	-6
Great Axe	+4	+3	-2	-3	+4	-2	-5
War Pick	+2	+1	-2	-2	+1	-3	-6
Great Pick	+4	+3	-2	-2	+3	-3	-6
Hammer	0	0	-2	-3	0	-2	-7
Sledgehammer	+1	0	-2	-3	+1	-2	-7
Mace	0	0	-2	-3	0	-2	-7
Great Mace	+2	+1	-1	-2	+2	-1	-6

Weapon	Required strength level	Required strength DM	Advantageous strength level	Advantageous strength DM	Weakened blow or swing DM
	Hand Axe	5	-1	8	+2
Battle Axe	6	-2	9	+2	-2
Great Axe	6	-2	10	+2	-3
War Pick	5	-2	9	+2	-2
Great Pick	6	-2	10	+2	-2
Hammer	5	-1	8	+2	-1
Sledgehammer	7	-2	10	+2	-2
Mace	6	-1	9	+2	-1
Great Mace	8	-2	10	+2	-2

CONDENSED COMBAT CHART

Weapon Type	Armor Type and Range													
	None		Jack		Mesh		Cloth		Reflec		Ablat		Battle	
	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S
Hand Axe	5	5	6	6	10	10	10	10	5	5	9	9	13	13
Battle Axe	6	4	7	5	12	10	12	10	6	4	11	9	15	13
Great Axe	8	2	9	3	14	8	15	9	8	2	14	8	17	11
War Pick	7	5	8	6	11	9	11	9	8	6	12	10	15	13
Great Pick	7	3	8	4	13	9	13	9	8	4	14	10	17	13
Hammer	8	8	8	8	10	10	11	11	8	8	10	10	15	15
Sledgehammer	8	6	9	7	11	9	12	10	8	6	11	9	16	14
Mace	8	7	8	7	10	9	11	10	8	7	10	9	15	14
Great Mace	8	3	9	4	11	6	12	7	8	3	11	6	16	11

Note: Number shown is the minimum needed "to hit" rolled on 2d6.

DWARVEN AGING TABLE

Term of service:	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14+
Age:	180	200	220	240	260	280	300	320	340
Strength	(.....1 (7+).....)		(.....-1 (8+).....)						
Dexterity	(.....-1 (8+).....)		(.....-1 (9+).....)						
Endurance	(.....-1 (7+).....)		(.....-1 (8+).....)						
Intelligence no effect before age 400; then -1 (8+).....								
Education unaffected by aging.....								
Social Standing unaffected by aging.....								

"Term of service" refers to the end of that numbered term. "Age" refers to the first day of the personal (physiological, not chronological) year.

The negative shown is the potential reduction in characteristic if the saving throw (given in parentheses) is not made, using two dice.

The word "castle" conjures up thoughts of fortresses with watchtowers atop stone walls, and massive gates behind which guards await an assault from the enemy. Castles are usually thought of as being from the medieval period, but walled cities and elaborate fortresses are a concept much older than that time. Many "castles" existed thousands of years ago, complete with their own histories of espionage, exciting battles, kings and queens, and brave warriors. One such place is the ancient fortress city of Jericho.

Until the advent of modern archaeology, most of our knowledge of Jericho was gleaned from the Book of Joshua in the Old Testament of The Bible. As scientists studied these ruins of antiquity, they found The Bible to be a very accurate historical resource on the subject. People and events which had been previously assumed to be mythical were discovered to have actually existed.

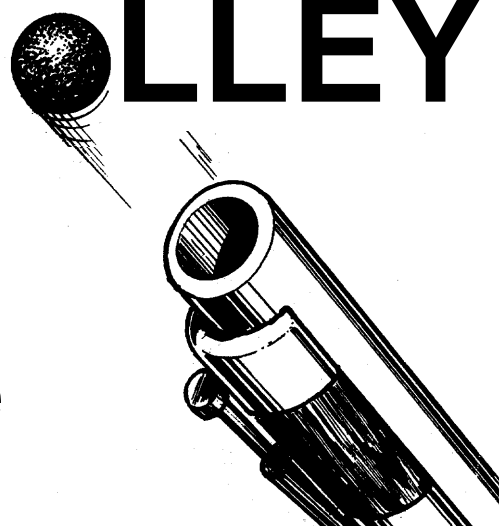
Jericho was an average-sized city strategically located in an oasis seven miles north of the Dead Sea. It was constructed in a way that made direct assaults on it almost impossible. An 11-foot-high stone foundation ringed a 30° smooth slope which rose 35 feet to a main wall — possibly a double wall — that surrounded the city. This slick dome-like surface, called a glacis, prevented battering, made scaling very difficult, and provided no solid foundation for an enemy's ladders. Also because of the slope, would-be invaders could not build fires to fracture the stone. Several citadels peered out over the walls; houses were built on the thick outer barrier, in plain sight but unreachable from the outside. The city was indeed formidable.

According to Biblical accounts, Joshua was told to lead the people of Israel against this immense fortress. His army was ill-equipped for the task, and Jericho was apparently impenetrable. But Joshua's people had faith, and when they marched around the city with the Ark of the Covenant thirteen times over the prescribed seven days, the walls of this great castle crumbled. Evidence indicates that the outside wall fell outward, pulling the inner walls down with it. Jericho lies in ruins today, a mute monument to ancient civilization and to the faith of men.

A SECOND VOLLEY

Taking another shot at firearms, AD&D™ style

by Ed Greenwood



Since the appearance of "Firearms" in DRAGON™ issue #60, several readers have requested a similar treatment of the small arms which developed from the handgun. Accordingly, here is a brief look at the arquebus and its successors. The historical development and battlefield use of such weapons are familiar to many gamers and readily available in library books to most others, so military history pertaining strictly to our "real world" has been omitted.

It is again recommended here that in an AD&D campaign, gunpowder should be considered undiscovered or inert, so that firearms cannot be used in the "standard" fantasy setting. Experimental and enjoyable play involving firearms is best safely confined to parallel "worlds" (alternate Prime Material Planes which can be reached only by the use of magical items, spells, or gates).

A campaign can be quickly unbalanced by firearms that are too accurate, or easy to use, or numerous. I once visited a campaign in which a cache of weaponry culled from the GAMMA WORLD™ game was walled up in the first level of a dungeon. Excavations into a suspiciously circumvented area on our dungeon maps won us an arsenal of powerful explosives and lasers — and deadly boredom. Frying our first dragon was quite exciting, and the second was a workmanlike but still enjoyable job. But the third was routine, and the rest (it was a large dungeon) were boring. Once we'd run out of dragons, we sallied forth from the looted dungeon and barbecued a nearby wandering army of orcs. Play soon ended in that campaign; the party members became absolute rulers of an almost featureless landscape, having destroyed everything they didn't fancy the looks of.

On the other hand, the occasional "hurler of thunderbolts," held by an individual NPC and jealously guarded for use only in dire emergencies, is an acceptable and useful "spice" for an AD&D campaign in need of same. Longtime

readers of DRAGON Magazine will recall (from "Faceless Men And Clockwork Monsters," issue #17) that an adventurer recognized a firearm because he had once seen a mage in Greyhawk with "such a wand." Such rarity and misunderstanding (i.e., the assignment of magical status) of firearms appears the best way to handle such weapons in an AD&D game.

Before embarking on a brief tour of the small arms developed from the handgun, it is well to bear in mind that during these times no large munitions factories or production standards existed (and unless all firearms in the AD&D setting come from one source, this is likely to hold true in play as well). As a result, almost every weapon is unique, having individual characteristics due to varying barrel dimensions and materials, amount and mixture of gunpowder used, and differences in the shot employed. Small arms were in use for a very long time before King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden introduced a fixed cartridge of bullet and powder. Until then, everyone measured their own powder charges on the battlefield. The timid did little damage to the enemy; the reckless blew themselves up. The statistics shown on the tables given in this article should therefore be treated as a "typical" base, to be modified freely to fit the situation at hand.

It is also necessary to keep in mind the accoutrements of a gunner: oil, to keep the weapon in working order and free of rust; a watertight carrying container for gunpowder (such as the powder horn of the American frontier); rags, to clean and wad with; shot, usually large metal balls for piercing armor and stopping men, and handfuls of tiny metal pellets for shooting fowl and vermin; and a rod or rods (often carried slid down one side of a boot) for cleaning out the barrel and ramming the shot home. Details of these vary from weapon to weapon; a DM should keep track of such heavy and awkward gear, and try to keep the use of

guns a fussy and not too rapid business — in a street fight one should grab for a blade, rather than whipping out a pistol or musket and clearing the field — because one would risk a fatal misfire, and in any case would have to coolly stand for one round loading the firearm between each and every shot. A more complete list of a gunner's equipment is provided later on for those who wish to consider encumbrance in detail.

The primitive handgun was a small cannon on a stock. It was fired by means of a red-hot wire put through a touch-hole. Later, a slow-burning match (usually a cord that had been soaked in nitre and diluted alcohol and then dried) replaced the wire. The flame of the "slow match" was more likely to ignite the gunpowder, and the implement was both easier and safer to use: A wire had to be heated in a non-portable fire laid on the ground, which could be perilous with gunpowder nearby, whereas a slow match could be lit with flint and steel at a safe distance, and carried to a more mobile gunner.

Later, the matchlock replaced the hand-held match; at the pull of the trigger, the lit match was dipped in a pan of gunpowder by the S-shaped clamp (or "serpentine") which held it. Firing became more rapid and more accurate — a gunner could now look at his target when preparing to fire, rather than concentrating on the touchhole.

The matchlock was faster than the handgun, but not fast by any other standards. Firing it required ninety-six separate actions — such as measuring the powder and pouring it down the muzzle; dropping in the lead ball and then a wad of rag; uncovering the priming pan, filling it with powder, and closing the pan again; adjusting the position of the match in the serpentine, and lighting the match; and then opening the pan again, aiming, and pulling the trigger. As author Richard Armour puts it, "the gunner hoped his target would hold still while all this was

going on." (This last statement is from Armour's hilarious book, *It All Started With Stones and Clubs (Being a Short History of War and Weaponry from Earliest Times to the Present, Noting the Gratifying Progress Made by Man Since His First Crude, Small-scale Efforts to Do Away' with Those Who Disagreed With Him)*; published by McGraw-Hill, New York, 1967.)

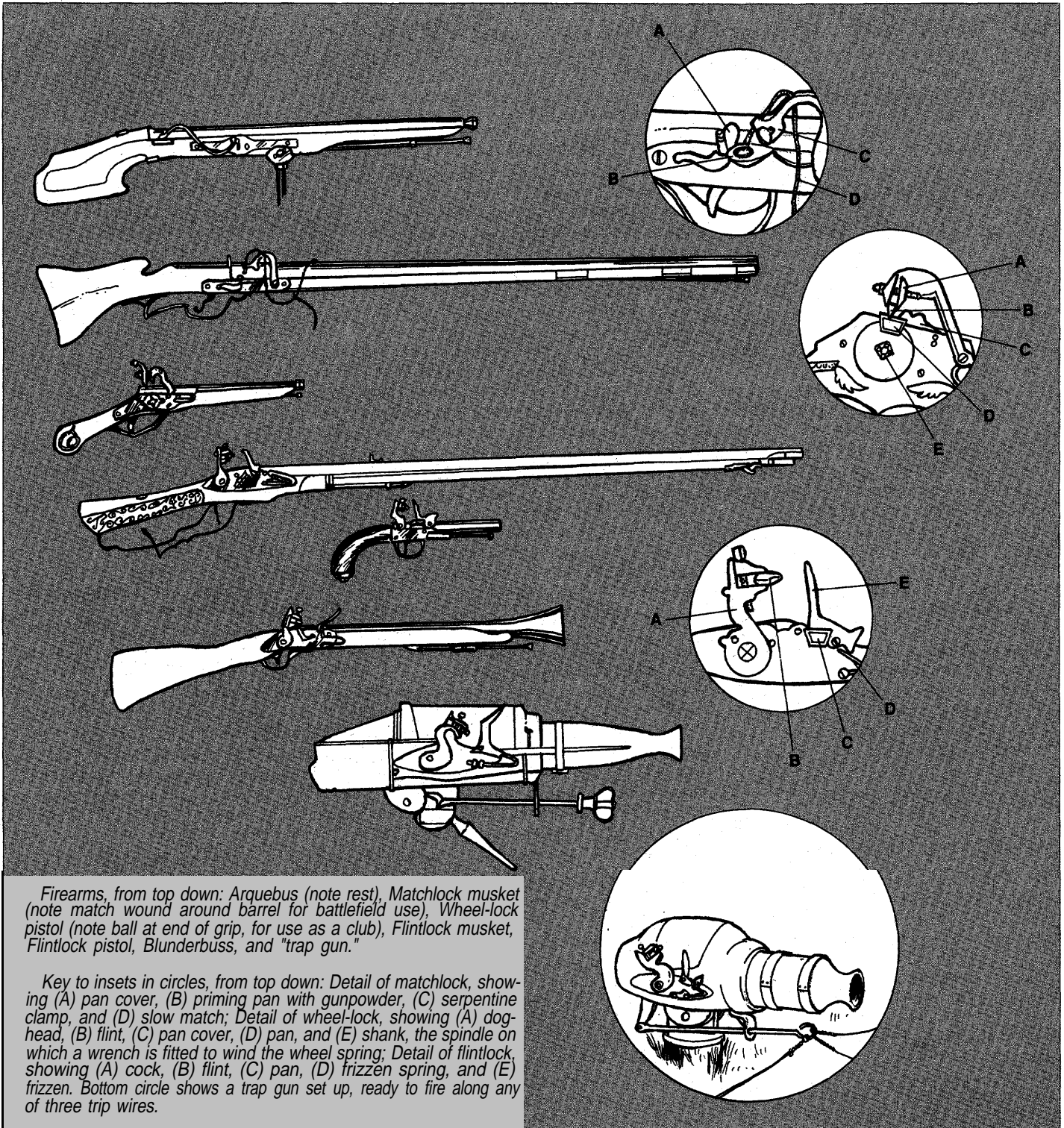
The matchlock had other disadvantages, too: a premature ignition of the potentially dangerous open pan of powder, too much powder, or simply an

uneven distribution of powder in the pan (ever try carefully levelling a spoonful of powder in the midst of a battle?) could cause an explosion at the expense of the gunner and not the target — the source of the expression "flash in the pan."

The barrel of a matchlock was fouled by gunpowder with each shot, and in a long engagement its accuracy declined as the recoil caused by the fouling grew wilder, leaving a gunner's shoulder numb and bruised. A curved stock was soon devised to reduce the recoil impact. There was also the problem of shooting

in the rain; water could easily put the match out. Surprise was impossible because of the smell, glow, and noise of the matches; and it was not unheard of for one gunner to set off his own or a comrade's ammunition. Although names have been applied rather loosely over the years to all sorts of weapons, I have confined "arquebus" to the earlier versions of the handgun, and "caliver" to the lightened matchlock musket.

The musket was an upgunned arquebus, and consequently was so heavy that it had to be supported on a crutch or a



Firearms, from top down: Arquebus (note rest), Matchlock musket (note match wound around barrel for battlefield use), Wheel-lock pistol (note ball at end of grip, for use as a club), Flintlock musket, Flintlock pistol, Blunderbuss, and "trap gun."

Key to insets in circles, from top down: Detail of matchlock, showing (A) pan cover, (B) priming pan with gunpowder, (C) serpentine clamp, and (D) slow match; Detail of wheel-lock, showing (A) dog-head, (B) flint, (C) pan cover, (D) pan, and (E) shank, the spindle on which a wrench is fitted to wind the wheel spring; Detail of flintlock, showing (A) cock, (B) flint, (C) pan, (D) frizzen spring, and (E) frizzen. Bottom circle shows a trap gun set up, ready to fire along any of three trip wires.

rest. It was almost a hundred years before the weapon was lightened enough to dispense with the supports. Although the musket fired a heavier shot, it also jumped in the rest when fired, resulting in lower accuracy. But its bullets could pierce the best armor that could be worn

by a foot soldier. (As this became known, soldiers in full armor all but disappeared from battlefields, and subsequent small arms could be made smaller; the musket no longer needed its rest.) Musketeers still had to be protected by non-shooters while loading their pieces, but almost

overnight firearms became the dominant force in warfare. Infantry who did not employ muskets were armed with pikes, so that a musketeer could undertake the slow, clumsy process of reloading safely within the long reach of defending pikemen. When pikeheads were attached to

TABLE OF GUNS

Gun name	Typical caliber	Range (in AD&D")			Damage		Maximum rate of fire (1 man) (1 = once/round)	Maximum rate of fire (gunner & loader)	cost of weapon (gp)	Avg. weight (lbs.)	Average overall length
		S	M	L	S-M	L					
Arquebus	Widely variable	3	7	12	1-10	1-6	1/3	3/2	500	25	3' 4" + rest (up to 4' 6")
Caliver (matchlock musket)	Variable	4	8	14	2-9	1-8	1/2	1	450	11	4' 6"
Dragon ("Dagg" or "horse pistol") (wheel-lock pistol)	.50	1	2½	4	1-6	1-3	1	1	600	4%	1' 4"
Flintlock pistol	.60	2	3	5	1-6	1-4	1	1	550	2	1' 2"
Early flintlock musket	.70	10	20	30	3-12	1-10	1	1	800	10	5' 6"
Blunderbuss	Widely variable	1	2	3	1-10	1-10	1/2	1/2	500	8	2' 4"

Note: The prices shown on the table are those in an area where weapons are plentiful, and ammunition, repairs or manufacture of same is nearby. Prices should be doubled, tripled, or even increased by a factor of ten where weapons are rare and/or are objects of prestige or power.

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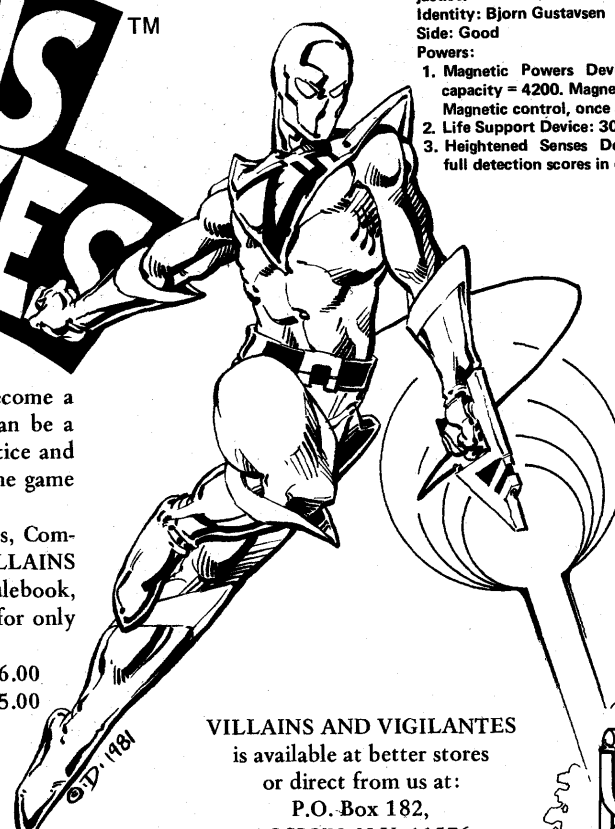
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MAGNETOR: A Swedish electronics researcher who built devices that he might become a champion of justice.
 Identity: Bjorn Gustavsen Age: 20
 Side: Good Level: 1


Powers:

- Magnetic Powers Device: 10 charges. Magnetic capacity = 4200. Magnetic blast range = 21" Magnetic control, once achieved, lasts 12 turns.
- Life Support Device: 30 charges; PR = 1 per hour.
- Heightened Senses Device: Nightvision goggles, full detection scores in darkness.

Wt.: 160 lbs.
 Str.: 14
 End.: 13
 Agil.: 12
 Int.: 14
 Char.: 11
 Dam. Mod.: +1
 Acc.: +1
 Hit Pts.: 9
 Heal: 1.2
 Car. Cap.: 320
 Basic HTH: 1d6
 Power: 53
 Movement: 39"
 Det. Hidden: 10%
 Det. Danger: 14%
 Invent Pts.: 1.4
 Inventing: 42%

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muskets (upon the invention of the bayonet), the pike disappeared.

Two "firelock" mechanisms, the wheel-lock and the flintlock, were developed to solve the problems of the slow match. Both could be loaded and primed at leisure, to be fired at a moment's notice. But both were more expensive than the matchlock, more likely to go awry and misfire or need repairs, and could be fired fewer times before needing cleaning. As a result, they took a while to catch on.

The wheel-lock was never widely used by infantry. Rather than a match, it employed a saw-edged wheel wound up with a spring and a piece of iron pyrite (or flint) held against it in a doghead vise. When the trigger was pressed, the wheel (like a cigarette lighter) would spin, shooting a shower of sparks into the priming powder in its enclosed pan. If properly loaded with dry powder, adjusted and wound, a wheel-lock firearm would almost certainly fire when the trigger was pulled, even in a rainstorm. Cavalry could carry loaded pistols in their holsters for hours or even days. Although the wheel-lock was complicated and slow to load, this "at the ready" feature revolutionized cavalry tactics. Rather than using the shock of their charges to strike and overrun infantry (the reason for pikes), cavalry now performed such dangerous maneuvers as the "caracole," lines of armored cavalrymen carrying three pistols each formed up in lines. Each line in succession rode up to the enemy, fired, and swerved off to reload and form up again in the rear. Not only was this maneuver overly complicated, but a cavalryman riding close enough to shoot enemies could himself be shot at, both by firearms and long-bows. Nevertheless, the addition of wheel-lock pistols restored to cavalry the effectiveness it had enjoyed before pikes and muskets faced its every charge.

The flintlock was to become the standard infantry weapon for more than two hundred years (until the advent of the percussion cap, which resulted in the cartridge or "bullet" familiar to us now, and a firing mechanism consisting of a pin driven forcefully into the rear of the cartridge by a pull of the trigger). The flintlock resembles a tinderbox — a flint strikes steel, and the sparks created fall into the priming powder. The flint is held in a "cock" or vise which (unlike the wheel-lock, wherein the vise is stationary) flies forward like the hammer of the familiar Colt revolver to strike a steel arm (the "frizzen") when the trigger is pulled. Although not as surefire as either the matchlock or the wheel-lock, the flintlock is cheaper and simpler, more durable, and easier to repair in the field. If the flint does not need adjusting, a flintlock can be loaded slightly faster than a matchlock — and it can be loaded in advance and carried ready to fire one

shot at a moment's notice. The persistent failing of the flintlock revealed over centuries of use is that it too often misfires (does not go off). At least, this failing is preferable to one of the main drawbacks of earlier firearms, which was that they literally blew up in the gunner's face.

Firearms were of course continuously modified and improved upon, but this article will not follow on to rifled barrels and the other innovations of the Napoleonic era and later weaponry. Instead, mention must be made of another development of the same idea, which is basically to increase the chance of striking a target by firing a spray of shot rather than a single bullet or ball. A blunderbuss has a short, trumpet-flaring barrel which is loaded with powder, wad, and a handful of iron balls or whatever was available. This was the chief advantage of the blunderbuss: one traded muzzle velocity (and thus penetrating power, range, and accuracy) for the ability of the weapon to take stones and other projectiles that need not be carefully shaped to a specific bore (barrel diameter). Farmer Giles in J. R. R. Tolkien's delightful fantasy *Farmer Giles of Ham* used "anything he could spare to stuff in" as ammunition: old nails, bits of wire, pieces of broken pot, bones and stones "and other rubbish." Giles fought off a giant with his blunderbuss, even if firing it did leave him flat on his back.

A blunderbuss barrel can be made of brass, or a length of stove pipe; it is easy to build and to repair. It can fire anything small enough to easily fit in the barrel: a pound of nails, say, or odds and ends of lead castings or rusting ironmongery (this last usually resulted in infected wounds). A covered blunderbuss, known as a "spring gun," could be set up to discourage poachers and other intruders; it would be mounted on a swivel post a foot or less off the ground and attached to three or four long trip-wires leading off in all directions. When someone disturbed one of the wires, the strain would act on a rod beneath the gun attached to the hammer or cock of the flintlock, and the gun would instantly swing around and fire along the tripped wire.

Any gunner in an AD&D setting must carry the supplies of ammunition and tools necessary to keep his or her temperamental weapon in working order. In practical terms, this generally consisted of keeping one's gunpowder dry and cleaning the weapon after every use. Taking a primitive firearm into battle is a time-consuming job. It is also a skill to use it effectively; every shot must count when the firing rate is so low, and one cannot snatch up a weapon and pick off a target when it must be carefully loaded with a precise amount of powder and the right size of shot. (The use of too-large shot will destroy the weapon and usually also the gunner, whereas too-small shot

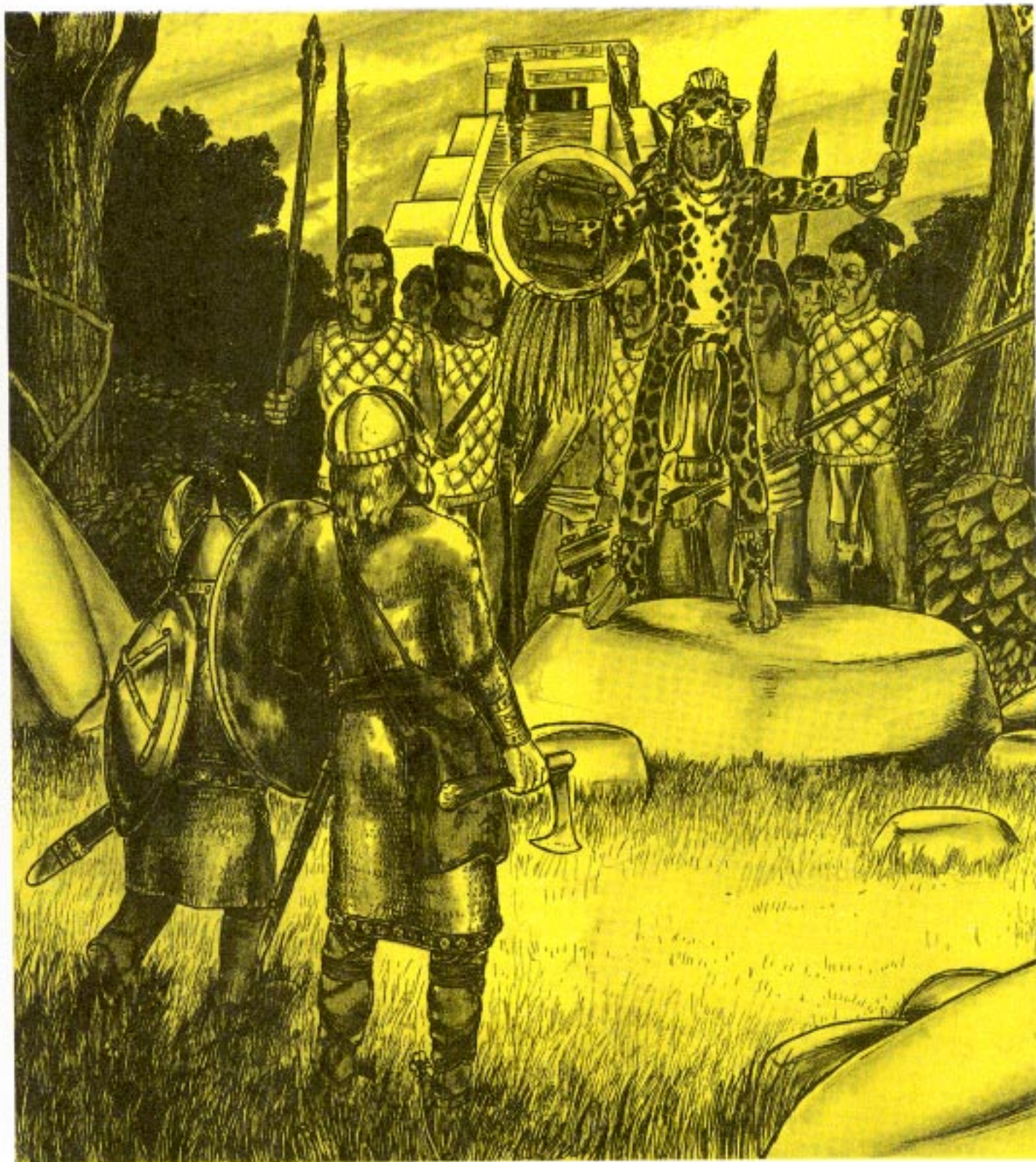
rolls along one side of the barrel, acquiring a spin perpendicular to the line of fire, and therefore an unpredictably curved flight path.) It must also be aimed with care: none of the guns described above will work if not upright; the "snapshot" of the western gunfighter or modern commando is impossible to execute.

Necessary gear for a gunner consisted of matches or flints, a large flask of (coarse) gunpowder and a small "touchbox" of fine priming powder. Often these last were of wood, and carried slung on a bandolier like the modern movie GI carries grenades: when pulled, the top of the flask remained behind, and the gunner put a thumb over the top of the touchbox (which contained just enough powder for one firing) until he could upend it into the priming pan. The matchcord was carried wrapped around one's hat (inside the hat in wet weather), and flints were usually carried in a belt pouch, wrapped so as to keep them from chipping and striking sparks from one another if the holder had to run or scramble about.

Bullets or shot were carried in belt pouches, and when in action, a couple for immediate use were often held in the gunner's mouth (much as a tailor holds pins). All firearms also required ramrods (most of which were carried in a slot provided in the gunstock), scrapers, and cleaning rags and curved metal extractors (which resemble miniature golf irons) for raking out bullets or shot. Making bullets required lead and a brass mold; often only one mold would produce bullets of the right size for a particular gun. Flint and steel, and dry kindling, were required for lighting slow matches and/or laying the fire necessary to cast bullets. To use the early arquebus practically in battle, a gunner needed a helper to tend his fire, mix the ingredients of gunpowder (at a safe distance from the fire) and carry the weapon's rest (in battle, the gunner himself carried it about by a loop of cord tied around his wrist). Wheel-lock weapons also required a "spanner" or key which wound up a chain attached to the spring which spun the wheel, usually carried tied to one's belt so that it would not be lost.

A gunner also carried a sword and a dagger (which served also as eating knife, flint scraper, and cleaning tool), and in a pinch could use the pointed end of the crutch-shaped rest for defense. Most early pistols were made with huge balls or knobs at the butt end of the grip, so that when empty they could be used as clubs — doing 1-3 points of damage, 1-4 if a mounted wielder is combating a target on foot. A musket uses up to two ounces of powder per firing; one pound of lead made eight musket balls if they fitted the barrel tightly, or ten if they "rolled in." Modern shotgun gauges developed from this sizing of shot by the number of bullets to the pound.

MECHICA



MECHICA

NOTES FOR THE DM

"Mechica" is an AD&D™ adventure for 5-8 characters, each of 4th-7th level, designed to introduce the player characters to a new culture.

This module is based on pre-Columbian Meso-America. Some changes from historical reality have been made to make the transition from reality to fantasy easy to accomplish. It is recommended that the DM research one or more of several historical works in order to more accurately recreate the atmosphere established in this adventure.

As the DM reads through this module before running it, he will notice that many encounter areas are not populated with specific people and things, but are described in general terms. This allows the adventure to be as flexible as possible — but it also means that the DM must flesh out the environment before it is ready for the arrival of the adventurers.

Much of the information presented in the following introduction can be revealed to players before the adventure begins, or not, as the DM sees fit. "Mechica" will be more challenging to player characters if they are required to find out most of the facts about the environment on their own.

INTRODUCTION

The Mechica people had been but the subject of legend and song until recently. Even only as legends, they caused fear among the bravest of adventurers; their language, customs, deities, and methods of warfare were all different from those of other cultures. The legends recounted by a few adventurers who witnessed the great Mechica capital of Tenocatlan and lived to tell about it described vast wealth within the city, and strange pyramids with steps that reached to the sky, rising up from the center of an area where nobody seemed to dwell. Nearly every wall within the city was decorated with strange images: Gold and silver reptiles sprouting from flower-shaped feathers, gems of unbelievable worth forming the eyes of box-shaped faces, and images of snarling jaguars that inspired fear in the hearts of those who heard the tales of Tenocatlan. The tales also told of jaguar warriors that, it is said, were neither animal nor human.

Now the Mechica people have emerged out of the legends and taken a role in the lives of the Sapotecs, a community of

natives who live in the Sapotec Mountains near where the Mechica stronghold is said to exist. The Mechica do indeed exist, according to the Sapotecs who have fled from the southlands in terror. The sight of brown-skinned natives hurrying northward past onlookers, with belongings piled on their backs, is becoming more common with each passing day. If the Sapotecs are stopped on the roadway and questioned, they will only pause long enough to point to the south and mutter "Mechica" before hurrying onward. Even those who try to use a *Comprehend Languages* spell to obtain more information will find the explanations sketchy and too fantastic to believe.

THE LEGENDS

Several decades ago, a group of adventurers wandered into the Sapotec Mountains. When they reached one of the highest ridges, they discovered a rolling green valley to the south below them. What seemed to be vast fields of crops, occasionally broken by small stone or wooden buildings, covered most of the valley. Toward the center of the valley, some small patches of crops appeared to be floating on a large lake. In the center of the lake was an island, connected to the rest of the valley by three wide causeways. Visible on the island itself were several strangely shaped buildings.

The adventurers began to descend the mountain in order to make contact with the residents of the valley. But halfway down the trail they were attacked by a small group of men and what seemed to be their pet jaguars. The adventurers were all taken prisoner, except for a thief named Hy Dinshadow, who somehow escaped detection by the men and beasts and returned with his tales to tell the people of the northland.

Over the intervening years, several other groups of adventurers have sought to make contact with these strange people, but only the fate of one of these other groups is known, again because of one who escaped. In this instance, a young ranger was taken prisoner and led to the pyramids on the island. He noticed that the causeways were well defended, yet he was surprised to find that nobody dwelled in the area they led to. The island seemed to be some sort of a center that contained temples devoted to strange-looking deities, an amphitheater where he saw a strange and violent game

taking place, beautiful gardens, and an extensive collection of animals and humanoids in some sort of zoo.

It was in one part of this "zoo" that the young ranger was housed, along with humans who had been taken prisoner from earlier expeditions. And each other race had its own display area: elves, dwarves, orcs, goblins, halflings — every humanoid race — was represented for the viewing pleasure of the "Mechica," as these people called themselves. From time to time, he saw one or more of his cellmates taken away, never to return.

One day, just after a large group of new prisoners had been brought to the humans' cell, the inmates discovered that they could enable one of their number to escape by forming a pyramid that reached to the top of the wall. Because the ranger was young and skilled in the ways of survival in the wilderness, he was the one chosen to go over the wall. He dashed to the lake, luckily found a canoe nearby and successfully fended off the attack of a jaguar as he cast off. The young man eventually returned to his homeland in the north and related his tale, asking for volunteers to form a rescue mission. But none of his countrymen would go south, either out of fear or disbelief.

Today, the people of the north avoid the Sapotec Mountains and the lands to the south, for nobody knows whether the tales of long ago are true, or merely superstition created to explain the many persons who have disappeared in the mountains. The only humans known to the people of the north who live near the mountains area are the Sapotecs, who avoid all contact with people other than their own.

(There is only a 5% chance that a Sapotec native will speak the common tongue, and any such character will not be friendly, but will answer honestly when he/she can and then attempt to move away from the questioner as quickly as possible. The Sapotec natives are peaceful and will avoid conflict whenever possible.)

THE MECHICAS

Each member of the Mechica people will be either a cleric, fighter, thief, or warrior (a version of ranger; see below). Although there are no Mechica magic-users or illusionists, some clerics and members of other classes have been

An AD&D™ adventure for characters of 4th-7th level

Designed by Gali Sanchez

presented with magic items (gifts from their deities) that would not normally be found unless magic-users were present.

Warriors are essentially rangers, complete with tracking ability, druid spell ability (at appropriate level), 2d8 hit points at first level, etc. Exceptions to the rules regarding rangers are these: Warriors must be neutral, lawful neutral, or chaotic neutral; they receive no bonus against giant class creatures; and any number of warriors may work together.

Mechicas gain a +1 bonus to dexterity (like elves) and are +1 to hit when using any bow other than a crossbow. The types of armor they can use, and the equivalent armor class designations in the AD&D rules, are:

No armor, no shield: AC 10

No armor, shield: AC 9

Quilted cotton, no shield: AC 8

Quilted cotton, shield: AC 7

Cotton & animal skin, no shield: AC 7

Cotton & animal skin, shield: AC 6

Cotton or skin & shell or gold/silver inlay: AC 6

Cotton or skin & shell or gold/silver inlay, plus shield: AC 5

Mechicas will not wear any metal armor except for gold or silver inlaid on cotton, skin, or turtle shells.

Mechica do not speak the common tongue. They speak a language called Nahuatla (na- hwa -tlah) which is understandable by the Sapotec natives who live nearby. They will not recognize any alignment language. Their system of worship is based on that described in the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopeda, Central American Mythos. (Since this adventure deals with the fantasy world "Mechica" instead of the historical Mexico, all references to human sacrifice in the DDG book should be ignored for purposes of this adventure. Instead, victims are brought to the Mechicas' ceremonial altar, the *Risa* stone, and polymorphed into an appropriate animal — usually a jaguar — to appease the deity.)

The highest official position in the Mechica culture is the Emperor, who is a high-level cleric. The Emperor is followed in the hierarchy by a court of high priests (high-level clerics), then by high-level generals and other military leader types.

Mechica warfare is very different from the European style of combat. The object is to reduce a foe's hit points so that the opponent surrenders or falls "dead" but

can then be tied up and kept alive by a healing spell. Religion is the center of Mechica life, and the deities must always be appeased. This means that a steady supply of characters for the *Risa* stone must be insured. A dead enemy does nothing for the deities; surrendered enemies can be polymorphed into different animals to appease the various self-centered deities of the Mechica culture.

The weapons of the Mechica people are derived from available materials and their methods of warfare. Obsidian is used as the material for the blade in almost every type of edged weapon. The ebony rocks are chipped into razor-sharp, jagged pieces, then mounted on a wood handle with the butt end carved in the shape of a canoe paddle. The length of the handle varies from 6-7' for a spear to less than a foot for the macahuitl (mah-cah-wee-tul), a large-bladed weapon resembling a machete, which is the most popular of all Mechica weapons. The macahuitl is commonly 3-4' long from the tip of the blade to the end of the handle, although they vary since each weapon is handmade by its wielder. Stone hammers are also common, although they certainly do not compare to their European counterparts in terms of damage. Daggers are made of obsidian; the blades are sometimes fitted into wood or bone handles, but most often the dagger is entirely formed of the volcanic stone.

The most popular missile weapons among the Mechica are the sling, the short bow, and the javelin. These do not vary from the weapons described in the AD&D rules, except that flint, obsidian, and bone are used for the bullets, arrowheads, and spear heads instead of metal. The most dangerous Mechica missile weapon is the tlacochtli (tlah-coachtlee), a small javelin with three bone barbs. It was hurled by an atlatl (spear thrower), in the same way a harpoon is cast, with a maximum range equal to the length of the rope attached to the end of the shaft of the tlacochtli. When the point of the javelin strikes an opponent, the wielder grasps the rope, pulls it taut, and threatens the victim. If the victim surrenders, he is tied up and taken prisoner. If the victim does not surrender, the attacker will pull back on the rope, pulling the barbs back through the wound and doing even greater damage than the original hit.

Dmg. (s-m/l)	Mechica weapons	
	Lng.	Spc. req. Spd. fat.
Hammer ¹ 1-4/1-3	c.1½'	2' 4
Macahuitl (as sword) ² 2-8/2-16 ⁵	c.3½'	4' 6
Macahuitl (as club) ³ 1-4/1-2 ⁵	c.3½'	4' 5
Spear ⁴ 1-6/2-8 ⁶	as per AD&D	
Tlacochtli ⁴ 1-8/1-8 ⁷	as per spear	

¹ — Adjustments vs. different armor classes are the same as for the hammer as described in AD&D rules.

² — Adjustments vs. AC same as for AD&D long sword.

³ — Adjustments vs. AC same as for AD&D club.

⁴ — Adjustments vs. AC same as for AD&D spear.

⁵ — The macahuitl can be wielded as a sword, striking with the obsidian edge, or as a club, striking with the flat wooden side. When the weapon is used as a sword, the obsidian will grow dull as the number of successful hits increases; therefore, damage should be computed as 2-8 vs. size S or M opponents for each of the first two hits, 1-8 for the next two, 1-6 for the next two, and 1-4 thereafter until combat is resolved. Against size L opponents, the damage figures should be 2-16 for the first round, 1-12 for the second, 1-10 for the third, 1-8 for the fourth, 1-6 fifth, 1-4 sixth, and 1-2 for the remainder of the melee.

⁶ — The Mechica spear was constructed like the macahuitl. To account for the gradual dulling of the obsidian, damage should be computed as 1-6 for the first two hits vs. size S or M opponents, and 1-4 for the remainder of the combat. Against size L opponents, damage is 2-8 for two hits, 1-6 for the next two hits, and 1-4 for the rest of the combat.

⁷ — The tlacochtli requires 1 round to load on the atlatl, fire, and hit an opponent. If the hit is successful, damage of 1-8 is computed. The next round must be spent retrieving the tlacochtli if it missed its target; or, if it hit, the weapon can be pulled back through the target for double damage (2-16). If initiative is won by the tlacochtli victim, the wounded character can only cut the line if he/she has a sharp weapon already drawn; a comrade with a sharp weapon already drawn can cut the rope, provided that character has the initiative and is close enough to the victim to do so. Otherwise the wounded character can only surrender, or else sustain the 2d8 damage rolled for pulling the weapon back out. The tlacochtli is used in an attempt to force the victim to surrender, and a Mechica will always give a victim the opportunity to do so, unless his own life is threatened.

THE PROBLEM

In the past, the Mechicas paid homage to many different deities, favoring no one of them over any other. But now the tribe's high priest, Emperor Cuactehmoc (pictured at right), has ordered that Tezcatlipoca (DDG p. 35) be appeased first and foremost, at the expense of Quetzalcoatl (DDG p.32). He has directed that war and chaos be spread through the surrounding countryside so that as many prisoners as possible can be cast upon the *Risa* stone. The leader has decided to overrun the area with (polymorphed) jaguars in honor of the most treacherous of deities. This, of course, is most pleasing to Tezcatlipoca, the "Smoking Mirror," who cannot intervene directly on his own behalf because doing so would dangerously upset the delicate balance of power maintained by the deities. For similar reasons, no other deities feel safe in trying to intervene and keep Cuactehmoc from realizing his plans, because all of them fear upsetting the balance that exists between their various spheres of influence, and none of them want to risk doing something that might destroy that balance and thereby destroy the universe they all control.

The various Mechica clans, religious orders, and military orders are all united behind their emperor in an effort to capture as many prisoners as possible. Bands of Mechica warriors are spreading northward over the ridge of the Sapotec Mountains in search of victims.

When captured, prisoners are brought back to the Order of Jaguar Priests at Tenocatlan. These are the fiercest clerics of all the Mechica, for they inflict lycanthropy upon themselves, becoming werejaguars, as a part of their training and as a sign of their devotion. Even other Mechicas (those who are not Jaguar Priests) fear these clerics.

The Jaguar Priests, while in various stages of lycanthropy, cast prisoners on the *Risa* stone, a statue of a reclining man holding his hands on his chest. By forcing the victim down onto the stone on his or her back and uttering the proper words, the priests cause the victim to be polymorphed into a jaguar. This state will remain until a *dispel magic* spell is cast by a magic-user of 16th level or higher. The polymorphed character(s) will otherwise follow the specifications of the *polymorph others* spell as described in the Players Handbook. The new "jaguar" is then set free — but the creature will quickly find itself subject to attack from any humanoids who come into contact with it, including Mechicas, who value jaguar skin for armor and decorative purposes.

In order to stop this spreading of evil, someone or some group of characters will eventually have to oust Cuactehmoc. To accomplish this, an individual or a party of adventurers will have to somehow get into Tenocatlan, since the



Emperor never leaves the holy city unless a deity requires it.

The problem should not be related to the party directly by the DM; rather, the adventurers should be required to obtain information (from NPCs) that will make it clear to them what their goal should be, and then set about accomplishing that goal.

WEREJAGUAR

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-12

ARMOR CLASS: 3

MOVE: 15"

HIT DICE: 5+3

% IN LAIR: 20%

TREASURE TYPE: *R in lair*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-3/1-3/1-8

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Rake for 1-4/1-4*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Silver weapon or*

+1 or better weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Average*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*

SIZE: *M*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

Werejaguars are all members of the Order of Jaguar Priests and worship Tezcatlipoca. Except where indicated otherwise, they conform in all respects to the characteristics of lycanthropes as described in the Monster Manual. It is viewed by these priests as a sign of total devotion to take the physical form of

their deity, and they willingly submit themselves to the ordeals of lycanthropy. The disease has a 28-day cycle: For one week the human cleric undergoes a slow change, growing claws, cat-like facial features, and the like. During this time, the werejaguar is still able to act as a cleric and maintain a "normal" day-to-day life. After one week, the cleric looks exactly like a large jaguar and will go out and prowl for victims. The werejaguar will attack any living creature, unless or until the jaguar's defeat seems unavoidable. Once engaged in combat, a werejaguar will never surrender; escape will always be the preferred alternative to defeat whenever escape is possible. Otherwise, the cat will fight to the death. Werejaguars will never attack others of their own kind, but will attack other Mechicas just as they would any sort of humanoid.

After one week in jaguar form, the creature begins the week-long process of changing back to human form. After the change back is complete, the lycanthrope goes about his or her normal "human" routines. Werejaguars can cast cleric spells any time except during the week when they are in jaguar form. These creatures are never held accountable for their killings by the Mechica people while in jaguar form.

FANTASY AND HISTORY

This adventure is loosely based on the Aztec or Mexica civilizations of the 13th-16th centuries. If players have some knowledge of these civilizations, the DM should let them use it. In game terms, this knowledge can be described as part of the earlier mentioned tales and legends about the Mechicas. Enough alterations have been made in this adventure from the actual history of the Aztecs that much of a player's pre-learned information will serve no purpose. This can and should be attributed to the alterations of time and a few overly imaginative story tellers. (For instance, the Aztecs were known for a form of human sacrifice in which the hearts of their victims were cut out of their chests. If and when characters are taken prisoner and brought to the *Risa* stone, the DM should make it appear as though they are about to be killed instead of polymorphed, right up to the time when the shape change occurs.)

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

In order to enable the DM to fit this adventure into an already existing campaign, there is no specified starting point for the journey southward. The starting point can be placed on a map of the DM's world, at a location in close proximity to a tropical mountain area. The party can be made aware of the current refugee problem from the south as something that comes to their attention in the natural course of things.

The journey from the starting point to the foothills of the Sapotec Mountains should take about two weeks by foot, or half as long if all party members have mounts. A party can only take mounts as far as the foothills, which are heavily forested with lush tropical jungle. The journey from the foothills into the Sapotec Mountains will require one week of further travel on foot.

Random encounters should be rolled for normally from the Temperate And Subtropical Conditions Table, Inhabited And/Or Patrolled Areas, from p. 186 of the DMG. This table will apply for the trip from the starting point to the foothills. The column for "Predominant Terrain" should be chosen to fit the conditions on an already existing campaign map. Alternatively, if no map is being used to get the party from the starting point to the foothills, the "Plain" column should be used. In addition to the provisions of this encounter table, there is also a 1 in 10 chance per turn of encountering 1-4 Sapotec refugees heading north. As stated before, they will hardly ever speak the common tongue and will resist questioning. If pressured, they will identify themselves as Sapotec tribesmen (*Comprehend Languages* required), and if asked why they are fleeing they will speak of the "jaguar plague." But they will only give this information if they have no other choice. Sapotecs are peaceful, they mind their own affairs, and they expect the same in return. If there is any way of avoiding contact with strangers, including running away, the tribesmen will do so.

Upon arriving at the foothills, the party will have noticed the weather to be warmer and much more humid than before. The vegetation will also show the change in climate. The farther south the party proceeds, the warmer the temperature will become. In the foothills, random encounters will still be occur on a 1 in 10 chance per turn. But the type of encounter will now be determined using the table below:

Creature type	Dice roll
Ant, giant	01-02
Ape	03-05
Bear, black	06-09
Beetle, rhinoceros	10-12
Centipede, giant	13-16
Couatl (see note)	17-19
Herd animal	20-25
Jaguar	26-47
Lycanthrope, werejaguar	48-52
Men, tribesmen (Mechica)	53-56
Men, tribesmen (Sapotec)	57-60
Scorpion, giant	61-64
Snake, constricting	65-70
Snake, poisonous	71-74
Snake, spitting	75-76
Spider, giant	77-80
Spider, huge	81-86
Toad, giant	87-94
Toad, giant, poisonous	95-00

Note: Any couatl encountered will actually be a minion of Quetzalcoatl, the deity known as the "Feathered Serpent." If members of the party somehow recognize the creature for what it is, and call to it, the flying snake will approach. It will speak the common tongue fluently, although it will not volunteer information. If adventurers request specific facts about the Mechicas, the feathered reptile will answer up to three questions, in a yes-or-no manner only.

In its capacity as a minion of Quetzalcoatl, the creature will fear that its giving out of too much information might be construed by other deities as an attempt at direct intervention by Quetzalcoatl. It will therefore try to help as best it can, but will not divulge more than three yes-or-no answers.

MAP "A" ENCOUNTER AREAS

After forging through the narrowest of footpaths (which require movement in single file at all times) for one week, the party will discover that the lush tropical forest comes to an abrupt end at the foot of a steep mountain ridge. The mountains are granite; the terrain is occasionally speckled with some scrub-type plants or trees. These plants are new, the beginning of the "revival" of the plant life that was destroyed in the last volcanic eruption. This fact should be easily deduced by any party member who questions why the vegetation in the area comes to such an abrupt halt. This knowledge may spark some concern among party members, since several volcanoes (not active, but the characters won't know that) can be seen along both sides of the now-wider trail. The party may travel three abreast on this part of the trail. If characters move off the trail, travel is reduced to 1/4 of normal movement rate due to the sharp climbs and drops in the terrain that were created by volcanic lava flows and earthquakes.

1. Empty Sapotec Calpulli: After the party clears the first ridge, they will notice a pathway jutting off to the east. If this path is examined, the party will discover that it has been traveled on recently. If a ranger is in the group, he or she will recognize and be able to track the footprints of a single barefoot human. The path can be followed back roughly one-quarter mile into a steep ravine. At the end of the ravine is a calpulli (wooden dwelling) in a state of disrepair. It is about 40' wide and angles back to a depth of 100'. The front entrance is uncovered. If they enter, the party will find the dwelling to be a single room that has long been abandoned. Eight hammocks hang between the wall and a series of posts that run from floor to ceiling. Also in the room are 16 floor mats, some crude stone implements and eating utensils made of gourds, a pile of rotten squash in a corner, and a crude

figure of a feathered snake, with the feathers made of gold. (The figure is worth 30 g.p., for the gold only. It is the only item of any value in the room, which appears to have been ransacked.) If characters search under the floor mats, they will find a total of 27 s.p. The bowls, clustered in the center of the room, contain food, although their contents now appear to be a fungus growth. In short, it appears as though the people who occupied this dwelling were interrupted or made to flee in the middle of their daily routine. If players ask, the markings on the bowls will remind them of similar markings on items carried by the Sapotec refugees in the north.

2. Alcoman: While descending from the first ridge of mountains, each character will have a 1 in 6 chance (2 in 6 for elves, half-elves, and rangers) of noticing a man watching the party from behind a low bush. He will be some 50' from the trail. If he is called to in the common tongue, he will look confused more than frightened. He will answer with the words "No kill." If he is fired upon first, he will fight back.

His name is Alcoman Ocelotl (4th level fighter, AC8, HP26, ALLN, Str 14, Int 11, Wis 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Cha 10, quilted cotton armor, short bow, macahuitl, 12 arrows) and he is a direct descendant of one of the prisoners in the "zoo." His grandfather escaped from the Mechicas and settled in the mountains, where he ended up married to a Sapotec woman. He passed on two things to his grandchild before he died: a rudimentary understanding of the common tongue, and an intense hatred of the Mechicas. If he is befriended, Alcoman will relate what he knows of the Mechicas and will volunteer to help the party as a scout and information source. Alcoman's biggest problem with the party will be his severely limited command of the common tongue. He will only talk in simple, "Tarzan-style" common. (But he is totally fluent in the Mechica language and well versed in the Mechica religion, as are all Sapotec people.) He will relate the history of the calpulli described in Encounter 1 (above) if he is asked about it. His explanation is that the calpulli — where he used to live — was raided and ransacked by Mechica warriors dressed as jaguars, and the residents were carried off. However, Alcoman does not know the fate of the other calpulli members (he will explain that he was out hunting when the raid took place).

Alcoman will also tell of the profusion of jaguars that has caused havoc in the area. He does not know the cause of the sudden population increase, but he seems to believe that Tezcatlipoca is behind it somehow. As far as he knows, all of the rest of the Sapotec families have fled the area, or else they have suffered the same fate as the members of

Alcoman's calpulli. The young fighter has stayed because of his intense hatred of the Mechica, his youthful pride, and his desire to help other refugees who might remain in the area.

He knows that the great Mechica city of Tenocatlan exists and is located somewhere along the trail leading south, but Alcoman has never been any farther south than this; the Mechicas and the jaguars are too numerous for him to risk traveling that far by himself.

Because their behavior and appearance remind him of his grandfather, Alcoman is infatuated with the members of the adventuring party. If the party chooses to bring Alcoman along, he will show the group loyalty beyond all the members' expectations. He will defend any and all members of the party against all odds, even to the death if necessary. He will become a most useful adventurer, despite his youth and relatively low level. When the party arrives at the forks in the road further along the path, Alcoman will not know which path leads toward Tenocatlan, since he has never ventured this far.

Should the party choose to leave Alcoman behind, he will follow at a distance, waiting for an opportunity to rush to the party's aid. He will, in fact, persist unless bound and left behind. He feels that if he shows himself to be capable, the party will eventually accept him.

If Alcoman is slain before being given an opportunity to interact with the adventurers, the party will find on his person 7 g.p., a likeness of Quetzalcoatl worth 10 g.p., and a bracelet (also worth 10 g.p.) that was given to him by his grandfather. An inspection will show the bracelet to be obviously different from either the Mechica or Sapotec styles of decoration. The party members should then be left to ponder the origin of the bracelet, since they now have no means of finding out the truth.

3. The Tlaloques: Should the adventurers choose the "wrong" road (the one heading west), they will find that this pathway comes to an abrupt end after about a day's travel. At the end of this trail is a large ditch. Close inspection by a dwarf or gnome will show that the ditch was recently dug (within the last week or less) and that it appears to be the work of gnomes. In fact, the excavation is the work of the tlaloques (tlah-low-kays), a race of gnomes created by the deity Tlaloc. The purpose of the ditch is to provide a place for fallen rain to gather, in hopes that the accumulation of water will eventually form a lake. (The ditch is presently dry, and is still under construction.) Tlaloques are like gnomes in every respect, except that they are all of neutral alignment and speak only Nahuatl, the language of the Mechicas and Sapotecs. When adventurers arrive in the area, they will encounter six tlaloques:



Xocholotl (ftr/thief, 5/5, AC 7, HP 32, ALN, Str11, Int9, Wis11, Dex11, Con 17, Cha 9, macahuitl, dagger, shield)

Aguacatl (ftr, 7th lvl, AC 6, HP 49, AL N, Str 11, Int 8, Wis 14, Dex 9, Con 15, Cha 15, macahuitl, shield)

Coyotl (ftr/thief, 3/3, AC 8, HP 13, AL N, Str 12, Int 10, Wis 18, Dex 14, Con 11, Cha 13, tlacochtli)

Guaxolotl (thief, 8th lvl, AC 8, HP 42, ALN, Str12, Int16, Wis11, Dex 14, Con 17, Cha 17, dagger)

Chapultl (ftr, 8th lvl, AC 6, HP 43, AL N, Str 16, Int 16, Wis 17, Dex 13, Con 15, Cha 10, macahuitl, and shield)

Tula (illusionist, 6th lvl, AC 7, HP 17, AL N, Str9, Int 16, Wis 12, Dex 17, Con 11, Cha 14, dagger; spells to be determined by DM, but one of them must be invisibility 70' radius).

The tlaloques will always have a guard watching from within the ditch, and therefore will have an 8 in 10 chance of

spotting the advancing party before the adventurers spot the tlaloques. If the advancing characters are spotted, the tlaloques will gather around Tula, who will cast his *invisibility 10' radius* spell on any of the work crew and wait to play havoc on the party members. As do other gnomes, tlaloques love a good laugh at someone else's expense. The DM should choose illusionist spells for Tula that will leave the tlaloques rolling on the ground with glee. Should any member of the party take offense at being the object of ridicule, this will only serve to draw more attention to that member from the tlaloques. If the party members accept their fate in good spirits, the tlaloques will "thank" the adventurers by becoming visible and offering them a *ring of water walking*. The gift is in fact well intended and fittingly represents these minions of the deity of rain. On the other hand, if the characters don't like their treatment and resort to arms, the tlaloques will fight to

the end. They carry no gold, for they have no need of precious metals. They do have a *spade of colossal excavation*, however, and in the event of defeat this would fall into the adventurers' hands. Tlaloc would curse the party in the event of the tlaloques' death, bringing driving rain down upon them for 5-10 consecutive days.

4. Ocelotlacan, Calpulli of the Jaguar Knights: This is where the Jaguar Knights train. It also serves as the staging area for the invasion of the surrounding countryside. As the party comes over the ridge above this site, they will see Lake Taxcoco for the first time. The view is stunning from the point where the trail divides. In clear weather the characters can see more than 40 miles away from their vantage point atop the high mountain pass. Below them (weather permitting) they can see islands with rows of corn, beans, squash, and fruit trees growing as if magically inspired. Dugout canoes hold fishermen with large nets. Near the Swamps of Tepoztatlan (Encounter area 9; see below) canoes carry hunters with short bows in search of ducks and geese. Ocelotlacan is also in sight, below and to the southeast. The characters can avoid the barracks if they choose, but there is a 2 in 6 chance of the party being spotted by sentries in each round the adventurers stand looking at the vista.

If the party is spotted, an alarm will be sounded, sending a band of some 60 Jaguar Knights (dispersed in groups of 4-7 warriors each) after the party. All Jaguar Knights have statistics and abilities appropriate to the warrior subclass described earlier.

The knights will scour the countryside until they have found the members and captured or killed them. The object will always be to capture if at all possible so that the characters can be sent to the *Risa* stone. All warriors will wear jaguar skin and cotton as a uniform. Some will carry shields, but those who carry a tlacochtli cannot use that weapon and a shield at the same time. In each small group of Jaguar Knights, a captain (12th level or higher) will command 3-6 warriors of lower level. Warriors will use their tracking ability to try to locate and apprehend the trespassers.

5. Teotihuacal, "The City of the Gods": If the characters reach this "city" they will see three structures. The northernmost structure is a pyramid with a temple at the top. This is the Pyramid of the Moon, and the temple is dedicated to Huitzilopochtli (DDG p. 34), the deity of war. To the south and east of this structure is a pyramid three times the size of the first. This is the Pyramid of the Sun, and its temple is dedicated to Tezcatlipoca. The third building is a conglomeration of columns, all made in the likeness

of a feathered serpent. In the middle of the column-filled area rises a temple. If Alcoman is with the party, he will quickly recognize this temple as one erected to his deity, Quetzalcoatl. Alcoman will insist that the party enter that temple instead of either of the other two. He has no way of knowing which deities the other temples are dedicated to, unless he is forced to enter them. From ground level (outside the temples), the "city" appears deserted.

5A. The Temple of the Moon: The base of this pyramid measures some 490' square with a 60'-wide stairway rising along one side leading to the top. Upon reaching the landing on top of the second of three tiers of stairs, the party will notice two 30' x 30' temple-like structures. The sounds of some sort of ritual can be heard coming from the structure on the west side. Alcoman will not be able to identify anything at this point. Inside are four clerics, all wearing headdresses made of hummingbird feathers. Alcoman will recognize the clerics as devotees of Huitzilopochtli, the god of war. They are:

Huitzolotl (cleric, 6th level, AC 7, HP 22, AL CN, Str 12, Int 7, Wis 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Cha 9, hammer, shield)

Tecolotl (cleric, 10th level, AC 7, HP 60, AL CE, Str 7, Int 11, Wis 18, Dex 5, Con 16, Cha 12, +2 hammer, shield)

Pozolotl (cleric, 10th level, AC7, HP 40, AL NE, Str 9, Int 6, Wis 12, Dex 8, Con 11, Cha 9, hammer, +1 shield)

Zacatl (cleric, 8th level, AC 3, HP 59, AL NE, Str 18, Int 17, Wis 18, Dex 18, Con 17, Cha 8, +1 to hit, +2 to dmg, -4 defensive adj. to AC, +4 to saving throw, +3 react/att, *ring of spell turning*, hammer, shield)

The four clerics will remain deeply involved in their ritual unless the party members speak or call to each other when approaching the temple. If combat ensues, there will be a 75% chance of investigation by the Eagle Knights in the adjacent (eastern) temple (see following text).

In the eastern temple are four Eagle Knight warriors silently praying for honor in battle. This is a common religious rite in Mechica society, even of devotees to other deities. Huitzilopochtli does not care who participates in a combat, as long as the battle is honorable. The "honor" is bestowed in the form of a *prayer* spell cast on fighters who come to this shrine. The spell, bestowed by Huitzilopochtli himself, will commence with the start of the recipient's next combat, and will last for a total of 13 rounds (DDG p. 34). The war god will not otherwise intervene in behalf of the Eagle Knights, and the spell can be neutralized by an opponent casting the same spell (in opposition to the first one) or a *chant*. If this neutralization is attempted, the difference between the durations of the two

spells should be computed. The effects of opposing spells will cancel each other out until the shorter spell ends. Then the longer-lasting spell will be effective only for the remainder of the duration of the longer spell. For example: The god of war casts spells as a 13th level cleric. Therefore his *prayer* will last 13 rounds. A *prayer* cast by a 7th-level cleric adventurer will last for 7 rounds. The Eagle Knights' spell (from the god) will take effect immediately at the start of a conflict. During the first round, the cleric adventurer casts his or her *prayer*. By the end of that round, the knights will have used one round and have 12 left. For the next 7 rounds all participants in combat will fight as though no spells had been cast. After those 7 rounds, the Eagle Knights will have the benefit of their *prayer*, but for only 5 more rounds. There will be a 2 in 6 chance of the *prayer* having been bestowed on the warriors if the party enters the eastern temple first. If the party enters the clerics' area first, there will be a 4 in 6 chance of the *prayer* having been bestowed on the Knights when they are later encountered. The Knights are:

Ixtalapa (warrior, 8th level, AC 6, HP59,ALN,Str13,Int13, Wis14, Dex 12, Con 15, Cha 12, cotton & eagle-feather suit, shield, macahuitl, short bow, 12 arrows, dagger)

Cuicuilco (warrior, 4th level, AC 6, HP 34, AL LN, Str 17, Int 13, Wis 14, Dex 12, Con 17, Cha 8, cotton & eagle-feather suit, shield, macahuitl, short bow, 9 +1 arrows, dagger)

Tlalpan (warrior, 10th level, AC 7, HP 43, AL LN, Str 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Dex 11, Con 14, Cha 8, cotton & eagle-feather suit, tlacochtli, macahuitl, dagger)

Coyoacan (warrior, 7th level, AC 6, HP36,ALN,Str13,Int13,Wis18,Dex 6, Con 14, Cha 12, cotton & eagle-feather suit, shield, macahuitl, short bow, 11 arrows, spear)

On the top of the Pyramid of the Moon is an ornately decorated temple, 60' x 40'. After passing between the 30'-tall Eagle Knight statues/pillars that frame the entrance, the characters will find pastel paintings on the wall depicting great battles. The west wall shows Jaguar Knights and Eagle Knights accompanied by jaguars, soldiers in loincloths, chieftains and clerics wearing elaborate headdresses, and a large hummingbird flying over the top. The north wall shows a battle in progress against a Sapotec army of substantially less splendor than the group depicted in the west painting. The eastern wall depicts a victorious Mechica army returning with scores of prisoners. The painting gives no clue as to what happens to the prisoners, should the question arise. In the center of the temple is a simple stone altar. Standing on the altar is a statue of an Eagle Knight holding a bowl with a liquid inside it.

(The liquid is a *potion of super-heroism*; the bowl contains only one dose, and the liquid can be consumed on the spot or transferred to another container and taken away.)

5B. The Pyramid of the Sun: This is both the largest and the most spectacular of the three temple areas. Built in five graduated levels, the pyramid measures 715' square at the base and is about 220 feet tall with a temple-type structure at the top. The top can be reached by climbing the five sets of steps, all very uneven and requiring the full attention of the climber. The fourth set of stairs is so steep that the climber must use both hands and feet.

The temple at the top of the pyramid is 30' square. On the side opposite the entrance, a row of braziers blocks access to a thin cotton veil covering the wall. If any member of the party is wearing metal armor, there is a 2 in 6 chance of someone spotting the glint of reflected light from the surface on the other side of the veil. This is the Temple of Tezcatlipoca, and the surface behind the veil is his "smoking mirror," through which he watches the goings-on of men (DDG p. 35). The braziers (non-magical) are burning, and the room is filled with the smell of burning charcoal. The braziers can be moved, should the party decide to do so in order to get closer to the mirror. From the "temple side," the mirror is a *mirror of life trapping*. If a character lifts or moves the veil to see what is on the other side of it, he or she will automatically see his or her reflection. Any other character directly in front of the 10'-wide mirror when the veil is lifted will have an 80% chance of seeing his or her reflection in the mirror. Any characters standing off to one side or the other will have a 1 in 3 chance of seeing their reflection, regardless of their exact position with respect to the mirror; otherwise, they will not be immediately aware of what is behind the veil. The mirror is of divine origin and cannot be broken.

The only way a party member who sees his or her reflection can be saved from the effects of the *life trapping* is by putting living things into it. The mirror has a capacity of six trapped beings, and will be "filled" with jaguars when the party enters the temple; thus, one jaguar will be released for each new being that enters the mirror. The sixth being put into the mirror will cause the first party member trapped in the mirror to be cast out. If Alcoman is present and doesn't get trapped in the mirror, he will fear (and say out loud) that any party members trapped in the mirror will have met their end at the hands of the Sun God (provided that someone in the party has discovered the mirror behind the veil). The mirror cannot be detached and moved.

5C. The Temple of Quetzalcoatl: This temple is surrounded by pillars in the

shapes of feathered serpents. In the middle of the pillars is the smallest of the three pyramids in the "city." It measures 208' square at the base and is 70' tall, including the temple at the top. Six box-shaped layers form this pyramid. Each layer is decorated with snake-heads peeking out from the center of a daisy-shaped arrangement of feathers. A set of 20'-wide steps on one side of the pyramid lead up to a 20' square temple devoted to Quetzalcoatl. A brightly colored couatl, a minion of the deity, awaits the party inside. This is the only opportunity for the party to get some idea of what is going on inside Tenocatlan without actually venturing into the city. The couatl will answer up to six questions in a yes-or-no manner, and will briefly explain the reason for an answer. (See the note accompanying the random encounter table earlier.) If requested to help the party out of trouble concerning the "smoking mirror," it will cast a *sticks to snakes* spell in order to help free any party members trapped in the mirror — but the characters will have to carry the snakes up the Pyramid of the Sun and set them free in front of the mirror. (If this is done, there is a 66% chance for each snake to see itself in the mirror, or 100% if the snake is held facing the mirror. If the latter is attempted, there is a 10% chance of the character doing the holding also seeing himself in the mirror.) The couatl will not consider flying the party into Tenocatlan because there is no safe place to land, and in any event the party members could only be transported one at a time.

6. La Llorona: One of the great fears of every Mechica, old and young alike, is called "The Crying Lady." She awaits unsuspecting travelers at this point. Many years ago at this point on the Atlatonco River, a young Mechica mother would come to do her laundry on the riverbank. One day as she was beating her clothing against the rocks, her young son fell into the river. The current was too swift for her to save the helpless child. The woman went into a deep depression and eventually died. Ever since her death, travelers have reported hearing the howls of a wailing woman at the banks of the Atlatonco River. So fearsome are these cries that some people hearing them are said to have died on the spot from fright.

La Llorona (your-own-ah) is in reality a groaning spirit. Should the party pass through this spot at night, she will wail (jeopardizing party members as they cross the point where they must ford the river to stay on the road), but will not otherwise attack. If the party passes the intersection of the road and river during the day, she will do everything in her power to keep the adventurers from leaving the area. Party members will be safe from wandering monsters, Mechicas,

and any other living thing while they remain near the banks of the Atlatonco at this point. Even animals know not to venture near here.

La Llorona is AC 0, HD 7, HP 33, AL CE, Dmg 1-8, SA wail, SD +1 or better weapon to hit, Size M, MR 50%.

7. Causeway Entrances: Tenocatlan will be visible to adventurers while they descend to one of the causeway entrances. The sight is breathtaking, for the "city" is radically different from anything the adventurers are used to. The island city does not have a sizable population; most of the Mechicas live along the banks of Lake Taxcoco in stone or adobe *calpulis*. In the center of the lake, three golden "ribbons" seem to meet at the island on which Tenocatlan is located. The city looks like a grouping of oddly shaped, gold-colored wedding cakes. From the top of the nearby mountain ridges, the party will see Mechicas crossing the three causeways, looking from the mountaintop like a well-drilled army of ants. If the party watches the causeways for an entire turn, they will notice 1-6 jaguars suddenly running out of Tenocatlan, through one of the causeways, avoiding all humans. Fishing and hunting boats dot the lake. To the south of the city-island are the floating gardens of Xochomilco, beautiful flower and vine arrangements that seem to float in the water. Still further to the south, the floating gardens are used to grow vast quantities of corn, beans, squash, and chiles. It becomes obvious to the party that were the city under siege, it would have to be taken militarily. The city would never fall to the threats of hunger or thirst.

It is impossible to approach the causeways in the daytime without being discovered by guards or the local populace. At night, however, if the party is watching the city from a high vantage point, they will discover that the streets and causeways (only visible on a clear night) seem to be deserted. This is for a very good reason, for at night the Order of the Jaguar Priests rules the streets. Should the party attempt to enter the city via a causeway at night, there is a 2 in 8 chance of encountering 1-4 roaming werejaguars. This chance will increase to 2 in 6 once the city is entered.

(The Dungeon Master should generate a dozen or so werejaguars from the stats given earlier. This preparedness will help the adventure move along more smoothly. Of the dozen, roll 1d6 to determine how many are in were-form; the remainder should be in cleric form with appropriate spells. The DM should also be sure to describe the differences in appearance of the various clerics. Some will have jaguar ears, whiskers and tails, while another may simply have a cat-like snout, and others will appear to be "normal.")



8. The Canoes: If the party chooses the path that leads to Xipe Island and takes the route to the island by night, they will have found the Achilles heel of the Tenocatlan defenses. A long, unguarded causeway leads from Xipe Island to Xico Island, which is used to grow corn. There is only a 1 in 12 chance of the adventurers having a random encounter on Xipe Island, and any encounter (if there is one) will be only a single jaguar or werejaguar (50% chance of each).

The causeway connecting the two islands contains a trap: The only bridge on the causeway, about 20' long and located halfway across the span, is set each night so that it will collapse under a load of 170 pounds (the weight of a normal human) when that load is in the middle of the structure. Any character standing on the middle 10' of the bridge when it collapses must save vs. dexterity at -2 or fall into the lake. Characters in the remaining 5' area on either side must save vs. dexterity at +3 or meet the same fate.

The trap is a simple mechanism, the heart of which is a removable beam that supports the center of the bridge. When

the trap is set, the beam is moved to the center island, so it cannot be spotted by the party before they cross the bridge. All characters walking onto the bridge will have their normal chance to spot the mechanical trap.

Xico Island is occupied at night by a lone Mechica guard: Micantle, a 3rd level fighter (AC 10, HP21, AL LN, Str 14, Int 7, Wis 10, Dex 8, Con 9, Cha 9, loincloth, spear, dagger). Micantle will investigate the noise he hears if the bridge collapses, arriving within 2d8 rounds from the time of the collapse. He may remember (2 in 3 chance) to bring his horn, and if so he will use it. There is a 60% chance that 1-4 werejaguars will hear the horn and will arrive at the scene in 4d4 rounds.

If the adventurers get past the bridge and Micantle, they can proceed down the causeway to Xipe Island. The island seems to be nothing but cornfields, unless the party proceeds through the fields to the beach at the south side of the island. Here the adventurers will find some 70 canoes used by the Mechicas for farming, fishing, and hunting. Each canoe is 7-12 feet long and designed to carry one man, although each is large

enough to hold two people without any problem. The DM should allow for normal navigation through the water, but the party's speed will be hindered because of their unfamiliarity with the lake.

If the party discovers the causeways in this area during the daytime, they will find them being heavily travelled. The beam will have been replaced in the bridge by Micantle, allowing safe passage to Xipe Island, and only 1d4 canoes will be beached. There is a 3 in 6 chance per turn of the adventurers being discovered if they attempt to use the causeway during the daytime.

9. The Swamps of Tepozatlan: This area is a dense swamp; movement rate will be reduced accordingly. Random encounters in this area are determined from page 189 of the DMG, Marsh Encounters, disregarding any result of "hippopotamus." Any tribesmen encountered will be Mechicas on a hunting expedition; if this result is obtained, roll d6: 1-2 = 2d4 Eagle Knight warriors of 5th-8th level; 3-4 = 2d4 Jaguar Knight warriors of 5th-8th level; 5-6 = 3d4 thieves of 4th-7th level.

ENCOUNTERS FOR MAP "B" (THE CITY OF TENOCATLAN)

The party should be able to reach Tenocatlan by any one of a number of means. Magic, flying, boating, and using a disguise, to name a few, are all possible means of gaining entry to the city. The DM should rule on particulars with regard to what disguise will work, whether the party is spotted while flying in by night, etc. Common sense and good gamesmanship must prevail throughout this adventure, and especially at this point, by which time the DM should have a basic understanding of the Mechica peoples.

The city of Tenocatlan is the center of Mechica activity. Unless the adventurers have taken proper precautions, they will stick out like sore thumbs in this environment. Everything from their armor, to their skin color, to their language, is different from what the Mechicas are used to seeing. A misjudgment on the part of the player characters concerning this topic should be dealt with severely. Although the center of the city is not overly populated with guards, if the party is recognized as strange, or combat ensues, an alarm horn will be sounded by any guard in a position to do so, the causeways will be opened to prevent escape, and the guards in the city will be reinforced by the arrival of boatloads of Jaguar Knights and Eagle Knights from the shores of the lake.

The island of Tenocatlan has several decorative gardens containing fruit trees, delicate tropical flowers, and flowering trees, all planted in locations to enhance the feeling of visitors that they are entering a holy place. The areas outside the parallel east-west canals are made up entirely of gardens, as are the shorelines between the canals.

From the center of the island rise the twin temples to the gods of rain and war (map locations 1A and 1B), and the temple to the sun god (map location 10). The sounds of continuous drum-beating and chanting mix with eerie flute music, all of which serves to remind the characters that they are in a very different sort of place.

ENCOUNTER AREAS

1. Twin Temples: Two sets of broad steps lead up a tall pyramid to a pair of identical temples at the top. Inside the north temple (A) is a 50' square room. In the middle of the room is a deer totem on top of a small altar. On either side of the totem are two wands. One is a normal *wand of lightning* with 38 charges. The second is a *wand of weather control* with 42 charges. The latter wand will cause torrential rain (or snow, depending on the temperature) to fall in an area of from 4-16 square miles (roll separately for each use of the wand). Seated Indian-style in front of the totem is a cleric in deep meditation (4th level, AC 10, HP 19,

Wis 12, unarmed; spells determined by DM if necessary). He will be surprised if encountered by the party. Characters may be able to deduce that this is the temple dedicated to the god of rain, whom Alcoman will know as Tlaloc.

In the south temple (B), the party will find the High Priest of the Hummingbird. He is a 18th level cleric AC 5, HP 68, AL N, Wis 18, with a +2 ring of protection, wearing an eagle-feather suit and cotton and bearing a club and hammer. Behind him is a giant gold likeness of a hummingbird worth 8,000 g.p. Paintings similar to the battlescenes in the Pyramid of the Moon are on the walls, which may lead characters to realize they are in the Temple of Huitzilopochtli. Again, Alcoman will recognize the decorations for what they are. Otherwise the party could figure that this is some god of war or battle. This cleric, like the one in the north temple, is under orders from the Emperor to stay in the temple at all times, to insure victory in battle and a steady supply of victims for Tezcatlipoca.

2. Platform for the Stone of Tizoc: Sitting out for all to see is the Stone of Tizoc. It is a six-foot-high block of granite on top of which is mounted a six-inch-diameter stone, also of granite, which is in reality a *stone of controlling earth elementals*, known as "Earth Monsters" in Mechica legend. According to the tales, this monster is so fearsome, it once tore off the leg of Xochipilli, the god of chance (DDG p. 36). The result of this incident was the calling of the Council of the Gods at Teotihuacal, where the deities collaborated to manufacture this stone in order to protect themselves and their people.

3. Tzompantli: This is a display of skulls, all of great Mechica warriors who fought heroically in battle. This serves as a strange "hall of fame" for those who have performed well in the service of Huitzilopochtli.

4. Ball Court: This is a playing court where a game very similar to basketball, but much more violent, is played. There is a 1 in 6 chance of a game being in progress if the court is investigated during the day.

5. Eagle House of the Sun Temple: This is the area which under normal (non-war) conditions would be the sleeping area of the High Priest of the Hummingbird. Of course, he will not be here because he has been ordered to remain in prayer at the temple (1 B). There will be three werejaguars guarding inside. The only noticeable things of worth are a meager 12 g.p. and 23 s.p., but back by a sleeping mat is an old Mechica scroll. If *comprehend languages* is cast on it, it will show to be similar in effect to a *man-ual of bodily health*.

6. Platform of the Eagle House: This holds the awe-inspiring Mechica calendar. Probably too difficult for the party to figure out, it is known among the Mechica as the "Prophecy Stone." It has much religious significance as well as all the information necessary to be used as a calendar.

7. Snake Temple: This was the temple to Quetzalcoatl at one time, but no Mechica would dare show himself or herself on these steps now, because of the recent turn of events. The interior of the temple is run-down and deserted.

8. Temple of Xipe Totec, God of Spring: At the top of this small pyramid is a 30' square single-room temple, its walls adorned with brightly painted flowers. This temple contains nothing but a granite altar.

9. Pyre of Huhueteotl: On top of a stone altar, similar in shape to the one holding the Prophecy Stone, is a constantly burning flame 30' in diameter, a tribute to the god of fire. If the party peers carefully inside the flame, there will be seen a *ring of fire resistance* in the center of the fireplace. Characters have the same chance to spot the ring as for secret doors. Anyone trying to move through the fire will take 1d6 of damage for each 5' traveled, unless some means of protection from fire is employed.

10. Temple of Tezcatlipoca: This could be the final destination of the party, in the context of this adventure. The pyramid that supports the temple rises some 120' above the ground. At the base, a wall allows only three points of entry to the pyramid-temple. Each entrance is guarded by four jaguars who sit atop the wall and lazily watch people pass by. These animals were once Jaguar Knights who were polymorphed. They serve as sentries just as they would if they were still human warriors. If one of them detects anything suspicious about anyone entering through one of the three gates, it will stand up slowly while keenly eyeing its intended victim, and then suddenly spring down on the intruder, snarling in rage. The other cats, upon seeing one of the guards rise, will instantly join the fray themselves.

If the adventurers climb the steps to the temple, they will see a 40' wide and 20' deep structure. The first object noticed by the party will be the *Risa* stone, in the center of the temple area. It is a stone carved in the form of a man reclining on his back, arms bent in as though supporting his rib cage. His head is tilted up and turned to one side, and there is a hideous grin on his face. The second thing the party will notice are the 2-8 werejaguars that are always present, protecting their most sacred temple. The werejaguars will attack immediately and

without reservation. At least two of them will be in human or near-human form, and those two (or more) will carry alarm horns that they will blow the first chance they get. When a horn is sounded, there is a 75% chance that the sentry jaguars on the wall below will hear the alarm. There is a 60% chance of other werejaguars or warriors nearby also hearing the alarm. (Roll only once for both "alarm" results. If the roll results in only the jaguars hearing, they will be the only concern for the DM. If the alarm was heard by other warriors or werejaguars, the defense plan for the city will go into effect; see earlier notes.)

The next concern for the party will be Cuactehmoc himself. There is a 65% chance of his being in the temple when the party arrives, but he will not personally join in a battle unless and until it looks like the werejaguars in attendance are being defeated. Cuactehmoc is a 26th level cleric, AC 8, HP 80, AL CE, Str 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Dex 8, Con 14, Cha 17, quilted cotton, hammer. Spells recommended for Cuactehmoc are these: *Bless* (x2), *Command* (x2), *Darkness* (x2), *Cause Fear* (x3), *Purify Food & Drink*, *Sanctuary*, *Augury* (x3), *Hold Person* (x2), *Resist Fire*, *Slow Poison*, *Snake*

Charm, *Speak With Animals* (x2), *Spiritual Hammer*, *Cause Blindness* (x2), *Cure Blindness*, *Cause Disease* (x2), *Cure Disease*, *Dispel Magic* (x2), *Feign Death*, *Bestow Curse*, *Cause Serious Wounds* (x2), *Cure Serious Wounds*, *Undetectable Lie* (x2), *Poison* (x3), *Protection from Good*, *10' radius*, *Tongues*, *Atonement*, *Cause Critical Wounds* (x2), *Commune*, *Dispel Good*, *Name Strike*, *False Seeing* (x2), *True Seeing*, *Animate Object* (x2), *Blade Barrier* (x2), *Conjure Animals*, *Harm* (x3), *Word of Recall*, *Earthquake*, *Wither*, *Destruction* (x2).

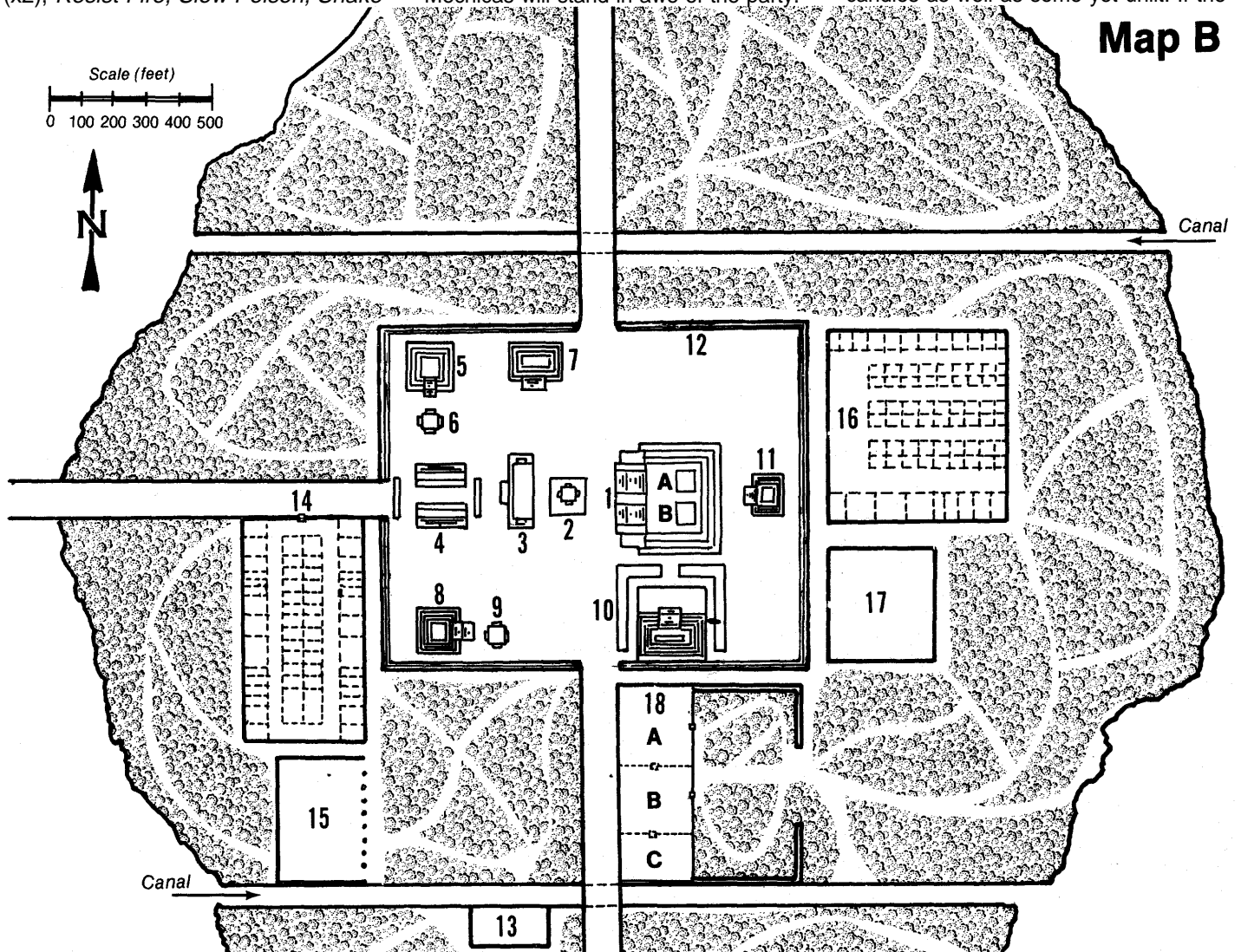
If the adventurers destroy the *Risa* stone, all of their adversaries except Cuactehmoc will flee in terror. The other devotees will see themselves as having failed in their defense of this most sacred artifact, and they will fear the wrath of Tezcatlipoca. The sun god will not worry about them or the party members, for he will admire their courage. On the other hand, the deity will quickly claim the life of the high priest as payment for his failure in his responsibilities. The party will have thereby solved the problem, without being required to directly confront the emperor, and will have guaranteed their safe return home, since the other Mechicas will stand in awe of the party.

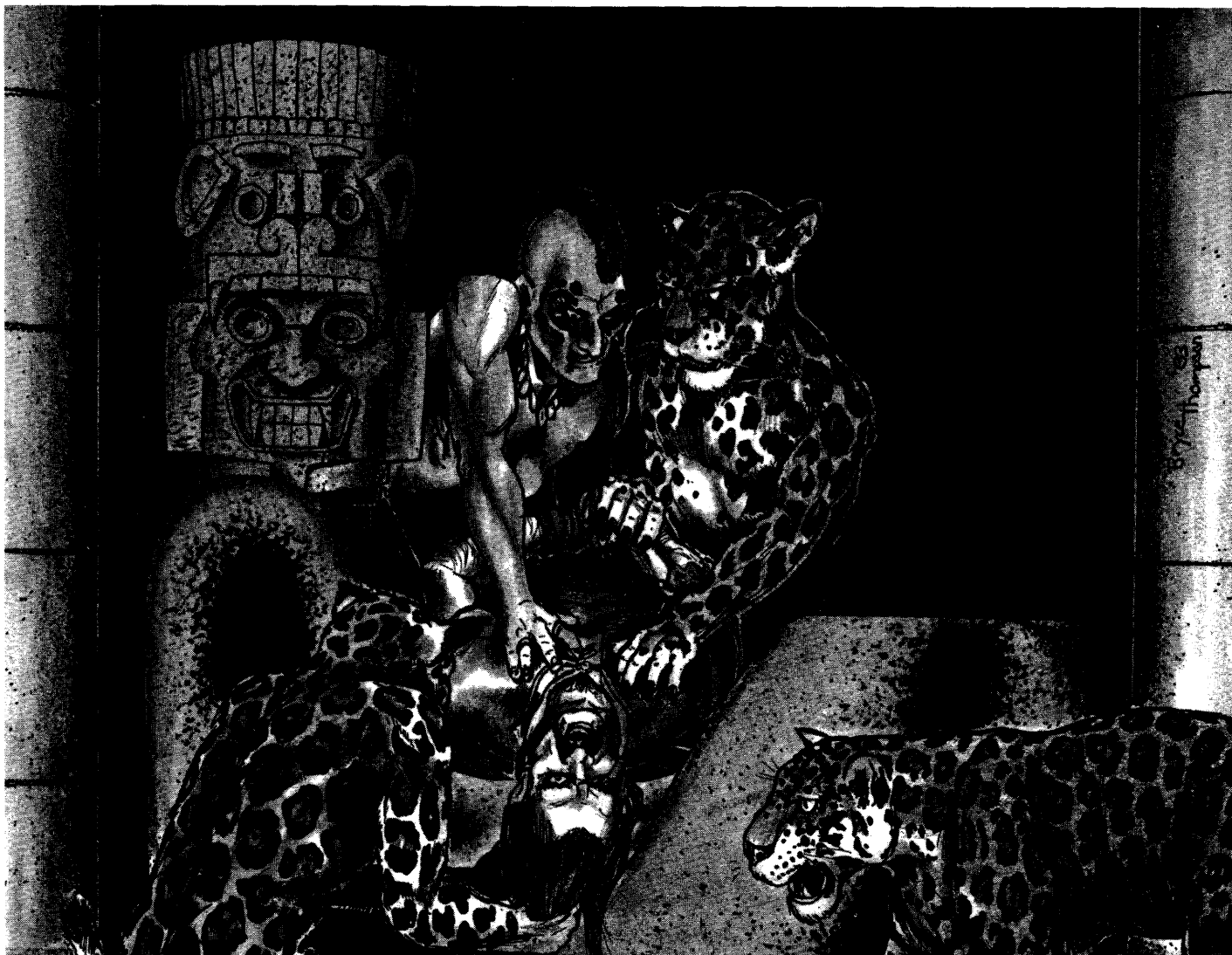
In the event that the adventurers risk open combat with Cuactehmoc, they deserve whatever fate befalls them. The first Mechica objective will be to defend the *Risa* stone at all costs. The second, if possible, will be to capture and/or polymorph the party members into jaguars on the *Risa* stone.

11. Temple of Colbuacan: This small pyramid temple is hidden to the east of the twin temples to Tlaloc and Huitzilopochtli. If the party members enter this temple, they will find it in the process of renovation. If they have been in any of the temples of Huitzilopochtli, they may recognize the same mural painting on the south wall as the same sort that they have seen before. The other walls are covered over, awaiting repainting.

12. Snake Wall: This 12-foot-high wall, shaped like a bas-relief snake, stretches all the way around Tenocatlan, enclosing the sacred city except where the causeway entrances intersect it.

13. Black House of Coatlicue: This temple is a shrine to the "mother of the gods." Inside are a number of burning candles as well as some yet unlit. If the





candles are checked carefully, one of the unlit ones will be found to be a *candle of invocation*.

14. Palace of the Tlaloquetin: Here are kept all "short" prisoners awaiting the *Risa* stone. "Tlaloquetin" refers to the Tlaloques, and the "short" prisoners are all dwarves, gnomes and halflings. There will be 3d4 of each race in this prison. If the prisoners are released before the adventurers gain control of the city, alarms will be sounded and the Mechicas will allow no escape from the island, as per previous instructions (see earlier text). Any of these prisoners will be happy to fight on behalf of the party if set free, but none will have weapons or armor.

15. House of Songs: If the party comes near this building they will be able to identify it as the source of the drumming, chanting and flute playing they have been hearing. If adventurers look into the building they will see musicians, and the musicians will probably see the party. This makes no difference, and the music will continue unless the musicians are attacked. The musicians are the only citizens of Tenocatlan who don't care

whether strangers are lurking about or not. If this house is entered at night when it is empty, the party will find a set of *drums of deafening*, but the only way to find out what they are is to beat on them in the middle of the night.

16. Palace of Axayacatl: This building is for "large" prisoners. This group includes humans, elves, half-elves, and half-orcs. They also await their turn on the *Risa* stone. As with the "short" prisoners (area 14), they will do what they can to help the party, but they have no weapons or armor. Their release will cause the general alarm to be sounded in the city.

17. The Royal Aviary: This is the emperor's bird cage. It is filled with a number of brightly plumed birds. But there is little in the way of adventure here.

18. The Palace of Cuactehmoc: As with the Temple of Tezcatlipoca (area 10), there will always be 3d4 jaguars perched on top of the wall to guard his highness.

18A. Keep of the Jaguar Priests: The door from the courtyard is unlocked and opens into the werejaguar hideout. These

creatures/clerics are here to help protect and serve the emperor as slaves. If the emperor is at the Temple (area 10), there will be only 1d4 lycanthropes present here. If the party has not entered the Temple yet, there is a 1 in 3 chance that the emperor will be in his room. If he is present here, there will be 3d4 lycanthropes present guarding the High Priest.

18B. Sleeping Quarters: For all of the furnishings in the rest of the city, this room will surprise the party, because it is quite modest. A simple sleeping mat is against the far wall. If he is present in his quarters, Cuactehmoc will have heard the commotion outside this chamber and prepared himself for battle. If the *Risa* stone has already been destroyed, the party will enter to find the emperor dead. If he is not present, the room will seem quite empty. Should the party check for secret doors and succeed in their search, they will find the entrance to area 18C. It is opened by lifting the sleeping mat. Closing the door will return the mat to its former place.

18C. The Emperor's Treasure: The god Tezcatlipoca is also known as the provider of wealth. The reward for foiling Cuactehmoc's treachery comes to the tune of 180,000 g.p. and 287,000 s.p. ❧

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Guidelines to keep your group going

by Ken Rolston

The setting: A snack bar in the heat of summer at a large university where a gaming convention is underway. Several subdued gamers file quietly in, grab beverages, and cluster around a corner table. After a few seconds of intermingled silence and sighs, one ventures:

"Well, that was a bit of a disaster."

"It sure wasn't what I'd expected. Jeez, succubi? I expected monsters . . ."

"Yeah, we go in like commandos and we get charmed immediately. Nice plan."

"Nice plan, huh? What kinda planning were you doing? You guys just sat there arguing about the party order."

"Well, we had just about given up trying to make suggestions, because all you did was argue, and then go ahead and do what you wanted anyway —"

"C'mon, guys, knock it off."

Uneasy silence.

"It didn't help that those two fighters got killed off in the first hour."

"Well, they just kept getting out in

front in every melee; then they hit that trap . . ."

"Look, they had no business out in front — thieves are supposed to check for traps like that."

"Sure. We were *really* that organized. You jerks never even figured out that we were supposed to *go around* the ambushes, not through them."

"I must point out that *you* wasted quite a few spells yourself. If you'd tried a Find Traps, or saved a few Heals instead of being a warrior-priest, we might not have lost four characters."

"And I hate to mention it, but we did take forever to get started."

"Right. I hear the winning team finished in only two hours, and they all survived."

"Oh, our ref was such a jerk. He didn't know what he was doing."

"Yeah, you sure helped us by arguing with him over that surprise attack. I don't blame him. We were terrible. We were

disorganized and careless, we wasted time, we fought when we shouldn't have, and we never really figured out what we were supposed to be doing. We didn't check for traps, we left the same guys out in the front of the party until they got croaked, we used dumb spells, we had no plans — I'm surprised *any* of us survived."

Studied silence.

"I tell you one thing. No way I'm gonna screw up next year. Aside from feeling like a jerk, I didn't have much fun. All that arguing about plans, and that guy who just wouldn't cooperate . . ."

"Yeah, I learned something. You don't have to win to have fun, but you sure have to be at least decent."

Slurping sounds as the straws scour bottoms of cups.

"I never even heard of a succubi . . ."

"A succubus, stupid."

"If you're so smart, how come you're dead?"

Competing in a fantasy role-playing tournament can be exhilarating, but it can also be very frustrating. On one hand, play is intended to be at a high level of concentration and intensity in a mysterious and challenging adventure; on the other hand, inept responses to common obstacles can cause disappointment and disaster. Poorly prepared players may fumble around, disorganized and confused, wasting playing time in endless arguments and discussions which never quite resolve into a plan or strategy. When confronted with a hostile encounter, the party dissolves into panicky chaos, each player insisting that he

be heard first. Careless and ignorant mistakes cause needless casualties and frustration. Aggressive players push others aside, hogging the action, while good but less aggressive players sit bored and restless with nothing to do. Finally, at the end of a four-hour session, exhausted and disappointed gamers discover they had never even understood their goal, much less achieved it.

It is not difficult to become a more effective player in FRP tournaments, through understanding the basic principles and techniques of competitive play. The small amount of effort required to learn and practice these basic principles

and techniques will be amply repaid by improvements in the quality of play. A gamer can have much more fun playing in competitive events, and may even earn glory and prizes, if he can avoid making elementary errors in organization, conduct, and strategy.

The following guidelines for improving play can be divided into five general categories: anticipating the nature of the event; preparing before the event begins; employing basic principles of effective play; learning and developing strategies; and handling common problems. Each of these categories is described and explained in the text that follows.

Anticipating the nature of the event

Examine the event description as detailed in the convention brochure or catalog, where there may be explicit or implicit clues to the skills emphasized in the tournament.

An event description may plainly state a preference for dedicated role-players, or may suggest a wargaming scenario ("a siege to rescue the fair princess"). In addition to examining written descriptions, you should solicit personal accounts from friends who have participated in similar events. Major competitive events run annually at large conventions, like the AD&D™ Open Tournament and the RPGA Open, tend to be similarly organized from year to year, and many gaming clubs have a distinctive personality that can be recognized in the events they sponsor; perhaps the group specializes in "the thinking man's dungeon," or the elaborately detailed underground adventure. Careful observation of these clues to the nature of the event will permit effective preparation; it is most distressing to arrive at a competition expecting one thing and finding another.

Make yourself aware of the level of play to be expected, and select only events you qualify for.

Several conventions give keys to the degree of experience needed for each event, ranging from "no experience needed, younger players welcome, rules will be taught" to "players should know rules and be experienced in the game." Additionally, there are varying levels of complexity within each rule system. For example, an experienced AD&D player whose local campaigns are at low levels may have difficulty playing in a tournament where the characters are all established at fifteenth level. Accounts of previous practices in particular tournaments provide helpful hints about the level of play, though practices may change. Being unprepared for the level of play in a competition may lead to embarrassment, and may deprive fellow team members of necessary support; a player who is only familiar with low-level spells but has been assigned a tenth-level mage may be a great liability to a competing group.

Examine published scenarios from past tournaments.

For example, TSR has published the scenarios used for the 1980 GEN CON® XIII AD&D Open in a series of modules, A1-A4. These modules provide not only a description of the scenarios faced by the players, but also generally explain the methods used in judging the participants. Included are descriptions of the prepared characters used in the event. The modules are interesting and entertaining in their own right, but they can be particularly helpful to a novice player intending to enter an AD&D Open for the first time; he can see what resources his character may have, and anticipate the

type of adventure he may encounter. Also, by reading the notes on the tournament rules and judging, he can preview the kinds of rules and limitations he may face, and recognize strategies that are encouraged by the event designers.

Search for clues to the tone of the event in event descriptions and personal accounts.

Are players expected to respond with traditional and conservative strategies, or will daring and unconventional play be rewarded? Is the tone grimly competitive and serious, or is there a light and recreational attitude toward play? If the event promises to be a classic hack-and-slash operation, there is little point in devising clever tricks and innovative applications of magic spells. On the other hand, if the event is a free-wheeling affair where ingenuity and deviant thinking is rewarded, it is less profitable to drill on the wording of the spell descriptions in the rule books. It is also poor form to arrive at a highly competitive tournament without serious preparation; being prepared is showing simple consideration for those other players who will adventure with you. Remember that FRP tournaments are usually cooperative ventures, and a poorly prepared player can be a great liability to a serious-minded group of participants.

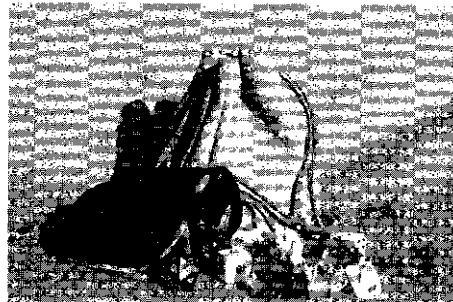
Know the rules system to be used in the tournament.

It is a good idea to review the rule books, keeping in mind that the local game may have developed many variant rules and specific interpretations that will not apply in a tournament situation. In tournaments such as the AD&D Open, the tendency is to rely on a strict and literal reading of the published rules; thus, review of the rules can prevent careless play resulting from habitual conditioning to local variant rules. Take a good look at the books, then, both to refresh the memory on rarely used sections, and to recall the difference between local practices and the published rules.

Drill on things like spell lists and commonly encountered magic items.

Many tournaments limit the opportunity to refer to rule texts during the session, and it is always better to have information in mind than to have to fumble with books during the game. Additionally, prospective participants can drill themselves on the types of resources available in the rules; this may inspire clever new tactics based on those resources. These kinds of drills can be accomplished individually, or they may be a cooperative effort; this is an especially good way to pass the time during the long car trips to some conventions, with the passengers posing problems for the driver and reading aloud relevant passages.

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Anticipate the kinds of tasks and problems to be faced.

For example, if wilderness travel seems likely from the event description, what practices and skills will be useful? If last year's tournament employed many riddles, pick up a collection of riddles from the local library. If the theme of the scenario seems to be based on Greek and Roman mythology, grab a textbook and study up. If there is a hint that undead are likely to be the major opponents, review the appropriate sections of the monster listings in the rule books to learn how to best deal with them.

Develop pre-organized procedures and tactics for typical problems.

For instance, whenever presented with a situation where *commune* spells (which permit asking the gods a certain number of yes-no questions) may be used, it is useful to have a list of generally helpful questions at hand, such as "Are there any secret entrances to the whatever?" or "Are there any guards at this entrance?" It is also a good idea to have some standard combat drills in mind. In *Runequest*, for example, prepare a list of favorite spells to be activated before a combat, and arrange the lists to reflect priorities and varying tactical situations. If opposing forces will not close for several rounds, several spells may be cast, and it is only sensible to cast first the spell that may protect you from distance

A group that is used to working together has a distinct advantage over a team of strangers.

weapons; if melee is imminent, perhaps only one well-chosen spell may be appropriate. Similarly, in any wilderness travel, night watches are best arranged with spell casters and missile specialists inside a circle of well-armed melee specialists, so a surprise night attack will not suddenly result in a personal combat between an unarmed magic-user and a well-armed fighting man, with the spell-caster unable to use his magic to protect himself or the party. Preparing these tactics ahead of time will not only yield valuable tactical advantages, it will also save the time lost during a session as the group discusses possible tactics. Often such discussions consume excessive game time, while a well-outlined plan delivered by a well-prepared player will usually be quickly accepted and put into action.

Be conscious of your strengths and weaknesses in the particular system to be used.

Know the roles in which you will be an asset to your team; likewise, know which responsibilities you are poorly prepared to handle. Be prepared to offer your leadership in areas where you are experienced and well-versed; understand

when you will need to defer to others in matters where your background is weak. A player who is adept at organizing and leading a party, or who has a special interest in magic or in combat tactics, should expect to take special responsibilities in these skills; he should also look for fellow players who can provide the particular skills he may be weak in.

Know your team members ahead of time, if possible.

It may be possible to register and play as a team in some tournaments, and usually a group that is used to working together has a distinct advantage over a hastily organized team of strangers. Get together and establish team goals, and prearrange responsibilities for different roles. Be careful, however: Certain tournaments do not advance whole teams, but only the top players from each session; in this case it is better to avoid competing against friends. Additionally, in certain large cutthroat tournaments, where individual awards are handed out for the wealthiest survivors, it is a good idea to arrange mutual non-aggression pacts with friends; though such tactics do perhaps put other individual players at an unfair disadvantage, elimination

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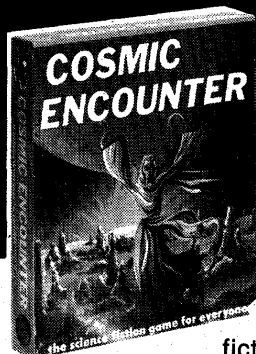
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tournaments must be won by some method, and this tactic is no more tasteless than many other ruthless measures which are often employed.

Preparing before the event begins

Get to the location early. Scout out the talent. If you are already organized as a group, but short a few players, select people who will fit into the party.

If arriving as an individual or small group, seek out a well-organized and experienced-looking group needing a few players to round out a team. Even before the event begins, feel out the appropriate roles for the team members; actively lobby for a particular role, if you feel yourself well-qualified. Discuss preferences for character classes and areas of expertise. In general, begin the process of structuring the group and getting acquainted with other players.

Sometimes it is possible to speak with the gamemaster before the event starts.

This may be an opportunity to get certain items of business out of the way, like questions on methods of scoring or order of seating. Consider, however, the risk of antagonizing your judge before the event, and don't inundate him with a series of unnecessary questions. The GM will be trying to get himself organized for the event, and your barrage of questions

may interfere with his concentration; therefore, balance the benefits achieved by saving time in asking questions before the event against the liabilities incurred by disrupting the GM's preparations.

Listen to the GM's directions and descriptions when the event begins.

Usually the GM will have some introductory remarks or suggestions about procedures which should be noted intently. Then a description of the goals and conditions of the adventure should follow, with any necessary background information. If this is given verbally, it is wise to take notes for later reference. If the GM gives out a single copy of useful printed information, one player should read the information aloud for the whole group; thereafter, individual players may examine the material at their leisure.

Before the session begins, make certain that the objectives of the adventure and the criteria for judging have been clarified by the GM and understood by the players.

Know whether the judging is for best team or for best individual. Make sure the task or objective is clearly understood. How important is survival? Can you win if you die? Is role-playing or wargaming emphasized? How important is achieving the objective? Is time a factor in judging? If a player is intent on winning, he must know what he has to do in order to do it well.

After the GM's opening remarks, the players are usually given a few minutes to organize themselves; it is critical to use this time efficiently.

Get guidelines from the GM for an appropriate amount of time to allot for organizing. This should take about half an hour on the average, though more time will be necessary for complex role-playing and ambiguous tasks. In general, the amount of time needed for organization depends on the detail of the character descriptions, detail of scenario background, and the complexity of the objectives. During the organization period, the players should select characters, determine procedures and group organization, and provide the GM with a group marching order. In general, first attend to the GM's specific requirements, then add further embellishments and refinements as the circumstances permit.

The assignment of players to characters is critical; the effectiveness of the individual players and their enjoyment may most greatly be influenced by the appropriateness of their character assignments.

Wherever possible, assign characters according to player preference; however, players must often deny themselves their favorites in the interest of the party. For example, if a player enjoys playing the dumb, berserk, combat-happy fighter, yet he recognizes that he is the most



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likely candidate for an effective group leader, he would better serve the party if he chose a thinking-type character who might be able to organize and direct the group, rather than the fighter who would dash off into melee at the first opportunity. Usually players who are good at problem-solving and strategy should be magic-users or cleric types, while the pushy, impatient types should be the fighters. Quiet, unassertive people most often contribute best when they play clerics and fighters who are held in reserve. Thieves are often a subclass of fighters, for practical purposes, but at times this is a good role for free-lancers who are unwilling to organize into tightly structured units. These players can be sent off on solo missions, or be given a larger degree of freedom of initiative.

An organizational structure must be selected for the players.

The GM may make certain requirements, or he may leave party organization strictly up to the players. Several organizational structures are available to choose between, each with its own strengths and weaknesses in different circumstances.

One common organizational structure is "anarchy and chaos." The principal virtue of this system is that each player is free to do his own thing, and with a very small number of players, this system may be effective. However, this structure usually results in poor communication and wasted time. GMs generally dislike this style, because it typically means several people talking and asking questions at once, and it tends to be noisy, with the most assertive and aggressive participants ending up dominating play.

Another traditional method of organization is the "caller" system. Here one player becomes the sole channel of communication with the GM. All questions and actions are funneled through the caller to the GM. Many GMs like this system because they only have to deal with one player at a time, and when the caller is a good leader, the play is efficient, with the caller helping the GM maintain order and direction. The fault of this system is that it gives more active play to the caller than to the rest of the group, and may permit a single player to dominate the action. Also, the insistence on formality may sometimes cost more time than it saves.

An alternative system divides the caller/leader roles among several players. For example, one caller is designated for combat, while another is designated for wilderness travel. Individuals will accept responsibility for different specialties, and the GM will turn to them for their specifications of actions in the proper

circumstances. For example, a thief becomes the caller for scouting; the GM will talk primarily with him while they move along a path. Suddenly the party is ambushed; the GM turns to the combat specialist, who quickly directs the party in a predetermined defensive strategy. The advantage of this system is that it permits each player a fair amount of action and dialogue. Also, each player becomes responsible for certain specialties, and he may work independently on developing and refining tactics while another caller is busy talking to the GM. Ideally, several players will be actively planning in different areas at once, with a resulting greater efficiency in time. Additionally, a player will direct activities in his area of special expertise; the best magic-user will be directing the spell-casting activity, while the best tactician will be directing the physical combat.

One other organizational structure is the "shifting caller," essentially a form of polite chaos. In this situation each player speaks for himself; the only rule is that no more than one person speaks to the GM at a time. The players may wait to be acknowledged by the GM, or some player may be designated as "director," determining who speaks and in what order, or the players may simply work it out as best they can. This style prevents the distracting and irritating phenomenon of two players trying to talk to the GM at once, and with a quiet, considerate, and well-balanced group, may be more efficient than an overly formal structure. The shifting-caller style may be improved by making one player a clearing house for notes prepared by other players; while one player asks the GM questions, other players may write a couple of notes with questions or suggestions and hand them to a clearing-house player. As soon as there is a break in the dialogue, the clearing-house player can read the notes aloud or give them to the GM for answers. This system keeps players active while the GM is tied up, and it keeps a record of all those good ideas and questions that always get lost while waiting for a turn at the GM. It also makes a reservoir of questions for the GM that can be answered while the party discusses other issues as a group.

Whatever system is chosen, it must be designed to perform some vital functions: First, it must prevent more than one player from questioning the GM at a time, because the GM is the information bottleneck; he cannot function effectively if he is interrupted or distracted, and he obviously cannot answer more than one question at a time. Second, it must keep each player as active as possible, and

give equal opportunities for play to all; most everyone can relate to the tedium and frustration of waiting for minutes, if not hours, as other players hog the play and the GM's attention. Third, it must allow each player to employ his strengths as efficiently as possible; if responsibilities are divided, they must be assigned to those best able to perform them.

If various responsibilities are divided up amongst the party members, there are several useful roles that individuals may assume.

It is generally accepted that designating a party leader makes play more efficient; however, the role of the leader may be either a limited or expansive one. He may be considered as a commanding officer, or he may simply act to help guide the flow of the dialogue. It is indecent of a leader to hog the play; he should assert himself whenever the party is in danger of wasting a great deal of time, or when a serious threat prevents immediate dialogue and discussion, but it is best if he uses his position to ensure that each player gets an equal chance to enjoy the play.

It is also useful to have a mapping specialist, and someone who makes it his business to keep notes on any information received. A GM may require a party to recount important things discovered in the course of the adventure, and notes are very helpful at these times.

A tactical director can handle combat situations; often there will be a player who delights in such wargaming problems, and who can help the party efficiently use its resources and protect itself in an organized fashion.

A magic coordinator can keep track of the kinds of magical resources available in the party, and help the party budget its use of expendable spells and items; he can also coordinate magical support for combat, and suggest creative uses of magic for unusual predicaments.

A scout makes a good caller for cautious exploration and travel, while a persuasive talker might be designated as the routine ambassador for the group.

There is no reason why a specific role should not be shared by two or more players, when necessary. If each player has a special responsibility, he will gain a greater sense of participation in the adventure, and more detailed attention can be given specifically to each of these important facets of successful tournament play.

Once party roles are determined, certain kinds of information must be organized and provided to the party and the GM.

If a blackboard is available, it is useful to list the players by character name, real name, and by other important descriptors, like character class, hit points, level, armor type, primary weapon, and so forth. This list will help strangers communicate quickly with one another, while

The GM is the information bottleneck; he cannot function effectively if he is interrupted or distracted.

providing a list of party resources. Information about armor type and hit points will be useful to combat coordinators, and in determining the party's marching order. The board can also be used to keep a running tally of injuries to players, reminding the group who needs rest and healing. If there is time and room, list special magic items, spells available, and special talents. This information may be of great assistance in designing strategies.

If a blackboard is not available, notes on paper will have to do, and certain characters may wish to keep special rosters for their own use; for example, a magic specialist might want to keep a list of the spell powers and/or spell points available in order to budget and coordinate magic use.

It is also customary to specify the party's travel order. This may be done with miniatures, as notes on paper, or on a chalkboard. It is a good idea to keep a written record of the party order, if figures are used, to facilitate returning to party order after engagements that disperse the members. It is also useful to develop several different party orders for different circumstances. For example, the scout may suggest one party order for wilderness travel, and another for indoor investigations. The combat coordinator may suggest automatically assuming a certain formation when the

GM's are human, too, and sometimes careless in their hurry to improve the party's time efficiency.

party is ambushed, while the party leader may have a system of night watches and dispositions of party members around the campfire. Arranging these ahead of time may save valuable time during play, particularly if one person can arrange these formations while another player is engaging the GM in personal discussion.

Basic principles of effective play

1. Operate.

Do something, even if it's wrong: Move it! One of the greatest failings of many tournament groups is the paralyzing caution that prevents the players from moving in any direction before thinking and talking about it for fifteen minutes. It is often a good idea to start out with an eager and decisive leader, while the analytic and cautious minds keep their eyes peeled for trouble. Most tournaments begin with a series of "time wasters" (see #2) that can fool the most inexperienced competitors. Generally, the really dangerous encounters are saved for later, on a principle of increasing levels of difficulty, and if party members cannot face the early challenges when they are fresh and unblemished, it is unlikely that they will be very effective with later problems.

Parties that dither and harangue over every decision will lose too much game time to finish the scenario.

2. Avoid time wasters.

Don't waste any of your resources on an encounter if you can get around it. Many player groups will choose to engage a party of weak opponents, confident that it can defeat them; however, unless the combat is specifically part of the objective, the time and resources are utterly wasted. Typically, the first part of a session will provide many opportunities for the imprudent player to forget his objective and squander his time and resources on irrelevant matters.

3. Listen to the GM's descriptions.

Get the picture: When in doubt, ask for a diagram. Many players are intimidated by the GM, and they assume that the GM always describes accurately, and if they don't understand the description, it must be their own fault. On the contrary: GM's are human, too, and sometimes careless in their hurry to improve the party's time efficiency. Many a foul-up occurs from misunderstandings about what the GM feels he has described. The best way is to make things completely explicit, preferably in the form of a diagram. Preparing

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Be aware of what style of play the GM likes; be the kind of party he wishes he had in his own campaign.

a diagram doesn't really take much longer than reading the description, if the GM knows the set-up, and it is less ambiguous for the players. The GM can also be held accountable for it; if the GM omits an important detail when reading from a text description, then is called to account for it twenty minutes later, who can prove that the GM read it incorrectly? Who can remember exactly what was said? Ask for a recap and summary if the action becomes confused and complex. Requiring the GM to be specific may take time, but it may prevent serious misunderstandings and time wasted on straightening them out. Remember, the characters are there, and the players are entitled to their best opportunity to visualize the scene as if they were actually there seeing it.

4. Transmit efficiently.

Only one person can interact with the GM at a time. As mentioned earlier, the GM is the information bottleneck; understand that principle, and try to work around it. Use notes to the GM for questions of secondary importance; these can be handled during a lull in the action. Use diagrams or written summaries when a series of detailed specifications of

actions are required. Don't split the party; even though common sense indicates that a party can search an area faster if it splits up, the GM can only judge one group at a time, so the whole group might as well stick together for game purposes.

5. Communicate with other players.

But in doing so, avoid noise and chaos. Private communications can go on while another player has the GM's attention, as long as the communication is by note, or if the players move away from the table. Don't try to talk across another conversation, and avoid interrupting someone else's dialogue unless imminent peril looms. Sometimes when the GM is locked in dialogue with a single player for one reason or another, it is a good idea to withdraw from the table for a party caucus and planning session. Subcommittees may be useful at times to discuss tactics or specific problems. Occasionally the leader should organize group discussions of tactics and objectives, and he should summarize options and guide members in orderly methods of expressing their opinions.

6. Analyze the GM's style.

Does the GM perceive himself as an

opponent, or as a facilitator attempting to insure a pleasant experience? Does he depend on a literal interpretation of the rule book, or is he inclined to judge from common sense? Does he encourage discussion of his judgements, or is he offended at the implied slur on his authority? Is he well-prepared for the scenario, or does he get confused easily and spend time fumbling with notes? Does he expect the group to organize on its own, or does he prefer to help the group run efficiently? Is he inclined to offer hints when the party is stuck, or does he patiently wait for the party to sink or swim on its own merits? Be aware of what style of play the GM likes, and keep him comfortable. Be the kind of party that the GM wishes he had in his own campaign at home. Avoid antagonizing the GM or making him defensive; a hostile GM is far more dangerous than the worst kinds of player blunders that can be imagined.

7. Plan carefully, and have backup plans.

The leader is crucial in guiding efficient planning. He should encourage brainstorming — but don't judge or discuss the suggestions initially, just list them. Often the first idea offered is discussed in detail, using up all the time that should be used for planning, and none of the other plans are even recognized or discussed. As each plan is listed, the

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leader should listen carefully, and attempt to clarify any plans that are ambiguous or poorly expressed or which contain hidden assumptions. Once all the plans are listed, the leader should set a cutoff time for discussion of the plans and the means by which the plan shall be selected. It is not always a good idea to depend on a vote to decide the selection of a plan. Sometimes the selection of the plan should be entrusted to the appropriate specialist; for example, the combat specialist might be best suited to select an assault plan.

Always have backup plans. Keep plans flexible enough to respond to unexpected hindrances. Keep the plan as simple as possible; it is an unfortunate truth that people are often unable to do complicated things, and a simple plan is much easier to improvise or revise when the unforeseen occurs.

The plan must take into account the following: the objectives of the party; the party resources; an estimate of the opposing forces; an awareness of available time to complete the plan; the deadlines of the scenario; and the scenario's apparent level of logical consistency. The more likely it is that characters will die irreversibly, the more conservative the plan must be, with ample alternatives and escape contingencies. The degree of logical consistency in the adventure is very important; the less reliably logical the scenario is, the less useful careful planning will be. In those goofy, completely illogical universes, it is often futile to plan in any but the most superficial fashion.

8. *Don't confuse real time with game time.*

Even though it might realistically take your party hours to retrace their steps to return to what may have been a better route, realize that in game terms, since the area has already been mapped, it will take very little game time to go back and start over at the better route. When the choice is between two weeks of wilderness travel and a month of sea voyage to reach a destination, remember that the two voyages will most likely take about the same amount of game time. The important thing is game time, a scarce resource that must be conserved.

Particularly try to avoid the common panic that can set in when players/characters know the time for the event is running out. Players who hurry will rarely enable their characters to act any faster; though six people simultaneously stating their requests takes less game time, the net effect is lost time, because the GM cannot understand any of the requests. Staying cool and organized is the most efficient use of game time, even though panic and adrenalin rushes might be the appropriate role-playing response as a character.

9. *Innovate, but don't overdo it.*

Balance the possible benefits of clever

Only tamper with an unknown item or artifact when it seems to be absolutely necessary, or absolutely safe.

and unconventional procedures against the risk of violently disrupting the typically narrow focus of most tournament dungeons. That clever idea may cost valuable game time as the GM struggles to find precedent and reason for his judgement, and if the GM must consult with the tournament organizers for a response to the stroke of genius, the time lost may far outweigh the benefit gained.

10. *Don't yank on levers.*

Avoid actions that imply that success is simply a matter of faith in action and good luck. Sophisticated GMs are scornful of lever-pullers, and will often offer a device designed to punish such reckless behavior. Only tamper with an unknown item or artifact when it seems to be absolutely necessary, or absolutely safe. Don't pick up that widget and push the button, just because you detected magic. It is far more likely to result in an untimely demise than an instant dominion over all enemies.

Effective tournament strategies

In addition to learning accepted principles of good play, it is helpful to recognize and understand certain widely practiced strategies that have proven effective in tournament competition.

1. *Send an appropriate party member ahead to scout.*

Common practice is to make a thief-type invisible. Preferably he should have special skills that make him hard to detect, but good at perceiving things. Infravision, for example, is very helpful. Usually the scout is a character who has little value in melee or magic; scouting may be a relatively safe occupation for a lightly armored and weak character. He should be skilled at detecting traps, and cautious by nature. By scouting ahead, dangerous encounters and traps may be avoided, and useful information will be obtained that will make planning more effective.

2. *Magical concealment is almost always useful.*

Spells of invisibility and silence are very popular, but illusion spells may sometimes serve similar purposes. The principle is avoiding undesirable encounters, or gaining the element of surprise in an attack.

3. *"Carry your water in you," as the denizens of the desert say.*

Use magical or perishable healing resources early; don't try to conserve them. Otherwise, the spell-casters may die before they can employ their spells, and a character may perish because he was not healed up to full capacity. It is a good idea, however, to save a few potions or salves that can be applied by anyone,

and provide a benefit which will not disappear upon the death of the bearer. These resources can be saved for discretionary use in the later stages of an adventure. In general, however, make it a practice to stay as close to peak durability as is practical; it is terrible to watch a character die who might have lived if he had not foolishly attempted to "conserve" healing magic.

4. *In all travel and battle orders, provide for relief of the front line — someone who can step in or interpose himself between an attacker and a sorely wounded comrade.*

Often a well-armed but unimposing character can hold off an attacker long enough to permit the front-line juggernaut to return to the fray fully healed. It is foolish to wait for the front line to be cut down before the second line tests its valor in combat.

5. *Don't separate the party.*

The GM can only handle one party, or part of a party, at a time, and one group will be sitting twiddling its thumbs while the other group works with the GM. Even though common sense indicates that a party could search an area faster if it split up into small groups, the practical fact is

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that more game time is consumed, it is also true, incidentally, that divided parties are easier prey for marauders.

6. *Don't hesitate to use information magic; become skilled in its use.*

Most magic-users tend to think in terms of fireballs and lightning bolts, but there are many useful spells that can help prevent encounters or confer tactical advantages that outweigh the value of scorching a few bad guys. Such spells as *find traps*, *locate object*, *find the path*, *augury*, *divination*, and a host of *detect* spells will help the party avoid perils and achieve its objectives. One particularly useful type of spell that is often poorly utilized is the "ask questions of the gods" spell, like *commune*, *contact other plane*, and *divination*. These spells can often be used effectively in the early planning stages to obtain valuable intelligence about the disposition of the opponent and the layout of his defenses. Often it will be possible to avoid the bulk of the defenders, or at least to accurately assess their strengths and weaknesses. The ability to use this kind of magic quickly and effectively is rare in FRP gamers, and may provide the margin of victory against a less well-prepared party.

7. *Ignore loot; first and foremost, achieve the objectives.*

GMs love to leave loot around to distract the inexperienced gamer. Sometimes casually encountered treasure may yield a valuable tool, but it is just as likely that it will yield a crock or a trap. While one group is playing around with that unmarked potion bottle (actually a *portion of plant control*), another party is forging ahead to accomplish its ordained task. Particularly entertaining is the character who can't walk past a stack of gold bars; it is comic to see him struggling with the encumbrance in combat. Ignore the simply attractive; seek only the essential.

8. *Don't despair when hit points and spell powers are nearly gone.*

A depleted character must simply be more clever. The gamer's truly effective weapons are his wits and his ingenuity, and it is often very satisfying to be stripped of all the usual powers and abilities and left only with desperately contrived resources. One excellent final round of an AD&D Open left the characters stripped of weapons, armor, spells, and even torches at the beginning of the adventure. Such challenges bring out the best in players, and clever improvisations will be recalled far longer than the wielding of gross weapons and magics.

9. *Don't hesitate to use consumable resources, unless there is a strong hint in the background or objectives of the scenario that seems to encourage such stinginess.*

It is very poor form to end the adventure with unused powers and dead companions. Many players hesitate to use

Better to have a less qualified leader than a struggle for dominance every time a decision must be made.

their more scarce and powerful spells until the adventure is almost over; then they try to use them all at once, regardless of their appropriateness. If a powerful spell is used well and early, it may permit the party to arrive at its destination in good enough condition that the task will be easily accomplished. Don't always assume that the toughest combat is saved for the end of the scenario; the climax of the adventure may be a difficult puzzle, or a problem which cannot be solved by simply using a bigger hammer. Frequently enough, that fireball that is carefully conserved will be completely ineffective against the fire lizard that is the final obstacle. Such ironic surprises are the delight of fiendish GMs.

10. *Maintain party unity at all costs.*

Even in a scenario that encourages treachery, try to keep as much of the party alive, functional, and confident of mutual assistance as possible. Last-minute treachery is usually most effective, anyway, and least depressing to the betrayed character, who at least will have had most of a pleasant adventure. If no treachery is encouraged in the scenario, avoid any divisive actions that cause mistrust within the party. Ensure the prospect of aid in extremity by assuring others that aid will be given to them when they need it.

11. *When all else fails, play dead.*

This cheap trick is terribly common, and many ruthless GMs are unimpressed by such tactics, but sometimes it is simply the last resort of the doomed character. Generally it is unusual for opponents to meticulously finish off a downed character, particularly when there are other characters still standing; a character in such dire straits should be philosophical, and thankful for any opportunity to avoid the fatal blow.

Common problems in tournament play

Certain typical problems must be recognized and handled effectively, or the entire game may be spoiled.

1. *Intransigent players.*

Sometimes one or more players in a group simply will not go along with the party. Sometimes it is someone who just doesn't like being organized or given orders; sometimes it is a self-styled leader who is insensitive to the fact that he is not acknowledged as the leader. Privately attempt to explain the problem to the player, and courteously ask him to cooperate for the sake of the party; it is seldom effective to employ negative means with such a player. Usually the reason he is a problem is that he is insensitive to criticism or reason. Send this player off on a separate mission; here it is better to split the party than to try to

work around an uncooperative player. At best the player may be able to aid the party by being separated from the rest of the members; at worst, time and patience will not be wasted in arguing with him.

2. *Ballhogs.*

Some players have to be on center stage at all times; they don't give other players a chance to share their thoughts or perform useful functions. These guys always push through the party and grab the magic objects, or fire impulsively at encounters, or insist on a lengthy explanation of their point of view. An effective party leader can channel action away from such players and toward less assertive players. Privately asking the player to relax and give other players a chance may help; finally, however, it may be necessary to be unpleasant with these players, particularly if the impulsive behavior of the player is getting the party into trouble. Sometimes a sympathetic GM will assist the party, but it may come down to ostracizing the character, or knocking him over the head. It is easier to take if the sanction can come in game terms, and still allow the player some ability to participate in the adventure. For example, a charm spell may permit the party to control the character's actions, or some other character can keep an eye and a weapon trained on the offender, with the promise of violence in case of further problems. It must be observed, however, that a dead character cannot be a ballhog.

3. *The weak GM.*

Sometimes a GM will clearly be unfamiliar with the rules or, very often in large tournaments, unfamiliar with the scenario. In some cases he will simply not have much talent or skill at game-mastering. It is very frustrating for players who are experienced GMs to sit and watch a judge fumble around, when it is clear that the players could do a better job of judging. It is useless to attack and humiliate such judges, and they may not be responsible for their incapacity; often a judge may not see his scenario until the night before, and he may find the scenario emphasizing the very areas of the rules where he is weakest. In this case, it is best to try to help the GM wherever possible, and to avoid pushing him beyond his limits. If his ineptitude causes particularly serious delays as he struggles with confused scenario references, or tries to make judgements, ask the GM if he will extend the time limit to compensate. The worst case of this predicament is when the GM tries to cover his ill-preparedness by being a ruthless killer. Some GMs feel that killing a few characters will earn them instant respect. There is little that can be done in these

cases, other than discussing the problem afterward with the tournament organizers. A final resort might be to walk out of the event directly, and confront the organizers; I did this one time, and received some sort of satisfaction, but generally it is best to remember that it is only a game and take the misfortune philosophically.

4. Leadership struggle.

Sometimes two strong-willed players will be equally qualified to lead the party, and they will disrupt the action by constantly arguing over who has the better plan. If one of those strong-willed people happens to be you, simply let the other person lead. It is better to have a possibly less qualified leader than to have a time- and energy-consuming struggle for party dominance every time a decision must be made. If you are an observer in the battle for power, it may be necessary to put the problem before the party and insist that a leader be chosen by vote or by lot. Don't hesitate to get tough with leader types; they wouldn't be assertive if they weren't tough enough to survive criticism, and often simply calling the source of the problem to the attention of the contending leaders will eliminate the difficulty.

5. Indecisive dithering and endless planning discussions.

Often it will be possible to get the party to recognize that time is being lost, and suggesting a time limit on discussion, or a limit of one comment per player, may solve the problem. Sometimes it is necessary to be the bad guy, and impulsively perform an act that commits the party to a plan of action. Taking judgements affecting the whole party into your own hands, however, is not likely to make you popular, and even if the tactic works, the party is unlikely to thank you for it. Another option is to take off on your own, with the GM's help; the party will often follow without reflection, simply to avoid a party split. Recognize, however, that some of the solutions suggested here are listed as problems themselves (see "ballhogs"), and it is best to limit discussion and dithering to that which

can be done while maintaining the party's agreement and cooperation.

6. Treachery.

This is no fun for the victim, yet often great fun for the betrayer. One effective approach, when traveling with friends, is to swear a mutual revenge oath: Any character who betrays any one of the oath-swearers will be pursued to the death. Individually, it is best to establish with the GM by means of a note that you are constantly on the lookout for theft or treachery within the party; this may sometimes entitle you to some warning when some rat directs the GM that he is going to pull a fast one. A pragmatic and ruthless approach is to kill dubious characters outright; another approach is to acknowledge a thief an extra share of treasure in return for the courtesy of not stealing from the party. Most effective is the agreement of all members of a party to punish treachery; sadly, there is little to assure the value of such an oath. The most effective way to avoid this problem is to refuse to play with anyone whom you do not know and trust; unhappily, this is rarely possible in tournament play.

7. Disputes with the GM.

It is difficult to generalize on this problem. Some GMs invite discussion of their judgements; others bitterly resent any questioning of their authority. Usually such endeavors consume a great deal of time, and often they have relatively little effect on the result of the game. After analyzing the style of the GM, and considering whether he is at all likely to be amenable to discussion of an error or oversight, weigh the possible benefits of a reversed decision against the time lost and the possible irritation of the judge, and do what is necessary. Don't forget that you are a partisan critic, and that your view of the judgement may be strongly colored by self-interest. In the case of a clear error or unfair judgement where the GM is unwilling to listen to reason, take it up after the event with the tournament organizers; sometimes such an error will be so obvious and so important that some redress must be made for

the sake of the event and the peace of mind of the players.

8. Idle players becoming bored while the spotlight is elsewhere.

Find some useful busy-work tasks to keep players active and alert when the GM is tied up with another player. Bored players will let their attention wander and break into private conversations on unrelated topics; this can be distracting and demoralizing. Encourage these players to update inventories or battle plans, or prepare night-watch lists, or to search background materials for missed hints. Though these activities are not on center stage, they are at least clearly related to the task, and revising plans for the final conflict to reflect new information and depleted resources may increase the chances of a successful mission.

9. Uninspired team members.

Public contempt and humiliation will not improve a gamer's play; it will not serve any purpose to make a weak player miserable. If you can presume to judge the quality of another's skills, you should be able to take responsibility for finding tasks equal to his ability. Determine his strengths (everybody has some) and exploit them; build the player's confidence and self-worth; and even if he turns out to have been little help in the adventure, at least you will not have been responsible for ruining another person's enjoyment of the scenario. Productive



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criticism is usually best delivered in private, and most easily accepted and appreciated from an unvindictive source. Be generous, be understanding, and remember that you are playing a game which is supposed to be for the enjoyment of all.

10. Weak leader and/or disorganized group.

Initially, it is most important to recognize this problem; many groups founder in organizing, planning, and discussion, but are not conscious that the problem is not the content or quality of ideas, but the lack of a system to review and implement them. George Johnson, an experienced tournament judge, tells the classic story of the group that was performing horribly in his scenario; finally, after two hours of confusion and disaster, one player observed, "Gee, I guess we ought to choose a leader." Ironically, this problem will often crop up in groups with superior players; there are just so many good ideas that no one can stand to abandon his own concept to work with the group. The final round of the Origins 82 *Runequest* tournament is a perfect example. With eight excellent players, there were (at least) eight very good ideas about how to approach the party's task; no one plan was obviously better than the next. The result was that the party broke up into several small groups, each intent on following their own ideas.

It is not undignified to strive to win; the spirit of competition provides the best gaming experiences. However, never lose sight of the ultimate goals — to play hard, to play well, and, most of all, to have fun.

Though their individual play was truly superior, and thoroughly entertaining, the party ran out of time before it could complete the scenario.

Once the group recognizes its disorganization, it is a good idea to pick a leader and be as formal as a classroom; once things settle down, the structure can become less formal as the circumstances indicate. A reliable and familiar model for group organization is the school classroom; a leader can borrow many of the techniques of teachers in organizing the group, relying on such simple principles as waiting to be recognized before speaking and listing important details on blackboards. Though some may resent such formal structuring, it will be accepted if it solves a mutually perceived problem.

11. "The wrong leader."

A typical complaint heard after an unsuccessful adventure is "Our leader led us to disaster," or "We picked the wrong leader." This may simply be a matter of undignified second-guessing; as often as not, the leader may have been the best choice, and the complainer simply looking for a scapegoat. However, to the extent that this is a valid complaint, several principles address this problem:

A: Look for leadership qualities. A good leader is usually older and more experienced; inquire as to which players have tournament experience and which players have led parties in tournament play before, and how often. A potential leader will probably be doing many of the things suggested by this article long before he is officially designated party leader. He will usually be an extrovert, speaking easily with friends and strangers alike. (Do not confuse the loudmouth with the extrovert — a loudmouth tries to do all the talking; an extrovert will perhaps initiate the talking, but will also listen to what is said.) He will usually have his own materials (rule books, dice, note pads, pencils) well organized, perhaps even to the point of compulsion. He may politely defer to others when leader volunteers are called for; often a really experienced leader is embarrassed by his preeminence. He may be self-conscious about constantly taking such an important role, and he may eagerly encourage other less experienced players to take a shot at a party leadership role — a generous gesture that should be respected, since the veteran can always be called on if things go badly later on.

B: Explicitly limit the leader's role from the very start of the expedition. Make it

clear that the choice of leader is provisional; it may be necessary to choose another leader later in the scenario if problems arise. Do not promise or imply complete obedience; do not sit back passively, dumping the responsibility for success on your leader. Such passivity encourages or forces the leader to rely on his own judgement, when he should be able and obligated to consider the contributions of the other members.

C: It is each player's responsibility to assert himself when he feels the leader or group is not functioning properly. It is in poor taste to sit quietly, critically judging the party's efforts, then to later complain that the leader or rest of the party blew it. A tournament is a team effort, and each individual is responsible for the group's success or failure. Often a quick critical appraisal of the situation can set things back on the right track. For the leader's part, he must be positive and accepting of criticism; he should encourage anyone who disagrees to speak out. As long as the leader encourages the comments of party members, and as long as they do not abandon their right and responsibility to support and advise him, the group can operate efficiently without becoming a dictatorship with the passive indulgence of the players.

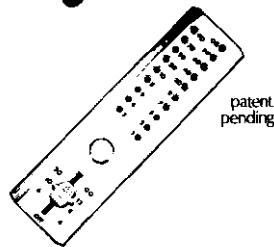
12. Last-minute panic.

The last thirty minutes of a tournament adventure often degenerates into chaos as each player desperately seeks to expend his remaining powers and grab the treasure before time runs out. Even the well-organized group will go crazy at the last minute, abandoning their efficient systems, in disruptive panic. Each player insists on acting and speaking immediately, with the result that no one can act or speak effectively. Resist the emotional urge to panic, and try to operate as you have throughout the scenario — in an orderly and efficient manner.

Effective FRP tournament play

As the gamer becomes more experienced in tournament play, he will adapt, revise, and perhaps discard many of the suggestions offered above, and he will devise his own set of principles to guide him to increasingly effective and successful tournament play. It is not undignified to strive to win; the spirit of competition provides the serious atmosphere in which some of the best FRP gaming experiences may be enjoyed. However, never lose sight of the ultimate goals — to play hard, to play well, and, most of all, to have fun.

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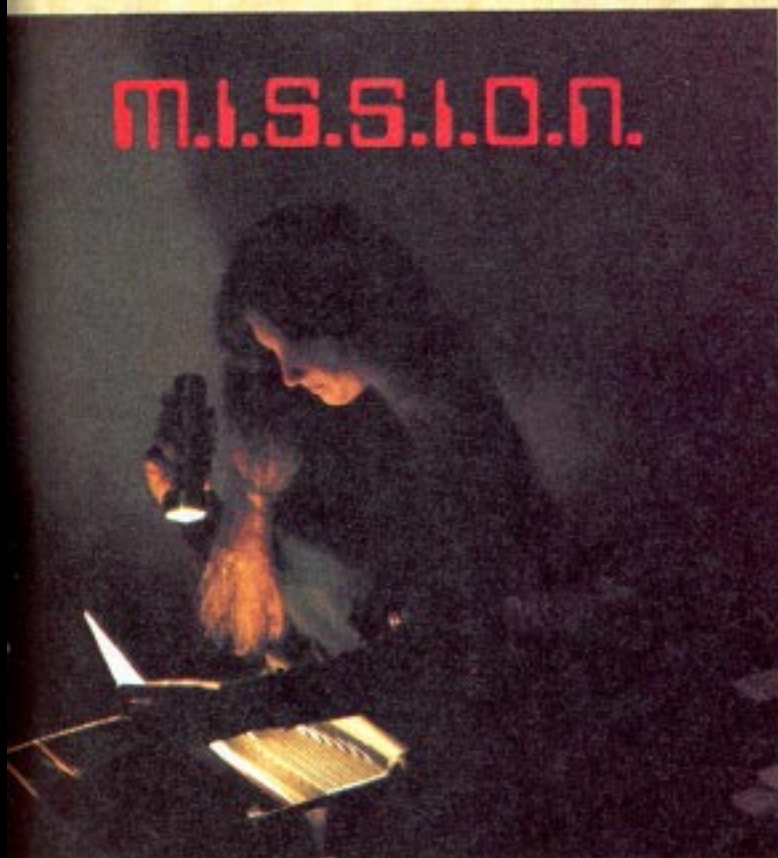
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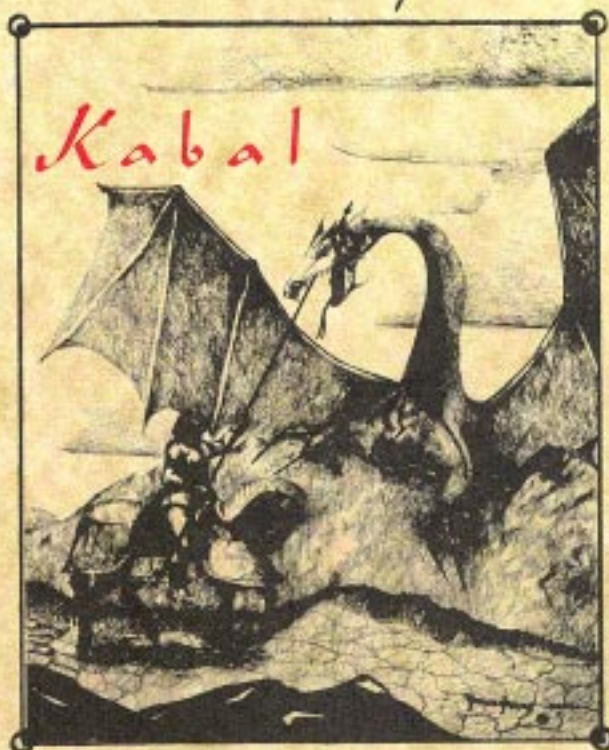
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You approach the island swimming silently, carefully avoiding the patrols by diving deeper. When you reach the island, you frantically bury your gear in the sand, before you crawl through the thick grass to the fence. Cutting through the fence is easy, but your heart stops when your foot scuffs some dirt onto the last mine in the field. Avoiding the searchlight, you sprint to the building and enter. After neutralizing the alarms, you penetrate the security zone. Locating and photographing the plans is almost too easy...

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The game

by
**Tim
Grice**

The game of chess has its origins in the distant past. In medieval times it was known as the game of kings. Given the quasi-medieval setting of most AD&D™ game environments, it seems not implausible that knowledge of chess lurks somewhere in the land. This article demonstrates how to simulate the game of chess in a fashion that is both reasonably accurate and playable.

Who can play

For the purpose of simplicity, chess is treated as a language insofar as learning it is concerned. This means a character must have an intelligence of at least eight to be able to learn and play the game. A character with an intelligence of eight can know one additional language, as indicated in the Players Handbook. If the character in question chooses to know how to play chess, he or she has used up that additional language. A character with an intelligence of 10, who can normally know two additional languages, can know only one additional language if he or she chooses to know how to play the game of kings. While the game is treated as a language for learning purposes, it should be remembered that chess is not literally a language; just because a character knows how to play chess does not mean that character can converse with any monster that can also play chess. The character could engage the monster in a game of chess, but any other, more meaningful communication between them is impossible unless both have some spoken/written language in common.

Chess modifiers

Not all chess players are created equal. The degree of proficiency a chess player has is simulated with a statistic called the Chess Modifier (CM). When a person learns the game his CM is low, but it will increase as the player gains experience in the game. Chess Modifiers range from 9½, for the lowest-ranked beginner, to more than 100, attainable only by chess masters: the average CM for a player

within a game

AD&D™ characters can battle over a chessboard

character is about 35. The basic Chess Modifier for a character who has just learned how to play chess is computed by adding the character's intelligence score and half his or her wisdom score, retaining the fraction if there is one. A cleric with an intelligence of 11 and a wisdom of 13 has a CM of $17\frac{1}{2}$ when he first learns the game of kings. When playing the game his CM is considered to be 17 (dropping the fraction). The "extra" fraction is used when the cleric gets better at chess, as detailed below on the subject of experience.

Playing procedure

The game of kings is played in turns, each of which are, coincidentally, exactly one turn (10 melee rounds) long. To prepare for a game, the judge (DM) first determines the Stalemate Limit for that game by adding the players' Chess Modifiers, dividing that total by 10 (dropping the fraction, if any) and adding the result of a roll of d6. If the game continues for this number of turns, it is considered to end in a stalemate or draw, with no victory for either player.

To begin each turn of a game of chess, each player secretly chooses which of the six strategies he will use and writes it on a note which is given to the judge (DM). Also on this note is the means, if any, by which the player is cheating. The judge then rolls percentile dice and modifies the result according to the players' strategies, according to whatever means (if any) of cheating are being used, and according to the players' Chess Modifiers. (The procedure is clearly outlined later in this article by an example.) Finally, the adjusted dice roll is used to refer to the appropriate line on the Turn Result Table (below), and the result read from that table is used to adjust the game's cumulative score, which is set to zero at the beginning of the game. If the cumulative score reaches -4 at the end of a turn, the game is over with a crushing victory for White; a cumulative score of -3 indicates a win for white; a cumulative score of +3 indicates a win for Black; and

a cumulative score of +4 is a crushing victory for Black. If the cumulative score at the end of a turn is between -2 and +2 inclusive, the game continues until a winner emerges or until the Stalemate Limit for that game is reached.

Turn Result Table

01—05: Great move for White; adjust cumulative score by -2

06—45: Good move for White; adjust cumulative score by -1

46—55: No change in status; no adjustment to cumulative score

56—95: Good move for Black; adjust cumulative score by +1

96—00: Great move for Black; adjust cumulative score by +2

The strategies

The six strategies are: General Attack, Build Up Own Position, Destroy Foe's Position, Set a Trap, Trade Down, and Attack Foe's King. At the beginning of each turn Black and White both select one of these, write it down on a note

(along with the method of cheating, if any, being employed) and hand it to the judge. The judge cross-indexes the two strategies on the table below; this yields a number, which is added to the percentile dice roll generated by the judge. (Adding a negative number is equivalent to subtracting that amount if it were expressed as a positive number.) Black's CM is added to, and White's CM is subtracted from, the resulting number. This modified number (perhaps also further modified for cheating; see that section in the following text) is compared to the Turn Result Table to determine the result of that turn's moves. Note that each "turn," for purposes of adapting chess to the AD&D game, may represent more than a single pair of moves on the chessboard; what is being measured by the Strategy Table and the Turn Result Table is not necessarily the result of individual moves, but the result of the application of a general strategy over a series of such moves, all of which constitute one "turn" in the AD&D time system.

STRATEGY TABLE

A = General Attack; B = Build Up Own Position; C = Destroy Foe's Position; D = Set a Trap; E = Trade Down; F = Attack Foe's King.

White's Strategy	Black's Strategy						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
A	0%	-20%	+10%	+20%	0%	-10%	
B	+20%	0%	0%	-30%	+10%	+10%	
C	-10%	0%	0%	+20%	-10%	-10%	
D	-20%	+30%	-20%	0%	+20%	-10%	
E	0%	-10%	+10%	-20%	0%	+20%	
F	+10%	-10%	+10%	+10%	-20%	0%	

A sample game

The cumulative score is set to zero. White has a CM of 29. Black has a CM of 20. Black's CM + White's CM divided by 10 (drop the fraction) equals 4, which means if the game is not won in 4 + 1-6 turns it will be a stalemate or draw. The judge rolls d6, getting a result of 3, making the Stalemate Limit for this game seven turns. (The judge, of course, does not tell the players how long they have to play.) The players select their opening

strategies and give the judge notes telling what they will do on the first turn. Black will try to destroy White's position, while White is immediately trying to attack Black's king. The two strategies are cross-indexed on the Strategy Table, giving a result of +10%, so 10 will be added to the percentile dice roll. The judge rolls 82, which is modified to 92. Adding Black's CM of 20 and subtracting White's CM of 29 (a procedure which will yield the same result for each turn)

means that the roll is modified by another -9, making the final result 83. The 83 is compared to the proper line on the Turn Result Table, showing that the actions taken on this turn constitute a good move (actually, a series of good moves) for Black. The cumulative score is adjusted by +1, from 0 to +1.

Turn two: On this turn, Black is willing to trade down, while White is mounting a general attack. The two strategies cancel each other out. The judge's percentile dice roll of 77 is again modified by -9 for a result of 68, another good turn for Black. The cumulative score of +1 is adjusted by +1, to +2.

Turn three: White is setting a trap, while Black is attacking White's king. The dice roll is 56, modified by -10 for the players' strategies and by -9 for the difference in their CM's, for a result of 37, a good turn for White. The cumulative score is adjusted by -1, down to +1.

Turn four: White is trading down while Black is launching a general attack. The dice roll is 48, adjusted by -9 for the players' CM's but not adjusted for the difference in strategies, for a result of 39, another good turn for White, which puts the cumulative score back at 0.

Turn five: Black is trading down while White is building up his position, yielding a -30% modifier. The dice roll is 30, and taking the modifiers into account, the resulting number is -9 (considered the same as a result of 01, the lowest number obtainable on the Turn Result Table). This turn was very good for White, and the cumulative score is adjusted by -2, going to -2.

Turn six: Black's cause does not look good. The best he can hope for is that the Stalemate Limit die roll was relatively low, since with a cumulative score of -2 with (at most) 5 turns to go he would need 5 "good moves" or 3 "great moves" to win. Since White is the more skillful player, Black's chance of getting the needed moves is slim. He chooses to attack White's king, while White chooses a general attack. The modifiers of -10 (for strategy) and -9 (for CM's) is applied to the dice roll of 20, yielding a result of 1 — another "great move" for White. (In this case, Black would have had much better chances if he had set a trap.) The cumulative score is adjusted by -2 to -4 ending the game in a crushing victory for White. If Black had survived this turn, and also not lost in the next (seventh) turn, the game would have been a stalemate.

In this sample game, neither Black nor White engaged in cheating. If either or both had, the result might have been different. (See the section on cheating in the following text.)

Gaining chess experience

As a character plays chess and gets better at it, his Chess Modifier can increase. But not every game presents the

opportunity to learn, and some games will obviously teach more than others. The more difficult a foe is to beat, the more experience can be gained by the other player.

In AD&D game terms, experience may be gained whenever a character wins a game of chess without cheating. The winner must roll less than his or her intelligence on d20, success indicating that the winner has learned something while playing. If the roll is failed, then the character in question has not learned anything from the game. In no case can a character learn anything from a game, for purposes of increasing his or her CM, if that character did not win the game.

If the roll vs. intelligence succeeds, the character's CM goes up by an amount equal to the opponent's CM divided by the character's CM. In the sample game described earlier, White (CM of 29) beat Black (CM of 20). Therefore, if White rolls less than his intelligence on d20, his CM will be increased by $20/29$. Then, if and when White gains another $9/29$ (for example, by beating someone with a CM of 9), his CM will go up to 30. If, for instance, White beats an opponent with a CM of 14 and makes his intelligence roll, he would have a CM of 30 plus $5/29$, which would be rounded down (for playing purposes) to 30. The fraction would be counted when making further calculations to gain more experience. (Note that it is possible for a player's CM to increase by one point or more as the result of a single game, if the winner of that game had a CM equal to or less than his opponent.)

There are restrictions on how rapidly a player character can gain chess experience, regardless of how many games the character wins in a span of time. The NPC noble with little else to do but putter around and think could conceivably increase his CM by a substantial amount in a single day. A player-character adventurer will have many far more important things to do than play chess all the time; such a player's CM cannot increase by more than one point within a span of 1-4 weeks; the DM must roll d4 for each player to determine his or her "learning limit," which will apply throughout the player's chess-playing lifetime. The only exception to this one-point limit is for a player who earns more than one CM point in a single game, and in this case that player is limited to the amount of that increase for the next 1-4 weeks.

Another restriction is this: Only the first game an adventurer plays against someone has any chance of affecting the adventurer's CM. While this is not true in the real world, in game terms it is utterly necessary; otherwise, all the chess players in a party could play each other over and over again and gain chess experience in round-robin fashion until all had reached their maximum CM's.

Each player's Chess Modifier has an

upper limit, beyond which further progression is impossible. The maximum CM of a person (NPC) who has nothing to do but play chess all day, every day, is 5 times his initial Chess Modifier (intelligence + half of wisdom). Player-character adventurers, who cannot spend a large amount of time on the game, can never advance beyond 3 times their initial Chess Modifier.

Cheating

Several methods of cheating at chess exist in an AD&D context. A player attempting to cheat must indicate that, and specify the method being used, on the note that he gives the judge at the beginning of the turn. Being caught cheating has many different possible consequences, ranging from expulsion from the game to decapitation, depending on who does the catching. The Dungeon Master must decide the severity of the punishment on a case-by-case basis.

The simplest way to cheat is to try to move the pieces around when no one is watching. A player who succeeds at this gains a bonus to his CM — for the current turn only — equal to his dexterity. In the game example given earlier, suppose that Black (CM of 20) decides late in the game that cheating is better than losing. The cumulative score is -2, on turn six. Black has a 14 dexterity. If he succeeds in moving the chessmen around, his CM for this turn will be $20 + 14 = 34$.

Cheating in this fashion, however, is not without risks. The player attempting to cheat must make a roll of dexterity or less on d20 for all those watching the game (including his opponent and any spectators, but not the judge). Each roll that fails alerts one watcher. Thieves are allowed two rolls per watcher, the first as above and (if it fails) the second a percentile roll with the same chance of success the thief has of picking pockets. This method of cheating can be tried only once per turn. Each succeeding try on later turns in the same game lessens the necessary d20 roll by one, and lowers the pocket-picking percent of a thief by 5%; this sort of cheating becomes easier to detect the more often it is tried. If the player cheating has a dexterity of 20 or higher, or is a thief with a pick-pocket percentage of 100% or more, there is still a 1% chance of the cheating being noticed. For this and all other methods of cheating, the judge (DM) does the dice-rolling, to keep unknown the fact that a cheating attempt is being made.

Another means of cheating, far harder to detect, is through the use of *ESP*. The medallion can be detected by a physical search or by some form of detect magic, and use of the spell can be revealed by detect magic, but the psionic abilities of *ESP* and telepathy can only be detected by a psionic character, by the use of *ESP*, or a *detect lie* spell. The *ESP* spell can be cast on the sly by mumbling the

verbal component and moving the hands in the Somatic fashion under the table. A magic-user attempting to cast an *ESP* spell surreptitiously must make a saving throw of his intelligence or less on d20 for each watcher to avoid the casting being detected.

If the spell is successfully cast or the power successfully employed by a medallion or through psionics, the effect of *ESP* is devastating: For that turn the opponent's CM is lowered to zero, and rather than the *ESP*-user having to select a strategy, the most favorable one (from the viewpoint of the *ESP*-user) is applied against the opponent's choice of strategy. If both players are using *ESP*, that turn of the game will have no result, with no adjustment of the cumulative score, and each player will be aware that the other is cheating.

Use of the psionic ability of *empathy* is almost undetectable (5% chance per turn used, cumulative, and only detectable by other psionic characters or those able to detect the expenditure of psionic energy), and results in the lowering of the opponent's CM to 2/3 of normal for the turn in question.

When playing to lose (for whatever reason), a player need not use all of his CM. In fact, a player can use a negative CM of up to half his normal Chess Modifier without being obvious. (This desire should be communicated to the judge in the note preceding each turn.)

Far and away the most common form of cheating is by intimidation. Whenever

intimidation is attempted, by whatever means, the intended victim of the intimidation must roll his wisdom or less on d20 (adjusted up or down at the Dungeon Master's discretion, according to the severity of the intimidation) to avoid being intimidated. The effect of successful intimidation is to lower the victim's CM by 10% for one turn. This effect is cumulative, to a maximum of five successful attempts (a lowering of the CM by 50%) in one turn.

Intimidation can be accomplished by a multitude of means, including having husky bodyguards breathing over the victim's shoulder, laughing whenever the victim makes a move, "playfully" swishing a sword in the victim's direction, and so on. Any particular form of intimidation can only be attempted once per turn, but can be tried turn after turn if so desired. Whenever any player is competing against a dragon who has more than half the other player's hit points, an automatic possible intimidation takes place, and the other player must make a roll against wisdom or be intimidated. Intimidation is semi-open; that is, it is apparent to the intended victim and any onlookers, and the players involved can make their own rolls against wisdom. All die rolls pertaining to other forms of cheating are rolled in secret by the judge.

A player who cheats or attempts to cheat can gain no experience from the game in question. However, there may obviously be other reasons for a player to engage in a chess game and attempt

to cheat in order to enhance his chances of victory; winning a bet on the outcome of the game is perhaps the most obvious of all.

NPC chess players

A non-player character's chance of having learned how to play chess is dependent on the character's profession and intelligence. Remember that a character must have an intelligence of at least 8 to be able to play chess. NPC's who can play the game will have the basic Chess Modifier of intelligence + half of wisdom in addition to a bonus, which is generated according to the following list:

Noble: Chance of knowing chess is 5% per point of intelligence, bonus to initial CM is 1-40.

Magic-user: 3% per intelligence, 1-30

Fighter: 2% per intelligence, 1-30

Thief: 2% per intelligence, 1-40

Cleric: 2% per intelligence, 1-10

Gambler: 2% per intelligence, 1-50

Merchant: 2% per intelligence, 1-20

Serf: ½% per intelligence, 1-8

Chess Master: 100%, 50 + 1-50

Dragon: 1% per intelligence + ½% per hit point, 0-7 per age level

Others: 1% per intelligence, 1-12

The CM bonuses and chance to know the game are only for non-player characters. Player characters must learn the game from someone who knows it already, and will have the initial Chess Modifier of intelligence + half of wisdom until gaining experience. ■■■



Convention schedule

ORCCON 1983, Feb. 19-21— Southern California's largest strategy game convention and exposition. The site is the Sheraton-Anaheim Hotel, next to Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif. Admission is \$15 at the door for all three days, or \$10 at the door for one day only. For more information: Strategicon PR Dept., P.O. Box 2577, Anaheim CA 92804.

GAME FAIRE '83, Feb. 26-27 — This fourth annual convention will be held at

Spokane Falls (Wash.) Community College. Admission is \$6 for a two-day pass or \$4 for one day; profits will go to the Spokane Guild schools. Details are available from Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane WA 99201, phone (509)325-3358.

WISCONSIN SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION, March 4-6 — The seventh annual staging of the event known as WisCon will take place at the Inn on the

Park in downtown Madison, Wis. Membership fees are \$10 until Feb. 25, or \$15 thereafter and at the door. More information can be had from SF³, Box 1624, Madison WI 53701.

CRUSADERCON II, March 4-6 — Located on the Metro State Campus, Denver, Colo. For more information, contact the MSC Gamers Club, Box 39, 1006 11th St., Denver CO 80204.

HALCON 6, March 4-6 — To be held at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. For details, write to Halcon 6, P.O. Box 295, Station M, Halifax, N.S., Canada B3J 2N7.

IMAGINCON II, March 4-6 — A SF/gaming convention at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kan. Contact: KSU Gaming Council, c/o Ann Simony, 1412 Houston, Manhattan KS 66502.

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AGGIECON XIV, March 24-27 — To be held at the Memorial Student Center at Texas A&M University. Memberships are priced at \$7.50 until March 1, \$10 thereafter. Contact: AggieCon XIV, P.O. Drawer J-1, College Station TX 77844.

FANTASYLAIR '83, March 25-27 — To be held at Tonkawa H. S. in Tonkawa, Okla. Contact: Northern Oklahoma Dungeoneers, PO Box 241, Ponca City OK 74602; (405)762-0349 or (405)765-2382.

STELLARCON 8, March 25-27 — A SF convention to be held on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. For details, write to Mike Brown, SF³, Box 4, E.U.C., U.N.C.-G., Greensboro NC 27412.



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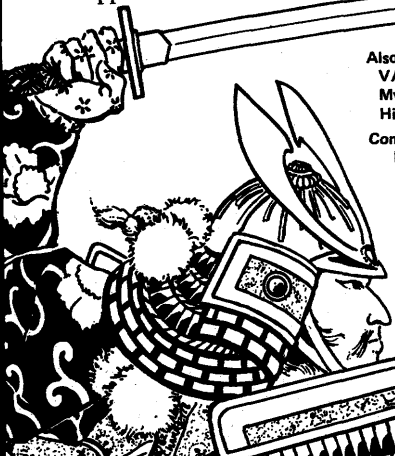

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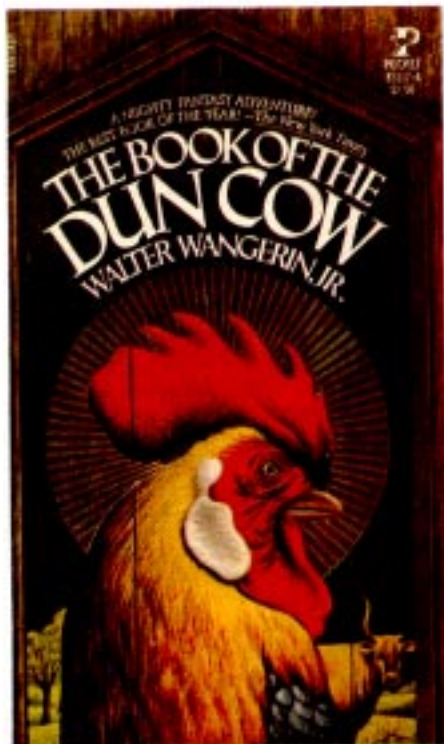




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The leader of the animals, to whom falls the task of trying to stop Wyrms when he makes his stab for freedom, is Chauntecleer, the rooster. He is a brave, if simplistic, soul, given to equal moments of tantrum and inspiration. His friends and

helpers come in all forms: Lord Russel, the fox; Beryl, the nursing, guardian hen; John Wesley, a weasel; and above all, Mundo Cani, the dog with the great nose. Together, under Chauntecleer's direction, the animals of the land battle against Wyrms, and his evil creations, the mutant rooster, Cockatrice, and his sham children, the basilisks.

The beauty of *Dun Cow* is in the fallibility of the central characters. All of the animals break from the normal Disney-inspired tradition of quadruped superiority. Every animal in the book displays a range of emotions and beliefs, some endearing, some foolish, some noble and some bigoted. In short, Wangerin has mirrored everyday human existence in his fable, making it one of the most interesting reads of the year.

SPECIAL DELIVERANCE

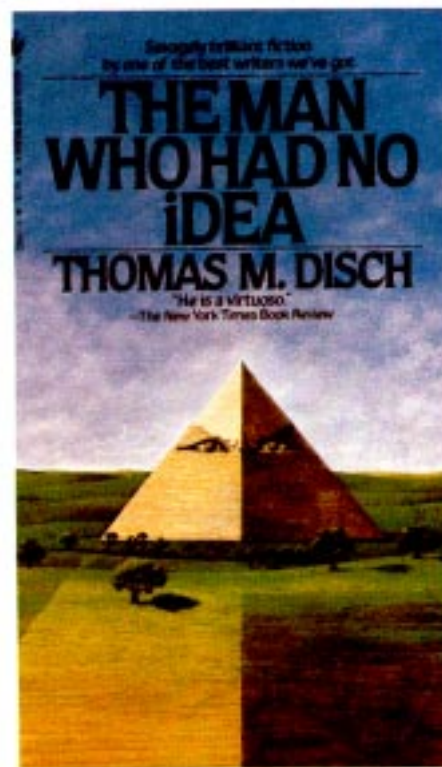
Clifford D. Simak
Del Rey Books \$2.75 345-29140-9-275

Special Deliverance starts when professor Edward Lansing decides that the student who handed in the best paper on Shakespeare he has ever read couldn't have written it himself. The professor demands the truth, and the student confesses he bought it in a "slot machine." Sceptically investigating, the professor finds the student's machine, discovers there are other such machines, and is eventually teleported by one of them to a strange world.

Here he meets other people kidnapped from other worlds, all as puzzled as he as to what they should do. Deciding that they are being tested by whomever or whatever brought them to wherever they are, they set out to discover where they are, and why they are there. Their journey is not pleasant; the questers begin to die and disappear one by one, providing the survivors with scant clues as they exit.

A large success in hardcover, now out in paperback, *Special Deliverance* is one of Simak's best efforts in years. It has a harder edge than most of his recent work. Although many of the characters within retain the traces of buffoonery typical of Simak's work, somehow they do not seem as simple-minded as usual. The book is too rough, too challenging, to allow them to remain mere clowns throughout.

A clear return to the stronger writing style of a decade previous, *Special Deliverance* was a pleasant surprise. Since I've always been a Simak fan, it was extremely enjoyable to find his latest book chock full of the kind of writing which made me a fan of his in the first place.



THE MAN WHO HAD NO IDEA

Thomas M. Disch
Bantam Books \$2.95 0-553-22667-3

The only collection reviewed this time around is one which is long overdue. It is not that Disch is ever ignored; it is only that everything he does is worthy of attention, and it should be put before the public as soon as there is enough of it.

The Man Who Had no iDea is a gathering of seventeen Disch gems, crammed in one atop the other, each funnier, or stranger, or weirder than the one before.

Many of them are short, four, five pagers, leaving room for the several lengthy entries also chosen for inclusion. It is not to worry: Disch's short-shorts are always perfect. There is perhaps no more frightening short-short story in the world than "An Italian Lesson."

If you like Disch, or just like really offbeat tales, this is the ideal "train-to-work/schoolbus/etc." companion. Even if more collections were reviewed, this would be the must of the month.

MAGICIAN

Raymond E. Feist

Doubleday \$19.95 0-385-17580-9

I rarely review hardcover books. If they're good, my thought is that they will appear soon enough in paperback; time enough then to send people out looking. This is not one of those cases.

It is rare that anyone does anything worthwhile with the sword-and-sorcery genre these days, especially out of the blue. It is rare any more if characters we are familiar with can do anything that is new or different. For a new author to come out of nowhere and create two entire worlds and several dozen fascinating characters and enthrall readers from coast to coast is something that demands immediate attention.

Raymond Feist is a fantasy role-playing game designer who one day decided to do what a lot of role-players talk about: He wrote a book. The difference between Feist's book and the ones that are merely talked about, however, is that *Magician* is filled with new ideas, new concepts, and reworkings of familiar ones that come off well enough to be embraced as new.

The novel is the tale of two boys, and the war which engulfs them and their land. It is a war of magic and weapons, one which leads both youths to manhood, and into totally different lives than either of them could have ever suspected. I will not even begin to try to outline the near 550 pages of intricate plotting which fills *Magician*.

I will say that Feist has done his homework. His medieval worlds (one based on feudal Europe, the other on feudal Asia and Japan) ring true. There is enough included about the daily lives of the characters to make us care about them and for them. And, although the writing does bog down a trifle toward the end as the author pulls together all of his plot-lines, this is not to be worried about.

Played out against a massive background and told over nearly a score of years, *Magician* is a fine, solid read. It is also, happily, open for a sequel. It wraps all of its loose ends neatly together, but there is a strong desire on the part of the reader for more, and enough substance left in the material to warrant it.

Magician is the best new fantasy concept in years. After the hundreds of bad, dry, pointless, repetitious fantasy novels I have seen over the past decade, this one is more than a breath of fresh air — it is a sweeping sweet wind which has a chance of putting its author firmly on the throne next to Tolkien — and keeping him there.



THE ODDS ARE MURDER

Mike McQuay

Bantam Books \$2.50 0-553-22858-0

I have recommended the Mathew Swain series by Mike McQuay in this column before. For those who don't know Swain, he is a tough, honest, moral private detective, living in Earth's future. He fights against automation, depersonalization, and all of the other dehumanizing elements of his time. The stories are told in the hard-boiled, cynical style of Raymond Chandler, but with a flavor all their own which makes them more than mere sendups of old words with a new coat of paint.

In McQuay's newest novel, *The Odds Are Murder* (reported at this time to be the last in the series), Swain has hit rock bottom. He has no money, and no car. He has sold his 'overcoat for drinking money. The state has taken away his detective license, and his hope. As the book opens, he has just been released from a mental institution he was railroaded into by his enemies. Of course, things happen to start him fighting again, and there within lies the stuff of one of the finest detective fantasies ever written.

The Odds Are Murder is more than a genre novel. McQuay has made a study of madness and depression which is in many ways unequalled. It is a sad book, one which can often repulse readers, while in the same instances refusing to let them go, keeping them filled with an almost morbid fascination. No matter what happens to Swain, or what he does, the reader keeps going because he does not want to see him fail. Swain represents human hope and determination, the kind of determination strong enough to go to any lengths to succeed.

The Odds Are Murder is for more than fantasy/science fiction fans, or detective readers, or any one small group. *Anyone* with an extra \$250 should give this one a high place on his shopping list.

THE SECRET Kelly/Mann/Preiss/Trilling/Palencar/Pierard/Asen/Jay Bantam Books \$10.95 0-553-01408-0

As one can see from the above listing, more than a few hands were involved in the creation of *The Secret*. This book, besides being a fairly amusing look at goblins, spirits, and other classic fairy folks most people are familiar with, is also a treasure hunt, involving buried jewels (*honest!*) in 12 locations throughout North America.

The book contains color illustrations which, when coupled with verses inside, combine to give the clues to the exact locations of the treasure of the Fair People.

Apparently, the reader is not required to actually go to the location of the treasure, but may fill out a form (contained in the book) on which they can simply describe the location. If you can call the shots on the *where*, the jewels you find are yours.

Be warned, however: After looking the clues over, one can see that *The Secret* is going to be safe for a long time. The treasures really are there for whomever can find them, but finding them is going to be tough. The book is great fun on its own, though, and worth the price, just for the hours of enjoyment it will afford one in trying to decipher the clues, let alone in reading the text (both serious and humorous), and looking over the drawings and the photographs of the Fair People inside.

THE VENETIAN COURT

Charles L. Harness

Del Rey Books \$2.25 345-30628-0-225

In *The Venetian Court*, Charles Harness weaves a simplistic tale of right and wrong. His villains are straightforwardly evil. His champion is a man of conscience using a conscienceless profession (the law) as his weapon. The person championed is noble, virtuous, and self-sacrificing. None of the characters ever achieve more than a partial half-life, all of them too busy mouthing stock phrases and wondering trite thoughts, woodenly shuffling in and out of scenes.

The novel concerns Quentin Thomas and his attempt to save a woman's life in court. What he must do is prove independent intelligence in a computer, bring the plaintiff, Universal Patents, Inc., to its collective knees, and outwit merciless judge Rex "Spider" Speyer. His problems are that the computer's inventor is certified as mad, and nowhere to be found; Universal Patents is the largest, most powerful corporation in the world,

and run by ruthless killers; and, lastly, the judge is an insane sadist who will bend the law in any way he can to see Ellen Welles found guilty and executed just for kicks. If that last sentence seems lengthy and unwieldy, it's nothing compared to the book.

Granted, there is nothing really wrong with *The Venetian Court*; the problem is that there is nothing particularly right with it, either. As a story, it just lays down for an afternoon dognap, doing nothing to inspire the reader. Coupling this with its *deus ex machina* ending makes the novel a bland piece of work, not much worth the effort to buy or read.

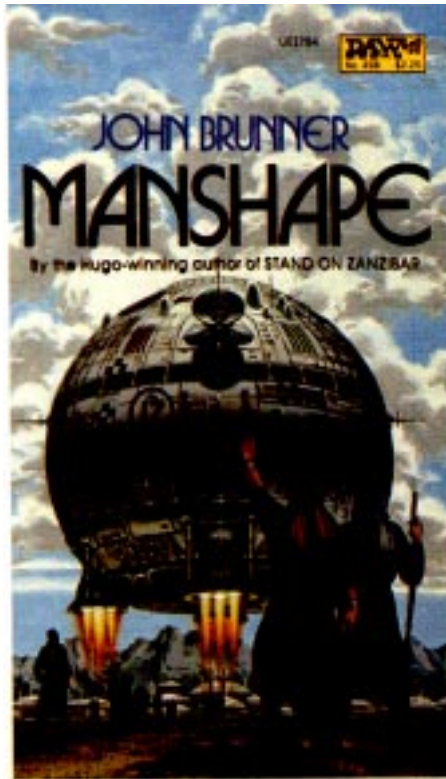
MANSHAPE

John Brunner

DAW Books \$2.25 O-87997-784-7

A large leap away from the previously mentioned novel is the latest from John Brunner, *Manshape*. Herein we are presented with a humanity which has spread throughout the stars faster than the mother planet could keep track of them. Consequently, most of the new worlds settled by Earth were lost from each other until the invention of the Bridge System.

This method of instantaneous transportation linked each rediscovered world to all of the others until the discovery of Azreal, the one world that refused the



Bridge. It would be cruel to give here even a hint as to why Azreal burns down the Bridge, or what happens after that.

Brunner has shaped an extraordinary book, distilling down what would have

become an unwieldy nightmare of a novel in many another author's hands, giving us only what we need to know, and yet giving it to us in a highly desirable package. His characters are all fully blown, each giving us a clear picture of exactly who he or she is. This, coupled with Brunner's invention of the pantologist ("invention" in the sense that he makes over the profession to the point where you can believe such people actually exist) makes for highly enjoyable reading, indeed.

Manshape is an excellent new release, perfect for those who enjoy a good puzzle, especially one which takes a great deal of plain and simple logic to solve.

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CITYBOOK I: Aid for all systems

Reviewed by Ken Rolston

CITYBOOK I is a gamemaster's aid consisting of 25 business, service, and lodging establishments, amply described along with the personalities and activities found therein. The book is attractively designed, written well, imaginative, and conveniently applicable to any FRP rules system. Published by Flying Buffalo, Inc., for \$14.95, it is an expensive but still worthwhile labor-saving device for the fantasy gamemaster running city adventures.

CITYBOOK I is a 128-page, 8½-by-11 format paperback. It begins with a section explaining how to adapt the specifics of the character and establishment descriptions to one's own system. Next is a general how-to article for beginners on gamemastering FRP cities. Then a comprehensive key to the floor-plan descriptions is given, complete down to symbols for privies and bathtubs.

The balance of the book is devoted to the detailed descriptions of 25 places of business appropriate to fantasy cultures. For each there are a description of the establishment and the services offered there; detailed keys to the layout, character sketches and portraits of the important NPCs; and two or three suggestions for using the setting and characters as the core of a gaming session.

The 25 establishments are sub-divided into several categories. The first is Lodging and Entertainment, featuring a roughneck tavern and a more respectable inn, complete with the benign ghost of a minstrel amicably haunting it. The second section is called Public Services, a broad category including a "taxi" garage, refined public baths, a candlemaker with some "special" designs, a leech with a gleeful, eager ineptitude at surgery, a magic shop, a taxidermist and museum (exhibiting some of those charming horrors commonly encountered by intrepid adventurers), a diviner, and a tattoo parlor run by an ugly pair of twins named the Sleaz brothers.

The next section is grouped loosely under Services: Hardware. Here are described an armory, a swordsmith, a bowyer, a tanner, and a stable/smithy. The Food Services section consists of a bake shop, a butcher, and a street-cart food vendor, complete with monkey. Community Services include a clocktower with the inevitable hunchback, and a Bellman's Guild, the equivalent of a news service. Under Spiritual Services may be found a Temple to Putrexia (a rather passive and inoffensive religion), an undertaker (just what every good FRP campaign needs), and a cemetery with a lovely vampire and a mad doctor. In the

Security section are a police barracks and the Bummingham Jail.

CITYBOOK I does not claim to be a complete city, unlike *Thieves' World* and *The Free City of Haven*. Neither does it claim to help you structure or design an FRP city, as do several products by Midkemia Press, for example. Instead, this product offers modular pieces to be added to an existing city, or to be used as the nucleus for one to be constructed by the GM. The descriptions of the establishments and personalities of this package are far more completely developed than those of other recent city materials. By focusing on relatively few features of a city, greater detail in description is achieved — and detail is the soul of atmosphere in a fantasy role-playing campaign. This package is particularly good for the GM who emphasizes role-playing; there is little encouragement of crude hack'n'slash here. In general the write-ups are full of dramatic opportunities, well-organized and stimulating to the narrative imagination.

Particularly interesting are the design features that enable *CITYBOOK I* to classify as a truly all-system supplement. The book handles five aspects of gaming that are usually quantified and detailed in ways that are unique to each rule system. The first aspect is the general attributes of the NPC — strength, dexterity, power, etc. *CITYBOOK I* suggests that it is unnecessary to detail all of these stats for NPCs, but directs the GM to look for phrases in the character sketches ("quick," "very stupid," and so forth) as guides to distinctive characteristics. From experience I have found this to be true; seldom is it necessary to have character stats for most NPCs, as long as the character is well-visualized and understood by the GM.

The second aspect is fighting prowess. Here *CITYBOOK I* provides a six-level coding system, rating each NPC as a poor, average, fair, good, very good, or excellent fighter. It also gives percentiles suggesting what proportion of the population could be expected to have that level of ability. For example, "poor" fighters would be easily defeated, and they would comprise about 40% of the population, while "excellent" fighters would represent the top 5% of the skill group and would be likely to defeat most opponents easily.

The third aspect, magic ability, is also described in six levels with percentiles. Magic ability is further broken down into eight types of magic: combat, curative, clairvoyant, conveyance, construction, communication, concealment, and conjuration. An NPC might have only one or several of these types of magic. It is clear

that many magic rules, with their endless spell lists, will be so diverse as to defy description in these limited terms.

These three aspects of the NPC will require the GM to prepare relevant system-oriented notes for each character if there is any chance that there will be combative or magical interaction with the player characters; however, since it is unlikely (I hope) that the players will match swords with Widow Rohls (the baker) or her charming daughters, detailed stats are unnecessary. In a city most NPCs will not engage in more than dialogue or repartee with the characters, and the full dramatic descriptions provided for the NPCs in *CITYBOOK I* are quite adequate for this purpose.

The fourth aspect of NPCs, physical appearance, is actually more specifically described in *CITYBOOK I* than is provided for in most rules, and therefore is more than adequate. Another aspect of play, costs and prices, is handled in general terms ("low," "reasonable," "expensive"). When specific prices are used, reference is made by comparison to prices in U.S. currency (1 g.p. = \$1) so that relative value can be judged.

The guidelines also mention that the description of certain NPCs as "orcs" or "dwarves" depends on the GM's use of racial types in his own campaign. It is easiest to suppose that all the NPCs in this package are humans of varying statures and ethnic backgrounds, since none of the character descriptions rely on any distinctively idiosyncratic features of race. For example, the description of the Sleaz brothers, the tattoo-parlor twins, as "orcs" would be misleading in a system that labels orcs as primitive and ferocious; their portraits are far from fearsome, and one is described as "a gentle soul" who "adores animals and small children."

I have found *CITYBOOK I*'s placid indifference to detailed statistics for NPCs to be quite acceptable; others may not be so satisfied. As a GM who emphasizes role-playing, I find the personality of the NPC is far more important than his martial skills or his hit points, particularly in the usually civilized setting of city adventuring. I rarely need to know the hit points or spell abilities of any NPC, and in the infrequent cases where a player goes berserk and attacks a grocer, I make up the stats on the spot. A GM who prefers a more formal preparation may face a time-consuming task if he wishes to specify the abilities and characteristics of the NPCs in terms of the rules system he is using, and this may be a weakness if the GM is looking for something he can use immediately without any time or labor of his own.

The establishments themselves are excellently illustrated with floor plans and external views. The scale and diagrams are detailed and unambiguous, down to the direction that a cabinet door will swing open. The creators of these establishments were not as stuck in a medieval history mind-set as are the creators of most FRP cities. The establishments are a blend of the medieval and the modern, full of anachronisms that may offend the more fussy GM — but why must all fantasy follow the models of Western medieval history anyway? Some of the establishments may be appropriate for smaller villages, but most would more likely be found in a larger population center.

CITYBOOK I is entertaining and readable, moreso than most other fantasy gaming supplements. The presentation is well-organized and coherent. The tone is light-hearted and amusing, unlike the grim flavor of many game materials. The writers are also refreshingly free of the dogmatic dichotomy between Good Guys and Evil Guys so pervasive in FRP gaming. There is an even-handed and sympathetic treatment of both the clean-cut and the shady characters that encourages a more complex view of personality and motivation than does, for example, a crude alignment system.

Though many FRP materials are amply detailed in their treatment of plot and

setting, rarely is characterization as detailed as it must be to afford fully developed NPCs that make the GM's task easier. *CITYBOOK I* contains numerous sharp, strong, and distinct characters with plenty of hooks for the GM's impromptu narrative. For example, the old coot living in the shack in back of the bakery is really a mind-burned wizard with occasional flashes of uncontrollable power, and the blacksmith is really a powerful wizard with a program of revenge on his mind, disguised and hiding until the time is right. On the other hand, sometimes city gaming materials may be overly detailed, as packages like *The Free City of Haven* sometimes are; the characters are too intricately involved in other contexts to be comfortably introduced into the local campaign, aside from being so detailed that there is just too much for the GM to recall. This product manages to avoid both extremes, providing vivid and stimulating personalities to stir action and reaction in the players. One excellent feature of the characterizations is the portraits drawn by Liz Danforth. One picture is indeed worth a thousand words; each face is distinctive and precise, and the clothing, as well as the visage, of a character can tell us a lot about his personality.

The suggestions for scenarios given with each set of characters and their establishments range from clever and

appealing to strained and improbable. It is unlikely that many will rely on them to provide the core of a gaming session. It will be far more productive to follow the inspirations stimulated by adding these settings and characters to an existing campaign; they are good creative spark-plugs for improvisation and for rounding out a session preparation. They can be effectively used to provide a net to catch anyone that falls through the holes in your preparation of a town. You know how characters insist on wandering off on a trail that takes them away from your carefully prepared narrative sequences to fiddle around in unanticipated places. This book provides a ready stock of stopgaps for such behavior — and frequently the chance encounters will prove as interesting as the story line you carefully prepared.

For the FRP gamemaster who runs city adventures, *CITYBOOK I* is an excellent resource. The settings, characters, and narrative potentials of the materials are imaginative and appealing. The detail is complete and visual, but not overwhelming. It can be used to supplement any campaign, and requires relatively little work from the GM to adapt to his own system. It is a pleasure to read and a pleasure to the eye — material that will be read and used, rather than filed away. I look forward to future all-system products like this from Flying Buffalo. ❧

CIVILIZATION breaks new ground

Reviewed by Tony Watson

Once in a while, a new game comes out that proves that there is still plenty of virgin territory out there for game designers to explore and plenty of room for innovative and imaginative approaches to those subjects. Avalon Hill's release, *CIVILIZATION*, is just such a game.

It's difficult to categorize the game. It's not historical (technically, much of the time period of the game is prehistorical), in the sense that, unlike most historical wargames, it doesn't strive to simulate any specific incidents. Historical trends, rather than historical events, are the stuff that *CIVILIZATION* is made of.

The mapboard covers the region of the eastern Mediterranean, Near East, and Black Sea coasts. Each player takes the role of one of the ancient world's great cultures. Nine counter sets are provided, the pieces representing population, accumulated wealth, ships, and — most importantly — cities. They are used to depict the civilization's geographical distribution, agricultural and trade potential, and military power. The civilizations covered in the game are Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, Crete, Illyria, Thrace, Asia, Africa, and Italy. Although nine

sets of counters are provided, the maximum number of players is seven; the additional sets are offered to insure variety in the nations available to players. *CIVILIZATION* is a game of player interaction, and the more players the better; although versions for less than the full seven-player game are included, contests using less than three or four players don't compare to the quality of a many-faceted struggle.

The four-section, foldout mapboard is printed in a variety of earth tones, showing valleys, highlands, and deserts. The map is divided into irregularly shaped areas instead of hexes. Each land area has a population limit of from one to five, indicating how many population counters can exist in that area at one time. "City sites" are small squares located in some territories that denote optimal spots for the construction of cities.

The counter set for each player is identical in composition, but players can easily differentiate between their respective nations because illustrations symbolic of the nation are printed on each set of counters: for instance, a ziggurat representing Babylon, and (what else?) the great pyramids for Egypt. Population pieces are square, city counters are

round, and ship pieces are rectangular. The population counters are backprinted with a picture of filled urns and are used to represent goods paid for taxes.

The game components also include two decks of cards, one deck representing commodities and deck of civilization cards. The first of these, the "trade deck," consists of nine sets of cards for different trade goods, such as salt, grain, bronze, and cloth. Printed on the cards is the value of a set of the same commodity, based on a geometric progression: for instance, a single salt card is worth its base value, three, but a set of three salt cards is worth twenty-seven. Eight of the sets have an associated calamity card (explained later).

The goal of all the players is to accumulate civilization cards. The cards in the civilization deck are color-coded according to group (arts, sciences, crafts, or civics). Printed on each card is its point cost, any special credits it gives toward the purchase of other cards, and any special advantages that accrue to the holder of the card. For example, the pottery card, which is a crafts card, costs forty-five points to buy, gives a ten-point credit toward other crafts cards, and, when coupled with a grain card from the

trade deck, helps to lessen the effects of a famine (one of the calamities).

CIVILIZATION has a thirteen-phase sequence of play. That may sound like a lot, but most of the phases are simple, and some can be handled simultaneously. The turn begins with payment of taxes; for each city a player has, he must convert two of his counters into wealth and place it into his treasury. Then the players deal with population expansion: Areas with one counter double in population, and those with two or more receive an increase of two counters. A census, taken at this point, determines the order of movement for the turn; players move in reverse order of the population of their nations.

Movement itself is very simple. Counters can be moved one area per turn on land; ships, which are bought and maintained by taxes or a levy of population tokens, allow movement of up to four spaces per turn through open sea and coastal areas.

Movement is followed by conflict, also very simple to resolve. When the population of a given region exceeds that area's limit, and the population therein belongs to two or more players, conflict occurs. An attrition system, with players alternately removing counters, is used, with the only modifying factors being an advantage in numbers and possession of the civilization card for metal working.

No dice or CRT is used; conflict is totally predictable. In this regard, the game is probably not for those who fancy themselves as adroit tacticians (though there is undoubtedly an element of strategy to the conflict system). The military aspect of the game is de-emphasized, but entirely appropriate to the game's scope and breadth.

CIVILIZATION centers around cities. These are constructed after conflict when six population counters are brought together by a player on a city site. (Cities can be built on locations other than city sites, but twelve population counters are needed in those cases.) Cities are important as a solid defensive position (they are difficult to assault) and as a source of trade cards. For each city a player has, he may draw a trade card from one of the piles representing the base value of the cards within it. Three cities, for example, would enable a player to pick from the first three trade-card piles; that is, the piles containing cards with base values of one, two, and three. The more cities a player has, the greater number of cards of higher value he will receive.

After trade cards have been drawn, the trading round begins. This is perhaps the most important phase involving player interaction. Players can offer a trade of a group of three or more cards they hold by stating the total point value of the group and one of the commodities represented in the proffered group. The object of trading is the building of sets of similar cards, which (as described earlier) are worth much more than single cards. Very often it is in the interest of both players involved to make a trade, and both will benefit from an exchange.

The object of the accumulation of points in trade cards is to be able to purchase civilization cards with those points. The value of a set of trade cards can be combined with treasury tokens and special credits from other already-purchased civilization cards to buy new civilization cards. Since the supply of some types of cards is more limited than others, competition for those cards is keen; the important "mysticism" card, which is the lowest-priced of all but gives credit toward science and arts cards, is especially sought after.

Civilization cards determine the nature of a culture and its resistance against certain types of calamities. Advancement up the Archaeological Succession Table is dependent on the ownership of numbers, types, and point values of civilization cards. These cards provide the major source of points for the final totals needed to win the game.

Calamities, the bane of any culture they happen to (and perhaps other cultures as well), are a critical aspect of the game. They enter play via the trade-card deck, with one calamity card in each value pile except the first (the one-point value cards). A calamity can be a flood,

an earthquake, a famine, a form of social unrest (such as civil war), or the rise of iconoclasm in a culture, to name a few. The effect of a calamity is measured in losses to the cities and the population of the player who is beset by one. In some cases, civilization cards can lessen the effects of these disasters.

Some calamities are drawn from the trade-card piles and must be played by the person who drew them; others need not be put into play immediately and may be passed to another player via the trading process. In most cases, the play of a calamity card allows the stricken player to take somebody with him. For example, a player whose culture has suffered an epidemic must lose sixteen points (cities are worth five points in the accounting for calamities, population units worth one apiece) — but the play of the epidemic card allows the player to have all other players lose a total of twenty-five points as well, with no single other player losing more than ten points. Spreading out the effect of a disaster is often a more effective way to strike at another player than the use of military action, especially if that player's territories are geographically remote.

CIVILIZATION is a game that defies comparison with others. I can think of no other game that covers such a broad span of time, 8000 B.C. to 250 B.C., or allows the players such control over the shaping of an entire culture. Despite the game's vast scope, the mechanics of play are uncomplicated. This is not to say the game is unsophisticated; nuances in movement and combat and the strategies inherent in trading and the acquisition of civilization cards present themselves anew every time the game is played. The way the game works — the way it simulates the importance of cities as defensive and trade centers, the manner in which it handles the building of a great civilization via the accumulation of technology, arts, sciences, and social philosophies, and the accurate interpretation of a primitive economic system — is a thoughtful and imaginative approach to the subject of the nature of man at the dawn of history.

It has been my experience that a five- or six-player game involving people with some knowledge of the game plays in about eight hours, a full seven-player game taking a little longer. For those with less time available than that, the rules offer provisions for ending the game at earlier points in time instead of playing it to its chronological conclusion.

CIVILIZATION was originally the product of a British design group, and the game was subsequently picked up and marketed by Avalon Hill. It sells for the rather hefty price of \$22, but this is understandable considering the large number of components the game contains. Even at that price, it's a fine value and is highly recommended. ❦

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This game's for daredevils only

Reviewed by Ken Ralston

DAREDEVILS is a role-playing game set in the Thirties era of genre and pulp fiction. The game is published by Fantasy Games Unlimited, and shares some rules conventions with some of their other games, like *Aftermath* and *Bushido*. For \$18.00, the purchaser gets a 64-page rulebook, a 32-page scenario booklet, a GM screen, character sheet, and dice.

Designed for adventures featuring heroes like Doc Savage, Charlie Chan, Indiana Jones, and Sam Spade, the game rules do an admirable job in covering many of the important features of adventuring in the modern era of technology, though the complexity of some of the procedures will be intimidating to many gamers. The scenarios provided with the rules demonstrate the range of dramatic adventures that may be conducted using the rules, from the gimmick-happy nobility of Doc Savage to the sober investigative work and hard-boiled figures of the detective genre. For the gamer interested in the literature and drama of the 1930's, this game offers comprehensive rules and authentic atmosphere.

The rules are tough reading. In addition to the complexity of many of the procedures, the added impediment of obscure presentation makes for unpleasant study. The rules are set up poorly for reference purposes, with no index and a glossary that does not give references back to the text discussion of the term defined. The style is dense and compressed, presumably because of the designer's anxiety to include every bit of the detailed and clever rules created to handle combat, skills and tasks, character generation, and the trappings of technology. If the text had been better illustrated with examples, and more care had been taken to make the rules easy to read and reference, I might be less reserved in my recommendation of this game. As it is, it will require a dedicated gamer to read and study the rules enough to smoothly negotiate the complicated labyrinth of procedures and detailed specifications.

The combat system is particularly bewildering. It attempts to handle every important factor in the resolution of actions that take only seconds in cinema, or at most a page in literature. The result is a very realistic simulation that takes a great deal more time than is justified by its dramatic purpose. It slows the rhythm of the game and distracts from the charming atmosphere so painstakingly developed throughout the scenarios included in the product. When we playtested one of these scenarios, we seemed to carefully avoid combat, not because we were

afraid of dying, but because we didn't want to fool with the combat rules.

The character-development procedure is detailed but well-organized, and is an entertaining enough solitaire activity. The resulting character sheet is surprisingly simple and easy to use. The character abilities, background, skills, career, and study options facilitate the design of well-rounded and interesting characters. The task resolution system is an effective use of the character skills concept; it takes into account the character's talent, skill, background, the complexity of the task, and the availability of resources and reference materials. This system is quite detailed and involved; however, since its use may often take place during downtime, and it is meant to simulate a procedure that would often really take a very long time (tracing fingerprints, repairing a motor vehicle, researching the background of a voodoo cult), it is not as discouraging as the convoluted combat system that requires thirty minutes to simulate thirty seconds of action.

There are many other positive features of the rules. Included is a good treatment of time scales and tactical and strategic movement. Rules covering the use of electricity, doors and locks, and disease are entertaining and credible. Operating a vehicle, avoiding accidents, and fighting in and on moving vehicles works smoothly and with dramatic conviction. The suggestions for creating adventures and non-player characters are worth reading by players of any FRP game. The section on PC motivation is a useful guide to creating appropriate characters for the genres served by this game. Generally, the rules are very comprehensive, moreso than any of the other FRP games set in the modern era. Any gamer who is already using rules for *Call of Cthulhu* or *Champions*, for example, may be interested in incorporating some of the features of *DAREDEVILS* into his or her campaigns.

The *DAREDEVILS* scenario booklet contains four adventures. "Fu Sung's Secret" is a simple introductory adventure that brings out the investigative aspects of the rules, and also provides an opportunity for a little melee. "Fu Sung's Revenge" is a follow-up adventure where the characters assault a mansion peopled with thugs and martial artists and containing the obligatory death-trap which the characters must miraculously survive. "Black Claws" is a full-scale campaign that brings the characters into contact with the occult, politics, and the exotic setting of Africa. The classic is "On These Mean Streets"; it is an example of the best virtues of *DAREDEVILS*. It features investigative work, seeking out

contacts in the various subcultures of the underworld, the police, and high society. The crime that must be riddled out is apparently simple but, as is appropriate in the genre, is really complex and obscure in the motivations and methods of the characters involved. With this scenario it is almost possible to capture the atmosphere of the detective films and novels of the 1940's and 1950's.

DAREDEVILS will probably be of particular value to those interested in the detective genre. I have little respect for the pulp fiction of the 1930's; television's uninspiring "Bring 'Em Back Alive" suggests how weak the resources of the genre really are. On the other hand, the crime and detective genre has a lively tradition in fiction and film, and provides good material for scenarios which emphasize piecing together clues, motives, and opportunities rather than bang-bang, shoot-em-up adventures.

DAREDEVILS is unlikely to attract a large audience. It is too complicated to understand at one sitting, and thus not suited for those looking for a quick evening's action and entertainment. There is a current marketing trend in FRP games that relies on selling many new games with specialized subjects rather than one game with numerous supplements. This strategy depends on the gamer who will buy a game and play it three or four times, then move on to the next novelty. Unless the rules are simple, or closely parallel other familiar rules, it is unrewarding to learn a complicated set of rules just to play a game a couple of times. *DAREDEVILS* is not simple; it cannot be played smoothly after a first reading of the rules. This game is for the sophisticated gamer who plans to use all or part of the rules in an ongoing campaign, or who plans to do a major part of his role-playing gaming in the modern era.

Despite my reservations about the readability and complexity of the rules and procedures of *DAREDEVILS*, it is the most comprehensive set of rules covering role-playing in the modern era, and shows great ingenuity in handling many gaming situations that are handled poorly or not at all by other systems. If the players avoid combat, the game plays fairly smoothly and at a satisfyingly dramatic pace. The scenarios included with the game are well-written and show the virtues of the rules in their best light. Though *DAREDEVILS* is not appropriate for the casual gamer, those interested in the genre and pulp fiction of the twentieth century will find that it provides the resources and rules to adapt the flavor and atmosphere of those adventures to a role-playing scenario. ■■■

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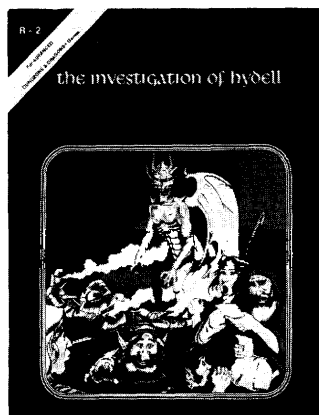
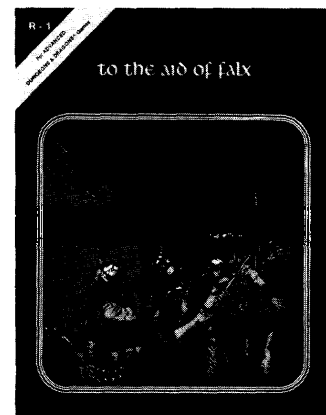


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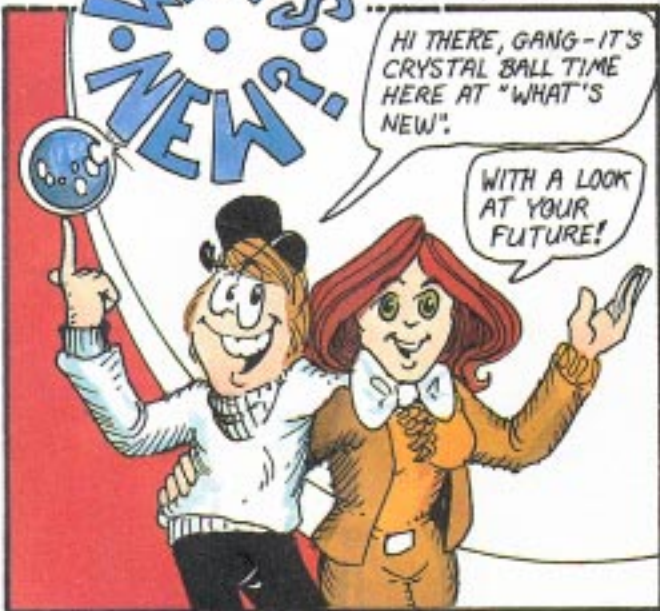


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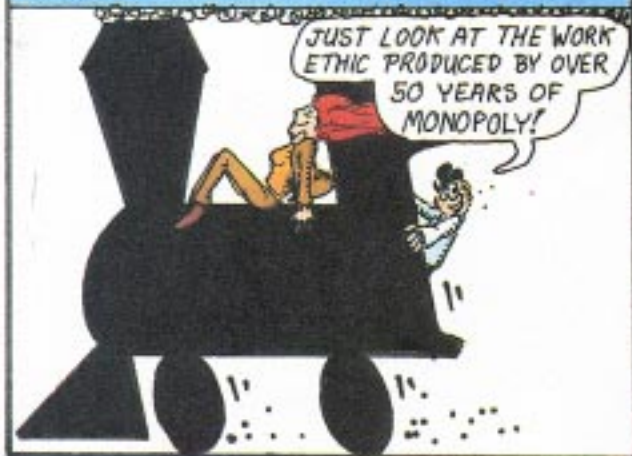


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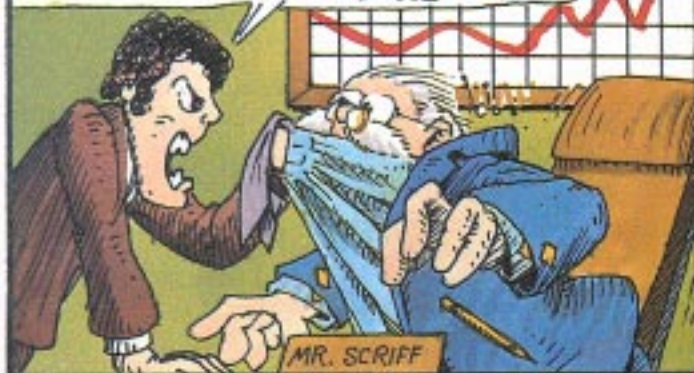
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MR. SCRUFF

THIS EXPOSURE TO DIFFERENT CULTURES AND THE NECESSITIES OF DEALING WITH THEM WILL BROADEN ONE'S TOLERANCES...

... BUT THEN IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT IF I COULD MAKE A TRADE AGREEMENT WITH INTELLIGENT VEGETABLES FROM SIRIUS- THEN I COULD HANDLE A RUSSIAN MINISTER OF TRADE.



YES- THOSE SIRIANS ARE TRICKY.

... NOT TO MENTION THEIR NEGOTIATING SKILLS.

SOME MINISTER OF TRADE YOU ARE!!

BUYING WHEAT FOR FIVE TIMES WHAT IT'S WORTH I CAN CHALK UP TO SIMPLE STUPIDITY - BUT TO SELL THEM THE BERLIN WALL?! - WHAT ARE YOU? AN IDIOT?!



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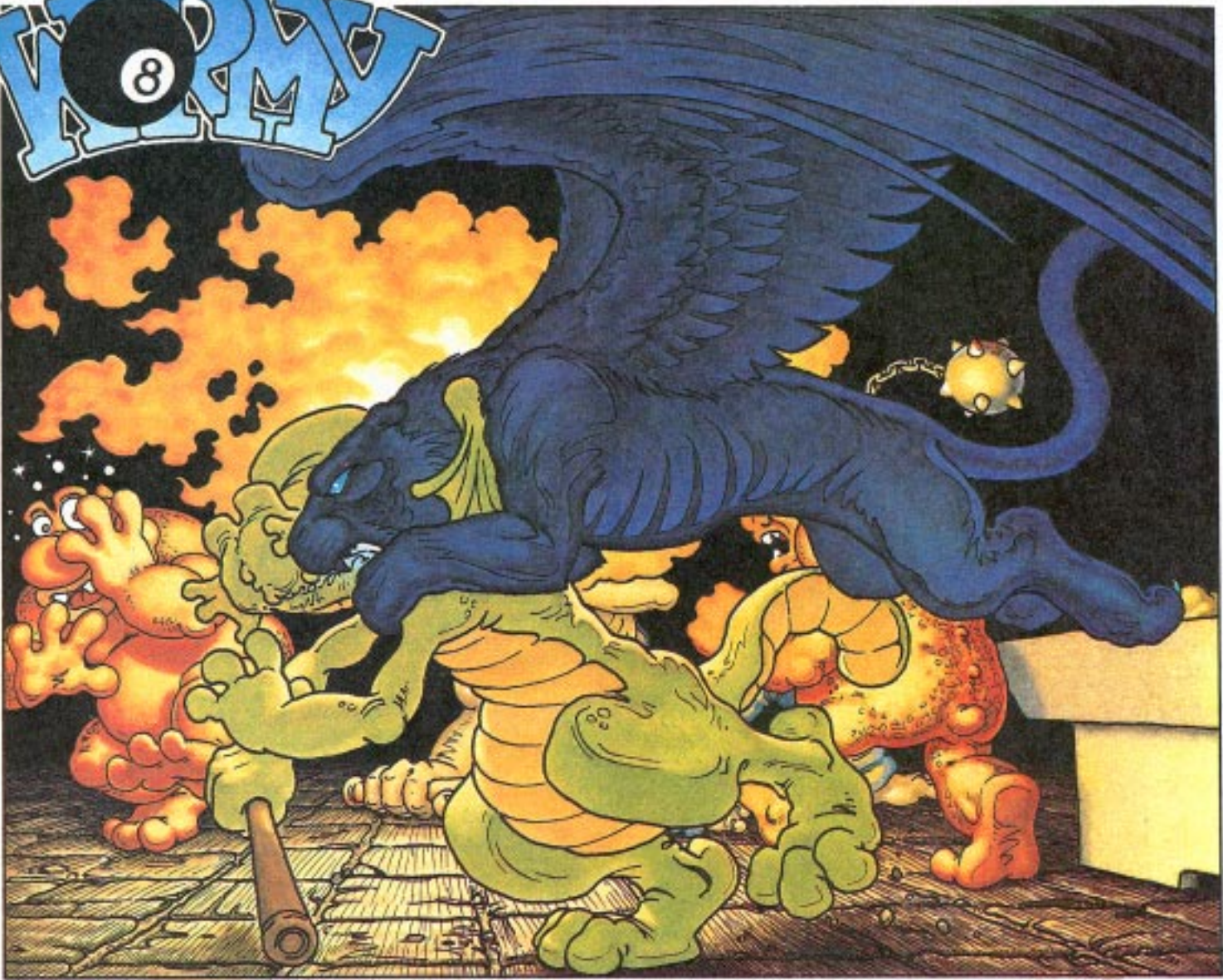
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